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# THE METAPHORIC PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS THAT STUDY IN DIFFERENT HIGH SCHOOL TYPES TOWARDS THE CONCEPT OF 'UNIVERSITY'\*

## FARKLI LİSE TÜRLERİNDE ÖĞRENİM GÖREN ÖĞRENCİLERİN 'ÜNİVERSİTE' KAVRAMINA YÖNELİK METAFORİK ALGILARI

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### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, farklı lise türlerinde öğrenim gören lise son sınıf öğrencilerinin üniversite kavramına ilişkin görüşlerinin metaforlar aracılığıyla incelenmesidir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu lise son sınıfta öğrenim gören 268 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Çalışmada öğrencilerden üniversite kavramına yönelik metaforlar üretmeleri istenmiştir. Çalışma verileri yarı-yapılandırılmış bir form aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışma verileri nitel yaklaşım tekniklerinden içerik analizi ile çözümlenmiştir. Çalışmada 229 metafor üretilmiştir. Üniversite kavramının tanımlanmasında üretilen metaforların en çok “özgürlük”, “geleceğe yön veren” ve “bilgi veren ve geliştiren” kategorileri altında yer aldığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca “özgürlük”, “dönüm noktası”, “hayat” ve “gelecek” ifadeleri de en sık kullanılan metaforlar olarak göze çarpmıştır. Metaforlar okul türüne göre analiz edildiğinde; Fen Lisesi öğrencilerinin görüşlerinin çoğunlukla “bilgi veren ve geliştiren”, Anadolu Lisesi öğrencilerinin “özgürlük” ve İmam-Hatip Lisesi öğrencilerinin ise “araç” kategorilerinde yer aldığı görülmüştür.

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Lise, Öğrenci, Üniversite, Metafor.*

### Abstract

This study aims to analyse high school final year students' views on the concept of university through metaphors. The study group was composed of 268 high school students. In the study, the students were asked to produce metaphors for the concept of university. The data were collected via a semi-structured interview form. The data were analysed with content analysis, which is one of

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the qualitative approach techniques. 229 valid metaphors were collected. The metaphors created were mostly in the categories of “freedom”, “guiding the future” and “informing and developing”. Besides, the categories of “freedom”, “turning point” and “life” were found to be the most frequently used metaphors. According to school type, the views of science high school students were mostly collected in the “informing and developing” category, the views of Anatolian high school students were “freedom”, and the views of Religious vocational high school students were in “instrument” category.

*Keywords: High School, Student, University, Metaphor.*

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## **Introduction**

Universities can be considered as institutions of higher education where individuals would like to receive education so as to get a job, to improve their depth in intellectual knowledge or to discover their own limitations in a different social environment. The fact that approximately two million people apply for university entrance exams every year in Turkey (Ünikampüs, 2018) indicates that university is a target to attain. It can be estimated that the mass, the majority of which is composed of new graduates of secondary education, have dreams of being accepted into a university for various reasons. The students facing challenging test process and having different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds may differ in their expectations of university education and states of mind. They may have a range of feelings from stress, anxiety and fear to happiness, comfort and peace. This situation can change students’ perspectives of university and meanings they attach to universities.

A close examination of the system of secondary education in Turkey demonstrates that there are different types of high schools in Turkey such as science high schools, social sciences high schools, Anatolian high schools, Anatolian religious vocational high schools, fine arts high schools, sports high schools and vocational high schools (Ministry of National Education, 2017). The goal of these types of high schools is to assure that students gain several skills apart from the general goals by the time they graduate. For instance, science high schools are expected to raise individuals having the basic knowledge about science and mathematics necessary to be scientists while social sciences high schools are expected to raise individuals having the basic knowledge of social sciences necessary to be scientists. It is emphasised that Anatolian religious vocational high schools serve as a resource to students having the competence to offer religious service to the society. The students attending those types of high schools can be thought to have different academic, social and cultural competence. Students in Turkey choose a high school to go according to the scores they receive from a centrally held test. This indicates the academic

competence of students attending the types of high schools mentioned, and it also influences students' achievement in entrance into university to a large extent. On examining the assessment report prepared for the test for transition into higher education (called YKS examination) given prior to acceptance into a university which was given in 2018, it was found that science high schools received 364.91, Anatolian high schools received 239.14, and Anatolian religious vocational high schools received 197.95 on average (YKS, 2018). The data shows that there are clear differences between the types of high schools in terms of academic achievement. Thus, it was found that science high schools had the highest average scores in Turkey. It is apparent that these types of high schools differ in their purpose of establishment, in the expertise and competence of their students and in their academic achievement. Therefore, it can be said that students of differing qualifications graduate from the above mention types of high schools. It can be predicted that different qualifications and expectations can diversify students' perceptions of university.

Universities are the institutes of higher education doing scientific research, supporting society's social, cultural and economic development and raising well-qualified human resources (Sakıncı & Bursalıoğlu, 2012). They are the prestigious institutes of education aiming to provide social benefits in the light of knowledge they reach. Ortaş (2004) describes universities as prestigious institutes of research which are responsible for generating, interpreting, criticising, communicating and spreading knowledge for social benefit. In other words, universities are the places playing important roles in determining the future of societies. According to the law of higher education (1981, p. 5350), universities are predicted to fulfil three basic tasks: educational and instructional activities, scientific research-based knowledge generation and practices to develop social benefit. Besides, it was also stated that university education provides several individual and social benefits. The benefits include such positive modifications as academic development, providing intellectual perspective, offering new occupational and social opportunities, instilling in individuals the determination to struggle with problems, forming the cultural identity, developing it and transmitting it and accelerating economic growth (Çetinsaya, 2014; Kirwan, 2007; UNESCO, 2000). Universities- which attract the attention of mainly students and also of the whole society- can mean different things from person to person. Individuals' process of meaning giving can be uncovered through metaphors.

People can use different similes to make concepts more comprehensible and permanent in mind in explaining the concepts. The similes cannot be independent of individuals' intellectual accumulation, social and cultural background or their economic level. This can lead to several

descriptions of the same concept. These descriptions can be expressed as metaphors. According to Yob (2003), metaphors are the unveiling of probable connections and dynamics about a concept in the process of knowledge generation. Yet, metaphors are not the concepts themselves but they are the symbols of the concepts. Thayer-Bacon (2000) stress that metaphors are the parts of our life and that people often use metaphors to communicate their ideas and beliefs. That is to say, metaphors can be considered as cognitive meanings in which people reflect their phenomena by means of their mental images (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008). In a similar way, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) point out that metaphors create social reality and that they can play guiding roles for future actions. Kasoutas and Malamitsa (2009), on the other hand, argue that metaphors make it easier to state the ideas which cannot be fully expressed, that they reflect the complexity of ideas and various perspectives and that they make descriptions more vivid and more effective.

Metaphoric approaches facilitating the reflection of diverse perspectives about a concept stand out as an application noticeable in several studies in recent years. Today, there is an increase in the number of studies investigating a number of concepts in metaphorical contexts in the field of educational sciences. It has been observed that some of these studies examine concepts such as education (Akbaba Altun & Apaydın, 2013), pre-school teacher (Akgün, 2016), teaching profession (Çocuk, Yokuş & Tanrıseven, 2015; Koç, 2014), teacher identity (Erickson & Pinnegar, 2016), curriculum (Gültekin, 2017; Özdemir, 2012), multicultural education (Günay, Aydın & Koç Damgacı, 2015), teaching (Hamilton, 2016), giftedness (Olthouse, 2014), university (Oyman & Şentürk, 2015), school administrators (Örücü, 2014), schooling (Thomson, 2016). The fact that metaphors offer an insight beyond routine descriptions into the analysis of concepts can increase semantic richness and thus can point to the different aspects of perceptions of a concept. In this context efforts were made to analyse high school final year students' metaphors for the concept of university. It can be thought that students studying in different school types have different backgrounds in terms of cultural capital. In this context, it is important to determine what the perspective of students studying at these schools are towards the university and how the differences between schools affect students' perspectives. It can be stated that especially the changes in the course content in school types carried out by policy makers and how social differentiation transforms the concept of university will help us for understanding. Hence, the associations universities have in students' minds were investigated in the study.

## Method

### Research Model

This study, which set out to unveil students' views on the concept of university through metaphors, considers the subject in a qualitative approach. Patton (2014) argues that rich, powerful, striking and varied findings can be obtained via metaphors. The study uses phenomenological design and investigates the perceptions about the concept through figurative meaning. Phenomenological design indicates phenomena which is felt in our surrounding but which cannot be explained fully or described in depth and in details (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Individual differences and experience are prioritised in such approaches and personal perspectives about a phenomenon are stressed. The reason for using this approach in the study is to reveal the perspectives of students studying in different high school types towards the concept of "university" in depth. In addition, with this approach, it is thought that it will be more effective to determine how the difference in school will create a variety on the related concept.

### Study Group

The study group was composed of 268 final year high school students attending science high schools, Anatolian high schools and religious vocational high schools in Ankara in 2015-2016 academic year. The participants were chosen in random samples method. According to Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel (2009), the elements constituting a sample are chosen equally and independently in this method.

Table 1

#### *Demographic Properties of The Study Group*

Variables	Groups	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Female	170	63.4
	Male	98	36.6
Types of schools	Science high school	72	26.8
	Anatolian high school	102	38.1
	Religious vocational high school	94	35.1

As is clear from Table 1, 63.4% of the students ( $n=170$ ) are female whereas 36.6% ( $n=98$ ) are male. Of them 26.8% ( $n=72$ ) attend a science high school while 38.1% ( $n=102$ ) attend an Anatolian high school and 35.1% ( $n=94$ ) attend a religious vocational high school.

### **Data Collection**

The students were asked to state their views by using metaphors so that their metaphorical perceptions of the concept of university could be determined. For this purpose, they were given a form having the sentence “University is like (a/an) ..... because .....” on it. In the first blank the students were asked to write the simile and in the second they were asked to explain it with a reason. According to Saban (2008), the relations between an element that a metaphor associates and its source are unveiled with the word “like”, and the logical background is unveiled with the word “because”. The students were allowed approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the forms distributed to them. The forms collected were analysed as the basic source of data for the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected from high school students were put to content analysis. Content analysis enables researchers to investigate a phenomenon in depth. Participants’ views are classified in similar themes in content analysis and they are expressed by interpreting them (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The metaphors collected in this study were analysed at five stages (labelling, classifying, categorising, validity and reliability analysis, and calculating and interpreting the frequencies) and then they were analysed and interpreted (Saban, Koçbeker & Saban, 2006).

#### ***The Stage of Labelling***

The metaphors created were listed at this stage. After that, they were coded (imagination, wedding tv show, the final stage, stairs, etc.). The forms to be excluded from evaluation (for instance, the ones which were not completed or which were not fully completed) were also marked at this stage.

#### ***The Stage of Classification***

The metaphors collected from the students were examined and the relations between metaphors and the reasons given were evaluated. Although 268 forms were collected in the process of data collection, only 229 of them were evaluated. Due to reasons such as refusing to complete the forms, not completing them fully or having ambiguous meanings, 39 forms- 7 of which came from science high school students, 15 of which came from Anatolian high school students and 17 of which came from religious vocational school students- were excluded from evaluation.

### *The Stage of Categorising*

Having excluded 39 forms from evaluation, 229 metaphors created by the students were evaluated. The metaphors which were valid were divided into 7 (for science and Anatolian high school students) or 8 (for religious vocational high school students) categories within the framework of the reasons given. The metaphor of “home of knowledge”, for instance, described universities as places transferring knowledge and as places where individuals could make progress. Besides, it was also found that the same metaphors were divided into different categories due to semantic reasons.

### *The Stage of Validity and Reliability Analysis*

The whole process was explained in detail to attain validity and to keep the validity high, and all the findings about the metaphors were described. Expert opinion was consulted so as to find the level of reliability. The experts agreed in terms of dividing the metaphors into seven or eight categories. However, they considered the metaphors “future, summit, life, tree, stage, high school, key and light” in different categories. The opinion of two field experts was used for the reliability of the study. In the research, there were differences of opinion on 9 metaphors such as freedom (3), future (2), light, trees, paradise, door. Accordingly, the reliability of the study was found in Miles and Huberman’s (1994) formula [ $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{agreement}}{\text{agreement} + (\text{agreement} + \text{disagreement})}$ ]. Thus, the reliability was found as  $[\frac{229}{(229+9)}] = .96$ .

### *The Stage of Calculating and Interpreting the Frequencies*

All the metaphors created by the students were arranged separately. Then, the metaphors in the categories were expressed according to frequency (f) and percentage (%) values. Finally, the figures were tabulated.

## **Results**

This part of the study describes the findings about the metaphors the students created for the concept of university and the frequencies for the categories the metaphors were divided into. Additionally, the metaphors which were divided into seven or eight categories were compared according to types of high schools. 229 valid metaphors in total were evaluated in this study. Seven and eight categories were distinguished according to the reasons the students gave for their metaphors. The metaphors and the frequencies for the categories are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

*The Distribution of the Metaphors According to the Categories*

Categories	f(%)	University metaphors	f(%)
University as freedom	46 (20)	The place where dreams start (1), freedom (14), another city (1), comfortable environment (1), end of imprisonment (1), way of salvation (1), environment (1), responsibility (1), door to the future (1), independence war (1), the place to go (1), breathing (2), a new start (3), paradise (1), water (1), peace (1), end of race (1), place of self-discovery (2), start of life (1), the sky (1), comfort(2), palace (1), salvation (2), World of dreams (1), life (1), standing on one's own feet (1), sea (1).	27 (16.7)
University as the thing guiding the future	38 (16.5)	Stairs (1), summit (1), the most beautiful stage of life (1), Education (1), future (3), freedom (1), turning point (5), hope (1), dream (2), door to the future (1), a map directing (1), concern for the future (1), life insurance (1), the greatest step (1), the institution where we acquire our job (2), map (2), the Picture in which life is painted (2), lantern (2), arrow (1), home(1), signboard(1), life (1), the one which determines the future (1), institution of education determining the future (1), crossroads (1), light (2).	26 (16.1)
University as the one informing and developing	36 (15.7)	Home of knowledge (1), never dying flame (1), home of knowledge (1), library (1), knowledge (1), the place where everything is learnt (1), the future (1), high school (3), institution of education (2), light (2), flower (1), a big high school (1), school (1),family (2),ceramics (1), obligation (1), trees (4), branches of a tree which have produced leaves (1), place of development (2), the place where my thoughts are directed (1), the sky (1), the place where my horizons are widened (1), the place where my dream will come true (1), a stage (1), an important place (1), life (1), place of teaching (1).	27 (16.7)
University as the instrument	33 (14.4)	Summit (1), prestige (1), the future (3), freedom (2), the final stage (1), the way of salvation (1), money (1), the first stage of dreams (1), door to dreams (1), turning point (1), the start of life (1), door (4), gravitation (1), a stage (3), the final stage (1), the first step (1), key (3), road (1), salvation (1), home of education (1), insincerity (1), the place of jobs (2), the place determining our life (1).	23 (14.2)
University as the place of socialising and difference	28 (12.2)	Wedding tv show (1), the place to begin to work (2), following people on Instagram (1), girls (1), beginning to work (3), paradise (4), home(1), the second family (1), the continuation of high school (1), an apple (1), water (1), cloudy water (1), whatever will be will be programme (1), social activity (1), rainbow (1), a colour (1), the united nations (1), the place where I will recognise myself (3), the road determining the future (1), insincerity (1).	20 (12.4)
University as negativity	26 (11.3)	High school (2), games of hunger (1), cash register (1), meaningless (1), time spent in vein (1), waste of time (1), nonsense (1), life insurance (1), unemployment (1), streets (1), sea (1), sleep (2), a cave equipped with lamps (1), great torment (1), turnery (2), farm (2), love (1), garbage (1), dreams (1), worse than the most difficult questions (1), examinations (1), insincerity (1).	22 (13.6)
University as the process	19 (8.2)	Turning point (1), kindergarten (1), the place to start real life (1), Hezarfen's flight from Galata tower (1), the place to start work(1),rehearsal before real life(1), learning the life (1), first step (2), life (5), the end of high school (1), a difficult start (1), tree of life (1), hope (1), a mirror (1).	14 (8.6)
University as uncertainty	3 (1.3)	Mango (1), mirage (2).	2 (1.2)



According to Table 2, the category most frequently emphasised by the participants is the category of “freedom by 20%. It was followed by the category of “guiding the future” by 16.5%, the third most frequently emphasised category is the category of “the one informing and developing” by 15.7%, the fourth one is the category of “instrument” by 14.4%, the fifth one is the category of “the place of socialising and difference” by 12.2%, the sixth one is the category of “negativity” by 11.3%, the seventh one is the category of “process” by 8.2% and the eighth one is the category of “uncertainty” by 1.3%. The findings about the comparison for metaphorical meanings the participants assigned to the concept of university according to the types of schools are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*A Comparison of the Students' Metaphors According to the Types of Schools*

Categories	Science high schools		Anatolian high schools		Religious vocational high schools		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
University as freedom	12	17.6	25	29	9	12	46	20
University as the thing guiding the future	7	10.2	17	19.7	14	18.6	38	16.5
University as the one informing and developing	14	20.5	7	8.1	15	20	36	15.7
University as the instrument	4	5.8	13	15.1	16	21.3	33	14.4
University as the place of socialising and difference	14	20.5	5	5.8	9	12	28	12.2
University as negativity	10	14.7	11	12.7	5	6.6	26	11.3
University as the process	7	10.2	8	9.3	4	5.3	19	8.2
University as uncertainty	-	-	-	-	3	4	3	1.3
Total	68	100	86	100	75	100	229	100

As is clear from Table 3, the metaphors which were divided into eight categories were compared according to the types of schools. Accordingly, it was found that the meanings science high school student, Anatolian high school students and religious vocational high school students assigned to the concept of university differed. Thus, the students of science high schools mostly produced metaphors in the categories of “university as the one informing and developing” (20.5%), “university as the place of socialising and difference” (20.5%) and “university as freedom” (27.6%) while the students of Anatolian high school students produced metaphors most in the categories of “university as freedom” (29%) and “university as the thing guiding the future” (29.7%) and the students of religious vocational high school students produced metaphors most in the categories of “university as the instrument” (21.3%) and “university as the thing guiding the future” (18.6%).

### **University as Freedom**

46 students (20%) expressed their perceptions with 27 metaphors (16.7%) in this category. The images most emphasised in this category were the metaphors of “freedom” ( $f=14$ ), “a new start” ( $f=3$ ) and “salvation” ( $f=2$ ). In this respect A10 said, “it is like freedom because nobody intervenes you neither do they give you orders”; A18 said, “it is like freedom because I will do whatever I want”; A42 said, “it is like freedom because nobody interferes with my choice”; F43 said “it is like the place where you discover yourself because you have the right to try and choose a lot of things freely; I21 said, “it is like comfort because there is no obligation for attendance”. On examining the metaphors according to types of schools, it was found that 27.6% of science high school student, 29% of Anatolian high school students and 20% of religious vocational high school students considered university in the category of freedom.

### **University as the Thing Guiding the Future**

38 students (16.5%) stated their views of the concept of university through 26 metaphors (16.1%) in this category. The most prominent metaphors in the category were the metaphors of “turning point” ( $f=5$ ), “the future” ( $f=3$ ) and “lantern” ( $f=2$ ). In this respect A25 said, “it is like a turning point because what is my future like will be clear at university”; I19 said, “it is like a turning point because it determines how my life will be spent”. In addition to that, A4 said, “it is like future because it is the place where I will see myself in the future” and I3 said, it is like a lantern because it sheds light on what my future will be like”. Accordingly, 10.2% of science high school students, 19.7% of Anatolian high school students and 16.5% of religious vocational high school students produced metaphors in the category of “guiding the future”.

### **University as the One Informing and Developing**

36 students (15.7%) stated their views by using 27 metaphors (16.7%) in this category. The metaphors of “trees” ( $f=4$ ), “high school” ( $f=3$ ) and “institution of education” ( $f=2$ ) were remarkable. In this respect I4 said, “it is like a tree because universities ripen us just like trees ripen fruit” and F8 said, “it is like a high school because there are courses and they load us with knowledge”. On the other hand, F9 said, “it is like an institution of education because we receive education for the job we want to get and we are informed of the job”. Hence, 20.5% of science high school students, 8.1% of Anatolian high schools and 20% of religious vocational high school students produced metaphors in this category.

### **University as the Instrument**

33 students (14.4%) explained their views through 23 metaphors (14.2%) in this category. The metaphors of “door” ( $f=4$ ), “stage” ( $f=3$ ) and “key” ( $f=3$ ) were the most frequently emphasised images in this category. In this respect, F3 said, “it is like a door because it is necessary for a better life”; I10 said, “it is like a stage because you use it to go up, to a better life” and I16 said, “it is like a key because it will unlock the doors to a happier life”. Thus, 5.8% of science high school students, 15.1% of Anatolian high school students and 21.3% of religious vocational high school students said that they perceived university as an instrument.

### **University as the Place of Socialising and Difference**

28 students (12.2%) produced 20 metaphors (12.4%) in this category. The metaphors of “paradise” ( $f=4$ ) and “the place where I will recognise myself” were prominent in this category. In this respect, F9 said, “it is like paradise because everybody is free”; F11 said, “it is like paradise because there are new friends, other people and other worlds there” and I23 said, “it is like the united nations because there are people of every type”. On the other hand, I27 said, “it is like a place where I will recognise myself because I will socialise and discover myself there”. Hence, 20.5% of science high school students, 8% of Anatolian high school students and 12% of religious vocational high school students described university as the place of socialising and difference.

### **University as Negativity**

In this category, 26 students (11.3%) produced 22 metaphors (13.6%). The metaphors of “high school” ( $f=2$ ), “farm” ( $f=2$ ) and “turnery” ( $f=2$ ) were remarkable in this category. The examination of students’ views demonstrated that F41 said, “it is like a high school because there are courses and courses, I got tired of it”; A35 said, “it is like waste of time because I enter business life very late”; F40 said, “it is like a farm because we are forced to get the job that the owners of the farm want us to get”. F39 said, “it is like turnery because it is the place of raising uniform humans”. Thus, 14.7% of science high school students, 12.7% of Anatolian high school students and 6.6% of religious vocational high school students produced metaphors in this category.

### **University as the Process**

19 students (8.2%) stated their perceptions of university through 14 metaphors (8.6%) in this

category. The remarkable metaphors in this category were “life” ( $f=5$ ) and “the first step” ( $f=2$ ). In this respect, A34 said, “it is like life because it has an end” and I54 said, “it is life the first step because it will teach us how to walk, how to run and how to progress in life”. Thus, 10.2% of science high school students, 9.3% of Anatolian high school students and 5.3% of religious vocational high school students said that they perceived university as a process.

### **University as Uncertainty**

Only religious vocational high school students produced metaphors in this category. Accordingly, 3 students (1.3%) produced 2 metaphors (1.2%) reflecting their perceptions of university. They tried to describe university in the metaphors of “mirage” ( $f=2$ ) and “mango” ( $f=1$ ). According to I63, “university is like mirage because you think you see it but you can’t see it”. According to I1, “university is like mirage because I don’t know what it is like”.

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings obtained in this study which analysed high school final year students’ perceptions of the concept of university through metaphors indicated that there were several metaphors used in expressing the meaning associated by the concept of university. For instance while university contained positive meanings such as “freedom”, the one informing and developing”; it could also contain negative meanings such as “negativity” or “uncertainty”. On examining the students’ metaphors as a whole, it was found in this study that 229 metaphors were produced in total- which were then divided into 8 categories.

Meanings such as freedom, effects on the future, development by informing, the place of socialising and functioning as an instrument in attaining goals which were assigned to the concept of university made us think that students tended to perceive university as a positive concept. Apart from that, it was also found that some of the students referred to university like an element of negativity or uncertainty. The metaphors such as freedom, life and turning point- which were most frequently produced by the students- reflected the important and positive impressions about university. A review of relevant literature demonstrated that the studies of metaphors concerning the concept of university had been conducted with such different samples as high school students (Dinç Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013), prospective teachers (Koşar, 2016; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015; Uğurlu, 201) and university lecturers (Oyman & Şentürk, 2015). The fact that the students in the study performed by Altun and Uzuner (2017) perceived university as “career and centre of freedom and that the participants in Korkmaz and

Bağçeci (2013) perceived university as “the statement of freedom” supported the findings obtained in this current study. In addition to that it was found in some other studies that prospective teachers perceived university as variation and freedom (Koşar, 2016; Uğurlu, 2018) and as negativity (Oyman & Şentürk, 2015). These findings were consistent with the present study findings. This situation indicated that perceptions about university varied. The majority of high school students especially perceived university as the place of freedom, development, difference and socialising but a portion of them perceived university as an element of negativity. Although prospective teachers had positive perceptions about university, it was found as different from high school students’ views that they had more negative approaches towards university. High school students’ positive approaches towards university could be attributed to the fact that they had not had acquaintance with university environment yet; or to probable interest in, desire for or curiosity about university. In addition, the expectation of students to be more intensely involved in social and cultural opportunities since universities have a more flexible educational approach compared to high schools may have provided a positive perception. University students’ negative statements about university, on the other hand, might have stemmed from the fact that their expectations had not been met in terms of the quality of courses and human resources at university. In various studies on this subject, it has been determined that the local people of the location of the universities have a negative attitude towards university students (Yılmaz & Kaynak, 2011), that the young faculty members create a qualified education problem (Devecioğlu, 2015), and there are intense deficiencies in social environment, sports and accommodation services (Polat, 2011).

On examining the metaphorical perceptions of the concept of university according to types of schools, it was found that there were positive approaches in general. Yet, it was remarkable that there were differences in some categories. For example, the proportion of science high school students’ describing university as “the place of socialising and difference” was remarkable when compared to the proportions for the students of the other types of schools. The reason for having high proportions in this category might be the insufficient time science high school students allocated to social life due to high achievement expectations of those students and due to their study tempo, and their desire to make up for the lack of social life at university. Besides, perceiving university as an element of “negativity” might have stemmed from the improvement in students critical approach. Eraslan Çapan (2010) found that the children who are described as gifted are creative, can look at event from a different perspective and are versatile. Students having these properties can be presumed to have stronger in aspects of criticism. It was found

that some of the studies labelled science high school students as gifted (Ataman, 2008; Ciğerci, 2006; Koçak & İçmenoğlu, 2012).

Another finding obtained was that Anatolian religious vocational high school students perceived university in a more positive way than the other students. The rule of coefficient implemented in 1999 in university entrance examination victimised students who wished to choose university departments outside their area of education. The coefficient differences between types of high schools were reduced in 2010, and the practice of coefficient was ended in 2011 (Özdemir, 2010). This situation gave Anatolian religious vocational high school students the right to apply for the other areas in addition to the areas of their education in the process of transition into university without any loss of scores. The solution of coefficient problem can be considered as the reason for Anatolian religious vocational high school students' positive perceptions of university. Another reason could be the modifications made to Anatolian religious vocational high school curriculum in 2013. According to Korkmaz (2013), the numerical courses (mathematics, geometry, etc.) and science courses (physics, chemistry, etc.) which were not available as compulsory courses in the curriculum of the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades of those schools before the modifications caused disadvantages to the students of those schools. Mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics courses were added to the curriculum beginning with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2013 with the modifications made by the board of education. This raised the academic proficiency and motivation of those students and increased the importance of university for students to achieve success and to shape their future. Besides, adding various academic courses to the curriculum may show that imam-hatip students develop a positive perception towards the university. Various studies have shown that the vast majority of these students have the willingness to go to university (Dikbıyık, 2016; Karateke, 2020).

In conclusion, this study obtained basically two findings: First, the majority of high school final year students considered university as freedom, as an institution in shaping the future and in personal development, as a key unlocking the doors of a more qualified life, and as the centre of socialising containing differences in it. These views indicated that the high school final year students had positive attitudes towards university. Second, they also had negative perceptions of university. Especially the fact that the students having well-quality education had high negative perceptions requires that we should think about it.

Accordingly, it may be recommended that similar studies should be performed again. The studies to be performed could be conducted with more types of high schools and with the participation of greater number of students. Another recommendation could be that views about university

could be analysed in-depth through interviews with high school students and through focus-group approaches. Additionally, metaphors such as “games of hunger”, “meaningless”, “time spent in vein”, “unemployment”, “farm”, “turnery” and “insincerity” used by high school students to describe their negative thoughts about university can also be considered as a criticism of the educational system and of university administration and organisation. It may be recommended that policy-makers should put more realistic and more feasible approaches into practice so as to remove or to diminish the hitches mentioned.

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