

The Dream School: Exploring Children's Views About Schools

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Abstract

Children should have a say in matters that concern them such as the characteristics of their learning environments, and their imaginations can be used when designing these environments. This study aimed at revealing the dream school characteristics of children attending kindergarten classes and primary school, and was designed as a case study. The study group consisted of 5 to 10 years old children from three schools with different socio-economic status. In the data collection process, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the children about the characteristics of their dream school. In addition to this, they were requested to draw pictures of these schools and a second interview was held for these drawings. Findings showed that children had fantastic and creative dreams as well as dreams about the socio-emotional and physical environments of the schools. These findings were presented comparatively according to school level. Taking these findings into account, the characteristics of the dream school are important in terms of changing and transforming the ongoing school systems. This way, the basis for creating learning environments designed according to children's interests and needs will be provided and the children will feel better and feel that they belong to these environments.

Keywords: Dream School, Children, Views, Learning Environment.

DOI: 10.29329/ijpe.2022.459.7

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INTRODUCTION

It can not be ignored that children's perspectives are as valuable as the perspectives of the teachers and school administrators to understand the realities of education and training processes in the school. Children participate to school at a basic level by enrolling and/or continuing their education. However, the concept of child participation is a broader expression that means they are respected and valued as a member of the community (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Reasons such as adults' defining and controlling the mechanisms for children's participation in school and the issues they make decisions set a limit for the words children can say and result in slight progress towards student participation (Jones, 2017). Kostenius (2011) states that despite all legal regulations of national institutions, the psychological health and well-being of school-age children are declining and there are problems in the ethical values of a school system where children are allowed to express themselves, but their opinions are not taken into account in the decision-making process. The children are one of the important elements of the psychosocial environment in schools and the idea that children's participation in issues related to them at school benefits them to develop their good relations with their teachers and their learning experiences is increasingly accepted.

Children's imaginations should be used in the design of schools, the obstacles to their dreams should be discussed with them, and their right to dream and fight for their dreams should be emphasized (Freire, 2005/2019). Their opinions should be asked and taken into account for the development of schools. Participation of students in research processes on school development creates a mutual win-win situation in terms of both the establishment of positive and respectful school culture and the ability of students to actively influence their own lives (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2009). Students who have the opportunity to participate in the research process can reveal what works well in schools or what can be improved by reflecting on school practices and taking action. A study aiming at reconstructing schools that provide the skills and qualifications students will need in the 21st century, both in terms of physical and educational experiences, shows that there can be wide-ranging discussions between students and adults about the future visions of schools. The students constitute an important part of the study process by sharing their dreams for the schools of the future. In some studies, it was determined that they valued large, bright, modern, and well-maintained places with sufficient resources, and established a link between positive learning environments and positive behaviors (Frost & Holden, 2008).

In recent years, there has been an increase in studies that reveal findings of the characteristics of an "ideal school" for children rather than studies describing children's opinions on learning environments see (Bland, 2010, 2012; Flutter, 2006; Frost & Holden, 2008; Kangas, 2010; Kostenius, 2011; Simmons, Graham & Thomas, 2015; Valentim & Freire, 2019). In studies carried out on the "ideal school" phenomenon, children were asked to write stories (Kangas, 2010) or draw pictures (Bland, 2010, 2012; Kostenius, 2011) and interviews were arranged with children. However, schools serve as a learning and socializing environment for children, and it can be said that there is a need for studies revealing the characteristics of their dream schools or the school in which children can be happy by going beyond just describing the perceptions/opinions of children towards schools. Such studies are still limited (see Aktürk Çopur, 2017; Aydoğdu, 2008; Döş, 2013; Ekiz & Gülay, 2018; Güneş, Çakıcı Güneş & Akman, 2016; Özdemir & Akkaya, 2013; Türkmen, 2014). This indicates that more studies are required in Turkish literature to describe the dream schools of children. By referring to and considering the findings obtained as a result of describing the dream schools of children, a basis will be provided for changing, transforming, and designing the ongoing school systems according to children's interests and needs. This way, an important contribution will be made to the literature at both the national and international levels. In addition to these contributions, this study aimed at enabling the children attending primary school and kindergarten classes to describe the characteristics of the school in their dreams. In line with this aim, it was ensured that the participants of this study consisted of the students of three public schools located in regions with different characteristics. It was considered that this study would make an important contribution to the literature in terms of revealing to what extent the dreams of children living in different parts of the same city differed, as well as the width of the age scale of the study group. Another strength of this study was that the children were

requested to make a drawing of their dream school and a face-to-face interview was held with the children about these drawings in addition to the first face-to-face interviews. In addition to providing data richness in terms of the diversity of the data obtained, this also enabled the use of “child-friendly methods” to communicate with children. The perspective of recognizing that children are similar to adults but have different competencies than adults (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998) draws attention to the necessity of using child-friendly methods. Detailed information on the method, data collection process, and data analysis of this study is presented under the “Methodology” section.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at revealing the dream school characteristics of children attending kindergarten classes and primary school, and was designed as a case study. Creswell (2013/2016) defines the case study as a qualitative approach where researchers collect in-depth information about one or more current limited systems in real life with multiple sources of information at a certain time. The analysis unit of this study consisted of students at the basic education level. This study was designed as a nested multi-case pattern (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) as the data was collected from three different schools differing socio-economically.

Context and Participants

The study group was determined by purposeful sampling method as “it focused on information-rich situations that would shed light on the research questions” (Patton, 2014, p. 230). The maximum diversity sampling method was used to reflect different perspectives on the desired situation. The aim of providing diversity in this method is not to generalize to the universe, but to try to find similarities or differences between situations. In line with this aim, kindergarten class and primary school students from three schools (Çankaya, Etimesgut, and Altındağ districts of Ankara province, Turkey) differing in socio-economic terms and with different development levels were included in this study. The ages of the participants ranged from 5 to 10. The names of the schools were coded as *Blue*, *Red*, and *Green* for ethical reasons. A total of 61 children (19 from Blue school, 16 from Red school, and 26 from Green school) who met the determined criteria participated in this study. Detailed information about the schools was provided below.

Blue School (low level)

The Blue school continues its education activities on a full-time basis with 174 students, 12 teachers, one school principal, one assistant school principal, two cleaning personnel, and one security personnel. It is a school attended by children of families with low socioeconomic levels or irregular income in Altındağ district. The school has a drama hall, library, laboratory, and music class. The open area of the school is around two decares and consists mostly of asphalt ground. There is a container used as a painting workshop in the garden as well as some trees. There are football goals without net and basketball hoops as playground in the school garden. On the garden floor of the three-floored Blue school, there are lines drawn for various plays (such as lines for hopscotch). The school garden is surrounded by high walls and iron bars.

Red School (medium level)

The Red school continues its education activities on a full-time basis with 621 students, 42 teachers, one school principal, one assistant school principal, five temporary personnel, one officer, and one security personnel. It is a school attended by children of families with medium socioeconomic levels in the Etimesgut district. The school has 34 classrooms, 8 workshops (visual arts, wood design, mind games, mathematics, science and technology, sports and physical activities, and life skills workshops), an informatics class, a library, a music class, two indoor sports halls, a conference hall, and a cafeteria. The school building is a three-floored building and the school occupies around eight decares of area. This school is a high-level school in terms of its physical

facilities and competencies compared to other schools. There are slide, teeter-totter, and basketball hoops in the school garden. There is also a soft ground playground in this school.

Green School (high level)

The Green school continues its education activities on a full-time basis with 538 students, 31 teachers, one school principal, one assistant school principal, five temporary personnel, and one officer. It is a school attended by the children of families with high socio-economic status in the Çankaya district. The school has two buildings. Grades 1 and 4 study in the first building while grades 2 and 3 in the second building. The first building was constructed in 1992. This building has 10 classrooms, two kindergarten classes, a library, a science and technology laboratory, and a closed area where sports equipment and tools are kept. The second building was constructed in 2000. This building has 6 classrooms, one counseling room, and one multi-purpose conference hall. There are a canteen and a dining hall in the basement of both buildings. The road connecting both school buildings and the school environment is located in a natural wooded grove. The garden area is about five and a half decares. Both buildings have volleyball courts and are surrounded by walls and wires.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before the data collection process, the legal permissions were obtained to conduct this study. After obtaining the institutional permissions, consent forms were obtained from both children and parents as the participants were under the age of 18. The data collection process consisted of two stages. In the first stage, face-to-face interviews were held with the children and, in the second stage, interviews were held again on the pictures drawn by the children. In the face-to-face interviews, semi-structured interview questions were used to determine children's views on their dream school. The researchers conducted a literature review to determine the interview questions and created a basic question in parallel with the aim of this study. Four researchers came together in this regard and agreed on the following research question: *"I want you to imagine a school. How would you like this school to be?"*. The reason for choosing this question is that this question serves the aim of the study the most. The questions were shaped and deepened according to the answers obtained from the children. To provide an in-depth understanding, the data obtained from the interviews were supported by the drawings of students about their dream schools. At this stage, the children were asked the following question: *"Can you draw a picture of your dream school?"*.

The data were collected in the January and February months of the 2019-2020 academic year. A total of 61 students were interviewed from each grade level of three different schools (preschool, primary school 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades). The interviews were held in a silent place of the school (such as an empty classroom, workplace, and hall) and each interview lasted around 15 minutes. Two weeks after the interviews, the same children were gathered together and asked to draw a picture of their dream schools. At this stage, various materials such as colored pencils, paints, and paper used were provided by the researchers. Two students could not participate in the drawing stage of this study as they were not present at the school on that day. Thus, 59 children participated in this dimension. The children were provided about 30 minutes to draw their dream school and the researchers were with the children during this time. Students were allowed to sit alone and away from each other to prevent them from being influenced by each other. After the drawings were completed, each student was interviewed face to face about his/her drawing. The second semi-structured interview phase lasted about 15 minutes for each child. Questions such as *"Can you describe your drawing for me? / What are these? / Who are these people? / What are they doing?"* were used during these interviews. Although the drawings were great tools for children to express their imaginations, the interviews on the drawings were also an important opportunity for them to express their drawings in an explanatory way. Malchiodi (1998/2013) states that asking questions about the drawings will help to get more information from the details of the drawings. The interviews made in both stages of the data collection process were recorded with voice recorders to prevent data loss.

In the analysis of the data process, each researcher wrote down the data obtained from his/her interviews (interview questions and interviews with drawings) without any screening. Then, all the written data was shared with all the other researchers of this study and stored in three different files for three schools. The data from each school were kept together. The researchers analyzed the data they transcribed in two stages. In the first stage, each researcher created themes by bringing together common elements through induction after reading the data they collected thoroughly. In the second stage, the researchers gathered together and exchanged opinions. As a result, the researchers reached a consensus and three themes were created in terms of the elements in the dream school as *socio-emotional environment dreams*, *physical environment dreams*, and *fantastic-creative dreams*. Then, it was ensured that all researchers had access to the latest analysis and that each researcher could see each other's findings table. Thus, incompatibilities between coders were eliminated. The obtained findings were finalized for three schools and the schools were compared with each other in terms of the number of dreams (frequency) included in the themes. The same method in the analysis process of the responses to the interview questions was followed for the data obtained from the drawing interviews. In addition to this, elements that were included in the drawings of children but not expressed in the interviews were also added to the findings. A drawing representing each of the determined three themes was selected and presented in the Results section. Researchers' fields of expertise also came to the fore as a factor that significantly affected the validity of the study in the data collection and analysis process. In this regard, two of the researchers had teaching experiences at the primary school level, one researcher had expertise in the field of preschool education, and one researcher was studying in the field of visual arts. These factors were important in terms of effective communication with children during the research process and revealing the findings that would serve the purpose of this study during the data analysis stage.

RESULTS

In this study, it was attempted to reveal the feelings and opinions of children about the schools they imagined, and some themes were created as a result of the analysis of the data. In this regard, it was seen that children had fantastic and creative dreams as well as dreams about the socio-emotional and physical environments of schools. Findings regarding these three themes were presented below.

1. Theme: Dreams Regarding Socio-Emotional Environments

The findings of this study showed that there were factors related to the socio-emotional environment in the dream schools of children. It was seen that children included their friends, teachers, school principals, first-degree immediate family members, and people working in different professions in the social environments of their dream schools. Children did not only include people in the social environment of their schools but also imagined other living components such as plants and animals. In addition to this, they also shared the emotional states they felt in their dream schools. Children stated that the people they wanted to include in their dream schools the most were their friends and teachers in their current schools. It was also determined that children included family members such as parents as well as people working in different professions such as scientists, doctors, and pilots in their dream schools. It was determined that the emotion felt by the children the most in their dream schools was "happiness". The children imagined schools with flowers and fruit trees where they could feed animals such as cats, dogs, and rabbits.

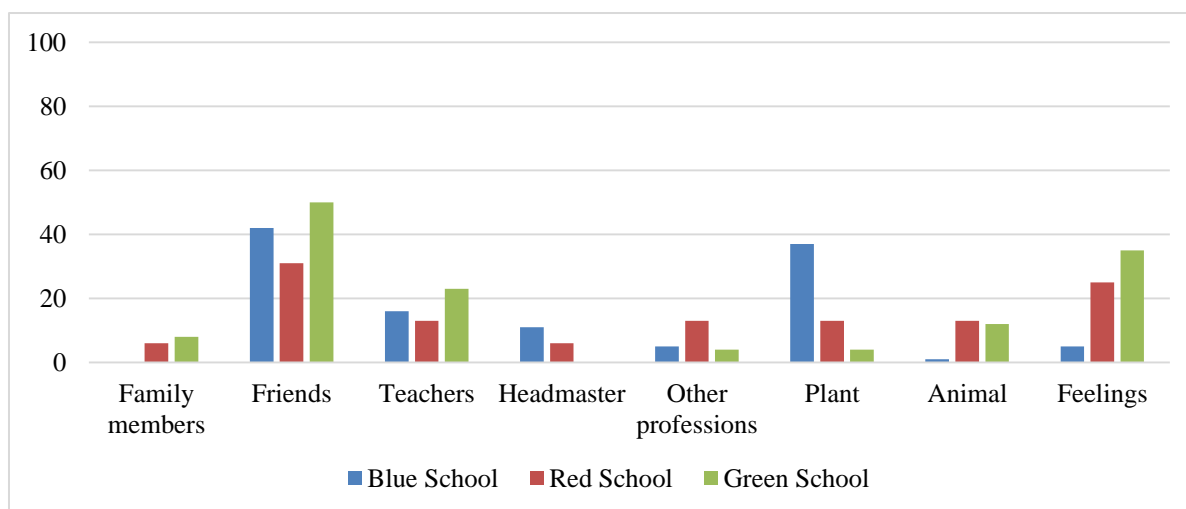


Figure 1 The Dream Findings Regarding the Socio-Emotional Environment

As can be seen in Figure 1, considering the current stakeholders, children in all three schools wanted their friends to be in their dream schools. In the Blue school, 42% of the children participating in this study wanted to see their friends, 16% wanted to see their teachers, and 11% wanted to see their school principals in their dream schools. Similarly, the percentages of the preferences of the children in the Red school were 31%, 13%, and 6% respectively. While the children participating in this study from the Green school did not include the school principal in their dream schools, 50% of the children wanted their current friends and 23% wanted their current teachers to be in their dream schools. A student attending kindergarten class at the Green school wanted her family members and the school principal at her dream school and expressed herself as follows:

“... I wish my father at school was the school principal. My mother, me, my sister, and my friends are at school. There are students from 3-B class.”

31% of the children participating in this study from the Blue school used herbal elements such as flowers and fruit trees in their dream schools. However, it was observed that these children either did not include family members, animals, and feelings they felt or they included them with low percentages. On the other hand, children in the Red and Green schools stated that they wanted to see more animals in their dream schools unlike the children in the Blue school. In addition to this, 35% of the children participating in this study from the Green school and 25% of the children from the Red school expressed their feelings in their dream schools with words such as “being happy, liking, having fun, being trouble-free”. The drawing made by a student attending the 4th grade at the Green school was presented in Visual 1 as an example drawing. This drawing included findings related to the socio-emotional environment of the school. In the drawing and the interview made after the drawing, it was determined that the child’s dream school contained happy friends, animals (cat and birds), a sunny sky, and colorful elements (curtains, door, and roof). The name of the school written on the roof can be translated as “Animal Garden Primary School”.



Visual 1 The Drawing Regarding the Socio-Emotional Environment of the School

2.Theme: Dreams Regarding Physical Environments

Analysis of the data demonstrated that children’s dreams were concentrated on the physical environment of the schools. Therefore, three sub-themes were created under the physical environment theme as “school areas, sports areas, and materials”. The distribution of these findings according to schools was presented in Figure 2.

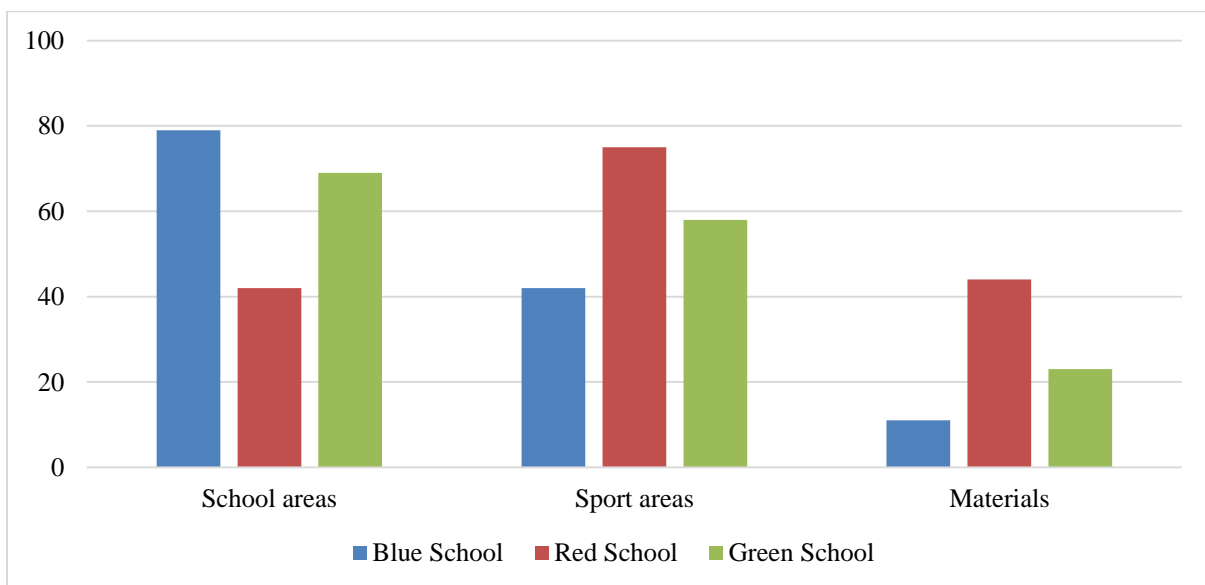


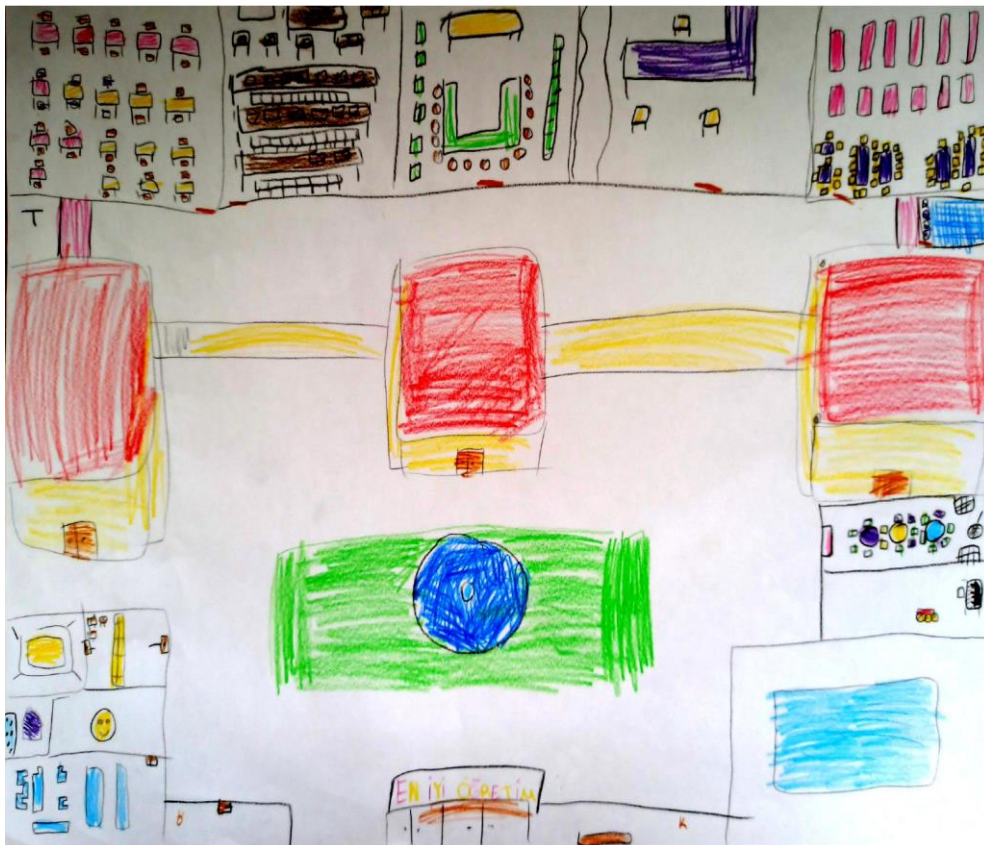
Figure 2 The Dream Findings Regarding the Physical Environment

Figure 2 shows that the dreams of children attending the Blue and Green schools were mostly gathered under the school areas sub-theme while the dreams of children attending the Red school were mostly gathered under the sports areas sub-theme. This similarity determined in the Blue and Green schools also appeared in the order of the sub-themes. In other words, the frequency of the sub-themes

were school areas, sports areas, and materials from high to low respectively for both schools. It was observed that the areas that children wanted to have in their *school areas* were mostly workplaces such as visual arts, music, drama, ceramic, design, wood, and toy class and they imagined a cinema hall, a theater stage, a playground, a museum belonging to the school, a laboratory, an agricultural area, and a dining hall. Another area that children imagined the most was sports areas. In this regard, it was determined that the children imagined sports areas such as football ground, basketball court, handball court, volleyball court, playground, tennis court, gymnasium, swimming pool, ice rink, indoor sports hall and cycling areas although some children imagined only the larger sizes of the existing areas in their schools. Students also imagined *materials* affecting the physical environment. In this regard, it was observed that children imagined individual lockers, toys, smart boards, televisions, recycling bins, puppets, chess games, lego, kitchen tools, bean bag chairs, rocking chairs, and garden toys to be used in the garden. A student attending kindergarten class at the Green school described the materials he wanted to have in his dream school as follows:

“...I wished there were lots of cardboard. Making a model house is a very fun thing. I want all the statues to be gray, with gold ornaments on them. I would like to have a bike and ball...”

Considering the drawings and interviews about these drawings, the drawing made by a female student attending the 3rd grade at the Green school was presented in Visual 2 as an example. This drawing included findings related to the physical environment of the school. In the drawing and the interview made after the drawing, it was determined that her dream school had three buildings connected to each other by corridors. There were an ornamental pool and swimming pool in front of the school building, a music class with a piano, and an indoor basketball court. In the upper left side of the drawing, there were dining halls and classrooms with different layouts (such as U layout, cluster/group layout) drawn side by side.



Visual 2 The Drawing Regarding the Physical Environment of the School

3. Theme: Fantastic and Creative Dreams

When the feelings and opinions of children on their dream schools were examined, it was determined that their imagination was related to unreal (fantastic), unproducible, non-functional or non-existent at schools but likely to be found and unusual/different, and problem-solving practices. The distribution of these findings according to schools was presented in Figure 3.

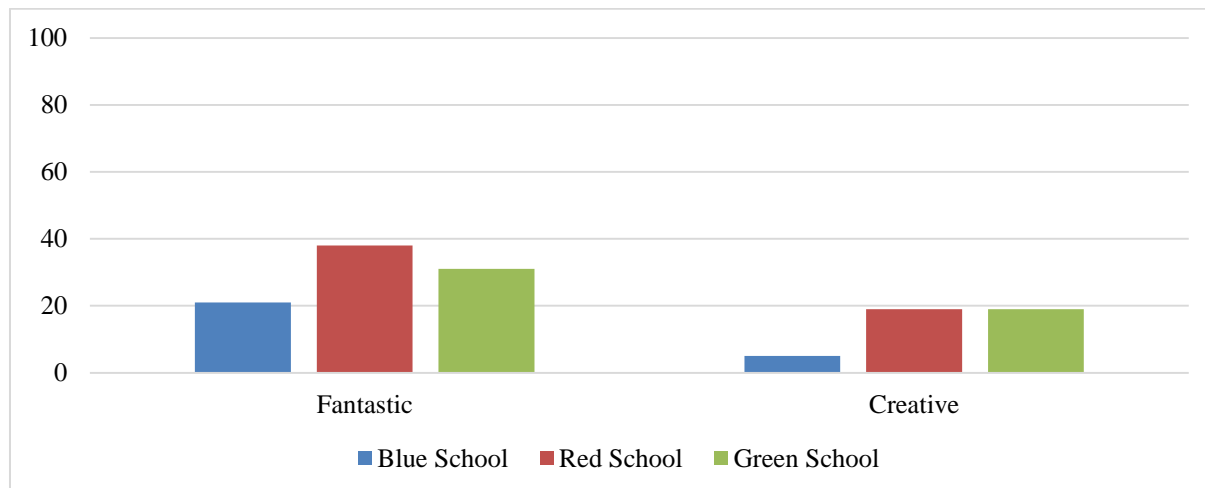


Figure 3 Fantastic and Creative Dream Findings

Figure 3 demonstrated that the fantastic dreams of children were more than their creative dreams. Most of the fantastic findings were about superheroes (like Spiderman) and space. It was seen that the children imagined lecturing robot boards, rockets belonging to the school, spaceship, teleportation device, slides instead of stairs, golf courts, and a school flying with balloons as well as imagining some food and beverages (such as unlimited/never-ending candies and fruit milk). It was determined that shorter lesson times (e.g., 20 minutes), longer breaks, being able to go to school in the evening, having constant music at the school, reading poems, and having party rooms and golf courses were among the creative dreams of the children participating in this study. In Figure 3, it can be seen that the children attending the Blue school expressed fewer dreams about both fantastic and creative dreams than the children attending the Green and Red schools. The students attending the Blue school expressed only a few creative dreams. Considering the Red and Green schools, it was determined that these schools expressed dreams in close proportions (38% and 31%, respectively) in terms of the fantastic dreams while they had equal proportions in terms of the creative dreams (19%). A creative dream was presented here to represent the opinions of the children. A student attending the 4th grade at the Red school described his drawing as follows:

“This school is also open in the evenings. There are football matches in the garden in the evenings. Everyone in the neighborhood comes to watch these matches”.

Considering the drawings and interviews about these drawings, the drawing made by a male student attending the 2nd grade at the Red school was presented in Visual 3 as an example. This drawing included findings related to the fantastic dream. In the drawing and the interview made after the drawing, it was determined that there were many fantastic elements in his dream school. As can be seen in the visual, the school is a spaceship that travels to the future and the school has a garden, basketball court, swimming pool, fuel tank, and a bus. Students and teachers wear astronaut suits at the school. During the interview, the child mentioned that this school, which was a spaceship, returned to earth when the lessons were over.



Visual 3 The Drawing Representing the Fantastic Dreams about the School

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed at enabling the children attending primary school and kindergarten classes to describe the characteristics of the school in their dreams. The Ministry of National Education Republic of Turkey (2020) defines the school as physical and virtual spaces where educational activities are carried out. In the literature, there are many studies demonstrating that the school is more than a place and that it is important in the lives of students in social and emotional aspects besides its influence on academic success (e.g., Calp, 2020; Cristóvão, Candeias & Verdasca, 2020; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011; Kangas & Cook, 2020; Kostenius, 2011; McNally, Darmody & Quigley, 2019; Nedelcu, 2013; Rahim & Fauziah, 2016; Shala, 2013; Simmons, Graham & Thomas, 2015). Studies revealing the dreams of children attending schools about their schools will demonstrate and guide us what is missing or wrong in the existing schools. Duffy (2006) states that we can learn what children know about the world, what they care about, and how they choose to represent them by examining their imaginary expressions. The schools serve as learning centers for the children. Therefore, children's expressing their feelings and opinions about their schools may affect their sense of belonging and make them feel cared for.

The findings obtained as a result of the interviews with the children and the school drawings of the children were included under three themes (see Findings). The most basic finding of this study is that the schools need to be organized in a way to meet the social, emotional, and entertainment needs of students. In a study conducted by Piispanen (2008) it was stated that students' opinions on their learning environments (school, classroom, etc.) differ from those of teachers and parents. However, with this study, it was seen that students, like parents and teachers, cared about the social and psychological value of the school. As Kershner and Pointon (2000) point out, children can explain their perceptions of the classroom environment with social concepts (getting along with each other), emotional concepts (being safe and confident), their tasks (needing to concentrate), or learning (remembering, understanding, and developing ideas). For example, when the dream schools of children are examined in terms of the socio-emotional environment (see Fig. 1), it can be seen that the most desired figure in all three schools is friends. This finding shows that the school is not only a learning-teaching center but also a socialization center. This also supports the socio-cultural perspective arguing that learning takes place in interaction. The finding that they include not only their friends but also many other individuals (family members, teachers, principals, doctors, security

personnel, etc.), plants, and animals in their dreams support the socialization of children in schools. According to Friesen (2010), animal-supported programs are becoming increasingly popular in schools and therapeutic environments. Many studies (Herzog, 2011; Macauley & Gutierrez, 2004; Walsh, 2009) indicate that such environments will be a socially and emotionally supportive environment for children.

In this study, it was a remarkable finding that none of the children in the Blue School (socioeconomically low level) imagined family members in their dream schools. The reasons for this can be considered as the characteristics such as the economic situation and education level of the families. Sarpkaya (2007) states that various characteristics such as family, social values, and opportunities influence student behavior and are important components of school discipline. Bourdieu and Passeron (1970/2015) state that the source of success-failure, preferences, and positive-negative behaviors in education is mostly family. Therefore, it can be said that the family, which has such an important position, is not included in the dream schools of the children attending the Blue school and that the children consider the situation about their families as a disadvantage and do not include this in their dreams. Similarly, it was determined that children attending the Blue school either did not include the animals and their emotions or they included them rarely. Findings from the other two schools demonstrated that there were situations that created positive emotions such as happiness, enjoyment, fun, and trouble-freeness about the socio-emotional environment of the dream schools. In a study conducted by Calp (2020) the children described a happy and peaceful school as “a fun and quiet place, where ideas are respected, where there is no fighting, where there are rules, where plays are allowed, where teachers are not scary, where responsibilities are fulfilled, and a decent and respected place”. In this regard, it can be concluded that the findings of these studies are in parallel with each other. Another interesting finding was determined in the Green school, which had many physical and financial resources. It was also determined that the children attending the Blue and Red schools included the school principal in their drawings while the children attending the Green school did not include the school principal in their drawings. In a study conducted by Sezer and Can (2020) it was determined that the students attached importance to the learning environment, school environment, and physical equipment for a “happy school”. The absence of school administrators among these priorities was in parallel with the findings of this study.

The findings of this study demonstrated that physical environments also played an important role in the dream schools of children. Studies in the literature (e.g., Flutter, 2006; Kangas, 2010; Martin & Murtagh, 2015; Piispanen, 2008; Ridgers et al., 2012) highlighted the importance of the physical spaces of the school for children’s physical activity needs such as play and sports. It can be said that children make their dreams based on their current needs and experiences. Saul (2001) calls this as *the normalization of imagination*. In other words, the things we need in our surroundings, in our streets, and in our schools enable us to enrich our imagination in balance with our logic and develop visions about what to be imagined and what can be. The findings of this study demonstrated that children highlighted the shortcomings of their existing order (e.g., a larger library, more playgrounds) or areas, people, and living creatures (such as art workshops, swimming pools, family members, plants) they wanted to have in their schools. The most important evidence supporting this theory was the current physical conditions of schools (see Context and Participants section). For example, it was determined that the children attending the Red school imagined *sports areas* the most. This could be related to the fact that the Red school had a small garden and the sports areas in the school garden were insufficient. Similarly, the children attending the Blue and Green schools mostly imagined *school areas*. This could result from the fact that the Blue school currently had very insufficient facilities and the two school buildings of the Green school were not close to each other (see Context and participants section). In addition to this, considering the items emerging as the sub-themes, it was seen that the children attending the Red school imagined materials the most. Currently, there are various design workshops in this school. It was considered that the children attending this school imagined more about materials than other children due to the material needs in their schools. In addition to these, one of the findings supporting this was that children imagined *larger areas* than the existing ones in their schools.

It was also determined that the dreams of the participants about the socio-emotional and physical environment of the school were more than their fantastic and creative dreams. Bland (2006, 2011, 2012) classifies imagination under four types (fantasy, creative, critical, and emphatic imagination) and this classification has a significant place in the literature. In this regard, only two of the four imagination types (fantasy and creative) were found in this study. Considering the findings of this study, very few data were obtained on creative imagination and it was determined that the children attending the Blue school did not dream creatively and they had very few dreams about fantastic imagination compared to other schools (see Figure 3). This supports the proposition that dreams are built on the basis of current needs and experiences (see Saul, 2001). It can be argued that this finding is significant evidence of inequality between schools that manifests itself even in children's dreams. It was mentioned that the creative dreams of the children aimed at solving the existing problems in the school (see Data collection and analysis section). In this regard, it can be concluded that children regarded lesson and break times, the school's not being open in the evenings, the lack of sufficient space for artistic activities (such as music, poetry), and the school's not meeting their entertainment and sport's needs (party rooms, golf courses) as problems.

Considering the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the dreams of children about their schools were within the framework of their experiences in the current school conditions. This study demonstrated that children needed a wide variety of spaces, workshops, and materials for both physical activities and their academic development in their dream schools regardless of their socio-economic conditions. In addition to this, the children described their schools as places where they socialized with their friends and other individuals. The children participating in this study suggested that schools should be a fun and happy environment, have an environmentally friendly environment with plants and animals, and sometimes include fantastic or creative elements. This study revealed that children had opinions about what characteristics schools should have in line with their needs and creativity, and emphasized the need for these ideas to be carefully and meticulously considered by the other stakeholders of the school.

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