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Research Article

## What Does It Mean To Be a Student in Different Types of High Schools in Turkey through the Eyes of Students?\*

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### Abstract

Being a student describes a multi-component reality with both individualistic and social inclusions. How this reality is established and how subjects position themselves in their current educational environments historically, culturally, and sociologically are one of the most controversial topics of educational sciences. Therefore, this study investigates what it means to be a student in different types of high schools in Turkey through students' eyes. This study was conducted using a phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs. Convenience sampling was used to determine which schools and which types of schools would take part in the study. Semi-structured, personal, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 96 eleventh graders from six different types of high schools (eight girls and eight boys from each type of high school: science, Anatolian, vocational and technical Anatolian, fine arts, social sciences, and Anatolian imam and preacher high schools) from the central districts of Ankara. The data was analyzed using the phenomenological analysis method in order to reach the core that turns different experiences into commonalities. The cores that were revealed as a result of the analysis were consolidated under two main themes: "who the students think they are" and "how they differ themselves from other students."

### Keywords

Phenomenology • High school types • High school student • Student experience • Educational sociology

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The notion of “student” does not correspond to a totally homogenous group in daily life when one considers such components as their interests, requirements, future expectations, socio-economic status, and environment. Being a student describes a multi-component reality with both individualistic and social inclusions. How this reality is established or how subjects are positioned historically, culturally, or sociologically in their current schools or educational environments is one of the most controversial topics of educational sciences. Nevertheless, the central problem in this research is what kind of interactions do students with different characteristics (positive attitudes, successful/unsuccessful, learning disabilities, etc.) have, rather than what it means to be a student. School, on one hand, forms a different base for one to establish being a student; on the other hand, school works in tandem with what is brought in from outside. In the most general sense, this research discusses the workings of the deliberation between school and student rather than the results of the deliberation. Accordingly, the research is intrinsically structured as an effort to discover how experiences are interpreted by students while investigating these experiences from different types of high schools.

While being a student and even years after graduation, the results of deliberations with school have closely influenced most of our lives. In other words, graduating from a science high school or graduating from a vocational high school might establish completely different social, cultural, and economic reference points when considering the experience of being a student. This shouldn’t be perceived as a broad and reductive argument, such as a science high school graduate is always more successful in life. Yet one shouldn’t naively ignore the prospective or current possibilities of being a student in a relatively good high school. The subject of what good school does or what it corresponds to has been addressed differently by various approaches. While some approaches have tried to address the characteristics of negotiating with a school in terms of its social function (social mobility), others have emphasized the processes of social reproduction (Tan, 1990).

Being a student has been discussed in the literature through three main axes: in-school factors, macro factors, and out-of-school factors. However, these discussions have mainly been based on the quality of being a student (successful, non-adaptive, positive attitudes, etc.) rather than greatly discussing being a student as an authenticating experience of the individual. In this sense, being a student has been evaluated as a phenomenon which starts and ends at school, or has been redefined in settings where educational activities are at stake such as with private teaching institutions or trainings. As a matter of fact, being a student is a social identity that manufactures its own social and cultural mythologies (student housing, student meals); it is an identity that directly addresses a very important part of most people’s life and thus is not built only at school. Moreover, having been a student at a certain

school doesn't lose its significance even after graduation. As a result, these three common axes have been discussed as follows.

When examining studies through the first axis (in-school factors), one can see that they have mainly focused on relationships that students establish with other students, with teachers, and with school administrators, or they have focused on notions such as commitment, belonging, engagement, and so on. For instance, in their study on commitment, [Burke and Retitzes \(1991\)](#) revealed that how students' identities were perceived by others was more influential than being successful with regard to undergraduate students' feeling of commitment to their school. [Osterman \(2000\)](#) reviewed research on the sense of school belonging and expressed that gaining recognition at school had a positive effect on students' emotions related to school belonging but that schools didn't sufficiently take students' need to be a part of society into consideration. In their study based on flow theory in terms of the notion of engagement, [Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff \(2003\)](#) concluded that high school students' level of engagement increased when their perception of a tasks' challenge and their own skills were at a high level and balanced, when the instruction was relevant, when the learning environment was under their control, and when they were engaged in individual and group work. In her study focusing on teacher-student relationships, [Berstein-Yamashiro \(2004\)](#) revealed that a positive relationship between teachers and students is a vital component in the success of the learning and teaching process. [McKillip, Godfrey, and Rawls \(2012\)](#) stated that the relationships that high school students developed with each other, with their teachers, and with school administrators had an essential role in the creation of school culture and that the establishment of positive relations at school had a positive effect on the learning process after high school. When considering in-school factors, studies in Turkey have been observed to also focus on notions such as in-school relationships, school membership, engagement, and so on. For instance, in a study ([Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı \[MEB\], 2011](#)) conducted by the Ministry of National Education, high school students' opinions, values, and family relationships were examined in relation to the education system. In their study on classroom engagement, [Sever, Ulubey, Toraman, and Türe \(2014\)](#) indicated that female students who considered themselves successful and had a positive attitude towards school had had a higher level of classroom engagement. [Sarı \(2013\)](#), in her study about school membership, stated that students' school membership differed depending on grade level, academic success, and socio-economic status.

Research on macro factors, this study's second axis, has investigated how social structures such as social class, gender, and so forth interact with schools and students. After the 1980's, researchers gravitated towards studies that aimed to reveal how schools reproduced social inequality. Even though education has been accepted as

having a significant function in providing individuals with equal opportunities, it has also been suggested to serve, justify, and sustain more profound and structural inequalities (Weis & Fine, 2004). Studying the effects of high schools on the reproduction of social classes, Fine et al. (2004) observed that even though high schools didn't have this specific function, they did serve this aim as well. The way schools reproduce social inequality can also be found in the study of Fox and Fine (2013). In their study, neo-liberal social policies in New York were observed to increase inequalities, cause more discrimination, and lower the graduation rates of deprived students as a result. In his ethnographic research conducted on five primary schools with different socio-economic statuses, Anyon (1980) made a social class analysis and revealed that hidden curriculum shaped the experiences of students. Kerckhoff (1995), who also mentioned the link between educational institutions and the production of social classes, emphasized that the opportunities individuals have at their secondary education institution designated the opportunities they would have in their higher education institutions. Through that study, one can see that educational experiences, especially secondary education, are a significant and determining factor for the future learning experiences and socio-economic status of an individual (both due to the hierarchical status of the institution and the future opportunities it provides through the learning experience). In Turkey, there are different cultural structures, and although standard educational programs exist in every region, some regions have conducted special studies to increase student engagement in education. The educational outcomes of these studies have mainly involved literacy and the higher participation of female students in education (Can, Deşdemir, & Öncül, 2012; Demirdirek & Şener, 2014; Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü [KGSM], 2008). In Turkey, there have also been a limited number of macro-factored studies on social structure regulations and educational policies, investigations into whether social classes are reproduced through schools, or descriptive studies on the effects of social structure in schools (Aksoy, Özden-Aras, Çankaya, & Kayahan-Karakul, 2011; Kurul, 2012).

Some of the research that addresses being a student within the macro-factor context has focused on the role of gender upon the student construct. Recent research has been based mostly on structuralist or post-structuralist theory. Researchers with a structuralist point of view have underlined the school's function in reproducing traditional gender roles. These researchers have examined how the reproduction process had been organized at schools within the context of the relationships and intersections between gender, social class, and macro factors while trying to reveal how gender roles were reproduced. For instance, radical feminists such as Delamont (1980) and Mahony (1985) asserted that just like in society, a male-dominant culture has been established at schools, that male values have been boosted, and that through this, gender inequalities have been reproduced. Researchers with a Marxist or socialist perspective such as Anyon (1983) and Arnot (2002) have focused

on the relation between gender and social class; they observed how schools had reproduced traditional gender roles and social classes through several mechanisms. Meanwhile, post-structuralist researchers argued that gender roles have not been fixed and that these rules have not been based solely on social structures. According to these researchers, boys and girls play an active role in schools in establishing their own gender by behaving in accordance with their gender roles or by resisting them (Davies, 1989; Davies & Banks, 1992; Francis, 2010; Jones, 1993; Walkerdine, 1989). For instance, Reay (2010) studied how girls had positioned themselves within the context of the schools' power relations and traditional gender roles in a primary school in London. In her study, she ascertained that the school had served as a means of teaching gender norms, and girls could play more than one role by positioning themselves differently in various situations. Similarly, Özkazanç and Sayılan (2008) researched how girls had constructed their feminine identity at a high school in Ankara within the context of a male dominant school culture; their research revealed the role of tension between adaptation and resistance strategies used by girls in a male dominant school culture as well as the role of their future academic expectations on the construction of feminine identity. In Turkey, research on gender in education has mostly been based upon a liberal point of view. This research also focuses on equal access to education by men and women, providing men and women equal education opportunities, and developing and implementing unbiased educational programs and learning materials with respect to gender for this purpose. Research that focuses on school culture, in-class relationships, students, teachers, administrators, and families from a gender context has been scarce.

The leading out-of-school factors, which form the third and final axis, are how students' families and environment in which they live are reflected in their interactions with school. When examining the literature from the perspective of social class, the relationship of school and family has been explained through the notions of social and cultural capital. A family's social class plays a crucial role in establishing social (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001) and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). School is one of the most important channels in conveying social (Chua, 2013; Edwards, Franklin, & Holland, 2003; Lai, Wong, & Feng, 2015; Morrow, 1999) and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2010; Martelele & Andrade, 2013) to new generations. In this respect, a family's cultural and social capital has been argued to have an impact on children's school choices. From another point of view, one can state that school-family interactions and values outside of school play an important role in a student's success in school and in finding authenticity (Al-Fayez, Ohaeri, & Gado, 2012; Ergün, 1994; Hoyle, O'Dwyer, & Chan, 2011; Parsons, 1964; March & Gaffney, 2010; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao-Yu, 1998; Shek, Leung, & Lu, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Additionally, according to the educational choice theory developed by Lean (1972), children of families with a fixed income can develop long-

term educational objectives (as cited in [Sönmez, 2000](#)). When looking at children's high school choices, parents have been known to be able to influence them, which can provide students with a more advantageous position in university placements ([Veeck, Flurry, & Jiang, 2003](#); [Wu, 2008](#)). Also, when parents' education levels are higher, children's approaches and attitudes towards education have been observed to change ([Çelenk, 2003](#); [Nathanson, Corcoran, & Baker-Smith, 2013](#); [Tezcan, 1997](#)). Yet studies in Turkey have revealed that when choosing a type of high school, students disregarded their own educational and vocational aspirations and expectations; they tried to please their parents by attempting to enter a profession that their parents would accept ([Cengiz, Titrek, & Akgün, 2007](#); [Sönmez, 2000](#)).

These three axes intersect within the context of several factors and students' future expectations. Research on how in-school factors relate to students' future expectations have revealed how components such as school experiences and social acceptance in school ([Israelashvili, 1997](#)), self-criticism ([Thompson & Zuroff, 2010](#)), self-confidence ([Iovu, 2014](#)), teacher support ([Hudley, Daoud, Polanco, Wright-Castro, & Hershberg, 2003](#); [Iovu, 2014](#)), peer relations ([Cunningham, Corprew, & Becker, 2009](#)), and so forth shape students' future expectations. In studies on macro factors related to future expectations, how socio-cultural variables affect students' career choices and objectives were examined ([Boxer, Goldstein, DeLorenzo, Savoy, & Mercado, 2011](#); [Gushue, 2006](#); [Malmberg, Ehrman, & Lithén, 2005](#)). Within the context of the relation between out-of-school factors and future expectations, there have also been studies that emphasize the parents' role in shaping future expectations ([Weis & Cipollone, 2013](#); [Weis, 2014](#)).

When reviewing the literature in Turkey, apart from discussions on being a student, one can also find studies that describe being a student in different types of high school through different variables. Some of these studies evaluated every high school type, while some compared different high school types in terms of various variables. For instance, different types of high schools were compared in terms of problem-solving skills ([Korkut, 2002](#)), attitudes toward different lessons ([Çelik & Ceylan, 2009](#); [Ekici & Hevedanlı, 2010](#)), academic success and motivation ([Kapıkıran & Özgüngör, 2009](#)), success on university entrance exams ([Berberoğlu & Kalender, 2005](#); [Köse, 1999](#)), and more. Some other research in the literature observed variables about university students according to the type of high school they had graduated from. For instance, there have been studies that focused on variables such as self-sufficiency belief levels ([Altunçekiç, Yaman, & Koray, 2005](#)), and prospective teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession who were studying at educational sciences faculties and had graduated from different types of high schools ([Tanel, Kaya-Şengören, & Tanel, 2007](#)). A review of the literature shows that profound, qualitatively structured studies have not been numerous in Turkey. As being a student has been explained

within the context of different types of high schools and from a framework of in-school factors, macro factors, and out-of-school factors, this qualitatively conducted study alternatively aims to add another dimension to studies within this field and to reach to the core that shows the commonalities of students' experiences regarding different high school types.

## Method

### Research Design

This study intends to reveal how students studying in six different types of high schools interpret school based on their own daily experiences. During this interpretation process, the students' lives were examined by inferring themes from them such as how they describe their school, how they differentiate themselves through the type of education they receive at school, and what good does school do them. Hence, the phenomenological approach was used as a research design during this study.

The phenomenological design is a frequently used approach in qualitative research. The philosophical and methodological foundations of the phenomenological approach are based on Husserl and Schutz. Husserl (1970), who had pioneered studies on phenomenology, suggested a philosophical approach with an effort to create a diagram that would classify and describe subjective experiences. As a theoretical successor of Husserl, Schutz approached phenomenology as the examination of inferences from personal experience, thus marking his contribution to its methodology. In other words, while Husserl (1970) stated that one could only know what one had experienced, Schutz saw the phenomenological approach as an effort to understand the details that lay beneath daily experiences (Goulding, 2002). The phenomenological design focuses on conscious experiences based upon individuals' daily lives and is used to reveal how these experiences are interpreted by individuals. Whether or not these experiences are based on popular beliefs, stereotypes, or academic theories is not important; the important thing is to emphasize the characteristics of the social situation that show themselves when one consciously uses existing knowledge to construct a "counter" or "extraordinary" situation (Burawoy, 1991). This study, which is based on the school lives of students who were receiving education at different types of high schools, intends to reveal the students' understanding of being a student from the framework of how they associate with their school and their life stories, how the variations in their schools function, and what good their school does them.

The aim of the phenomenological design is to find commonalities in how people perceive and interpret similar experiences. These commonalities can be stated as the core of their experiences (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In other words, in a study in which phenomenology is used as a research design, these commonalities

are the invariable core of experiences. “Core” here refers to the common ground of experience among people (Patton, 2002). Within this context, this study aims to reach the core of the different experiences of being a student in the various types of high schools or to reach that which changes the meaning of being a student.

### **Study Group**

In phenomenological studies, information is generated interpersonally, and individuals who participate in the research are an inseparable part of data creation. Hence, the characteristics of the participants and how they are assigned are important. When determining the school types and the schools that would take part in the study, convenience sampling, which is a sampling method used in qualitative researches based on ease of access, was used (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 2002). Within this scope, the six types of high schools (science, Anatolian, vocational and technical Anatolian, fine arts, social sciences, and Anatolian imam and preacher high schools) that form Ankara’s central districts were selected for research, and official permission from the Provincial Directorate for the National Education of Ankara and from the Ethics Committee of Ankara University was obtained. The study group consisted of 96 eleventh graders (eight girls and eight boys from each high school) that had continued their education at the selected high schools. With information from the school administration and counseling services, students were selected from among those who had volunteered.

### **Data Collection**

In-depth interviews are the main method of data collection in studies in which the phenomenological design has been adopted. In this study, qualitative interviews were made in order to reveal how the students inferred being a student from their own experience at the different types of high school. Interviews provide researchers with interaction and flexibility for revealing the experience and meaning of a phenomenon (Richards & Morse, 2007). Qualitative interviews are usually described as in-depth, semi-structured, or flexibly structured (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

**Data collection tool.** In semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepares interview questions and can rearrange these questions with limited flexibility to accommodate people (Creswell, 2005). In order to conduct semi-structured interviews, a set of questions is prepared for use during the interviews; the subject of the interview is allowed to answer with as much detail as desired, and the interviewer can explain the questions if necessary (Berg, 1998; Gay, 1996).

In this study, personal, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the volunteer students. In accordance with the phenomenological design, the

interview questions were prepared so as to explore the meanings that could be derived from the students' experiences in the different types of high schools and to reveal what such experiences mean for the individuals. While preparing these questions, a literature review was conducted. Following this, group studies with the participation of all researchers were performed and questions were pooled. From this pool, questions compatible with the aim of the research were selected and the interview form was generated. After an expert review of the interview form, the necessary edits were applied to the form. In order to determine whether the questions were comprehensible or not, a pilot study was conducted with a similar study group. The interview form took its final shape after the pilot study. The questions on the interview form were mainly about the students' families, place of residence, extra-curricular activities, how they had decided on their current school, their daily lives during and after school hours, their friends, their relationships with their teachers, and future expectations.

**Data collection process.** Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with the 96 students who had been selected from among the volunteer students chosen with permission from the Ankara Provincial Directorate for National Education. Two researchers were assigned for each high school and the interviews were conducted by a total of 12 people. Each researcher conducted eight interviews. Before the interviews, the students were informed through the informed consent form about the aim of the interview and the process; voice recorders were used upon their consent. Interviews took between 30 and 120 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed by an expert company. The transcribed interviews were analyzed by the researchers using the phenomenological coding technique. During the first phase of the analysis process, pre-coding (open coding) was made while studying interview texts. In the second phase, an axis was formed by matching interview questions with codes. In the third phase, definitive themes were stated within the context of the axis; the core, which defined the common points that differentiated the meaning of being a student in the various types of high schools, was revealed in the last phase. The research findings obtained from the data analysis were discussed while considering relevant research in the literature.

### **The Role of the Researchers**

In research that utilizes a phenomenological design, information is produced interpersonally; the researchers involved in the process of understanding the experience are an inseparable part of data creation. Within this context, the researchers' characteristics

and the way they approach this process are important (Creswell, 2005). The study was conducted in Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences by an assistant professor and 11 research assistants who were continuing their doctoral studies; it was supported by the Ankara University Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit. Theoretical background for the research design (phenomenology) and the study were prepared and implemented at schools after 18 months of weekly gatherings by the researchers who had been co-attending the classes of Social Theory, Qualitative Research Methods in Education, and Advanced Analysis Techniques in Qualitative Research.

As the researchers had different theoretical points of view through their studies in various fields such as educational sociology, curriculum studies, Turkish language education, fine arts education, psychological counseling and guidance, educational administration and policy, computer education and educational technologies, and foreign language education, the study was conducted through consensus.

The way that the relationship is established between the individuals whose experiences are at stake and the researcher who interprets these experiences is quite important during phenomenological researches. In this relationship, the researcher, who is aware of their own emotions and thoughts, is supposed to suppress their prejudices, assumptions, and beliefs (Creswell, 2005). As the researchers involved in this study had their own high school experiences and may have prejudices regarding the different types of high schools, several debates were conducted in order to allow for the researchers to discover these preconceived notions. Researchers participated in the field study with as much self-awareness as possible by keeping these debates in mind.

### **Validity and Reliability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (2013), research can be evaluated through the information it offers to the literature as long as this information can be confirmed by other researchers and the research that led to that information is apparent and consistent with respect to the process and results. Again, research is evaluated through its ability to propose a solution to problems faced in real life. This is the reason why researchers must provide evidence that proves their findings demonstrate authenticity, that confirms the results are valid in similar situations and settings, that demonstrates these findings are consistent with each other, and that shows the data has been acquired and revealed objectively (Patton, 2002). In order to ensure the credibility of this study, the researchers regularly gathered with the school administration, teachers, and students; they also engaged long-term with the socio-cultural structure of the school to know their characteristics. Additionally, in order to ensure triangulation, the semi-structured interviews were delivered by researchers from different fields, structured observations were conducted, and the school was photographed, all of which was presented at the group meetings. The participants were provided with detailed information on the research process by the

researchers and were clearly told that they could leave the research whenever they wanted (honesty in being informed); the group of volunteer participants was selected from those that had chosen to contribute to the research (Shenton, 2004).

In order to ensure transferability of the research, thick descriptions were made during the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Within this scope, the role of the researchers, how the participants were selected, the development of the data collection tool, and data collection and analysis were described in detail. In order to obtain trustworthy data (dependability), each researcher presented his/her coding to another researcher for supervision (Creswell, 2005). Secondary opinions were gathered in consideration of whether each code had described its meaning or not. In addition to this, the raw data and codes were archived so that they could be studied by other researchers. In order to ensure confirmability, each step of the study (data acquisition tools, analysis, and reporting) was clearly written by researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2013) and examined by the Ankara University Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit.

## Findings<sup>8</sup>

### Who Are We? Being a Student and Real Life Stories

In the narrations of the participating students, we witnessed various types of associations about where and how being a student intersected with their personal life stories. These association types bore the traces of in-school, macro, and out-of-school factors. Interestingly, while answering the question “Who are we?”, students from schools that were considered more prestigious tended to underline the happenings at school whereas students from other schools considered the subject from a wider perspective using macro processes. While students from the “more prestigious” schools mentioned issues such as books, student relationships, and achievements at school with a tone that was distinct from other high school types, students from the other schools emphasized their understanding of the cause and effects of their overall life concerns, such as choosing the high school, finding a job, university exams, and so forth. Within that sense, one can say that while students from the high schools of science or social sciences (the first group) made sense of their being a student through *processes*, students from the second group of high school types (Anatolian, vocational and technical Anatolian) made sense of their experiences from a “cause-and-effect” point of view. However, the definition of a prestigious high school shouldn’t be seen as a single, universally accepted definition. The term “prestigious” applies here because these high schools only accept students with high grades. Other high schools, especially the Anatolian imam and preachers high school, could also be qualified as prestigious for other reasons.

8 The code showing the owner of a quote has been identified with the acronym of the school type followed by the gender and the number assigned to that student. For each type of high school, male and female students were assigned numbers from 1 to 8. For example, FAHSM2 means the fine arts high school's second male student.

Striking narrations on the intersection of students' life stories with school were heard from the social sciences high school (SSHS) students. This intersection was related to personal characteristics such as a tendency towards social sciences, interests, and being political. Being a student at SSHS meant to be involved with what was going on at school. As mentioned above, keeping up with school processes is a pre-requisite for being an authentic and suitable social sciences high school student. Most of the students had established a relationship between their own tendencies with what school could provide. In other words, being a student at a SSHS means entering into a special territory composed of people with special qualifications.

Of course every person has a point of view. By every person, I mean there are those who are appreciated by everyone, those whose point of view stands out, and those who have thoughts but keep them in and say "this is how it is according to me." Then there are those who have nothing to do with the world, those who don't deserve to be a SSHS student. (SSHSM2)

It is possible to say that the emphasis is mostly on the expression "deserve" here. In this sense, having good scores was not enough to fit in. "Having a point of view" and "being interested in the world" were expressed as the prerequisites suitability. A common narration, especially among SSHS students, was that the schools had a clear vision as well as a good formation.

The school has a mission, a vision. My cousin studied here before me, which influenced me for sure. (SSHSF1)

Everyone carries a book for reading in addition to test books. Can you imagine? (SSHSF5)

Similarly, students from the science high school, which also accepted students with high scores, said that the school itself significantly established the differentiating aspects of being a student at a science high school. In other words, when describing themselves, the science high school students' stereotypical definition of others preceded school processes.

We hear it most of the time: "You're a science high school student." (SHSF1)

They care about each and every one of us; not every teacher does, but most do. It's both a good and bad thing, indeed. They really make us feel special, yet it also feels as if they are putting a huge responsibility on us. They expect us to be very successful. We all fear letting them down. But as I said, it's better than other schools. Besides, when there's a contest, for example, people ask whether we will attend or not; people expect us to. This honestly makes me proud. I think being acknowledged not personally but as a school is a good thing. (SHSF7)

Although they were being reminded of how special or different they were both in and out of school, this difference was not acknowledged by everyone. Even so, we observed

that “intelligence” had an important place in the narrations as an emphasis of distinction. For science high school students, studying in that particular school was not a contingency; they had already spent their life preparing to enter this school. Therefore, rather than an intersection, we can say that there was strong “continuity” in these narrations.

I know that I’m an intelligent person. I worked hard too. Because the profession I want to have is quantitative and not verbal, I decided to go to a science high school. (SHSM5)

Since primary school, I have been told to achieve the grades that were required for Ankara’s science high school. My objective has always been here. I studied accordingly for a long time. (SHSM5)

The Anatolian imam and preacher high school (IPHS) has a special place both because it is a hot topic on the political agenda and because it provides children with a religious education on top of other lessons. The students were aware of this situation and said that they had gotten involved in this debate from time to time. We observed a “conservative” family pattern with almost all narrations related to how the students had chosen that particular school. Therefore of all the high school types, the most apparent intersection between life stories and school was observed with the IPHS. Unlike students from the science high school, these students had generally decided to enroll in this high school as a last resort or had been guided to this school by their parents. Most of these students expressed that they had thought about other school options before deciding to enroll in this one. However, it is possible to say that the agenda of political debates has been reflected onto this school and that the students had consciously set what their expectations were from the school.

Let me consider it as the IPHS, then, not just as a school. According to me, it is a privilege to be a student here because we attend religious classes as well as other required courses. We have 16 hours of classes, more than what the others have. I think that is the privilege. It cultivates us both socially and educationally. (IPHSF1)

My first choice was ... AHS and the second choice was ... AHS; this was my third choice. My father supported me when I was deciding. This way I can have a good moral education and can contribute to the family. Taking into account that the president and the prime minister had graduated from this school, it was well received by my relatives. They always point out the popular people. It was my choice, but I did discuss it with my father. (IPHSM2)

Among all other school types, the Anatolian high school (AHS) was the one that contained the characteristics of all other school types. In a sense, AHS showed transition characteristics between schools that enrolled students with high scores and schools that enrolled students with low scores. According to the students, after all of the regular high schools had been turned into AHS, a wide range of schools came into existence and the gap between the best and the worst schools widened. Students expressed this

situation as a “loss of prestige.” For this reason, it was difficult to extract a narration at AHS about “Who are we?” The Anatolian high school was described with more pragmatic notions and as a place to graduate from to enter a university. When choosing this school, unlike the students from the science high school and SSSHS, AHS students had considered the distance of school from home, exam scores, teachers, and so on. Recommendations from older family members who had received an education when AHS was considered reputable significantly influenced their choices. This influence, in addition to some cases where students had made their school choice “by mistake, casually, or as a guarantee,” showed that they had not been consistent in their decisions.

My exam scores were enough to enroll in better high schools but this place is closer to home. Since I am a kid who has trouble waking up, it would have been impossible for me to get to school on time if I had chosen another school. They influenced me by telling me how close and good the school is and how qualified the education is. (AHSM1)

My older sister studied here. It is a very old school and is very close to my home. I chose it so that I wouldn't have a commute problem. (AHSM5)

The fact that they didn't have a special desire to study at either AHS or another school had an important influence on the choices of students who had preferred closer schools to avoid wasting time. According to these students, that they considered high school only as a step towards university and that they preferred a high school that was closer to home showed how AHS have lost prestige and how ordinary these schools have become.

Fine arts high school (FAHS) students defined their routine away from school within the context of their artistic identity and their practical experiences that evolved around this identity. These students, who had described artistic events as “getting involved with art” and embedded in their daily life, expressed a difference from students of other high school types. Students in these schools were aware that they could continue their education at that school because they were talented; thus they felt as part of a special group. Unlike other high school types, being accepted to the school because of a special talent exam made them feel talented and privileged.

I am glad to be a fine arts student. It's a good feeling to say I'm involved with art; it makes me proud. I'm happy that I do this and nothing else... Art is not something that everybody does and there is this happiness, this feeling of satisfaction because I'm in it and this is what I'll do in the future. (FAHSF7)

They know it's hard to be accepted into this school as it depends on talent, and I think there is something special about it. (FAHSM1)

Students who considered themselves privileged and talented in art saw FAHS as a step to being a conservatoire student and in particular thought that the education

they were receiving differed from other high school types. Within this context, students from FAHS thought they were ahead in terms of getting a job in their field of education and that they could realize themselves at this particular type of high school where they were free to be involved with art. Although these students' parents were concerned that the academic quality of education provided at FAHS would not be enough for the university exams, they had supported their children in their choices and considered this type of high school advantageous in terms of gaining social privilege and an artistic background.

I had never thought about where I would go if I couldn't go here. This place was my only objective. I had never even thought of an alternative. I feel more special as I am involved with music. (FAHSF6)

In the narrations of students from vocational and technical Anatolian high schools (VTHS), the central theme was having a profession. One important determinant for attending VTHS had tended to be due to academic failure. More importantly, the impact of students' social class was overwhelmingly observed at VTHS. Fear of unemployment was a basic stress not only for parents but also for children, and it had a direct influence on the decision of enrolling in VTHS. Of course the question here is that was this really a choice based on a decision? Most of the narrations showed us that VTHS was not actually a choice. However, it wouldn't be right to qualify this situation as the norm. A social class corresponding to a certain school is common for other high school types too. This correspondence could, however, be observed most strikingly at VTHS.

It was not my decision actually. I wanted to go to AHS. My family said that I wouldn't study hard at AHS and that I should have a profession. That's why they sent me to VTHS. My exam score was high enough for AHS. My parents influenced me, but it's just as well that I'm here. (VTHSM9)

I was very irresolute about my choice; I suffered a lot. Besides, I'm very emotional. I started to cry that I wouldn't be able to enroll or place in any school. My parents convinced me that food is a field with vast opportunities, which made sense. I researched the Food Technology and Food Analysis Departments, too. It really is something that I can do as a profession. I truly wanted a medical VTHS, but I thought that I wouldn't be successful in medicine. (VTHSF2)

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, we saw that students had made sense of their being students within two frameworks: process and causation. It is also important to state that there are connections between these two. If a school has an enhancing influence on peoples' opportunities in life and their social value (even if it is only considered to have this), what it means to be a student in a certain type of school is evaluated through the

school's processes. Thus, a proper basis for emphasizing the differences (which are mostly superiorities) has been formed. Yet when a school's prestige or success is not enough for a student to be measured as "special" on the social scales, the experience of being a student is seen to be made meaningful via causation and pragmatic approaches. This situation manifests itself mostly in narrations related to school choice. Considering this argument, the following section will discuss how the students differentiated themselves from others.

### **How We Differ from Others!**

When distinguishing themselves from students studying at other types of high schools, they talked about what awaited them in the future or the routine practices related to their school type. These school practices were sometimes presented as fixed characteristics of the school and independent of the student; other times they were presented as behavioral patterns that the students thought overlapped with their type of high school.

The most distinctive narration was that the lack of a school bell at some schools seemed to be the most important characteristic that differentiated some schools from others. This placed the students from these particular schools in a position separate from "being sheep." What was more striking was that the narration was common among the SSHS and science high schools. Both schools are ones that only accept students with higher grades.

When I first came to school I found it very interesting that there wasn't any school bell. Suddenly, this place looked like a university, and I liked it very much. (SSHSM5)

The thing I like about this place is as I said before: there is a free atmosphere here. For example, even the absence of a school bell is something very good. There is no bell when classes begin or end. The bell only rings when the school day starts at 8 a.m. We already arrive on time. Arriving late is rare. It's a really good thing that there's no bell to ring us in like sheep. (SHSF1)

Both SHS and SSHS students used the comparison of being like a university in their narrations:

The written examination systems are not like the ones in other high schools, so to be honest we feel as if we are studying at a university. This is why SHS graduates don't have any difficulty adapting to a university. (SHSF1)

The students from these high schools saw their school as a university due to the implementations at these schools: no bells to ring between classes, there's a campus, exams, laboratories, teacher behaviors, and more. Another commonality seen here is that both schools were considered to be free environments. Freedom here is discussed within the axis of freedom of thought, freedom to enter and exit from school, freedom of dress. Freedom is seen as one of the most distinctive factors for SSHS and SHS students.

We have never worn uniforms. We were free to wear whatever we wanted even before the regulation made it free. (SSHSM1)

We don't have security at our school, anyone can leave or enter school whenever they want; it's never a problem. I don't think that we are totally free, but compared to other schools, we have a certain level of freedom. We've never had a problem because everyone is aware of their own responsibility. (SSHSF7)

I think SHS has an environment that supports freedom of thought more than some other schools. People can think differently here. Our school tries to do that, too. In class, they produce thoughts with a logical order. When you look at the exam types, the questions, the way we have class, you can see that they are trying to create a mathematical way of thinking based on logic. (SHSM2)

The most important finding of the research can be deduced from this very point. These two school types are not only schools that accept students with the highest exam scores, but they are also the schools with the highest percentage of those who enter a university; they prepare these students for their "elite" social positions. In particular, SHS students' university concerns are also practically non-existent.

Everybody knows that education is good here; this is why my family is happy. They are pretty sure that I'll get enrolled in a good university after graduation, so they're happy too. (SHSM2)

I think the school is 93% successful at university entrance exams. All graduates go to a university and many of them to law schools. (SSHSM5)

This school type's practices aim to make students feel important and valuable, and students are aware of this. Students from these schools not only receive a good education, but they are also presented with social and physical chances in order to make them self-confident, responsible, free-thinking individuals open to a lifetime of learning and development; this is suitable for the prospective power positions they're expected to obtain in the future. Through school trips and visits from scientists and artists, these students are constantly being reminded of who they will become. In person, these students are more routinely involved in high level cognitive activities compared to the other types of high schools. Reading, which has an important place in the daily life experiences of these students, doesn't mean to read a lot or only to read about their own specific field. Because students prefer to read books related to their studies rather than popular books and because they explain this openly shows their tendency to avoid pop culture while demonstrating openly their elite attitude. As a way to support these kinds of efforts, these students focus on academic events and avoid physical activities such as sports events. The lack of a sports complex at the participating SSHS and the way students study other lessons during their physical education classes implicitly shows the expectation of an increased focus on academic events. Even though there were students with personal interests in sports, this was not a common narration.

When I began 6th grade, I told myself, “I’ll get involved in politics. I’ll be a representative. I want to be the prime minister. How will I do this, how will I be that?” I searched the various types of high schools. The SSHS had just opened in 2002 with one in İstanbul; then in 2004, another one opened in Ankara. There will only be 14 SSHS where perfect IB classes start. Ok, I’ll go to that one, I want SSHS... I’m sure that we’ll come to a good place; high-grades in the future because we came here to become leaders. We have come to this SSHS culture to change certain things. (SSHSM1)

To most people, those at our school study their lessons and do nothing but class work. That is not true, because people at our school have at least one thing to do in their spare time. For example, one of my best friends is writing a book. We play volleyball. We have semester concerts. I have a lot of friends who play musical instruments, and they stage a concert each semester. Indeed, this Thursday we have our records concert. (SHSF2)

For FAHS students, the situation seemed to be a little more complicated. While some of them had serious future concerns, others didn’t care that much. Although all students thought the main reason for being there was because they were talented, they didn’t share a common opinion as to what advantage that talent would bring them in the future. For this reason, university entrance exams were very important for the students in this group. They considered not having basic science lessons such as mathematic, physics, chemistry, as a very serious disadvantage. After starting school, this situation had turned into the main one which took up most of their time. Even so, the difference between this school type and other schools was mainly qualified through being talented.

Our school is different from other high school types because our school accepts 30 out of 300 people through the talent exams. (FAHSM3)

This is different from other types of high schools because it focuses on arts, compared to a science high school where they are good at mathematics and physics. Science high school students may not sing. This school is about being talented. We are here because we have artistic talents. (FAHSF3)

In the narrations, it was also emphasized that FAHS students were “people at ease”, which is different than other students’ narrations. Moreover, according to some students this manner of being calm was “beyond reasonable limits”. But the majority opinion pointed out that students’ being at ease was something positive.

The thing I like about the school is that there are a lot of different people. Think about it, sometimes I feel as if I’m the only normal being at school. There are too many weird people. There are many different people: with their clothing, their language, and their thoughts. (FAHSF1)

There is a difference here compared to other school types; here, people are more at ease.

Their expectations from life are more positive. They are not concerned about working or making money; they pursue a happier life, a more peaceful life. (FAHSF5)

Again, strikingly and contrary to our expectations, FAHS students stated that they were not free. This statement pointed to a major conflict in an institution which is supposed to educate “artist candidates”. The school attitude towards clothing was especially criticized. The future artistic identity that students wanted also created a wish to shape their future by commenting on their current school experience. Yet restrictions on such things at their school conflicted with their sense of freedom, a sense they wanted to transfer from their art to their school. The current problem here is that unlike SSHS and SHS students, FSHS students have a dress code.

We feel bored to death. This is an art school and we need to be free. At first glance, it’s a very simple school, not very different from others, but this school should have its own characteristics. We are very close with our teachers; we can talk about anything. The thing I don’t like about school is that it’s very oppressive, wearing uniforms, clothing restrictions. (FAHSF4)

Sometimes our thoughts are oppressed. When talking to the teacher or complaining, the teacher ends up saying “This is not the right place for this.” When criticizing a teacher, when listening to things they shouldn’t say to us, we feel restricted; like, what if they get angry, what if they send us for disciplinary action. (FAHSF3)

The narrations of the VTHS students expressed that their self-confidence was exactly opposite of that for the students from SHS and SSHS. Although a significant part of the students stated that it was an advantage to have a profession after graduation, they also announced that they might not be successful in the future due to various reasons such as “not being unable to perform, succeed, or understand”. As mentioned before, the correlation between social class and education could be seen most clearly among VTHS students. The most important thing to underline here is the hierarchy among VTHS students. Compared to others, some VTHS students had greater advantages in relation to their education and career opportunities. This can be observed in some of their narrations.

As this place offers vocational training, the male presence is dominating. Like I said, there is not much here. No differences or diversity. For example, choose 10 people and ask them. Eight out of 10 students’ fathers work at OSTIM. What do you say to that? Industrial region “What are you going to be?” “I’ll work with my father,” ... usually as a repairman. There’s a lot of those. I mean, when you ask 10 people here, 8 of them will say “I’ll work with my father” or “I’ll be a repairman like my father.” This is what I mean happens. (VTHSM7)

We have a guaranteed profession. Normally those who graduate with an associate degree can’t find a job. But as we are going to graduate as food technologists, we have a lot of job opportunities. Therefore we have job security. (VTHSF2)

When asked how they're different from students at other schools, some of the students mentioned having a "lower quality education" than other schools; one student interestingly justified the reason for that: Contrary to students from other schools, they considered the problem not to be the quality of the education, but to be about the self. However, the most emphasized issue was the advantage of having a profession. This advantage created a certain "at least my future is guaranteed" comfort zone for students.

I mean the same lessons are taught everywhere. This is how it is, but student understanding here is not the same as it is at SHS. That kind of difference is easily seen. For example, let me say something. We're told something. In general in this school, it takes longer for us to understand it. At SHS, the guy pre-studies at home and can understand the lesson. This is the only difference I see. (VTHSM7)

No matter how much students feel that their future is guaranteed, they frequently verbalize their concerns about what kind of a future awaits them to a certain degree. The striking manifestation from feeling "socially disposable" and the low future expectations born as a result of being positioned lower in the cognitive hierarchy were seen as a statement of despair in another student's narration. For VTHS students, the wish to enroll in a university was interpreted only as "deceiving oneself".

I studied in the food department willingly, but to be honest, I always wanted to study law. I don't think that I could have gotten the required score for a law school at the university exams. Some friends think "I can be a VTHS student; if I take private classes, I can achieve" but they are deceiving themselves. There's no such thing. The highest score a VTHS student can get is about 360-370. (VTHSF2)

While SHS and SSSH teachers and school practices constantly make these students feel special, some of the VTHS teachers behaved very differently toward students. In other words, as the authenticity of the school is shown by the education and attitudes of teachers suited toward their prospective social positions, the expectations of these students are also shaped accordingly, just as at SHS and SSSH.

We are VTHS students; needless to say we are not as successful as AHS students. Some teachers say things like "You are VTHS students, so you don't need to know this, it is normal that you don't know this, you don't have the mathematical background to understand this!" As a result, I don't expect anything from school. What can you expect from such a school with teachers who talk like this? (VTHSF2)

It would be a significant mistake to think of VTHS students as desperate, passive victims of the system based on the above narrations. These students are constantly searching to better their lives; they are aware of all of the positive and negative characteristics of the situation. Within this scope, they did not build their narrations on being successful or unsuccessful in life. They brought meaning to their disadvantaged

position by making it to the next step of their education in various ways. The main problem was that these students perceived this as their own fault, and as mentioned above, these perceptions were constantly reinforced by the school.

In the interviews with IPHS students, the narrations showed that “moral representation” and “privileged position” were what differentiated them from other high school types. The former was stated mostly by female students while the latter was more common among the male students. Male students made this choice of school type totally aware of what kind of a school awaited them and with the support of their family and environment. Being an Islamic intellectual was greatly emphasized. While male students define IPHS as “privileged” due to the fact that the pioneers in political and business life had graduated from these schools, female student narrations pointed out a different feeling by stating they were being trained in accordance with moral values.

Yes. Being from IPHS is one thing and being from AHS is another thing. I think a guy who graduates from AHS only has a materialistic point of view. But a guy who graduates from IPHS learns the physical sciences, even if it just a pinch. Physics, chemistry, biology... We study physical sciences for 6 hours [per week]. Mathematics and geometry... We also attend these classes. Plus, being able to educate the self spiritually has a totally different taste. I would attach great importance to this if you were to become a governor or a doctor in the future. When you visit a county or a village, if you can perform a Friday prayer, if you can commune with the community, you'll leave an impression. You'll be appreciated. I think like this. This is what it's like to be an IPHS student. (IPHSM8)

Some of the IPHS students thought that they represented a religion and had the perception that they were “role models”. Due to this perception students attached importance to being balanced and measured about all kinds of topics (clothing, behavior, relationships with friends, attending social activities). They considered all forms of extremism to be wrong when representing the school, and they either avoided being friends with extremists or assimilated them by reporting them to the teacher. This situation caused polarization within the school. Some girls wore surcoats and found leading a balanced and prudent life to be important; they thought that staying away from extremists was beneficial for everyone. Some girls, on the other hand, wore tight and colorful clothes with headscarves, or didn't use a headscarf, or wore make up and didn't care about the dress code; they followed fashion trends and adapted to consumerism.

For example, as far as clothing... They put on too much make-up. I myself put on make-up too, but there are girls who use false eyelashes. As a matter of fact we call these “foundation cream with legs”. She wears a headscarf, but is not properly dressed. It's normal that these friends are sent to the disciplinary committee. (IPHSF1)

I wear a surcoat. I have friends who really care about dressing modestly. Polarization can take place. For example if she is wearing a surcoat, there is a verse in the Quran that says cover your breasts and shoulders; they are doing as is required. I wear a surcoat that is ok, thank God. I don't want my legs to be seen. I wear trousers. And I prefer loose trousers. (IPHSF3)

At the interviews that took place in AHS, it was observed from the narrations that after all of the regular high schools had been turned into AHS, they became ordinary with no distinguishing characteristics left. Students used this exact description when talking about AHS: "They used to be good but they don't have any special qualities now." In this sense, distinctive from others, different emphasis was placed not on the future but on the past. The fact that "being close to home" was the most powerful reason for choosing this school strengthens these narrations.

All regular high schools are AHS now; only VTHS and SHS are different. SHS is based mainly on science as you know. (AHSM1)

I don't think there is an advantage to studying at an AHS. As all high schools have been turned into them, I think they've become ordinary; education is the same, educational conditions are the same. There are no activities or events of any kind; the conditions are the same. I think they just changed the name to AHS; I don't see an advantage here. (AHSF1)

There isn't a certain response because all regular high schools were turned into AHS. It was more important in the past when there were only 10 AHSs in Ankara, now they're everywhere so that isn't important anymore. (AHSM5)

When asked about how they differed from other school types, they were observed to answer with a similar approach. The students frequently stated that they were in a better situation than those in VTHS.

According to me, the quality of education is better than other schools. I have a friend receiving education at a vocational school. Their education is not as good as ours. Weekly class hours for fundamental lessons at their school are less than ours. Here, we have more. (AHSM6)

Being special students or feeling so seemed to be directly linked with being unique. Also, a new category seemed to have appeared in the narrations: the well-established AHS. When analyzing their discourses, no differences or developments were able to be seen with the new AHS, but the education quality of well-established AHS was still good. An AHS that still accepted students with high scores continued to be viewed differently within the category of preferred schools.

When talking about the events that had taken place at their school, students stated that they were "ordinary" or "limited in number"; that was why they had limited relations with their schools compared to the other academic high school types, excluding FAHS and VTHS. Therefore, socializing and other events happened outside of school. The

lack of academic or intellectual socialization at school became a burden that prevented students from discovering one another's common aspects. Therefore, even though they had some opinions on the personal meaning of being an AHS student, they didn't have any idea how this identity was shaped or what underlined it.

There was a theater show in English, we went to that. That was all. (AHSF2)

There are only volleyball and football class tournaments. We don't have much of an activity apart from these two. (AHSF1)

The only activities in our school are music and sports. At the Council, they decided to create a football team and a handball team; no other team can be established. You can see that there are really good table-tennis players with pro skills but they are not doing it, and we can't say anything about that. (AHSM5)

## Discussion

Being a student corresponds to a multi-component authenticity, the meaning of which is produced with both individualistic and social inclusions. As stated in the findings, the opportunities that a school provides paralleled life expectations. The most significant indicators in this situation were that the types of high schools that educated from among the higher educational fields were more importantly the types of high schools where students would go on to attend a university. Additionally, high school types could be seen as institutions that educate people in different fields as well as being institutions that play a part in constructing societies (Bourdieu, 1977). How a high school student positions one's self in high school, their individual and public relations, historically and sociologically has been more related to the socio-cultural structure from which the student comes. The likelihood of going to a VTHS is established the day a child is born (Sever, 2015). The personal meaning of school is not only related to when one continues education but is also related to what happens after they graduate. The quality of this relation is defined even before school begins. This situation underlines the social and political characteristics of a school. To which school we will attend, as well as to which we won't, has been sociologically predetermined (Kerckhoff, 1995).

As stated in the findings, SSHS and SHS students prepare for their "possible" prospective and exclusive positions in society through school practices, their families, and the events they attend. It is also possible to say that this preparation process started long before they arrived at school. While SHS students tended to see themselves as scientists of the future who would undoubtedly study medicine or engineering, SSHS students saw themselves as future statesmen who would work on law and political science. These expectations had become more meaningful with the

absence of a school bell and dress code, as well as with teachers' constant reminder to the students of how special they are. These students gained the skills and pleasures of what the future elite should have through their interactions at school: reading, arts, and social and cultural events. For students of both schools, "earning money" was not a central concern. On the other hand, earning money or having a profession was a central concern for VTHS students. Within this sense, the meaning of school for these students was founded on the bridge between "job" and "individual". In their justifications about what was waiting for them in the future, it was openly observed that education had recreated structural inequalities and students saw this situation as something ordinary (Weis & Fine, 2004).

We observed that students had differentiated themselves by saying they were better than students from the other types of high schools. The narrations of VTHS students focused on how they were different from the best ones. AHS students stated where they stood within the educational hierarchy with words like "at least we are in a better situation than VTHS". The comparisons of those who saw themselves as "the best" changed too; the focus here shifted from other students to the future positions of power they saw themselves in, like being a scientist, politician, doctor, or judge.

One of the most important findings of the research showed itself through the "other" narrations. Students tended to explain their own value or insignificance by what other schools meant to them. Thus they could constantly test their own position while guessing what awaited them in the future. But "the other" narration seemed to be a conscious choice. In other words, each high school seemed to have its own "other". Actually, this provided significant clues about possible conflicts within the social hierarchy and about who would be where in the superior-subordinate relation.

Data from this study has revealed the existing arguments in the literature that propose that social class has been the only determinant in school choice should not be subjected to reductive interpretation. Social class doesn't seem to be the only determining factor in choosing a school. Even so, social class manipulation seems to be the most effective force on how a school functions or how the choice is made (Veeck et al., 2003). Even the notion of choosing pointed to a problematic situation: Most of the time there hadn't been a choice, at least not a choice that could be said to provide equal options for everybody. In this sense, students have been generally charmed by the illusion of choice and try to understand their schools through this.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

As a result, it can be stated that one starts to establish what their high school experience of being a student will be like even years before starting school. One can interpret this situation as a sociological correlation rather than evaluate it

as psychological preparedness. Considering the success and future chances that differ from school to school, the current hierarchy's alignment with the structural inequalities in society can be stated as the reason. This theme doesn't totally lose meaning even when these experiences differed throughout the same school types. Yet no matter how different the experiences were, hierarchies' fundamental central positioning was seen. Whether or not high schools were considered as a passage to university or professional life was at the heart of the experience of being a student.

One can, however, consider that school types differ significantly among themselves, and a new study could be performed to understand this situation. Having detailed research about the manner and process of these differences may make the current research findings more meaningful. One of the most basic arguments of the research, which was explained several times in various ways, is that being a student is not a homogenous authenticity; this variant, which significantly changes according to school type, might also be valid within each school type, too. Many macro-factors (social, political, geographical, and economical) can also be said to affect this situation.

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