

An Analysis of Students' Perceptions about Fundamental High Schools in the Context of Equality in Education in Turkey

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25.11.2016

Received in revised form

21.02.2017

Accepted 11.03.2017

Available online

30.03.2017

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the experiences of high school students regarding the application of fundamental high school, who prepare for the university exam, and attend to fundamental high schools and public high schools, via their own opinions. For this purpose, the study was conducted with a phenomenological research approach. The main analysis of unit was students who attended both fundamental high schools and public high schools, and preparing for university entrance exams, also known as YGS and LYS. Research data was collected with in-depth interviews with 20 last year high school students. The interviews were conducted in accordance with semi-structured interview form, which was prepared by the researchers. Data obtained through interviews was analyzed with content analysis and two main themes emerged. One of those themes was named as "Equity", and the other was named as "Fundamental High School Phenomenon". These themes were presented by quotations of participants and results were discussed.

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Keywords:

Marketization in education, equality in education, private sector, standard tests, fundamental high schools.

Introduction

Education, according to the egalitarian view, which considers it as the process of humanization, is one of the fundamental rights, possessed by the individual. Education being considered as a fundamental right, may also be expressed as everyone being able to use their right to access education, and not being subject to any kind of discrimination based on distinctions such as ethnicity, socio-economical level, or gender. For individuals to be able to use their right of education, despite these differences, it is expected from the organization of national education, to make necessary regulations and to be able to provide the same educational service, while taking into account these differences. Therefore, a fair education is possible only if the organization of national education is able to preserve its public character.

Bowles (1999) pointed out that, in the pre-capitalist societies, the basic producing unit was the family, but after the industrial revolution the family failed to fulfill this need and that schools were needed to give to individuals new professional qualities and social responsibilities such as punctuality. According to Bowles (1999), social position, profession, and wealth would be obtained not by birth, but in accordance with the person's own effort and abilities, thus via education. However, there is a line of studies pointing out that schooling efforts could reproduce the existing inequalities in society (see: Bowles, 1972; Willis, 2016; Kapferer, 1986; Velaskar, 1992; Stanton-Salazar ve Dornbusch, S, 1995; Van Zanten, 2005; Hoadley, 2007; Collins, 2009; Fenwick, 2011; Mavelli, 2014). Similarly, Bowles and Gintis (1999) argue that, education system dominates the

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2017.02.009>

students in a fashion to form a coherent and efficient labor, and provides the reproduction of social division of labor.

Bourdieu (2006) points out that, in modern stratified societies, close ties existing between class, culture, and power, make it necessary to conduct research on educational institutions. According to Althusser (1991), rulers in capitalist systems, who try to keep the state power in their hold, use education as a fundamental ideological apparatus. Most privileged students owe to their neighborhood, not only the habits, practices and behaviors that would be directly useful in their lessons. At the same time, they inherit these behaviors in a manner that will affect their academic success. The implicit condition of academic success, the culture, has been distributed among students of various neighborhoods, in a manner that is not equal at all (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2014). For example, according to Willis (2016), children from the working class are resisting the culture presented by the school, and are denying high career-professions, they are accepting the values of their families and the working class, and are reproducing their own class position.

Bourdieu (1986), states that the various capital forms he used, in explaining the context of capital could be classified as social, cultural, and symbolic capital. His theory of capital designates, in the sense used by Bourdieu (1986), the social environment and social relations (social capital), the accumulation based on education and in-family experience (cultural capital) and the convertible assets (economical capital) possessed by individuals, as the resources defining their lives. Cultural capital is defined, in general as the educational competences acquired in family and at school. These come out, as also pointed out in Bourdieu's definition, as pleasure and consumption patterns, which are culturally valued. In this definition, it is pointed out that, the school education is based on the cultural capital, gained from family (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital, in this sense, contains those behaviors and tendencies, which are considered not directly related to education, but closely correlated with it (Harker, 1990).

Centralized standard tests have significant impact on the life of the students and are used as a tool of education reforms (Blake, 2012). These tests can be considered as an important disciplinary tool for obedience, the hierarchical supporting of the relations between individuals, and their continuity. At this point, Foucault's (1992, 231-232) below assessment, regarding exams that establish hierarchy under a normalized technique, gives better conceptualization of the disciplinary functions of standard tests.

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected. The superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance. [...] in this slender technique are to be found a whole domain of knowledge, a whole type of power.

According to Foucault (1992), individuals are being kept under surveillance and normalized, through examination and thus, being positioned in hierarchy. According to this analysis, the examination is prominent as a technology of discipline, which objectifies and classifies individuals, and allows punishment. According to Apple (2014), the economic mobility and the professionalism ideology of professional and administrative new members of the middle class, depends on the spread of measurement and evaluation. For centralized examinations have a function of manipulating reality by itself and altering learning orientation and worth of individuals, since existing social inequalities, and individual characteristics and requirements are not accepted as absolute input (Aksoy, Akgündüz, Demir, Tunacan, Türk ve Uğur, 2014). Therefore, the cultural capital constituting a part of examinations creates an advantage, in a society where cultural capital is unequally distributed like economic capital, in favor of children with higher capital. Apple (2004b) states that, individuals with high cultural capital, make their capital valuable with these examinations, and maintain their own class with economic power.

The function of school, as an ideological device of the state, is producing subjects, having "appropriate" tendencies and values, who will address the needs of social division of labor, along with selecting and

certifying necessary labor force. Bourdieu (2006, 36-37) describes, as an analogy to Maxwell's demon, this selection as follows:

Maxwell imagined a demon who sorts the moving particles passing before him, some being warmer, therefore faster moving, others cooler, therefore slower moving; the demon sends the fastest particles into one container, whose temperature rises, and the slowest into another container, whose temperature falls. He thereby maintains difference and order, which would otherwise tend to be annihilated.

The school system too, executes the metaphor of Maxwell's demon, through centralized examinations. In expense of the energy needed for selection process, it preserves the formerly existing regime, i.e. the difference between students equipped with unequal cultural capital. To be more precise, through a series of sorting operations, it differentiates those who have cultural capital via inheritance, from those who lack it. And differences in ability, since it could not be separated from social differences which occur due to inherited cultural capital, thus maintains the previously existing social differences. Power relations, due to this nature of centralized examinations, are reproduced through social classifications created through education. The individual is disciplined and controlled through the examination. The examination is at the center of the procedures, which form the individual as the result and object of power and as the result and object of knowledge. In this regard, the school can be considered as a continuous device of examination (Foucault, 1992).

Somel and Nohl (2014) state that, when students select among existent choices in centralized examinations, they perform a technicalized selection, rather than an actual learning. It gets easier, for individuals who get successful in examinations, to reach educational institutions and professional roles of their want. Therefore, individuals who would like to utilize these advantages and families who want to have successful kids tend to purchase services to increase success in examinations. In this case, with the closing of private teaching institutions, a new market has been formed due to families embarking on a new quest for increasing the exam success. Alcott and Rose (2016) found with their household survey in East Africa countries (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) that private schools cause inequality in learning. According to the survey, private schools increase the deficit in the context of equality in education, in terms of the students having low socio-economic levels. Therefore, in educational organizations such as the one in Turkey where, centralized exams play great role in the education lives of individuals, it is clear that the incentives and permits given to private sector are, raising the students who are members of families of higher class and level, to a more advantageous position than the others are.

Even though the application of Fundamental High Schools, and the incentives given to families can be argued in the context of equality, the results produced by similar applications in different countries, can be negative in terms of equality in education. The so-called 'low price' or 'low cost' schools, opened in South Africa, so that the children of families, with low socio-economic levels could attend, may be an example of this. According to Languille (2016), these schools provide advantage to children of the new mid-class families, rather than poor students in South Africa, and while to be able to send the child to a private school is considered as an indicator of social status, poor kids are thus constrained to attend poorly funded public schools. Similarly in India, where the presentation of education services by private sector is widespread, even though the schools are obliged to admit certain percentage of students free of charge, the work of Srivastava and Noronha (2016) shows that the poor have very limited access to these schools. The same work also shows that students admitted to private schools free of charge, are isolated and remain being in a disadvantageous position, since they are not able to attend paid activities such as additional courses. The work of Zeitlyn, Lewin, Chimombo, and Meke (2015) reveals that public schools in Malawi are insufficient, both in terms of quality and quantity; therefore, education services presented by private sector meets with great demand; but, even the cheapest 15 of such schools could not be afforded by poor families. Maitra, Pal and Sharma's (2016) work, has again reached the evidence that families in India prefer to send boys, rather than girls to private schools. Similarly, families in China, when not able to afford the education costs of their children, may choose to send boys, rather than girls to school, for they think the boy will maintain a family in the future (Ngok & David, 2004). Kapferer (1984) further points out that public and private schools in Australia reproduce, due to the pedagogical differences they practice, the structural inequalities in society.

Context and the Purpose of the Study

In the neo-liberal era, where great change is experienced in public services, in the field of education, concepts such as localization, quality, governance, standardization, accountability, and privatization prove prominent. Various regulations, regarding specifically standardization, along with privatization are being observed in Turkey too. One of those regulations is the closing of private teaching institutions and their transformation to private schools, under the name of *Fundamental High Schools*, via the Parliament Act Amending the Basic Law of National Education and Delegated Legislation, of the date 1.3.2014 and number 6528 (Millî eğitim temel kanunu ile bazı kanun ve kanun hükmünde kararnamelerde değişiklik yapılmasına dair kanun, 2014).

As it is known, transition to higher education in Turkey is provided via standard tests. In the related literature, there is a great deal of evidence proving that standardized tests disturb equality in favor of students coming from wealthier families (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Apple, 2004a; Au, 2008; Au, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Haney, 2000; Horn, 2003; Rutz & Balkan, 2016; Thompson & Allen, 2012). On the other hand, Turkish literature also includes findings supporting that current national education system of Turkey is already has an unequal character (Akkan, 2000; Alpman, 2009; Dündar, 2010; Öztürk, 2015; Yanık 2004; Yıldız, 2015). It is possible to argue that these tests, when considered with the regulation mentioned above, will deepen already existing inequalities of Turkish education system. For in a system where the transition to higher education is made with standard tests, it will not be false to say that the newly established fundamental high schools will perform the functions that are previously performed by private teaching institutions. In other words, the regulation can be interpret as the private teaching institutions were not abolished, but they were given the authority to grant diplomas and thus, an alternative to public schools in the preparation to tests of transition to higher education was formed.

It is possible that, giving incentives to parents who will send their children to private schools would be considered as transferring public resources to private sector. Thus, it can be anticipated that, children of the families able to afford fundamental high school education with higher prices than private learning institutions, would prepare for standard tests in better conditions, and would be in a more advantageous position than their contemporaries, who are obliged to attend public schools. While the students who could afford the education they will get could choose fundamental high schools, rest of the students would have to choose public schools, and thus students would be separated according to their socio-economic levels. Therefore, the problem of this research is to analyze deeply, how the students studying in the city of İstanbul, which contains individuals from many different socio-economic levels, and preparing for admission to university, experienced the application of fundamental high school. From this point of view, the aim of this study is to analyze the experiences of the students of last year in high schools regarding the application of fundamental high school, who prepare for the university exam, and attend to fundamental high schools and public high schools, via their own opinions.

Method

Research Design

This research is executed, in compliance with its aim, in qualitative research method. Qualitative research approach is based on viewing the research object integrally, and studying it in its own context (Punch, 2005). In social sciences, main data source of the researcher who surveys with qualitative method is human, and the researcher is not gathering data from an already existing whole, given from this source, but he/she is recreating the data with the subject interviewed (Kümbetoğlu, 2005).

This research was executed in phenomenological design, to be able to better analyze how the students preparing for admission to university experienced the application of fundamental high school, in the context of equality in education. Phenomenological researches are done to determine, how individuals experience a concept or a phenomenon, and how it is understood (Creswell, 2007).

Study Group

The current study conducted purposeful sampling method to choose the participants. In qualitative research, choosing sampling as purposive is due to the aim of research, rather than methodological

requirements; and the technique of purposive sampling permits the researcher to select the participants suitable for the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2007; Marvasti, 2004). Qualitative research is made for, rather than generalizing, acquiring information, as deep as possible, about a phenomenon. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique, which provides the information most appropriate to the aim of the research, is better suited for qualitative researches.

In this study, of purposive sampling techniques, the criterion sampling technique is employed. The criterion sampling technique ensures that the research is conducted with participants who satisfy the criteria, determined according to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002). In this context, the criteria that are considered to provide the richest data, in compliance with the aim of the research, is determined in this research. As a result, the criteria used to select the study group of this research are designated as, that the participants are attending the last grade of high school, that they are preparing for YGS and LYS, and that they have attended private learning institutions in preceding years.

In the research scope, interviews have been conducted with a total of 20 students, who then had been attending the last grade of high school and preparing for YGS and LYS exams. The participants were explained about the content of the research and about the reason of the interviews, and the interviews had started on the condition that participant accepted to interview. Therefore, volunteerism principle was honored in the making of the interviews. The notion that the study group was balanced in terms of gender distribution was given attention, and out of the 20 participants, 11 was female, while 9 was male. In the distribution of participants in terms of school type, a similar balance was pursued, and 11 students attending to public schools with 9 attending to fundamental high schools, were included into study group.

Collection and Analysis of the Data

The data of the research was composed via in-depth interview technique. The most appropriate one of the qualitative data collection techniques is the technique of in-depth interview (Creswell, 2007). It is a device of composing data, which makes it possible to get to the essence, rather than appearance, of many phenomena, processes, and relations seen in the social world, to grasp the details of these, and to understand them integrally (Kümbetoğlu, 2005). In this way, the researcher tries, on the basis of the statements and experiences of the participants, to build an image as complete as possible (DeMarrais, 2004).

To create the research data, based on the research purpose and the literature, a semi-structured interview form, consisting of open questions was formed. In the interview form, along with two primary questions, there were 10 supplementary questions. The questions in the interview form were formed, based on the literature on the marketization and equality in education regarding the context in Turkey. In a phenomenological research, the participants are asked two questions, as general as possible, about the researched phenomenon and these questions are supplemented with other open-ended questions (Creswell, 2007). The interview form, prepared in this way, was presented for the expert revisions who are specialized in educational sciences for examining both in theoretical and linguistic sense. Additionally, two of the prospective participants were preliminarily interviewed, and the intelligibility of the interview form was evaluated. Based on the suggestions by the experts and the participants, the interview form was given its final state.

The interviews with the participants were recorded in audio, and each interview has lasted 30 to 50 minutes. Each one of the interviewee was notified that they could withdraw from the interview at any time or they did not have to answer any question they did not want to do so. They were also notified that any personal information about them would be confidential. Thus, pseudonyms were used to protect participants' confidentiality. To be able to analyze the interviews, recordings were transcribed and the interviews were put into writing. After transcription process was completed, research report including analysis and interpretations of data were returned to research participants for member checks, in order to ensure credibility and confirmability of the data and to strengthen it (Maxwell, 1996; Creswell, 2007). The interview texts obtained were analyzed via content analysis technique. The main purpose of the content analysis technique is to attain concepts and relations, which could explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Content analysis is generally used in the analysis of written texts such as transcripts, diaries, or documents, and is done for revealing the underlying meaning patterns of these texts (Patton, 2002). In qualitative research, data analysis is performed through coding of the data, combining the obtained codes and thus obtaining the themes

(Creswell, 2007). In this study too, obtained data is primarily coded in line with the research purpose. For thematic coding, in the first step, the similarities and differences of the obtained codes are needed to be identified, and according to this, related codes and the themes, that can be put together are to be detected (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, coding operation is made according to the concepts, emerging from the data. The researchers themselves handled the codification and analysis process of the data manually. In order to analyze the data, firstly the general sense of the data was explored; secondly the data was encoded; and finally themes were specified as Saldaña (2009) and Creswell (2007) indicated. The obtained codes were afterwards combined in categories, and these categories were combined under themes, and evaluated. To ensure the validity and the reliability of the study, all three of the researchers analyzed obtained data separately, and the analysis was performed through common and similar themes, attained by each of the researchers. Data analysis to be done by more than one researcher, helps reduce the subjectivities, which could occur in the case it was done by only one person (Patton, 2002).

Findings

As a result of the analysis of the interview texts, two themes have come up. The first theme, called 'inequality in exam preparation', consists of the categories, 'inequality caused by fundamental high schools', and 'inequalities caused by structural elements'. The second theme, attained in the study was called 'phenomenon of fundamental high school'. The categories in this theme are, 'the concept of fundamental high school', 'negativities of fundamental high schools', and 'reasons of preference'.

Theme 1: 'Inequality in Exam Preparation'

Under inequality theme, two different categories were identified. First category, which is 'inequalities caused by fundamental high schools' consists of six different codes. These codes are listed as following: (1) examination oriented education; (2) public schools' curriculum and examinations; (3) insufficiencies of public high schools; (4) teacher qualities; (5) success points and school examinations; (6) study environment. The second category of this theme is named as inequalities caused by structural elements. Under this category, there are three different codes. These codes are as following: (1) inequality of opportunity; (2) inequalities between schools; (3) regional differences.

Category 1: Inequalities caused by fundamental high schools. When narratives of the interviewees are examined, it was revealed that the students, regarding inequality, had pointed out the advantages provided by fundamental high schools, which is the first category of equality theme, and that some of the narratives had referred to the examination-oriented education given in fundamental high schools. For example, Aktan, a student of a fundamental high school, uses the description "...it has its name, fundamental high school. Exam. Nothing besides the exam." for his school. Uğur, who attends to a public school, states the advantages provided by fundamental high schools to their students as, "... they don't study 12th grade topics, they do YGS. And after the school, they stay for additional courses, and do trial exams once in a week. For they are focused on YGS only, and since YGS is the important exam, they have some advantage." Gülşah, a student of a fundamental high school, has mentioned the advantages her school provides to her by executing a program, which is focused only on tests, in preparation for YGS and LYS, as follows:

Since fundamental high schools, in this sense, perform as school plus private learning institution, and since they focus more heavily on the test part, it makes a plus for us. That is, at least for fundamental high schools, in comparison to most schools, have rights to expect a higher success in the exam at the end of the year. Since it is an exam oriented institution [...] my [old] school was not exam oriented, that is, I was in one of the best private schools in Turkey. Despite, it was not exam oriented. The staff here, and primarily the administrator, they all attracted me. I think this place can better prepare me for the university. And in here too, the fact that it is better in discipline indicates that we are successful in test, too, they are more heavily exam oriented.

Here, it can be stated that fundamental high schools provide great advantages to their students, by adopting a program that focuses only on the exam. On the other hand, under public schools' curriculum code, some of the participants stated that in public schools, preparation process to YGS and LYS stays in second plan and the regular curriculum, which is provided by National Ministry of Education, is followed. The regular curriculum, and the exams at public schools, seem to be considered as a disadvantage, since they hinder the

preparation for university exams. For example, Oğuzhan, a student of fundamental high school, mentions the disadvantage in terms of curriculum, of attending a public school, as *“When you’re in public school, since the exams are stricter, it makes burden upon you, and thus it is more complicated.”* Damla, who attends a fundamental high school, remarks the disadvantages she would have had in case she had stayed in public school, as *“...as I said we would have been studying the school lessons also, plus we would have been attending to private learning institutions and preparing for the exam.”* Rümeyisa and Yiğit, who are also students in public schools, point out that, the curriculum in their schools is not suitable for preparation for the exam, and therefore how it poses a disadvantage for them, as follows;

...the disadvantage in school, we have to stick to the curriculum, since the school is owned by the state. The building too. Let’s say, the education system is like that. We only can study for university exams in spare lessons, but for the fundamental high school, they study YGS and LYS in all of their lessons, continuously solving tests, a continuous study for the upcoming exam, they provide an accumulation of knowledge for the first test. But not here, consider, we always beg our teachers to solve tests, teacher, please let us solve tests, but they have no such thing, it’s a great disadvantage. (Rümeyisa)

They have the advantage. Here, we deal with the school courses too. Especially, in the first term, it was like this. We cope with the 12th grade curriculum, and some of the teachers never make it easy. Some of them, nevertheless tolerate. But again, in the second term, this term, I think we would be a little bit comfortable, but then again, we have to think about that too, for now if we fail in class, it will again affect our admission point, we shouldn’t think about those. We need to cope with both, in that case. We have to go balanced. That is, we cannot focus on one, and drop the other. (Yiğit)

Similarly, Aktan, who is a fundamental high school student, points out the difference in curriculum between public schools and his own, and the inequalities it creates, as follows:

That is, we study neither literature, nor anything else, that is, we are students of quantitative field. There is the front of the screen, and there’s the behind. But in public schools, it’s not the case, the guy studies literature, physical education, and visual arts altogether. But prepares for LYS, prepares for YGS. In this matter, we have the advantage. But there, the guy almost has ten hours, fifteen hours of literature, physical education, visual arts. I’m not against it, but if it happens there, it should happen here, too. If we are both to enter the same exam, we should get the same education. My friend starts to school at nine o’clock. He starts with two lessons of literature. Then he has two hours of physical ed. Then to the visual arts. He takes three to four courses, daily. He has four courses from quantitative. What do we do here? We start at nine. Only math, geometry, physics, chemistry, biology, until five, sometimes six, seven at the evening. Now, I study the courses of my own area, only and I study them exam oriented, only. That guy studies the 12th grade curriculum and many other courses.

Besides the disadvantages, created by the curriculum in effect, and the exams of public schools, based on narratives of the participants, it can be deduced that public schools are perceived to be insufficient for preparation for the university. These narratives of participants were coded as ‘insufficiencies of public high schools’. In this sense, it is quite striking that Halit, a public school student states one of the reasons of choice for his friends who have chosen the fundamental high school, as *“...the idea that the school was not enough, could have pushed them towards fundamental high school, I think.”* Gülşah, a student of fundamental high school, and Rümeyisa, a student of public high school put their mistrust in public school as follows:

...there are some institutions they are truly special, anatolian high schools, specifically. They are good, but I hear from the around, I have teacher superiors, i.e. moms of my friends, etc. To obtain success from any school that is, quite minor ratio, success from school, that is; and these people have generally obtained it from private learning institution. (Gülşah)

But now, in private sector, and we understand that things provided to us, by the normal state does not suffice. Why does such a thing happen? Why do they go to fundamental high school? While we have such a resource why don’t we use it, and they go to there? Because now, it doesn’t suffice. Because it doesn’t suffice, the private sector joins the game. (Rümeyisa)

Other than the mistrust in public schools, that the teachers working with these schools are incompetent, is one of the remarks coming forward. Therefore, it can be stated that the teacher profiles of the two different

school types, is also considered as an element of inequality, in terms of university examinations. Expressions on qualities of teachers are coded as 'teacher qualities'. For instance, Damla, who attends to a fundamental high school states her views on the competency of her teachers as *"Because of the staff, [in fundamental high school] we have more concerned teachers; they give us more support for the examination. The teachers in public schools are a bit more incompetent."* Similarly, Edanur and Meliha too, who are both fundamental high school students, have stated the differences between the teachers, as follows:

... Teachers there are a bit something, that is, quite disciplinary but in the sense that they have an attitude like, it is possible without you, too, and they're like that, so it's bad. And they get mad, and they scream, that also was bad, in the public high school. It's not like that in the fundamental high school. All the teachers are quite considered. It's pretty good, for example the counsellor, I have never known the regular talk of my counsellor, that is, this year, I have fully experienced private school. (Edanur)

There's no preparation with the public school, I think there's no preparation with public school only, for there's leisureliness there, nobody cares, teachers are not, ok, there are disciplinary teachers too, but they're in the attitude of "I should lecture and go", lots of teachers of such kind. (Meliha)

Another point of view regarding the quality of teacher has come from Onur, a public high school student. Onur, regarding the teachers of fundamental high schools, has voiced an opinion suggesting the teachers at fundamental high schools might be insufficient, with the statement, *"Since most of the teachers are the ones who failed at KPSS, they too are being admitted there, according to an order, and I don't think they are so good."*

Another deduction, according to student narratives, regarding inequality in education is that, the secondary education success points added to YGS and LYS points of the students too, differ between public schools and fundamental high schools, in a way that fundamental high school students are in advantage. Participant expressions on secondary education success points were coded as 'success point and school examinations'. In this matter, a public high school student, Rümeyşa's following statements are quite striking:

[Students who transfer to fundamental high schools] have expectations about courses. For example, my friends, who can't even get certificate of acknowledgement, were telling me: "I got certificate of acknowledgement, I even press for certificate of appreciation". Because, as I said, they are given a pre-solved paper, and told to solve that again, so that they are given points. And thus the CGPAs rise. Secondly, by this CGPA rise the points from school success rise.

Again similarly, the statements of Elif, who is a student of a public high school, reveals how the practices in exams by fundamental high schools provide advantage to their students:

It has been more unequal. For example, the biggest reason of why I can't prepare for the examinations is that I give priority to school exams, for decreasing the CGPA, etc. is about the school points. But they send us the exam papers, i.e. our friends that is the social media, it reaches us in every way. I look at them, they aren't even remotely related with our exams. They truly ask too easy, or they already give the solutions. Even they tinker with it. [...] For one thing, all my friends got certs of appreciation, last year. They automatically rise above us, in CGPA. A twenty percent of the last year grades are taken, I guess. But for example, it is said that some showed their ninth grade English course as problematic, and they retook the exam and get 90 pts. So, such things were made.

This case is also verified by Oğuzhan, with his *"I think the only difference is that, in terms of school exams, there is a bit more tolerance and so a comfort follows."* statement.

It has been mentioned by the participants that, another element of the fundamental high school practice that disturbs the equality in favor of the students of fundamental high schools, is the materials for exams, provided to the students. Participant expressions on teaching materials were coded as 'materials focusing on standard exams'. For instance, the following statements of Aylin, a fundamental high school student, in which she compares her school with the public school in terms of materials, help the difference to be understood:

In the public school, only textbooks were given. Here, no textbooks were given, instead they have given their own publications, preparation publications, as I recall. Besides that, they give test books, and fascicules. It has more advantage. For example, they give booklets. In public schools, just that. Some teachers

might require a textbook to be bought. But here, we have already enough, plus we buy too. Teachers also recommend. Thus, here's better.

Same case is stated by Gülşah also, a fundamental high school student, as “...here, a book per minute comes to us.” Yiğit, who attends public schools, points out this difference with “the school, of course does not provide documents. For them, the school provides. Plus, they of course buy themselves, the school does not provide everything but in our case, it provides us nothing, we buy things ourselves.”

Lastly, the inequality in university admission, created by the practice of fundamental high school, shows itself in the study environment of the students. While analyzing the data, related expressions were coded as ‘study environment’. Vahap, student of fundamental high school, describes the environment in his school with the statements, “You have the opportunity of one-to-one study with the teachers. You don’t need to chase the teacher, as in public school. The teacher comes to you, and you can easily have your questions solved.” Uğur, who attends to public school, respectively has pointed out the trouble in this matter, he had lived in his school, as “They have better in-school [fundamental high school] study environment. They study silently, everyone studies. In the school [public school], however, there’s no such reason. In terms of studying, we don’t have equal conditions.”

Category 2: Inequalities caused by structural elements. When the narratives of the participants are examined, it is found that they have given opinions regarding inequalities, caused by not only the practice of fundamental high school itself, but also by structural elements. In much of the narratives, there are statements that in the education system, students enter the exams unequally for various reasons. One of the codes aroused under this category is ‘inequality of opportunity’. For example, Aktan, who is a student of fundamental high school, have stated how the families of high economic level provide their children with advantage, as follows:

Now, if that guy has no financial means to attend fundamental high school, what fault does he have? Why can't he be successful? Maybe he's smart, but he has no means. Why can't he reach high, but I reach it with my money? That is, at least the order should not be with money. If I give five liras to you, and myself take one lira, and then if I try to surpass you, it's an unfair competition. If there is to be an exam and if it is to be Turkey-wide or with an order Turkey-wide, if human lives are to be changed by this ordering, then everyone in this should have equal conditions, so that it is revealed that who is cleverer. [...] Think like this, two will compete, the end is the same but the starting point is different. Or that one of them has shoes, and the other one has none, will there be a healthy outcome? There won't, it's not possible. If you want a healthy outcome they should start at the same point, and they should have the same means.[...] It's like, in planes, the rich travels in business class and eats kebab, and the poor one, at the back, eats sandwich, or takes the bus. I think, this fundamental high school is the plane. But the guy, cannot reach to the point by bus, where you fly by plane, it's impossible. You fly in one hour, but he rides for twelve hours. But the time is limited. You don't compete in equal conditions.

Rabia, who attends to a public school, too has pointed out how the means she has socio-economically provide advantage to her, in terms of preparation to the examination, as follows:

Now, I look at my own home, I have my own study room in the house, I have my support of family. Test books, and everything. The preparation to the exam, it's not only spiritual, it has something materialistically. But not everyone has this chance.

Another element, which the interviewers think, in terms of preparation to the university, causing inequality other than socio-economic levels of the students is the difference in schools and regions. These expressions were coded as ‘inequalities between schools. For example, Elif, a public school student, has pointed out like “I don’t suppose, currently we’re in the same conditions. I thought. I don’t suppose. All in all, not every school is the same. In terms of teacher quality, etc. Not every school turns up the same.” Oğuzhan, a fundamental high school student has also pointed out the difference between even fundamental high school and has made the sentences: “... I think there’s difference in education between fundamental high schools. I think that not every fundamental high school is one. Frankly, we all think the same in this matter.”

Now, for example here we, at least in terms of the school. Thanks to our school, they all [teachers] are quite nice, we’re comfortable. A friend of mine, in the same district, but in a different school, is not welcomed with the same teaching staff, nor with the same tenderness. He doesn’t get the same education in school. This is for the least.

The participants have stated that, similar to the difference in schools, a variance is caused by the differences in regions also, and that this causes inequality in preparing for the university. In this matter, Aktan, a student of fundamental high school has stated his thoughts as follows:

For because, between one who attends to a public school in the east and, for instance, me, there's much difference in education. Maybe he's much cleverer than me, maybe he'll accomplish much more, but I take precedence. For one thing, the exam is a Turkey-wide exam. Let's for now forget fundamental high school. Our conditions in İstanbul are not same as those in Black Sea Region, or those in the East.

The last code under this category is named as 'regional differences'. Onur who attends to public high school has pointed out that the entrance to university varies according to regional differences, with his expressions "In different cities, in the east, for instance, the east is currently in a stir, and there are children getting no education, they're going to end with us, in the same age. I don't think our claims are equal." The expressions of Rabia, a public high school student, state that, the students living in different regions of the same city even don't enter the exam in equal conditions, as:

...specifically in today's conditions, there are students entering the exam from every city. Currently a part of the country is living a life; another part lives a different one. This is obvious, even in İstanbul. We, Beylikdüzü and Esenyurt are adjacent districts, there's a five-minute distance in between, and only a road separates them. But life conditions in these two are so different. When it snows, it affects so much. I can't reach any of my friends in Esenyurt. Neither can they attend their schools. Continuous electricity cuts.

Theme 2: 'The Fundamental High Schools'

Under fundamental high schools theme, three different categories were identified. First category, which is 'concept of fundamental high schools' consists of three different codes. These codes are listed as following: (1) unnecessary and inefficient; (2) commercialization of education; (3) continuation of private learning instructions. The second category of this theme is named as 'disadvantages of fundamental high schools'. Under this category, there are three different codes. These codes are named as following; (1) inefficiencies of fundamental high schools; (2) discipline; (3) absence of lessons like physical ed, arts and music. Finally, the last category is named as 'motives of choice' which consists of following codes; (1) financial problems; (2) familiar environment; (3) individual diligence; (4) reliance on public high schools, and (5) parental pressure.

Category 1: Concept of fundamental high schools. Besides the inequality created by fundamental high school application, the participants have stated their opinion regarding the practice itself. Narratives in this point contain statements that the fundamental high school application is unnecessary and pointless. These narratives are coded as 'unnecessary and inefficient'. For example, Yiğit, a public high school student, has stated his opinions on this matter as "I think, it was not necessary. At least, while the examination system is like this. If they change this one, they should also change the examination system." Meliha, who is herself a fundamental high school student has raised her discontent regarding to fundamental high schools with her following expressions: "It didn't give much benefit, if I was in regular school and attended a private learning institution, it would still be better. I think the fundamental high school didn't provide an advantage, had I attended my own school regularly, and attended private learning institution, it would be the same, but those institutions were closed, and I was compelled to come here." Similarly, Damla too, a fundamental high school student, has stated her opinions on this matter as "I think it was unnecessary, should the private institutions continue, it would be better, for one aspect. I mean, there was no such necessity." and continued like this:

Due to the closure of private institutions, I think everyone wanted to attend fundamental high schools. Actually, on one hand, for everyone goes to there, something has come up, that is, for everyone tends to that, it is considered to be necessary. But in my opinion, the student attending to public high school can also do something, with taking course and own effort, all in all, it's not much necessary.

Besides fundamental high schools' being unnecessary, it is seen that narratives include views that this application is a step towards commercializing the education. These expressions of participants are coded as 'commercialization of education'. For example, it is quite striking that Oğuzhan, a fundamental high school student, expresses his opinions about his own school with the statements, "Here's a commercial institution, after all. Certain students are for advertisement. And since the rest are for maintaining the commercial institution, they care

more about social activities. The ones, not in the foremost class.” It is possible to get the leads about the marketplace logic, underlying the fundamental high schools, from Halit’s below expressions:

It could be supported, but I don’t find correct for it to become a commercial business. That is, with a student. Certainly, the given service is to have a reward, but astronomic quantities like ten, fifteen grand [turkish liras], strike nonsense to me, I believe it transforms education into commercial business. This is somewhat related to a person’s subconscious. We take it valuable, if it is paid. This, I think, is somewhat a capitalist point of view. I mean, when we pay to institutions ten, fifteen grand, the idea; ok, I paid this amount of money, this will surely provide benefit to me, even if I do nothing and rest only, the institution will make me enter somewhere; prevails. I think, due to this point of view, they [students transferring to fundamental high schools] go there.

Again, similarly, a public high school student, Rabia’s below statements, are also in a way that they point out the marketplace logic of the fundamental high school application, and its being a step regarding commercialization of education:

I see the fundamental high schools, only as a money trap. [For those who choose fundamental high schools] the reason of selection is their fear. If I pay, it would be better. You think it would be worse, if you paid five liras to some goods, but should you pay ten liras, you think it would be better. The difference of these two is in money. I mean, it is something due to capitalism. Important one is not the money, it’s the quality of the good. I think we should think so. They too, were wasted inside the system, I think. [...] I thought, from the beginning that the fundamental high schools were money traps. [...] You all are there for a purpose and you pay money to the opponent, so I consider that relation somewhat an interest relation, and so I don’t think there’s a real sincerity. For this reason, if I were there, I would get much less points.

Expressions regarding the establishment of fundamental high schools, which is a practice toward commercialization of education, as not having created a change for some students and that fundamental high schools still are being viewed as continuation of private learning institutions are also present in the narratives. These expressions are coded as ‘continuation of private learning instructions’. For example, as Onur, a public high school student states in “*I think fundamental high schools are like continuation of private learning institutions, for they are insufficient to be schools, I think in that way.*”, the institutions that transformed into fundamental high schools, have not gained the legitimacy of being a school in the view of some students. Similarly, Rümeyza, who is a public school student also supports this, with her statement as, “*I think fundamental high schools are in a quality to be continuations of private learning institutions. They can’t change it only by acquiring a license. Because they still teach YGS and LYS topics.*”

Category 2. Disadvantages of fundamental high schools. In participants’ narratives it is seen that,, participants have also pointed out the inefficiencies of fundamental high schools. Expressions concerning this issue are coded as ‘inefficiencies of fundamental high schools’. For example, Aktan, being a fundamental high school student, has so criticized the social aspect of fundamental high schools:

Socially speaking, as fundamental high school, there is no socialization. Firstly, I should mention that. Especially, if you’re on twelfth grade, you should see nothing social. At most, I create my own socialization in my off-school hours, in my own friend environment, I make sports, or whatever I do, on my own. One should have no such expectation from the school.

It is seen that some students criticize fundamental high schools in physical respects. For example, Halit, who is a public school student, has criticized the physical structure of fundamental high schools with his statements of “*I think, for the structure that we call school, our school is much better than any fundamental high school. For they are designed for private learning institution system, they are not structures in the capacity of being a school.*” Oğuzhan, who is a fundamental high school student, also voices a similar criticism:

For starters, as you know, in some of the fundamental high schools, there’s no garden. No courses so that you can relax. They try to compensate with various expeditions, but of course these are not enough. Frankly, I don’t consider as a school, I consider as a private learning institution. I consider as a place to spend one year, as preparation to university, I don’t consider as a school.

Meliha, who is herself a fundamental high school student, similarly gathers attention to the point of discipline in her schools with her *"...in school, at least there was discipline. Now there's neither private learning institution, nor school. I see that as a lack of discipline."* statements. In this matter, Vahap has stated his discontent about his own school, as follows:

For I grew up as a sportsman, I like being under discipline since I was little. But since the circumstances are a bit loose, I grow self-stress. Why is this guy treated like this? For I am seventeen years old, I have never failed to show all due respect to any of my teachers but when a guy comes and talks casually, I'm a little offended.

Meliha, who evaluates the disadvantages of fundamental high school due to fundamental high schools being a new application, over her own school, describes the situation as *"I view it as an institution, trying to provide discipline, but it can't be provided, they're in their first years, after all, we shouldn't view as something."*

Another disadvantage of fundamental high schools has been stated by the participants as, courses like painting, music and physical education being absent or disregarded. Expressions about absence of such lessons were coded as 'absence of lessons like physical ed, arts and music'. For example Oğuzhan, a fundamental high school student has gathered attention to the lack in this point, by his *"There's no course to free your mind, music, painting, physical Ed. You always take quantitative curses, naturally it is exhausting."* expressions. Similarly, a fundamental high school student, Meliha too has pointed out the disadvantage, caused by the mentioned lessons in saying *"In one hand it is good, math's and literature replaces it, on the other hand, we became like, we could be rested a bit, we could breathe, we could be relieved, even for one hour per week, this rhythm is exhausting. "And Vahap describes the reflection of the lack in this matter, on himself, as follows:*

I like to do sports very much, when I do sports, I let off steam, but for example in our school, there's no sport facilities. I feel like discharging with sports. There's nothing. Occasionally, they make expeditions, I attend to those. It is a disadvantage for me, being unable to sport. In my former school, we had everything under our reach, we had football field, basketball field, volleyball field, and we played them all. But when I'm unable, I grow stressful, I can't discharge. And this affects me negatively.

Category 3: Motivations of choice. In the interviews with the participants, it is found that, the elements influencing the choice between the two schools were also pointed out, and that in the first place comes financial problems experienced by students' parents, which is the first code of this category. For example, Aylin describes why her remaining friends in public high schools have 'not transferred to fundamental high schools like her, as *"Well, I know, for a lot of friends that I have talked to, it is due to financial problems."* Yiğit has pointed out that he fears to be an economic burden on his family by attending fundamental high school, via describing the reason why he stayed in public high schools with his *"Not my friend environment but the financial status has been in effect. "My elder brother had told me: 'If you want, go there, and don't think the cost' but nevertheless, I thought it would be a burden, since it is a great money."* statements. The following statements of Vahap, who is a fundamental high school student feeling, a similar responsibility upon him, shows how this situation gives him a responsibility:

Due to my family's economic status being rather good, I have attended to fundamental high school. And I consider this as an injustice in high school. It is absurd, since maybe the guy wants it that badly. He did nothing in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, he is greatly deficient, since his economic stance is not good, he can't attend fundamental high school. I take this as opposite to my world view. They charge you with great amounts of money. The single kids are too scarce already, everyone in Turkey has at least one sibling. You and your siblings, you both have costs. For someone who attends to fundamental high school, to choke your sibling's income, I'm currently in remorse, for instance.

Another important element affecting students' choices, to be not wanting to leave their familiar environment, is reflected on their narratives. Expressions about this issue are coded as 'familiar environment'. Aycan, who stayed in public school, describes her reason of choice, as *"...I don't like change, adaptation process, etc. It was better for me that I stayed. Environment, being familiar was influential on my staying."* Halit, who had chosen public school has put into words, the advantages, in terms of the exam, of staying in his familiar environment, via his *"We prepare to the exam with the people, with whom we have been together for three years, after all. We know one another, better. We know our minuses and pluses, much better. Therefore I think we can study a bit*

more efficient.” expressions. Rabia also has expressed her reason for not choosing fundamental high school as “Now, going to a fundamental high school from scratch. Brand new friends, brand new teachers, no bonds.” Similarly, Faruk, who attends to public high school, also has pointed out the advantage of public schools on this matter, as follows.

I don't think there's a difference, and I think the [public] school is more advantageous, rather than them. Pros, you have been in the same school for four years. You know it. You know the teachers and the administrates. When you go to the fundamental high school, a new ambiance, a new thing, one needs to adapt. Therefore, the school has more advantage.

We can also say that, an element affecting the choices of students is, the sense of individuality lying under the exams. While analyzing the data, these expressions were coded as ‘individual diligence’. There are also students in the participants, who think that, independent of structurally defining elements, only studying individually can bring success. For example, Uğur, who has chosen public high school, has remarked he is in this opinion with his words, “I believe that one who thinks he would succeed, would not attend fundamental high school.” Again similarly, Rabia also expressed her reason not to choose fundamental high school, as “... besides, I know, I'm not too bad. I know that I can get to somewhere, with my own efforts.” Again, the following statements of Şule and Gülşah, who attend to public high school and fundamental high school respectively, are striking in the same sense:

After all, we study, actually. It has nothing to do with the school, the more we study, the better places we get to. But it has nothing to do with fundamental high school, for example, the tolerance and anything else, they also exist in our school. For instance, it's the same, in terms of care, our teachers take care of us too. I don't think, there's an inequality. (Şule)

The teacher is a teacher, everywhere. I think absolutely that, getting results is up to the student. The teachers of course have capacities, but in the end, I reckon, if they were able to become teachers, then that capacity should have been certified by the state. I don't think there's an inequality, there. (Gülşah)

It is among the deductions from the narratives that, despite many advantages provided to students by the fundamental high schools in terms of preparation to the exam, in cases they could rely on public schools, they wouldn't choose fundamental high schools, which is coded as ‘reliance on public high schools’. For example, Oğuzhan who attends fundamental high school has expressed the reason of choice of students remaining in public high schools as “First, since they have expectations from the teachers, we attended a school for three years, we know all our teachers, after all. Since they knew what they could do for us, and they trusted in them, they stayed, frankly.” Similarly, Mahsun also expresses his reason to choose fundamental high school as “The facilities my school provides to me, the projection which was drafted before me, and due to the road map satisfying me, these had much influence on me, attending fundamental high school.” The below statements by Halit and Faruk also reveal that, the students being able to trust in public schools, has great impact on their preferences:

This will be a little personal answer, that is, I won't be able to generalize. If I were in a different school, maybe I would go to fundamental high school. It wouldn't suffice actually. I have already spoken recently, in the name of my friends, who transferred to fundamental high schools from our school. I definitely think that my school is much better than fundamental high schools around, to which I might have probably attended. In terms of both the administration and the teachers. All of them already has experience in private learning institutions that is they know the preparation process, well. For, I wouldn't stay here, if the administrative staff didn't give that confidence. [...] As I said, neither financial status, nor the friends or any other thing had effect, I stayed here, just for I had trust in my school, I think I was right. I trusted in my school. Mr. Principle has explained this year's plan, time after time, he explained what he thought, etc. and in my head, I considered the fundamental high schools, I couldn't see much difference (Halit)

Teachers in school, the administrates. Friends are influential, too. My family would like me to attend a fundamental high school. But I explained to them, again and again, our school will already do something, I told them. School is aware too, they take precautions, accordingly. Thus, I persuaded them. So generally, the school, the administrates, teachers, and friends. (Faruk)

The last code of this category is ‘parental pressure’. It can be stated that the pressure from the family has also an effect on students' choices. On the other hand, the pressure from the family has affected the

selection of the students, while the families, having to pay great amounts has comprised another element of pressure on the students. Oğuzhan explains his reason for choice of fundamental high school, as *“In a way, I went due to family pressure. Otherwise, I could have stayed in public high school; I think my school was better. The reason to my choice was family pressure. And to get away from friends, and focus on the courses, for a bit.”* Similarly, Elif also states how her family affected her preference with her *“My mom, like always, affected my decision. My uncle is a teacher. He said that courses would be opened in the public education center. My mom also thought that i could succeed anywhere. So I didn't chose to attend a fundamental high school.* In addition, Vahap states as follows that his family had effect in his choice of fundamental high school, and the problems felt by them due to financial obligations that his family had embarked.

For I have chosen fundamental high school, completely due to pressure from my family. If it were up to me, I would have stayed. Had I stayed in my school, I could afford for more resources. And I wouldn't blush, when asking money for books, from my family. [...] If it were not for my parents, I would not attend fundamental high school. Should you ask what I would lose, nothing. I just study a little more, since I feel pressure over me, for my family is in a critical position financially, due to my attending fundamental high school. I would study, if I was not in my school too, but I wouldn't have studied as I study in fundamental high school. Completely psychological. [...] I feel a bit in debt to my family. Since, they force their facilities. For example, when I go out with my friends, I think that they work so much for me, what I am doing. I feel psychological pressure. This motivates me deeply. [...] But, since we have pressure upon us, we're in the intention to go home, and study.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has been conducted for executing an analysis in the context of inequality, regarding the Fundamental High School practice, which was started in Turkey, in recent years, based on the narratives of students preparing for YGS and LYS. Two different themes, one being called 'inequality in preparing exams', and the other 'fundamental high school phenomenon', has been formed after the content analysis of interviews made with 20 different students, both from public high schools and from fundamental high schools, and who prepare for the university exams.

Under first theme, two different categories were identified. First one was named as “inequalities caused by fundamental high schools” consists of six different codes. These codes are examination oriented education; public schools' curriculum and examinations; insufficiencies of public high schools; teacher qualities; success points and school examinations and study environment. The second category of the first theme was named as “inequalities caused by structural elements”. This second category included three different codes, which are inequality of opportunity; inequalities between schools and regional differences

It is found in students' narratives that the fundamental high schools is an application, in which equality in education is negatively affected. The difference, remarked in the narratives at most is the exam oriented teaching programs, followed by fundamental high schools. In public schools, the courses irrelevant to the exam to be also present and students being have to allocate time for such courses, has been considered as an element which provides advantage to the students attending fundamental high schools. Such courses being not taught to students, results in the time, fundamental high school students allocate to university entrance exams, being more.

The practice of fundamental high school is also causing public education to lose reputation, in the eyes of the students and their parents. It has been considered as an important remark that, the interviewed students has pointed out both that public schools were insufficient for exam preparation, and that the teachers working in public schools were not as good as the ones working in fundamental high schools. Centralized standard tests being present, along with trivializing the subjects and applications, which is included in public education curriculum, but not included in exams, also disgraces public education. Thus, families with sufficient economic opportunities, can turn to alternatives such as fundamental high schools, and get free of the trivialized subject, and thus can provide advantage to their children.

It has also been reflected on the narratives of the students that, there are practices, which disturbs equality, in favor of fundamental high school students, regarding Secondary Education Success Point (OBP), which is added to YGS and LYS points, and determined according to students' success in school exams. It is

also reflected on the narratives that, while upon the students of public high schools, along with the responsibility of preparing for the exam, additionally, exams of school courses are also encumbered, the students of fundamental high schools are favored with concessions. It can be stated that, thus the students of fundamental high schools with higher OBPs provide themselves such an advantage in entering the university.

Another result that can be deduced from participants' narratives that public schools are not able to provide their students with the same study environment, which disturbs equality in preparing examinations in favor of high school students.

The students interviewed, has also pointed out independent of the fundamental high school practice, the structural elements causing inequality. The participants' narratives showed that students think not all of the students entering university examinations have the equal opportunities. Some of the participants indicated that economic inequality results in inequality of opportunity between students.

Another structural element disturbing equality that was indicated by the participants was inequalities between schools. Some of the participants indicated that difference event between schools, in terms of facilities or teacher qualities, causes inequality in preparing exams. That such differences exist even between fundamental high schools was indicated by some of the participants.

Like differences between schools, regional differences and inequalities are also a factor that causes inequality between students taking university examinations. According to some of the participants, different regions provide their dweller with different opportunities, thus the equality may be disturbed. It can be deduced from participants' narratives that some of them think not every region of the country is equal. There are even differences between districts of the same city.

The second theme formed after the analysis was named as "fundamental high schools". Under this theme, three different categories emerged. The first category was named as "concept of fundamental high schools", which consists of following three different codes: unnecessary and inefficient; commercialization of education; and continuation of private learning intuitions. The second category, which was named as "disadvantages of fundamental high schools", also three different codes: inefficiencies of fundamental high schools; discipline; and absence of lessons like physical ed, arts and music. Lastly, the final category, which is "motives of choice" consisted of following codes: financial problems; familiar environment; individual diligence; reliance on public high schools, and parental pressure.

The 'fundamental high schools' theme, which is the second theme reached in the study, gives leads on how the students view fundamental high school. A majority of the students, along with viewing fundamental high schools as needless and pointless, have pointed out the commercial aspect of this practice, rather than its educational aspect. Therefore, fundamental high schools, defined as continuation of private learning institutions, by some students, have been described as a business, even as a money trap, rather than a school.

The inadequacies of fundamental high schools, which are profit-seeking institutions, relative to public schools have also been reflected in the narratives of the students. Along with the physical inadequacies of fundamental high schools such as garden, cafeteria, and sports fields not being overlooked by the students, the courses such as physical ed, painting, and music, which are out of YGS and LYS scopes, not being present or cared about in fundamental high schools has also been considered as a negativity by the students who had already been preparing heavily for the exams, throughout the year.

The reasons lying behind the preference of the students of public high schools or fundamental high schools has also been reflected in the narratives, and the most remarked one has been the economic problems. The most important factor, in short, affecting the preferences of the students has been the economic opportunities possessed by them. Other than this, students not being eager to get away from their familiar environment has also affected their choice, and rather than attending fundamental high school, they have chosen to stay in their familiar schools. Although there were students who thought their schools were insufficient and chose fundamental high school, there were also those who preferred the public school, relying on the trust provided by the school management and their teachers. Additionally, that along with the students who view the fundamental high school pointless, those who believe that they could get desired points in exams by studying on their own also have not chosen the fundamental high school, are among the remarks that has been reflected in the narratives.

To summarize the results of the study, the fundamental high school, which is an important step towards marketization and privatization in education, has made the unequal 'race' medium caused by standard exams, further unequal. While families with adequate financial facilities has obtained lots of advantages by sending their kids to fundamental high schools, and these schools have disgraced the public education in the eyes of the students. In addition to this, fundamental high schools, which are seen as businesses, are not able to provide the physical and social facilities, produced for students by public schools, and thus are not carrying school qualification, as a whole.

As it is known, the education system has also a function of providing the re-production of the existing social formation and the dominant cultural capital. In Bourdieu's (2006) statement, education too works like Maxwell's Demon, and preserves the pre-existing order, that is the difference between students who have unequal cultural capital. In the neoliberal period, in which the discussions of privatization and marketization in education are intensely experienced, and the standardization increased in an ongoing fashion, it is possible to state that, education opportunities differ in accordance with socio-economic levels of the students, and that students having higher socio-economic levels are able to obtain better opportunities. The fundamental high school practice, which was established in Turkey, too causes the students who can afford, to obtain a great advantage in university entrance exams. This already existent unequal 'race' caused by standard tests, now has become more sensitive to the socio-economic opportunities of candidates. The families, who can endure the cost, send their children to schools which better prepare them for the exam, and obtain a big advantage over the children of families who cannot afford this cost. In this matter, Balkan and Rutz (2016) have laid out in their study, what the new middle class families could do in order, to obtain this advantage. The fundamental practice therefore, can be considered as one of the opportunities offered to these families. And the results of this study, provides some opinions from the eyes of the students, about elements which deepens the inequality, in favor of the fundamental high school students.

The inequality caused by privatization in education, is not limited only to Turkey, and the fundamental high school practice in Turkey. In parallel with the results by the students' narratives, in the scope of the study, Tooley and Dixon (2006), has detected that the students attending private schools in Ghana, Nigeria, and India, which are among the countries having high venture levels in the field of education, had higher points in standard tests. Levin, Cornelisz, and Hanisch-Cerda (2013), have also pointed out that, although the private schools in the education system of Netherlands, which is a mostly privatized system, provide freedom and efficiency of choice, they hurt social justice and social coherence, due to the existing socio-economic and ethnic stratification among the school types, and among the schools. Elacqua (2012) has reached the evidence that, the children of the poor families in Chile, mostly attended to public schools, and the children of the poor families who were able to attend private schools were subject to discrimination and exclusion in their schools. Motala (2009) also found out that, the paid schools in South Africa caused an inequality in obtaining educational services, and in the quality of the provided education.

The meaningful relation between poverty and test success, detected by Berliner (2006), or Condrón's (2011) evidence regarding PISA scores in countries with high economic inequality being less than those in more equitable countries also reveals that economic inequality directly affects the test success too. Another one of the elements causing inequality with regard to the exam is the difference in schools and another one is regional differences. That since each school is not in the same quality, there are inequalities in entering the exam, and is among the statements seen in the interviews. In addition to this, there are participants who state the students living in the same country, even in the same city, but in different regions, are also unable to enter the exam, due to regional differences.

On the other hand, it will not be right, to consider the fundamental high school practice which came out due to the commercialization of education, independent of the standardization, and particularly of the standard tests. Through standard tests, while it is easily controlled which information is presented in which form, and how it will be taught, the topics which are out of the scopes of the standard tests are being excluded from the curriculum, and even if they were included, they are being trivialized (Au, 2007; Au, 2010). The results of this study also confirms these statements, and either the students, the parents, or the schools are considering topics out of the exam scopes unimportant. Therefore, public schools, which include these insignificant topics in their curriculum, are considered insufficient in the context of these exams, and these topics and courses can even pose as an element of disadvantage for the students in public schools. In fact, the

evidence obtained in Kapferer's (1984) study also, has laid out that due to differences, which occur in in-school practices, in comparison with the public schools; private schools in Australia could provide greater advantages to their students.

Standard tests are also the most prominent element, which has paved the way of commercialization and marketization in education, in short, providing the suitable environment to create the fundamental high schools. For, in order for a good can be subject to exchange in the market, it is required that the exchange value could be detected. For ensuring freely roaming and marketing of the goods, it is required for the evaluation activity, which will reveal the value of the good, to be executed regularly (Kurul, Küçüker, Yolcu, Özdemir, Çokluk, Baykal, and Öztürk, 2013). Therefore, the standard tests are the most important factor in the detection of the values of the teachers and the schools in the market, along with in classification and the ordering of the students.

Various recommendations could be put forward based on the results of this study. As it can be understood from both the literature and from the results of this study, to open the field of education to the activities of private entrepreneurship, affects the equality and the rightness negatively, in a socio-economically stratified society. Therefore, the abolition of both the standard examinations and the practice of fundamental high schools would be one of the most important steps that could be taken, in order to be able to provide justice and equality in education.

Additionally for the researchers, it can be recommended to do research which study how the children of the families of various economic, social, and cultural capital in Turkey were affected by the practice of fundamental high schools; to execute comparative ethnographic research in order to better lay out the differences between fundamental high schools and public schools, rather than the student opinions; to design works, in which the courses of fundamental high schools and those of public schools are investigated comparatively.

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