

Metaphorical Perceptions of Secondary School Students towards Physical Education Teachers

Rafet Ünver (Corresponding author)

Faculty of Sports Sciences

Kırıkkale University, P.O. Box 71000, Kırıkkale, Turkey

E-mail: rafetunver@kku.edu.tr

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Abstract

As it is known, one of the most important factors of an education system is the teacher. According to Turkey's education system, students first meet a physical education teacher in secondary school. Therefore, it is an important question that remains to be clarified what students who have just started secondary school think about their physical education teachers. In this context, the aim of the research was to examine the metaphors created by the students who have just started secondary school about physical education teachers. This research is a qualitative study designed by making use of the phenomenology pattern that examines the metaphors created by secondary school students about physical education teachers. A total of 65 students, 34 male and 31 female, participated in this research voluntarily. A structured interview form prepared to evaluate secondary school students' perceptions of physical education teachers was used. In this study, content analysis technique was used in the evaluation of metaphors. When the research findings were examined, it was seen that 6 themes were created in total. Within the scope of these themes, it was seen that there were 12 metaphors in total. While the most metaphors were created under the theme of Superhero (29), the least metaphors were produced under the theme of Element (3). When the reasons for the themes created by the participants about physical education teachers were examined, it was determined that the students emphasized that physical education teachers are strong and athletic and also have various abilities. As a result, it was found that the justifications for all metaphors formed by secondary school students about physical education teachers were positive. Therefore, it can be said that secondary school students have positive feelings about physical education teachers.

Keywords: Physical education teachers, Metaphorical perceptions, Secondary school students

1. Introduction

Physical education lesson is accepted as an integral part of education. One of the main purposes of physical education is to create awareness of a healthy lifestyle in students. The goal of raising healthy individuals in physical education is achieved through physical activities (Carel et al., 2011). The importance of physical activity and exercise on health has been emphasized by many researchers (Sekban et al., 2022; Kilincarslan et al., 2022; İlbak & Bayer, 2021; İlbak et al., 2022). In this context, since childhood is considered as a critical period for the acquisition of lifelong physical activity behaviors (Carel et al., 2011), it is obvious how important physical education lessons are.

As it is known, one of the most important factors of an education system is the teacher (Kavcar, 2003). According to Turkey's education system, students first meet a physical education teacher in secondary school. In other words, students have the opportunity to participate in physical activities outside the classroom for the first time in this period under the supervision of an expert in the field of sports. Physical education teachers have the opportunity to communicate closely with students in terms of the scope and functioning of the course. Considering that students tend to take their teachers as role models in the school environment, sensitivity should be paid to ensure that this communication is as good as possible. For these reasons, the attitude of the students towards the physical education lesson and physical education teacher is important (Karaşahinoğlu & İlhan, 2019).

When the studies examining attitudes towards a person or phenomenon are examined, it is mostly used to use scales (Kangalgil et al., 2006; Yıldız & Özbek, 2018), draw a picture (Temel & Güllü, 2016; Karaşahinoğlu & İlhan, 2019) or produce metaphors (İlkım et al., 2023; Namlı et al., 2017). Borba and Lucena (2007) stated that studies on metaphor have increased in the last 30 years and the metaphor of this new perspective, which emerged in the 1980s, is explained as language ornamentation under a rhetorical perspective and is seen as a cognitive tool. The fact that this phenomenon is a powerful mental mapping and modeling tool for individuals to make sense of and construct their worlds has a great impact on the increase in studies on metaphors (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006).

Metaphor, in its most general sense, is defined as the explanation of something through something else or the explanation of a phenomenon that is foreign to us by likening it to a phenomenon that is familiar to us (Black, 1979; Türker, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that the metaphor technique is a very effective and functional method.

There are many studies in the literature that aim to reveal students' perceptions of learning and teachers (Stylianou et al., 2013; Aykaç, 2012; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008; Kalyoncu, 2012). It is important to reveal the perceptions of the concept of a physical education teacher, as physical education teachers, unlike other branch teachers, have responsibilities that go beyond the school in terms of time and space, and especially because they have a decisive effect on the sportive lives of students.

When the relevant studies in the literature were examined, it was found that the researchers focused on the physical education lesson (Koksal & Gorucu, 2015; Sofi & Yoncalik, 2015;

Karagün, 2021; Güllü, 2021; Stylianou et al., 2013; Carlson, 2001) and the number of studies on teachers was quite low (Sözen & Korur, 2019; Gorucu et al., 2016; Ulas, 2021). In addition, the fact that the students who have just started secondary school are taking the physical education lesson from the physical education teacher for the first time reveals the situation of the students to face a new situation.

In this context, both because physical education teachers have responsibilities that extend beyond the school in terms of time and place, and especially because they have a decisive impact on students' athletic lives, and also because middle school students are taking physical education for the first time from a physical education teacher, it is of interest to understand the perceptions that middle school students have towards physical education teachers. In this framework, the aim of the research was to examine the metaphors created by the students who have just started secondary school about physical education teachers.

2. Method

This research is a qualitative study designed by making use of the phenomenology pattern that examines the metaphors created by secondary school students about physical education teachers. Among the qualitative research approaches, the use of metaphors aims to get deeper views from individuals and understand their thoughts and feelings (İnam, 2008) and to reveal and interpret individual perceptions about a phenomenon in general (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

2.1 Study Group

A total of 65 students, 34 male and 31 female, participated in this research voluntarily. All of the research group were students between the ages of 11 and 12 who had just started secondary school. At the beginning of the study, data were collected after obtaining parental consent.

2.2 Data Collection Tool

A structured interview form prepared to evaluate secondary school students' perceptions of physical education teachers was used. In the first part of the form, which consisted of two parts, there were two questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants (gender and age), and in the second part, there were open-ended questions in order to determine the perceptions of the students. For this purpose, the participants stated that "Physical education teacher is like ... because ..." were asked to complete the sentence. The expression "because" was used for the students participating in the research to provide a justification for the metaphors they produced.

During the data collection phase, the researchers first informed the students and then explained by giving a metaphor example because of the low age group of the students and the possibility of not understanding the question asked. It was stated to the students that participation in this study was on a voluntary basis, and students who did not want to participate in the study were not obliged to answer the questions.

2.3 Analysis of Data

The analysis of the metaphors produced by the students in the research group about physical education teachers was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, metaphor sources were examined. At the end of the examination, 11 forms that were not intended for the purpose of the study or were unrelated to the metaphor source were not analyzed. In the second stage, categories related to metaphors were created. The relationship between the subject and source of metaphors has been examined in depth. Content analysis was carried out on the characteristics attributed to the subject from the source of the metaphor, and as a result of this analysis, conceptual categories were revealed. In the third stage, metaphor sources were classified according to their conceptual categories and themes were created. In the content analysis, the metaphor itself was taken into account in determining the themes.

2.4 Validity and Reliability Strategies

To ensure the credibility of the research, a depth-oriented data collection strategy and an expert review strategy were adopted. In the research, the determination of the metaphor source was not contented with, the data collection tool was designed in such a way that the relationship between the source of metaphor and the subject of metaphor would be examined in depth. With the expert review strategy, besides the researchers, an expert working in the field of educational sciences and especially working on metaphor provided consultancy during the research. For the consistency of the research, while categorizing the metaphors of an expert and researchers outside the research, the level of agreement was checked with the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) “Reliability = Consensus/Consensus + Disagreement”. It has been reported that reliability is provided in cases where this agreement is 70% or more.

3. Results

The findings obtained from the data of the research are presented in tables below.

Table 1. Metaphors created by participants about physical education teachers.

Themes	Metaphors	f	No. of metaphors
Superhero	Spiderman (8), Superman (12), Batman (9)	29	3
Animal	Lion (6), Cheetah (5)	11	2
Nature	Stone (5)	5	1
Element	Iron (3)	3	1
Cartoon Character	Temel Reis (Popeye) (7), Johnny Bravo (4)	11	2
Food	Candy (3), Pudding (2), Biscuits (1)	6	3
Total		65	12

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 6 themes were created in total. Within the scope of these themes, it is seen that there are 12 metaphors in total. While the most metaphors were created under the theme of superhero (29), the least metaphors were produced under the theme of element (3).

Table 2. Justifications for the metaphors created by participants about physical education teachers

Themes	Metaphors	Examples for metaphor justifications
Superhero	Spiderman (8) Superman (12) Batman (9)	PE teacher is like a Superman because he is very muscular. PE teacher is like a Superman because he is quite athletic. PE teacher is like a Superman because he is quite strong. PE teacher is like a Spiderman because he seems to have magical powers. PE teacher is like a Spiderman because he is quite strong. The PE teacher is like a Batman because he's very muscular. PE teacher is like a Batman because he has many talents.
Animal	Lion (6) Cheetah (5)	PE teacher is like a lion because he is quite strong. PE teacher is like a lion because he has a rather dominant character. PE teacher is like a cheetah because he runs very fast. PE teacher is like a cheetah because he can move very fast.
Nature	Stone (5)	PE teacher is like a stone because his muscles are very hard. PE teacher is like a stone because he is quite strong.
Element	Iron (3)	PE teacher is like an iron because it is very strong.
Cartoon Character	Temel Reis (7) Johnny Bravo (4)	PE teacher is like a Temel Reis because he seems to have magical powers. PE teacher is like Temel Reis because no one can beat him. PE teacher is like Johnny Bravo because he is very muscular.
Food	Candy (3) Pudding (2) Biscuits (1)	PE teacher is like a candy because he is so cute and kind. PE teacher is like a pudding because when I see him, I am happy. PE teacher is like a biscuit because he is as sweet as a biscuit.

Note. PE: Physical education.

When the justifications for the themes created by the participants about physical education teachers are examined, it is determined that the students emphasized that physical education teachers are strong and athletic and have various abilities. In addition, it was found that the reasons for all metaphors formed by secondary school students about physical education teachers were positive (Table 2).

4. Discussion

In this study, the perceptions of secondary school students about physical education teachers

were examined through metaphors. When the results of the findings of the study were examined, it was determined that the metaphors created by all participants about physical education teachers based on positive reasons. In this context, 12 metaphors (Superman (12), Spiderman (8), Batman (9), Lion (6), Cheetah (5), Stone (5), Iron (3), Temel Reis (7) Johnny Bravo (4), Candy (3), Pudding (2), Biscuits (1)) were created and 6 themes (Superhero, Animal, Nature, Element, Cartoon Character, Food) were identified within the scope of these metaphors. While the most metaphors were created under the theme of superhero (29), the least metaphors were produced under the theme of element (3). When the justifications for the themes created by the participants about physical education teachers are examined, it is determined that the students emphasized that physical education teachers are strong and athletic and have various abilities. Based on these findings, it can be said that the personal characteristics of physical education teachers have significant effects on secondary school students.

The results of our research also show parallelism with the relevant studies in the literature and show that students generally form positive metaphors for physical education teachers (Soysal & Afacan, 2012; Kalyoncu, 2012; Gedikli, 2014; Çulha-Özbaş & Aktekin 2013; Şengül et al., 2014; Sayar, 2014; Gorucu et al., 2016; Ulas, 2021).

The personal characteristics of the physical education teacher are a very important issue that should be considered. Physical, social, and spiritual characteristics of the physical education teacher are important in terms of training, directing, and setting an example for students (Tamer & Pular, 2001). In our study, it was concluded that students focused on the personal characteristics of physical education teachers. Therefore, it is thought that teachers should be sensitive about this issue, since the positive or negative attitudes of physical education teachers during the lesson can directly affect the students.

One of the results obtained from the findings of the research was that the students emphasized the physical appearance of the physical education teachers. The metaphors produced by the students were mostly related to the athletic and strong appearance of their teachers. Sözen and Korur (2019), reported results in this direction in their research.

Among the factors that make the teacher effective, the teaching strategies that teachers use in the classroom have an important place as well as personal characteristics (Çakmak, 2001). Therefore, not only the personal characteristics of teachers, but also their professional and instructional characteristics should be considered, and studies based on this should be done (Çoban & Turan, 2006). In our study, students reported that physical education teachers had various professional abilities. In this context, it can be said that physical education teachers are successful instructors in the lessons.

Demirhan et al. (2002) stated that the three most important characteristics that an ideal physical education teacher should have been as follows, in their research aiming to determine students' views on physical education teachers. Firstly, to understand students in every subject, secondly to be competent in professional knowledge and skills, and thirdly to have a sense of humor. As it is understood from the findings of our study, students stated that their physical education teachers are talented and at the same time kind and sweet. This is an

indicator of the positive thoughts that students have towards their physical education teachers.

5. Conclusion

As a result, it was found that the justifications for all metaphors formed by secondary school students about physical education teachers were positive. Therefore, it can be said that secondary school students have positive feelings about physical education teachers. It is recommended to compare physical education and other branch teachers in future research. In addition, it is recommended that researchers conduct similar studies according to factors such as the grade level and gender of the students.

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