



Copyright © 2022 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports
<http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/>
 Journal of Youth Research • August 2022 • 10(27) • 63-77

ISSN 2791-8157

Received | 2 Dec 2021

Accepted | 28 Apr 2022

Universities in the Eyes of High School and University Students: Using Metaphors to Describe Universities

*Kübra Karakaya Özyer**

*Fatma Altınsoy***

Abstract

This study aims to reveal how high school and university students use metaphors to talk about universities. Adopting a phenomenological research design in our study, we collected qualitative data from 182 high school and 252 university students. After collecting data, we performed a content analysis to assist us in developing relevant codes and themes for the metaphors used by students. The content analysis allowed us to devise the following themes for the metaphors cited by high school students: universities' being a personal development center, a place to prepare for and start life, a center of knowledge and learning, a social and cultural hub, a center for career development, freedom, a place that fosters happiness, and a place that is difficult to access. The themes for university students' metaphors were: universities' being center for a personal development, a place to prepare for and start life, a center for knowledge and learning, a social and cultural hub, a center for career development, freedom, missed expectations, and a place that fosters happiness and a feeling of belonging. Our study revealed certain differences in how high school and university students regarded universities. Using the findings of our study, university administrators can revise their visions and services to fit the themes emerging from this study.

Keywords: University, Metaphor, High School, Education.

* Dr., Research Assistant, Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Faculty of Education, Eskişehir, Turkey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0208-7870>

** Dr., Psychological Consultant, Ministry of National Education, Bilecik, Turkey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4910-2510>

Öz

Bu çalışma lise ve üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversiteler hakkında kurdukları metaforları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmamızda fenomenolojik araştırma deseni benimsenmiştir ve 182 lise ve 252 üniversite öğrencisinden nitel veri toplanmıştır. Verileri topladıktan sonra, öğrencilerin kullandıkları metaforlara uygun kodlar ve temalar içerik analizi ile belirlenmiştir. Lise öğrencilerinin oluşturdukları metaforlar “üniversitelerin kişisel gelişim merkezi”, “hayata hazırlanma ve hayata başlama yeri”, “bilgi ve öğrenme merkezi”, “sosyal ve kültürel alan”, “kariyer gelişim merkezi”, “özgür yaşam alanı”, “mutluluğu besleyen bir yer” ve “erişilmesi zor bir yer” temaları altında toplanmıştır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin metaforlarına yönelik temalar ise “kişisel gelişim merkezi”, “yaşama hazırlanma ve hayata başlama”, “bilgi ve öğrenme merkezi”, “sosyal ve kültürel alan”, “kariyer gelişim merkezi”, “özgür yaşam alanı”, “beklentilerin karşılanmadığı yer”, “ait hissedilen ve mutlu olunan yer” olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Araştırmamız, lise ve üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversite kavramına bakış açılarında bazı farklılıklar olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Üniversite yöneticileri, araştırmamızın bulgularını kullanarak vizyonlarını ve hizmetlerini bu çalışmada ortaya çıkan temalara uyacak şekilde revize edebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Üniversite, Metafor, Lise, Eğitim.

Introduction

Universities are educational institutions whose primary objective is to prepare individuals for their future professions. Renowned for the diverse educational activities they offer (Charle & Verger, 1994), universities have evolved from offering solely an education to a multi-layered, dynamic institution that synthesizes education, public benefit, psychosocial development, and science (Ertem & Arı, 2016).

Universities play a variety of roles, such as conducting educational activities to support career development (Erdem, 2013; Griffiths, 1965; Hamlyn, 1996; Toylan & Göktepe, 2010), performing scientific research to develop innovative practices and technologies (Altbach & Salmi, 2011; Erdem, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2001; Griffiths, 1965; Hamlyn, 1996; Martin & Verdaguer, 1995; McGregor & Volckmann, 2010; Rasmussena et al., 2006; Rothman et al., 2011; Toylan & Göktepe, 2010), and carrying out activities to meet the needs of the communities in which they exist (Erdem, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2001; Martin & Verdaguer, 1995; Rasmussena et al., 2006; Taylor & Miroiu, 2002). By supporting their psychosocial development, universities also play an important role in cultivating intellectual individuals (McGregor & Volckmann, 2010; Radmard & Soysal, 2019). Universities' roles constitute a dynamic structure replete with a wide array of rich content. That said, the meanings students attribute to universities differ. Extant studies reveal that students associate universities with educational activities that support career development (Argon, 2015; Ertem & Arı, 2016). Students are reported in the literature to associate the following aspects with universities: socializing environment (Argon, 2015; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Jorgensen-Earp & Staton, 1993; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013; Radmard & Soysal, 2019), freedom (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Demirtaş & Çoban, 2014; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013; Uğurlu, 2018), multiculturalism (Argon,

2015; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Demirtaş & Çoban, 2014; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015; Uğurlu, 2018), the beginning of real life (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Argon, 2015; Kahu & Picton, 2020), and identity development (Argon, 2015; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Radmard & Soysal, 2019). Students perceive universities to have a multidimensional nature. Using metaphors is one of the most important tools enabling students to explore all the different facets of universities.

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Kövecses, 2017; Kövecses & Benczes, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), conceptual metaphors are mental mapping and modeling mechanisms where one phenomenon is used to make another, separate phenomenon more concrete. This theory focuses on mental structuring and reinterpretation (Kövecses, 2017; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to this theory, conceptual metaphors incorporate several features. One is that they map and match the conceptual system's domains (Lakoff, 2006). Another feature is that conceptual metaphors transform an abstract experience area to more concrete area. This transformation is facilitated by the similarities in nested hierarchical structures (Kövecses, 2017; Kövecses & Benczes, 2010).

When using metaphors, a complex phenomenon is associated with an experienced phenomenon, thus facilitating interpretation. In other words, conceptual metaphors are mostly shaped by life experience (Kövecses, 2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Language and culture are subjective structures that direct the wider context in this process. Metaphors include linguistic processes because they establish connections with the outside world for mental signification (Cameron, 1996). Likewise, since mental configurations are context sensitive, they are sociocultural (Kövecses, 2010; Moser, 2000). Based on these explanations, metaphors are symbols that evoke a phenomenon through conscious and subconscious processes, thereby making concepts easier to grasp.

Knowing the above, it has thus become important to understand how students—given their central role in universities—regard these institutions and how their perceptions have changed as universities have shifted from being unidimensional organizations to multi-layered, dynamic ones. The literature contains several studies investigating how high school (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Ertem & Arı, 2016; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013) and university students regard universities (Argon, 2015; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Demirtaş & Çoban, 2014; Jorgensen-Earp & Staton, 1993; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Landau et al., 2014; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015; Radmard & Soysal, 2019; Uğurlu, 2018; Yang & Liu, 2009). A holistic and comparative consideration of the meanings attributed to universities before, during, and after one's time there will aid researchers to gain a better understanding of students' expectations and experiences. This study will help clarify what universities mean to students and thus serve as a guide to help institutions meet their students' expectations.

In this study, we aim to reveal how both high school and university students regard universities through metaphors. To this end, we sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do high school students regard universities?
2. How do university students regard universities?
3. What are the similarities and differences in how high school and university students regard universities?

Methodology

Research Design

We adopted a qualitative research method, a phenomenological design, as this was in line with our objective of examining participants' lived experiences (Merriam, 2009).

Study Group

We collected data from two separate study groups, both of whose members were recruited through purposeful sampling. The first study group consisted of twelfth-grade (senior) high school students from Bilecik, Turkey. The majority of the families from this region are classified as middle income. This group of students attended an Anatolian high school—a type of school geared to preparing students for study in universities—in said city. Though we initially reached two-hundred students, eighteen were excluded from the analysis because they had failed to complete the section on metaphors. All students from this group were between seventeen and nineteen years old; 53.3% (n = 97) were female and 46.7% (n= 85) were male.

The second study group consisted of university students from one of the three state universities located in Eskişehir, Turkey—the twenty-fifth most populated city in Turkey. Though we contacted a total of 302 students, only 252 were included in the analysis. Of this total, 69% were female and 31% male. First-year students constituted 50% of all participants, second-year students 11.9%, third-year students 9.1%, and fourth-year students 27.8%.

Data Collection Tools

We developed a specialized, two-part metric to collect data for our study. Whereas the first part solicited respondents' demographic information, the second asked them to write metaphors representing universities, to explain their metaphors, and to reveal their rationale for using said metaphors. Following a survey of extant studies on metaphors (Altınsoy & Özabacı, 2019; Fetah et al., 2014; Yalçın et al., 2016), we developed a metric that we then administered online. Accordingly, respondents were asked to complete the following sentence: "Universities resemble ... because..."

The questionnaire was administered to high school students face to face in their own classrooms. A paper-based version was distributed to high school students who were then given ten minutes to complete. University students, on the other hand, completed this questionnaire online as a Google Form.

Data Analysis

Respondents' answers were entered into two separate columns, i.e., metaphors and explanations. Twenty-one statements that did not include metaphors were excluded from analysis. Such imagery as the sun, festivals, and bridges were marked in a separate column, thereby rendering a total of fifty different expressions.

Respondents' answers were then reviewed and the meaningfulness of their metaphors and explanations checked. A subsequent twenty-nine questionnaires were excluded from analysis since their answers were unrelated to universities.

We then subjected the data to a content analysis for classification and interpretation. Creswell and Poth (2016) list five steps during content analysis: (i) collecting data and performing data dumps, (ii)

arranging and classifying data into themes, (iii) determining connections in order to show how themes interact with one another, (iv) reviewing conflicting data and coming up with alternative descriptions, and (v) presenting the findings. During the first stage of the analysis, we created preliminary codes for each metaphor. While creating codes, the metaphors were considered together with the explanations provided by respondents. The researchers exchanged ideas while devising codes and left blank those metaphors for which a consensus could not be reached. After completing the coding process, we returned to the uncoded metaphors and discussed among ourselves whether it would be appropriate to assign one of the existing codes. Metaphors that could not be assigned an existing code were excluded from analysis. Three weeks after the first coding, we came together and performed a second coding session. All of the metaphors were recoded without considering the results of the first session during this session. Codes were created after considering the codes and themes found in the literature. After this session, inconsistent codes were reviewed and a final decision was made as to what code they should be assigned. As a result of the two coding sessions, we decided that metaphors could be represented by more than one code. For example, one student likening universities to a shining star reasoned that this was “because [students] improve themselves, further their careers, and learn about life.” This metaphor was therefore assigned more than one code. Considering universities’ complex nature, it is not surprising that respondents brought up diverse rationale. We then calculated the percentages and frequencies of each code. After creating the final codes, we devised themes by associating them with one another.

Validity and Reliability

Protracted interaction with data sources, detailed data collection, and data diversity are all important in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). We repeated the coding process twice over a three-week period to gain familiarity with and make better sense of the data. Furthermore, study data were diversified to increase credibility. We were careful to select both high school and university students studying in different fields in order to represent a wider diversity of experiences. Credibility was further bolstered by including verbatim quotations made by respondents.

Applicability to similar settings or situations can be mentioned in qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Detailed descriptions and purposeful sampling are integral in ensuring transferability. We deliberately selected students from the same university and high school in an attempt to eliminate any differences arising from the institutions they attended. Additionally, we have presented each phase of the study to the reader in meticulous detail.

Since an outside perspective is one factor that affects research consistency (Christensen et al., 2014), we sent the codes and themes devised to two different experts to attain their opinion. We then revised the themes and codes based on their feedback.

We carried out this study after receiving permission from Eskişehir Osmangazi University’s Social and Human Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (decision number 2020/22 reached on 25 November 2020).

The researchers' roles have been laid out in detail in order to verify the study. Both the data collection metric and the data obtained as a result have been preserved in case of any audit.

Researchers' Roles

Providing a detailed description of the roles fulfilled by researchers is important in qualitative research. One researcher had previously worked as a guidance and psychological counselor in the high school included in this study. Prior to conducting the study, this researcher conducted field observations and interviews to gain a preliminary understanding of how students perceived universities. The other researcher has worked as a research assistant for more than five years at the university where data were collected.

Findings

High School Students

The high school students came up with 145 metaphors for universities, several of which were used more than once (See Table 1). Upon further review, however, we observed that some of the repeated metaphors were used in more than one sense. One student, for example, used a ladder to represent career development whereas another student used it to symbolize the transition into adult life. Another student used steps to describe universities as an environment where one learns a profession and gains autonomy. Likewise, different metaphors were sometimes used to symbolize similar things. While one student used a compass to represent universities' role in directing one's life, another student used a kite to represent the same thing. We therefore devised codes that took into consideration both metaphors and their particular explanations.

Table 1. Codes and Themes for High School Students

Themes	Frequencies	Codes	Frequencies	Sample metaphors
Place to Prepare for and Start Life	60	Directing life	31	Compass
		A new beginning	14	White paper
		Preparation for life	6	Boxing match break
		Diverse experiences	5	Deepest point of an ocean
		Life simulation	4	House
Personal Development Center	59	Earning through hard work	23	Cup
		Learning how to manage life	17	House
		Making decisions that lead to new acquisitions	9	Road
		Identity development	5	Meeting point
		Autonomy	5	Steps

Career Development Center	25	Career development area	25	Attic
Knowledge and Learning Center	14	Knowledge transfer	14	Book
Freedom	13	A place to live freely	13	Bird
Social and Cultural Venue	9	Multicultural environment	6	Detention camp
		Socialization	3	Home
Difficult to Reach	8	Difficult to reach	8	European Union
Enjoyable Place	3	An enjoyable place	3	Chocolate

Table 1 shows that eight themes and seventeen codes were created from the 145 metaphors written by high school students. These themes are: (i) a place to prepare for and start life, (ii) a personal development center, (iii) a career development center, (iv) a knowledge and learning center, (v) a place to live freely, (vi) an enjoyable place, (vii) a place hard to reach, and (viii) a social and cultural area.

Most of these metaphors ($N = 60$) were related to preparing for and starting life. The codes falling under this theme were: directing life, a new beginning, preparation for life, diverse experiences, and life simulation. Many high school students thought universities would direct the course of their lives. Participants stated that they believed their lives would change significantly after going to university and that their experiences there would impact their future. They further stated that positive university experiences would greatly enhance their future lives.

Several students believed they would experience a completely different environment than high school in that they would have a new beginning. Some students considered that the time spent at university would prepare them for their adult lives. One student, for instance, likened universities to a gateway, explaining that “an important life awaits us after [university].” Some participants stated that universities were a simulation of adult life, adding that the experiences and activities in which students participated there would prepare them for real life. One participant regarded universities as the place where “people have to follow a certain path so that they can be ready for real life.” Students thought that they would have a wide array of novel experiences while preparing for adult life away at university. One participant likened universities to life, highlighting that he expected to have both uplifting and upsetting experiences there. One student explained: “[University] offers people a variety of experiences; some of which cause pain and others joy.”

The metaphors that high school students came up with revealed that they perceived universities to function as a center for personal development ($N = 59$). The codes falling under this theme were: earning through hard work, learning how to manage one’s life, making decisions that lead to new acquisitions, identity development, and autonomy. High school students primarily regarded universities as a place where they would need to work hard, as exemplified by one student who stated that “universities

are like trees because the better you look after at them, the better fruits you get.” They thought that students needed to make a concerted effort to benefit from university life. There, they believe they will acquire new knowledge and behaviors that will benefit them throughout their entire university career. High school students saw universities as an opportunity to learn how to manage their lives. One student explained his metaphor as follows: “There, we will improve and learn how to take care of ourselves.” Given that, students regarded universities as an environment to develop their life skills. Some students stated that their choices would be given greater importance there. They also stated that although there were both positive and negative sides to universities, it was up to each individual to derive benefit from his or her time there. One student likened universities to an oven that produced different results depending on how one used it: “It can either cook or burn a person.”

The high school students who came up with these metaphors emphasized the importance of self-control while at university, arguing that people can realize their dreams by making the right choices and taking the appropriate steps. One aspect of self-improvement is identity development, and university may offer students opportunities to deepen and enrich how they perceive themselves. The study data showed that some high school students considered universities to be environment for maturation and self-discovery. Similarly, some students perceived universities as a place where they could realize their autonomy. They believed that students would have the opportunity to make their own decisions and take responsibility for the consequences while studying at university.

One of the most popular themes spoken about by high school students was universities’ role as career development centers. Some students (N = 25) regarded universities as a place to acquire a profession. One participant likened universities to a bridge: “For me, [university] will serve as a bridge for my future plans and career.” This and other similar metaphors indicate that high school students perceive universities as a stepping stone to realize their dreams and goals.

Only fourteen metaphors—or 7.7% of the high school students included in our study—considered universities as centers of knowledge and learning. These students referred to universities as places where existing knowledge is transferred, as opposed to being produced. One student likened universities to a library, stating: “We can obtain all kinds of knowledge from both people and experiences.” In summary, high school students view universities as the place where knowledge is stored and transferred via people and experiences.

The high school students saw universities as a place where they could live independently and free from external control. One student described universities as being without limits: “[Universities] allow us the opportunity to do whatever we want.” Further review of this theme showed that students felt restricted in their current situation and saw universities as a means to escape.

Some high school students viewed universities as an uplifting place. Two codes fell under this theme: being a place that fosters happiness and being one’s ideal place. Accordingly, students considered attending university to be one of their primary goals. One student, for instance, complained about the difficulty of being accepted to a university, likening it to admission to the European Union. In other words, students regarded universities as being difficult to attend yet a desirable environment

for students. Some students described universities as a place where positive emotions are felt. One student, for instance, likened universities to a home garden, describing them as “comfortable and beautiful places.”

Finally, some high school students described universities as a social and cultural venue. Two codes fall under this theme: multicultural environment and socialization. Students viewed universities as a place where people from different cities and cultures come together. One participant, for instance, likened universities to Istanbul: “There are different communities and circles of people at every corner.” The metaphors students brought up were: the world, Istanbul, and training camps. Students who viewed universities as an environment for socialization also likened universities to a home environment in which “[people] shared an environment with others and are influenced by their ideas.”

Findings from University Students

Table 2 below displays the eight themes and twenty-six codes derived from the metaphors that university students used to describe universities. Similar to with high school students, codes the themes were finalized after considering metaphors together with the explanations students gave for them.

Table 2. Codes and Themes for University Students

Themes	Frequencies	Codes	Frequencies	Sample metaphors
Personal Development Center	80	Personal development	26	Stairs
		Place guided by choices	15	Map
		Identity development	13	Seed
		Earning through hard work	11	Agriculture
		Learning to manage life	8	Abroad
		Opportunity	6	Bus terminal
		Autonomy	1	Life
Preparation and Staging Point for Life	59	Diverse experiences	21	Winter vacation
		Simulation of life	18	Family
		Preparation for life	12	Teacher
		Competitive environment	3	Competition
		Life-guiding	3	Compass
		Challenging environment	2	Computer games

Social and Cultural Hub	39	Multicultural environment	26	Forrest
		Socialization	13	Playground
Knowledge and Learning Center	36	Knowledge center	33	Fruit tree
		Production center	3	Bee hive
Place Where One Feels Negative Emotions and Disappointment	25	Disappointment	20	Village
		Difficult to escape	5	Bog
		Standardization	2	Factory
Career Development Center	19	Career development	18	Consultant
		Seminal	1	Book
Place Fostering Feels Belonging and Happiness	10	Place to feel belonging	4	House
		Place to be happy	4	Surprise gift
		Ideal place	2	Orange
Freedom	6	Place to live freely	6	Utopia

The metaphors most frequently brought up by university students were used to liken universities to centers for personal development. The following codes fell under this theme: personal development, a place guided by one's choices, identity development, earning through hard work, learning how to manage one's life, opportunity, and autonomy. University students thought that their universities enabled them to gain an education. One participant likened universities to fitness centers "because the goal in both is to push your limits and improve yourself." Students who articulated similar metaphors viewed universities both as a step forward and as an environment that facilitates one's continued improvement. Here, metaphors refer to a holistic perspective that contributes to one's personal development rather than to increasing knowledge.

Some university students mentioned that willpower and personal choices were central aspects of their developmental process. Consequently, they concluded that personal development was dependent on one's choices. For example, one student said that "universities are like the Internet. If you use it well and spend your time wisely, you'll benefit greatly. However, if you don't make proper use of it, you'll leave without gaining anything whatsoever." This indicates that universities offer different things to different people; those who wish to improve themselves can do so by making the right choices. Universities provide an environment where students can discover their identities, strengths, and weaknesses. One student said that "universities are like a key; they open doors for you to discover

different aspects of yourself.” Such comments indicate that university students saw universities as fulfilling an important role in their inner journey.

Several participants regarded universities as a place where they reaped the benefits of their hard work and effort. Students asserted that universities were where people should strive to work hard. One student said that “universities are like the harvest. The person who works reaps the benefits whereas the person who doesn’t simply looks on.” Another student said that “universities are like agriculture; you benefit the more you water the soil and make it fertile.” These and other similar statements demonstrate that university students regarded universities as a place where effort is rewarded.

Another factor driving personal development is the acquisition of skills that help individuals manage their lives. Several students stated that universities enabled them to acquire the skills they would need in life. One student likened universities to being away from home, bringing up his struggle to live away from his family. Some students who perceived universities as centers for personal development regarded universities as gateways to new life experiences. Another student who described universities as inns in which young people could spend the night said that “[universities] doors are open to everyone and offer vital opportunities to those who still have a long way to go.” A few students described their time at university as the period when they gained autonomy. They further described universities as a place where individuals learned to stand on their own two feet, make their own decisions, and shoulder the consequences of these decisions.

Six codes were created for this theme: diverse experiences, a simulation of one’s future life, preparation for life—a competitive, challenging, yet still life-guiding environment. A holistic evaluation of these six codes revealed that universities play an important role in aiding students in their transition from high school to adult life. Students gain experiences similar to those they will experience during their future adult lives and prepare themselves for their next stage of development. Universities offer students uplifting, unforgettable, peaceful, challenging, boring, and trying experiences. One student likened universities to heaven and hell, adding that both can be experienced there. Another student emphasized that universities are where one can experience opposite poles: “Universities are like an elevator because they’re full of ups and downs.”

Several students regarded universities as a simulation of real life, adding that since the situations experienced during one’s adult life can also be experienced as university students, universities act as a training ground for their future lives. One student expressed that “[universities] are the last stop on a bus because the transition to full adulthood begins after university.” Students thought that real life would begin after graduation and that their time at university was a preparatory phase.

In addition to seeing universities as a preparation stage, several students regarded universities as a competitive environment where one continues to push forward to accumulate as much benefit as possible. One student likened universities to a high-speed train race where trains need to increase their speed constantly in order to overtake others. Some students viewed university as a challenging environment. In fact, one student who believed that overcoming difficulties experienced at university was an integral part of life commented that “universities are like a single-player computer game; you

think that the level you just beat was the hardest, but you realize you were wrong once you begin the next level.” Several students regarded universities as the period that directed where they would go in their lives. Likening universities to a compass, one student said that “universities are like a compass because they direct where you go in your life.”

Another theme derived from university students’ metaphors was universities’ role as a social and cultural hub. Codes relevant to this theme were: socialization and fostering a multicultural environment. Students viewed universities as a hub where people from different cultures interacted. For example, one student likened universities to the world, adding that she encountered people from different cities, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds. Students also brought up social status, with one student likening universities to a festival “because [universities] are full of energetic people where everyone has the same or similar goals.”

Yet another theme derived from university students’ metaphors was how universities acted as centers of knowledge and learning. The codes for this theme were knowledge transfer and production center. Here, several students viewed universities as centers where knowledge was produced, stored, and transferred. One student likened universities to a fruit tree, with knowledge being the metaphorical tree’s fruits. Another student likened universities to factories that produced knowledge. Here, we observe that students emphasized universities’ roles of producing and transferring knowledge. Several students regarded universities as production centers. One student, for instance, likened universities to a beehive whose honey was the work done by the professionals working there.

In addition to positive descriptions, some students associated universities with negative emotions and disappointment. Several students said that universities were similar to their previous primary, middle, or high school experiences, adding that their expectations went unmet. One student said:

My university is nothing more than a high school because it goes to great lengths to portray itself as being better than it really is. However, instead of providing real academic instruction, it busies students with nonsensical things. Real universities are like the Renaissance and the Reformation because they use science to shatter meaningless traditions so as to create a smart, prudent young generation able to think and criticize.

From this, we understand that several students were disappointed with their university experience, as they had negative experiences and concluded that university did not resemble how they had imagined it to be. Some participants described their university experiences as challenging and difficult to escape, as evinced from one student’s statement: “Universities are like a bottomless pit because you feel like you’ll never be able to get out of it.”

Yet another theme derived from university students’ metaphors was university’s role as career development centers. Codes relevant to this theme were: career development and being seminal. Students believed that universities were integral in laying a sound foundation for their careers. One participant likened universities to apprenticeship training and emphasized that universities were a means to gain specialization in a particular field or profession: “[Universities] aim to instill students

with specialized knowledge and skills taught by experts with superior knowledge in a specific field.” Another theme that emerged from university students’ metaphors was notion that universities were a place that fostered happiness and a sense of belonging. The codes for this theme were three: belonging, happiness, and being one’s ideal place. Some participants stated that they had adapted to the university environment and felt at home there. One participant supported her position with the following statement: “[University], quite literally, resembles home for me because even though it’s a formal setting, it provides the warmth of home.” Similarly, some students stated that their time at university evoked a sense of pleasure and happiness in them, as epitomized by one student’s statement: “University is like a good book, you don’t want it to end when you read it.” Finally, some participants considered universities to be simultaneously difficult and desirable.

University students’ metaphors indicate that they associated universities with freedom. Students stated that they gained unlimited freedom and that the restrictions that had been on them were lifted once they entered university. One student likened university life to running on clouds while another likened it to living freely in a forest without being subject to restraints.

Comparison of How High School and University Students Perceive Universities

Most high school and university students regarded universities as centers for personal development and the place where they would be prepared for their future lives. Whereas high school students mentioned these two themes at almost the same frequency, university students brought up the fact that universities served as centers for personal development more than their being places that prepared them for their futures. While high school students emphasized that their time at university would direct the course of their lives and that it would constitute the first step toward a new life, university students were more likely to mention that their experiences at university would prepare them for their lives as adults.

While the next most cited theme by high school students was the notion that entering university would be an important step in shaping their professional lives, career development was the least represented theme in university students’ metaphors. University students brought up how universities acted as social and cultural hubs, served as centers of knowledge and learning, and did not meet their expectations more frequently than their role as career development centers. A small portion of high school students regarded universities as places where knowledge is stored—not produced—and transferred from teachers to students.

University students, on the other hand, regarded universities as places where knowledge is both produced and transferred. Both groups regarded universities as places where they were able to live their lives freely without being bogged down by constraining restrictions.

Both high school and university students believed universities to be uplifting and enjoyable places. Several students also added that universities offered a peaceful environment. University students further stressed that they experienced a feeling of belonging at their universities.

While some university students stated that their time in university did not meet their expectations and,

at least in some cases, were a disappointment, high school students made no such remarks. University students described universities as an environment that fostered feelings of pessimism, negativity, and disappointment upon realizing that universities were not what they had imagined them to be and were places where inequity was experienced. Both groups regarded universities as hubs where people from different cultures, cities, and backgrounds met with one another and engaged in different social and cultural activities.

Discussion

In this study, we examined how high school and university students used metaphors to describe universities. The eight themes created for high school students were: universities' being a personal development center, a place to prepare for and start life, a center for knowledge and learning, a social and cultural hub, a center for career development, freedom, a place that fosters happiness, and a place that is difficult to access. The eight themes created for university students were: universities' being a personal development center, places prepare for and start life, centers of knowledge and learning, social and cultural hubs, career development centers, freedom, missed expectations, and places that foster happiness and a feeling of belonging. These findings parallel those of previous studies conducted with high school and university students. In the literature, high school students defined universities as the future, cultural diversity, centers for career development, centers of freedom, and the beginning of real life (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Korkmaz, & Bağçeci, 2013). University students, on the other hand, described universities as negative places, centers where science is produced, multicultural environments, intellectual places, a new beginning, places of disappointment, and difficult (Argon, 2015; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Radmard & Soysal, 2019).

The students in our study emphasized four main functions of universities: (i) carrying out educational activities, (ii) conducting scientific studies, (iii) conducting activities for the public benefit, and (iv) supporting individuals' psychosocial development (Griffiths, 1965; Hamlyn, 1996; McGregor & Volckmann, 2010; Rasmussena et al., 2006). Among these, carrying out educational activities is similar to two themes in our study: universities' being centers of knowledge and learning and career development centers. Conducting scientific research overlaps with the theme of universities' being centers of knowledge and learning. Conducting activities for the public benefit parallels universities' being centers for personal development, a place to prepare for and start life, centers for knowledge and learning, social and cultural arenas, career development centers, and uplifting places. Finally, supporting psychosocial development overlaps with universities' being centers for personal development and places where students prepare for and start life.

Another notable finding of this study is that both groups of students emphasized identity development. According to Erikson (1964), high school and university students are still in the process of developing their identities. The fact that universities offer students opportunities to explore their identities may very well have impacted the meanings they attributed to universities. This finding suggests that although it is not one of the universities' main objectives, it should be included among universities secondary goals.

Both groups of students brought up several common themes with respect to universities, namely their being centers for personal development, places in which students prepare for and start life, a center for knowledge and learning, a social and cultural hub, a center for career development, freedom, and an uplifting place. However, it should be noted that high school and university students conceived themes differently. High school students, for instance, regarded universities as places where students can prepare for and start life as well as participate in a variety of experiences that simulate real life, that will give them direction and prepare them for adult life. University students, however, brought up how universities gave direction to life, prepared them for life, emulated real life, and offered them a variety of experiences, challenges, and competition. These differences are most likely a result of different expectations and life experiences.

One difference between the two groups was that high school students considered universities as being difficult to gain access to. This specific finding differs from what was found by other studies in the literature (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013). One possible explanation for why the high school students in our study hold this belief is because they were in their final year of high school at the time and may have therefore been influenced by the anxiety brought on by upcoming university entrance exams. University students, on the other hand, mentioned how universities did not live up to their expectations, a common finding in the literature (Argon, 2015). One explanation for this is that prior to attending university, students may have developed a very romanticized understanding of what life on campus would entail.

Study Limitations

Qualitative studies such as ours are based on the need to reveal how a group of individuals perceive and attribute meaning to a specific phenomenon. The findings of our study, however, cannot, given the qualitative nature of our research, be generalized. Though this may be thought to be a limitation, we reached important findings with respect to the meanings both high school and university students attributed to universities.

Recommendations for Administrators

University administrations can make new arrangements by revising their visions and services to fit the themes obtained from the study. Since the current study shows that students associate universities with personal development centers, universities can diversify existing venues and devise entirely new ones (e.g., clubs, social activities) to enable students to discover their own identities.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has shown that students' university experiences shape how they perceive universities themselves. Based on this, the differences in how students of different ages (e.g., high school students, first- and fourth-year university students) perceive universities can be examined in a longitudinal study. Given that perceptions of universities change frequently, our study offers researchers working in the field of educational administration useful insight into how current students regard universities.



Lise ve Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Gözünden “Üniversite”: Bir Metafor Çalışması

*Kübra Karakaya Özyer**

*Fatma Altınsoy***

Giriş

Bireyin icra edeceği mesleğe hazırlayan ve geleceğini büyük oranda şekillenmesinde derin izler bırakan eğitim ortamlarından biri de üniversitelerdir. Eğitim öğretim faaliyetleriyle ön plana çıkan üniversitelerin (Charle & Verger, 1994) zamanla bu işlevin yanında tek boyutlu bir yapıdan çok katmanlı ve dinamik bir oluşuma evrildiği görülmektedir (Ertem & Arı, 2016).

Üniversite kavramının incelendiğinde; kariyer gelişimini destekleyecek eğitim-öğretim faaliyetleri yürütmek (Erdem, 2013; Griffiths, 1965; Hamlyn, 1996; Toylan & Göktepe, 2010), yeniliklere ve buluşlara kapı aralayacak bilimsel araştırmalar yapmak (Altbach & Salmi, 2011; Erdem, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2001; Griffiths, 1965; Hamlyn, 1996; Martin & Verdaguer, 1995; McGregor & Volckmann, 2010; Rasmussena et al., 2006; Rothman et al., 2011; Toylan & Göktepe, 2010), toplum ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak faaliyetler yürütmek (Erdem, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2001; Martin & Verdaguer, 1995; Rasmussena vd., 2006; Taylor & Miroiu, 2002) gibi roller içerdiği görülmektedir. Bunların yanında üniversiteler bireyin psikososyal gelişimini destekleyerek entelektüel bireyler yetiştirilmesinde de önemli bir yere sahiptir (McGregor & Volckmann, 2010; Radmard & Soysal, 2019).

* Dr., Araştırma Görevlisi, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Eskişehir, Türkiye, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0208-7870>

** Dr., Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışman, MEB-Bilecik, Türkiye, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4910-2510>

Üniversite olgusuna dair yapılan açıklamaların yanında öğrencilerin bu kavrama yüklemiş olduğu anlamların farklılaşabildiği görülmektedir. Yapılan çalışmalarda öğrenciler “üniversite” olgusunu kariyer gelişimini destekleyecek eğitim öğretim faaliyetleriyle eşleştirmektedir (Argon, 2015; Ertem & Arı, 2016). Ek olarak; sosyalleşme ortamı (Argon, 2015; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Radmard & Soysal, 2019), özgür olunan yer (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Demirtaş & Çoban, 2014; Uğurlu, 2018) çok kültürlülükle buluşma (Kahu & Picton, 2020; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015), gerçek hayatın başlangıcı (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Argon, 2015; Kahu & Picton, 2020) ve kimlik gelişim sahası (Argon, 2015; Radmard & Soysal, 2019) gibi çeşitli anlamlar yüklediği rapor edilmektedir.

Zaman içinde tek boyutlu bir yapıdan çok katmanlı ve dinamik bir oluşuma evrilen üniversitelerin önemli paydaşlarından olan öğrencilerin üniversiteye dair bakış açılarını ortaya koymak önemli hale gelmiştir. Alan yazında lise (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Ertem & Arı, 2016; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013) ve üniversite (Argon, 2015; Çelik & Yarım, 2019; Demirtaş & Çoban, 2014; Jorgensen-Earp & Staton, 1993; Uğurlu, 2018) öğrencileri üzerinde ayrı ayrı gerçekleştirilen çalışmalar mevcuttur. Ancak bu kavrama ilişkin yüklenen anlamlar üniversite yaşamı öncesi ve üniversite yaşamıyla birlikte bütüncül ve karşılaştırmalı ele alınması öğrencilerin hem beklentilerini hem de yaşanmışlıklarını daha iyi anlamak ve bu süreçte öğrencilere yardım edebilmek adına zengin bir kaynak sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışmada lise ve üniversite öğrencilerinin “üniversite” kavramına yükledikleri anlamları ve algıları metaforlar aracılığıyla açığa çıkartmak amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda çalışmanın araştırma soruları şöyledir:

1. Lise öğrencilerinin üniversite kavramına dair benzetmeleri nelerdir?
2. Üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversite kavramına dair benzetmeleri nelerdir?
3. Lise ve üniversite öğrencilerinin benzetmelerindeki benzerlik ve farklılıklar nelerdir?

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada amaçlara ulaşmak için olgu bilim (fenomenoloji) kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri iki farklı çalışma grubundan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile elde edilmiştir. Birinci çalışma grubunu Bilecik ilinin bir ilçesindeki 182 lise 4. sınıf öğrencileri oluşturmaktadır. İkinci çalışma grubunda ise Eskişehir’deki bir devlet üniversitesindeki 252 üniversite öğrencileri bulunmaktadır. Veri toplam aracı araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiş olup iki kısımdan oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde katılımcılara ait cinsiyet, yaş, bölüm ve sınıf düzeyi sorulmuştur. İkinci bölümde katılımcılardan “Üniversite benzer; çünkü” cümlesinin tamamlaması istenmiştir. Elde edilen verilerin tasnif edilmesi ve anlamlandırılması için içerik analizi tercih edilmiştir.

Bulgular

182 lise öğrencisinin üniversite kavramı için ürettiği metaforlar incelendiğinde 145 farklı metaforun üretildiği belirlenmiştir. Bu 145 metafordan 17 kod oluşturulmuştur. Birbiriyle ilişkili kodlar birleştirildiğinde 8 farklı tema oluşturulmuştur. Bu temalar: yaşama hazırlanma ve hayata başlama yeri, kişisel gelişim merkezi, kariyer gelişim merkezi, bilgi ve öğrenme merkezi, özgür yaşama alanı, haz alınan yer - mutluluk veren yer ve sosyal ve kültürel alan olarak tespit edilmiştir.

Üniversite öğrencilerinden alınan 170 farklı metafor ifadeleri sekiz tema altında toplanmıştır. Bu temalar; kişisel gelişim merkezi, yaşama hazırlanma ve hayata başlama, sosyal ve kültürel alan, bilgi ve öğrenme merkezi, beklentilerin karşılanmadığı yer, kariyer gelişim merkezi, ait hissedilen ve mutlu olunan yer ve özgür yaşama alanı olarak tanımlanmıştır.

Tartışma

Bu çalışmada, lise ve üniversite öğrencilerinin “üniversite” kavramına yükledikleri anlamlar metaforlar yardımıyla incelenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, lise öğrencilerinin üniversite algıları ile üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversite algılarının farklılaştığı belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar liseli ve üniversiteli katılımcılarla yürütülen çalışma bulgularını destekler niteliktedir. Alan yazında üniversite kavramına lise öğrencileri tarafından “gelecek, kültürel çeşitlilik, kariyer gelişiminin merkezi, özgürlüğün merkezi, gerçek hayatın başlangıcı” (Altun & Uzuner, 2017; Korkmaz & Bağçeci, 2013); üniversite öğrencileri tarafından “olumsuzluk unsuru olarak üniversite, bilim üretim merkezi, çok kültürlü bir ortam olarak, entelektüel yer, yeni bir başlangıç, hayal kırıklığı ve zorluk” (Argon, 2015; Kahu & Picton, 2020; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015; Radmard & Soysal, 2019) biçiminde anlamlar yüklendiği görülmektedir. Bu çalışma ile değişen üniversite kavramı ve algılanan işlevleri öğrencilerin gözünden ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Özellikle üniversite yönetimleri vizyonlarını ve sunduğu hizmetleri güncellerken mevcut çalışmadan elde edilen temalara göre yeni düzenlemeler yapabilir.

Kaynakça/References

- Altbach, P. G., & Salmi, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The road to academic excellence: The making of world-class research universities*. World Bank Publications.
- Altınsoy, F., & Özabacı, N. (2019). The metaphorical perceptions of high school students who receive psychological counselling services on the concept of “psychological counsellor”. *Osmangazi Journal of Educational Research*, 6(1), 25-34.
- Altun, Z. D., & Uzuner, F. G. (2017). Güzel sanatlar lisesi öğrencilerinin üniversite kavramına yönelik metaforik algıları. *Eğitim ve İnsani Bilimler Dergisi: Teori ve Uygulama*, 8(16), 60-83.
- Argon, T. (2015). Üniversite kavramına yönelik algıların metaforlarla boylamsal olarak incelenmesi: Türkiye’den bir üniversite örneği. *Eğitim Araştırmaları ve İncelemeleri*, 10(1), 36-49.
- Cameron, L. (1996). Discourse context and the development of metaphor in children. *Current Issues in Language & Society*, 3(1), 49-64.
- Charle, C., & Verger, J. (1994). *Histoire des universités*. Presses universitaires de France.
- Christensen, L. B., Johnson, B., & Turner, L. A. (2014). *Research methods, design, and analysis*. Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Çelik, S., & Yarım, M. A. (2019). Üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversite, rektör ve gelecek kavramlarına ilişkin metaforik algılarının incelenmesi. *Turkish Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(2), 31-50.
- Demirtaş, H., & Çoban, D. (2014). Üniversite öğrencilerinin, üniversite ve fakülte kavramlarına ilişkin metaforları (İnönü Üniversitesi Örneği). *Ondokuz Mayıs University Journal of Education*, 33(1), 113-143.
- Ertem, Z. S., & Arı, A. (2016). Lise öğrencilerinin üniversite ve öğretim elemanı kavram algıları. *Cumhuriyet International Journal of Education*, 5(3), 78-92.
- Erdem, A. R. (2013). Bilgi toplumunda üniversitenin değişen rolleri ve görevleri. *Yükseköğretim Dergisi*, 3(2), 109-120.
- Erikson, E. (1964). *Insight and responsibility: Lectures on the ethical implications of psychoanalytic insight*. W. W. Norton & Company.

- Etkowitz, H. (2001). *The bi-evolution of the university in the triple helix era*. Science Policy Institute.
- Fetah, E., Çelik, İ., & Aktürk, A. O. (2014). Ortaokul öğrencilerinin Facebook algısı: Bir metafor analizi. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 22(2), 635-648.
- Griffiths, D. E. (1965). *Behavioural science and educational administration*. Chicago Press.
- Hamlyn, D. W. (1996). The concept of a university. *Philosophy*, 71(276), 205-218.
- Jorgensen-Earp, C. R., & Staton, A. Q. (1993). Student metaphors for the college freshman experience. *Communication Education*, 42(2), 123-141.
- Kahu, E. R., & Picton, C. (2020). Using photo elicitation to understand first-year student experiences: Student metaphors of life, university and learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 1-13.
- Korkmaz, F., & Bağçeci, B. (2013). Lise öğrencilerinin "Üniversite" kavramına ilişkin metaforik algıların incelemesi. *Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2(1), 187-204.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). Metaphor and culture. *Philologica*, 2(2), 197-220.
- Kövecses, Z. (2017). Conceptual metaphor theory. In E. Semino & Z. Demjén (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language* (pp. 13-27). Routledge.
- Kövecses, Z., & Benczes, R. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 202-251). Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (2006). Conceptual metaphor. In D. Geeraerts (Ed.), *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* (pp. 185-239). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Landau, M. J., Oyserman, D., Keefer, L. A., & Smith, G. C. (2014). The college journey and academic engagement: How metaphor use enhances identity-based motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(5), 679.
- Martin, J. C., & Verdaguer, A. (1995). Development and diversification of the social and economic functions of French universities. *Higher Education in Europe*, 20(3), 25-36.
- McGregor, S., & Volckmann, R. (2010). Transdisciplinarity in higher education: The path of Arizona State University. *Integral Leadership Review*, 10(3), 1-25.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd edition). Sage.
- Moser, K. S. (2000). Metaphor analysis in psychology: Method, theory, and fields of application. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2).
- Oyman, N., & Şentürk, İ. (2015). Öğretmen adayları ve öğretim üyelerinin "üniversite" kavramına ilişkin metaforik algıları. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi*, 21(3), 367-394.
- Radmard, S., & Soysal, Y. (2019). Eğitim fakültesinin çeşitli öğretim programlarındaki öğretmen adaylarının üniversite kavramına ilişkin metaforik akıl yürütmeleri. *Journal of Higher Education & Science*, 9(3), 1-18.
- Rasmussen, E., Moenb, Ø., & Gulbrandsen, M. (2006). Initiatives to promote commercialization of university knowledge. *Technovation*, 26(4), 518-533.
- Rothman, S., Kelly-Woessner, A., & Woessner, M. (2011). *The still divided academy: How competing visions of power, politics, and diversity complicate the mission of higher education*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Toylan, N. V., & Göktepe, E. A. (2010). Öğrenen organizasyon olarak üniversiteler: Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde durum analizi. *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 2(1), 61-68.
- Taylor, J., & Mirou, A. (2002). *Policy making, strategic planning and management of higher education*. Carfax Publishing, Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Uğurlu, Z. (2018). Öğretmen adaylarının üniversite kavramına ilişkin algılarının metafor analizi. *Çağdaş Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 5(1), 82-97.
- Yalçın, M., Özoğlu, E. A., & Dönmez, A. (2016). Öğretim elemanlarının araştırma görevlisi kavramına ilişkin metaforik algıları. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 41(185), 19-32.
- Yang, T. P., & Liu, A. S. (2009). The analysis of university metaphors. *University Education Science*, 3, 30-34.