UNIVERSITY AS "PREPARATION FOR LIFE": AN INVESTIGATION ON PARENTS' METAPORICAL EXPRESSIONS

"HAYATA HAZIRLIK" OLARAK ÜNİVERSİTE: EBEVEYNLERİN METAFORİK İFADELERİ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME

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Abstract: This research aims to unveil the perceptions parents hold towards the concept of "university" through the use of metaphors. It is a qualitative study designed to describe and interpret the metaphorical thoughts of parents whose children are university students, regarding the phenomenon of university. Content analysis, a commonly employed method in qualitative research analysis, was utilized. The study's participants consist of parents of students enrolled in various undergraduate programs across universities in our country during the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample includes 163 parents. In the study, 142 metaphors produced by parents are analyzed under different categories by subjecting them to content analysis. The metaphors of parents regarding the concept of university are grouped under 12 categories. The analysis of metaphors produced by parents regarding the concept of "University" indicates a predominantly positive perception, characterized by a blend of abstract and concrete expressions. The metaphors most frequently cited—"Life," "Family," "Home," "Development," and "Education"—highlight the university's integral role in personal development, social relationships, and intellectual enrichment. The analysis of parental metaphors concerning the university concept reveals a comprehensive perspective that transcends the educational scope, highlighting its significance in personal growth, intellectual development, social integration, and professional preparation. Future studies can explore how parents' perceptions of universities, shaped by socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic factors, align with students' experiences and how these perceptions evolve over time. Additionally, examining the impact of global trends and digital transformation, particularly post-pandemic, on education perceptions can inform educational policies.

Keywords: *University, Personal Development, Parental Perceptions, Education*

Özet: Bu araştırma ebeveynlerin "üniversite" kavramına ilişkin sahip oldukları algıları metaforlar yoluyla ortaya çıkarma amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çocuğu üniversite öğrencisi ebeveynlerin üniversite olgusuna ilişkin metaforik düşüncelerini betimleme ve yorumlanması amaçlandığı için nitel bir araştırmadır. Nitel araştırma analizinde çoğunlukla kullanılan içerik analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubu 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılı güz döneminde ülkemizde çeşitli üniversitelerin lisans programlarında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin ebeveynleridir. Çalışma grubu 163 ebeveynden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada, ebeveynler tarafından üretilen 142 metafor, içerik analizi yoluyla farklı kategoriler altında analiz edilmiştir. Üniversite kavramına ilişkin ebeveyn metaforları 12 kategori altında toplanmıştır. "Üniversite" kavramıyla ilgili ebeveynler tarafından üretilen metaforların analizi, çoğunlukla pozitif bir algıyı ve soyut ile somut ifadelerin bir karışımını işaret etmektedir. En sık atıfta bulunulan "Hayat," "Aile," "Ev," "Gelişim" ve "Eğitim" metaforları, üniversitenin kişisel büyüme, sosyal ilişkiler ve entelektüel zenginleşme üzerindeki temel rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Üniversite kavramıyla ilgili ebeveyn metaforlarının analizi, eğitim kapsamını aşan geniş bir perspektifi ortaya koymakta ve kişisel gelişim, entelektüel gelişim, sosyal entegrasyon ve mesleki hazırlıktaki önemini vurgulamaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar, ebeveynlerin sosyoekonomik, kültürel ve demografik faktörlerle şekillenen üniversite algılarının öğrencilerin deneyimleriyle nasıl örtüştüğünü ve bu algıların zaman içinde nasıl değiştiğini araştırabilir. Ayrıca, küresel eğilimlerin ve özellikle pandemi sonrası dijital dönüşümün eğitim algıları üzerindeki etkisinin incelenmesi, eğitim politikalarına bilgi sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Üniversite, Kişisel Gelişim, Ebeveyn Algıları, Eğitim*

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Introduction

When a person is born, the first environment they encounter is their family. The family plays a crucial role in shaping and developing the individual's character (Bornstein, 2002). The relationships formed within the family significantly impact the individual's life and their ability to interact with others. Research shows that the quality of a person's life is closely tied to the relationships they establish with their parents, as well as those they build within society (Lamb, 2010). The foundation of these relationships is laid in the family environment. The family serves as a primary social unit where children learn basic values, norms, and behaviors that help them become active members of society (Coleman, 1988). It is the first environment where an individual learns the distinction between right and wrong, as well as the norms of their culture. Therefore, strengthening the family structure contributes to the overall well-being of society. For example, Article 41 of the Turkish Constitution emphasizes that "The family is the foundation of Turkish society. The state takes necessary measures to ensure the peace and welfare of the family, especially the protection of the mother and children, and the teaching and implementation of family planning" (Republic of Turkey, 1982). A stable family structure is thus essential for fostering social cohesion and stability.

The parenting role is a role that the person(s) will never give up and can never give up for a lifetime. All parents want their children to live healthy and happy lives, to grow up in the best conditions, especially to be safe. However, most of them do not know how they can achieve this, that is, in what way(s) they will achieve this goal (Çetin, 2014). At the same time, parents who have the most important role in the child's life; they are the people who shape the child's ideas and life with a limited framework and affect the healthy development of the child physically and psychologically. (Bandura, 1977) What kind of behavior the child sees from his parents reflects it on his own life, character and academic life.

The concept of "university" comes from the Latin word "universitas", which was formed by the evolution of the concept of "universitates". "Universitas" is the equivalent of the word guild and means a group of individuals with independent and common interests (Öztunalı, 2001). The concept of "university", which includes high-level education, is defined as follows in the TDK Turkish Dictionary: Faculty, institute, college, etc., which have scientific autonomy and public legal personality, and which provide high-level education, training, scientific research and

publication. educational institution consisting of institutions and units, darülfünun (TDK, 1996). Özdinler (2016) defined the concept of university as "the places where individuals with a free mind, free mind and conscience reinforce their ability to find, analyze and critically examine the truth, free from stereotypes, prejudices and dogmas." As an institution, the university directs the social transformation, but it is also affected by the social transformation. It is difficult in this respect to reveal what it is.

Especially in the 1960s, the effects of social transformations that began not only in Turkey but around the world were most evident in universities (Timur, 1998). The universal mission of universities includes conducting research, providing high-quality education, and producing and disseminating knowledge (Higher Education Law, Article 3). University students face multiple challenges upon entering university life, such as living away from their families and beginning a life independently (Furnham, 2012). This new environment allows them to experience different perspectives, broadening their view of life and fostering self-awareness (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Many students must attend universities far from their families, and these experiences influence not only the students' perceptions but also the views of their families regarding the university experience. Research indicates that families tend to develop their perceptions of university based on the educational achievements and experiences of their children (Gofen, 2009). Additionally, parents' engagement with their child's university experience significantly shapes their attitudes toward higher education institutions (Lareau, 2011).

Many ways are used to reveal the perceptions of individuals about a certain phenomenon or concept. One of them is metaphors, the basis of which is to make sense of and experience something by connecting it to a network of concepts belonging to another meaning field. Metaphor is a narrative and pedagogical term that has been used in different fields such as rhetoric, linguistics, philosophy, semiotics, psychology, and pedagogy from the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to the present. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ortony, 1993). Although "metaphor" is mostly known as a rhetorical (literary, narrative art, rhetoric) term today, it is also used as a means of expression and teaching in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, linguistics and pedagogy (Demir &Karakaş Yıldırım, 2019).

Although efforts are made to find the holistic and concrete truth in scientific studies, it can only reach the truth in a partial and limited way (Goldmann, 1998: 41). Therefore, the use of metaphors can contribute to the expression of reality, albeit partially. As a form of simile with constructive aspects, metaphor-based narration can express vital issues as a way of thinking and seeing intertwined with the way they comprehend (Morgan, 1998: 14).

Today, parental guidance and influence play a significant role in university selection, marking a critical transition from adolescence to adulthood (Eccles, 2009). However, the perspectives of parents and their children toward university may differ. What parents perceive as the best and most secure choice for their children may not align with the child's own expectations and aspirations (Pomerantz et al., 2007).

Parental interaction influences multiple areas of a child's development. Research suggests that development is interconnected, where early educational experiences have a lasting impact on subsequent levels of education (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). For example, the child's experience in preschool can shape their success in primary school, which then influences secondary education and, ultimately, the choice of university during high school. A stable and positive educational experience is essential for building healthy social relationships throughout life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

University life, which follows an often stressful education period, represents one of the first steps toward independence. It offers individuals the chance to experience life away from their parents and develop autonomy (Arnett, 2000). Some students prefer to stay in their hometowns for university, while others choose to study in cities closer to or farther from their families. Whether to leave or stay near the family varies between students, influenced by individual and cultural differences, as well as parental attitudes (Holdsworth, 2009).

Examining the participation of the family in education in pre-school education institutions (Ömeroğlu & Yasar, 2005), conducting research on the preschool period parent school (Oktay, 2003), the interest and participation of the families in the programs applied in the pre-school education institutions and the preschool Addressing the views of parents on the contribution of educational institutions to family education (Kaya & Gültekin, 2003), secondary school 6.7. Examining the relationship between the perceived parenting attitudes of 8th and 8th grade students

and their social emotional learning skills (Yılmaz, 2014), examining the relationship between secondary school students' perceived parenting attitudes and self-esteem and depression levels (Ersoy, 2013), the reading attitudes of high school students' parents can be affected by various variables. (Aydoğdu & Kara Özkan, 2021) However, the direct parent-university relationship was not examined in the studies.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is marked by significant life changes, and higher education plays a pivotal role in this developmental process (Arnett, 2000). Universities are considered spaces where young individuals acquire not only academic knowledge but also social, emotional, and personal skills essential for adulthood. Research indicates that university attendance fosters autonomy, decision-making, and responsibility, contributing to identity formation and self-concept (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Thus, university is not merely an educational institution but a developmental stage preparing students for personal and professional life.

Parental involvement plays a critical role in shaping students' educational journeys, particularly in choosing and perceiving universities (Eccles, 2009). Parents often guide their children through the decision-making process, reflecting their expectations, values, and hopes for the child's future (Pomerantz et al., 2007). This influence is not limited to selecting institutions but also extends to shaping students' attitudes toward university life and academic performance. The metaphorical expressions of parents regarding universities reflect their broader beliefs about the purpose of education and development.

Metaphors are powerful cognitive tools that help individuals structure their thoughts and communicate abstract ideas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In educational research, metaphors provide insight into participants' underlying beliefs, values, and attitudes (Saban, 2009). Studies indicate that the use of metaphors enables researchers to explore complex phenomena such as education, learning, and development by revealing hidden cognitive structures (Ortony, 1993). This study uses metaphors to understand how parents conceptualize "university" and how these perceptions align with their expectations for their children's growth and development.

Existing research highlights the significance of parents' perspectives in shaping educational experiences (Gofen, 2009). Studies show that parents often view universities not just as places of academic learning but as environments for personal and social development (Lareau, 2011). For

example, Gofen (2009) emphasizes that parents' experiences and beliefs influence their children's educational achievements, especially in first-generation university students. Moreover, metaphors such as "home" and "family" in previous studies reflect a view of university life that includes emotional support and social integration (Holdsworth, 2009).

This research will give a clue to the views of parents about their child in university and will also contribute to revealing the perspective of the parent towards the university. Obtaining the views of university students' parents can help us understand the parent-university relationship. The metaphorical expressions of the parents about the university phenomenon are also important in terms of being an unmentioned subject. It is hoped that the research will be useful in terms of seeing the general framework of the university views of the parents.

Aim of the Research

This research was carried out to reveal the perceptions of parents about the concept of "university" through metaphors. These revealed metaphors are classified under various categories.

Within the framework of this general purpose, answers to the following questions were sought;

1) What are the metaphors parents have for the concept of "university"?

2) Under which categories can the metaphors of parents be grouped in terms of their common characteristics?

Method

Model of the Research

This research is designed as a qualitative study, aiming to describe and interpret the metaphorical thoughts of parents with university students regarding the concept of the university. Qualitative research is suitable for exploring relationships, contexts, and the nature of specific phenomena, as it focuses on deep understanding rather than numerical data (Creswell, 2013). In this context, the research adopts a phenomenological approach, which is often used to clarify and interpret personal perceptions and experiences (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). This approach is appropriate as the study

seeks to explore how parents perceive and conceptualize the university experience metaphorically, providing insights into their personal and shared understandings.

Study Group

The study group of this research is the parents of students studying in undergraduate programs of various universities in our country in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The study group consists of 163 parents. The working group was based on volunteerism. The voluntary selection of the participants contributed to the ethical and natural progress of the process. This method was implemented taking into account factors such as time constraints and financial constraints that may affect the overall findings of the research. In determining the participants included in the study group, it was aimed to bring speed and practicality to the research by using the convenient (easily accessible) sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The convenience sampling method allowed for a large database to be created in a limited research period and allowed parents to come from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. However, the limitations of this method are recognized and therefore caution should be exercised regarding the generalizability of the research findings. In future studies, the use of larger and random sampling methods may help to achieve more representative results.

In this study, the primary criterion for participant selection was being a university student, regardless of their specific institution. The focus was on understanding students' shared experiences and perspectives, which transcend individual universities. Therefore, data on the participants' specific universities and the number of participants from each were not recorded, as this information was deemed irrelevant to the research objectives. Research in social sciences often prioritizes the characteristics of the participants over institutional affiliations, especially when the goal is to explore generalizable patterns or shared experiences across a specific population (Patton, 2015). In this context, the essential factor was to capture the diversity of student experiences rather than focusing on institutional differences. Collecting data without institutional segmentation allowed for a broader understanding of the university student experience as a whole, aligning with studies that aim to generalize findings across populations rather than institutions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 1

Demographics of the Working Group

		n	%
Gender	Female	116	71,2
	Male	47	28,8
Education level	Primary school	*20*	12,3
	Secondary school	*10*	6,1
	High school	*54*	33,1
	University graduate	*78*	47,9
	Illiterate	*1*	0,6
Settlement	Metropolitan city	70	42,9
	City	51	31,3
	County	28	17,2
	Village/Town	14	8,6
	Total	163	100

Examining Table 1; 71% of the study group is female and 29% is male. In terms of education levels, 48% are university graduates, 33% are high school graduates and 23% are primary school graduates, and 0.6% are illiterate. In terms of settlements, 43% live in metropolitan cities, 32% live in cities, 17% live in districts and 8% live in villages or towns.

Collection of Data

In this study, a semi-structured opinion form was used as the primary data collection tool, which is commonly preferred in metaphor research (Döş, 2010; Inbar, 1996; Linn, Sherman, & Gill, 2007; Pishghadam & Pourali, 2011; Saban, 2009). The form was developed through a careful and systematic process to ensure it effectively captured the metaphorical perceptions of parents about the concept of university. The data collection tool consists of two parts.

In the first part, participants were asked basic demographic questions to gather information about their gender, education level, and place of residence. These questions were designed to help contextualize the metaphorical data by providing background information about the participants.

The second part of the form involved the sentence prompt "University is like …………………… because …………………". This sentence allowed parents to express their metaphorical thoughts about university and justify their reasoning. This open-ended format encouraged participants to freely articulate their perceptions without being constrained by predefined answers, which is essential for obtaining rich, qualitative data in metaphor studies.

The development of the semi-structured form underwent several stages. Initially, a literature review was conducted to examine previously used tools in similar metaphor studies. Based on this review, an initial draft of the form was created. The draft was then subjected to expert review, where several educational researchers and qualitative methodology experts provided feedback on the clarity, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the questions. Based on this feedback, the form was revised and refined. Pilot testing was conducted with a small group of parents to ensure the questions were easily understood and to identify any potential ambiguities. After reviewing the results of the pilot test, minor adjustments were made, and the final version of the form was prepared for distribution.

The final form was then distributed to parents of university students during the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. Participants were selected through convenient sampling, and they voluntarily completed the forms. This process ensured that the data collection tool was both reliable and effective in capturing the nuanced, metaphorical expressions of the participants.

Analysis of Data

Content analysis, which is mostly used in qualitative research analysis, was used. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. For this purpose, it is necessary to conceptualize the collected data first, then organize it logically according to the emerging concepts and determine the themes that explain the data accordingly (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

In this study, the analysis of the metaphors stated by the parents was carried out in 4 stages.

During the coding and sorting phase, 163 parent candidates were reached for the study, and the metaphors put forward in the questionnaire form were evaluated and coded by each parent, and the metaphors produced were brought together according to their similar characteristics. It was categorized by considering regular and meaningful metaphors with more than one majority. (Pesen, 2015)

At the stage of compiling sample metaphor images, the metaphor that best represents the overall theme of the study was selected and highlighted. The relationship between the conceptual meaning (target) and the metaphor's source was carefully analyzed to ensure suitability. Based on this

analysis, sample metaphors that align with the study's objectives were chosen for further exploration.

Metaphors developed by the parents during *the category development stage* were grouped in terms of common features regarding the 'university' phenomenon and evaluated. In which 163 parents participated, each metaphor image was associated in terms of parents' perceptions of the university. As a result, each metaphor was analyzed and organized into specific themes based on the metaphors themselves, rather than solely on the reasons starting with 'Because.'

At the stage of ensuring validity and reliability, reporting in detail how the data were collected and analyzed in qualitative research positively affects the validity. However, how objective one is when reaching the results is related to reliability at the first level (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The findings were explained in detail to ensure the validity of the research. In addition, all of the metaphors representing the categories created in the research are included in the findings section. All metaphors and categories whose reliability was tested were transferred to the computer environment and frequency and percentage calculations representing the relevant categories were made. A total of 492 metaphors were initially generated by 163 parents. After similar metaphors were grouped and consolidated, the final analysis was conducted with 142 distinct metaphors. The data was analyzed by dividing these 142 unique metaphors into conceptual categories, and frequency (f) and percentage (%) values were calculated according to the sub-problems, with the results presented in tables. During the placement of metaphors in the tables, they were ranked from the most frequently mentioned metaphor to the least preferred one. Parents' metaphors that lacked justification or did not align with the study's framework were excluded from the analysis.

Content analysis method was used to analyze the data and themes and categories were carefully created in this process. These themes and categories were determined in accordance with the purpose of the study and the category in which each metaphor was included was based on clear criteria. Representative examples of the categorized metaphors are presented in detail in the findings section. This increased the transparency of the study and supported the validity of the findings. In order to ensure reliability, several steps were followed in the study. Firstly, data collection and analysis processes were standardized and the same questions were asked to all participants. Secondly, independent coders were used to analyze the data. Two independent researchers analysed the parents' metaphors and evaluated the consistency and objectivity of the

findings. In this process, the agreement rate between the coders was calculated, resulting in a high agreement rate of 87%. This agreement rate indicates the consistency between the coders and strengthens the reliability of the analysis process.

Findings

The findings obtained as a result of the data analysis are presented separately as (i) metaphors produced regarding the university phenomenon (ii) conceptual categories they are related to and (iii) examples belonging to each category.

Findings Concerning the Metaphors Produced for the University Phenomenon

The parents, who formed the study group of the research, produced a total of 142 metaphors for the concept of "University". Abstract metaphors, which were predominantly used by parents, alongside a smaller but significant number of concrete metaphors, reveal a comprehensive view of the university as transcending mere academic instruction. While abstract metaphors were more frequently encountered, concrete expressions also played a crucial role in illustrating the diverse perspectives of parents. This combination of abstract and concrete metaphors highlights that parents perceive the university not just as an educational institution but as a critical life stage that fosters personal development, social relationships, and intellectual enrichment.

University was frequently associated with the abstract metaphor of "life" by the parents. One of the parents emphasized that university is a process of continuous development and learning with the statement "University is like life because every day is a new experience", while another parent stated that learning is lifelong with the statement "University is like life because learning continues throughout one's life". Furthermore, the statements "University is like life because it passes quickly" and "It is like life because it shapes the rest of your life" emphasize that this period is a critical step that shapes the future of the individual, even though time passes quickly. Parents described university as a process full of ups and downs, "It is like life. They see a lot of ups and downs there and try to adapt to this situation", emphasizing the importance of learning to struggle against difficulties. Another parent pointed to the contribution of university to the acquisition of knowledge and experience by saying, "It is like life, because there are many things that the years you study teach you".

In addition, university was frequently expressed with the abstract metaphors of "family" and "home". One of the parents said, "University is like a family. It is a common living space. There are things we share in common. Teachers are like our family elders", emphasizing that the university is perceived as a social community. Another said, "It is like a family, because the education staff are there for us", indicating that the university is an environment that offers support to students. Furthermore, the statement "It is like a home, because most of your time is spent there" indicates that the university has become the center of students' lives, while the statement "The university is like a home that prepares you for life, because you face most of the realities of life here" reveals that the university plays a critical role in the process of preparing individuals for life. In general, the metaphors "life," "family" and "home" used by parents indicate that university is not only an educational institution but also an important period in terms of personal development, social integration and building the future.

Parents frequently associated the university with the concrete metaphor of "book". One parent emphasized the fact that university is a constant source of information with the statement "University is like a book, because it always teaches you something new". Another parent said, "It is like a book, because when you get bored, you want to put it down, but you are curious about the rest, you keep turning the pages." Another parent stated that university arouses the desire to learn in students, even though it is sometimes challenging. In addition, the statement "University is like a book because it is full of adventures" indicates that students see university as a process of discovery and adventure. The "tree" metaphor reflects the individual development and rooting process of the university. The statement "University is like a tree, because it is the point where a person reaches the best level in education and takes root in life" emphasizes that individuals are brought into society by developing themselves at university. Another parent said, "The university is like a tree, because as it grows, it bears fruit", emphasizing that the university is an environment that reveals the potential of individuals and transforms it into fruit. These metaphors show that the university is perceived as a process that both provides knowledge and prepares individuals for the future.

Parents also frequently described university with positive metaphors such as "freedom," "friend" and "development". The statements "It's like freedom, it's where you stand on your feet" and "It's like freedom because the student learns to live without depending on his/her family" indicate that

university is a time when individuals gain independence and assume their own responsibilities. Another parent stated, "It is like freedom, because it is a time away from family pressure, but it is also a time of longing", indicating that while university offers individuals freedom, it also brings with it a sense of longing. In addition, some parents defined university with the metaphor of "friends". The statements "University is like a friend, because most friendships are made there" and "University is like a friend, because it adds importance to your life" show that university offers an important space in terms of social relations. Another statement, "University is like a friend, because what you do to your friend you get in return, if you protect him/her, he/she protects you, if you benefit him/her, he/she benefits you" indicates that university offers the opportunity to develop mutual solidarity and mutually beneficial relationships. Finally, university was also explained with the metaphor of "development". The statements "It is like development, because one develops oneself and experiences the difficulties of life" and "University is like development, because all knowledge is gained from there" indicate that university is an environment where individuals increase their knowledge and experience, and at the same time develop their ability to cope with difficulties. In general, these metaphors used by parents reflect that university is a critical period in terms of personal freedom, social bonds and individual development.

Some parents described university in negative metaphors, highlighting various challenges. The statement "It's like a bad place because the lectures are ridiculous and unnecessary" suggests that some parents find the curriculum inadequate and useless. Similarly, "It is like a bad place because university is the new beginning of the bad end. It is unemployment" reveals that university is associated with the anxiety of not finding a job after graduation. In addition, the statement "University is like anxiety, because when you are far away from your family, not hearing news gives you anxiety" shows that university reflects the emotional burdens of being far away. Another metaphor, "It is like a battlefield, because it is full of people who are always waiting for your defeat", emphasizes the competitive nature of the university. In addition, the statement "University is like loneliness because you have to stand on your own feet in a huge and foreign city and know your responsibilities" reflects the feeling of loneliness that students experience in a foreign environment and the obligation to assume their individual responsibilities. These statements indicate that some parents perceive university as a process full of not only academic but also emotional and social challenges.

Among these metaphors, the ones with the highest frequency are "Life" (f=89), "Family" (f=25), "Home" (f=22), "Development" (f=20) and "Education" (f=17) was determined. In Table 2, first twenty metaphors which have highest frequencies are listed. These represent %62 of all metaphors.

Table 2

First Twenty of All Metaphors and Frequency Values

No	Metaphor	f	%
1	life	89	18,1
2	family	25	5,1
3	home	22	4,5
4	development	20	4,1
5	education	17	3,5
6	information	15	3,0
7	festival	12	2,4
8	social environment	12	2,4
9	future	11	2,2
10	book	11	2,2
11	work	10	2,0
12	step	9	1,8
13	freedom	9	1,8
14	tree	8	1,6
15	friend	8	1,6
16	world	7	1,4
17	experience	6	1,2
18	entertainment	5	1,0
19	redundancy	5	1,0
20	cafe	5	1,0
	Toplam	306	61,9

Findings Related to Categories and Related Metaphors Regarding the University Phenomenon

142 metaphors produced regarding the concept of exam were gathered under 12 categories. In order to convey the meaning of the obtained categories, metaphors, frequency and percentage values of the categories are presented in the tables below.

Table 3

All Metaphors and Frequency Values by Categories

Category	Metaphor	f	%	P(n)
Personal Development	*achievement, aim, alphabet, beginning, book, change, consciousness, development, dictionary, difficulty, education, effort, exam, experience, high school, information, lesson,*	28	22,8	113

	library, mind, organization, primary school, rivalry, talent, to read, way, work, workshop, youth			
Abstract and Philosophical Ideas	*art, benefit, chance, civilization, dream, expatriate, freedom, future, idea, longing, love, luck, misery, point, pride, redundancy, separation, song, time, transfer, turning point*	21	10	50
Nature	*battlefield, beach, bird, cliff, country, flower, forest, garden, ocean, path, rain, rainbow, sea, sky, soil, step, sun , tree, world*	19	10,2	51
Objects and Tools	*backpack, bicycle, boots, clock, diamond, drum, light, liner, material, moneybox, mop, pen, sharpener, soap, stairs, treasure, vehicle, window*	18	4,2	21
Human Emotions and States	*anxiety, child, confrontation, enthusiasm, eyelash, foot, health, lifecycle, loneliness, maturity, need, person , puberty, responsibility, sadness, sleep, stress*	17	4,4	22
Entertainment and Leisure	*cafe, entertainment, festival, game, holiday, jigsaw, journey, linger, recipe*	9	5,6	28
Social Relationships	*culture, family, friend, interaction, life, marriage, social environment*	7	28,2	139
Food and Drink	*food, fruit, honey, pasta, pomegranate, quince, sugar*	7	2,6	13
Living Spaces	*airport, carpenter shop, casino, home, kitchen, nursing home*	6	5,7	28
Work and Profession	*expert, organized business, teacher, work*	4	2,8	14
Science and Technology	*computer, innovation, internet*	3	1,4	7
Economics and Finance	*economy, investment, money*	3	1,2	6

When Table 2 is examined:

The category of *Personal Development* has the highest number of metaphors (28) with a frequency percentage of 22.8%. It includes metaphors that relate to learning and intellectual growth, such as "achievement," "education," "knowledge," and "lesson," which suggests that exams are strongly associated with the acquisition of knowledge and the process of personal development. This category has the highest number of metaphors and occurrences, suggesting parents see the university as primarily a place of growth and learning. It encompasses a broad range of educational and developmental concepts from "achievement" to "youth," indicating that the university experience is multifaceted and impacts students' lives in various ways, from personal growth to acquiring knowledge.

Abstract and Philosophical Ideas contains 21 metaphors with a frequency of 10%. These metaphors, like "dream," "future," and "idea," convey a sense of exams being a stepping stone or

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a significant event that could influence one's philosophical views or future aspirations. This category reflects a perception of the university as a place that fosters deep thinking and philosophical growth. Metaphors like "freedom," "future," and "dream" indicate that parents view the university as an environment where abstract thinking and future aspirations are cultivated.

Nature category comprises 19 metaphors with a frequency percentage of 10.2%. Metaphors like "battlefield," "ocean," and "rainbow" might imply that exams are seen as natural challenges or obstacles that one encounters and must navigate or overcome. Metaphors such as "ocean," "path," and "tree" suggest parents liken the university to a natural journey or process. This could symbolize the organic growth that occurs in a university setting and the idea that education is a natural part of life's landscape.

Objects and Tools category with 18 metaphors and a frequency percentage of 4.2%, this category includes metaphors that liken exams to various tools or valuable items, suggesting functionality, utility, or the notion of exams being a means to an end. Items like "backpack" and "pen" are practical tools associated with study, while "treasure" and "diamond" might symbolize the valuable and enduring benefits of a university education.

Human Emotions and States category has 17 metaphors and a frequency percentage of 4.4%. It contains metaphors that are related to human experiences and emotions, like "anxiety," "maturity," and "stress," indicating the emotional and psychological impact that exams can have on individuals. This category includes emotions and stages of human life, from "anxiety" and "stress" to "maturity" and "responsibility," indicating parents are aware of the emotional and psychological journey that accompanies university life.

Entertainment and Leisure category has 9 metaphors with a frequency percentage of 5.6%. Metaphors such as "holiday," "game," and "festival" are somewhat unexpected in the context of exams, possibly suggesting that for some, exams might be a break from the usual routine or a different kind of engagement. Metaphors such as "festival" and "holiday" suggest that parents also see the university as a place for enjoyment and downtime, not just serious study.

Social Relationships category contains 7 metaphors with a high frequency percentage of 28.2%. This indicates a strong association of university with social aspects of life, like "family," "friend,"

and "social environment," emphasizing the role of university in social interactions and life transitions. This category emphasizes the social aspect of university life, from "family" and "friend" to "culture" and "social environment," indicating the importance of the relationships formed during this time.

Food and Drink category also has 7 metaphors but with a lower frequency percentage of 2.6%. This category's metaphors might symbolize exams as something to be consumed or digested, like "food," "honey," and "sugar," perhaps indicating that exams are nourishment for the mind. This category's metaphors may refer to the university as something that nourishes or provides for students, with "food" and "sugar" symbolizing the essentials and sweet aspects of university life.

Living Spaces category, with 6 metaphors and a frequency percentage of 5.7%, includes metaphors like "home" and "kitchen," which could imply that exams are a central part of one's living space or personal life. Metaphors such as "home" and "kitchen" may indicate that the university is seen as a living space that provides comfort and shelter, and where daily life unfolds.

Work and Profession category contains 4 metaphors with a frequency percentage of 2.8%. Metaphors such as "teacher" and "work" suggest that exams are closely related to professional development and career advancement. With metaphors like "work" and "teacher," parents connect the university to professional development and the role of educators in preparing students for the workforce.

Science and Technology category has 3 metaphors with a frequency percentage of 1.4%, indicating a less frequent but still present association of exams with progress, modernity, and innovation. This category, including "computer" and "innovation," suggests the importance of technical skills and the role of the university in advancing technology and innovation.

Economics and Finance category, also with 3 metaphors but a slightly lower frequency percentage of 1.2%, this category's metaphors suggest that exams are viewed in terms of their economic value, investment, and monetary implications. The metaphors "money" and "investment" indicate the financial implications of university education, viewed as an economic transaction or investment in the future.

The category of *Personal Development* is dominant, highlighting the central role of exams in educational and developmental processes. The *Social Relationships* category has a high frequency percentage, indicating that exams are perceived as significantly influencing social dynamics. Categories related to emotions, physical world, and utilitarian objects suggest a diverse range of perceptions and symbolic meanings associated with exams. Less frequent associations are made with food, professional life, and economics, but they still present a view of exams as practical and essential elements of life. The metaphors present a complex picture of the exam as a phenomenon with implications that span across various dimensions of human experience.

Findings Related to Conceptual Categories

In the interest of clarity and simplicity, the findings obtained in the study are presented in the subsequent sections by showcasing and interpreting the three or four metaphors with the highest frequency in each category. In this section, all categories were shown and analyzed because of the frequency and importance of them.

Table 4

Metaphors According to the " Social Relationships " Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
life	*"Numerous experiences are encountered for the first time."*	89	18,1
family	*"One forms familial bonds with peers."*	25	5,1
social environment	*"The most enduring friendships are established there, and a multitude of individuals are met."*	12	2,4
friend	*"It exerts a lifelong influence upon us."*	8	1,6

Life (89 f, 18.1%): The metaphor of "life" being most frequently used suggests that parents see the university as a vital part of existence. It could indicate that they view university education as closely intertwined with the larger journey of life, possibly encompassing growth, opportunities, and experiences that are crucial to one's overall development. *Family (25 f, 5.1%):* The significant frequency of "family" implies that parents may perceive the university as an extension of or as having a significant impact on the family unit. This could reflect the belief that the university experience is not isolated to the individual but also involves the family, whether in terms of support, pride, or collective aspiration. *Social Environment (12 f, 2.4%):* This metaphor suggests that parents view the university as a social sphere or an environment that shapes social interactions. It indicates the importance of the social aspect of university life, where one forms networks, is

exposed to diverse viewpoints, and learns to navigate different social settings. *Friend (8 f, 1.6%):* The use of "friend" less frequently than the other metaphors might indicate that while parents acknowledge the role of friendships in the university experience, they might place greater emphasis on the broader social environment, family involvement, and the overall life impact of the university.

The dominance of the metaphor "life" indicates that parents heavily associate the university with a significant phase in life, one that is perhaps transformative. The presence of "family" as a strong metaphor suggests an understanding that the university affects and involves the family, not just the individual student. The inclusion of "social environment" and "friend" reflects the recognition of the social dimensions of university life. Overall, these metaphors paint a picture of the university as a holistic experience that extends beyond academia, deeply embedded in personal and social spheres.

Table 5

Metaphors According to the "Personal Development " Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
development	*"It constitutes the initial step on the path toward individual autonomy."*	20	4,1
education	*"It serves as one of the inception points of education."*	17	3,5
information	*"There, we can access the information we desire and require."*	15	3,0
book	*"It invariably imparts new knowledge."*	11	2,2

Development (20 f, 4.1%): This metaphor, having the highest frequency, suggests that parents view the university phase as a critical period for development. It implies a period of growth, maturity, and advancement in skills and abilities. The concept of development here could encompass personal, social, academic, or professional growth. *Education (17 f, 3.5%):* The metaphor of education, following closely behind development, signifies the core function of a university. Parents likely recognize the institution as a place of formal learning and academic training. This aligns with the traditional view of universities as places where structured education is obtained. *Information (15 f, 3%):* Information being a prominent metaphor indicates that parents see the university as a source of knowledge and learning. It might also suggest that they consider the ability to access, process, and use information as a key outcome of university education. *Book (11 f, 2.2%):* The book metaphor, while less frequent than the others, still holds a significant place, symbolizing the academic aspect of the university. It could represent study, research, and the acquisition of knowledge through literature and reading, which are fundamental aspects of university life.

The metaphors chosen by parents reflect a strong association between the university and the processes of learning and personal growth. "Development" and "education" suggest a recognition of the transformative nature of the university experience. The emphasis on "information" and "book" underscores the importance of knowledge and academics. Collectively, these metaphors depict the university as a multifaceted institution that not only imparts education but also plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's overall capabilities and worldview.

Table 6

Metaphors According to the "Nature " Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
step	*"It represents the initial step towards the journey of becoming an independent individual."*	9	1,8
tree	*"It is the juncture where an individual ascends to the pinnacle of their educational journey, launching into life and establishing their roots."*	8	1,6
world	*"It encompasses a diversity of elements from every type of person and every aspect of life."*	7	1,4

Step (9 f, 1.8%): The metaphor "step" is the most frequent in this category, which might suggest that parents view the university as a step in a larger journey, perhaps a significant milestone in life's path. This could imply progression, a move towards future goals or aspirations. *Tree (8 f, 1.6%):* The "tree" metaphor could symbolize growth, stability, and life-long learning, reflecting the organic development of knowledge and personal growth that parents might associate with the university experience. It could also represent branching out into various fields of study or the idea of putting down roots in a nurturing academic environment. *World (7 f, 1.4%):* With the metaphor "world," parents may be indicating that university represents a microcosm of the larger world or a realm of new experiences and diverse opportunities. It suggests exposure to a broader perspective and possibly the idea that university is a place where one prepares to enter the wider world.

The metaphors from the "Nature " category portray the university as a natural progression in life ("step"), a place for growth and development ("tree"), and as a broadening of horizons ("world"). These metaphors collectively suggest that parents see the university not just as an educational institution but as an integral part of the natural course of life, offering a foundation for personal development and a gateway to a larger realm of experiences.

Table 7

Metaphors According to the "Abstract and Philosophical Ideas" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
future	*"It serves as the preparatory phase for future life."*	11	2,2
freedom	*"The student learns to live independently of their family unit."*	9	1,8
redundancy	*"Perhaps even without its pursuit, life would remain unchanged."*	5	1,0

Future (11 f, 2.2%): The metaphor "future" being the most frequent in this category suggests that parents associate university education with the future prospects of their children or the future in a broader sense. It reflects the anticipation that university is a preparatory stage for what is to come, likely in terms of career, personal development, and life progress. *Freedom (9 f, 1.8%):* The metaphor of "freedom" indicates that parents might see university as a time and place of liberation, perhaps from previous educational constraints or as an environment where students can explore different paths and make choices about their lives with greater autonomy. *Redundancy (5 f, 1%):* The presence of "redundancy" is intriguing as it could suggest a critical perspective. It may reflect concerns about aspects of the university experience or the education system being outdated or unnecessary. Alternatively, it could point to a belief that some elements of university education may no longer be as essential as they once were, perhaps in the face of changing job markets or new educational paradigms.

The metaphors used in the "Abstract and Philosophical Ideas" category indicate a mix of hope and critique in how parents perceive the university. "Future" and "freedom" suggest a positive outlook on the university as a stepping stone to later success and personal growth. In contrast, "redundancy" may signal some skepticism about the efficacy or relevance of some aspects of university education. These metaphors collectively reveal that while parents recognize the importance of higher education for future opportunities, there may also be concerns about its alignment with the evolving needs of students and society.

Table 8

Metaphors According to the " Living Spaces" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
home	*"It becomes a haven for individuals where they spend the majority of their time."*	22	4,5
nursing home	*"It is characterized by its reliability and the presence of attentive care."*	2	0,4

Home (22 f, 4.5%): The metaphor "home" is used most frequently in this category. This suggests that parents may view the university as a 'home away from home,' a place where students spend a significant amount of time and undergo substantial personal growth. It may also imply a sense of belonging, comfort, and security that they hope the university environment will provide for their children. *Nursing Home (2 f, 0.4%):* The use of "nursing home" is quite unusual in this context. It could suggest a place of care and support, perhaps indicating that parents hope the university will offer a nurturing environment. However, it might also carry connotations of concern, possibly about the ability of students to live independently or the need for guidance during their university years.

The prominent use of "home" indicates a desire for the university to be a welcoming and safe environment, emphasizing the importance of the social and emotional aspects of university life. The reference to "nursing home," although much less frequent, might highlight an aspect of care or support that is associated with the university experience. It could also reflect parental concerns about the well-being of their children as they transition to a more independent phase of life. These metaphors reveal the hopes and concerns parents harbor about the spaces their children will inhabit while pursuing higher education.

Table 9

Metaphors According to the " Entertainment and Leisure " Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
festival	*"Simultaneously, one engages in leisure activities while accumulating unforgettable friendships and memories."*	12	2,4
cafe	*"One's social network expands, enriching their general cultural knowledge."*	5	1,0
entertainment	*"The most cherished and enjoyable moments have transpired there."*	5	1,0

Festival (12 f, 2.4%): The metaphor "festival" being the most frequent suggests that parents may perceive the university experience as a celebratory and vibrant time. This could reflect an

understanding that university life includes social events, a variety of activities, and a festive atmosphere that can be enjoyable and enriching. *Cafe (5 f, 1%):* The "cafe" metaphor could imply a place for social interaction and leisure, a relaxed environment where students can unwind and socialize. It might also symbolize the informal learning and discussions that happen outside the classroom. *Entertainment (5 f, 1%):* Similar in frequency to "cafe," the metaphor "entertainment" indicates that parents associate the university with enjoyable activities and a break from the more strenuous aspects of academic life. It underscores the importance of balance between study and leisure.

The metaphors in the "Entertainment and Leisure " category collectively illustrate a parental perspective that views the university as a space not only for academic pursuit but also for personal enjoyment and relaxation. The prominence of "festival" highlights an aspect of celebration and community, while "cafe" and "entertainment" suggest the value placed on downtime and social experiences. These metaphors may reflect the parents' hopes that their children will find a balance between their studies and personal fulfillment during their time at university.

Table 10

Metaphors According to the " Human Emotions and States" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
maturity	*"All the education we receive contributes to our maturation."*	2	0,4
responsibility	*"The challenges experienced act as a system for awakening a sense of responsibility."*	2	0,4
child	*"It is the place where one's need for education, knowledge, and culture evolves."*	2	0,4
loneliness	*"In a different city, you must stand on your own feet and be cognizant of your responsibilities."*	2	0,4

Maturity (2 f, 0.4%): The metaphor of "maturity" likely signifies the growth and development expected to occur during the university years. It suggests that parents see the university as a critical time for their children to develop a more mature perspective on life and to gain independence. *Responsibility (2 f, 0.4%):* By using "responsibility," parents may be indicating that they believe the university experience should teach their children to be more accountable for their actions. This includes managing their studies, finances, and personal life, which are key aspects of becoming an adult. *Child (2 f, 0.4%):* The metaphor "child" is interesting in this context as it could imply a few things. It might suggest that parents still see their children as young and in need of guidance despite

them being at a university age. Alternatively, it could reflect on the transformation from childhood to adulthood that the university phase represents. *Loneliness (2 f, 0.4%):* "Loneliness" could indicate a concern among parents about the potential for their children to feel isolated or unsupported during their time at university. It acknowledges the emotional challenges that come with the transition to university life and the importance of social support and connection.

These metaphors collectively depict the university as a significant transitional phase where young adults undergo personal growth ("maturity"), learn to take on greater duties ("responsibility"), move from adolescence to adulthood ("child"), and face emotional challenges such as isolation ("loneliness"). The equal frequency and percentage values suggest that these concepts are all integral to the parents' understanding of what the university represents in the journey of human development.

Table 11

Metaphors According to the "Objects and Tools" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
window	*"It can be said that an institution with a multitude of students signifies a diversity of distinct ideas."*	2	0,4
pen	*"Its impact leaves an enduring trace."*	2	0,4
light	*"Every piece of knowledge acquired catalyzes an enlightenment within an individual."*	2	0,4

Window (2 f, 0.4%): The metaphor "window" could symbolize the university as a portal offering a new perspective or outlook on the world. It suggests visibility, transparency, and the possibility of looking beyond current circumstances into future opportunities. *Pen (2 f, 0.4%):* "Pen" as a metaphor likely represents the traditional tools of learning and communication. It may also imply authorship and creation, signifying that the university is a place where students can write their own stories and articulate their knowledge. *Light (2 f, 0.4%):* The metaphor "light" often symbolizes knowledge, enlightenment, and clarity. In the context of the university, it could suggest that higher education enlightens the mind, offering clarity in thought and illuminating the path forward.

These metaphors indicate the university's role in providing resources ("pen"), opening new horizons ("window"), and offering enlightenment and understanding ("light"). Each metaphor carries a similar weight, suggesting that they are all important aspects of the educational tools, environments, and outcomes that parents associate with the university experience. They reflect the

parents' perception of the university as a place that equips students with essential tools for learning and personal development.

Table 12.

Metaphors According to the "Work and Profession" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
work	*"It demands responsibility and prepares individuals for professional life."*	10	2,0
teacher	*"It cultivates a person both academically and socially."*	2	0,4
expert	*"It specializes individuals in their field and profession."*	1	0,2
organized business	*"A conclusion is reached through collaborative effort."*	1	0,2

Work (10 f, 2%): The metaphor "work" suggests that parents see a direct link between university education and professional work. It implies that they view the university as a place where students prepare for their future careers and gain the skills necessary for the workplace. *Teacher (2 f, 0.4%):* The "teacher" metaphor reflects the role of educators in the university setting. It indicates the importance of the guidance and knowledge that teachers provide to students, which is integral to their professional and personal development. *Expert (1 f, 0.2%):* The term "expert" suggests that parents may associate the university with the attainment of specialized knowledge and the development of expertise in a particular field. It underscores the university's role in helping students become authorities in their chosen disciplines. *Organized Business (1 occurrence, 0.2%):* This metaphor could indicate that parents perceive the university as an institution that should function efficiently like a business. It may also imply that they expect the university experience to instill a sense of organization and business acumen in students.

The metaphors used in the "Professional Life and Work" category illustrate the expectation that the university serves as a foundation for future employment ("work"), a place where skilled educators ("teacher") impart knowledge and cultivate expertise ("expert") within students, and an environment that promotes organizational skills ("organized business"). These metaphors reveal parents' perspectives on the practical and professional outcomes they anticipate from a university education for their children.

Table 13.

Metaphors According to the "Food and Drink" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
food	*"You satiate your hunger for knowledge."*	4	0,8
sugar	*"It enriches your life with flavor."*	2	0,4
fruit	*"It contains the essential nutrients required by everyone and is palatable."*	2	0,4
pasta	*"It is universally appreciated and satisfies hunger."*	2	0,4

Food (4 f, 0.8%): The metaphor "food" could symbolize the university as a source of sustenance for the mind, essential for growth and development. It implies that education is as necessary for intellectual development as food is for physical health. Sugar *(2 f, 0.4%):* "Sugar" may represent the sweet rewards of university life, perhaps the enjoyable aspects or the 'sweet success' one might achieve through academic endeavors. It could also suggest that some parts of university life are particularly pleasing or gratifying. Fruit *(2 f, 0.4%):* The "fruit" metaphor might symbolize the fruitful outcomes of attending university, such as acquiring knowledge or gaining qualifications. It could also imply the ripening of personal and professional abilities that comes with higher education. Pasta *(2 f, 0.4%):* "Pasta" as a metaphor could refer to the foundational and versatile nature of university education. Just as pasta is a staple food in many diets and can be adapted in numerous ways, university education can be seen as fundamental and adaptable to various career paths and life situations.

The metaphors in the "Food and Drink" category suggest that parents view the university as nourishing the mind ("food"), providing pleasurable experiences ("sugar"), yielding valuable results ("fruit"), and serving as a versatile foundation for the future ("pasta"). These metaphors imply that parents perceive the university experience as both essential and rewarding, contributing to the growth and satisfaction of their children in various ways.

Table 14

Metaphors According to the "Science and Technology" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
innovation	*"Experiencing a new city entail encountering new friends and environments."*	5	1
internet	*"Everything is readily accessible at your disposal."*	1	0,2
computer	*"The information you seek is presented to you along with alternatives according to your preference."*	1	0,2

Innovation (5 f, 1%): The metaphor "innovation" suggests that parents perceive the university as a hub of creativity and new ideas. It implies that they view higher education as a place where students can engage with cutting-edge research and technological advancements, contributing to new developments in various fields. Internet (1 occurrence, 0.2%): The mention of the "internet" reflects the importance of digital connectivity and access to information in modern education. It may also suggest that parents see the university experience as being greatly enhanced by, and dependent on, digital technology and online resources. Computer (1 occurrence, 0.2%): "Computer" as a metaphor could represent the integral role of technology in the university setting. It might imply that technological literacy is essential for students and that computers are a fundamental tool for learning, research, and professional preparation.

These metaphors emphasize the role of technology and innovation in the university experience as seen by parents. "Innovation" being the most frequent metaphor indicates a strong association with progress and the generation of new ideas, which are considered key outcomes of a university education. The mentions of "internet" and "computer" underscore the perceived necessity of technology in supporting learning and academic pursuits. Collectively, these metaphors indicate that parents expect the university to be a place where students engage with modern technology and contribute to advancements in science and technology.

Table 15.

Metaphors According to the "Economics and Finance" Category

Metaphor	Example of Participant Statement (Code)	f	%
money	*"It poses a financial challenge."*	3	0,6
economy	*"For the first time, you are required to consider and weigh every necessity, making purchases with the deliberation of an economist."*	2	0,4
investment	*"The knowledge acquired today becomes wealth in the future."*	1	0,2

Money (3 f, 0.6%): The metaphor "money" likely suggests that parents associate the university with significant financial considerations, whether that be the cost of tuition, the financial burden of education, or the potential for future earnings. *Economy (2 f, 0.4%):* "Economy" as a metaphor could imply that parents see the university as an economic system or entity that plays a role in the larger economy. This might reflect their views on the university's impact on individual economic prospects and its place within the broader economic context. *Investment (1 f, 0.2%):* The use of "investment" indicates that parents may view the money and time spent on university education as

an investment in their child's future. This suggests an expectation of a return on this investment, such as better job opportunities and increased lifetime earnings.

The metaphors used in the "Economics and Finance" category reflect parents' views of the university as intertwined with financial matters. "Money" being the most frequent metaphor indicates direct concerns or considerations about the financial aspects of university life. "Economy" suggests a broader perspective on the role of university in society and its economic impact. Finally, "investment" indicates a long-term view of the value of university education. These metaphors reveal that parents consider the financial implications of university education to be significant and view it as an investment in their children's future economic well-being.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, which aims to evaluate the metaphorical expressions of regarding the concept of university, 142 metaphors produced by parents were analyzed under different categories by subjecting them to content analysis. The findings showed that the metaphors of parents regarding the concept of university were grouped under 12 categories.

The analysis of metaphors produced by parents regarding the concept of "University" indicates a predominantly positive perception, characterized by a blend of abstract and concrete expressions. Abstract metaphors, constituting 59% of the total, alongside concrete ones at 41%, reveal a comprehensive view of the university as transcending mere academic instruction. The metaphors most frequently cited—"Life," "Family," "Home," "Development," and "Education"—highlight the university's integral role in personal growth, social relationships, and intellectual enrichment. This suggests that parents regard the university not only as an educational institution but as a pivotal life stage pivotal for overall development and social integration. The findings illuminate the multifaceted significance parents attribute to the university experience, encompassing academic, personal, and social dimensions. Such notions could be supported by Tierney (2008) that emphasized how parents conceptualize higher education as a pathway to success, often equating it with future economic security and upward mobility.

Looking at the literature, similar to this research, looking at the literature, similar to this research, Pesen (2015) explores the perceptions of parents about the concept of "child" through metaphors,

highlighting how parents construct meaning around educational concepts. Pesen's findings show that parents tend to view their children both as fragile beings needing protection and as investments for the future, reflecting their aspirations for the child's success. This aligns with the current study's findings, where parents similarly perceive the university not just as an educational setting but as a transformative stage crucial for future development and success. Both studies emphasize that parental metaphors provide insights into deeper beliefs about education, showing that parents associate educational stages—whether related to children or higher education—with broader life goals such as personal growth, security, and future prosperity. These parallels demonstrate that parents' use of metaphors reflects not only their emotional attachments but also their expectations about education's role in preparing individuals for life and society.

Recent research supports these notions, indicating that parents increasingly conceptualize higher education as essential for economic security and upward social mobility (Reay, David & Ball, 2005). Similarly, Schuller and Field (1998) argue that parents view education as a pathway to both individual development and social integration, reflecting shifting societal expectations about the role of education. These studies align with the current findings, as parents in this study regard university as not just a means for academic achievement but also as a platform for building essential life skills and social connections. The emphasis on future success, as found in both the literature and this study, highlights a shared belief among parents that education is critical for equipping young people with the skills necessary to thrive in a competitive, uncertain world.

On the other hand, parents' likening of the concept of a university to concrete objects like money, school, amusement park, and book underscores a realistic approach towards higher education. Parents understand that university is an investment (money), a continuation of previous education (school), a source of new experiences (amusement park), and a significant source of knowledge (book). These metaphorical associations may echo research such as Perna and Titus's (2005) work, where they showed parents' recognition of the financial implications of higher education and their impact on family economics.

Recent studies further elaborate on these insights. According to Ball (2010), parents increasingly view higher education as both an individual investment and a social necessity, given the growing competition in the labor market. Similarly, Reay (2004) and Bourdieu (1986) highlight how parents see higher education not only as a path to economic stability but also as a means for social and

cultural capital accumulation, which contributes to long-term family well-being. Furthermore, Reay, David and Ball (2005) argue that parents' understanding of the financial burden and opportunities linked to higher education shapes their long-term planning and economic behavior, mirroring the metaphor of university as money or investment. These recent studies align with the findings of this research, emphasizing how parents' metaphors about university reflect a blend of pragmatic and aspirational perspectives, recognizing both the challenges and opportunities associated with higher education.

Findings show that parents mostly attribute a positive meaning to the university, seeing it related to life and home, indicating comfort, stability, and personal development. This aligns with studies that highlight the positive expectations parents have from universities, associating it with their child's personal and professional growth (Vaccaro, 2010). This aligns with Tierney's (2008) work emphasizing that parents often see higher education as a pathway to success and personal development. This can also link to Kahu et al.'s (2015) research, which highlights the range of skills and experiences gained at university that can contribute to future career success but also to personal growth and development. However, it is crucial to consider that these perceptions may vary across different demographic and socioeconomic groups. Therefore, further research might want to explore how these metaphorical representations differ across various groups to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parental perceptions towards universities. Also, comparing these parental metaphors to the actual experiences of students in universities could offer additional insights into the alignment or disparity between parental expectations and student realities, an area highlighted in Kahu et al.'s (2015) research on student engagement.

The analysis of parental metaphors concerning the university concept reveals a comprehensive perspective that transcends the educational scope, highlighting its significance in personal growth, intellectual development, social integration, and professional preparation. Metaphors such as "life," "development," and "future" emphasize the university's pivotal role in shaping individuals' trajectories, fostering a sense of autonomy, and preparing them for future challenges. The use of "home" and "family" underscores the importance of a supportive and nurturing environment, reflecting the social and emotional dimensions of the university experience. The exploration of parental metaphors regarding the university experience underscores its perceived role not just as an educational institution but as a pivotal life stage influencing personal development, social

integration, and future professional paths. Such a transition can be linked to studies like those of Vaccaro (2010), who discusses the shift that students go through in university, both academically and personally. Babenko's (2023) investigation into the professional development of future managers at the initial stage of university education highlights the critical role of universities in laying the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for professional success. Similarly, Pham's (2022) study on the academic identity development among Asian international doctoral students at a U.S. research university sheds light on the social and emotional dimensions of the university experience.

Furthermore, the metaphors extend to the realms of leisure and personal fulfillment, with references to "festival" and "entertainment," indicating the balance between academic rigor and life enrichment. The depiction of the university as a "step" and "tree" in the journey of growth and the emphasis on "innovation" and "technology" highlight the dynamic nature of learning and the critical role of universities in fostering creativity and adaptability in the face of societal changes. Financial considerations, as reflected in metaphors related to "money" and "investment," reveal the economic implications of university education and its perceived value as an investment in personal and professional futures. Collectively, these metaphors illustrate the multifaceted expectations and perceptions of parents regarding the university experience, encompassing a broad spectrum of life's dimensions, from personal development and social connections to professional ambitions and financial planning. These metaphors underscore the dual nature of university education as both a significant financial commitment and a vital investment in future success. This ties into research like Perna and Titus's (2005), which examines parents' views of university as a stepping stone towards secure economic futures. Minutillo, Cleary, Hills and Visentin (2020) discuss the economic benefits of international students to the host institution and country, emphasizing the financial considerations in the context of international education. This study indirectly touches upon the investment aspect of university education by highlighting the significant financial contributions of international students and the need for adequate support systems to maximize their educational and personal development outcomes. Bekareva, Getmanova and Ivanova (2022) examine factors influencing the investment returns of beginning investors, highlighting the importance of financial and investment literacy. This research underscores the value of education in enhancing financial literacy, which is crucial for making informed investment decisions, including the decision to invest in university education for future returns.

Future studies may examine how parents' metaphorical perceptions of university vary according to socioeconomic, cultural and demographic differences. Furthermore, investigating the congruence or incongruence between parents' expectations and students' university experiences may contribute to universities' development of student and family communication strategies. Comparing student and parent metaphors can provide important insights into how these perceptions evolve over time. In addition, how factors such as global trends and digital transformation affect parents' perceptions of education can also be examined. Especially in the post-pandemic period, investigating whether new metaphors have emerged regarding hybrid and online education models can guide educational policies.

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Geniş Özet

Amaç

Bu araştırma, ebeveynlerin "üniversite" kavramına ilişkin algılarını metaforlar aracılığıyla ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ortaya çıkarılan bu metaforlar çeşitli kategoriler ve temalar altında sınıflandırılmıştır. Bu genel amaç çerçevesinde şu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır; Ebeveynlerin "üniversite" kavramına ilişkin sahip oldukları metaforlar nelerdir? Ebeveynlerin metaforları ortak özellikleri bakımından hangi kategoriler altında toplanabilir?

Yöntem

Bu araştırma, üniversite öğrencisi olan ebeveynlerin üniversite olgusuna ilişkin metaforik düşüncelerini betimlemeyi ve yorumlamayı amaçladığından nitel bir araştırmadır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2022-2023 akademik yılı güz döneminde ülkemizdeki çeşitli üniversitelerin lisans programlarında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin ebeveynleri oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma grubu 163 veliden oluşmaktadır. Çalışma grubu gönüllülük esasına göre oluşturulmuştur. Veri toplama aracı iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde ebeveynlerin cinsiyeti, eğitim düzeyi ve ikamet ettiği yer gibi kişisel sorular yer almaktadır. İkinci bölümde ise ebeveynlerin üniversite hakkındaki düşünce ve algılarını ifade edebilecekleri "Üniversite .... gibidir çünkü ...." cümlesi yer almaktadır.

Bulgular

Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturan ebeveynler "Üniversite" kavramına ilişkin toplam 142 metafor üretmiştir. Bu metaforların; %59'unun (f=84) soyut, %41'inin (f=58) somut ifadeler olduğu, %56'sının (f=80) olumlu, %28'inin (f=40) nötr ve %16'sının (f=22) olumsuz anlam taşıdığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu metaforlar arasında frekansı en yüksek olanlar "Hayat" (f=89), "Aile" (f=25), "Ev" (f=22), "Gelişim" (f=20) ve "Eğitim" (f=17) olarak belirlenmiştir. Üniversite kavramına

ilişkin üretilen 142 metafor 12 kategori altında toplanmıştır. Elde edilen kategorilerin anlamını aktarmak amacıyla metaforlar, kategorilerin frekans ve yüzde değerleri tablolar halinde sunulmuştur. Kişisel Gelişim kategorisi en fazla metafora (28, %22,8) sahiptir. Bu kategoride "başarı", "eğitim", "bilgi" ve "ders" gibi öğrenme ve entelektüel gelişimle ilgili metaforlar yer almaktadır; bu da sınavların bilgi edinme ve kişisel gelişim süreciyle güçlü bir şekilde ilişkilendirildiğini göstermektedir. Felsefi ve Soyut Kavramlar 21 metafor (% 10) içermektedir. "Hayal", "gelecek" ve "fikir" gibi bu metaforlar, üniversitelerin kişinin felsefi görüşlerini veya gelecekteki hedeflerini etkileyebilecek bir basamak veya önemli bir olay olduğu hissini vermektedir. Doğa kategorisi 19 metafordan (% 10,2) oluşmaktadır. "Savaş alanı", "okyanus" ve "gökkuşağı" gibi metaforlar, üniversitenin kişinin karşılaştığı ve aşması gereken doğal zorluklar veya engeller olarak görüldüğü söylenebilir. İnsani Duygu ve Durumlar kategorisinde 17 metafor (%4,4) bulunmaktadır. "Kaygı", "olgunluk" ve "stres" gibi insan deneyimleri ve duygularıyla ilgili metaforları içeren bu kategori, sınavların bireyler üzerinde yaratabileceği duygusal ve psikolojik etkiye işaret etmektedir. Eğlence ve Boş Zaman kategorisinde 9 metafor (%5,6) bulunmaktadır. "Tatil", "oyun" ve "festival" gibi metaforların sınavlar bağlamında kullanılması beklenmedik bir durumdur ve muhtemelen bazıları için sınavların alışılagelmiş rutinden bir kopuş ya da farklı türde bir uğraş olabileceğini düşündürmektedir. Sosyal İlişkiler kategorisi %28,2 gibi yüksek bir sıklık yüzdesiyle 7 metafor içermektedir. Bu, sınavların "aile", "arkadaş" ve "sosyal çevre" gibi yaşamın sosyal yönleriyle güçlü bir şekilde ilişkilendirildiğini göstermekte ve sınavların sosyal etkileşimler ve yaşam geçişlerindeki rolünü vurgulamaktadır.

Sonuç

Ebeveynler tarafından "Üniversite" kavramına ilişkin üretilen metaforların analizi, soyut ve somut ifadelerin bir karışımı ile karakterize edilen, ağırlıklı olarak olumlu bir algıya işaret etmektedir. Toplam metaforların %59'unu oluşturan soyut metaforlar ile %41'ini oluşturan somut metaforlar, üniversitenin salt akademik eğitimin ötesine geçen kapsamlı bir bakış açısını ortaya koymaktadır. En sık kullanılan metaforlar olan "Yaşam", "Aile", "Ev", "Gelişim" ve "Eğitim" üniversitenin kişisel gelişim, sosyal ilişkiler ve entelektüel zenginleşmedeki ayrılmaz rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Öte yandan, ebeveynlerin üniversite kavramını para, okul, lunapark ve kitap gibi somut nesnelere benzetmesi, yükseköğretime yönelik gerçekçi bir yaklaşımın altını çizmektedir. Ebeveynler üniversitenin bir yatırım (para), önceki eğitimin devamı (okul), yeni deneyimlerin kaynağı

(lunapark) ve önemli bir bilgi kaynağı (kitap) olduğunu ifade etmektedir. Bulgular, ebeveynlerin üniversiteye çoğunlukla olumlu bir anlam yüklediğini, üniversiteyi yaşam ve evle ilgili gördüğünü, rahatlık, istikrar ve kişisel gelişime işaret ettiğini göstermektedir. Üniversite kavramına ilişkin ebeveyn metaforlarının analizi, üniversitenin kişisel gelişim, entelektüel gelişim, sosyal entegrasyon ve mesleki hazırlık açısından önemini vurgulayarak, eğitim kapsamını aşan kapsamlı bir bakış açısını ortaya koymaktadır. Metaforlar, üniversitenin yalnızca akademik başarı değil, aynı zamanda boş zaman ve kişisel tatmin için de bir alan sunduğunu, "festival" ve "eğlence" gibi referanslarla göstermektedir. Üniversitenin, bireysel gelişim yolculuğunda bir "basamak" ve "ağaç" olarak tanımlanması, büyümeyi ve olgunlaşmayı simgelerken, "yenilik" ve "teknoloji" vurguları, öğrenmenin dinamik yapısını yansıtır. Bu metaforlar, üniversitelerin yaratıcılığı teşvik ederek toplumsal değişimlere uyum sağlama konusunda oynadığı önemli rolü ortaya koymaktadır.