

## Research Article

### Metaphorical Perceptions of University Students Regarding the Concept of “Leader”

#### Üniversite Öğrencilerinin “Lider” Kavramına İlişkin Metaforik Algıları

**Mehtap ARAS**

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi

Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi, Acil Yardım ve Afet Yönetimi Bölümü

[mehtap.aras@gop.edu.tr](mailto:mehtap.aras@gop.edu.tr)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1194-8123>

| Makale Geliş Tarihi | Makale Kabul Tarihi |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 16.11.2021          | 24.02.2022          |

#### **Abstract**

*This study aims to reveal university students' perceptions of the concept of the leader through metaphors. The research model is in the phenomenology model, which is one of the qualitative research models. The population of the research consists of actively registered students at Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University in the 2020-2021 academic years. There are a total of 30.851 students (associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and Ph.D.) in the state university in this academic year. A questionnaire form was applied to reveal the mental images of 756 students who accepted to participate in the study regarding the concept of the leader. In the coding and sequencing phase of the research, it was examined whether the metaphors associated with the concept of the leader were clear, but 170 students' papers were deemed invalid (no metaphor, weak metaphor imagery, logical basis), and the analysis of the research data was made with metaphors obtained from 586 students. 10 different main themes (authoritarian, guiding, fair, protective, wisdom, life source, peak, natural power, connective, and hardworking) were created in the metaphorical perceptions of the students regarding the concept of leader.*

**Keywords.** leader, leadership, metaphor, university student.

#### **Öz**

*Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin “lider” kavramına ilişkin algılarını metaforlar aracılığıyla ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma modeli nitel araştırma modellerinden biri olan fenomenoloji modelindedir. Araştırmanın evrenini 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi'ne aktif olarak kayıtlı öğrenciler (önlisans, lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora öğrencileri) oluşturmaktadır. Üniversitede 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında toplam 30.851 öğrenci öğrenim görmektedir. Araştırma anket linki öğrencilerin mobil telefonlarına ve e-posta adreslerine gönderilmiştir ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 756 öğrencinin verdiği cevaplar analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın kodlama ve sıralama aşamasında lider kavramı ile ilişkilendirilen metaforların açık olup olmadığı incelenmiş, ancak 170 öğrencinin anketi geçersiz sayılmıştır (metafor olmaması, zayıf metafor imgelemine olmaması, mantıksal temel). Bu nedenle araştırma verilerinin analizi 586 öğrenciden elde edilen metafor ile yapılmıştır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin lider kavramına ilişkin metaforik algılarında 10 farklı ana tema (otoriter, yol gösterici, adil, koruyucu, bilgelik, yaşam kaynağı, zirve, doğal güç, birleştirici ve çalışkan) oluşturulmuştur. liderin uyguladığı liderlik tarzı yada tarzlarının çalışan davranışları üzerinde doğrudan etkisi vardır. Hem örgütün hem de çalışanların başarısı için çalışanlara, örgütün kültürüne ve iklimine uygun liderlik tarzları uygulanmalıdır. Her biri farklı bir meslekte olan ve çoğu geleceğin liderleri veya izleyenleri olacak üniversite öğrencilerinin lider kavramına ilişkin algıları bu nedenle önemlidir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler.** lider, liderlik, metafor, üniversite öğrencileri.

#### **Önerilen Atf /Suggested Citation**

Aras, M., 2022 Metaphorical Perceptions of University Students Regarding the Concept of “Leader”, *Üçüncü Sektör Sosyal Ekonomi Dergisi*, 57(1), 427-441.

## 1.Introduction

Although most of the studies in the field of leader and leadership are in the field of management and organization, many disciplines explore the concept of leader and leadership in different aspects. In general, the concept is often compared with the concept of manager; it is obvious that they are different from each other. It is not necessary to have a formal structure to be a leader. For all that, an organization or group cannot be expected to be successful without a leader. The value of professions is measured by the services they provide to society. The value of these services is determined by both the members of that profession and those who will receive the service. At this point, leadership is of great importance in all occupational groups (Karabey et al., 2019: 18). The success of both a formal structure and an informal group depends on the success and characteristics of the leader. There are many definitions of the concept of leader in the literature. The definition of leadership has evolved with the research on the concept. Since the 1930s, many definitions of leaders have been made and each definition has emphasized a different characteristic of the leader. The characteristics that a leader should have can be classified as skill and ability, personal characteristics, social characteristics, physical and constitutional factors (Jago, 1982: 317). Leadership in its simplest form; 'the process of influencing and mobilizing audiences towards common goals'. Koçel (1998: 396-397) define leader as “a person who motivates and influences others to act for a specific purpose” and formulates the leadership process as follows:

$$\text{Leadership} = f(\text{leader, followers, conditions})$$

Yukl (1989: 252) stated that the definitions of leadership are defined in terms of “individual characteristics, leader behavior, interaction models, role relationships, follower perceptions, influence on followers, influence on task goals, and influence on organizational culture”. Many theories of leadership have been developed. In addition to this, more than thirty leadership styles<sup>1</sup> and their characteristics have been revealed.

Metaphor is provisionally conveying the meaning of a word or a name by making use of the relation of similarity. Palmquist (2001) defines metaphor as “a linguistic device that links two objects or concepts is usually considered to be a figurative language construct through which speakers and writers relate two dissimilar ideas to create a dramatic transfer or comparison from one domain of experience to another”. Burke (1969: 503) defines metaphor as a “device for seeing something in terms of something else”.

Metaphors are an important communication tool when there is difficulty in explaining or in a situation where the expression needs to be strengthened (Özçetin, 2018: 5). Metaphors are also a rich source of qualitative data (Fennell, 1996) and can help us develop a deeper view of our reality in a particular social context (Schechter et al., 2018: 4)

Metaphor research has also been done in the field of organizational theories and management (Brink, 1993; Cornelissen, 2004, 2005, 2006; Cornelissen, Kafouros, & Lock; 2005; Cornelissen & Kafouros, 2008; Morgan, 1980, 2006; Oswick, Keenoy & Grant, 2002; Tsoukas, 1991). And there is a limited number of metaphorical studies on the concept of leader in the literature (Avidov-Ungar, et al., 2020; Buchanan et al. 2007; Memişoğlu & Yılmaz, 2019; Mio et al., 2005; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Singh, 2010; Schechter et al. 2018). Leadership and metaphor studies have often been the subject of research in educational sciences. In the field of management, Fennell's (1996) studies on the concept of a leader through metaphors revealed three main themes: power, an ethic of responsibility, sense of nurturance.

University students will be the professionals of the future, either as leaders or followers (Karabey & Karagözoğlu, 2021: 1778). For this reason, their perspectives on the concept of a leader and the perception they create in their minds about the concept of a leader are very important. The research

---

<sup>1</sup> e.g., Democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, dark leadership, strategic leadership, narcissistic leadership, toxic leadership, coercive leadership, cross-cultural leadership, affiliative leadership, pacesetter leadership, coaching leadership, team leadership, visionary leadership, quantum leadership, digital leadership, servant leadership, sparking leadership, charismatic leadership, ethical leadership, chaotic leadership, distributed leadership, emergent leadership, authentic leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, team leadership, bureaucratic leadership, hypnotic leadership.

aimed to examine the mental images of students in a state university regarding the concept of a leader. At the same time, it is aimed to reveal the common points in the perceptions of university students as "leader candidates" since their departments and professions are different.

## **2.Methodology**

### **2.1. Purpose of the research**

The aim of this research is to reveal the mental images of university students regarding the concept of leader through metaphors. Within the framework of this general purpose, the study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the metaphors that the students have produced regarding the concept of leader?
2. Under which conceptual categories can the produced metaphors be grouped in terms of common features?

### **2.2. Research Design**

In the research, "phenomenology", one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The phenomenology design focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have a detailed and in-depth understanding of. Phenomenology provides a suitable research ground for studies that aim to investigate phenomena that are not completely foreign to us and that we know but cannot fully understand.

### **2.3. Ethical Dimension of Research**

Before the research was conducted, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee approval (08.06.2021/ 12.18) and institutional permission were obtained. The students who accepted to participate in the study were informed about the purpose and process of the research and their informed consent was obtained. The study was carried out according to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

### **2.4. Data Collection**

The population of the research consists of actively registered students at Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University in the 2020-2021 academic years. There are a total of 30.851 students in the state university in this academic year. A questionnaire form was prepared to reveal the mental images of 756 students who accepted to participate in the study regarding the concept of a leader. In the first part of the questionnaire, which consists of two parts, there are five questions related to determining the socio-demographic information of the students (age, gender, class, etc.). In the second part, to reveal the perceptions of the students regarding the leader, metaphors were defined and exemplified, they were asked to complete the gaps in the sentences "The leader is like a ....., because ....." ". In metaphor studies, the concept of 'like' is generally requested to evoke the connection more clearly between the subject of the metaphor and the source of the metaphor, 'because' the concept is asked to provide a justification (or logical basis) for the presented metaphors (Saban, 2009). Data was collected through online survey software and social media communication. A questionnaire was sent to the phones and e-mail addresses of all students registered at the university by the media and public relations department.

### **2.5. Analysis of Data**

In the process of analyzing and interpreting the data, respectively; the coding and extraction of metaphors, creating the main theme, ensuring validity and reliability, and quantitative data analysis was carried out (Saban, 2008). In the coding and sorting phase of the research, it was examined whether the metaphors associated with the concept of a leader were clear or not, but the papers of 170 students were deemed invalid (due to the absence of metaphor, weak metaphor imagery, lack of logical basis) and the analysis of the research data was made with 586 metaphors obtained from 756 students. During the main theme creation stage, 10 different main themes were created by associating each metaphor with a theme. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the data analysis process was explained in detail and the obtained 586 metaphor images were used as the main data source and each main theme was supported with metaphor images. In addition, expert opinion was sought to check whether the metaphor images collected under 10 main themes represented the main themes to ensure reliability. A list of

metaphors and main themes was prepared for two faculty members who are experts in the same field, and each metaphor was given a number and asked to write the number of the metaphors they thought belonged to the main themes. These pairings were then compared. The reliability of the research was decided according to the number of consensus and disagreements obtained from the comparison. Reliability was calculated according to Miles and Huberman (1994)'s formula; Reliability = Number of same decisions/ (Sum of the same and different decisions) because of this calculation, the reliability of the research was found to be %94 reliability is provided.

As a result, after the completion of a total of 586 metaphors and 10 main themes according to their content, the metaphors and all the information were transferred to the SPSS statistical program. After this procedure, the numbers (f) and percentages (%) covering 586 metaphors and 10 main themes were calculated.

### 3.Findings

Demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of the participants

|                |  | n   | %    |
|----------------|--|-----|------|
| <b>Gender</b>  | Female   | 526 | 69.9 |
|                | Male   | 226 | 30.1 |
| <b>Faculty</b> | Faculty of Health Sciences                       | 202 | 26.8 |
|                | Faculty of Engineering and Architecture          | 17  | 2.2  |
|                | Faculty of Education                             | 41  | 5.4  |
|                | Faculty of Arts and Sciences                     | 60  | 8.0  |
|                | Faculty of Dentistry                             | 13  | 1.7  |
|                | Medical School                                   | 15  | 2.0  |
|                | Sports Science Faculty                           | 13  | 1.7  |
|                | Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences | 57  | 7.5  |
|                | Faculty of Agriculture                           | 8   | 1.1  |
|                | Faculty of Applied Sciences                      | 18  | 2.4  |
|                | Vocational School                                | 252 | 33.4 |
|                | Others   | 59  | 7.8  |
| <b>Class</b>   | 1.   | 443 | 58.6 |
|                | 2.   | 191 | 25.3 |
|                | 3.   | 57  | 7.5  |
|                | 4.   | 57  | 7.5  |
|                | 5.   | 6   | 0.8  |
|                | 6.   | 2   | 0.3  |

The 10 themes determined as a result of the analysis and the most striking examples of these themes are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Metaphors related to the concept of "leader"

| Main Theme             | Metaphors  | Example Leader Definitions  | %     |
|------------------------|--|---|-------|
| <b>1.Authoritarian</b> | Father (32), Commander (15), President (18), God (12), Power (10), Lion (26), Master (29), Crown (25) Idol (10)                      | <p>"A leader is like a father, because a country without a leader is like a home without a father"</p> <p>"The leader is like the commander because the leader puts the team members in order, the leader is the person in charge of them"</p> <p>"A leader is like a lion because the leader always protects and always acts wisely"</p>   | 30.20 |
| <b>2. Guiding</b>      | Pilot (6) Road (8), Front Wheel (6), Steering (6), Leader (4), Navigation (4), Head (12), Road Sign (6), Control (12) Lighthouse (6) | <p>"I can compare the leader to the pilot because without her/him we can neither take off nor land."</p> <p>"A leader is like a path, because it leads us to the goal."</p> <p>"The leader is like the front wheel because wherever the front wheel goes, the rear wheel goes, and whichever wheel gets damaged will affect the entire ride"</p> <p>"The leader is like the steering wheel of a car because the leader both moves and directs the group"</p> <p>"A leader is a pioneer because the leader controls everything, and the leader is often pragmatic"</p> | 11.95 |
| <b>3. Fair</b>         | Scales (8), Judge (16), Fair (8), Trust (6), Sword (10)  | <p>"A leader is like a scale because the leader treats everyone equally"</p> <p>"A leader is like a judge because the leader must be just."</p> <p>"Leader means trust because you can't believe anyone you don't trust"</p> <p>"A leader is like a sword because the leader's direction and control must be sharp."</p>  | 8.20  |

|                              |   |  |             |
|------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| <p><b>4. Protective</b></p>  | <p>Steel Vest (4), Mother (12), Wolf (10), Flag (16), Superhero (9)</p>                                   | <p>"The leader is like a steel vest because it feels strong, durable and reassuring."</p> <p>"A leader is like a mother because the leader wants her children and family to be happy in the best and most correct way and to have a good future, regardless of material and moral issues."</p> <p>A leader is like a wolf because I think every wolf fight for leadership. When there is an absolute winner, the leader becomes clear.</p> <p>"I would liken it to a superhero because the leader can somehow handle and protect the impossible."</p>  | <p>8.70</p> |
| <p><b>5. Wisdom</b></p>      | <p>Book (6), Library (6), Mind (8), Brain (10), Pen (8), Teacher (8), Processor (6), Hypothalamus (2)</p> | <p>"A leader is like a book because books inspire the person who reads it, and leaders should inspire the communities they lead."</p> <p>"A leader is like a library because the leader has every knowledge and experience "</p> <p>"The leader is like the mind because our mind is our greatest leader. It gives us direction and we go to our goal with its warning"</p> <p>"The leader is the brain; it thinks everything, plans and gives commands."</p> <p>"The leader is like the hypothalamus in the brain, because it has great duties and responsibilities; It also helps the group to work in a disciplined, planned and harmonious way."</p> | <p>9.20</p> |
| <p><b>6. Life source</b></p> | <p>Sun (8), Tree (8), Heart (6), Water (4), Flower (10), Earth (8) Seed (6)</p>                           | <p>"A leader is a sun because like the sun, a leader enlightens people with the leader's knowledge and expertise."</p> <p>"The leader is like a tree because it is the source of life."</p>  | <p>8.20</p> |

|                         |   |   |      |
|-------------------------|---|---|------|
|                         |   | <p>"The leader is like the heart of the human body because the head may be the brain, but the heart is the most prominent organ of the human body with more workload."</p> <p>"A leader is like a seed because just as a tree needs a seed to grow, a community needs a leader to rule it."</p>   |      |
| <b>7. Peak</b>          | Mountain (12), Tower (8), Ladder (14), Eagle (10), Kite (6)   | <p>"A leader is like a mountain because they are the highest and they can dominate everything. To be able to lead a group, they need to observe everyone, and the mountain can see and observe everything because it is high."</p> <p>"A leader is like a tower, because leaders are always above"</p> <p>"The leader is like the last rung of the ladder because I think of it as the step-by-step climb and the final destination."</p> <p>"A leader is like an eagle because he directs and directs everyone else, both in the air and on the ground."</p> | 8.55 |
| <b>8. Natural power</b> | Ocean (4), Wind (4), Avalanche (6), Flame (4), River (4)  | <p>"A leader is like the ocean because it seems vast, but the part of the real leadership is hidden in its depths."</p> <p>"A leader is like the wind because the way he directs the sail, the sail is thrown there."</p> <p>"A leader is like an avalanche because when it sets out, no force can turn it's from its path."</p> <p>"A leader is like a river because it has natural power."</p>  | 3.75 |
| <b>9. Connective</b>    | Zipper (6), Door Handle (4), Love (8), Teammate (4), Locomotive (2), Neck (6), Painter (4), Octopus (4) | <p>"A leader is like a zipper because it connects."</p> <p>"Leader is like love because it is unifying, people take responsibility and envisage doing something in effort with their teammates."</p>  | 6.50 |

|                        |  |   |      |
|------------------------|--|---|------|
|                        |  | <p>“A leader is like a teammate because the leader always supports the employees and should see them as the leader’s friends.”</p> <p>“The leader is like the painter because the painter combines the colors, and the leader is the team members.”</p>   |      |
| <b>10. Hardworking</b> | Ant (4), Machine (4), Hero (6), Manager (8), Bee (4) | <p>“A leader is like an ant because it does its own thing and works hard.”</p> <p>“A leader is like a hero because he can somehow get through the impossible and works hard.”</p> <p>“The leader is like a bee because it works to achieve the goals of an organization united for a common purpose.”</p> | 4.46 |

### **Authoritarian**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader as an authoritarian. In this main theme, a total of 9 different metaphors were produced by 177 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of the father (32), the most prominent ones are master (29), lion (26), crown (25), and commander (15). According to them, the leader is an authority figure. Some of the metaphors related to this category and the reasons for their development are shown in Table 2. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a father because a country without a leader is like a home without a father”.

### **Guiding**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is a guide. In this main theme, a total of 11 different metaphors were produced by 70 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of head (12) and control (12), the most prominent ones are lighthouse (6), pilot (6), wheel (6), and navigation (4). According to them, the leader is a person who guides. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “The leader is like the front wheel because wherever the front wheel goes, the rear wheel goes, and whichever wheel gets damaged will affect the entire ride”.

### **Fair**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is fair. In this main theme, a total of 5 different metaphors were produced by 48 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of judge (16), the most prominent ones are scales (8), trust (6), sword (10), and fair (8). According to them, the leader is someone who acts or should act fairly. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a scale, because the leader treats everyone equally”.

### **Protective**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is protective. In this main theme, a total of 4 different metaphors were produced by 42 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of flag (16), the most prominent ones are mother (12), wolf (10), superhero (9), and steel vest (4). According to them, a leader is someone who protects and watches. For us, the most striking metaphorical



definition in this main theme is “I would liken it to a superhero because the leader can somehow handle and protect the impossible”.

### **Wisdom**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is wisdom. In this main theme, a total of 8 different metaphors were produced by 54 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of brain (12), the most prominent ones are book (6), library (6), pen (8), and teacher (8). According to them, leader is a wise person. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a library because the leader has every knowledge and experience”.

### **Life Source**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is a life source. In this main theme, a total of 7 different metaphors were produced by 50 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of flower (10), the most prominent ones are sun (8), tree (8), heart (6), earth (8), and seed (6). According to them, leader is a source of life that ensures survival. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “The leader is like a tree, because it is the source of life”.

### **Peak**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is a peak. In this main theme, a total of 5 different metaphors were produced by 50 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of ladder (14), the most prominent ones are mountain (12), eagle (10), tower (8), and kite (6). According to them, the leader represents the summit. For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a mountain because they are the highest and they can dominate everything. To be able to lead a group, they need to observe everyone, and the mountain can see and observe everything because it is high”.

### **Natural Power**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader has a natural power. In this main theme, a total of 5 different metaphors were produced by 22 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of avalanche (6), the most prominent ones are ocean (4), wind (6), flame (4), and river (4). For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a river because it has natural power”.

### **Connective**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is a unifier. In this main theme, a total of 8 different metaphors were produced by 38 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of love (8), the most prominent ones are zipper (6), teammate (4), locomotive (2), and octopus (4). For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like a zipper because it connects”.

### **Hardworking**

In this main theme, the participants stated the leader is hardworking. In this main theme, a total of 5 different metaphors were produced by 26 students. Among the metaphors produced in the main theme of manager (8), the most prominent ones are ant (4), bee (4), hero (6), and machine (4). For us, the most striking metaphorical definition in this main theme is “A leader is like an ant because it does its own thing and works hard”.

## **4. Discussion**

Many leadership types have been put forward in studies in the field of leadership. When we examine these leadership types, there are leadership types that we can define as “good” and “bad” or “positive” and “negative” (Adams et al., 2019; Allio, 2007; Bayar, 2021; Blanch et al., 2016; Cameron, 2012; Einarsen et al., 2007; Kampen, 2015; Kasapoğlu, 2019; Lam, & Roussin, 2015; Schilling, 2009; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013; Zbierowski, 2016). To classify and give an example, we can describe democratic leadership, coaching leadership, team leadership, visionary leadership, ethical leadership, entrepreneurial leadership as good or positive leadership and narcissistic leadership, toxic leadership,

coercive leadership, dark leadership types as bad or negative leadership. While some leaders inspire, support, and help their followers develop, some leaders create a difficult work environment for their followers and lower their morale and motivation. The behavior of the leader is important for the organization and employees to achieve their common goals and to increase the performance of the organization and employees. The leader is a very important factor in the success, motivation, and behavior of the followers in the organization. Therefore, how they perceive the leader and the role they attribute to the leader are also important. The study revealed the perspectives of future leaders and followers towards the leader and the emotions it evoked in them through metaphors. The equivalent of the concept of leader in university students is generally a positive expression. They explained the leader with concepts such as strong, fair, protective, wise, and hardworking. The strongest theme emerging in the study is authoritarian. The authoritarian theme includes metaphors such as father, president, God, power, master, crown, commander. In the metaphors produced, negativity or negative leader behavior was not encountered much. Contrary to the leadership types that we can define as “bad”, the students defined the leader with positive and strong expressions. Students, most of whom have not yet started their working life, used very positive expressions towards the leader. They defined the leader as a strong, intelligent, wise, hardworking, guiding, and trusting person. The leader they create in their minds means these things to them. We hope that it will shed light on the introduction of new leadership types and studies in the field of leadership.

The effect of the leader on the employees in the organization is an indisputable issue. Studies have shown that the leadership style applied by the leader has a direct effect on employee behavior. For both, the success of the organization and the success of the employees, leadership styles appropriate to the employees, the culture and the climate of the organization should be applied. In the field of management and leadership, studies that reveal how a concept is perceived through mental images are limited. Although there are many studies on the concept of leadership in the literature, there is hardly any work done through metaphors. Studies examining the concept of a leader through metaphors have been mostly conducted in the field of educational science; metaphorical perceptions of teachers about the concept of digital leadership (Avidov-Ungar et al., 2020), metaphorical perceptions of faculty of education academic staff on the concept of leader (Memişoğlu & Yılmaz, 2019). Many of the university students, each in a different profession, will become future leaders. For this reason, university students' perceptions of the concept of a leader are important.

## 5. Conclusions

By determining the metaphorical perceptions of university students about the concept of a leader, the mental images of the students who will be the leaders of the future were revealed. Who is the leader in the minds of the students, what is it, how it should be is important in terms of revealing this and determining the administrative choices and preferences of the students? In addition, it is important to determine the tendencies and needs of the students in their education processes.

Findings should be interpreted in the light of several limitations. The differences in the management styles, cultures and education of the countries may affect the perception results. Therefore, it is recommended to repeat the study in different countries. Finally, the absence of a similar study in the literature made it difficult to further discuss and compare research results.

The perceptions and mental images of the students who will lead the future regarding this concept are very important. In this sense, the perspectives of potential leaders to the leader and the concepts they liken are also important. Therefore, we believe that this study will contribute to the literature. The positive content (power, love, trust, judge, mother, father, hero, superhero, seed, brain etc.) of the metaphors produced by the students may also be a guide for future studies.

## References

- Adams, B.G., Meyers, M.C. & Sekeja, L. (2019). Positive leadership: Relationships with employee inclusion, discrimination, and well-being, *Applied Psychology*, 69(4), 1145-1173.
- Allio, R.J. (2007). Bad leaders: how they get that way and what to do about them, *Strategy & Leadership*, 35(3), 12-17.

- Avidov-Ungar, O., Shamir-Inbal, T., & Blau, I. (2020). Typology of digital leadership roles tasked with integrating new technologies into teaching: Insights from metaphor analysis. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*.
- Bayar, M. (2021). A Study on the Analysis of the Effects of Positive Leadership Behaviors on Employees' Emotional Well-Being, *Third Sector Social Economic Review*, 56(3), 2147-2176.
- Blanch, J., Gil, F., Antino, M., & Rodríguez-Muñoz, A. (2016). Positive leadership models: Theoretical framework and research. *Psychologist Papers*, 37(3), 170-176.
- Buchanan, D., Caldwell, R., Meyer, J., Storey, J. & Wainwright, C. (2007). Leadership transmission: a muddled metaphor? *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 21(3), 246-258.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A Grammar of Motives*. California: University of California Press.
- Brink, T. L. (1993). Metaphor as Data in the Study of Organizations. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 2(4), 366-371.
- Cameron, K. (2012). *Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Cornelissen, J.P. (2004). What Are We Playing at? Theatre, Organization, and the Use of Metaphor. *Organization Studies*, 25(5), 705-726.
- Cornelissen, J.P. (2005). Beyond Compare: Metaphor in Organization Theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 30, 751-764.
- Cornelissen, J.P. (2006). Metaphor and the Dynamics of Knowledge in Organization Theory: A Case Study of the Organizational Identity Metaphor. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(4), 683-709.
- Cornelissen, J.P., Kafouros, M., & Lock, A.R. (2005). Metaphorical images of organization: How organizational researchers develop and select organizational metaphors. *Human Relations*, 58(12), 1545-1578.
- Cornelissen, J. P. & M. Kafouros (2008). Metaphors and Theory Building in Organization Theory: What Determines the Impact of a Metaphor on Theory?" *British Journal of Management*, 19, 365-379.
- Einarsen, S., Aasland, M.S. & Skogstad, A. (2007). Destructive leadership behavior: A definition and conceptual model. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 18(3), 207-216.
- Fennell, H. (1996). An Exploration of Principals' Metaphors for Leadership and Power. Research Report. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service*.
- Jago, A.G. (1982). Leadership: Perspectives in Theory and Research. *Management Science*, 28, 315-336.
- Kampen J. (2015). *Emotional Abuse and Neglect in the Workplace: How to Restore Normal Organizational Life*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Karabey, T., Karagözoğlu, Ş., Polat, N., & Keskin, A. (2019). Determination of The Level of Satisfaction of The Patients Hospitalized According to The Gender of The Nurses Who Care for Them. *Cumhuriyet University Journal of Health Sciences Institute*, 4(2), 17-24.
- Karabey, T., & Karagözoğlu, S. (2021). Determination of Nursing Students' Attitudes towards Evidence-Based Nursing: Turkey Example. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 14(3), 1777.
- Kasapoğlu, E. (2019). Negative Leadership in Architectural Design Offices. Brandebo, M. F., & Alvinus, A., (Ed.) *Dark Sides of Organizational Behavior and Leadership içinde* (s.67-90). IntechOpen.
- Koçel, T. (1998). *Business Management*. İstanbul: Beta.
- Lam, C. F., & Roussin, C. (2015). Reconciling negativity with positive leadership: A practical application. *Journal of Positive Management*, 6(1), 29-41.

- Memişoğlu, S. P. & Yılmaz, Ö. (2019). Metaphoric Perceptions of Academic Staff of Faculty of Education on the Concepts of Leader and Leadership. *Jass Studies- The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, 75, 1-15.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mio, J.S., Riggio, R.E., Levin, S.Z., & Reese, R. (2005). Presidential leadership and charisma: The effects of metaphor. *Leadership Quarterly*, 16(2), 287-294.
- Morgan, G. (1980). Paradigms, metaphors, and puzzle solving in organizational theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25(4), 605-622.
- Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Oswick, C., Keenoy, T., & Grant, D.S. (2002). Metaphor And Analogical Reasoning in Organization Theory: Beyond Orthodoxy. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2), 294-303.
- Özçetin, S. (2018). Metaphors on Teacher Leadership Produced by Principals and Teachers. *Amasya Education Journal*, 7(1), 1-20.
- Palmquist, R. A. (2001). Cognitive style and users' metaphors for the web: an exploratory study. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 27(1), 24-32.
- Rodriguez, A. & Rodriguez, Y. (2015). Metaphors for today's leadership: VUCA world, millennial and "Cloud Leaders". *Journal of Management Development*, 34(7): 854-866.
- Saban, A. (2008). Primary School Teachers' and Their Students' Mental Images about the Concept of Knowledge. *Elementary Education Online*, 7(2), 421-455.
- Saban, A. (2009). Prospective teachers' mental images about the concept of student, *Journal of Turkish Educational Sciences*, 7(2), 281-326.
- Schechter, C. et al. (2018). Leadership Metaphors: School Principals' Sense-Making of a National Reform. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 17(1), 1-26.
- Schilling, J. (2009). From ineffectiveness to destruction: A qualitative study on the meaning of negative leadership. *Leadership*, 5(1), 102-128.
- Singh, K. (2010). Metaphor as a tool in educational leadership classrooms. *Management in Education*, 24(3), 127-131.
- Tsoukas, H. (1991). The missing link: A transformational view of metaphors in organizational science. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), 566-585.
- Youssef-Morgan, C. M., & Luthans, F. (2013). Positive leadership: Meaning and application across cultures. *Organisational Dynamics*, 42, 198-208.
- Yukl, G. (1989). Managerial Leadership: A Review of Theory and Research. *Journal of Management*, 15(2), 251-289.
- Zbierowski, P. (2016). Positive leadership and corporate entrepreneurship: Theoretical consideration and research propositions. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 4(3), 73-84.

## Arastırma Makalesi

### Metaphorical Perceptions of University Students Regarding the Concept of “Leader”

*Üniversite Öğrencilerinin “Lider” Kavramına İlişkin Metaforik Algıları*

**Mehtap ARAS**

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi

Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi, Acil Yardım ve Afet Yönetimi Bölümü

[mehtap.aras@gop.edu.tr](mailto:mehtap.aras@gop.edu.tr)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1194-8123>

#### Genişletilmiş Özet

##### 1.Giriş

Lider ve liderlik alanındaki çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı yönetim ve organizasyon alanında olmasına rağmen, birçok disiplin lider ve liderlik kavramını farklı yönleriyle araştırmaktadır. Yönetici kavramı ile sıklıkla karıştırılan ve karşılaştırılan liderlik kavramının, yönetici kavramı ile benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları vardır. En önemli fark ise liderlik için formal bir örgüt yapısına ihtiyaç duyulmamasıdır. Fakat bir örgüt veya grubun lider olmadan başarılı olması beklenemez. Hem formal hem de informal bir yapının başarısı, lidere ve lider özelliklerine bağlıdır. Alan yazında, lider kavramının birçok tanımı bulunmaktadır. Liderliğin tanımı, kavram üzerine yapılan araştırmalarla birlikte gelişmiştir. 1930'lardan bu yana birçok lider tanımı yapılmış ve her tanımda liderin farklı bir özelliğine vurgu yapılmıştır. Bir liderin sahip olması gereken özellikler beceri ve yetenek, kişisel özellikler, sosyal özellikler, fiziksel ve yapısal faktörler olarak sınıflandırılabilir (Jago, 1982: 317). Koçel (1998: 396-397), lideri “belirli bir amaç için hareket etmek için başkalarını motive eden ve etkileyen kişi” olarak tanımlar ve liderlik sürecini;

Liderlik= f (lider, takipçiler, koşullar) şeklinde formüle eder.

Metafor, bir kelimenin yada kavramın, benzerlik bağıntısından yararlanarak anlamının geçici olarak aktarılmasıdır. Burke (1969: 503) metaforu “bir şeyi başka bir şey açısından görmeye yarayan araç” olarak tanımlar. Metaforlar, anlatmakta güçlük çekilen veya anlatımın güçlendirilmesi gereken bir durumda önemli bir iletişim aracıdır (Özçetin, 2018: 5). Metaforlar aynı zamanda zengin bir nitel veri kaynağıdır (Fennell, 1996) ve belirli bir sosyal bağlamda gerçekliğimizin daha derin bir görünümünü geliştirmemize yardımcı olabilir (Schechter vd., 2018: 4).

Örgüt teorileri ve yönetim alanında da metafor araştırmaları yapılmıştır (Brink, 1993; Cornelissen, 2004, 2005, 2006; Cornelissen, Kafouros, & Lock; 2005; Cornelissen & Kafouros, 2008; Morgan, 1980, 2006; Oswick, Keenoy & Grant, 2002; Tsoukas, 1991). Alanyazında lider kavramına ilişkin sınırlı sayıda metaforik çalışma bulunmaktadır (Avidov-Ungar, Shamir-Inbal & Blau, 2020; Buchanan vd. 2007; Memişoğlu & Yılmaz, 2019; Mio, Riggio, Levin & Reese, 2005; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Singh, 2010; Schechter vd. 2018).

Üniversite öğrencileri geleceğin liderleri ya da izleyenleri olacaklardır. Bu nedenle lider kavramına bakış açıları ve lider kavramına ilişkin zihinlerinde oluşturdukları algı oldukça önemlidir. Araştırma, bir devlet üniversitesindeki öğrencilerin lider kavramına ilişkin zihinsel imajlarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla birlikte, farklı bölümlerde okuyan ve farklı meslek gruplarında çalışacak olan üniversite

öğrencilerinin ve diğer bir ifade ile potansiyel “lider adaylarının” lider kavramına ilişkin algılarındaki ortak noktaları ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır.

## 2. Metodoloji

### 2.1. Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin lider kavramına ilişkin zihinsel imgelerini metaforlar aracılığıyla ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu genel amaç çerçevesinde çalışmada aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Üniversite öğrencilerin lider kavramına ilişkin ürettikleri metaforlar nelerdir?
2. Üretilen metaforlar ortak özelliklere göre hangi kavramsal kategoriler altında gruplandırılabilir?

### 2.2. Araştırma Tasarımı

Araştırmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden biri olan "fenomenoloji" kullanılmıştır. Fenomenoloji tasarımı, farkında olduğumuz ancak ayrıntılı ve derinlemesine bir anlayışa sahip olmadığımız olgulara odaklanır. Bize tamamen yabancı olmayan, bildiğimiz ancak tam olarak anlayamadığımız olguları araştırmayı amaçlayan çalışmalara uygun bir araştırma zemini sağlar.

### 2.3. Veri Toplama

Araştırmanın evrenini 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi'ne kayıtlı aktif öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Üniversitede 2020-2021 eğitim- öğretim yılında toplam 30.851 öğrenci öğrenim görmektedir. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 756 öğrencinin lider kavramına ilişkin zihinsel imajlarını ortaya çıkarmak için anket formu hazırlanmıştır. İki bölümden oluşan anketin birinci bölümünde öğrencilerin sosyo-demografik bilgilerini (yaş, cinsiyet, sınıf vb.) belirlemeye yönelik beş soru yer almaktadır. İkinci bölümde, öğrencilerin lidere ilişkin algılarını ortaya çıkarmak için “Lider ..... benzer, çünkü .....” cümlesinin tamamlanması istenmiştir. Metafor çalışmalarında genellikle 'benzer' kavramı ile metaforun konusu ile metaforun kaynağı arasındaki bağlantıyı daha net bir şekilde ortaya koyması ve sunulan metaforlar ile kavramın bir gerçekçe veya mantıksal bir temel ile sağlaması istenmektedir (Saban, 2009).

Veriler, üniversitenin Basın-yayın ve halkla ilişkiler departmanı tarafından 2020-2021 Eğitim-Öğretim yılında üniversiteye kayıtlı tüm öğrencilerin mobil telefonlarına ve mail adreslerine anket linki gönderilerek çevrimiçi anket yazılı ile elde edilmiştir.

### 2.4. Verilerin Analizi

Verilerin analiz edilmesi ve yorumlanması sürecinde sırasıyla; metaforların kodlanması ve çıkarılması, ana temanın oluşturulması, geçerlik ve güvenilirliğin sağlanması ve nicel veri analizi yapılmıştır (Saban, 2008). Araştırmanın kodlama ve sıralama aşamasında lider kavramı ile ilişkilendirilen metaforların açık olup olmadığı incelenmiş ancak 170 öğrencinin anketi geçersiz sayılmıştır (metafor olmaması, zayıf metafor imgelemi, mantıksal temel) ve araştırma verilerinin analizi 756 öğrenciden elde edilen 586 metafor ile yapılmıştır. Ana tema oluşturma aşamasında her metafor bir tema ile ilişkilendirilerek 10 farklı ana tema oluşturulmuştur. Araştırmanın geçerlik ve güvenilirliğini sağlamak için veri analiz süreci ayrıntılı olarak anlatılmış ve elde edilen 586 metafor görseli ana veri kaynağı olarak kullanılmış ve her bir ana tema metafor görselleri ile desteklenmiştir. Ayrıca güvenilirliği sağlamak için 10 ana tema altında toplanan metafor görüntülerinin ana temaları temsil edip etmediğini kontrol etmek için uzman görüşüne başvurulmuştur. Aynı alanda uzman iki öğretim üyesi için metaforlar ve ana temalar listesi hazırlanmış ve her metafora bir numara verilerek ana temalara ait olduğunu düşündükleri metaforların sayısını yazmaları istenmiştir. Daha sonra bu eşleşmeler karşılaştırılmıştır. Araştırmanın güvenilirliğine karşılaştırmadan elde edilen fikir birliği ve görüş ayrılığı sayısına göre karar verilmiştir. Güvenirlik Miles ve Huberman formülüne göre hesaplanmıştır; Güvenirlik = Aynı karar sayısı/ Aynı ve farklı kararların toplamı bu hesaplama nedeniyle araştırmanın güvenilirliği %94 olarak bulunmuş ve güvenilirlik sağlanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak içeriklerine göre toplam 586 metafor ve 10 ana tema tamamlandıktan sonra metaforlar ve tüm bilgiler SPSS istatistik programına aktarılmıştır. Bu işlemten sonra 586 metafor ve 10 ana temayı kapsayan sayılar (f) ve yüzdeler (%) hesaplanmıştır.

### 3.Sonuç

Yapılan arařtırmada, üniversite öğrencilerin lider kavramına ilişkin metaforik algılarında 10 farklı ana tema (otoriter, yol gösterici, adil, koruyucu, bilgelik, yaşam kaynağı, zirve, doğal güç, birleştirici ve çalışkan) oluşturulmuştur. Liderin örgütte çalışanlar üzerindeki etkisi yapılan çalışmalarla ortaya konulmuştur. Arařtırmalar, liderin uyguladığı liderlik tarzının çalışan davranışları üzerinde doğrudan etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Hem örgütün başarısı hem de çalışanların başarısı için çalışanlara, örgütün kültürüne ve iklimine uygun liderlik tarzları uygulanmalıdır. Yönetim ve liderlik alanında, bir kavramın zihinsel imgeler aracılığıyla nasıl algılandığını ortaya koyan çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Literatürde liderlik kavramı ile ilgili çok sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen metaforlar üzerinden yapılan çalışma görece çok azdır. Lider kavramını metaforlar aracılığıyla inceleyen çalışmalar daha çok eğitim bilimleri alanında yapılmıştır; öğretmenlerin dijital liderlik kavramına ilişkin metaforik algıları (Avidov-Ungar vd. 2020), eğitim fakültesi öğretim üyelerinin lider kavramına ilişkin metaforik algıları (Memişoğlu ve Yılmaz, 2019).