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# A Metaphorical View Regarding the Career and Sports Perceptions of University Students

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## Abstract

A career is a process in which people prepare themselves for a higher level in their professional life by gaining certain experiences and knowledge in their professional life and direct proportion to the increase in their knowledge. Sports are activities that socialize people through certain physical activities, reveal their performance and contribute to the development of people emotionally. This study aimed to reveal the perceptions of the faculty of sports sciences students about the concept of career and sports through metaphors. The study group of the research consisted of 61 students studying at Bandırma Onyedli Eylül University Faculty of Sports Sciences, physical education and sports teaching department. In the study, the metaphorical perceptions of the 1. grade students studying in the department of physical education and sports teaching, and coaching education in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year regarding the concept of "Career and Sports" were examined by qualitative data collection method. In the study, data were collected after the participants completed the statements "Career is like ... because..." and "Sport is like ... because...". By using the word "like" in the metaphor, an attempt was made to establish a connection between the subject and the source, and the phrase "because" was asked to be completed to obtain other information. In the study, phenomenological design and qualitative research techniques were used. For the solution and explanation of metaphors, the study was performed by revealing the metaphors, classifying the metaphors, categorizing them, and determining their validity and reliability. As a result of the information gathered, the participants wrote 42 metaphors in 7 categories following 60 themes related to the concept of career, and they wrote 43 metaphors in 5 categories following 60 themes for the concept of sports. As a result, when the metaphorical perceptions of university students towards the concepts of career and sports were investigated, it was seen that the students had the most variability category for the concept of "career" and the psychological impact categories for the concept of "sports."

**Keywords:** Career, Sport, Metaphor

## 1. Introduction

Due to the gradual change in technology and the differentiation of working environments in the world, the choices, expectations and needs of individuals vary. This change also affects the career choices that have an important place in the lives of individuals. Therefore, for future professions to have the necessary knowledge and sufficient equipment, the education they prefer gains importance. Because education is a process that includes the preparation process for the future professions (Yazıcı, 2009). In this direction, following the changes in the world, there have been differences in the career understanding of individuals. Today, the understanding of career has become a force that directs the individual to innovation and specialization (Özdemir, 2013). Therefore, the career perceptions of individuals, their university choices and the courses they take can affect this process.

According to the TDK, when the origin of the concept of career is examined, it has entered the Turkish literature by using the word "career" in English and "carrière" in French, and it includes the meanings of individuals to rise to the next level in their professions throughout their lives, to have better personal rights and to specialize (TDK, 2017).

In its general meaning, the concept of career is explained as the life-long experience of the individual about work and self-development (Tüz, 2003). Career seems to be a concept related to business life; however, it is known that it is related to the characters of individuals and human-centred. That is, it may differ from person to person. While some people describe the career as a job specialization, for others it means a steppingstone for personal development (Dinçer, et al., 2013, Özler, 2009).

In the developing and changing world, today's career perception has also changed. While working in an institution for many years in the past, we come across meanings such as promotion, seniority, and wages; In today's career perception, we can come across with having various experiences in different institutions, self-development, what they want to do and a satisfactory job has gained importance (Misican, Bedir, 2017; Öztürk, 2017).

When it comes to the career perceptions of the students studying at the faculty of sports sciences, how they perceive sports may also be important for this process. Because sports are very important for both the individual and the society as it closely concerns the lives of individuals who constitute every part of the society. For this reason, sports are considered as integrative activities in human life (Sunay, 2003). In this context, the sport is expressed as "conscious and planned activities that are the main source of the growing generations, aiming at the physical, mental, social and emotional developments of human beings, and appear as an integral and complementary part of general education" (Yıldıran and Yetim, 1996). In another definition, sports are expressed as activities that enable the individual to develop as a whole, by exerting physical effort, overcoming his/her opponent, interacting with society, and psychologically at the same time (Erdeмли, 2002). Therefore, sports are very important in terms of the physical, psychological and social gains of students (İlgar & Cihan, 2018).

Sports must be perceived correctly, especially by future generations who will create a career related to sports. In this direction, metaphor, which is a concept used to determine the perception of career and sports, is explained as reflecting the meaning formed in our minds with different words, apart from the original meaning of a concept (Güneş, Fırat, 2016). In another definition, metaphor is expressing the same concept with different words by developing people's imaginations about a concept (Bakırcıoğlu, 2012). When we look at the general studies on metaphor; It is seen that it consists of studies on obtaining information about the structures of metaphors and revealing their formations, studies on how to teach any subject, and studies on the subjective thoughts of individuals (Yalçın et al., 2016).

When literature is examined, Hazar, Tekkurşun and Dalkıran (2017) have examined the perceptions of traditional games and digital games in their study for secondary school students, Kurtipek (2019) has examined metaphorical perceptions to determine perceptions of sports club members in their study. Moreover, Yetim and Kalfa (2019) have conducted a study to determine the metaphorical perceptions of university students to determine their metaphorical perceptions about sports in their study, Baydar-Arıcın (2021) has determined their

metaphorical perceptions of the concept of the game and physical activity in their study for university students, and Koç (2020) has compared university students' metaphorical perceptions about the concept of physical education. Cihan et al. (2021) examined the metaphorical perceptions of the students of the faculty of sports sciences regarding the concept of recreation. In this context, it is seen that there are no studies examining the career and sports perceptions of sports science students using the metaphor method.

Career steps are very important in planning the lives of university students. It is very important to organize seminars on career plans to raise awareness, to adapt career planning courses to curricula, to introduce students to which programs they can participate in career steps in their university life, and to be informed by experts what job opportunities they will enter when they graduate (Kozak and Dalkıranoglu, 2013). While forming the career steps of the students of the faculty of sports sciences during their education, they can create different goals with exchange programs such as Erasmus, Mevlana and Farabi. As students start their professional life in general graduation departments such as trainers, managers and teachers, they can continue their careers in many professions such as the ministry of national defence, the general directorate of security, higher education institutions and athletic performance coaching. In this direction, the university is an important process that can help students increase their maturity level to reach their career goals, improve themselves in their current position and prepare themselves for the next step, realize their potential and make certain plans, and decide where, when, how and by which methods they can reach their goals.

It is thought that it will contribute positively to career orientation, career choices and career planning in determining the metaphorical perceptions of sports sciences faculty students regarding the concept of "career" and "sport." It is important for the study to determine the sports perception of the university students entering the faculty of sports sciences with a higher education exam score and choosing a university where there is no ability test in sports and the students who did not have a sports branch background. This study was performed to determine the career and sports perceptions of students who did not have any sports background and preferred the sports sciences faculty in their university preferences, and to determine under which categories these metaphors were gathered.

## 2. Method

In this section, the research model, research group, data collection tools and data analysis were included

### 2.1 Research Group

In this study, phenomenological design, one of the qualitative data collection techniques, was used. This pattern creates a suitable environment for studies that aimed to research and reveal certain concepts and knowledge that the person had (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### 2.2 Participant (Subject) Characteristics

A total of 61 students, 22 females and 39 males, studying at Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Faculty of Sport Sciences in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, participated in the study voluntarily.

Table 1: Research Group

	Variables	N	%
Gender	Male	39	63,93
	Female	22	36,07
	Total	61	100

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools

Qualitative data collection methods were used in the study. The study group was given information about the study before the career planning lesson and at the end of the career planning lesson, and it was applied to the

people who wanted to participate voluntarily. The study group was asked to complete the sentences “Career is like... because...” and “Sport is like... because...” to reveal the metaphors related to the concept of career. Participants were given a form, and they were asked to see the concept of career as an animate or inanimate object and to interpret this as well. To help them interpret the concept of "like" with a single word in the research, they were asked to explain the metaphors they produced for the concept of "because" in a certain pattern. Compliance of the research with ethical principles was approved by the decision of Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Ethics Committee dated 14.01.2022 and numbered 2021-1.

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of metaphors, revealing metaphors, classification of metaphors, categorization, determination of validity and reliability and data analysis studies were performed. Content analysis was used for the analysis and interpretation of the metaphors. In the study, firstly, numbers were given starting from 1 for each participant. After the numbers were given, content analysis was applied to collect the data in certain categories. The forms were examined, and the incomplete forms were removed, the forms were numbered, the metaphors were recorded, the categories were created by looking at the explanations for the metaphors, the validity and reliability analysis was performed, and various stages were applied with the interpretations (Saban, 2008).

#### 2.5. Revealing Metaphors

To create metaphors, understandable, clear and not confusing codes are given. Sample metaphor steps were created for the representation of metaphors in the research.

#### 2.6 Categorization

Metaphors for common aims were separated categorically and certain clusters were created for similar ones. Metaphors consisting of the concepts of career and sports of the participants in the study were divided categorically.

#### 2.7. Determination of Validity and Reliability

In determining the validity and reliability of the research, it was checked whether the common metaphors reached the common categories and the level of belonging to this category in terms of concept. In terms of the reliability of the study, the categories were organized by experts and the representation power of the given codes was examined. Considering the reliability of the content analysis, it was determined by the formula  $[\text{Consensus}/(\text{Agreement}+\text{Disagreement}) \times 100]$  (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A total of 61 metaphors were reached in the study, and 1 (blank) metaphor was out of view. When we look at the Huberman (1994) study, it was accepted that the studies with a reliability rate of 70% and above and above were reliable. Considering the reliability of this research, it was seen that the rate was 98%.

### 3. Results

In this section, the metaphors written by the students who continue their education in the first grade of physical education and sports teaching about the concept of career and sports, the categories that emerged as a result of the metaphors and the concepts revealed by the categories were expressed in tables.

Table 2: Distribution of metaphors created by students for the concept of "career" according to categories

Categories	Metaphors	Metaphor Frequency	Numberof Metaphors	%
Variability	Stairs (3), Trip (3), Lift (2), Life (2),	14	8	23,00

	Indescribable (1), Skyscraper (1), Hair (1), Tree (1)			
Rise	Stairs (5), Ladder (3), Domino (1), Lift (1), Mountain (1)	11	5	18,00
Tool	ID (2), A new page (2), Stairs (1), Mirror (1), Light (1), Backpack (1), Pen (1), Iron (1)	10	8	17,00
Effort	Climbing (2), Palm (1), Grassland (1), Sculptor (1), Sea (1), Wall (1), Road (1), Self-Realization (1)	9	8	15,00
Achievement	Stairs (2), Dream (1), Life (1), Road (1), Game (1), Ramp (1)	7	6	12,00
Life	Life (3), Future (1), Trip (1), Painting (1)	6	4	10,00
Influence	Steering (1), Medicine (1), Future (1)	3	3	5,00
	Total	60	42	100

When Table 2 was examined, categories belonging to metaphors were created and information was given about the number of metaphors and frequency values. The categories in which the concept of "career" was represented in Table 2, it was seen that it consisted of 7 categories, 60 metaphor frequencies and 42 metaphors under the headings of variability, rise, tool, effort, achievement, life and influence.

In Table 2, the category of "variability" consisted of (14) metaphor frequency and (8) metaphor number as stairs (3), trip (3), elevator (2), life (2), indescribable (1), skyscraper (1), hair (1), tree (1). Moreover, it was determined that the category of "Rise" consisted of the metaphor frequency (11) and the number of metaphors (5) as Stairs (5), Step (3), Domino Stone (1), Elevator (1), Mountain (1).

*For Variability*

According to Table 2, it was determined that 14 people and 8 metaphors represented this category. Example statements for the category of variability:

*“Career is like stairs. Because climbing is not enough, conditions can bring you down, the balance of the stairs can be disturbed and you can fall, or it is the way to the top (K6).”*

*“Career is like life. Because sometimes there are ups and downs. It does not always continue the same (K10).”*

*“A career is like a skyscraper. Because a career can grow when added to the top. It can also be destroyed with a small mistake (K34).”*

*For Rise*

*“Career is like a ladder. Because we start from zero and go higher (K7).”*

*“A career is like a ladder. Because as we know, there are continuous steps on the stairs and career is like the last point of that step. We constantly rise, increase steps, and when we look back, we will be in a successful position (P22).”*

*“Career is like a mountain. Because the mountains are high, you can reach the top by climbing (K26).”*

According to Table 2, it was determined that 11 people and 5 metaphors represented this category. Example expressions for the Rise category:

While the “tool” category consisted of values which was metaphor frequency (10) including identity(2), a blank page(2), ladder(1), mirror(1), light(1), backpack(1), pen(1), iron(1), and the number of metaphors consisted of (8), it was found that the “effort” category consisted of the metaphor frequency (9) and number of metaphors, including climbing(2), palm(1), field(1), sculptor(1), sea(1), wall(1), road(1), self-realization(1) and the number of metaphors (8).

*For Tool*

This category was represented by 10 people and 8 metaphors. Example expressions;

*“Career is like identity. Because it reflects who we are, what we are and what we do (K28).”*

*“A career is like a backpack. Because you meet your needs with the things you fill itself with, and you get help to reach your goals (P44).”*

*For Effort*

This category was represented by 9 people and 8 metaphors. Example expressions;

*“A career is like a field. Because as you sow, you reap (K14).”*

*“A career is like a sculptor. Because you have a pattern, it is clear what you want to be. You shape it by making certain efforts, you carve it, or you add it on top and you make some corrections to give it the shape you want (KÖ17).”*

It was determined that the achievement category consisted of values the metaphor frequency (7) which were including ladder (2), dream (1), life (1), road (1), game (1), slope (1) and the number of metaphors (6); life category is consist of the metaphor frequency which were life (3), future (1), trip(1), painting(1), metaphor frequency (6) and the number of metaphors (4).

*For Achievement*

This category was represented by 7 people and 6 metaphors. Example expressions;

*“A career is like a road. Because in this way, we add something to ourselves, we gain success (K41).”*

*“Career is like a computer game. Because as soon as we are successful, we want to go to the next level (P43).”*

*For Life*

This category was represented by 6 people and 4 metaphors. Example expressions;

*“Career is like life. Because career means learning and rising, just like in life. It constantly teaches us something similar to it in life (P16).”*

*“Career is like life. Because life consists of a career (K54).”*

*For Influence*

This category was represented by 3 people and 3 metaphors. Example expressions;

*“Career is like medicine. Because it cheers people up in their career, relieves their pain and makes them relax (K57).*

Table 3: Distribution of metaphors created by students for the concept of "Sports" according to categories

Category	Metaphor	Metaphor Frequency	Number of Metaphors	%
Psychological Impact	Therapy (3), Rushing Like Child (2), Happiness (2), A Blank Page (1), Breath (1), Hour (1), Fruit tree (1), Treatment (1), Energy (1), Escape Route (1), Medicine (1), Entertainment (1), Flashlight (1), Star (1), Life friend (1), Game (1), Feeling Good (1), The meaning of life (1)	22	18	36,00
Basic need	Food (4), Water (2), Work (1), Lifestyle (1), House (1), Weather (1), Oxygen (1), Miner (1)	12	8	20,00
Life	Life (6), Tree (2), Step (1), Job (1)	10	4	17,00
Passion	Ring (2), Pepper (1), Amusement centre (1), Life (1), Teacher (1), Game (1), War (1), Star (1)	9	8	15,00
Physical Benefit	Medicine (2), The mind of the Body (2), Healthy lifestyle (1), Healing (1), Agriculture (1)	7	5	12,00
Total		60	43	100



When Table 3 was examined, categories belonging to metaphors were created and information was given about the number of metaphors and frequency values. The categories in which the concept of "sport" was represented in Table 2; It was seen that it consisted of 5 categories, including psychological effect, basic need, life, passion and physical benefit, 60 metaphor frequencies and 43 metaphors.

"Psychological impact" category in Table 3 was consisted of number of metaphors (18) and metaphor frequency (22) including therapy(3), rushing like a child(2), happiness(2), a blank slate(1), breath(1), clock(1), fruit tree(1), cure(1), energy(1), escape route(1), medicine(1), fun(1), flashlight(1), star(1), life partner(1), game(1), feeling good(1), meaning of life(1).

#### *For Psychological Impact*

In Table 3, 22 people and 18 metaphors represent this category. Example statements regarding the psychological impact category:

*"Sport is like therapy. Because it solves our problems and gives happiness to the person spiritually (P6)."*

*"Sport is like breathing. Because when we do sports, it gives us life, takes the stress and relaxes our mind (P7)."*

*"Sports is like energy. Because it makes people feel good and fit, and it makes the person feel energetic (K15)."*

*"Sports is like a game. Because we have fun while doing sports, and when we have fun, we become more spiritually resilient (P58)."*

It was seen that the "basic need" category has consisted of metaphor frequency (12) including food(4), water(2), work(1), a lifestyle(1), home(1), air(1), oxygen(1), miner(1), the number of metaphors (8); life category consisted of the frequency of metaphors (10) and the number of metaphors (4), including life (6), tree (2), step (1), occupation (1).

#### *For Basic Need*

This category was represented by 12 people and 8 metaphors. Example statements regarding the basic need category:

*"Sport is like water. Because water is indispensable in people's lives, since water is needed to sustain human life, it means this for human life in sports (K22)."*

*"Sport is like air. Because we cannot live without doing sports, just as we cannot live without breathing (P32)."*

#### *For Life*

This category was represented by 10 people and 4 metaphors. Example expressions related to the life category:

*"Sport is like life. Because just like in life, there are ups and downs in sports (K30)."*

*"Sports is like a way of life. Because, like life, sports should be continuous and give direction to one's life (P48)."*

It was seen that the passion category consists of values that the number of metaphors (8) and the metaphor frequency (9) included circle (2), pepper (1), entertainment centre (1), life (1), teacher (1), game (1), war (1), star (1); physical benefit category has consisted of values that the number of metaphors (5) and metaphor frequency (7), including medicine (2), the body's mind (2), healthy life (1), healing (1), agriculture (1).

#### *For Passion*

This category was represented by 9 people and 8 metaphors. Example expressions for the passion category:

*"Sport is like pepper. Because even if it is sweet or bitter, you cannot leave it because you love it (P8)."*

*"Sports is like a game. Because even if you win or lose, you don't give up and you keep going until the end (K40)."*

#### *For Physical Benefit*

This category was represented by 7 people and 5 metaphors. Example statements regarding the physical benefit category:

*"Sports is like healthy life. Because, thanks to sports, the individual increases his physical capacity as he is constantly active (K18)."*

*"Sport is like the mind of the body. Because it contributes to our muscle development and health development by doing sports (K23)."*

#### 4. Discussion

The study was aimed to determine the perceptions of the students studying at the faculty of sports sciences about the concepts of "career" and "sport." It was understood that the participants created different metaphors for the concepts of career and sports. It was seen that many metaphors related to the concept of career have been put forward in the literature (Inkson, 2004). When the categories of metaphors related to the concept of career were examined in the study, it was seen that the most used category was "variability" with 14 metaphor frequencies and 8 metaphors. It was seen that the meanings that the research group generally identifies with the concept of career vary according to the ordinary flow of life and represent career. In another study, career perceptions were expressed as capital, and it was named as the changes that occur in the working lives of people. In the study of Terjesen (2005), it was seen that people need to invest in knowledge and skills that would positively affect their careers to be successful, and Inkson and Arthur (2001) call knowledge and skills as capital. In the study conducted by Hallett, Slapleton, and Sauder (2019) on the concept of career, the participants defined career as a "come-and-go" that has a periodic temporality and reflects how they change. Yung (2021) describes career as "temporary" in his study, and Filiz et al. (2022) in his study on high school students; the career was categorized by the participants as "process, progress, daily life and power/control."

When the categories of metaphors related to the concept of the sport were examined, it was seen that the most used category is the "psychological effect" category with 22 metaphor frequencies and 18 metaphors. It was seen that the meanings that the research group generally identifies with the concept of sport emerge as the psychological representation of sport as it relaxed the person spiritually, gives happiness due to the secretion of the hormone serotonin, and increases life energy. Similarly, studies showed that those who did sports were psychologically relaxed, happier, and got away from anxiety and depression. (Filbay et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2009; Zukerman et al. 2020).

When the metaphor studies about sports were examined, on the students studying in the faculties of sports sciences; It was observed that there were studies on the concepts of physical activity, games, sports clubs, sports managers, sports organizations, and physical education (Baydar-Arıcan, 2021; Koç, 2020; Kurtipek and Güngör, 2019; Kurtipek and Sönmezoğlu, 2018; Yetim and Kalfa, 2019). While in a study of Baydar and Arıcan (2021) physical activity was mostly categorized as "need" by the participants, In the study of Koç (2020), "physical education" was defined by the participants as health, need and recreational. Moreover, In the study conducted by Kurtipek and Sönmezoğlu (2018), "sports" was categorized as the most basic need by the participants. Similarly, in our study, the basic needs category was seen as the most-used category by the users after the psychological effect category. In the study of Yetim and Kalfa (2019), it was revealed that "sports" was categorized by the participants as movement and health.

In sum, when the metaphorical perceptions of university students regarding the concepts of career and sports were examined; It was found that they were aware of the ups and downs in their lives regarding the concept of "career", and that when life continues, there would not only be continuous progress, but also sometimes there would be variability in their perceptions that this progress would be interrupted, or they would go backwards. Following the concept of "sports," it was found that sport was not an activity that only increases one's physical capacities but has a greater psychological effect as it was created a mood that improves the person spiritually and makes the person happy by giving pleasure. It was recommended that the study should be applied to students studying in different faculties as well as in the faculty of sports sciences. Besides, collecting data from faculties

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