

## DETERMINATION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF 'LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE'

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### Abstract

Throughout our lives, as we communicate, we constantly learn new and different concepts. We then try to mentally concretize these concepts. If this process is carried out by drawing similarities with the knowledge we already possess, it progresses smoothly. However, if we attempt to associate them with concepts we are unfamiliar with, this process can be challenging and exhausting. This research was conducted to reveal the perceptions of undergraduate university students regarding the concept of "Landscape Architecture" through the use of metaphors. A total of 213 students from 14 different undergraduate departments participated in the study. The aim of the research is to uncover the perceptions of undergraduate university students regarding the profession of "Landscape Architecture" through metaphors. In this study, the phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, was used. Through a form containing questions for undergraduate students, they were asked to complete statements like "Landscape Architecture means ..... to me. Because ....." The content analysis technique was employed for analyzing the collected data. As a result of the research, participating university students generated 75 metaphors for the profession of "Landscape Architecture." These metaphors were grouped considering common attributes, yielding 9 main metaphors. The predominant perception of landscape architecture among university students from different departments emphasized themes of nature and design.

**Keywords:** Landscape Architecture, University Student, Perception, Content Analysis, Metaphor

### Özet

Hayatımız boyunca iletişim kurarken, sürekli olarak yeni ve farklı kavramlar öğreniriz. Ardından bu kavramları zihinsel olarak somutlaştırmaya çalışırız. Eğer bu süreç, önceden sahip olduğumuz bilgilerle benzerlikler kurarak gerçekleştirilmişse kolaylıkla ilerler. Ancak daha önce bilmediğimiz kavramlarla ilişkilendirmeye çalışıyorsak, bu süreç zorlayıcı ve yorucu olabilir.

Bu araştırma lisans düzeyindeki üniversite öğrencilerinin "Peyzaj Mimarlığı" kavramına ilişkin sahip oldukları algıları metaforlar yardımı ile ortaya çıkarmak için yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya 14 farklı lisans bölümünden 213 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı; lisans düzeyindeki üniversite öğrencilerinin "Peyzaj Mimarlığı" mesleğiyle ilgili algılarının metaforlar aracılığıyla ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Bu çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan olgubilim (fenomenoloji) deseni kullanılmıştır. Lisans öğrencilerinden gelen soruların yer aldığı bir form aracılığıyla; "Peyzaj Mimarlığı, bana ..... ifade eder. Çünkü ....." şeklindeki ifadeleri tamamlamaları istenmiştir. Elde edilen verilerin analizinde içerik analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda anket katılan üniversite öğrencileri, "Peyzaj Mimarlığı" mesleğine yönelik 75 metafor üretmiştir. Bu metaforlar, ortak özellikleri dikkate alınarak gruplandırılmış ve 9 ana metafor elde edilmiştir. Farklı bölümlerdeki üniversite öğrencilerinde öne çıkan peyzaj mimarlığı algısı, doğa ve tasarım temaları ağırlıklı bulunmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Peyzaj Mimarlığı, Üniversite öğrencisi, Algı, İçerik Analizi, Metafor

## 1.INTRODUCTION

The concept of landscape, which comes from the French word "peysage," and is used in English as "landscape" and in German as "landshaft," has been utilized in various languages to express the physical features of an area. Roughly 200 years ago, German geographer Alexander Von Humboldt defined landscape as "the characteristic features of a piece of land" for the first time as a scientific term (Bastian, 2001).

While the term "Landscape Architecture" emerged in the mid-1800s, the history of landscape design dates back to ancient times, including the Persian, Ancient Egyptian, and Roman eras. Notably, during the Middle Ages in Europe, the gardens of the Byzantine Empire, the formal and sophisticated designs of French and Italian castle gardens that gained prominence during the Renaissance, and other open and green spaces became significant examples of landscape design. The 18th century saw a shift towards designs that favored natural forms over formal forms, especially with the spread of the Romantic movement in England. Additionally, the impact of the Industrial Revolution on quality of life and working conditions led to the development of public open and green spaces for leisure and relaxation. The 19th century highlighted designs in harmony with topography (Anonymous, 2021). This evolution, which greatly influenced urban design and human life in Europe, extended to America and marked the use of the term "Landscape Architect" by Frederick Law Olmsted for the first time. Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, influenced by the English Romantic movement, designed Central Park (Manhattan, New York), the United States' first and most significant urban park, characterized by a pastoral public open space nature. This park marked a significant milestone in the field of landscape architecture. The declaration of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 marked another pivotal point. During the first decade of the profession, designs were rapidly developed to enhance the quality of life in rapidly growing cities. In 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) was established to advocate for the rights of the profession. Additionally, in Europe, the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) was founded in 1948, followed by the European Federation for Landscape Architecture (EFLA) in 1989 and the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS) in 1991. Landscape architecture education began in 1900 at Harvard University in the United States (Foster, 2009). Similarly, in Europe, Norway in 1919, Germany in 1929, and various universities in countries like Austria, Spain, and the Baltic Republics from the early 1990s onward began offering education on the subject (Uzun and Kesim, 2009).

In Turkey, landscape architecture education began in 1933 at the Ankara Higher Institute of Agriculture, under the Department of Ornamental Plants. With the establishment of Ankara University in 1946, education continued within the Faculty of Agriculture under the "Garden Architecture and Afforestation Department." In 1968, education commenced under the title "Department of Landscape Architecture," and in 1973, it produced its first graduates.

However, this situation led to complexities in terms of academic positions in universities. As a result of efforts to establish landscape architecture departments in different faculties, the title of "Landscape Architect" started being granted by Istanbul University's Faculty of Forestry in 1989 (Uzun and Kesim, 2009). According to the 2019 data from the Chamber of Landscape Architects of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, landscape architecture education is provided by a total of 41 universities under nine different names, including universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and private universities. According to the 2022 Student Selection and Placement Guide, a total of 2,135 quotas have been allocated for Landscape Architecture programs. Given its wide scope of work, Landscape Architecture is a profession that involves interacting with people and encompasses aspects of architecture, design, engineering, and considerations for human well-being. Due to its relatively later introduction compared to Europe and America, Landscape Architecture has been less known as a discipline. Nevertheless, the past 10-15 years have witnessed increased interest and recognition in this field.

Throughout our lives, we constantly learn new concepts and strive to mentally concretize them. If this process involves relating new concepts to our existing knowledge, it proceeds smoothly. However, if we attempt to associate them with unfamiliar concepts, this process can become challenging and taxing. Senemoğlu (2005) referred to new knowledge formed during the process of naming information as metaphors. Since each individual's experiences differ, the previously acquired knowledge will also vary, resulting in different visualizations and perceptions when forming new knowledge. Consequently, individuals approach new formations from different perspectives. The concrete images that emerge in our minds are actually metaphors. Perry and Cooper (2001) defined metaphors as the application of known things to explain unknown things. Individuals create metaphorical structures when expressing thoughts by establishing relationships between abstract concepts and concrete objects (Saban, 2005).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2005), metaphors serve as tools to aid people in perceiving the world, connecting one phenomenon to another. Metaphors transfer knowledge from a known domain to an unknown one. Forceville (2002) noted that three essential elements are required for the existence of a metaphorical connection between two or more things: the subject of the metaphor, the source of the metaphor, and the perceived similarity between the source and the subject. For instance, the representation of thoughts as a journey is also a metaphor. In this case, associating thoughts with concepts of movement and progression assists individuals in understanding cognitive processes. The language we use in our daily lives is inherently metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 2005). This has captured the attention of many educators today, leading to an increase in national and international research on metaphorical perceptions (Afacan, 2011; Güvenli, İpek, Atasoy, and Güveli, 2011; Şeyihoğlu, Gençer, 2010; Saban, 2009; Pektaş, Kıldan, 2009; Levine, 2005).

This study aims to uncover the perceptions of undergraduate university students regarding the profession of "Landscape Architecture" through the use of metaphors. To achieve this, a survey was conducted with 213 students from 14 different undergraduate programs. The goal was to identify the students' perception of landscape architecture in their minds. The research findings are intended to contribute to the measurement of the recognition of the landscape architecture profession.

## 2.MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the scope of this research, the phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, was employed to uncover the metaphorical perceptions of university students regarding the profession of "Landscape Architecture." The phenomenological design provides a suitable research framework for in-depth and detailed examination of phenomena that are often overlooked but have underlying awareness (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

The sample group of the study consisted of students enrolled in 14 different undergraduate programs (Landscape Architecture, Pharmacy, Architecture, Animal Science, Political Science and International Relations, Social Studies Education, Interior Architecture, Mechanical Engineering, Medicine, Biochemistry, Turkish Language and Literature, Foreign Trade, Aircraft Structure and Powerplant Maintenance) within Selçuk University during the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The sample comprised 213 students, with 74.6% (159 students) being female and 25.4% (54 students) being male.

For data analysis, the content analysis technique was chosen. Content analysis is a method used to reveal the concepts and relationships necessary for explaining the obtained data. "In phenomenological research, data analysis aims to bring forth experiences and meanings. Therefore, in content analysis, there is an effort to conceptualize the data and reveal themes that can describe the phenomenon" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Initially, the participating students were provided with various metaphor examples, and information about the purpose and necessity of the content analysis method was given. To identify the metaphors held by the undergraduate students regarding the profession of "Landscape Architecture," they were asked to complete statements like "Landscape Architecture means ..... to me. Because ....." Metaphors that could not be logically justified were excluded from the scope of the research. After eliminating these metaphors, evaluations related to 75 metaphors from the 213 students were included in the research. These developed metaphors were grouped based on their similarities and categorized into 9 different themes.

### 3.RESULTS

Within the scope of the research, a survey was conducted with 213 university students. The research findings were determined using the data obtained from the surveys. Of the participating students, 74.6% (159 students) were female, and 25.4% (54 students) were male. Among the participating students, 72.3% (154) were Landscape Architecture students, and 27.7% (59) were students from other departments. The survey data obtained from the participating students in the research were used to reveal the perception of "Landscape Architecture."

#### 3.1. Metaphors Created by University Students Regarding the Profession of Landscape Architecture

University students who participated in the research generated 75 metaphors for the profession of Landscape Architecture. These metaphors, along with their frequencies and percentages, are presented in Table 1. The predominant metaphors created by university students include nature (16.4%), landscaping (6.5%), plant (5.8%), green (4.4%), natural design (3.8%), and tranquility (3.4%).



**Table 1. Metaphors Produced About Landscape Architecture Profession**

Order	Metaphor	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Order	Metaphor	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Nature	48	16,4	39	Eco-friendly	2	0,7
2	Landscaping	19	6,5	40	Profession that shapes nature	2	0,7
3	Plant	17	5,8	41	Beautifying nature	2	0,7
4	Green	13	4,4	42	Indispensable	2	0,7
5	Natural design	11	3,8	43	Devotion	2	0,7
6	Tranquility	10	3,4	44	Living area of buildings	2	0,7
7	Environment	8	2,7	45	Fun	1	0,3
8	Life	8	2,7	46	Green architecture	1	0,3
9	Design	8	2,7	47	Expert	1	0,3
10	Park, garden, open area	7	2,4	48	Gardener	1	0,3
11	Sustainability	6	2,0	49	Clean world	1	0,3
12	Aesthetics	6	2,0	50	Colors of nature	1	0,3
13	Environmental Planning	6	2,0	51	Healthy society	1	0,3
14	Art	6	2,0	52	Architectural	1	0,3
15	Breath	5	1,7	53	Natural beauty	1	0,3
16	Natural architecture	5	1,7	54	Visual pleasure	1	0,3
17	Quality life	5	1,7	55	The sound of nature	1	0,3
18	Creativity	5	1,7	56	Breathing area	1	0,3
19	Colors	4	1,4	57	Ecosystem	1	0,3
20	Reflection of the city	4	1,4	58	Career	1	0,3
21	Beautifying the environment	4	1,4	59	Ability	1	0,3
22	Life	4	1,4	60	Color life	1	0,3
23	Dream	4	1,4	61	Regular life	1	0,3
24	Tree	3	1,0	62	Combination of art and architecture	1	0,3
25	Flower	3	1,0	63	Living material	1	0,3
26	Nature conservation	3	1,0	64	Cleanliness	1	0,3

27	Anti-concrete	3	1,0	65	Human nature relationship	1	0,3
28	Garden	3	1,0	66	Love for nature	1	0,3
29	Arrangement	3	1,0	67	Hope	1	0,3
30	Outdoor design	3	1,0	68	Botanical arrangement	1	0,3
31	Rest area	2	0,7	69	Harmony	1	0,3
32	Green area	2	0,7	70	Drawing	1	0,3
33	Spacious living space	2	0,7	71	Human	1	0,3
34	Park architecture	2	0,7	72	Ecological balance	1	0,3
35	Psychological comfort	2	0,7	73	Green environment	1	0,3
36	Visuality	2	0,7	74	Regular life	1	0,3
37	Landscape	2	0,7	75	Passion	1	0,3
38	Naturalness	2	0,7				
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>293</b>	<b>100,0</b>

### 3.2. The categories formed by the common characteristics of the metaphors created by university students about the profession of Landscape Architecture"

The university students participating in the research generated 75 metaphors regarding the profession of Landscape Architecture. These metaphors were grouped based on their common characteristics, resulting in 9 main metaphors. These metaphors, along with their frequencies and percentages, are presented in Table 2. The perception of Landscape Architecture among the students is primarily focused on the categories of "Nature" and "Design." Among the participants, 21.2% perceive Landscape Architecture through metaphors related to the nature category, such as nature, colors of nature, natural beauty, nature preservation, sounds of nature, nature-friendly, beautifying nature, anti-concrete, and love for nature. Another prominent category is "Design," also at 21.2%. The perception among students includes concepts like design, natural design, environmental arrangement, beautifying the environment, order, botanical arrangement, outdoor design, environmental planning, drawing, and art, all falling under the main metaphor of design. Other categories derived from the responses of participating students include "life," "green," "plant," "visual aesthetics," "creativity," "environment," and "sustainability."

**Table 2.** Categories Created by Metaphors Related to Landscape Architecture Profession

Order	Metaphor	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	<b>NATURE</b> (nature – colors of nature – natural beauty – protecting nature – sound of nature – nature friendly – beautifying nature – anti-concrete – love of nature)	62	21,2
2	<b>DESIGN</b> (design – natural design – landscaping – beautifying the environment – layout – botanical arrangement – outdoor design – environmental planning – art – drawing)	62	21,2
3	<b>LIFE</b> (life – breath – life – coloring life – orderly life – quality life – healthy society – peace – human – living material)	37	12,6
4	<b>GREEN</b> (green – green area – park, garden, open space – spacious living area – breathing area – relaxation area – natural architecture – park architecture – architecture – the combination of art and architecture)	36	12,3
5	<b>PLANT</b> (plant – tree – flower – gardener – garden)	27	9,2
6	<b>VISUALITY</b> (visibility - eye pleasure - landscape - psychological comfort - colors - aesthetics - cleanliness - harmony - hope - entertainment - reflection of the city)	25	8,5
7	<b>CREATIVITY</b> (creativity, dedication – passion – skill – career – essential – dream – nature-shaping profession – regular life – expert)	20	6,8
8	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> (environment – green architecture – living space of buildings – clean world – green environment)	13	4,4
9	<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b> (sustainability – naturalness – ecological balance – ecosystem – human nature relationship)	11	3,8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>293</b>	<b>100,0</b>

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The phrase "Determining Metaphorical Perceptions of Landscape Architecture Among Undergraduate Students" signifies a research conducted to comprehend how students in landscape architecture and other fields perceive this topic. Primarily, this research aims to grasp students' knowledge levels, biases, emotional responses, and perceptions regarding landscape architecture. Metaphorical perceptions involve the process of making comparisons with different subjects or objects to understand or express a topic. For instance, relating landscape architecture to nature. The outcomes of this study are crucial in understanding how the education system and curriculum influence students' interest and understanding of landscape architecture. Furthermore, it can provide guidance in delivering more effective education in landscape architecture.

The research revealed that 75 different metaphors were developed regarding the concept of "Landscape Architecture," and students from 14 different undergraduate programs displayed awareness of the profession. Students' perceptions of Landscape Architecture were primarily concentrated on the categories of "Nature" and "Design."

21.2% of participants associated Landscape Architecture with the category of nature, using metaphors that encompassed nature, colors of nature, natural beauty, nature conservation, nature's sound, eco-friendliness, beautification of nature, anti-concrete stance, and a love for nature. Similarly, another 21.2% of participants emphasized the importance of the design aspect, encapsulating design, natural design, environmental arrangement, beautifying the environment, arrangement, botanical arrangement, outdoor design, environmental planning, drawing, and art. Other categories formed based on participants' responses include "Life," "Green," "Plant," "Aesthetics," "Creativity," "Environment," and "Sustainability."

The results of this study demonstrate that the metaphors put forth by participants indicate that Landscape Architecture holds a significant position in terms of nature and design. Moreover, the inclusion of metaphors like peace, life, breath, psychological comfort, etc., suggests that Landscape Architecture not only involves environmentally friendly and sustainable design aspects but also contributes to creating spaces where people feel content, healthy, and as integral members of society. It is also worth noting that certain negative metaphors in the responses indicate concerns about unemployment among individuals transitioning from education to professional life. The emerged metaphors predominantly focus on topics like greenery, nature, environmental arrangement, ecological balance, parks, and environmental planning. It is necessary to raise awareness about Landscape Architecture encompassing both vegetal and structural design processes.

In conclusion, the emerged metaphors showcase a relatively high level of familiarity with the discipline of Landscape Architecture. Completing missing information and rectifying misconceptions about the profession will likely enhance its prestige. The study underscores that Landscape Architecture is a discipline that enhances people's living spaces, creates areas that improve life amid the hustle of work, provides designs for green spaces, directly and indirectly contributes to a better society, creates sustainable, healthy, environmentally friendly projects, offers access to natural environments that people long for, and possesses strong interpersonal skills, a consciousness of nature and the environment, and is a profession that creates spaces with minimal artificial intervention.

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