

Coast Guard Officer Candidates' Metaphoric Perceptions about Being an Officer Candidate: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract. This research was carried out to reveal the mental images (metaphors) of the candidates (n = 100) who are employed in the Turkish Coast Guard and who are in the basic training process. Each participant completed a standard form stating: "Being a Coast Guard officer candidate is... because... " The raw data obtained by completing the statement was analyzed in accordance with the convergent mixed research pattern. Officer candidates produced 78 different metaphors regarding their situation. These metaphors are grouped under eight different conceptual categories in terms of their common features. The categories in question differed according to the gender of the participants. The findings provide information about the situation of the officer candidates. These findings can be used to improve recruitment and training processes and to enhance basic training.

Keywords: Turkish Coast Guard, Metaphor, Coast guard officer, Career management

Introduction

Officer candidates (OC), who attain executive positions in the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG), are selected through a challenging recruitment process and subsequently, they are trained through a program that includes training in different fields from basic military service to law enforcement duties, from physical competence to management skills. OCs are men and women between the ages of 21-32 who have graduated with a four-year university degree. After orientation and basic military training, OCs receive basic law enforcement and coast guard training within a program determined by the administration. During the training, they are asked to be ready for all kinds of difficulties, both mentally and physically, and to display the expected behavior in different situations they will encounter. Daily activities are planned hour by hour as training, sustenance and rest. Men and women must also be present with the identical uniform and equipment. The program, which is applied to future leading commanders, is aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills. As a result of this candidacy process, it is also expected that they will assimilate the corporate culture and institutional affiliations.

Candidates will find themselves, perhaps for the first time, in an environment where both self and form discipline are prominent, as well as perhaps boarding for the first time. It is clear that in this environment, where candidates meet people, their experiences are different from previous ones. It is a positive reflection of the efforts of the OCs to adapt to this process, expressing that their opinions regarding the TCG in the application process have changed positively after starting training within the institution (Duzguncinar, 2020). They encounter a new way of life consisting of many written and unwritten rules, from TCG's own terminology to customs. Uncovering their emotions and thoughts, understanding the level of adaption to their environment, sharing their excitement and measuring their anxiety levels will help complete the training and gain greater personal strength in the process.

In the study, candidates were asked to share the above by using the metaphor. Metaphor is used when people have difficulties in expressing themselves, are afraid to, or do not want to be misunderstood.

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Lakoff & Johnson (1980) state that the word metaphor is used to mean “to express one thing with another” it is a Greek word in origin and consists of the words “Meta: beyond” and “Pherin: carry”. Throughout history, especially those dealing in philosophy, metaphors have often been used to better understand complex social issues. The essence of the metaphor is to understand one point from another. Aristotle (as cited in Soydas, 2010) suggests that the metaphor is a deviation of language from the normal usage and expressed in different language to enhance meaning by giving different understanding. Metaphor has become a part of language in everyday life, and it seems that people use it as different reflections of the way they perceive events (Wulf&Dudis (2005). Metaphor helps us perceive, understand, and further clarify complex events in our minds. Metaphor gives us richness and diversity while expressing our thoughts and explaining some concepts (Koc, 2014). It fulfills an important task by making it easier to understand the concepts that are difficult to understand (Saban, 2008). Metaphor is used for two main purposes. One is to describe any situation, and the other is to speed up or improve a process (Morgan, 2007). Since metaphor is different from classical methods, it supports creative thinking, allows an approach to events from different perspectives, and provides an environment where concepts are shaped not entirely according to the thoughts of individuals (Quinn, 1991). This contributes to the researcher gaining greater depth in and understanding of the area being studied. Using metaphor gives the individual the opportunity to express what he wants in a short and accurate manner, and adds to the ease of expression. Plus it also reveals the abstract concepts that are difficult to express, and accordingly obtain data and enable analysis of different variables (Kabadayi, 2008).

The metaphors expressed by the OCs and the reasons for choosing this metaphor were examined through discourse analysis. Discourse analysis, which is basically a qualitative research method, is a methodology that has recently been used in the literature. Celik and Halil (2008) argue that discourse analysis is a perspective of life consisting of methodological and conceptual elements. These two researchers state that the analysis is done by thinking about discourse or by making the discourse data. This type of analysis requires a labor intensive and long-term study (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The reason for this is that, as stated by Foucault (1969) (as cited in Parker, 2002), individuals are different from each other and consequently cause different discourses. In other words, the discourse of the individual differs from the others in terms of the mental state, time and place it is in. Discourse is examined within the local and general context of discourse. Barker and Galasinski (2001) (as cited in Flood 2013) argue that the parts of the discourse consist of the place and time of the discourse, the interactions, the social role undertaken, social knowledge related to the subject, culture, climate, norms and values, and organizational structure.

Studies related to metaphor have been mainly done in the field of education. When the research subjects were examined, it was observed that there was a focus on personal and professional awareness, educational efficiency, professional belief, and group dynamics (Yildizli et.al (2018). Semerci (2007), Celikkaya et.al (2016), Akhan et.al. (2014), Ozbas and Aktekin (2013), Ulukok et al. (2015) and Gunbayi (2011) are examples of successful metaphor research on different topics in the field of education. Few metaphors are available in the literature for law enforcement, including the TCG. The studies in question were generally made for the police or the personnel of this organization (Sari, 2010: Yuce & Demir, 2010). In this study, the focus is on OCs who will work in future positions of the TCG. Besides being an armed general law enforcement organization, TCG is the first organization covering the seas that comes to mind from the security sector. In addition to the widespread deployment that makes this organization special, it has the diversity of its duties at sea. The TCG has duties in different areas such as ensuring safety and security at sea, conducting fast, result-oriented and effective search and rescue activities at sea, and preventing irregular migration. These are added to the law enforcement duties required for law enforcement, to help citizens in natural disasters, to effectively combat all kinds of smuggling, to protect nuclear power plants and strategic facilities such as the newly launched Istanbul Airport (Sahil Guvenlik Komutanligi, 2018). The TCG also struggles with illegal fishing, hunting and marine pollution in order to protect the sea and the marine environment. These duties are carried out according to the 24/7 principle. In order to provide quality security service at all times, the TCG must have qualified personnel. Based on this point, the officer recruitment and training policy of the TCG

organization is implemented with great care. An intense effort is made to ensure OCs, who will be appointed to future management positions, complete the training and meet expectations. OCs show great desire and effort to follow the rules. They also try to adapt to a new lifestyle that is not easy to adopt quickly.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the officer candidates who continue their basic education at the Coast Guard by using metaphor. For this purpose, answers to the questions below were sought.

1. What are the metaphors that candidates produce for being an officer candidate? Why?
2. Under which conceptual categories are these metaphors collected in terms of their common features?
3. Do these conceptual categories differ significantly in terms of the gender of officer candidates?

Method

Research Model

This study is a convergent pattern mixed method research. Mixed method is a research method in which data is collected using quantitative and qualitative methods, and this data is mixed by integrating or establishing relationships (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The mixed method involves many philosophical assumptions and research processes in which data analysis practices and qualitative approaches are linked (Askun & Cizel, 2020). Convergent mixed pattern is a mixed research method pattern that combines the information obtained by the researcher from two different databases (quantitative and qualitative) to compare the results or transfer the obtained qualitative data to a quantitative database. In this pattern, the researcher collects the data simultaneously, analyzes them separately, and then compares them with each other (Gunbayi, 2020).

Research Place and Working Group

Table 1.

Information About Participants

Demographic Feature	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	12	12
Male	90	88
Total	102	100

The research was carried out at the TCG's school in Antalya. The school is the in-service training unit of the TCG. This research was conducted on the TCG's OCs in basic education in the 2019-2020 academic year. The research was carried out with a total of 102 OCs, 12 of whom were women. The ages of the OCs participating in the research are between 22 and 28, and the average age is 25.

Data Collection

OCs were asked to fill out a form. To achieve this, a written form of this phrase was given to them. Candidates were asked to identify only one metaphor using the phrase and express their opinions in writing. Similar to other metaphor studies, participants were asked to provide a justification for their metaphors. These forms, which were filled in by the OCs' own handwriting, were used as the main data source in the research.

Ethical Procedure

Throughout the whole study, published ethical procedures were followed at every stage. In the stages of data collection and analysis, great importance was attached to the privacy of individuals. All participants voluntarily participated in the study. This study does not risk any physical or psychological damage. The participants were informed about the study before the forms were distributed. Participants were informed that the forms they filled would be kept for seven years. The results were shared with OCs who wanted to see.

Analysis of data

The analysis and interpretation of the texts containing the metaphors of the participants and the reasons for choosing them were carried out within a five-step process. First, a temporary list of the metaphors produced was made. The aim was whether the candidates would express a certain metaphor prominently. In the second stage, each metaphor was examined as to whether there was inconsistency in relation to the name and the description. In the next stage, metaphors were arranged in alphabetical order.

The raw data was reviewed once again, and the metaphor expressions representing each metaphor were determined. In this way, a total of 78 different metaphors were grouped under 8 conceptual categories to use as reference sources and validate the data analysis process and comments of the study. For this, how each metaphor image conceptualized the phenomenon of knowledge was examined. Then, every image of metaphor was coded in terms of the perspective it had regarding the information. At the final stage, the validity and reliability of these studies were measured.

Validity, consistency and reliability are the two most important criteria used to ensure the credibility of the results of a study (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). In order to ensure the validity of the research results, 8 conceptual metaphor categories were explained in detail. Each of the 78 metaphors obtained was compiled with the category representing it and the results are shown in the findings section. To ensure the reliability of the study, expert opinion was sought to confirm whether the grouped metaphors represent the conceptual categories in question.

To ensure the consistency of the study, conceptual categories were determined by a specialist in the field of assessment and evaluation. The suitability of the categories was confirmed by the two experts at the TCG's School. The categories were subjected to the "Kappa Compliance Measurement" to determine whether the compromise rate among the evaluators occurred by chance.

There was a 91% agreement among the evaluators. Landis and Koch (1977) interpret this situation as a perfect fit. According to the authors, a desired level of reliability was provided when the consistency between expert and researcher evaluations was 90% and above. After the determination of a total of 78 metaphors and the development of 8 conceptual categories formed by these metaphors, all data was transferred to the SPSS statistics program. Then, the number (f) and percentage (%) of the participants representing the metaphor and the category were firstly calculated. Then, to test whether the conceptual categories differ according to the gender of the participants, the Pearson Chi-Square test was applied and the results were analyzed and interpreted.

Findings

According to the general findings obtained in this study, the OCs produced a total of 100 valid metaphors regarding their situation. Women produced 12 metaphors and men produced 88 metaphors. Out of a total of 78 metaphors, 2 were produced by both men and women, 10 by women only, and 66 by men only. 18 of the metaphors were expressed by more than one OC (See Table 2). While all women express separate metaphors, 18 metaphors were produced more than once by men. As a result of the Chi-square (X^2) test conducted, a significant difference was found between the preferences of male and female OCs in multiple expressed metaphors.

Table 2.

Multiple expressed metaphors

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Lion	3 (3%)	1 (8%)	4 (4%)
Sapling	4 (4%)		4 (4%)
Sword	3 (3%)		3 (3%)
That	2 (2%)	1 (8%)	3 (3%)
Breath	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Sky	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Ocean	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Wind	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Pen	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Hour	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Pocket-knife	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Wolf	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Machine	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Bullet	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Arrow	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Propeller	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Caterpillar	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Dolphin	2 (2%)		2 (2%)

Pearson X^2 (df=17)=10,762; p=0.000

In the next chapters, the features of the 8 conceptual categories developed in this research were introduced, supported by direct quotations. These conceptual categories were then compared in terms of participant gender.

1. Conceptual categories

Category 1: Officer Candidate as Animal

Table 3 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs' category as animals and the number of participants who developed each metaphor. According to Table 3, a total of 21 participants (20%) and 15 metaphors (22%) represent this category. In this category, women produced 2 metaphors and men 13. As a result of the Chi-square (X^2) test conducted in this section, a significant difference was found between the preferences of male and female OCs.

Table 3.

Officer Candidate as Animal

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Lion	3 (3%)	1 (8%)	4 (4%)
Wolf	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Caterpillar	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Dolphin	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Tiger		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Badger	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Booth	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Starfish	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Ant	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Eagle	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Butterfly	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Shark	1 (1%)		1 (1%)

Table 3 Continue

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Hawk	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Fox	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Crocodile	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	19 (21%)	2 (16%)	21 (20%)

Pearson X^2 (df=14) =12,296; p=0.003

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing animal metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **wolf**. Because wolves are durable and intelligent animals organized in teams. The presence of a wolf pack in the forest requires the care of all the creatures there. A singularly existing wolf makes a good planning and acts with strong focus before it can achieve its target. In my opinion, being an officer at the TCG requires individually to be durable, determined and intelligent. As a team, it requires being in a good planning and ambition union with colleagues.” (M-73)

“The officer candidate is like a **butterfly**. Because my adventure of being an officer candidate did not start in a short time. I started as a petty officer in the TCG. I call this period my caterpillar period. I developed myself in the first years of my mission. I proved myself. The desire to be an officer developed in the first years of my profession. I made an effort for this. I did not escape any duties. I have fulfilled the duties given with worthy...” (F-70)

“The officer candidate is like a **caterpillar**. Because caterpillars have difficulties until they become butterflies. However, when they enter the cocoon and turn into a butterfly, it is understood that these difficulties are worthy of the beauty they reached at the end. I also believe that I will come from the civilian and turn from caterpillar to butterfly with military training...” (M-77)

“The officer candidate is like a **tiger**. It is dominant in its environment, it is strong, and it is a fighter. In other words, he fights until he gets what he wants.” (F-12)

Category 2: Officer Candidate as Goods

Table 4 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as goods and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 12 participants (12%) and 10 metaphors (13%) in total. Women produced 2 metaphors in this category and men produced 8 metaphors. As a result of the Chi-square (X^2) test conducted in this section, a significant difference was found between the preferences of male and female OCs.

Table 4.

Officer Candidate as Goods

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Pen	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Hour	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Computer		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Steel		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Steel Wing	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Medicine	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Mixer	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Tug	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Umbrella	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Egg	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	10 (11%)	2 (16%)	12 (11%)

Pearson X^2 (df=9) =12,00; p=0.013

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing goods metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **pen**. Because we will be leading personnel in the future. Everyone uses the pen. However, not everyone agrees. Some consider using the pen as a sword. Some people prefer to use beautiful, polite and cool sentences... The candidate officer should always adapt to the conditions by standing upright according to the conditions of the situation.” (M-36)

“The officer candidate is like a **computer**. Because in our age where technology shows its development rapidly, computers have been one of the most important parts of our lives. Especially with the widespread use of the internet, it has facilitated the daily life of people and worked systematically to make things run faster. As the Coast Guard officer candidate, it is like being a computer of the seas, as it will be a part of disciplined and systematic work.” (F-07)

“The officer candidate is like an **umbrella**. Because immigrants passing through our country force us like heavy rainy days. Rain makes people wet and people may get sick. I want to be an umbrella for the peace and well-being of my country on rainy days.” (M-56)

Category 3: Officer Candidate as Nature

Table 5 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as nature and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 21 participants (20%) and 16 metaphors (19%) in total. Women produced 4 metaphors in this category and men produced 17 metaphors. As a result of the Chi-square (X^2) test conducted in this section, a significant difference was found between the preferences of male and female OCs.

Table 5.

Officer Candidate as Nature

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Water	2 (2%)	1 (8%)	3 (%)
Sky	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Ocean	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Wind	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Sea		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Pole Star		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Waterfall		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Fire	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Mountain	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Sun	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Light	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Comet	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Soil	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Bronze	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Venus	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Rain	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	17 (19%)	4 (33%)	21 (21%)

Pearson X^2 (df=15)=16,676; p=0.004

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing nature metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **fire**. Because the fire creates a noticeable effect in all places it passes. An officer should use the knowledge and abilities to gain this effect. This fire should be harmful and burning against lawlessness and a safe home for victims seeking help.” (M-11)

“The officer candidate is like a **light**. Because being light is to guide the people around us. It is to gather them under one roof and guide them when they do not know what to do. But the power of light depends on the people who support it. People left in a dark room will search for the first light. Because they know

that in order to start from somewhere, we need a source that will ignite us and show us the target.” (M-16)

“The officer candidate is like a **pole star**. Because it directs at night. I think that Coast Guard educates its staff better than other institutions and is more interested in candidate officers. In other words, if the officers are stars, they should make their difference with their light and always show people the right way.” (F-04)

Category 4: Officer Candidate as Plant

Table 6.

Officer Candidate as Plant

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Sapling	4 (4%)		4 (4%)
Tree	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Sunflower		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Cotton		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Total	5 (5%)	2 (16%)	7 (7%)

Pearson X^2 (df=3) = 7, 00; p=0.032

Table 6 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as plant and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 7 participants (7%) and 4 metaphors (5%) in total. Both women and men produced 2 metaphors in this category. As a result of the Chi-square (X^2) test conducted in this section, a significant difference was found between the preferences of male and female OCs.

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing plant metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **tree**. Because in order for our branches to rise up to the sky, our roots must go as deep under the soil. A great tree that occupies its place with strong roots and is resistant to heat, cold, rain and snow makes the place homeland for itself and confronts many difficulties like Turkish Nation... The Turkish officer, who has been a guide and shelter since the first years of the republic was established in our history, resembles a great tree.” (M-05)

“The officer candidate is like a **sunflower**. Because sunflowers turn in the direction that the sun rises. So they turn their directions to the sun. Officer candidates tend to the direction in which they receive efficient information. As the sun is useful for sunflower, information and equipment are also important for us officer candidates. Candidates should turn in the direction of knowledge ...” (F-02)

Category 5: Officer Candidate as Military Service

Table 7 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as Military Service and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 17 participants (16%) and 12 metaphors (17%) in total. While women did not produce metaphors of this category, men expressed 12 metaphors.

Table 7.

Officer Candidate as Military Service

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Sword	3 (3%)		3 (3%)
Pocketknife	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Bullet	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Arrow	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Knife	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Steel vest	1 (1%)		1 (1%)

Table 7 Continue

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Cartridge	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Mace	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Guardian	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Gun	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Rifle	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Arrow	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	15 (16%)		15 (15%)

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing Military Service metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **bullet**. Because; He knows how to be fast, to progress to the target that he wants to reach in a determined manner in his actions such as bullets, to pass the obstacles decisively whenever an obstacle arises, and not to worry about minor problems. While the bullet is advancing, it collects air around it, creates a vacuum environment and considers the factors that will enable it to move more effectively around it. I also notice of the people and information that I think will be useful to me and be useful when I become an officer.” (M-44)

“The officer candidate is like a **sword**. We are an iron piece to be processed, and our commanders are blacksmiths. They are the ones who turn this raw iron into a sharp sword. I hope the real officer will be out when this sword is known.” (M-39)

“The officer candidate is like an **arrow**. Because it stands upright in all weather conditions, in all conditions, despite all difficulties. It is stuck perpendicular to the target without being attached elsewhere. It can be flexible but not broken. At the same time, he must have a good shooter and bow to achieve the goal. Shooters are our trainers and commanders, and bow is the places and opportunities we train. If our *instructors can use the bow well, we will reach our goal. The goal is to be a good officer.*” (M-47)

Category 6: Officer Candidate as Maritime

Table 8 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as Maritime and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 9 participants (8%) and 7 metaphors (10%) in total. Women produced 1 metaphor in this category and men produced 6 metaphors.

Table 8.

Officer Candidate as Maritime

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Machine	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Propeller	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Compass		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Lighthouse	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Seaworm	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Ship	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Pal	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	8 (9%)	1 (8%)	9 (9%)

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing seaman metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **lighthouse**. Because; The Coast Guard officer guides people, saves them and becomes a ray of hope. We must always work to run for public help.” (M-29)

“The officer candidate is like a **machine**. Because I liked working all my life. I worked because I wanted to work, not because I had to work. I feel like I will never stop working and rust as I work.” (M-42)

“The officer candidate is like a **propeller**. Because I believe I direct people. As a woman and soldier, I feel myself as an individual that can be pursued ...” (M-51)

Category 7: Officer Candidate as Intangible

Table 9 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as intangible and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 10 participants (9%) and 10 metaphors (15%) in total. While women did not produce metaphors of this category, men expressed 10 metaphors.

Table 9.

Officer Candidate as Intangible

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Algorithm	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
White	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
True	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Dream	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Building foundation	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Savior	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Vitamin	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Artificial intelligence	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Punch	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Time	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	10 (11%)		10 (10%)

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing intangible metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like an **algorithm**. Because the algorithm produces solutions for every situation. It plans in advance where and what to do. With his preparation, he overcomes every event. Even if he fails on one issue, he finds new solutions with another plan.” (M-89)

“The officer candidate is like **white**. Because white represents cleanliness, spaciousness and order. Coast Guard officer candidates learn to be clean. They are regular and clothing reflects this situation. At the same time, the holiness of the profession is represented by white.” (M-84)

“The officer candidate is like an **artificial intelligence**. Because artificial intelligence has the ability to make a decision in the light of the information provided. In other words, in the light of the information learned, it reveals the ability to make its own decisions in the most correct way.” (M-90)

Category 8: Officer Candidate as Anatomy

Table 10 presents the metaphors that constitute the OCs’ category as anatomy and the number of participants expressing each metaphor. This category represents 5 participants (5%) and 4 metaphors (10%) in total. Women produced 1 metaphor in this category and men produced 3 metaphors.

Table 10.

Officer Candidate as Anatomy

Metaphor	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Breath	2 (2%)		2 (2%)
Spinal cord		1 (8%)	1 (1%)
Brain	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Heart	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Total	4 (4%)	1 (8%)	5 (5%)

Some of the reasons for OCs choosing anatomy metaphors are as follows.

“The officer candidate is like a **brain**. Because it has all kinds of control mechanisms to find new ideas that can direct and manage people. Because being an officer candidate is the previous step of being an officer. If you want this profession, you should have the features it requires. Managing, generating ideas and controlling are features that an officer should have.” (M-01)

“The officer candidate is like a **heart**. Because we are the young hearts of the Coast Guard. If we stop, our country and our people will be vulnerable to external dangers.” (M-02)

“The officer candidate is like a **spinal cord**. Because it is a unique piece that carries its central system in the spinal cord. The spinal cord controls involuntary behavior and reflexes in the body. It controls the involuntary behavior and reflexes of the personnel who are the Coast Guard officers. The officer organizes, manages and ensures that the system runs tremendously.” (F-01)

Differences of Officer Candidates According to Gender in Producing Metaphors

Table 11.

Differences by Gender

Category	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	Total f (%)
Anatomy	3 (%3)	1 (%8)	4 (%5)
Plant	2 (%2)	2 (%16)	4 (%5)
Nature	13 (%14)	4 (%33)	17 (%2)
Goods	8 (%9)	2 (%16)	10 (%13)
Animal	14 (%15)	2 (%16)	14 (%18)
Military Service	12 (%13)		12 (%15)
Maritime	6 (%7)	1 (%8)	7 (%9)
Intangible	10 (%11)		10 (%13)
Total	68 (75%)	12 (100%)	78 (%100)

Pearson X^2 (df=7) =9,287; p=0.029

Note: A total of 2 metaphors in the Nature and Animal categories were preferred by both male and female participants.

Table 11 compares 8 categories of metaphors produced by OCs in terms of gender. According to Table 11, metaphors of male and female OCs differ from each other. The Chi-square (X^2) test supports this view. It is possible to summarize these differences as follows.

Men produced more metaphors (n = 66, f = 75%) than female OCs in 7 categories: Anatomy, Nature, Goods, Animal, Military Service, Maritime and Intangible. While they produced the most metaphors in the Animal category (n = 14, f = 15%), they preferred the least Plant (n = 2, f = 2%).

In contrast, women did not produce more metaphors than men in any category. While women produce the most metaphors in Nature category (n = 4, f = 33%), at least Anatomy (n = 1, f = 1%) and Maritime (n = 1, f = 1%) categories they preferred. Women also did not express any metaphors in 2 categories: Intangible, Military Service.

When the data obtained in this research are analyzed, the following results are achieved.

The category that OCs produced the most metaphors was Nature (n = 17; 17%), while the least was in the Anatomy (n = 4; 4%) and Plant (n = 4; 4%) categories. When we look at those who use a metaphor as a partner, we encounter 18 (18%) metaphors in 7 (7%) categories. The Maritime category (7 (7%)) and the Military Service category (12 (12%)) are directly related to the officer profession. When we examine by gender, all the metaphors preferred by women are different from each other, while men used 18 metaphors (20%) in common. Water and Lion metaphors were preferred by both male and female.

Women preferred metaphors more frequently in Nature (n = 3; 3.8%) Plant (n = 2; 2.6%), Goods (n = 2; 2.6%) categories. This situation was encountered in men as Animal (n = 14; 17.9%), Nature (n = 13; 16.7%) and Military Service (n = 12; 15.4%). The only category in which all metaphors are used once is Intangible. While men produced the same number (n = 2) metaphors in Anatomy and Plant categories, this occurred in Plants, Goods and Animals as 2 times in women.

Discussion

The findings of this study draw attention to several important points: First of all, the fact that the OCs express their situation with such different metaphors (78) is an indication that a large number of metaphors are needed to explain an abstract, complex and multidimensional phenomenon as an OC as a whole. For example, officer candidacy can be defined as an item or it can also be seen as sailor, anatomy, animal, plant, Military Service. This shows us that the process of candidacy for officers is complicated and it cannot be explained as a whole with just one metaphor. When we look for a reason for this, Weade and Ernst (1990) (as cited in Saban, 2008) provide guidance, stating that metaphors are selective, representing only one part of the phenomenon that is intended to be defined. Contrary to popular belief, the metaphor should be seen only as a symbol of the phenomenon it is talking about, not itself. If it was possible to explain the phenomenon itself, metaphor would not be needed anyway. The difference of metaphor from the actual case can be explained by its perspective on the case. In other words, the case cannot explain the general whole, it can only give an idea (Thayer-Bacon, 2003).

While the OCs are expected to express metaphors related to their future professions, the metaphors they preferred in the field of Military Service and Maritime were not among the most preferred. This situation, which was surprising at the beginning, can be explained by the "Self-Concept Theory" proposed by Super et al. (1963) (as cited in Tuzcuoglu, 2000). According to this, the self-concept environment of the individual is realized by the interaction it enters. OC training are held on a boarding basis, which requires them to be in constant contact with other OCs throughout the process. OCs are also in the process of discovering their profession and may not yet consider themselves members of this profession until professional awareness is established.

Another finding is that the gender factor plays a decisive role in the mental images of OCs. In this study, female and male OCs gathered in two categories (Nature and Animal) in common metaphors (lion and water) while producing different metaphors in other categories. The fact that women do not produce metaphors in two categories (Intangible and Military Service) is another proof that they view the world differently from men. This situation is similar to the results obtained in the study on the importance of the importance given to the values among female and male university students, obtained by the Uyguc (2003) with the participation of 740 university students.

Next finding obtained is that the metaphor enables a working environment that supports creative thinking and gives the opportunity to reveal different perspectives. When the content analysis of the responses of the candidate officers for the reasons for choosing the metaphor was made, it was determined that they described this situation completely different from their previous lives by establishing positive sentences. The sentences they express show that the metaphors allow the individual to express himself according to the stereotyped sentences and completely free thinking system, not within the specified framework (Kaya, 2014).

In the study, it was determined that female OCs produce metaphors in different categories and very few metaphors are the same as those produced by men. Similar findings were obtained in some metaphor studies examining whether differences in metaphors by gender are noteworthy. For example, Varisoglu and Kasaveklioglu (2019), in their work carried out for the purpose of uncovering the metaphors of the group of 100 people, including 56 women and 44 men, who live in Tokat province, for unassigned teachers; they found that the images differed significantly from each other on a gender basis. The data of the research are similar to our study. "What would you compare to the teachers who could not be

appointed? And why?" It was collected through an interview form containing questions, and these were analyzed with descriptive analysis technique. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the perspectives of the female participants towards the teacher who could not be appointed are shaped around the context of not working, and the male participants are united around the context of not being known. In another study (Kalkan & Gurses, 2019), it aimed to measure the different metaphoric perception levels of female and male students enrolled in the open education system. Within the scope of the study, the researchers determined that women produce metaphors for theory, and men for application and distribution of information.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to learn the feelings and opinions of the OCs through the metaphor. The fact that the 100 OCs who participated in the study expressed their situation with 78 metaphors showed that men and women have significantly different opinions. The data obtained showed that metaphors can be used as a powerful tool to understand and make sense of the situation that officer candidates are in. By using metaphors to reveal, understand and interpret complex processes that involve difficulties, it will be possible to identify the feelings, thoughts and expectations of the people who produce metaphors.

Officer candidates expressed the concepts such as "adding value", "helping people", "guiding", "making a difference" in their views on the reasons for choosing metaphor. This is an indication that they have adopted the core values of the Coast Guard organization, whose main task is to save lives at sea, and that they have begun to work and prepare themselves to be part of this institution.

Recommendations

Although this study was conducted with OCs, it would be beneficial to carry out similar studies for candidate law enforcement officers with different status (petty officer, specialized sergeant, etc.). In this way, feelings and thoughts regarding the situation of other personnel who are subject to similar candidacy processes of the organization will be determined. Information obtained from these studies can also be evaluated as training processes and feedback within this process. This feedback can be used to review processes and practices and to identify their strengths and improvements. It can also be made a part of improvement work.

Comparing the results obtained by making similar metaphor applications to the candidates for the next term OCs can be seen as a part of professional analysis applications. The results can also provide data for personality profiling studies for OCs. The data obtained can be used in determining personality profiles that need to be focused on for future recruitment processes, developing or restructuring processes.

The candidacy process also means a new way of life for the OCs, which consists of many written and unwritten rules, which they did not know before, or even if they knew, could not find in practice. In this process, they show attitudinal and behavioral change towards the corporate culture of the Coast Guard. This change may not happen equally quickly for every officer candidate. Such metaphor studies will help them learn their feelings and thoughts about the candidacy process. In this way, it can be understood to what extent they adapt to their environment. Identifying the uncertain points for them and measuring their anxiety levels can enable them to overcome this difficult process without mental stress.

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