

## EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF FLAVOR: THE CASE OF AFYON KOCATEPE UNIVERSITY\*

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to reveal the metaphorical perceptions of university students studying at Afyon Kocatepe University regarding the concept of “flavor.” A semi-structured questionnaire was used as the data collection tool, and it was administered to a total of 322 students. The participants consisted of fourth-year students from the Departments of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Economics, Automotive Engineering, and Tourism Management. The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis. As a result of the research, students produced a total of 229 different metaphors related to the concept of flavor. Based on their shared characteristics, the metaphors produced by students from Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, and Tourism Management were grouped under 8 thematic categories; those from Economics under 9 categories; and those from Automotive Engineering also under 9 categories. Among the recurring metaphors, taste, mother’s food, love, and spices stood out. The findings indicate that metaphor preferences differ significantly depending on the students’ field of study. This result demonstrates that the concept of “flavor” is a multidimensional and subjective experience that cannot be limited to a single metaphor.

**Keywords:** Gastronomy, Flavor, Metaphor, Afyon Kocatepe University.

### INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is a label, meaning or conceptual expression that a concept creates in an individual. It is a process of seeing and understanding. It is a more important and powerful mental production than individuals simply explaining a concept with another concept because it expresses the depth and experiences of the relevant concept (Eraslan, 2011).

The societies in which individuals live directly affect the metaphors they create, because individuals attribute meaning to concepts according to the environment and conditions they are in. Individuals do not directly make an effort to form their metaphorical perceptions, because experiences and experiences are the most important elements that make up metaphor. Metaphors are of vital importance for individuals to understand and make sense of the world. Because individuals exist to the extent that they understand and make sense of their environment (Kantekin, 2018).

Human beings have always taken care of their nutrition in order to sustain their lives throughout history. However, in recent years, they have developed food diversity and started to create new flavors in the food world by producing new foods (Batu, 2017). Gastronomy is the science of taste and flavor (Bostancı and Yanmış, 2017). Flavor is expressed as a quality perceived with the participation of all senses (smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing) during the consumption of food. Each sense affects flavor with its own special characteristics (Karadeniz, 2000).

Sensory perceptions play a significant role in shaping individuals' life experiences. The concept of flavor is not merely a physiological phenomenon, but also a multidimensional construct intertwined with individuals' past experiences, cultural identities, and emotional states. Flavor evokes various

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associations in the minds of individuals, and one of the ways to express these associations is through metaphors. However, there is no existing study that explores how metaphors related to the concept of flavor differ based on the academic disciplines in which individuals are educated. In this context, the main aim of the study is to reveal the metaphorical perceptions of university students from different departments at Afyon Kocatepe University regarding the concept of “flavor” and to evaluate these perceptions within thematic categories. In doing so, the study seeks to understand, from an interdisciplinary perspective, how individuals’ educational and cultural backgrounds are reflected in their perception of “flavor” as an abstract concept. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to future research.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Metaphor, as emphasized by Lakoff and Johnson (2022), serves not merely as a linguistic ornament but as a cognitive tool through which individuals conceptualize abstract phenomena. In this context, “flavor” extends beyond the sensory experience to encompass memory, culture, and emotion. Understanding how individuals metaphorically construct the concept of flavor can reveal the deeper socio-cultural and disciplinary structures shaping perception. Therefore, this study is grounded in the theoretical approach of conceptual metaphor theory, which posits that abstract concepts are comprehended through concrete experiences.

The word metaphor comes from the Ancient Greek words *meta* (onto) and *phrein* (to carry) and refers to specific mental/linguistic processes in which some aspects of one “thing” are carried or transferred to another “thing”. As a result of these processes, the “second thing” is spoken of as if it were the “first thing”. Metaphor is considered a basic form of specialized language, called “figurative language” in English and “metaphor” or “metaphorical language” in Turkish, which differs from standard language by “not meaning what it says” (Cebeci, 2013). In other words, metaphor is the process of establishing a connection between information in the mind that allows one to perceive and understand a subject from the perspective of another subject (Eraslan, 2011).

The most common use of metaphors is to explain unknown concepts through known and established concepts. In other words, metaphor is the process of explaining unknown or difficult-to-explain concepts by establishing a consistent relationship between what is similar and what is likened (Canbaba, 2018).

When the relevant literature is examined, studies conducted using the metaphor analysis method are encountered. Caballero and Suárez (2008) examined how food-related metaphors are used to conceptualize emotions in Spanish and English. Their study focused on metaphorical expressions where taste, cooking, and ingestion were source domains for describing emotional states. The authors identified cross-linguistic similarities and differences, noting that both languages use taste metaphors (e.g., “bitter experience”) but with culturally specific nuances. The study highlights how gustatory metaphors shape emotional discourse and reflect broader cultural conceptualizations of feeling.

In their research, Alyakut and Küçükkömürler (2018) addressed the perceptions of university students studying in the gastronomy and culinary arts department regarding their own professions using the metaphor technique.

Köroğlu et al. (2018) addressed the perceptions of tourism guidance students regarding the concept of Turkish Cuisine using the metaphor technique. While 154 different metaphors were produced by the participants, Turkish Cuisine was most frequently expressed with the rainbow metaphor.

Saloman (2018) explored how the sense of taste has been positioned throughout history in philosophical discourse and metaphorical expression. The paper highlights how taste has often been considered inferior to vision or hearing in Western philosophy, reflecting a mind-body dualism. Nevertheless, Saloman argues that taste serves as a powerful metaphorical vehicle for conveying moral, aesthetic, and emotional judgments, revealing its deeper significance as both a sensory and cultural construct.

Zhou, Mo, Wang, and Zhang (2020) investigated the metaphoric associations between basic emotions and taste through a series of four studies. Participants were asked to match taste words (e.g., sweet, bitter, sour) to emotion-related or emotion-laden terms. The findings revealed that “sweet” was most frequently associated with positive emotions, while “bitter” and “sour” were commonly linked to negative emotions. These results highlight the intuitive and culturally grounded connections between taste perception and emotional meaning.

In their research, Baysal and Yıldırım Saçılık (2021) revealed the metaphorical perceptions of food and beverage management undergraduate students who took the banquet and event management course regarding the concept of banquet. In this context, entertainment and wedding metaphors were the most frequently produced out of 39 different metaphors.

In their research conducted by Üst Can and Solmaz (2021) to evaluate the profession perceptions of students receiving education in the culinary program through metaphors and to reveal the reasons underlying their thoughts of making or not making a career in the sector, 188 metaphors were produced by the participants and these metaphors were categorized under 16 themes. The most produced metaphors were ants, bees, and machines under the category of a hard-working cook.

Güner and Kale (2022) examined the metaphorical perceptions of chefs regarding their own professions in their research. Although metaphor is seen as an interpretive tool because it opens new perspectives for analysts in better understanding the subject under consideration, it was determined that chefs produced 68 different metaphors regarding their own professions and that chefs generally have a positive judgment regarding their professions. The most frequently produced metaphors by the participants were art, bee and love metaphors.

Yücel Güngör and Güngör (2022) revealed the perceptions of gastronomy and culinary arts students regarding the concept of gourmet through metaphor technique in their research. The participants produced 58 different metaphors with the concept of gourmet. The most frequently produced of these metaphors were scientist and child metaphors.

In his research, Ademoğlu (2023) addressed the perceptions of backpackers regarding street food, an important element of gastronomic tourism, through metaphors. In this context, 93 different metaphors were produced in the research. The rainbow metaphor was the most common among the produced metaphors.

Köşker (2023) revealed the perceptions of foreign students receiving university education in Turkey regarding the concepts of Turkey and tourism through metaphors.

Saatcı Savsa (2023) aimed to metaphorically examine Çanakkale local dishes as an intangible cultural heritage and to emphasize their importance by increasing the awareness of Çanakkale local dishes, and revealed the metaphorical perceptions of local people regarding local dishes. The most developed metaphors regarding Çanakkale cuisine were determined as Trojan horse, green and fish.

Ertaş and Nur (2025) revealed the metaphorical perceptions of gastronomy students regarding the concepts of gastronomy, culinary, and art. The participants produced a wide range of metaphors such as art, philosophy, dream, journey, chemistry, puzzle, family, and happiness, reflecting both cognitive and emotional dimensions of their understanding.

Existing studies demonstrate that metaphor analysis is an effective method for uncovering individuals' professional, cultural, and conceptual perceptions, particularly in the fields of gastronomy, tourism, and food and beverage management. These studies have focused on themes such as professional perception (Alyakut & Küçükkömürler, 2018; Üst Can & Solmaz, 2021; Güner & Kale, 2022; Ertaş & Nur, 2025), conceptual awareness (Baysal & Yıldırım Saçılık, 2021; Yücel Güngör & Güngör, 2022; Köroğlu et al., 2018), and gastronomic identity and cultural heritage (Ademoğlu, 2023; Saatcı Savsa, 2023; Saloman, 2018). In addition, Zhou et al. (2020) investigated the metaphorical associations between taste and emotion, while Caballero and Suárez (2008) analyzed how food-related metaphors are used to describe emotions in English and Spanish. Furthermore, Köşker (2023) explored the metaphorical perceptions of international students regarding Turkey and tourism.

Despite this growing body of literature, no study has been identified that specifically explores how the concept of "flavor" is metaphorically perceived by students from various academic disciplines. In this context, the present research aims to address this gap by analyzing how a multidimensional and inherently subjective concept such as flavor is interpreted across different departments. In this regard, the study offers an original contribution by adopting an interdisciplinary perspective on metaphor analysis, extending the application of this method beyond professional or cultural identity to include abstract sensory concepts like flavor.

## **2. METHOD**

The aim of this research is to reveal university students' metaphorical perceptions regarding the concept of "flavor" and to evaluate these perceptions within conceptual categories. The research population consists of students enrolled at Afyon Kocatepe University during the 2018–2019 academic

year. A purposive sampling method was adopted based on the rationale that students' education may be directly or indirectly related to the concept of flavor. Accordingly, the research sample consisted of fourth-year students from the Departments of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Economics, Automotive Engineering, and Tourism Management. The primary reason for selecting students from different departments was to explore how the concept of "flavor" is conceptualized differently depending on the academic disciplines in which individuals are educated. This approach provided the opportunity to examine how education in various academic fields influences students' metaphorical perceptions of the concept of flavor. The reason for including only fourth-year students was the assumption that they possess a certain level of disciplinary knowledge. A semi-structured questionnaire form with open-ended questions was used during the data collection phase. The open-ended question form is the written version of the structured interview method. It requires the data to be collected by writing the requested questions on paper as a list and leaving a certain space below and writing the participant's own thoughts (Kozak, 2015).

In order to reveal the perceptions of the students participating in the research towards the concept of flavor, each of them filled out a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part included questions about their gender and departments. In the second part, the sentence "Flavor is like/similar to ..... Because ....." was requested to be completed. 21 semi-structured questionnaire forms in which the because part was not filled were not included in the evaluation. The reason for making an explanation in the because part after generating a metaphor is to know the reason for the metaphor. The research data were collected at Afyon Kocatepe University in April 2019. 343 participants were reached in the research. As a result, analyzes were performed on 322 participants. Information on the gender and departments of the students participating in the research is given in Table 1.

According to the data obtained from the valid forms evaluated; 58.7% of the participants participating in the research are male (f=189) and 41.3% (f=133) are female. 22.0% of the participants are 4th year students studying in the economics department, 21.4% in the automotive engineering department, 20.2% in the gastronomy and culinary arts department, 18.9% in the tourism management department and 17.4% in the interior architecture and environmental design department.

**Table 1.** Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Variable		f	%
Gender	Female	133	41,3
	Male	189	58,7
Total		322	100
Department	Gastronomy and Culinary Arts	65	20,2
	Interior Architecture and Environmental Design	56	17,4
	Economy	71	22,0
	Automotive Engineering	69	21,4
	Tourism Management	61	18,9
Total		322	100

The metaphors produced by the participants were analyzed in five stages. These are; naming stage, classification stage, category development stage, validity and reliability stage, and data transfer stage to the computer environment.

a. Naming Stage

In this stage, the data was listed in alphabetical order. Survey forms with missing information were not evaluated.

b. Classification Stage

Survey forms were classified by dividing into sections. Metaphors were analyzed and reviewed according to their common features.

c. Category Development Stage

In this stage, the metaphors created by the students were categorized according to their common meanings. 8 categories were developed for the gastronomy and culinary arts department, 8 for the interior architecture department, 9 for the economics department, 7 for the automotive engineering department, and 8 for the tourism management department.

#### d. Validity and Reliability Stage

In order to ensure the credibility (validity and reliability) of the research findings, all conceptual categories developed in the research and the comments made by the students about the data were supported by quotations from the students' statements/opinions. Two important processes were carried out to ensure the validity of the research results for this study: (a) the data analysis process was explained in detail, and (b) the participant metaphor images obtained during the analysis and interpretation of the findings were used as the main data source, and these were included in the findings section (Duran, 2018).

#### e. Data Transfer Stage to Computer Environment

After categorizing the produced metaphors according to their common features, the data was tabulated. The tables show the categories, the number of students (frequency) and the number of metaphors. In the explanation section, the students' metaphors related to the concept of flavor were directly quoted.

### 3. FINDINGS

Metaphors produced by students of the gastronomy and culinary arts department regarding the concept of flavor are given in Table 2. Students produced 52 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. It was determined that the most repeated metaphors were spice (5), mother (3) and love (3). The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized according to the metaphor source relationship and it was determined that the category of “Flavor as an Element Related to Life (29.2%)” was the category with the most metaphors.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Flavor-Related Metaphors of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department Students According to Conceptual Categories

Categories		Metaphors	Number of Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	Flavor Associated with Family and Mother	Family (1), Mother (3)	2	4	6,2
2	Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings	Love (3), Taste (1), Taste of the Palate (1), Dissatisfaction (1), Emotion (1), Pleasure (2), Smell (1), Happiness (2), Symbol of Happiness (1), Affection (1), Tangible Feeling (1), Lust and Satisfaction (1), Savor (1), Feeling of Pleasure (1)	14	18	27,7
3	Flavor as an Element Related to Life	Main Building Block (1), Memory (1), Detail (1), Heaven (1), Childhood (1), Rainbow (1), A Beautiful Memory (1), Life (2), The Meaning of Life (1), Human (2), Red (1), Mutual Conversation (1), Personal (1), Dream (1), Poem (1), A Long Journey (1), Living (1)	17	19	29,2
4	Flavor as an Element Reflecting Culture	Iftar Table (1), A Cultural Phenomenon (1), Cultural Heritage (1), An Average Value (1)	4	4	6,2
5	Flavor Associated with Hometown	Höşmerim (1), Zahter Bread (1)	2	2	3,1
6	Flavor with Positive Meaning	Something Priceless (1), Everything I Love (2), Something Indispensable (1)	3	4	6,2
7	Flavor Associated with Health and Nature	A Nutritious Meal (1), Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (1), The Smell of Earth After Rain (1), Greenery (1)	4	4	6,2
8	Food – Food Item as Flavor	Spices (5), Food to Eat at Iftar (1), Well-Cooked Food (1), Salt in Moderation (1), Fried Chicken (1), Water to Drink When Thirsty (1)	6	10	15,4
Total			52	65	100

Some of the direct statements of the participants regarding the metaphors produced under the relevant categories are as follows:

P7: “Flavor is like spices. Because without them (spices), the food has no meaning.”

P34: “Flavor is like a person. Because people are good or bad.”

P41: “Flavor is like happiness. Because it varies from person to person.”

P55: “Flavor is like a dream. Because we get lost in flavor and feel ourselves in other lands.”

Table 3 shows the metaphors produced by the students of the department of interior architecture and environmental design regarding the concept of flavor. The students produced 55 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized based on the source–target relationship, and it was determined that the highest number of metaphors fell under the category of “Flavor as a Food/Food Item” (25%). Within this category, participants associated the concept of flavor with the following items: steak tartar a la Turca (1), chocolate (1), meat dish (1), hamburger (1), Indian food (1), cumin (1), lamb (1), anything that fills the stomach (1), eggplant moussaka (1), vegetables (1), sushi (1), shirdan (1), dessert (1), and olive oil (1). The most frequently repeated metaphor was “lentil bukme” (2), categorized under “Flavor Associated with Hometown” (21.4%).

**Table 3.** Distribution of Flavor-Related Metaphors of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design Department Students According to Conceptual Categories

Categories		Metaphors	Number of Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	Flavor Associated with Family	Family (1)	1	1	1,8
2	Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings	Effect in the Mouth (1), Love (1), Taste on the Palate (1), Good Feeling (1), Peace (1), Feeling Good (1), Being Happy (1), Happiness (1), Love (1), Food Made with Love (1), Longing (1), Pleasure (1)	12	12	21,4
3	Flavor Associated with Football	Fenerbahce (1), Ultraaslan Fan (1)	2	2	3,6
4	Flavor as an Element Related to Life	The Sound of an Instrument (1), Watching a Movie (1), Filling Your Stomach (1), Blessing (1), Orchestra (1), Dinner Set for 12 People (1)	6	6	10,7
5	Flavor Associated with Hometown	Anatolia (1), Desti Kebab (1), Sour Meatballs (1), Meat Bread (1), Kumru (1), Turkish Delight (1), My Hometown’s Food (1), Lentil Bukme (2), Mhlama (1), Corn Bread (1), Tantuni (1)	11	12	21,4
6	Flavor Associated with Professional Elements	Building Design (1), Well Designed House (1), The Path to Architecture (1)	3	3	5,4
7	Flavor Associated with Health and Nature	Sea (1), Four Seasons (1), Foods Eaten in Nature (1), Organic Products (1), Salt-Free Meals (1), Summer Season (1)	6	6	10,7
8	Food – Food Item as Flavor	Steak Tartar a la Turca (1), Chocolate (1), Meat Dish (1), Hamburger (1), Indian Food (1), Cumin (1), Lamb Meat (1), Everything That Fills the Stomach (1), Eggplant Moussaka (1), Vegetables (1), Sushi (1), Shirdan (1), Dessert (1), Olive Oil (1)	14	14	25,0
Total			55	56	100

Some of the direct statements of the participants regarding the metaphors produced under the relevant categories are as follows:

P69: “Flavor is like with lentil bukme. Because it reminds me of my hometown Afyon.”

P70: “Flavor is like building design. Because the more beautiful the design, the more attractive it becomes.”

P82: “Flavor is like Fenerbahçe. Because food without flavor is not life without Fenerbahçe.”

P111: “Flavor is like Anatolia. Because it offers infinite richness.”

Table 4 shows the metaphors produced by economics students regarding the concept of flavor. Students produced 56 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. It was determined that the most repeated metaphors were mother's food (4), taste (4), mouth taste (3) and happiness (3). The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized according to the metaphor source relationship and it was determined that the category "Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings (28.6%)" was the category with the most metaphors.

**Table 4.** Distribution of Flavor-Related Metaphors of Economics Department Students According to Conceptual Categories

Categories		Metaphors	Number of Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	Flavor Associated with Family and Mother	Family (1), Mother's Food (4)	2	5	7,1
2	Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings	Savor (3), Amour (1), Feeling (1), Taste (4), Taste of the Mouth (1), Joy (2), Excitement (1), Mutual Love (1), Happiness (3), Love (1), Pleasure (2)	11	20	28,6
3	Flavor as an Element Related to Life	The Path Leading from a Man's Stomach (1), Colors of the Rainbow (1), Relative Thing (1), The Thing That Gives Direction to Life (1), One of the Colors of Life (1), My Own Meals (1), A Perfect Picture (1), The Past of a Man (1), A Priceless Diamond (1), Foods I Love (1), Foods I Cook (1), Lifestyle (1), Eating (1), Smoke Cigarette After Meal (1)	13	13	18,6
4	Flavor Associated with Hometown	Bomb Dessert (1), Cag Kebab (1), Eastern Cuisine (1), Meaty Bread (1), Hometown (1), Hometown Food (1), Tarhana (1)	7	7	10,0
5	Flavor as Quality	Dose and Time (1), Work (1), A Social Reality (1), Things We Consume (1)	4	4	5,7
6	Flavor with Positive Meaning	All That Is Beautiful (3), Good Tastes (1), Something Pleasant (2), Pleasant Taste (1), Pleasant Things (1), Must Have (1), Important Thing (1)	7	10	14,3
7	Flavor Associated with Online Games	My Favorite Game (Pub-G) (1)	1	1	1,4
8	Flavor Associated with Health	Healthy Food (1)	1	1	1,4
9	Food – Food Item as Flavor	Buryan Kebab (1), Cezerye (1), Ice Cream (1), Gozleme (1), Iskender (1), Cookies (1), Lahmacun (1), Tantuni (1), Dessert (1)	9	9	12,9
Total			56	71	100

Some of the direct statements of the participants regarding the metaphors produced under the relevant categories are as follows:

P130: Flavor is relative thing. Because it is different for each person.

P148: Flavor is like a hometown. Because the feelings it gives to a person are special.

P182: Flavor is like the colors of the rainbow. Because even if one of the 7 colors is missing, you cannot flavor it.

Table 5 shows the metaphors produced by the students of the automotive engineering department regarding the concept of flavor. The students produced 62 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. It was determined that the most repeated metaphors were all that is pleasant (3), love (2), taste of mouth (2), taste of life (2), engine (2) and lifestyle (2). The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized according to the metaphor source relationship and it was determined that the category of “Flavor as an Element Covering the Technology and Automotive Field (30.9%)” was the category with the most metaphors. In this direction, it was determined that the students of automotive engineering associated the concept of flavor with their departments.

**Table 5.** Distribution of Flavor-Related Metaphors of Automotive Engineering Students by Category

Categories		Metaphors	Number of Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	Flavor Associated with Family and Mother	Family Home (1), Mother (1)	2	2	2,9
2	Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings	Bitter-Sweet-Sour (1), Taste (2), Love (2), Savor (1), Emotion (1), Feeling of Pleasure (1), Feeling of Love (1), Happiness (1), Seasoning (1), Sweet (1), Pleasure (1)	11	13	19,1
3	Flavor Associated with Football and Online Games	Fenerbahce Match (1), Match Excitement (1), Online Games (1), Pub-G (1)	4	4	5,9
4	Flavor as an Element Related to Life	Failing a Course You Worked Hard For (1), Relative (1), Taste of Life (2), One of the Basic Elements of Life (1), Enjoying Life (1), Mathematics (1), Dream (1), Lifestyle (2), Way of Living (1), Sleeping After Meal (1), Eating (1)	10	12	17,6
5	Flavor with Positive Meaning	Harmony (1), Beautiful (1), Beauty (1), All That Is Beautiful (1), All That Is Pleasant (3)	5	7	10,3
6	Flavor as an Element Covering the Technology and Automotive Field	2000 cc and Above Car Engine (1), My 75 Model Classic Car (1), Highest Speed in a Car (1), Overspeed (1), Full Gasoline Car (1), Direct Current's Love for Alternating Current (1), Full Fuel Tank (1), Injector (1), Quality Gasoline (1), Dealing with Machines (1), Massage Seat Car (1), Modified Sahin (1), Engine (2), Number Ten Oil (1), Paste-Polish (1), Zero Km Car (1), Telephone (1), Giving Thermo II in One (1), Thermodynamics (1), Toyota Supra's Engine Sound (1)	20	21	30,9
7	Food – Food Item as Flavor	Fire and Water (1), Spice (1), Spicy Food (1), Iskender with Plenty of Yogurt (1), Seed-Coke (1), Ravioli (1), Shirdan (1), Clean Water (1), Aged Wine (1)	9	9	13,2
Total			62	69	100

Some of the direct statements of the participants regarding the metaphors produced under the category of “Flavor as an Element Covering the Technology and Automotive Field” are as follows:

P199: Flavor is like a modified falcon. Because it adds color to life.

P225: Flavor is like a family home. Because it makes you feel happy and peaceful.

P246: Flavor is like the highest speed in a car. Because that sound makes me happy.

P250: Flavor is like an engine. An engine is love, the heart of mechanics. And flavor is the heart of food.

Table 6 shows the metaphors produced by tourism management students regarding the concept of flavor. Students produced 44 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. It was determined that the most repeated metaphors were taste (6), mother's food (4) and chocolate (4). The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized according to the metaphor source relationship and it was determined that the category of "Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings (44.3%)" was the



category with the most metaphors. It was also determined that only tourism management students produced negative metaphors regarding the concept of flavor and that these metaphors were unimportant (1) and incompatible flavors (1).

Table 6. Distribution of Flavor-Related Metaphors of Tourism Management Students According to Categories

Categories		Metaphors	Number of Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	Flavor Associated with Family and Mother	Mother's Hand (1), Mother's Smell (1), Mother's Food (4)	3	6	9,8
2	Flavor as a Representation of Emotions and Feelings	Pain (1), A Child's Happiness (1), Pleasant to the Palate (1), Taste (6), Taste of the Palate (3), Satisfaction and Pleasure (1), Good Taste (1), Pleasant Taste (1), Joy (1), Pleasure (2), Peace (1), Enjoyment (1), Happiness (2), Happiness and Pleasure (1), Dimension of Happiness (1), Respect and Love (1), Rate of Enjoyment (1), Enjoyment (1)	18	27	44,3
3	Flavor Associated with Football	Besiktas's Championship (1), Fenerbahce (1)	2	2	3,3
4	Flavor Described as an Element Related to Life	Doing Your Favorite Thing (1), Watching Your Favorite Scenery (1), Sunset (1), Movie I Watch Again and Again (1), Jumping from High Cliffs into the Sea (1), Lifestyle (1), Eating (2)	7	8	13,1
5	Flavor as Quality	Perception (1), Search (1), Culture (2)	3	4	6,6
6	Flavor with Negative Meaning	Unimportant (1), Incompatible Tastes (1)	2	2	3,3
7	Flavor Associated with Health and Nature	Naturalness and Nature (1), Healthy Food (1)	2	2	3,3
8	Food – Food Item as Flavor	Spices and Harmony (1), Steak Tartar a la Turca (1), Chocolate (4), Meat (1), Meat Dish (1), Things I Enjoyed (1), Tomato Paste and Spices (1)	7	10	16,4
Total			44	61	100

Some of the direct statements of the participants regarding the metaphors produced under the relevant categories are as follows:

P268: Flavor is like a search. Because you can't say you found it, there is always something better.

P291: Flavor is like chocolate. Because it makes you happy and people find flavor in foods that can make them happy.

P321: Flavor is unimportant. Because it is more important for my stomach to be full.

P325: Flavor is like jumping from high cliffs into the sea. Because it gives pleasure and happiness.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this research, which evaluated the metaphorical perceptions of university students regarding the concept of flavor, 322 university students produced 229 different metaphors regarding the concept of flavor. When these metaphors were examined, it was determined that the most produced metaphors were taste (12), mother's food (8), love (7) and spice (7).

When the metaphors produced by the students of the gastronomy and culinary arts department regarding the concept of flavor were examined, it was determined that the students generally made different definitions from the concept definitions they learned in class. This shows that metaphors were produced for the definitions in the students' own minds rather than the lessons taught about the concept of flavor. As stated in the studies of Baysal and Yıldırım Saçılık (2021), although it is a concept related to the department in which the students are educated, it is evidence that the newly learned information does not immediately replace the old.

Among the metaphors produced by the students of the department of interior architecture and environmental design regarding the concept of flavor, lentil bukme stood out under the category of "Flavor Associated with Hometown". Lentil bukme, one of the flavors of Afyonkarahisar cuisine, was associated with flavor by the participants from Afyonkarahisar. The fact that interior architecture and environmental design students used local dishes such as "lentil bukme" as metaphors indicates that individuals' gastronomic identities are shaped by their cultural roots. Within the framework of Bourdieu's (1984) concept of "cultural capital," it can be argued that individuals' gastronomic preferences and perceptions are directly connected to the socio-cultural structures to which they belong. When the metaphors produced by the participants were categorized, it was determined that the category of "Food-Food Item as Flavor", which stood out, was the category with the most metaphors and that different dishes and foodstuffs (steak tartar a la turca, chocolate, meat dishes, hamburgers, Indian dishes, cumin, lamb, everything that fills the stomach, eggplant moussaka, vegetables, sushi, shirdan, dessert and olive oil) were associated with the concept of flavor.

It has been determined that the most repeated metaphors produced by the students of the economics department regarding the concept of flavor are mother's food, taste, mouthfeel and happiness.

It was determined that the most repeated metaphors produced by the students of the automotive engineering department regarding the concept of flavor were everything that is pleasant, love, taste of mouth, taste of life, engine and lifestyle. The metaphors produced by the participants were categorized according to the metaphor source relationship and it was determined that the category of "Flavor as an Element Covering the Technology and Automotive Field" was the category with the most metaphors. In this direction, it was determined that the students of automotive engineering associated the concept of flavor with various concepts related to their departments. Some of these metaphors are engine, paste-polish, full fuel tank and it was determined that the department that used the terminology related to the department they were studying in the most compared to other departments was the automotive engineering department. In addition to the automotive engineering department, it was revealed that the students of the interior architecture and environmental design department also used professional terminology while producing metaphors (building design, well-designed house, path to architecture).

The use of professional terminology such as "engine," "fuel," and "polish" by automotive engineering students to describe flavor reveals how deeply the technical language of their academic discipline is integrated into their cognitive world. This finding exemplifies how disciplinary socialization shapes an individual's conceptual framework (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Similarly, the use of concepts like "design" by interior architecture students supports the notion that metaphor production varies across disciplines.

It was determined that the most repeated metaphors produced by the students of the tourism management department regarding the concept of flavor were the metaphors of flavor, mother's food and chocolate. In the research, it was determined that only the tourism management students produced negative metaphors regarding the concept of flavor and that these metaphors were unimportant and incompatible flavor metaphors.

The limitation of the research is that it was conducted with 4th grade students of the specified departments at Afyon Kocatepe University. In other studies to be conducted on the subject, the research group can be expanded and more metaphors can be obtained at different grade levels, and with the increase in the number of samples, it will be possible to make comparative analyses with the demographic characteristics of the students. The evolution of students' metaphorical thinking over time can be observed. Comparative studies between student groups and professionals (e.g., chefs, food critics, educators) can reveal how practical experience influences the production of metaphors. The fact that there is no research in the literature on determining the perceptions of students regarding the concept of flavor using the metaphor method and that it fills the gap in this area increases the importance of this

research. It is thought that the findings obtained from this research will be an important data source for different studies.

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