

THE METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS STUDYING THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF “CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of undergraduate students in the Department of Child Development regarding the concept of civil service through the use of metaphors. To achieve this objective, participants were asked to generate metaphors that reflect their understanding of civil service. This qualitative study was conducted with students enrolled in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of the Child Development program at Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Faculty of Health Sciences, during the spring semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information including gender, age, year of study, place of residence, number of siblings, housing status (rent or own), living arrangement (with or without parents), total household income, and parents' educational and occupational backgrounds. In the second section, participants were asked to complete the sentence: “Civil service is like ___ because ___.” In the final part of the questionnaire, participants were asked the questions: “In which sector would you prefer to work?” and “Why?” Findings revealed that the majority of metaphors produced conveyed positive perceptions of civil service. This suggests that participants generally hold favorable views of civil service. The concept was associated with positive metaphors such as padlock, key, iron door, and sun—symbols representing security, stability, and value. It was also found that most students preferred employment in the public sector due to benefits such as stable income, social security, and retirement advantages.

Keywords: metaphoric perception, perception of public employment, public sector, private sector.