

## **Eliciting the Insights of Academics and Postgraduates on Academic Ethics and Plagiarism: A Study of Metaphor**

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### **Abstract**

Academic ethics and plagiarism research are typically handled separately, with these concepts examined from either the perspective of academics or students. In order to better understand these two interconnected phenomena, this study examined them through the eyes of both academics and postgraduate students, who are often referred to as the academy's unbreakable pair. The study's findings, obtained through interviews of participants' metaphorical perceptions of these phenomena, show that the themes shared by both academics and postgraduate students with regard to the concept of "Academic ethics" were "Principled", "Guiding", "Laborious", "Solid foundation", "Distinguishing between right and wrong", and "Precious", and the common themes created from metaphors generated by both groups for the concept of "Plagiarism" were "Pelf", "A dead-end", "Disclosure", and "Cribbing". Findings also demonstrate that postgraduates have a theoretical background in academic ethics but have a limited understanding of plagiarism. Academics demonstrate a more comprehensive understanding of academic ethics as well as plagiarism than students.

**Keywords:** Academic ethics, plagiarism, postgraduate, academic

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## Introduction

The term “ethic” is a rational initiative made up of strong, applicable principles that have passed through centuries of long time through ethical reasoning which is based on reliable facts, generally accepted, and shared experiences and instincts (Büken & Büken, 2002). Kuçuradi (2007) gives point to the three main meanings of the term “ethics”; Firstly, ethics is expressed as a branch of philosophy expected to reveal verifiable-falsifiable information about the phenomenon of ethics, which is a human phenomenon. The word ‘ethics’ is sometimes used in the sense of morality, namely used to mean systems of evaluation and behavioral norms that are anticipated to guide individuals’ judgments and doings in their interactions with one another in a specific group at a specific time. In other contexts, the word ‘ethics’ is used to mean a set of norms created by a group of people for specific purposes. Ethical codes are chosen from the norms agreed upon by consensus and are intended to be universally valid. This meaning of ‘ethics’ is the most common today, as evidenced by the discussion of professional ethics and universal ethics. Scipanov and Nistor (2020) state that research ethics or academic ethics is a subcategory of professional ethics that applies to fact-finding, analyses, observations, predictions, proposals, and conclusions made by researchers, academics, and postgraduate students. While ethics is defined in specialized papers as a subject that “studies the theoretical and practical issues of morality” in the field of research ethics refers to a set of norms and values that control the research activity and the author’s mindset toward it. We will concentrate our efforts on this perspective of ethics, ethics as in scientific applications for educational purposes in particular.

In academia, codes of ethics are in place to ensure that these principles are incorporated into the habits of academics to accomplish the objectives of the higher education institutions (Saat et al., 2004). Different ethical references related to higher education can be mentioned as 1) the freedom of science, particularly freedom from political and economic effects; 2) the scholarly role of producing, addressing, and publicizing factual information; and 3) the connection between technology and society, which must be debated and altered, particularly in light of recent societal developments (Elven, 2021). These ethical references can be associated with duty, judgment, and moral conduct from the academic standpoint. To McEvan (1979), academics have a series of duties and responsibilities where ethics are involved, such as the objective and fair assignment of grades; complete outline of course and assignments; comprehensive and candid recommendations for assessing students or candidate faculty members, and high standard publications. The academics as non-biased observers are also expected to judge contemporary developments objectively in a broad context, to be critical, and to be heard. And the last of the ethical issues for the author is moral conduct. Academics must avoid unprofessional conduct in every area of their profession. The Institute of Higher Education Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK, 2012), in Turkey declared the patterns of unprofessional conduct from an ethical standpoint as:

- a) Unfair authorship: Including people who do not have an active contribution among the authors, modifying the order of authors unjustly and improperly, extracting the identities of those who made a contribution effectively from the work in later updates, using his impact to include his name among the authors despite the fact that he does not have meaningful contributions,
- b) Fabrication: Producing, reporting, or publishing data not found in the study,
- c) Falsification: Changing or modifying research materials, equipment, processes, or results in such a way that they generate different outcomes,
- d) Duplication: Submitting the same research findings to more than one journal for publication,
- e) Least Publishable Units: Producing a large number of publications by dividing research results in a way that breaches the integrity of the study,
- f) Plagiarism: Presenting others' original ideas, methods, data, or works as one's own, in whole or in part, without referencing under scientific rules.

Among the unethical conduct seen in academia, plagiarism has an important place especially in recent years the cases of plagiarism are growing bigger (Özenç Uçak, 2012). Plagiarism is commonly defined as “the appropriation of the words and ideas of others” (Bouville, 2008). It is indeed a sort of “literary theft, stealing (by copying) the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as one's own without crediting the source” (Park, 2003). Whether unintentional or intentional, plagiarism types vary submitting another's work as their own; borrowing the majority of manuscript from a specific source without making any modifications and adapting phrases or keywords while retaining a significant portion of the original source content; rewording different sources that complement each other; blending properly cited sources with non-cited sources: combining copied material from multiple sources, using quoting non-existent /incorrect sources; citing sources properly but including nearly no of their very own work; including proper citation, but with far too much text from the original (Luksanapruksa & Millhouse, 2016; Roka, 2017). Plagiarism, which was noticed to take place of any kind academic levels, undergraduate and postgraduate, is by far the most serious type of academic misconduct that is not restricted to a specific discipline, year, or learning context (Husain et al., 2017).

Higher education institutions and academics are responsible for more than just training professionals, doing research, and serving society. Training “scientists” who will be able to do scientific work in a specific field of science and who will be future faculty members with “master's” and “doctorate” degrees is another duty of academia. Achieving ethical practice with postgraduate research students is a multifaceted and complex process that necessitates clear guidance and exemplary role modeling (Erdem, 2012; Fielden, 2004; Özenç Uçak, 2012).

Research show that academics have influence on moral standards and ethical conduct of students (Birel, 2019; Hanna et al., 2013; Little,1989; Perry & Nixon, 2005). Academics' reliability should indeed optimize in order to reach the aims of producing high-quality degree holders. Academics should have and promote the awareness of ethical behavior when teaching, interacting with students and especially training scientists (Saat et al., 2004). However, several academics and postgraduates are under stress to plan, perform, and publish scientific work, which may result in various forms of academic dishonesty (East,2010). In the literature, a limited number of research have focused on both postgraduates' and academics' understandings and awareness of both ethics and plagiarism. A study by Akpabio and Esikot (2014) shows that personal ethical understanding and concern in a research context are inadequate by many faculty members and postgraduate students. Gilmore et al. (2010) underline the breaches of academic ethics as a prevalent issue among postgraduate students because they have a lack of understanding of the importance of primary literature in the research process, and they call for initiatives to enhance the growth of graduate students' research skills and orientations, with codes of ethics being a common topic. Du (2020) discovered that so many Chinese postgraduates have a poor understanding of plagiarism since most tertiary education in China lacks or provides insufficient instruction on proper source referencing. There are studies in the literature about the breaches of academic ethics especially performed by postgraduates by means of plagiarism. Postgraduates, according to Selemani et al. (2018), have a theoretical understanding of what constitutes plagiarism in terms of concept and types. In accordance with the study, all students regard plagiarism as a real academic offense. Nonetheless, the study discovered that students accepted intentionally or unintentionally committing plagiarism, and that students plagiarised despite knowing that plagiarism is a significant academic offense. Curtis and Tremayne (2021) reported the results of a survey on the students' understanding of, and attitudes toward, plagiarism, emphasizing the importance of continuing attempts to detect and avoid plagiarism, as well as teach pupils regarding academic ethics.

According to research, dishonesty and academic ethics breaches are not limited to students. According to Aziz and Silfiani (2020), many academics sacrifice academic tradition and academic integrity for personal gain. Their research shows that despite academics' awareness of their actions, they continuously took part in unethical conduct because they believed that the consequences for violators were minor. Despite their claims of being not busy or lazy, their acts proved the opposite. Bettaieb et al. (2020) discovered a general tendency among academics to have negative attitudes toward plagiarism because of a lack of knowledge about plagiarism and not regarding it as an unethical issue and violation of community norms. Vassileva and Chankova (2019) reported that, although there would seem to be agreement between many Bulgarian

academics on the various aspects that comprise the concept of plagiarism, revealed attitudes toward plagiarism activities differ considerably, representing a non-uniform conception of what qualifies as an offense.

Apart from the international literature on ethics and plagiarism, the legal and ethical concerns about plagiarism are recognized in the Turkish context, still, there are few studies undertaken. In the Turkish context, studies are addressing the factors underlying the cause of plagiarism performed by graduate students and the suggestions to prevent plagiarism (Ersoy, 2014; Özenç Uçak, 2012; Özenç Uçak & Ünal, 2015; Topçu & Gürer, 2019; Uzun et al., 2007), there are few conducted research, particularly on the opinions and perceptions of the academic staff regarding the plagiarisms and the scientific ethical codes (Odabaş, 2015; Tekin, 2014; Yıldırım, 2018). The postgraduate level studies found in the Turkish context were about postgraduate students' perspectives on scientific ethics (Aslan, 2010; Ezer & Aksüt, 2021; Özden & Ergin 2013). While there is growing interest in the literature regarding ethics and plagiarism, there is no evidence of research that compares perceptions of these phenomena from both the academic and student perspectives. Both academics' and students' understanding and conceptualization of plagiarism have been less studied and theorized. Accordingly, this study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature. We thought that using academic staff and postgraduate students' metaphors might give insight into their perceptions about ethics and plagiarism as stated by Cassel and Vincent (2011) metaphors can elicit powerful imagery that aids in the interpretation and communication of one's thoughts. Furthermore, creating metaphors allows for the capture of the core of beliefs of people.

Analyzing these metaphors can allow academic staff and postgraduate students to reflect on and critically examine their beliefs. Thus, the goal of this paper is to investigate and compare the perceptions of academics and postgraduates on academic ethics and plagiarism to discover if there exists a difference in viewpoints. Investigating gaps that may exist can assist in determining where the focus is needed in enhancing ethical practices and prevent plagiarism.

The research attempts to find answers to the following:

1. What are the metaphors that Turkish academics and postgraduates construct about the phenomenon of "academic ethics" and under what conceptual categories are these metaphors collected in terms of common features?
2. What are the metaphors that Turkish academics and postgraduates construct about the phenomenon of "plagiarism" and under what conceptual categories are these metaphors collected in terms of common features?

## Methodology

The current research took a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological approach is appropriate for investigating perceptions, orientations, and concepts, as well as phenomena that cannot be fully comprehended (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The primary goal of phenomenological studies is to extract the essence of the experiences of individuals who have different perspectives on the phenomenon under consideration (Creswell, 2017). As a result, it seeks to comprehend how individuals make sense of their experiences with facts and events, as well as how they share these meanings with others (Merriam, 2013; Patton, 2002). The perspectives of postgraduate students and academics on “academic ethics” and “plagiarism” were examined in depth in this study.

## Participants

Individuals who have firsthand experience of the phenomenon under study and who are able to accurately reflect it serve as data sources in phenomenological studies (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). As a result, postgraduate students and academics make up the research’s participants. 75 postgraduate students and 42 academics, all of whom volunteered their time to participate in the study, were involved. However, the examination revealed that 19 forms had been inadvertently or incorrectly completed, and these forms were disregarded from the evaluation. In this regard, 98 people from a university in Turkey took part in the study; 59 of them were postgraduate students and 39 were academics in the 2021–2022 academic year. Female postgraduates made up the majority of those surveyed, and the majority of them were enrolled in educational sciences-related study programs. The majority of students were at the course period of a master’s with thesis degree. More than half of academics were female and working at the faculty of education. The half of the entire population of academics were working as an assistant professor and about half of the academics had been in their profession for more than 15 years. (see table 1 for a description of the participants).

Table 1

*Personal Information of Postgraduate Students and Academics*

	$\Sigma f$	Variables	<b>f</b>	
		Gender	Female	39
			Male	20
Postgraduates	59	Institute	Institute of Educational Sciences	39
			Institute of Social Sciences	10
			Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences	6
			Institute of Health Sciences	4

	Type of Postgraduate Degree	Master's with Thesis	43	
		Non-Thesis Master's	10	
		Doctorate	6	
	Postgraduate Education Stage	Course Period	36	
		Thesis Stage	23	
	Gender	Female	22	
		Male	17	
	Faculty	Faculty of Education	22	
		Faculty of Literature	4	
		Faculty of Theology	3	
		Faculty of Engineering	2	
		Faculty of Science	2	
		Faculty of Sports Sciences	2	
		Faculty of Architecture - Fine Arts and Design	1	
		Faculty of Pharmacy	1	
		Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	1	
		Faculty of Health Sciences	1	
Academics	39	Assistant Professor	19	
		Associate Professor	10	
		Prof. Dr.	5	
		Instructor	3	
		Research Assistant	2	
		Experience in years	1-5 years	5
			6-10 years	8
			11-15 years	7
			16-20 years	9
			21-25 years	4
		26 years and above	6	
Total	98			

### Data Collection

Data on the concept of academic ethics and plagiarism that postgraduates and academics have created in their minds was gathered from them using a brief questionnaire. Participants received online interview forms with questions about their personal information and blanks for similes and justifications, such as “Academic ethics is like.....because.....” and “Plagiarism is like.....because.....”, which they were asked to fill out. With two postgraduate students and one academic, the pilot study was conducted first. Around four weeks in January 2022 were spent on the data collection process.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, we employed content analysis, a methodical analysis technique in which the words in the text are categorized into smaller groups and coded in accordance with predetermined guidelines (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). Four stages of analysis were performed on the data: data coding, theme discovery, theme arrangement, and definition and interpretation of the results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

The forms submitted by students and academics were thoroughly examined first. One by one, metaphors were coded, and 19 incomplete forms were removed from consideration for the study. This led to the discovery of 98 true metaphors. The metaphors used by the participants were arranged alphabetically to create a temporary list, which was then grouped. Finally, the themes were identified by taking into account the metaphors' motivations.

In qualitative research, it is crucial to give a thorough account of the information gathered and to explain how the conclusions were reached. As a result, it was explained in great detail how the metaphor-related themes were arrived at as well as the motivations behind the metaphors, especially in the current study's findings section. Additionally, the sample metaphors that best convey the themes derived from the metaphors were presented to the reader in the findings section without any alterations or additions. Three researchers reviewed metaphors at different times in the study; each researcher then developed metaphor-related themes, which were then discussed by the researchers to give the themes their final form. As a result, researchers had the opportunity to rethink the data and contribute to the emergence of stronger ideas (Creswell, 2017; Lichtman, 2006). To conceal the participants' personal information, the researchers coded it as (A3-F) ("A3" Academic-3, "F" = Female), (PG5-M) ("PG" Postgraduate-5, "M" = Male). In order to ensure the validity of the research, the researchers also transferred the interview forms and records into a computer environment and kept the codes and categories that emerged for interested parties to review.

### **Findings**

This title includes metaphors created by postgraduate students and academics about the concepts of "academic ethics" and "plagiarism", as well as findings related to the themes formed from these metaphors. Furthermore, examples from participants are presented, which are the source of the formation of themes in the findings.



### 1. Findings on Postgraduate Students' and Academics' Metaphoric Perceptions of "Academic Ethics"

Figure 1 depicts the metaphors developed by postgraduate students and academics for the concept of "academic ethics", as well as the findings related to the themes formed from these metaphors.

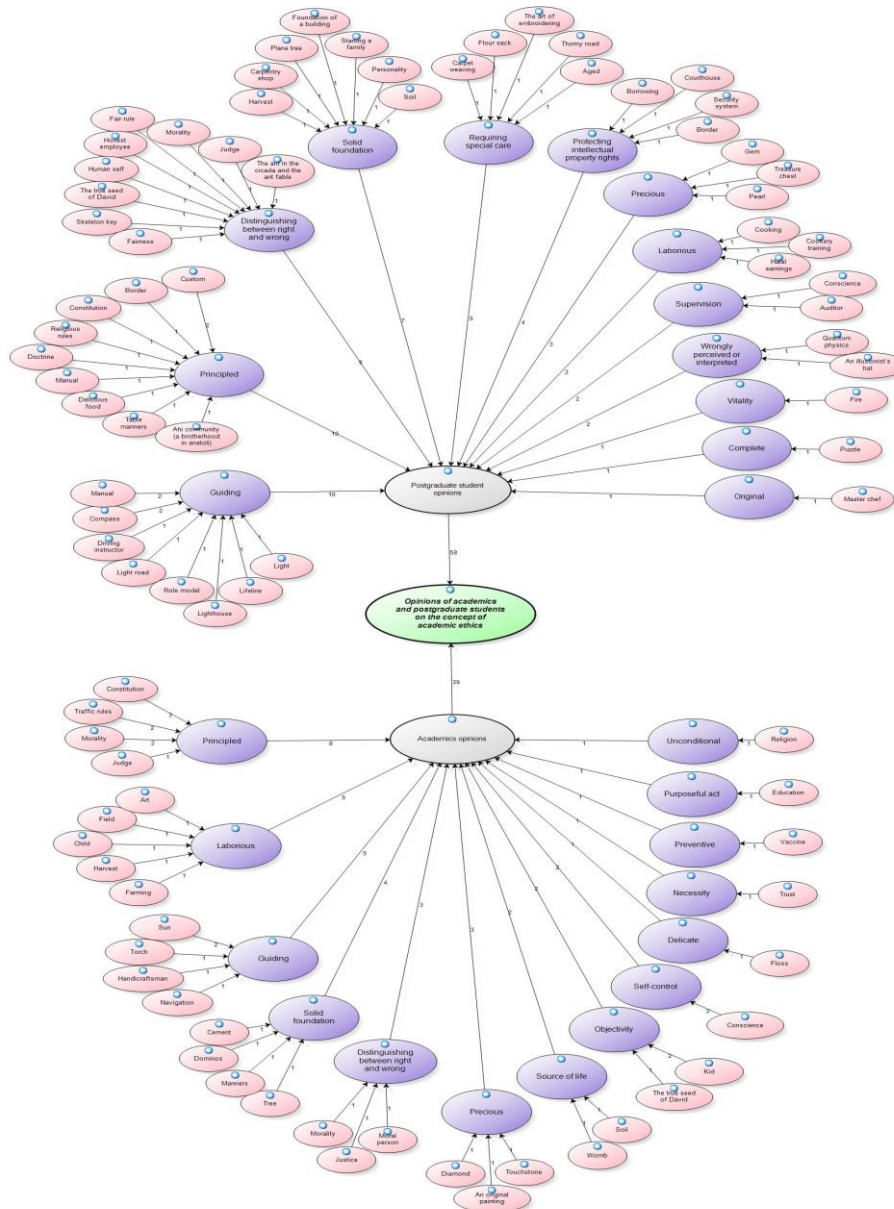


Figure-1: Metaphorical Perceptions of Postgraduate Students and Academics on the Concept of "Academic Ethics"

Figure 1 shows that 59 postgraduate students developed 52 different metaphors for the concept of “academic ethics” while 39 academics developed 32 different metaphors. Metaphors created by postgraduate students formed the following 13 themes for the concept of “Academic ethics”: “Guiding” (f: 10), “Principled” (f: 10), “Distinguishing between right and wrong” (f: 9), “Solid foundation” (f: 7), “Requiring special care” (f: 5), “Protecting intellectual property rights” (f: 4), “Precious” (f: 3), “Laborious”(f: 3), “Supervision” (f: 2), “Wrongly perceived or interpreted” (f: 2), “Vitality” (f: 1), “Complete” (f: 1), and “Original” (f: 1).

The analysis revealed that “Guiding”, “Principled”, and “Distinguishing between right and wrong” were the three themes for which the postgraduate students produced the most metaphors. Eight different metaphors (*manual, compass, driving instructor, light road, role model, lighthouse, lifeline, light*) by 10 students under the “Guiding” theme, and nine different metaphors [*custom, border, constitution, religious rules, doctrine, manual, delicious food, table manners, ahi community (a brotherhood in Anatoli)*] by 10 students under the “Principled” theme, nine different metaphors (*fairness, skeleton key, the true seed of David, human self, honest employee, fair rule, morality, judge, the ant in the cicada and the ant fable*) by nine different students under the theme of “Distinguishing between right and wrong” were constructed. Then, under the theme of “Solid foundation” seven different metaphors (*harvest, carpentry shop, plane tree, foundation of a building, starting a family, personality, soil*) were produced by seven students, and five different metaphors (*carpet weaving, flour sack, the art of embroidering, thorny road, aged*) were produced by five students under the theme of “Requiring special care”. In the follow up, four different metaphors (*borrowing, courthouse, security system, border*) by four students under the theme of “Protecting intellectual property rights”, three different metaphors (*gem, treasure chest, pearl*) by three students under the theme of “Precious”, three metaphors (*cooking, cookery training, halal earnings*) by three students under the theme of “Laborious”, two different metaphors (*conscience, auditor*) by two students under the theme of “Supervision”, two different metaphors (*quantum physics, an illusionist’s hat*) by two students under the theme of “Wrongly perceived or interpreted”, one metaphor (*fire*) by one student under the theme of “Vitality”, one metaphor (*puzzle*) by one student under the theme of “Complete”, and one metaphor (*master chef*) under the theme of “Original” were developed.

As illustrated in Figure 1, academics’ metaphors for the concept of “Academic Ethics” are organized into 14 themes: “Principled” (f: 8), “Laborious” (f: 5), “Guiding” (f: 5), “Solid foundation” (f: 4), “Distinguishing between right and wrong” (f: 3), “Precious” (f: 3), “Source of life” (f: 2), “Objectivity” (f: 2), “Self-control” (f: 2), “Delicate” (f: 1), “Necessity” (f: 1), “Preventive” (f: 1), “Purposeful act” (f: 1), and “Unconditional” (f: 1).

The themes for which academics produce the most metaphors are, respectively, “Principled”, “Laborious”, and “Guiding”. Eight academics produced four different metaphors (*constitution, traffic rules, morality, judge*) under the theme of “Principled”, and five academics produced five different metaphors (*art, field, child, harvest, farming*) under the theme of “Laborious”. Additionally, five academics produced four different metaphors (*sun, torch, handicraftsman, navigation*) under the theme of “Guiding”.

Then, four different metaphors (*cement, dominos, manners, tree*) were generated by four academics under the theme of “Solid foundation”, three different metaphors (*morality, justice, moral person*) were generated by three academics under the theme of “Distinguishing between right and wrong”, and three different metaphors (*diamond, an original painting, touchstone*) were generated by three academics under the theme of “Precious”. The other themes for which the academics generated metaphors are “Source of life” with two different metaphors (*wolb, soil*) by two academics, the theme of “Objectivity” with two metaphors (*the true seed of David, kid*) by two academics, the theme of “Self-control” with one metaphor (*conscience*) by two academics, the theme “Delicate” with one metaphor (*floss*), the theme “Necessity” with one metaphor (*trust*), “Preventive” with one metaphor (*vaccine*), “Purposeful act” with one metaphor (*education*), and “Unconditional” with one metaphor (*religion*).

When the themes developed from metaphors created by postgraduate students and academics regarding the concept of “academic ethics” are compared; both academics and postgraduate students used metaphors that constructed the themes of “Principled”, “Guiding”, “Laborious”, “Solid foundation”, “Distinguishing between right and wrong”, and “Precious”. The metaphors that created “Requiring special care”, “Protecting intellectual property rights”, “Supervision”, “Wrongly perceived or interpreted”, “Vitality”, “Complete”, and “Original” themes, on the other hand, are only articulated by postgraduate students. The themes of “Source of life”, “Objectivity”, “Self-control”, “Delicate”, “Necessity”, “Preventive”, “Purposeful act”, and “Unconditional” were all made up of metaphors created by academics.

Sample expressions from academics’ and postgraduate students’ responses, which served as the foundation for the development of themes related to the concept of “academic ethics” are provided below.

Statements taken from postgraduate students’ responses:

*“Academic ethics is like a guide, because we must follow it and fulfill its requirements. Besides being necessary, it is guiding and protecting the rights of all parties.” (PG69-F)*

*“Academic ethics is like doctrine because both have rules. If it is acted appropriately, the person in that field will be good, if not followed, each field has its own punishment system.”* (PG50-F)

*“Academic ethics is like the true seed of David because he chases after the smallest detail and never compromises his integrity.”* (PG62-M)

Statements taken from academics’ responses:

*“Academic ethics is similar to morality, because morality determines the rules of the social order, and ethics determines the rules of the academic order.”* (A12-F)

*“Academic ethics is like an art that is easy in language but very difficult in practice.”* (A9-F)

*“Academic ethics is like a torch. Because the torch allows us to see the road on a night journey. If you don’t have a torch, you will be lost in the dark on your journey to academia. It is the same in academic ethics, it guides the academic.”* (A17-M)

## **2. Findings on Postgraduate Students’ and Academics’ Metaphorical Perceptions of “Plagiarism”**

The metaphors for the concept of “plagiarism” created by academics and postgraduate students are shown in Figure 2, along with findings pertaining to the themes created by these metaphors.

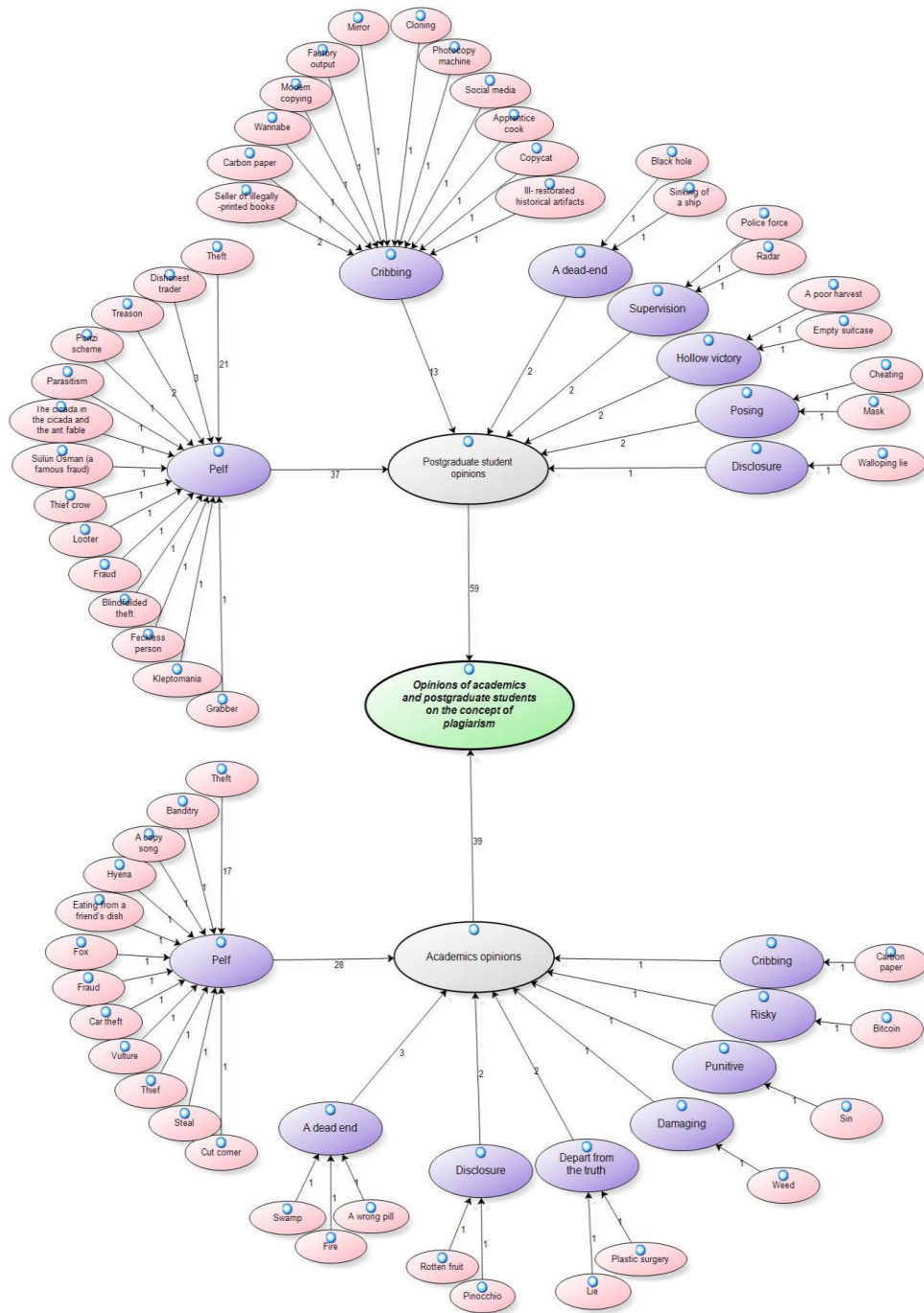


Figure 2. Metaphorical Perceptions of Postgraduate Students and Academics on the Concept of “Plagiarism”

Figure 2 demonstrates that 39 academics created 23 different metaphors for the concept of “plagiarism”, compared to 59 postgraduate students who created 35. In Figure 2, the metaphors used by postgraduate students to describe the concept of “plagiarism” are categorized into seven themes: “Pelf” (f: 37), “Cribbing” (f: 13), “A dead-end” (f: 2), “Supervision” (f: 2), “Hollow victory” (f: 2), “Posing” (f: 2), and “Disclosure” (f: 1).

A detailed analysis revealed that “Pelf” and “Cribbing” were the two most prevalent themes drawn from the metaphors used by postgraduate students. Under the theme of “Pelf” 37 postgraduate students created 14 different metaphors [*theft, dishonest trader, treason, ponzi scheme, parasitism, the cicada in the cicada and the ant fable, Süliin Osman (a famous fraud), thief crow, looter, fraud, blindfolded theft, feckless person, kleptomania, grabber*], and 13 postgraduate students created 12 metaphors (*seller of illegally printed books, carbon paper, wannabe, modern copying, factory output, mirror, cloning, photocopy machine, social media, apprentice cook, copycat, ill-restored historical artifacts*) under the theme of “Cribbing”. Afterward, under the theme “A dead-end” two postgraduate students created two different metaphors (*black hole, sinking of a ship*), under the “Supervision” theme two postgraduate students created two different metaphors (*police force, radar*), and under the theme “Hollow victory” two postgraduate students produced two different metaphors (*a poor harvest, empty suitcase*), two postgraduate students developed two different metaphors (*cheating, mask*) under the “Posing” theme, and one postgraduate student developed one metaphor (*walloping lie*) under the “Disclosure” theme.

The metaphors used by academics to describe plagiarism are categorized into eight themes in Figure 2: “Pelf” (f: 28), “A dead-end” (f: 3), “Disclosure” (f: 2), “Depart from the truth” (f: 2), “Damaging” (f: 1), “Punitive” (f: 1), “Risky” (f: 1), and “Cribbing” (f: 1).

According to the analysis, “Pelf” was the theme for which academics produced the most metaphors, with 28 academics contributing 12 different metaphors to it (*theft, banditry, a copy song, hyena, eating from a friend’s dish, fox, fraud, car theft, vulture, thief, steal, cut corner*). Then, under the theme of “A dead-end” three academics developed three different metaphors (*swamp, fire, a wrong pill*), two academics developed two metaphors (*rotten fruit, Pinocchio*) under the theme of “Disclosure”, two academics developed two metaphors (*lie, plastic surgery*) under the theme of “Depart from the truth” and one metaphor (*weed*) under the theme of “Damaging”, one metaphor (*sin*) under the theme of “Punitive”, one metaphor (*bitcoin*) under the theme of “Risky”, and lastly one metaphor (*carbon paper*) under the theme of “Cribbing” were generated by the academics.

When the themes created from the metaphors developed by postgraduate students and academics are compared to the concept of “plagiarism”; the themes of “Pelf”, “A dead-end”, “Disclosure”, and “Cribbing” consisted of the metaphors produced by both academics and postgraduate students; “Supervision”, “Hollow victory”, and “Posing” themes contain metaphors produced solely by postgraduate students; the themes of “Depart from the truth”, “Damaging”, “Punitive”, and “Risk” consist of metaphors developed only by academics.

The following are examples of responses from academics and postgraduate students that served as the foundation for the development of themes related to the concept of “plagiarism”.

Statements taken from academics’ responses:

*“Plagiarism is like a hyena, because it lands on the ready prey.” (A20-F)*

*“Plagiarism is like a wrong pill because when you think you have a cure for your problem, it will drag you to death.” (A10-M)*

*“Plagiarism is like rotten fruit because sooner or later it will stink.” (A2-M)*

Statements taken from postgraduate students’ responses:

*“Plagiarism is similar to theft because thieves steal and take possession of things that are not theirs.” (PG13-M)*

*“Plagiarism is like carbon paper, because you put whatever you want to copy in front of you and you can copy it without thought or effort. But you wouldn’t be introducing anything new.” (PG3-F)*

*“Plagiarism is like a black hole because, while attempting to exist through plagiarism, a person actually disappears by being buried in the universe’s most dangerous element.” (PG36-F)*

## **Discussion**

From the planning stage of a scientific research to the execution and publication stages, the researcher must abide by certain ethical principles. Academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, is a problem that has been studied, debated, and talked about for years. Recent studies on academic ethics and plagiarism in Turkey have used faculty and student self-evaluations (Aslan, 2010; Özden & Ergin, 2013; Sezgin et al., 2011). Finding out how people think about academic ethics and plagiarism, however, may be a crucial step before the ethics expertise of academics and postgraduate students is questioned. This will allow for more thorough research to be done on the topic. In order to ascertain postgraduate

students' and academics' perspectives on the ideas of academic integrity and plagiarism through metaphors, the following results were attained:

To begin, when metaphors related to the concept of academic ethics are examined, postgraduate students developed 52 different metaphors, whereas academics developed 32 different metaphors. "Guiding", "Principled", "Distinguishing between right and wrong", "Solid foundation", "Requiring special care", "Protecting intellectual property rights", "Precious", "Laborious", "Supervision", "Wrongly perceived or interpreted", "Vitality", "Complete", and "Original" were the 13 themes formed by postgraduate students for the concept of "academic ethics". The themes for which postgraduate students produced the most metaphors were "Guiding", "Principled", and "Distinguishing between right and wrong". In a previous study by Keskin et al. (2019), students created metaphors such as basic element, building block, indispensable etc for the concept of ethics under the theme of the source of life which is similar to the solid foundation theme in this very research. The themes "Principled" and "Guiding" in this study, meanwhile, are comparable to the theme "provider of social order" in the same study, using metaphors like "problem solver", "organizer", "limiter", and "guide" to refer to the concept of ethics. Akkaya (2020), who defined scientific ethics as the scientist's self-restraint and avoidance of unethical behavior by self-control, supported the theme of "Supervision" in this research. The "Principled" theme of the research is supported by laws and regulations, according to Akkaya (2020), who also claimed that academic ethics are established by various institutions, organizations, and pertinent parties. Other studies (Büken, 2006; Ezer & Aksüt, 2021) that are relevant to the theme of "Supervision" describe ethics as guidelines to adhere to and a method by which academics can directly regulate themselves.

The metaphors used by academics to describe the concept of "academic ethics" are organized into 14 themes: "Principled", "Laborious", "Guiding", "Solid foundation", "Distinguishing between right and wrong", "Precious", "Source of life", "Objectivity", "Self-control", "Delicate", "Necessity", "Preventive", "Purposeful act", and "Unconditional". "Principled", "Laborious", and "Guiding", in that order, are the themes for which academics produce the most metaphors. In the research of Okan (2021), academic ethics was defined as the rules to be followed that are written in the official documents or transferred culturally by the academic community, which is an opinion supporting the "Principled" theme that emerged in this study on academic ethics. However, it was noted in the study performed by Odabaş and Özmen (2015) that there was not a set standard for academic ethics and that academics were not well-informed about ethical standards.



It is possible to draw the conclusion that both academics and postgraduate students used metaphors to construct the themes of “Principled”, “Guiding”, “Laborious”, “Solid foundation”, “Distinguishing between right and wrong”, and “Precious” regarding the concept of “Academic ethics”. Postgraduate students created more diverse metaphors on ethics than academics, which could be attributed to students’ active writing process for their assignments and so on. Both academics and students created metaphors that directly addressed the moral conduct dimension of ethics while ignoring other aspects related to grades, assignments, and so forth. Both parties may have focused on this ethical reference as a result of recent issues resulting from plagiarism similarity check software.

The metaphors developed by academics and postgraduate students to describe the concept of “plagiarism” and the themes derived from these metaphors are another finding from the study. Examining the metaphors created for the concept of “plagiarism”, 59 postgraduate students came up with 35 different metaphors, while 39 academics came up with 23 different metaphors. The metaphors for the concept of “plagiarism” used by postgraduate students are organized into seven themes: “Pelf”, “Cribbing”, “A dead-end”, “Supervision”, “Hollow victory”, “Posing”, and “Disclosure”. The dominant metaphoric themes were “Pelf” and “Cribbing”, respectively. Some of the teacher candidates who took part in Bayram and Tıkman’s (2022) research defined plagiarism as “theft”, which is in line with the “Pelf” theme. Similar to this, Abalı Öztürk et al. (2018) looked into how teacher candidates perceived plagiarism metaphorically and discovered that “theft” and “copying” were the most frequently used terms. The themes of “labor exploitation” and “self-deception” from the same study also apply to the findings of the present study. According to Merkel’s study from 2021, teachers-to-be most frequently used the metaphor “steal” to describe the concept of plagiarism. Students implied ownership and thus improper use of other people’s works with this analogy. Prospective teachers who took part in Merkel’s (2021) research described plagiarism as “cheating” and claimed that people use plagiarism as a short cut to success because of a lack of effort, poor time management, or other reasons, which is consistent with the “Posing” theme developed in the current research. Additionally, in the study conducted by Nimasari et al. (2019), graduate students perceived plagiarism as “academic dishonesty”, which is consistent with the “Pelf” theme that emerged in this research.

The metaphors used by academics to describe plagiarism are categorized into eight themes: “Pelf”, “A dead-end”, “Disclosure”, “Depart from the truth”, “Damaging”, “Punitive”, “Risky”, and “Cribbing”. The theme for which academics produced the most metaphors were “Pelf”, according to a thorough examination. In line with this discovery, academics believe that plagiarism is “stealing” and “cribbing”, and that it refers to copying according to a study by Vassileva & Chankova (2019), which collected opinions on the subject from academics. Similarly, in the research by Leight (1999) and Robillard

(2009), plagiarism was referred to as “stealing” because it involved taking another person’s property without their permission. Additionally, Magubane (2018) referred to plagiarism as “academic fraud” because it occurs when unapproved and unethical methods are used in academic work, which is similar to the “Pelf” definition of plagiarism by students and academics.

When the metaphors developed by postgraduate students and academics are compared to the concept of “plagiarism”, the themes of “Pelf”, “A dead-end”, “Disclosure”, and “Cribbing” were created from metaphors generated by both academics and postgraduate students.

The metaphors that post students developed for academic ethics demonstrate how similarly they approach the idea of ethics. The results of the current study show that students have a theoretical background in ethics, and as Thomas and Zyl (2012) also noted, students understand the fundamental principles of academic ethics. Nevertheless, these results need to be further examined. In fact, despite believing themselves to be competent in scientific ethics, students in some studies (Aslan, 2010; Özden & Ergin, 2013) investigating the perspectives of postgraduate students on scientific ethics stated that they needed to improve. Previous research has revealed that undergraduate and graduate students do not fully understand what plagiarism really is (Doan, 2012; Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Sarlauskienė & Stabingis, 2014; Selemani et al., 2018). The majority of university students, according to Gul et al. (2018), have a limited understanding of research ethics and inadequate knowledge of ethical practices. They also need a little more guidance on how to evaluate the ethical implications of social science research.

According to research by Ünal and Özenç Uçak (2017), university students in Turkey learn about plagiarism at a later age than their counterparts abroad. As stated in the study, college students in North Carolina are aware of plagiarism earlier than Turkish undergraduates, even at the primary and secondary school levels. Students’ use of metaphors to describe plagiarism in this study demonstrated how little they actually understood the concept—mostly in terms of the concept itself. These results, however, do not allow us to fully comprehend the limitations of student plagiarism. Research that investigates students’ perspectives on academic ethics and what plagiarism is, or that reveals students’ plagiarism practices on their works, is required to address this.

The study also attempted to use metaphors to interpret academicians’ views on academic ethics and the concept of plagiarism. The academics involved in the study concisely summed up the idea of academic ethics by stating that scientific ethics is a set of guidelines that must be followed, that these guidelines serve to direct the researcher, and that it requires effort to adhere to these guidelines while conducting research. These opinions demonstrate the thorough understanding of academic ethics among academics.

Studies have shown that academics are generally aware of ethical issues (Odabaş & Özmen, 2015; Özcan & Balcı, 2016). When it comes to plagiarism, it is evident that academics produce metaphors that are more varied than students' metaphors, as well as more themes overall. This suggests that, compared to students, academics have a more comprehensive understanding of plagiarism. This conclusion is supported by the fact that faculty members have different perceptions about how serious plagiarism is, even though students and faculty members in Wilkonson's (2009) study generally have similar perceptions about cheating and plagiarism. Similarly, Shahbaz's (2018) study discovered that faculty members and university students had different perspectives on academic plagiarism because students lacked true awareness of the unethical and uncivil behavior associated with cheating and plagiarism.

These overall findings show that students place the most emphasis on guidance and moral aspect of ethics, while academics also emphasize the demanding nature of ethics with their metaphors. This could be evidence that academics strive to uphold ethical standards and are more conscious of the need to act morally in their academic lives.

It is observed that students and academics heavily emphasize unfair advantage and cheating when discussing plagiarism, using metaphors that referred to self. The majority of students see plagiarism as copying illegally or without crediting another person. However, academics developed several metaphors to describe plagiarism, only one of which included cribbing. They came up with metaphors that highlighted negative consequences and disclosure of plagiarism. Focusing on the unfair advantage of plagiarism by both groups but diversifying on the other aspects of plagiarism may mean the recent implications of softwares which reminds students copying in their assignments and academics the professional consequences of this misconduct. However, more thorough investigation is required to identify the causes of the variations and to assess both academics' and students' application and knowledge levels regarding plagiarism in order to thoroughly compare the perceptions of both parties.

## **Conclusion**

In fact, it could be argued that while these metaphors for academic ethics and plagiarism show how well-versed students and academics are in these concepts, they don't offer detailed information on how either group behaves in these areas. The findings indicate that the participants' perceptions of these concepts overlap with those in the literature, demonstrating that knowledge gaps are not the root of the issue. Through the use of metaphors, this study explored how academics and students perceive the concepts of academic ethics and plagiarism. It will advance the field to carry out research on different sample groups using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods, reach practical findings as opposed to perceptions, and compare the findings. In order to help

students internalize the idea of academic ethics, it will be helpful to introduce en education earlier and given the broad scope of the concept of academic ethics, academics and postgraduate students should receive training and be urged to participate.

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