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# Academics looks on the concept of "merit"

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## Abstract

Merit is a popular social and cultural leitmotif in neoliberal society. It promises justice, equity, and social mobility for all by promoting the ethos that with the right skills, hard work and creativity, anyone can 'climb' the market-based social ladder. The aim of the study is to determine how academics conceptualize and perceive the concept of merit through metaphors. Phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, and easy accessibility technique, one of the sampling methods with unknown probability, were used in the selection of the study group. The study included 101 academics working at Bingöl University in the 2020–2021 academic year. The metaphor sentence was sent to academics online. "Content analysis" technique was used to analyze the data. In the research, gold and justice metaphors were produced the most. As a result of the research, it was determined that merit is valuable and necessary because it provides justice as it should be given to those who deserve it and is closely related to the development of society. It was also concluded that it is a source of success and productivity because it provides a healthy functioning.

**Keywords:** Merit, Competence, Justice, Level of development, Foundation of society

## Introduction

The concept of meritocracy means that elite and valuable people in society are powerful and influential. This concept was first articulated in 1958 by the British sociologist Michael Young. Young coined this phrase in his work "The Rise of Meritocracy". In the United States, the meritocracy system emerged as a reaction to the "plunder system" or "spoils system" that legitimized the use of public resources by cronies (Güneşer Demirci, 2009; Tunçer, 2017). The merit system was born as a reaction to this system of plunder (Güneşer Demirci, 2009). In a sense, it can be said that the meritocracy system was produced both as a reaction and a solution to the system of favoritism (Demirtaş & Demirbilek, 2019).

Meritocracy is a social system in which individuals are rewarded through social position, resources or other goods based on their demonstrated talent, intelligence and skills (Castilla, 2008; Dobos, 2017). Merit is deeply embedded in the narratives of nation-states such as the United States' 'American Dream' (Sandel, 2020) and Singapore's rise as a Global City (You Yenn, 2019). Meritocracy, in which the management system is based on merit, is an approach that is based on the best performance and qualifications of the people selected for appointments and ignores other criteria (Şahin, 2016). Meritocracy

is a system of management and organization in which appointments and placements are made based on job-related suitability, intelligence, knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualifications rather than unwarranted bases (wealth, family relations, class privilege, popularity, social position, political power) (Sealy, 2010). Based on these data, it can be said that people with authority and responsibility in the merit system should be competent and qualified. In other words, it can be said that qualified and knowledgeable people must be authorized in the merit system.

The meritocratic perspective has two basic insights: First, the best people are placed in the best jobs. With the industrial revolution, the need for quality labor for the best jobs was recognized and it became inevitable that the "best" occupy the top positions as a condition of "economic" and "productivity". In traditional societies that have not completed the industrial revolution, such as Turkey, characteristics such as race, gender, social class or nobility come to the fore. However, in industrialized and developed societies, "objective" characteristics are emphasized (Davis & Moore, 2006). In short, one of the most fundamental ideas of meritocracy is that social rewards are distributed according to personal achievement, effort, and skill rather than qualitative characteristics (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004). The second basic understanding is related to education. Education and the selection process should be meritocratic as well as professional choices in education. First, education should be open and accessible to all. Everyone should compete under the same conditions and compete equally on the ladder of advancement. In this way, society is offered the promise of a bright future and social welfare (Goldthorpe, 2003). In a truly meritocratic system, equality of opportunity creates prominent levels of social mobility where talent is at its peak (Alon & Tienda, 2007). For this reason, it is stated that individuals from disadvantaged groups should be provided with "equal opportunities in education" due to their social position and should have the chance to compete on equal terms with all other individuals. Meritocracy is a social system in which individuals are rewarded through social position, resources or other goods based on their demonstrated talent, intelligence and skills (Castilla, 2008; Dobos, 2017).

However, there is a growing body of work examining how merit discourse facilitates the consolidation of privilege and reproduces organizational and social inequalities along the vectors of gender, race, caste, class and ethnicity (Gray & KishGephart, 2013; Khan, 2011; Śliwa & Johansson, 2014; Subramanian, 2019; van den Brink & Benschop, 2011). Both privileged and disadvantaged actors embrace the "true-like status" of merit (Amis et al., 2020). Despite this institutionalized ethic that presents talent and skill as the formula for social mobility, social inequalities have widened worldwide with increasing wealth consolidation among the ruling elite (Piketty, 2014). In this crisis of contemporary capitalism, those who have quadrupled their wealth 'deserve' to enjoy the blessings, while those left behind deserve to be blamed.

In meritocratic systems, it is accepted that merit is the most fundamental condition for the appointment of individuals. In meritocracy, social discrimination (race, economic superiority, etc.) is to be eliminated and only the merit of individuals is to be considered (Tannock, 2008). Merit is often seen as a process by which educational qualifications or educational skills are documented. The most common meaning of the term "meritocracy" in today's education system is that the opportunities provided by an individual's educational background are co-determinative with the individual's performance. This

assumes that prior learning performance is a fair and reliable indicator of future achievements (Meuret, 2001). Accordingly, it is said that there is a direct relationship between the level of education attained and the social status and position achieved, which is only possible through meritocracy (Acar & Ertek, 2019; Themelis, 2008).

Meritocracy is recognized as a system in which effort, skill and merit are evaluated as criteria for professional seniority and promotion (Torun, 2009). Merit is a broad concept and includes talent, education and experience. Meritocracy is considered by many to be an ideal principle of justice. This is because only relevant inputs such as ability and achievement are considered and irrelevant factors such as ethnicity and gender are ignored in the distribution of outcomes (So Hing et al., 2011). In meritocracy, where professional success is the focus, talent plus effort is key (Saunders, 2002). It is believed that this study will raise awareness by revealing the importance of meritocracy. At this point, academicians are expected to benefit from the research results. In the current practice, the appointment of non-meritocratic people during the appointment and evaluation of academics, regardless of their qualifications, can be considered as the source of some of the problems experienced in administrative processes in universities.

The public and researchers have come to the conclusion that there are some problems and irregularities in the recruitment of personnel to public institutions and organizations in Turkey. This situation has led researchers to consider this issue as a system and therefore to ask questions about which part of the system is experiencing irregularities. This has led them to identify what these irregularities are, find their causes and work on solutions. Studies (e.g. Aytaç & Fırat, 2021; Chadka & Jain, 2020; Diler, 2018; Doğan, 2019; Gilani, 2020; Keskinçelik Kara, 2017; Örenen Büken, 2021; Özbilgin et al., 2019; Tunçer, 2017; Yazıcı & Can, 2020; Yılmaz & Çakıcı, 2021), irregularities are concentrated on discrimination based on gender, sect, title, ideological views and beliefs, bribery and especially the merit system.

### Metaphor

Metaphors make it easier for us to grasp and feel the cognitive world of an individual or society in a more concrete and familiar way (Lakoff & Johnson, 2015). The appeal of using metaphors in research lies in their capacity to make individuals' knowledge and life experiences relevant and meaningful (Tepebaşı, 2013). Metaphors are seen as an excellent technique for teaching the unknown and proven tools for retention and recall of learned information (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006).

Since, as cognitive approaches to metaphor argue, metaphor is about how we think, not just how we talk about something, looking at the linguistic realizations of metaphor in discourse can help us understand the dominant and systematic ways in which people think about reality (Ng, 2020). Moreover, certain metaphors can be used to reinforce and perpetuate certain worldviews whose assumptions can be rejected unless challenged. This explains why critical metaphor analysis is necessary, as metaphors constitute verbal evidence for an underlying system of ideas. Thus, moving from CDS, which is concerned with the use of power to influence perception and action, to metaphor analysis, which serves as an access point to thought processes, can help to examine the ideological and systematic structures conveyed in discourse by considering the content of these metaphors in terms of what is emphasized (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2018).

Metaphors are one of the tools frequently used to develop theories in social sciences (Koohang & Harman, 2005). Metaphors are an important tool for our mental world and are widely used in many disciplines. They have powerful features such as describing people's ways of thinking and explaining events and phenomena that are the product of individuals' individual experiences and their relationships with their environment (Akan et al., 2014; Cook-Sather, 2003). Various generalizations can be reached by establishing relationships between abstract concepts produced through metaphors. As the number of generalizations made in different fields and times increases, hypotheses can turn into theories (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Through metaphors, abstract concepts related to the organization and the field of expertise are concretized and it becomes easier to understand the functioning and structure of organizations (Mazlum & Balci, 2018).

One of the advantages of using metaphors in educational research is to effectively define, explain and depict the concept to communicate with the focus audience (Güveli et al., 2011). In the light of these data, it is thought that it is important to reveal the metaphors that even individuals use without being aware of their own cognitive taboos and worlds and to provide feedback to individuals about their inner worlds. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies based on metaphors and individuals who interact with education are tried to be revealed through metaphorical perceptions (Demirbilek, 2020; Han & Demirbilek, 2022; Kalyoncu, 2012; Nalçacı & Bektaş, 2012).

As can be seen, meritocracy is extremely important for societies. It is thought that revealing the perceptions of academics about the concept of merit will contribute to the development of insufficient theoretical knowledge. In this study, the power of metaphors, which are frequently used in hypothesis and theory building processes, was utilized. Based on these data, this study aims to reveal the metaphors (mental images) of academics regarding the concept of merit.

### ***Purpose of the research***

The aim of the study is to determine how academics perceive and conceptualize the concept of merit through metaphors. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What are academics' metaphors about the concept of merit?
2. Under which categories are the metaphors created by academics for the concept of merit in terms of similar characteristics?

## **Method**

### **Research model**

Phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Phenomenology is a conscious experience and social action of individuals' own life worlds (Schram, 2003). This design focuses on phenomena that we may encounter in our daily lives in various forms such as events, experiences, perceptions, orientations, and concepts that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The aim is to reveal the cognitive structures such as

perceptions and expectations in the minds of the participants included in the study by examining their explanations of the phenomena they experience (Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2014).

### Participants

In the selection of the study group, the easy accessibility technique, which is one of the sampling methods with unknown probability, was used. With this technique, a random sample large enough to represent the universe is selected from a universe to determine the participants (Fraenkel et al., 1993). For the purpose of the study, a study group consisting of 105 academics working at Bingöl University in the 2020–2021 academic year, which the researcher could easily reach through familiar academics, was determined. Accordingly, the authors only consider the number of responses they collected by sending Google Forms to all populations (Table 1). However, the forms of 4 participants who created incorrect metaphors about the concept of merit were eliminated and as a result, the study was conducted with 101 forms. Link to Google questionnaire: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zefhNFR3JZ87Wl-2B7516z9fSOtc1x3cA7FruU712Rg/edit>

### Data collection

In the research, an online form was created in Google form environment. In the form, participants were asked to complete the sentence "Merit is like ...../similar because.....". As well as their personal information. In addition, explanations, and examples of what a metaphor is and how it is used were given (Kılcan, 2017). The prepared forms were sent online and collected in the same way.

### Data analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the study. Content analysis is defined as a systematic, renewable technique in which some words of a text are explained with smaller content categories by coding them according to certain rules (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). Balcı (2016) defines content analysis as the process of digitizing what people speak and write by coding them according to clear expressions. In the content analysis of the study, the following five-stage evaluation process, which is most preferred by researchers (Creswell, 2017; Demirbilek, 2021, 2022; Saban, 2008), was used: 1. *Naming and Screening Stage*, 2. *Classification Stage*, 3. *Category Development Stage*, 4. *Validity and Reliability Stage*, and 5. *Organizing Data for Quantitative Data Analysis*.

In the first stage of the study, an alphabetical list of the metaphors created by the participants was drawn up and it was checked whether they were produced in line with the objectives of the study. The data that created incorrect metaphors or did not want to create a metaphor for the concept of "merit" were eliminated ( $f=4$ ). The study was

**Table 1** Demographic information of the participants

Variables	Category	N	%
Gender	Female	86	85
	Male	15	15
Total number of participants		101	100

conducted with 101 forms. The forms of the metaphors included in the study were coded and numbered as 1 M, 2 M...101 M.

In the second stage of the study, content analysis was used, and each metaphor was read and classified one by one. In the third stage of the study, the metaphors written by the participants were brought together in terms of their common and similar characteristics and grouped under distinct categories. The researcher developed nine distinct categories for the concept of merit. In the process of categorizing the data, the justifications given were used. Data with the same metaphors but different justifications were categorized differently. For example, "Merit is like a diamond, because we find what we are looking for immediately (198 M)." The diamond metaphor in the sentence was placed in the category of being valuable. "Merit is like a diamond because it is very difficult to find (82 M)." While the diamond metaphor in the sentence was taken into the category of lack of merit.

In the presentation of the metaphors obtained, "Word Clouds" were preferred to increase the comprehensibility and accessibility by visualizing the written responses. The size of the word in the visualization is proportional to the number of times the word appears in the input text. In other words, the metaphor with a high frequency was set to an enormous size in the visualization (Bletzer, 2015). In the study, "justice visualization" was used due to the high number of metaphors related to justice.

#### Ensuring validity and reliability phase

Since it is among the important criteria of validity in a qualitative study, the data collected from the academicians were reported in detail, the results were explained and participant confirmation was obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). These reports were sent to experts who had previously conducted metaphor studies in the field and expert opinions were obtained within the same scope. The experts were asked to place the collected metaphors under categories so that none of them would be left out. In addition, feedback was requested to confirm whether the metaphors collected under the categories represented the category. Then, the categories created by the expert were compared with the categories created by the researcher. The reliability of the study was ensured by determining the frequencies of agreement and disagreement with this comparison. In qualitative studies, it is stated that the agreement between expert and researcher evaluations is at the desired level of reliability (Saban, 2008). Research reliability was calculated using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula;  $[\text{Reliability} = \text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) * 100]$ . *Reliability for the study was achieved with  $(95/101 * 100) = 94\%$* . In the last stage of the study, the frequencies (f) of the data obtained were calculated.

## Results

Under this heading, the findings that emerged because of the analysis of the data obtained through the form are presented. The findings are explained with the help of sub-headings created by considering the research questions.

#### Metaphors created by participants

The metaphors created by participants are presented in Fig. 1 via word cloud.





**Fig. 1** Metaphors of academics regarding the concept of merit

In Fig. 1, it is seen that 78 different metaphors related to the concept of "merit" have been produced academics. Most frequently produced metaphors for the concept of merit; gold ( $f=8$ ), justice ( $f=6$ ), sun ( $f=5$ ), diamond ( $f=4$ ), honey ( $f=3$ ), water ( $f=3$ ), driver's license ( $f=3$ ), medicine ( $f=3$ ), dress ( $f=2$ ), air ( $f=2$ ) and ladder ( $f=2$ ).

### Conceptual categories formed by participants

When the metaphors created by the participants regarding the concept of merit are analyzed, the frequencies of the conceptual categories created are presented in Table 2.

In Table 2, categories of metaphors for the concept of merit are presented. When the table is examined in terms of frequency; It is seen that there are ensuring justice and giving to the deserving person ( $f=22$ ), adding strength to society and being the foundation of society ( $f=17$ ), be valuable ( $f=16$ ), it is essential ( $f=11$ ), lack of merit ( $f=9$ ), requires skill and effort ( $f=8$ ), providing a healthy functioning and being complementary ( $f=7$ ), it is enlightening and peaceful ( $f=6$ ) and success and productivity ( $f=5$ ) categories.

### Discussion and conclusion

In the study, a total of 78 different metaphors related to the concept of "merit" were produced by academics. When the metaphors in the first category are analyzed in general; (1): Hz. Omer's justice, right, gold medal, judge's right decision, officer doing his job behind glass, flower, trust, crown, life, medal; (2): Ladder, dress; (3): Driver's license; (5): Justice; Metaphors were grouped under the category of "**ensuring justice and giving to the deserving person**". When the metaphors collected under this category were examined, it was found that academics perceived the concept of merit as a fair behavior reminiscent of deserving, ensuring justice and giving to the deserving.

**Table 2** Categories created for the concept of merit

Category (Quotations)	Metaphors	M	f
Ensuring justice and giving to the deserving person, "Merit is like the Judge making the right decision, because in the end justice is delivered (1 M)." "Merit is like a right because it must be given to the one who deserves it (7 M)." "Merit is like a gold medal because only those who deserve it stand upright (9 M)." "It is like a dress of merit, because it must be dressed to the one that suits you (14 M)." "Merit is like justice, because trust has been given to the person (33 M)."	(1): Hz. Omar's justice, right, gold medal, judge's right decision, officer doing his job behind glass, flower, luggage locker, crown, life, medal; (2): Ladder, dress; (3): Driving license; (5): Justice	14	22
Adding strength to society and being the foundation of society, "Merit is like knowledge, because its quality creates and strengthens the place it enters (16 M)." "Merit is like the body, because the more merit, the stronger the body (8 M)." "Merit is like air, because just as we are disturbed when the quality of the air is impaired, social balances are disrupted if the work is not done according to merit in the society (35 M)." "Merit is like an earthquake isolator because the earthquake isolator tries to keep the building alive during an earthquake. Likewise, competent people also strive to keep institutions alive (55 M)." "Merit is like medicine because if merit is essential in a society, that society starts to rise (85 M)."	(1): Knowledge, body, mercy, air, giving the job to the person, earthquake insulator, balance in the universe, the foundation of society, plane tree, essence, life water, medicine, brand, constitution; (3): Honey	15	17
Be valuable, "Merit is like gold because it is so precious and rarely found (5 M)." "Merit is like jewelry, because what is worthy of its location both adds value and is valued (10 M)."	(1): Jewelry, honesty, a properly functioning factory, kind of spring, beautiful, key; (3): Diamond; (7): Gold	8	16
It is essential, "Merit is like the foundation of democracy because it is indispensable (13 M)." "Merit is like oxygen because its existence benefits everyone. Its absence hurt everyone (17 M)." "Merit is like water, because as it is ignored, it dries up and loses its vitality (27 M)." "Merit is like justice because it is an indispensable managerial element (50 M)."	(1): It should be, the air, the foundation of democracy, oxygen, the sun, justice, obligatory, medicine; (3): Water	9	11
Lack of merit, "Merit is like the ababil bird, because it is always told, but no one really sees (19 M)." "Merit is like manhood, because not everyone is looking for merit, and not everyone is looking for merit. Whether you want to sit or stand or get up, their types are a more preferred elimination element (25 M)." "Merit is like the quality in coal, because no one cares because everyone uses natural gas (57 M)." "Merit is like a diamond because it is very difficult to find (82 M)."	(1): Gold in mud, gold, diamond, the ababil bird, fire, quality in coal, flattery, rare and dignified one, money	9	9
Requires skill and effort, "Merit is like a master because it takes effort, talent, patience and care (70 M)." "Merit is like halal food because it is earned by sweat (84 M)." "Merit is like a diploma because it is knowing the job (96 M)."	(1): Skill, master, virtue, halal food, diploma, athletics; (2): Knowing work	7	8
Providing a healthy functioning and being complementary, "Merit is like the missing piece of mosaic, because only worthy completes (26 M)." "Merit is like the keystone, because for a healthy functioning, one must have all the necessary qualities (45 M)." "Merit is like medicine because it removes the disease where it is used (86 M)."	(1): Missing piece of mosaic, keystone, machine, doctor entrusted with life, good driver, medicine, master surgeon	7	7
It is enlightening and peaceful, "Merit is like the sun because it illuminates everywhere (2 M)." "Merit is like a halal bite because it gives peace to those who feed on it (58 M)."	(1): Shining sun, true and harmonious sound, halal bite; (3): Sun	4	6
Success and productivity, "Merit is like the sun, because success shines wherever and where merit is found (6 M)." "Merit is like soil, because if it is cultivated and processed properly, it will yield a beautiful and productive product	(1): Sun, soil, car engine, competence, plant in right place at right time	5	5



**Table 2** (continued)

Citations are located under the categories in the table. Each number in parentheses indicates the frequency of the metaphor

In addition, when all categories are evaluated together, it can be said that merit is a strong variable that directly affects the perception of justice. In fact, it is seen that the existence of a meaningful relationship between merit and justice is emphasized in the literature (Çamur, 2020; Gök, 2017; Özdemir, 2013), merit is accepted as an ideal principle of justice by many researchers (Son Hing et al., 2011) and this situation overlaps with the results. According to Farabi's understanding, "Justice is the fulfillment of what objects deserve." In this case, justice is to give everyone their share and the right they deserve (Özgen, 2018). To progress at the desired level in the organization, competencies should be determined, appropriate criteria should be developed, and the deserving should be brought to the position (Acar & Ertek, 2019). Based on these statements, it is seen that merit is a concept that affects individuals' perception of justice. In addition, when the metaphors such as equality of opportunity and equality obtained in the study are examined, the participants stated that merit is also related to the concept of equality. In fact, when the literature is examined, it is stated that equality is one of the basic principles of the merit system (Gök, 2017).

When the data of category is examined; (1): *Knowledge, body, mercy, air, giving the job to the competent, earthquake insulator, balance in the universe, foundation of society, plane tree, essence, life water, medicine, brand, constitution*; (3): *Honey*; It is seen that there are metaphors. Through these metaphors, they expressed that merit is the foundation of society, strengthens and develops it. Similarly, under the categories of "ensuring a healthy functioning and being complementary" and **"being enlightening and peaceful"**; it is seen that it is accepted as a reflection of development. It is known that industrialization has certain consequences for the social structure in modern societies. While in pre-industrial societies or traditional societies, appointments were made based on characteristics such as race, gender, social class or aristocratic lineage, in industrialized and developed societies after the industrial revolution, educational characteristics such as "objective" characteristics gained value and competencies came to the fore (Davis & Moore, 2006; Jackson, 2007; Jackson et al., 2005). Based on these data, it can be said that societies where merit is dominant are modern and developed societies.

When the data of the third category is analyzed; (1): *Jewelry, honesty, properly functioning factory, spring type, beautiful, key*; (3): *Diamond*; (7): *Gold*; (3): *Diamond*; (7): *Gold*; they expressed how valuable and precious it is through metaphors. It is stated that the value of merit is more prominent in post-industrial societies, and even modern societies see it as a necessary consequence of being "economic" and "productive" (Acar & Ertek, 2019). It can be said that societies where merit is ignored are pre-industrial societies and traditional methods are still valid. The point to note here is that societies where meritocracy is not dominant are considered traditional and cannot complete the process of modernity.

In the employment of public officials, favoritism is the process that is conducted on different grounds instead of the principles of merit (qualification) and equality

(Aktan, 2001; Demirtaş & Demirbilek, 2019). Based on this definition, it can be concluded that in societies where favoritism is high, merit is also low. In fact, in the literature, favoritism is considered as the opposite of merit or merit system (Acar & Ertek, 2019). It is said that favoritism, which is described as a social reality of Turkish society (Akalan, 2006), is widespread in Turkish society (Argon, 2016; Aydoğan, 2009; Aytaç, 2010; Demirtaş & Demirbilek, 2019; Geçer, 2015; Uçar, 2016). In societies where favoritism is widespread, relationships can override merit and turn into a reason that prevents merit (Kahraman, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that there is no merit in Turkish society where favoritism is known to be high (Argon, 2016; Aydoğan, 2009; Aytaç, 2010; Demirtaş & Demirbilek, 2019; Geçer, 2015; Uçar, 2016). As in the studies in the literature, the participants in the study also stated that "there is no merit" through metaphors such as "gold in mud, gold, diamond, swift bird, fire, quality in coal, sycophancy, rare and prestigious, money". In the study, it was determined that the participants had the perception that merit, competence, effort, and labor have no value in society, that these are lies, and that "flattery" is more important. Based on these data, it can be interpreted that the reason for the **lack of merit** in Turkish society is that it is a society that has not completed the process of becoming a "modern society".

With the industrial revolution, the decrease in the number of jobs based on manual labor has revealed the problem of qualified and qualified personnel. It has been stated that schools are the solution to train and qualify qualified personnel (Acar & Ertek, 2019). For the "most talented" to reach the most important social positions, these talents need to be certified and formalized in educational institutions. Therefore, merit argues that the most qualified and the best should be assigned in appointments and placements (Goldthorpe, 2003). In support of these data, the participants stated that it requires **skill and effort** in line with competence characteristics such as knowing the job, expert, qualified, master, virtue, halal, diploma, athleticism, and skill.

When the data under the category of "success and productivity" are analyzed, it is seen that metaphors such as sun, soil, engine of the car, competence, plant in the right place at the right time were formed. Many researchers state that these qualities should be more important determinants of professional success (Gök, 2017). In the merit system as a social system, such qualities are accepted as criteria for the placement of people in positions and their success (Castilla & Benard, 2010).

As a result of the research, it was concluded that merit system provides justice because it should be given to those who deserve it; it is valuable and necessary because it is closely related to the development of society; it provides a healthy functioning; it is complementary, enlightening and peaceful; and it is a source of success and productivity.

### Recommendations

As a result of the research, it is recommended to adopt the merit system, which is seen as the basic need of a modern society. In an environment where access to information has become so easy with the technological developments in our age, it is believed that training qualified personnel and benefiting from their expertise is the main issue that countries need.

Strict audits can be conducted to ensure that the principles of competence and merit are applied in public institutions. In addition, a promotion system model can be created in which the conditions and process are secured, especially in executive promotions. Quantitative and mixed methods can be used to reveal academics' perceptions of the concept of "merit". In addition, studies on justice and morality can be emphasized and the relationship between them can be examined. The same research can be repeated in different universities with different participants. Different studies can be conducted to determine the criteria of modern and traditional society that stand out in the research.

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#### Declarations

##### Ethics approval and consent to participate

In the writing process of the study titled "Academics' View of the Concept of Merit", scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; no tampering was made on the collected data. I undertake that all responsibility belongs to the Responsible Author and that this study has not been submitted to another academic publication environment for evaluation.

##### Competing interests

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