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METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF HEARING IMPAIRED FEMALE NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS TOWARDS THE CONCEPT OF VOLLEYBALL

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ABSTRACT

Physical activity and sports for all people are a natural necessity for a healthy life, but it is a greater necessity and responsibility for disabled individuals. The volleyball branch, which is common in our country, especially in the list of preferences for girls, gains momentum with the successes achieved at the level of national teams and is one of the branches preferred for hearing impaired individuals. Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine the perceptions of hearing impaired female volleyball players about the concept of volleyball through metaphors. 20 female athletes in the hearing-impaired national team camp participated in the research. Phenomenology design, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. A personal information form was applied to the athletes while collecting the data of the research. The data obtained to determine the perceptions of the hearing impaired national female volleyball players about the concept of volleyball through metaphors were obtained by completing the sentence "volleyball is like/similar to ……., because ……". The collected qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis method. These metaphors produced were collected in 3 different categories. It was determined that the hearing impaired national female volleyball players developed metaphors in the categories of emotion, achievement and struggle, respectively.

Keywords: *Hearing impaired, Volleyball, Metaphor, Phenomonology, Sports, Qualitative Research*

INTRODUCTION

It is known that sports have an effect on social skills and, when used appropriately, can teach competition, cooperation, game rules, sports-related regulations and the branch in which they are trained, together with their aims (Bloom & Smith, 1996). The right of every individual to benefit equally from the advantages of sports also applies to individuals with disabilities. Disabled individuals are faced with discrimination in different positive and negative behaviors in social life. It is known that regular physical activity has important effects on healthy life (Mburu-Matiba, 2015). If all people do physical activity and sports is a natural requirement for a healthy life, it may be a greater requirement for people with disabilities. Even though the social perceptions and social and economic difficulties that exist for the people with disabilities in our country are gradually decreasing, they do not have the chance to express and show themselves in the social sense. In addition, for some families with disabled children, the process cannot be perceived correctly and children's access to the necessary opportunities is restricted (Altunsoy, 2018).

Sports for the disabled are aimed at reintegrating them into society and improving their quality of life, as well as rehabilitation. The biggest goal of sports practices for disabled individuals is to have a positive effect on both personality and professional and social life (Brettschneider & Rheker, 1996; Kosel & Frobose, 1999). Among the different causes of disability, the number of individuals with hearing impairment is quite high.

Hearing impairment can be defined with concepts such as deaf, severe hearing loss, hearing inadequacy, hearing disorder (Avcioglu, 2008). Although there are different classifications, the concept of hearing impairment is the most frequently used concept to describe all individuals with hearing loss (Avcioglu, 2008; Friend, 2006). Hearing impairment is an important limitation of communication, and this can hinder psychological development, the development of social skills, and motor development. It is observed that hearing-impaired children display motor skills at suboptimal levels, especially balance (Vidranski & Farkaš, 2015).

The development of motor skills is very important for hearing-impaired children as it will affect the child's interaction with the outside world, academic skills, acquisition of other skills necessary for life, and the development of mobility. In a study investigating the barriers to participation in physical activity for children with disabilities, people with disabilities face many obstacles mostly due to time constraints, lack of accessible opportunities and different priorities (Diaz, Miller, Kraus & Fredericson, 2019; Wright, Roberts, Bowman & Crettenden, 2019).

In this sense, necessary opportunities should be created at home, at school and in sports clubs so that hearing impaired individuals can participate in physical activity under appropriate conditions. In this way, it may be possible for disabled individuals to live and continue their lives like normal individuals in society through sports. The most important feature of participating in the sports environment for the hearing impaired is that it facilitates the formation of social identity by participating in a group, interacting and communicating within and between groups, regardless of age, gender, education, and degree of interest in sports. The volleyball branch, which is common in our country, especially in the ranking of preference for girls, gains momentum with the successes achieved at the level of national teams and is one of the branches preferred for hearing impaired individuals. Our hearing impaired national female volleyball team has achieved a hard-to-reach goal by winning world and Olympic championships for our country, and they have made us proud by flying our flag in the international arena. It is thought that determining what volleyball means in the lives of our hearing impaired athletes, who have achieved great success, is important in terms of guiding the athletes in the future.

In this context, it is thought that it would be useful to use metaphors defined by Lakoff and Johnson (2008) as the process of understanding and experiencing something from the perspective of something else, expressing a thought material in a way of human understanding, in determining the interests and needs of the athletes. It is known that metaphors are used by individuals to make sense of their experiences and to transfer them to others, and that metaphorical language facilitates people's communication (Craig, 2018; Thibodeau, Hendricks, & Boroditsky, 2017).

When the literature is examined, there are different studies on self-confidence, trainers, sports and athletes with disabled sports (Gur & Taskin, 2022; Guler, Tekkursun-Demir & Dursun 2019; Ozay, 2019; Pekel, Yazicioglu & Ilhan, 2019; Yazicioglu, Pekel, Kamis & Ilhan, 2020). In the case of hearing-impaired athletes, there are studies comparing the self-esteem, level and motoric characteristics of hearing-impaired football players with non-disabled sedentary individuals (Bicer, 2021; Karakoc, Coban & Konar, 2012; Dalbudak & Yigit, 2019). There is no study specific to the branch of volleyball.

It is thought that the way of expressing volleyball sport by the hearing impaired female national team volleyball players through metaphors will be beneficial in shaping, developing and changing the approaches towards the branch and athletes. Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine the perceptions of hearing impaired female volleyball players about the concept of volleyball through metaphors.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, it was carried out using the phenomenology design, which is one of the qualitative research methods, in order to determine the perceptions of the hearing impaired female national volleyball team athletes about the concept of volleyball through metaphors. The most important assumption of the phenomenological design is that there is a close connection between language and human emotions. It tries to understand and interpret people's feelings and thoughts depending on what they say (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

Research Group

This research group was determined by means of easily accessible sampling. 20 female athletes in the hearing-impaired national team camp participated in the research.

Collection of Data

First, after the demographic information of the participants was taken, it was obtained by completing the sentence "volleyball is like/similar……, because ……." in order to determine the perceptions of the hearing impaired national female volleyball players about the concept of volleyball through metaphors. No time limit was applied to the athletes. Necessary permissions for the research were obtained from the responsible national team coaches. No guiding expressions were used while explaining what they should do to the athletes.

Analysis of Data

Content analysis technique was used in the analysis of the data. The metaphors obtained first in the analysis of the data were numbered from 1 to 20. Afterwards, the metaphors were examined one by one and coded according to the meaning they expressed. By examining the relationship between the codes, the data were made meaningful by reaching the categories that could best explain the feature. In order to ensure validity and reliability, the methods of submitting the analyzes to the control of the researched people and presenting their comments to the experts were used (Ekiz, 2009). In addition, the themes created by the researcher who conducted the study with two experts from outside the research were compared, and then the reliability of the findings was calculated with the formula of percentage of agreement suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). It was observed that the percentages of harmony of the drawings were gathered under the same themes at a rate of 93%. The participant

samples given in the study were transferred in the same way without any editing. Codes with similar meanings were collected in 3 themes.

FINDINGS

In this section, according to the common characteristics of hearing-impaired national female volleyball players for the concept of volleyball, they were examined under certain codes and themes, and numerical information about them was presented. In addition, examples of created metaphors are given.

Volleyball as an element of emotion

Emotions are diverse, mild or severe, negative or positive, general or specific, short or long, or primary or secondary (Werner & Gross, 2010). Emotions play a central role in the important events of our lives. Although emotions have many behavioral and physiological features, emotions are primarily psychological (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotions not only give meaning to experiences, but also provide meaning to life by arranging oneself and other people or events with which we interact (Greenberg, 2004). In this category, 7 (35%) athletes explained the characteristics of the metaphor attributed to the source with expressions such as mirror, excitement, hope, faith, goal, in the metaphors they created. Some examples of metaphors created for the hearing impaired national volleyball players for this category are as follows;

"Volleyball is/similar to flying because on the court I feel winged and free." (Athlete 11)

"Volleyball is/similar to happiness and success because I feel it as the activity that connects me to life." (Athlete 19)

Volleyball as an element of achievement

In addition to the physical development provided by moving and high heart rate training, the contribution it provides to psychosocial and personal development is underlined (Malm, Jakobsson, & Isaksson, 2019). The biggest goal of sports for the disabled is to make a significant contribution to the professional and social life of the disabled by positively affecting their personality (Brettschneider & Rheker, 1996; Kosel & Froböse, 1999). In this category, 7 (35%) athletes explained the characteristics of the metaphor attributed to the source, with expressions such as achieving happiness, excitement, therapy, and love in the metaphors they created. Some examples of metaphors created by hearing impaired female volleyball players for this category are as follows;

"Volleyball is like a mirror/similar because every time I play I realize my mistakes better." (Athlete 20)

"Volleyball is like/similar to hope because it changes my life in a positive way." (Athlete 16)

Volleyball as an element of struggle

Sports are a set of customary training and competitions based on movement and struggle and necessary for this (Ataman, 1974). It is imperative that the movements be made within certain rules and the spirit of struggle. So, sports encompasses the whole of purposeful, conscious movements that people perform within the framework of certain rules in order to struggle, compete and have fun and achieve a healthy life. Examples of metaphors used by 6 athletes (30%) in this category are love, life, marathon, mother, mountain, resisting the wind. Some examples of metaphors created by hearing impaired female volleyball players for this category are as follows;

"Volleyball is/similar to going against the wind because it means doing against any challenge that is difficult and difficult to do." (Athlete 10)

"Volleyball is like/similar to love because volleyball was my childhood dream, even though my opportunities were limited, I did not give up. Now I owe the happiness of representing my country to the years I worked on the wall myself." (Athlete 5)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Metaphors used by educators and researchers for different purposes were used in this study to determine the feelings and thoughts of hearing impaired national female volleyball team athletes about the concept of volleyball. Considering the findings obtained from the research, suggestions were made for future research for disabled individuals. When the metaphors created by the hearing impaired female volleyball players participating in the research for the concept of volleyball were examined, it was seen that the female athletes stated metaphors related to the theme of being an element of emotion and gain.

When the metaphors created by female athletes on the theme of being an element of emotion are examined, it is seen that volleyball is an activity that gives them happiness and excitement, takes them away from the stress of life, and connects them to life as a therapy. In the analysis made between the self-esteem of the hearing-impaired athletes at the level of the National Team and the hearing-impaired adolescents who do not do sports, a significant difference was found in the self-esteem levels (Karakoc et al., 2012; Konar & Akyol, 2017). The fact that people have high self-esteem highlights that they are extroverted and more assertive individuals. They stated that coping with the difficulties brought by life and all the positive benefits of sports have a positive effect on their lives thanks to the sports they do. Studies have shown

that as the age of the hearing-impaired athletes increases, their life satisfaction score increases as the increase in their experience allows them to gain a place in the society as an athlete rather than being a disabled individual (Toy, Toros, Gundogan, Ogras & Çetin, 2020). In the metaphors created in our research, it can be thought that they see volleyball not only as a sport in their lives, but also as an area where they connect emotionally and have the chance to express themselves.

Sport is important for psychological and social development as well as physical development. Along with the socialization process, individuals gain experiences such as establishing good relationships, obeying rules and orders (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995; Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 2006; Stewart & Ellis, 2005). In the metaphor of athlete 18, which she/he explained as "believing is half of success, I achieved my goals by believing in volleyball", we can say that sports increase the general well-being, and that reaching goals through sports increases the chances of athletes who play sports and who also have hearing impairments, by taking a more active role in life than sedentary hearing-impaired individuals, to achieve their goals.

Disabled individuals may have to struggle with many difficulties in daily life. Among all these difficulties, it can be said that they see sports as a field in which they gain different benefits by struggling in this field, as they struggle with many difficulties in their lives. Athlete supports our research results by explaining the metaphor of 3 mountains as "reaching the summit, even if you go through bumpy roads". The social and psychological benefits that sports provide by arousing feelings of order, discipline, trust, competition and fellowship enable the individual to integrate with society and be beneficial (Stewart & Ellis, 2005; Stewart, 1991).

According to the metaphors obtained during the research process, it shows that volleyball produces positive results in terms of the psychological characteristics of the hearing-impaired national female volleyball players. The contributions of sports to the development of disabled individuals are stated in the (Kirimoglu, Filazoglu, Ilhan & Oz, 2016; Lastuka & Cottingham, 2016; Lorenzo, McKinney, Bam, Sigenu & Sompeta, 2019; Sahin, 2015; Sherrill, 2004; Tekkursun-Demir, Ilhan, Esenturk & Kan, 2018;, Karakas, Baba-Kaya and Kacay, 2017; Yilmaz and Soyer, 2018) studies. We can say that hearing impaired female volleyball players are noticed thanks to sports, they hear the love for them even if they can't hear it, and they feel valued. In other words, thanks to volleyball, hearing-impaired individuals can become more assertive individuals with high life expectancies. It can be ensured that the studies done with disabled individuals is increased and the ways of benefiting from all the positive opportunities provided by sports are diversified and become widespread.

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