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THE CURRENT STATE OF TENNIS IN IZMIR³

ABSTRACT

In many countries tennis has become a sports branch that has forged its own cultural structure. Being one of the branches that continue its popularity and tradition in the world, tennis has been undergoing an effort to reach the masses in Turkey since the 1900's. The purpose of this study is to analyze the current condition of tennis in Izmir due to this city's geographical and climatic conditions. tennis is expected to be a sport widely played. In this research 7 club managers, 7 coaches and 4 parents were interviewed. The case study method in qualitative research techniques was used and the data was gathered in accordance with the "interview method." As a result of the data analysis, four main themes and related sub-themes were acquired. These were; "Participants' views on the state of tennis in Izmir", "Participants' views on the activities of SFA", "Participants' views about the support given by the Turkish Tennis Federation (TTF) to tennis in the province of Izmir" and "Participants' views about the development and promotion of tennis in Izmir". As a result, it has been determined that the number of active athletes was less than the number of athletes registered with the TTF. Although Izmir supports tennis through significant international organizations and is suitable for tennis regarding its physical and cultural infrastructure and climate conditions, it has been observed that besides elite athlete training, tennis as a recreational sport has not yet reached its full potential. In order to promote tennis in Izmir, TTF, local administrations and the private sector should provide financial support, tennis training should begin at an early age, and cooperation with educational institutions should be made to create a sports culture.

Key Words: Tennis, Izmir, Qualitative research

TENİS VE İZMİR İLİNDEKİ MEVCUT DURUMU

ÖZET

Tenis, dünyanın birçok ülkesinde kendi kültür yapısını oluşturan bir spor branşı olmuştur. Dünyada popüleritesini ve geleneğini sürdürden branşlardan birisi olan tenis, 1900'lü yillardan itibaren Türkiye'de de kitlelere ulaşma çabası içerisindeydi. Bu araştırmada amaç, Türkiye'nin özellikle coğrafi ve iklim şartları yönünden tenis sporunun yaygın olması beklenilen İzmir ilinde, tenis sporunun var olan mevcut durumunun incelenmesidir. Araştırmasında 7 kulüp yöneticileri, 7 antrenörler ve 4 sporcu velisiyle görüşülmüştür. Bu araştırmada, nitel araştırma tekniklerinden durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Veriler görüşme yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizi sonucunda dört tema ve bunlara bağlı alt temaya ulaşılmıştır. Bunlar; "Katılımcıların İzmir'de tenis sporunun durumuna ilişkin görüşleri", "Katılımcıların HIS faaliyetleri hakkındaki görüşleri", "Katılımcıların TTF'nin İzmir ilinde tenise verdiği destek hakkındaki görüşleri", "Katılımcıların İzmir'de tenis sporunun gelişmesi ve yaygınlığımasına ilişkin görüşleri" şeklindeydi. Sonuç olarak; aktif sporcuya kayıtlı sporcu sayılarından daha az olduğu tespit edilmiştir. İzmir önemli uluslararası organizasyonlar ve iklim özellikleri bakımından fiziksel ve kültürel anlamda tenise destek verdiği ancak elit sporcuyu eğitiminin yanı sıra bir eğlence aktivitesi olarak tenis yeterli yüzdeye ulaşmamıştır ve İzmir'de tenis tanıtımı için; TTF, yerel yönetimler ve özel sektörden maddi destek sağlamalı, tenisin gelişimi için erken yaşlarda başlamalı ve spor kültürü oluşturmak için eğitim kurumları ile işbirliği yapılmalıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tenis, İzmir, Nitel Çalışma

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INTRODUCTION

Sports is a biological, pedagogical and social phenomenon that physiologically and psychologically develops the health of an individual, regulates social behavior, and improves mental and motor skills up to a certain level. In other words, sports is a phenomenon that develops the mind, soul and body of the individual providing coordination and socialization between these concepts (Yetim, 2000). Nowadays, a majority of the countries in the world agree that sports is an important tool that improves moral and physicality in manpower which is the founding principle of economic and social development. Now, instead of discussing the benefits of sports, planning the best way it may be carried out takes precedence. Therefore countries all over the world have begun to consider this social event as government policy (Aydın, 2002).

In this context, tennis is considered to be among the most significant sports. Known to be the sport of kings and nobles, tennis has mostly addressed the high-income group for a very long time. Nowadays, however, it is considered as one of the most popular sports in the world (İmamoğlu, 2009). Tennis, as in all other sports, requires athletes to possess technical, tactical and physical properties and also requires a great amount of effort. Especially the aesthetic movements witnessed during tennis competitions have made viewing it pleasurable thus adding to its popularity. In this context, tennis has become an important sport of the masses where millions of people both as audience and as participants are involved. Tennis, in addition to being a sport beneficial to the health of individuals of all ages, regular participation provides anxiety and stress management, coordination, bone health, cardiovascular and metabolic development, and emotional, social, physical and mental improvement (Ölçülü, et al., 2012). The development of tennis as a national game was mainly due

to the involvement of the royal families in the European nations. Furthermore, it is also interesting to note that the recent development of tennis as a leisure activity is predominantly due to the increase in the international participation in tournaments such as Wimbledon, French Open, etc. (Pattullo, 2002). This is discussed in detail in the section on the significance of tennis. It is also intriguing to see that tennis has not only witnessed growth on the international stage but also gained significant strength on a national level mainly due to the increasing involvement of students in tennis games. The initiative of retired British Tennis players to actively participate in the development of tennis in the UK is the kindling factor for the development of tennis as a leisure activity in the UK (Gower, 2004).

In this context, the province of Izmir has a suitable climate for tennis. Located in the mid-latitude zone and being a coastal city, Izmir is dominated by the characteristics of the Mediterranean climate. The summers are hot and dry; winters are mild and rainy; with spring and autumn being transitory months. The potential for sunbathing is high. The wind condition creates a great potential as the city is open to the shoreline and is inclusive of various topological structures (General Directorate of Meteorology, 2013).

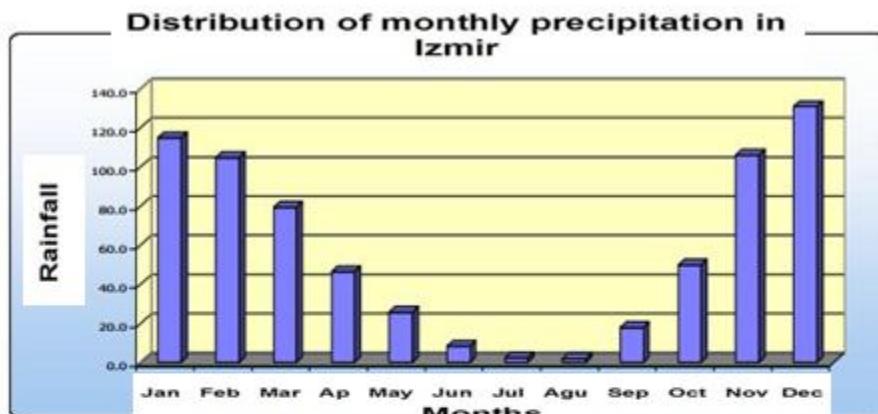


Figure 1: Distribution of monthly precipitation in Izmir

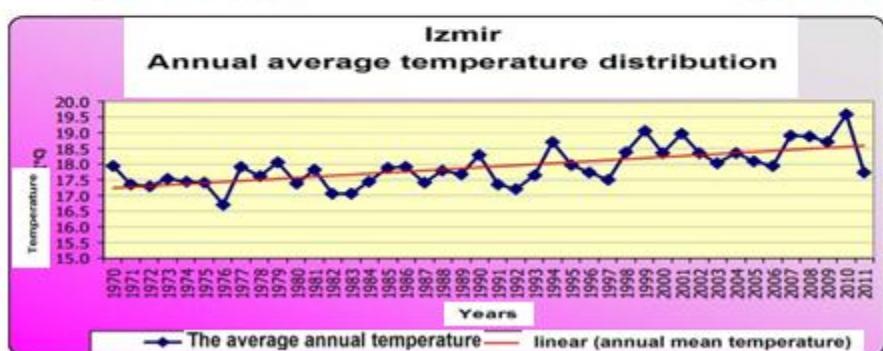


Figure 2: Izmir annual average temperature distribution

Purpose

In many countries tennis has become a sports branch that has forged its own cultural structure. Being one of the branches that continue its popularity and tradition in the world, tennis has been undergoing an effort to reach the masses in Turkey since the 1900's. However, tennis has not yet reached the desired level in terms of both the number of elite athletes or recreational participation. The purpose of this study is to analyze the current condition of tennis in Izmir where due to this city's geographical and climatic conditions tennis is expected to be a sport widely played with respect to the views of various bodies involves such as tennis administrators, coaches, national team coaches, and parents. As a result of this study, the general condition of tennis within the province of Izmir will have been evaluated by consulting with people dealing with tennis from different statuses. Thus, the aim is to assess the situation of tennis in

Izmir first, and then widen this assessment to include the general condition of Turkey.

Material and Method

Research Model

In accordance with this study's purpose, the case study method in qualitative research techniques was used and data was gathered with the interview method in order to establish the interest, participation and current situation of tennis in the province of Izmir. It is possible to define qualitative research as a process entailing observation, interview and document analysis of qualitative data collection methods based on following the qualitative process of realistically and cohesively portraying perception and events in a natural environment (YıldırımandŞimşek, 2006). The model of qualitative research was preferred in this study because it has been considered to be effective in revealing the

thoughts, experiences, expectations, suggestions, and concerns of the participants.

Scope and Sample of the Research Participants

In order to ensure the evaluation of the level of awareness of tennis from different

perspectives, 18 participants currently and actively involved with tennis have been selected from amongst administrators, trainers and parents of licensed athletes in active tennis clubs registered by the Turkish Tennis Federation in Izmir.

Participant Profiles

Personal information of the participants is featured in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant profiles

Code No	Gender	Age	Education	Task	Experience in tennis
P 1	M	55	Master	Administrator (Manager and Provincial Representative)	10 years and more
P 2	F	49	Bachelor	Administrator (Club President)	1 to 3 years
P 3	F	50	Bachelor	Administrator (Manager)	10 years and more
P 4	M	62	Bachelor	Administrator (Club President)	10 years and more
P 5	M	42	Bachelor	Coach (National Team)	10 years and more
P 6	M	32	Bachelor	Administrator (+National Team Coach)	10 years and more
P 7	M	36	Master	Coach	10 years and more
P 8	M	35	Bachelor	Coach (National Team)	10 years and more
P 9	M	35	Bachelor	Coach (National Team)	10 years and more
P 10	M	38	Master	Coach (TTF Referee)	10 years and more
P 11	M	34	Bachelor	Coach (TTF Referee)	10 years and more
P 12	M	40	Bachelor	Parent(of Licensed Athletes)	3 to 6 years
P 13	F	46	Bachelor	Parent(of Licensed Athletes)	7 to 10 years
P 14	F	45	Bachelor	Parent(of Licensed Athletes)	7 to 10 years
P 15	F	49	Bachelor	Administrator (Director)	1 to 3 years
P 16	M	55	Bachelor	Administrator (Club President)	1 to 3 years
P 17	M	48	Bachelor	Parent(of Licensed Athletes)	3 to 6 years
P 18	M	27	Bachelor	Coach (National Team)	10 years and more

Area of Research

The interviews carried out during research were conducted in areas the participants voluntarily preferred. These areas within the boundaries of the sports clubs were quiet and did not distract the attention of the participants; thus, they were appropriate places to carry out the interviews.

Data collection and preparation of interview form

As a method of data collection, the "interview" approach, and as an extension of this approach, the "interview form method" was used. The interview form was prepared by experts in the field and it consists of two

sections: one that collects information regarding the participants' personal information, and the second that includes relevant questions pertaining to the research.

Interviews

The face-to-face interviews conducted in this study with 7 administrators, 7 coaches and the parents of 4 licensed athletes were carried out after a pre-interview and evaluation with TTF sports clubs continuing their activities within the city of Izmir. The profiles of these participants have been given in Table 1. Appointments were made in advance with the participants selected for the face-to-face interviews and brief information regarding the nature of the interview was given. The interviews were

recorded on a voice recorder where the participant was informed that her/his voice was to be recorded. The participant was asked to sign a release form indicating that they gave permission for their voices to be recorded.

Purpose of this analysis was to convert the raw data into a form comprehensible for readers and other researchers. The interview data obtained using a voice recorder was later transcribed. Data obtained from all the participants were put together as a single text and was then encoded. During this stage, a group of three individuals worked independently uncovering certain themes in this process. These themes were then converted into a common framework. The interviewees were encoded as P1, P2 ...P18.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of this study was carried out according to:

- the consistency and sensibility of the findings,
- the consistency of the obtained data with the previously created conceptual framework,
- the findings concurrence with both audio recordings and short notes taken during the interviews. Thus, a sensible unity of the findings was presented.

The reliability of this study was ensured according to the following points:

- the methods and research steps were clearly described in detail,
- the research questions were clearly expressed,
- the data was collected in detail and in accord with the purpose of this study, and was stored in a format which others may use,
- the results clearly concur with the data.

Findings and the Presentation of Data

Data Analysis

This research used the "descriptive analysis" method of qualitative analysis methods for comprehensibly analyzing the data by examining the cause and effect relationship to obtain a number of conclusions and interpret the findings. The p

When the profiles of the 18 participants of this study are examined, it can be observed that they consist of 7 sports club administrators, 7 coaches (5 of which are National Team Coaches), and 4 parents of licensed athletes. The average age of the participants is 39. One participant has a master's degree and all other participants hold a university diploma. Three of the administrators are female and 4 are male. These administrators working at sports clubs have had responsibilities as club or branch president, manager, director, and provincial representative and they have maintained these positions for an average of 10 years. Additionally, one of the managers also serves as a national team coach, yet has been assessed as an administrator in this study. The coaches participating in the study were all male with an average age of 34. Five of these coaches still hold office as national team coaches. While two of the coaches hold master's degrees, the rest are university graduates. Evaluation of their professional experiences concludes that they have maintained over 10 years of coaching duties. When the profiles of the participating parents of TTF registered licensed athletes are examined, the average age of these participants is 45 and they have been in the tennis scene from at least 3 to 6 years. These parents, 2 mothers and 2 fathers, are all university graduates (Table 1). In Izmir, 7 tennis clubs continue their activities as summer and winter schools. However, it has been observed that only 4 of these clubs actively continue their activities throughout the year. The following table where these tennis clubs have been coded A, B, C and D, consists of data including the number of registered licensed athletes, active athletes, national athletes,

and the ages of the national players along

with their ratios.

Table 2: Numerical data of athletes in active tennis clubs in Izmir

Code of Club	Registered Licensed Athlete	Active Athlete	Number of National Athletes		Age of National Players	Total of National Athletes	Rate of National Athletes	Hobby Groups
	n	n	%	F	M	n	%	n
A	144	82	57	3	2	12, 14, 16	5	6
B	148	80	54	1	3	16, 14	4	5
C	52	52	100	-	-	-	-	70
D	117	65	55,5	-	2	16, 14	2	3
Total	461	279	-	4	7	-	11	-
								275

In order to determine the general condition of the sport of tennis in the province of Izmir, the digital data of sports clubs actively serving the branch of tennis has been acquired (Table 2). According to the data obtained from the 4 TTF licensed active sports clubs and their licensed athletes, the total number of licensed athletes registered with the TTF is 461

while the number of athletes that actively participate in the club's tennis practice is 279. The difference between the two groups is approximately 50%. When the number of national athletes and the ages of these national players were evaluated, it was observed that the active clubs secured athletes with various ages (12, 14, 16 year olds) for national teams.



A	• 1 Hard-surfaced Closed Court • 3 Hard-surfaced Outdoor Court
B	• 2 Hard-surfaced Closed Court • 3 Hard-surfaced Outdoor Court
C	• 3 Hard-surfaced Closed Court • 6 Clay Ground Outdoor Court
D	• 2 Hard-surfaced Closed Court • 5 Hard-surfaced Outdoor Court
Other Clubs	• 11 Hard-surfaced Outdoor Court • 5 Clay Ground Outdoor Court
Municipality and GHSİM	• 20 Hard-surfaced Outdoor Court • 4 Hard-surfaced Closed Court

Figure 4: Number of courts belonging to sports clubs, Izmir Municipality and GHSİM

When the number and types of tennis courts in the province of Izmir were examined, it was observed that the 4 active clubs participating in the survey have a total of 8 indoor hard courts and 18 outdoor courts, including 6 clay courts. Other clubs operating in the province of Izmir have a total of 16 courts, including a total of 11 hard floor courts. The Municipality and the Provincial Directorate

of Youth Sports Services (GHSİM) have a total number of 24 courts, 20 of which are outdoor courts and 4 are indoor courts (Figure 4).

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the participants, four main themes and various related sub-themes have been acquired concerning the condition of tennis in Izmir (Figure 5).



Figure 5: The main themes derived from the views of participants

As a result of the data analyzed according to the participants' views concerning the state of tennis in the

province of Izmir, 7 main themes and 14 sub-themes emerged and the findings have been encoded in Table 3.

Table 3: Findings concerning the participant views on the state of tennis in Izmir

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	f (N=18)
The Importance of Educating Players	Performance Athlete	5
	Infrastructure	9
	Capacity of Coaches	5
	The Education System	2
	Family	3
	Facilities	4
The Effect of Climatic Conditions	Suitable Weather Conditions	17
	Indoor and Outdoor Needs	8
	Geographic Location	4
	Number of Clubs	2
	Transportation	1
	Ethos	1
The Effect of Clubs	Conscious Families and Individuals	3
	Financial Support and Sponsorship	5
<i>The Importance of Materiality</i>		

Besides the participants' views on the tennis performance of Izmir's sports clubs, opinions concerning the activities organized within the framework of the

SportsFor All (SFA) mentality were also analyzed and the resulting data yielded 4 main themes and 8 sub-themes which have been given in Table 4.

Table 4: Findings concerning participant views on SFA activities

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	f (N=18)
Ensuring Ease of Access to the Public	Membership System	3
	Open use of Facilities	3
	Support for Multiple Branches	5
	Cooperation with Educational Institutions	2
	Recreational Activities (street tennis, veteran tennis, children's tennis, etc.)	10
The Importance of Cooperation with Local Authorities	Management support	7
Creating Awareness of Tennis	Awareness	5
<i>Disabled Activities</i>	Disabled People	1

Data obtained from the participants concerning TTF's support for the province of Izmir has been analyzed. The evaluation resulted in a numerical

analysis where 28% agreed (Yes), 39% disagreed (No), and 33% thought that the Federation's support was not enough (Figure 6).

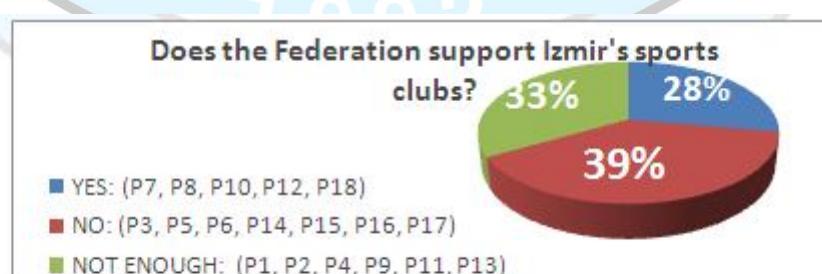


Figure 6: TTF's support of Izmir's sports clubs according to participants

The findings concerning TTF's support of Izmir's sports clubs have been analyzed

under 9 main themes given in Table 5.

Table 5: Findings on TTF's support of Izmir's sports clubs

Main Themes	f (N=18)
Contribution to International Tournaments	3
Providing Training Support	3
Providing Financial Support	14
Providing Emotional Support	3
Providing Material Support	4
Support for Organizing Tournaments	6
Foregrounding Personal Interests in Management	2
Effects of Personal Management Approach	2
<i>Administrative Support</i>	1

The data obtained from the analysis of the participants' views about the development and dissemination of tennis in

Izmir has been collected and analyzed under the 13 main themes. These themes are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Participants' views on the development and dissemination of tennis in Izmir

Main Themes	f (N=18)
Development in a Positive Direction	4
Budget Issues	1
Cooperation with Educational Institutions	4
Increasing of Local Government Support	7
Increasing of Private Sector Support	4
Increasing of TTF's Support	2
Ensuring Unity in the Province	2
Increasing Recreational and SFA activities	5
Increase of Importance to Infrastructure	2
Changing the Coaching System	2
Creating a Tennis Culture	3
Increasing Facilities	1
<i>Following Behind Other Sports Branches</i>	1

DISCUSSION RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

In many countries tennis has become a sports branch that has forged its own cultural structure. In order to evaluate the general situation of tennis in the province of Izmir, the numerical data of sports clubs active in tennis has been obtained.

According to the participant profiles of the research: 43% of the administrators are

female and 57% are male, 100% of the coaches are male, and 50% of the parents of athletes are female and 50% are male (Table 1). As all the tennis trainers were men, it has been determined that there is a deficit in female trainers in tennis clubs and this is an issue that needs to be addressed. We recommend that both the TTF and tennis clubs promote studies in this direction.

The participants all had university diplomas, where trainer and administrator participants even had master's degrees. These findings indicate that tennis is a sport preferred by individuals with high levels of education. According to İmamoglu's study (2009), "Reasons behind selecting tennis in the province of Samsun" and Sunay and Yıldırım's article (2009) "The expectations and the reasons for choosing performance tennis in Turkey," the participants' level of education being high is indicative that tennis is a sport preferred mostly by highly educated people. The percentage of females rising to the status of manager in tennis clubs is close to the ratio of male managers. The reason for this finding is assumed to be the association and nature of tennis being a sports branch selected and applied mainly by individuals with higher levels of education.

When the results concerning the numerical data of active tennis club athletes in Izmir (Table 2) were evaluated, it has been observed that the main reason for the 50% difference between the number of TTF registered athletes and the number of athletes engaged in active training in clubs were due to: athletes quitting active tennis due to age or that they focused on their education; or that they pursued their training in different clubs or sought private coaching outside of the clubs they were affiliated with. Despite the negative aspects concerning the training of national athletes in Izmir, this city still ranks amongst the highest when compared with other provinces training national athletes in Turkey (TTF, 2012).

As a result of the encoding process, data collected from the participants concerning the status of tennis in Izmir yielded the following topics: the importance of training players, the effect of climate conditions, the effect of sports clubs, ease of transportation, the importance of the cultural structure, the creation of a sports culture, and the importance of materiality.

According to participant views as well as Izmir province player training data, even though Izmir ranks high in Turkey, it has been seen that these players did not continue active tennis training after a certain age usually due to pursuing their education. Another main factor is that although there are national team coaches, the quality and quantity of coaches being trained to be national team coaches are deficient and this becomes one of the reasons athletes discontinue active tennis training in Izmir. Moreover, the number of female coaches being lower than the desired level also constitutes another important result. Izmir provides significant support to the sport of tennis both physically and culturally through the organization of major international events, climate characteristics, and ease of transportation to facilities. However, the percentage of training professional elite athletes and the perception of tennis as a recreational sport is not at the desired level (Table 3).

As a result of the coding obtained from the participants, a common view was held that tennis in relation to other sports did not have a sufficient number of facilities open to the public. Due to the membership system within the tennis clubs, it becomes difficult for the general public to benefit from these facilities. Another important result was the emphasis that tennis clubs should be in cooperation with the Turkish Tennis Federation and local governments. From this perspective, we recommend that both the TTF and tennis clubs should consider allowing the general public to use the available facilities, tennis should be made economically accessible with TTF's contributions, and talented athletes should be identified.

Although important steps were taken in terms of facilities, such as hosting major international organizations such as the University Games and having a 5000 person capacity facility such as the International Tennis Training Center

(UTEM), the survival of these facilities are in dire need of support from both the state and the private sector. In order to disseminate tennis culture and to have it perceived as a recreational activity, in other words as hobby tennis, cooperation with educational institutions should be carried out to ensure that tennis education begins at an early age, and cooperation should also be made with local administrations and the private sector to increase moral and financial support. Another important reason the general public does not show enough interest in tennis is because tennis is perceived to be a sport generally preferred by those with high income. Yet, the fact that municipalities provide free or low-cost training and private clubs do not demand a high cost is indicative that "awareness" concerning the sport of tennis is very low. The dissemination of tennis culture and the perception of tennis as a recreational activity, or hobby tennis, may be achieved if cooperation with educational institutions is carried out engaging children with tennis at an early age.

Kayapınar and Savaş (2009) have suggested that the spreading of tennis may be possible through the TTF, tutorial courses and programs on a provincial level. Through activities such as "street tennis, veteran's tennis, and children's tennis" this condition is being partly met. Educational institutions of developed countries carry out recreational tennis activities in support of this view. For example the Heriot-Watt University in Scotland and the Heights University in the US engage in recreational tennis programs for those who want to be healthy, make new friends, learn sports, and benefit from social opportunities (Heriot-Watt University, 2012; Heights University, 2012). However, the necessary importance has not been given to "disabled tennis" (Table 4). Considering that individuals discover themselves through sports and their creative aspects are motivated, disabled individuals would benefit from sports as

their motivation and psychological needs would partly be managed. Thus, sports are one of the best methods of adapting disabled bodies into society (Civanet al. 2012).

According to the coding resulting from the participants views concerning TTF's support for tennis in Izmir, the following data was obtained: 28% (Yes), 39% (No), 33% (not enough) (Figure 6). Participants reporting positive opinions towards TTF's support stated that the Federation gave priority to Izmir when organizing international events, provided material and financial support, organized relative courses such as coach training programs; whereas those who expressed negative responses indicated that during large-scale organizations the Federation did not provide sufficient financial support, the Federation managers did not show Izmir the level of significance it deserves, and that the Federations personal management approach was damaging for sports (Table 5).

According to the coding resulting from the participants views concerning the development and dissemination of the sport of tennis in Izmir, the data analyzed yielded the following: 39% of the participants emphasized that local administration support had to be increased, 28% of the participants stated the importance of increasing recreational activities (SFA activities), 22% of the participants indicated that private sector needed to support tennis, 11% of the participants emphasized a need to increase TTF's support, and 17% of the participants stressed the importance of creating a tennis sports culture (Table 6).

Unfortunately, academic studies concerning this subject have been found to be numerically diminutive and quantitative innature. Due to the richness and variety of data in this field, qualitative analysis is important and studies should be increased in this direction. As a final suggestion,

future studies carried out in other provinces intensely engaged in tennis (i.e. İstanbul, Ankara) as well as in different sports

branches would be indicative of the continuing process of the current situation.

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