

SPORTIVE

Metaphorical Perceptions of Esports Coaches to the Concept of Esports

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Orijinal Araştırma

Öz

Espor strateji ve planların yoğun olarak yer aldığı, fiziksel ve zihinsel çaba gerektiren, modern spor ile önemli bir etkileşim içerisine girmeye başlayan ve çevrim içi oyunlar üzerine kurulu bir spor dalıdır. Branşın önemli parçalarından biri olan antrenörlerin espor kavramına yönelik metaforik algılarının ortaya çıkarılması bu araştırmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmaya, 2021 yılında ülkemizde ilki gerçekleştirilen espor 1. kademe antrenörlük kursuna katılmış olan 40'ı erkek, 10'u kadın olmak üzere toplam 50 antrenör aday katılmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenoloji (olgu bilim) deseni kullanılmıştır. Verilerin elde edilmesinde, her bir antrenör adayına kişisel bilgi formu uygulanmış ve antrenör adaylarından “espor gibidir/benzer; çünkü” cümlesini tamamlamaları istenmiştir. Veri toplama aracı bizzat araştırmacılar tarafından uygulanmıştır. Ayrıca tüm katılımcılar gönüllülük esasına dayanarak çalışmada yer almıştır. Veriler içerik analizi tekniğiyle çözümlenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde sırasıyla adlandırma, eleme, kategori geliştirme, geçerlik ve güvenilirliğin sağlanması, elde edilen metaforların frekanslarının hesaplanması, yorumlanması ve yapılan çizimlerinin incelenmesi aşamaları takip edilmiştir. Her ne kadar bilgisayar oyunlarının sağlıksız olarak görülmesi espor için daha büyük problemlerin göstergesi olsa da bu araştırmada antrenör adaylarının çoğunun espor kavramına yönelik olumlu dönütler yaptığı görülmüştür. Yıllık takiplerle birlikte espor antrenörlerinin teknolojik gelişmelerle birlikte oluşabilecek antrenör ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesi adına çalışmanın tekrarlanması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Espor, spor, antrenör, metafor, algı

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Abstract

Esports is a sports discipline in which strategies and plans are heavily involved, requires physical and mental effort, has started to interact with modern sports and is based on online games. The aim of this research is to reveal the metaphorical perceptions of trainers, one of the important parts of the discipline, towards the concept of esports. A total of 50 coach candidates, 40 male and 10 female, who attended the esports 1st level coaching course, which was held for the first time in our country in 2021, participated in the research. Phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. In obtaining the data, a personal information form was applied to each coach candidate, and among the coach candidates, “esports is like/similar to; because” were asked to complete the sentence. The data collection tool was implemented by researchers personally. In addition, all participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis. In the analysis of the data, the stages of naming, screening, category development, ensuring validity and reliability, calculating, interpreting and examining the frequencies of the resulting metaphors were followed. Although the fact that computer games are seen as unhealthy is an indicator of bigger problems for esports, it was seen in this study that most of the coach candidates gave positive feedback on the concept of esports. It is recommended to repeat the study in order to determine the coaching needs of esports trainers, which may occur with technological developments, with annual follow-ups.

Keywords: Esport, sport, coach, metaphor, perception

Introduction

It is known that rapid developments in technology, including the field of sports, have led to the emergence of the concept of esports and this concept has shown a significant development. With the sponsorship of world-famous brands, esports, which is a unique industry with a high viewership rate, continues its progress with both official and private organizations (Üçüncüoğlu & Çakır, 2017).

Build around online games where people from all over the world can play online together or gather around the umbrella of big organizations (Argan et al., 2006), esports is accepted as a sport activity where gamers can improve their mental and motor capabilities (Adamus, 2012; Hemphill, 2005; Jonasson, K., Thiborg, 2010; Wagner, 2006). Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) describes esports as a sports format where primary roles of traditional sports have been facilitated by electronic systems and mediating the output of its system by human-computer interfaces as well as input from players and teams.

With the increasing attendance to esports, the world has been introduced to next-gen gamers who earn (a lot) with the help of elite sportsmen, prizes, sponsorships and support from famous people (Funk et al., 2018). While there is ongoing debate about the similarities and differences between esports and modern sports, it is argued that a high level of cooperation, coordination and strategic thinking in esports are the vital components of the discipline (Wagner, 2006). Both esports and modern sports take place either in teams or by oneself. In both of the situations, in order to achieve victory, individual abilities have to be more potent than other contestants, team co-ordination and cohesion have to be executed smoothly (Akın, 2008; Hutchins, 2006). Along with that, a successful esports player must be equipped with adequate knowledge (tactic and strategy) and skill to understand the game that is being played (Hemphill, 2005). It is stated as an issue that should not be ignored that

esports players should use their reflexes, cognitive functions and hand-eye coordination well in order to be successful in the games they play (Witkowski, 2012). It is thought that players with aforementioned skill and knowledge can play the game better (Freeman and Wohn, 2019) and esports gamers have similar practice needs just like traditional sports players (Taylor, 2012). It is indicated that esports players whose job is to play and compete against their opponents at a maximum level (Seo, 2016), need a coach to hone their in-game skills, to make esports a part of their identity, and to train the players on a certain level (Kim & Thomas, 2015).

Considering all these needs, the concept of coach alongside with players gains importance. Coaches that guide players to play video games competitively also play an effective role in helping players pursue esports as a career choice. Knowing and meeting the needs of coaches, who are one of the important parts of this discipline, where strategies and plans are heavily involved, leads to a one-way development.

Metaphors can be used to increase the understanding of the difficulties that the coaches have/may experience in terms of career and discipline (Triggs et al., 2011). The term “metaphor” means, the way of thinking and understanding according to the world we have come to accept as we know it (Morgan, 2016). Metaphors are explained by Arslan and Bayrakçı (2006) as a powerful mental mapping and modeling mechanism for individuals to understand and construct their own world. Metaphors are assumed to be a powerful cognitive tool for linking abstract and complex information with concrete experiences and not only have a representational function, but also provide a basis for understanding, decision making, and action (Dutke, 1994; Vosniadou & Ortony, 1989). Metaphors help understand subjects that haven’t been well understood and also help explain the new information in a concrete way by binding the similarities of the new information and the old information. According to Schmitt (2005), metaphors can be clarified many heterogeneous pieces of information with complex meaningful structures and can be used to transform this complexity into well-structured models.

When the literature is examined, there are studies examining the concept of esports, the esports structure, the motivation of esports players towards the discipline, the attitudes of trainers, players, managers and viewers engaged in modern sports, the perspectives of different field experts towards esports, and the relationship between esports and physical activity (Aslan & Çoknaz, 2021; Bányai et al., 2020; Bavelier et al., 2011; Brevers et al., 2020; Mustafaoğlu, 2018; Pluss et al., 2019; Smithies et al., 2020; Toth et al., 2020) . However, studies examining eSports coaches’ perception in eSports context are relatively unseen. Similar activities may have different meanings for different people, and the individual may attribute different meanings to the same activity (Seippel, 2006). The metaphorical perceptions of esports coaches, who have mastered their game-related skills and become professional esports players, need to be examined in order to examine what their needs are related to and to produce solutions. In this context, determining the perceptions of esports trainers towards the concept of esports constitutes the purpose of this research.

Material and Method

Research Design

In this research, Phenomenology pattern, a qualitative research method, was used to determine the meanings that were attributed by esports trainer candidates to esports concept via the help of metaphors. Qualitative research is defined as a method that investigates real-world problems and provides deeper insights (Moser and Korstjens, 2017), inquiring about the problem it examines, interpreting and trying to understand the form of the problem in its natural environment (Klenke, 2016). The phenomenological design tries to explain the common points of the experiences or

meanings related to the phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Research Publication Ethics

Ethical approval of the research was obtained with the Gazi University Ethics Commission's decision numbered 15 and dated 05/10/2021 and numbered 2021- 929.

Participants

In this study, the study group was determined by easily accessible sampling. A total of 50 coach candidates, 40 male and 10 female, participated in the research, who attended the esports 1st Level coaching course, which was held for the first time in our country in 2021. The participants consist of candidates who have fulfilled the requirement to be over 18 years of age and who have graduated from at least high school and equivalent institutions.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, qualitative data were collected through metaphors. In the research, the meanings attributed to esports by the coach candidates were revealed through metaphor. Hence, they were asked to fill in the blanks of series of questions like “esports is like...., because....” Before the application, the meaning of the metaphor was explained to the participants verbally and in writing. No guiding statements were made to the participants.

Data Analysis

The metaphors obtained first in the evaluation after the data were collected with the online and written metaphor forms were numbered from 1 to 50. The numbered metaphors were examined, and first of all, the metaphor sources of the trainer candidates regarding the concept of esports were determined. Then, the relationship between the subject and the source of the metaphor was examined. Data of five participants were expunged from the analysis due to the fact there was no logical infrastructure in their statements. After the extraction process, content analysis was applied to the collected data. By means of content analysis, the data were analyzed and organized in an objective and systematic way (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997; Cohen et al., 2007).

Later, taking into account the explanations made by the coach candidates about the concept of esports, coding was done and a code list was created according to the meanings of the metaphors created by the people during the coding. By looking at the relation between the codes, the data were tried to be made meaningful by trying to reach the categories that could best explain the feature. Metaphors are frequently used in qualitative research as they facilitate the use of the diversity of research data (ease of creating categories), making connections between the data and presenting the data to the reader (Sadık & Sarı, 2012). In order to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research, methods were used to present the data and analyzes to the control of the targeted mass, and also to present interpretations of it to the experts (Ekiz, 2009). Also, the subject created by the lead researcher of this project was compared with those of two third-party independent researchers and Miles and Huberman (1994) formula ($\text{Confidence} = \frac{\text{consensus}}{\text{consensus} + \text{dissidence}}$) was used to calculate the reliability of the research by determining the numbers of consensus and dissidence in the comparisons. In qualitative research, the agreement between the evaluations of experts and researchers is required to be 90% or more (Saban, 2008). It was observed that the percentages of agreement of the metaphors were gathered under the same themes at a rate of 97. As another reliability method, direct quotations were made by including the expressions used by the athletes to explain the metaphors.

Microsoft Excel database programs were used to analyze the data. Frequency and percentage values were calculated for the themes found. Metaphors with similar meanings were collected under

8 themes (Table 1). The opinions of the authors and expert psychologists were included in the classification and interpretation of the data into categories, themes.

Results

At the end of the analysis process, metaphors were divided into comprehensible themes according to similarities and differences and turned into tables. The metaphors that the trainer candidates made for the concept of esports were examined under certain codes and themes according to their common characteristics, and numerical information about them was presented. Examples of metaphors are also included. The metaphors of the coach candidates participating in the research for the concept of "esports" are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The metaphors that the esports coach candidates use for the concept of esports have the characteristics attributed to the source and are suitable according to the categories.

Conceptual Themes	Codes
Bodily and mental theme	Track and field sports, traditional sports, sports requiring versatile skills, chess, chess of the new generation, mathematics Olympics
Discovery/Education	An iceberg in the middle of the ocean, top class in school, exploring, long and fun road, family, waves, personality
Accessibility	It is a part of our life, an activity that can be done at any time, life, the sport of the future.
Virtualized perception of life	Virtualized life, traditional sports, daydreaming
Innovative	The blessings of technology, the inevitable transformation that awaits today's sports, sports keeping up with the digital age, keeping up with innovation, a vast universe, Renaissance, technology tool,
Socialization	A part of our life, a virtual team game, a group of friends playing ball on the carpet field,
Competitiveness	Life is devoted to traditional sports disciplines, waves, all sports disciplines, scales.
Emotional Discharge	Imagination, a psychological therapy, sports activities in our normal lives, smoking

When the metaphors created by the coach candidates are examined, "bodily mental activity" (f=13, 26%), "innovative" (f=8, 16%), "exploration/education" (f=7, 14%) "accessibility" (f=6, 12%), "emotional discharge" (f=5, 10%), "socialization" (f=4, 8%), "virtualized life" (f=4, 8%), and "competition" (f=3, 6%) were categorized as the theme.

Bodily and Mental Theme

"Esports is a sport like today's athletics because it needs the use of both physical and mental abilities just like other disciplines." (Participant 9)

The games in the esports discipline and its sub-disciplines are similar to the athletics discipline, with bodily activities (hand-eye coordination, maintaining the tempo, being fast when appropriate, being slow when appropriate, etc.) and mental activities (strategic thinking, keeping calm, managing anxiety, etc.) includes being able to use them together. In this context, participant 9 likens esports to athletics, one of the main sports disciplines.

Innovative Theme

"Esports is similar to the Renaissance because the Renaissance changed the assumed understanding of art and science until then and pioneered the creation of new movements. Esports is

at the center of this equation and is driving this change, today, where alternatives to traditional sports, games and traditional media are produced and constantly developed.” (Participant 49)

The participant, who foresees that esports will change the understanding of sports that has come up to date, sees esports as innovating. In addition, it can be thought that he sees esports as a driver of change for today.

Discovery/Education

“Esports is like an iceberg in the middle of the ocean; because people generally only see the part above the sea and approach esports with a superficial and prejudiced approach and try to keep their surroundings and children away. However, in my opinion, esports is a concept that is much deeper and more detailed than it seems, and that can appeal to many different segments of society in many different ways.” (Participant 1)

Participant 1 used the metaphor of the iceberg while describing the esports discipline. According to this metaphor, while there is a small part on the surface, there is a large part of this surface that remains unseen. He states that esports has many features that can be discovered by considering its sub- disciplines. It can be thought that he wants to tell that the discoverable features of esports cannot be seen due to the prejudices of the families.

Accessibility

“Esports is now a part of our lives. Because; With the development of technology, it is a sport where everyone can do whatever they want without being limited and everyone can talk and spend time instantly, even with people on the other side of the world. Even though the use of technology is increasing due to the epidemic today, it will be the biggest factor in our socialization in the near future.” (Participant 13)

The participant refers to the accessibility of esports and its contribution to socialization in terms of spectators and athletes, since esports does not require a feature such as a field or a tribune, which is different from the fact that esports discipline can talk and spend time with people from anywhere in the world at the same time.

Emotional Discharge

“Esports is/is like a dream world, because when there we can do most of the things we want, dream, and simply cannot do in real life. We can be warriors, we can be a football player, we can be the ruler of a world, we can be the creator of a world, in short, we can do most of the things we dreamt about doing in real life.” (Participant 2)

At this point, Participant 2 may be reflecting his thoughts on the esports discipline, starting from a cathartic (emptying emotions) approach to compensating for some things that cannot be achieved in the real world, in the virtual environment. When this idea is examined, FPS-style games, MMORPG games in terms of role-playing, traditional sports in the sports sub-discipline may have come to the fore for this participant.

Virtualized perception of life

“Esports is like virtualized life; because it takes part or all of life and gamifies it. A person who loves sports activities is interested in games such as FIFA, NBA, PES, Football Manager, Tennis World Tour. Individuals who love action, survival style are curious, interested, watching or playing games such as Minecraft, Rust, PUBG, Fortnite, Rainbow Six Siege. For example, I want to give an example from myself. I am studying Sports Management at Eskişehir Technical University Faculty of Sports Sciences. I am also a football coach. While I am playing at home, I try the work programs, trainings, offensive/defense plans I have drawn during my coaching, in Football Manager, and I try to develop my thoughts. Therefore, for me, esports is a virtualized life.” (Participant 6)

At this point, it is thought that the 6 participating esports disciplines have been transferred to a virtual life from real-life sports disciplines. He showed his knowledge about the games by exemplifying the esports disciplines with their games. By blending his education history that he received with one of the disciplines of Esports, he tries to find an application area in practice. One of the main reasons for this may be covid-19, another reason may be that he has not found a suitable environment in the field yet, and he may be following such a method, or he may be using it because he wants to see the practical application of what he thinks is easy. In this case, the participant states that he sees it as a virtualized version of real life with his last sentence. In addition, the participant may be trying the skill of transforming cognitive development, which has an important place in coaching, into tactical applications, through virtual applications.

Socialization

“Esports is like a group of friends where you play football on the astroturf every week. Because there is a competition, but this competition is a sweet and moral competition. Even if everyone is angry with each other on the field, at the end of the day, we go for a drink together. Just like the "trash talk" in esports, everyone supports each other in some way; Clubs their players, players their clubs, fans their favorite players and clubs. Just like friends or groups of friends do.” (Participant 21)

Participant 21 looks at esports as a part of daily life. The "group of friends who play football on the astroturf every week" is an activity for physical activity due to its structure. Competition is a little more secondary, and it is supported by the next sentence that it is made for entertainment purposes. It is thought that he sees esports as a means of socialization, just like astroturf matches.

Competitiveness

“Esports are similar to traditional sports disciplines (football, basketball, volleyball, etc.) because; Just like in traditional sports disciplines, esports includes components such as sponsors, spectators and broadcasters. In addition, like traditional sports disciplines, high-level leagues/tournaments are usually organized as a team, and there is a feeling of superiority over the opposing team, as in traditional sports discipline. (Participant 50)

Here, the present participant has associated esports with traditional sports. It expresses the perspective of esports and other sports through the sense of superiority. He may also be using this feeling to make up for something. At the same time, he may be using it to stand out. Therefore, the participant may see esports or sports as a tool.

Discussion and Conclusions

Emerging in the late 1990's, esports, now has drawn more attention by reaching out to new audiences. The fact that matches are broadcast on television, big tournament prizes, professional players receive very serious annual fees, and more than 100 million monthly active players such as League of Legends (LoL) have managed to attract the attention of all investors (Volk, 2016). The use of electronic screens, which not only attracts the attention of investors, is considered indispensable in today's lifestyles, and it is known that its use is quite high, especially among today's adolescents and adults. This interest has also led to an increase in the number of followers and esports-oriented business lines, which are reflected on the screens and reach serious user numbers. Fong and Trench (2019) argued that development of esports can provide numerous advantages to society. With this development, job opportunities are revealed in various fields such as information technologies, marketing, sales and engineering, it is thought that it will facilitate the investment of franchises, sponsors and advertisers in the specific destination where the esports event takes place. According to Jenny et al. (2018) hosting esports events also has a positive impact on economic development. One

of these business lines is esports trainers, who are aware of the increasing trend and will ensure that the masses do this job properly and are directed correctly.

Esports entered the sports industry as competitions with both physical and mental abilities, similar to other sports (Kim et al., 2020). Hutchins (2006) expresses, esports bear content similar to professional competitions where training, team co-ordination, aggressiveness and planned execution of team tactics are vital. Professional esports players have a rather long time to prepare, they play more than twelve hours a day (Thomas et al., 2019). Many researches show that, even not as a first priority, physical training (strength training and aerobic exercises) should be included in esports players' training (Kari et al., 2019; Pereira et al., 2019; Rudolf et al., 2020). For this reason, the need for coaches is increasing in order to meet the needs that evaluate the variables that can optimize both player health and competitive performance. In this context, when the metaphors created for the concept of esports by the trainer candidates who attended the esports trainer course organized for the first time in Turkey and turned to this field, are examined, we see that they are mostly grouped under the physical and mental theme (f=12). Although this issue is still discussed today, it is argued that esports is equivalent to classical sports in most of the studies. Wagner (2006) defines the esports discipline as a sports activity area where people develop and train their mental or physical abilities while using information and communication technologies. In a study by Jonasson and Thiborg (2010), traditional or modern sports are specified as simulated or adaptive in esports games. In the study, it was stated that although esports is based on cognitive skills, it also exhibits physical skills, and that fast and accurate coordination between hand and eye stands out as a lucrative skill in esports. These evaluations support the opinions of the coach candidates.

In the theme of being innovative, the coach candidates talked about the development of esports games, which have become widespread with technological developments, and the processes of creating different game characters and shaping the future. Chikish, Carreras and García (2019) report that the annual increase in the number of global hours devoted to watching esports increased by about 10 percent between 2016 and 2021. In this respect, change is inevitable. In order to increase the popularity of the games depending on the sales rates in order to increase the viewing pleasure of the sector and to meet the expectations. With the changes, different organizations are held every year (Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). In line with the professionalization process, players also change and improve their preparations and training methods. On the other hand, the Turkish Esports Federation, which was established in 2018, has given an important formality to the institutionalization of the discipline. In this context, the number of companies that invest in esports sponsorship and establish an esports league is increasing rapidly, as esports has become an active sports discipline (D. Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011)

In the virtualized life theme, they stated that the coach candidates benefit from esports in their daily life planning, training planning and analysis processes. This process is used in the form of practice and training in situations that reflect reality in different business areas, which we call simulation. Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) define esports as a form of sport in which the primary aspects of sport are facilitated by electronic systems, mediating the output of the esports system by human-computer interfaces as well as the inputs of players and teams. In the metaphors created by the trainers, we can say that they see esports as a process that can be included in the lives of the athletes along with the developing process. In the theme of accessibility and socialization, the Korean Esports Association expresses esports as a leisure time activity in the cyber space where participants match their electronic game skills against each other in order to win or lose, while Argan et al. (2006) define it as a sports discipline that requires both mental and physical capacity, more than any other sports discipline, where two people from different parts of the world can come and play together thanks to the internet or gather under the umbrella of big organizations. Other researchers drew attention to negative sides of playing computer games such as addiction, aggressiveness and social isolation while

their works shown parallel results, our research has shown, while others the accessibility of esports, as it does not require necessities other sports disciplines need such as playing field and guest stands (Dunning, 2013). When we look at the theme of accessibility in general, it can be said that esports has a very important position due to the demographic characteristics of the audience it addresses. While different companies share the information that around 214 million people watch esports around the world, according to their research, the fact that the 2016 Turkish Grand Final of the League of Legends Championship League was held in Fenerbahçe Ülker Sports Arena with the participation of 12 thousand spectators clearly demonstrates the reach of the masses.

As computer technology develops on the theme of being a competitive element, games also develop, and nowadays games can be played on various platforms such as smart phones, tablets, computers and game consoles. Developing games quickly created opportunities for new competitions (Taylor, 2012). Thus, the competitive environment of esports has become widespread and popular over time.

In our research, the metaphors created by the coaches also mentioned the development and spread of esports every day, the establishment of leagues, the formation of audiences, and the formation of competitive environments with success expectations as the conditions of classical sports disciplines such as sponsors occur. The issue of equality or inequality relates to players' access to opportunities to compete and practice. No one is directly excluded from esports, but it is a very costly process to purchase the relevant equipment, which is a problem that can be encountered in every discipline. The idea that all participants in sports must follow the same rules and regulations is important. Established in 2008, the International Esports Federation (IESF) has contributed greatly to the growth of esports as it sets international rules and standards to protect the integrity of the games (Yenişehirlioğlu et al., 2018).

In games context, emotional discharge is described as a leisure activity that randomly appears, without reason and brings joy (Mustafaoğlu, 2018). Games are also evaluated as different movement and thinking systems in every respect, and as ways of thinking and acting that are designed according to the behavior of others and the conditions of the situation, contrary to the usual behavior patterns (Wood & Attfield, 2005). With the technological developments, games have gained a new dimension and transitioned to the digital environment. These digital games are also called video or computer games and are used interchangeably (Kirriemuir, 2002). Video games require mental effort, while bodily games require physical and mental effort. Developing video/computer games offer people many opportunities that they cannot do in real life in a fantastic environment or within the personal preferences of the person. For example, the metaphor created by Participant 2 is “Esports is/is like a dream world, because when there we can do most of the things we want, dream, and simply cannot do in real life. We can be warriors, we can be a football player, we can be the ruler of a world, we can be the creator of a world, in short, we can do most of the things we dreamt about doing in real life.”

In the theme of discovery and being an element of education, esports has succeeded in being included in education curricula and among scholarship programs in many countries such as the USA, Sweden and Norway, as well as its popularity in Asian countries in recent years (Üçüncüoğlu & Çakır, 2017). Similarly, the esports scholarship application, which emerged as a result of the agreement between Riot Games Turkey, which organizes the League of Legends Turkey Championship and Academy Leagues, and Bahçeşehir University, shows that electronic sports have begun to be taken seriously in the academic sense. It can be thought that esports, which is expected to turn into a billion-dollar industry, can contribute to the promotion and development of this field throughout the country, and the creation of new business lines for the students studying in the department, with the courses to be given in the Faculties of Sports Sciences.

In the example of Participant 3, “Esports is like the most successful class in the school. Because the students of that class learn the lessons by having fun. Teachers who enter the class of that class rush into the class and teach efficiently and effectively. In this metaphor, of course, I wanted to emphasize that both the player and the audience of esports are distinguished, and that esports is as important for sports as that class is for school. When a person does what he loves, he is not considered to have worked. For children and young people, esports and acting are a sport where time is spent lovingly, and there is a need for correct guidance.” This metaphor runs parallel with researches done on “being open to innovations in esports education can lead the participants have fun while exploring”.

Many traditional sports brands are investing heavily in esports technologies, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has put more barriers to playing and watching traditional sports than esports (Kim et al., 2020). Although the fact that computer games are seen as unhealthy is an indicator of bigger problems for esports, it was seen in this study that most of the coach candidates gave positive feedback on the concept of esports. Most international computer game research has focused on the negative aspects of playing. According to Saloni-Pasternak and Gelfond (2005), the most common reported adverse effect is violence in games and its possible consequences. Research, however, has shown conflicting results; for example, while experimental studies demonstrate a short-term effect of aggressive behavior, other studies show no significant effects (Lee & Peng, 2006).

Other possible adverse effects examined were social isolation, addiction or gaming addiction, physical inactivity, and poor academic performance (Egenfeldt-Nielsen & Smith, 2003). However, no study has been found that indicates negative effects on school performance, physical activity and social life. Emphasizing the positive aspects of esports with these studies; For example, there are studies showing that children and adolescents who play video games are just as physically active as those who do not (Durkin & Barber, 2002; Lee & Peng, 2006; Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2006). In addition, recent studies have found positive effects on children and adults playing video games, such as spatial skills, reaction time, family relationships, parental obedience, social networking, school performance, and abstinence from alcohol and drug use (Durkin & Barber, 2002). Since impact studies have shown that playing video games has more positive than negative consequences, we might think that esports is more likely to be considered a part of sport. However, little is known about the effects of electronic games on the quality of life of the population because it is a relatively new practice among young people (Eitzen, 2016). Having good physical fitness levels, along with a balanced diet and adequate sleep, is one of the factors identified by esports players that can positively affect esports performance (Rudolf et al., 2020). Roncone et al. (2020) also found a positive association between physical activity and mental toughness in college esports players; They suggested that increasing mental toughness could be an important reason for esports athletes to incorporate regular physical activity into their training routines in the future. Therefore, it is recommended that esports explore the prospects for athletes and their health. In this context, with our research in which we examined the perceptions of esports coach candidates towards the concept of esports, it was determined that the training for esports coaches, organized for the first time in our country, will increase the cognitive diffusion effect through trainers in the future; It is thought that it will have a positive effect on the process of change and development of technique, tactics and therefore performance skills in games. In addition, it is recommended to repeat the study in order to determine the coaching needs of esports coaches that may occur with technological developments, with annual follow-ups.

Limitations of the Research

The number of participants in the research is limited to the number of candidate coaches who participated in the coaching course held for the first time in Turkey.

Conflict of Interest: There is no personal or financial conflict of interest within the scope of the study.

Researchers' Contribution Statement: Within the scope of the study, the authors have equal contribution.

Information on Ethics Committee Permission

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