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The Metaphoric Perceptions of 9-12 Years Old Gymnastics Athletes Towards the Concept 'Coach'

Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the perceptions of hobby group gymnastics athletes related to the concept of coach with the help of metaphors. The sample of the study consists of 90 hobby group gymnastics athletes. A "metaphor form" was prepared to determine the participants' perceptions about the concept of coach to collect data in the study. In the metaphor form, they were asked to complete some sentences such as "My trainer" is like; Because... ". The phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was used in the study. Content analysis technique was used in the analysis of the study. For the reliability of the analysis of the research data, the reliability coefficient between the participants was calculated, and this value was found as 88%. As a result, it was seen that gymnastics athletes produced 43 metaphors in total. These metaphors were collected in 7 different categories. While it was determined that the participants mostly developed metaphors in the categories of "being a representative of love" and "being useful" related to the concept of coach, these categories were followed by "being a representative of good", "being a hero", "being a family", "being fun" and "being enlightened". The metaphors most produced by the participants were listed as teacher, angel, mother, fun and flower. Live, lifeless, abstract and concrete metaphors were used for the concept of coach.

Keyword: gymnastics, coach, metaphor, athletes, perception.

INTRODUCTION

With the words "Today's children are the tomorrow's grown-ups", Mustafa Kemal Atatürk emphasized how important it is to have a quality education that we will give to our children, who are our future. The value of education at all levels of education is undoubtedly great. But the education given to children at an early age is more critical, because it is the period when the main schemes in the child's world of knowledge are formed. Stein K. explained the scheme as "a fundamental mental structure, a framework in which new incoming information will be placed." For this reason, their first experiences in sports life will constitute concepts such as coach, gymnastics and sports. These resulting schemes will affect the perception of sports throughout his/her life.

Education given in childhood (2-10 years) is of greater importance for children. "The first six years of our child's life, that is, until they start school, are the years when their personality is shaped. At the age of seven, his/her personality is considered to be shaped by the main structure. This is the basic personality that the child will maintain throughout his/her life" (Saygili, 2012). Gymnastics is one of the branches that are most included in this age range in sports. "Gymnastics is the set of systematic movements based on the agility, flexibility and control of the body, performed as a demonstration with and without tools" (Mengütay, 1987). At the same time, it is an important branch because it gives the ability to notice and discipline the body, which are some of its numerous benefits, and can appeal to all of the basic motor features.

When it comes to sports, one of the people who play the most active role in children is their trainers. One of the first trainers children encounter will be gymnastics trainers. A trainer is a leader who has the ability to transfer his/her energy, strength, dynamism, knowledge and social capacity to his/her athletes in the most effective and permanent way (Bensiz, 2016). Coach-athlete communication in sports environments is important for the development of the psychological and physical characteristics of athletes. In the athlete-trainer relationship, communication enables the trainer and the athlete to develop common knowledge and understanding of common goals and beliefs (Jackson, Dimmock, & Compton, 2018). The behaviors and attitudes of the trainer towards his/her athlete will shape the concept of the trainer in the child. The positive or negative aspects of this concept will be reflected in the child's perception of sports.

It is very important for our children to be in safe environments physically, mentally and spiritually in the sports environment as in every field. With a single careless word from the trainer, many children are able to quit sports at a very early age and avoid the numerous benefits of the sport throughout their lives. On the contrary, an instructor who approaches and trains children patiently and with the right language can bring many children who do not want to do sports into sports and change their lives positively. Trainer-athlete communication in sports environments is important for the development of the psychological and physical characteristics of athletes (Jowett, 2003). Therefore, the behavior of the trainer is very important and one of the first factors to be considered in the sports education of the child.

One of the most effective methods for children to express their perceptions about the concept of trainer is the metaphor method. Metaphor is the use of a concept, word, term by analogy in order to explain a phenomenon better and more effectively, by establishing an association with a word in another meaning (Aydin, 2004). According to Çalışkan (2009),

metaphor, on the other hand, is a mechanism that brings alternative interpretations in comprehending knowledge beyond being a word figure, and sometimes produces a unique reality and knowledge.

When the metaphor studies related to gymnastics were examined, it was observed that there were few studies on gymnastics trainers, while it was found that more metaphor studies were carried out on the concepts of sports, physical education teachers and sports branches in different branches (Ayyıldız, 2016; Karakaya and Salici, 2016; Namlı et al., 2016; Güler, 2017; Hazar et al., 2017; Sevinç and Ergenç, 2017; Karaşahinoğlu and İlhan, 2019; Kurtipek, 2019; Öztürk and Soytürk, 2019; Yeniçeri, 2019; Yetim and Kalfa, 2019; Çelik, 2020). This research focuses on the concept of gymnastics trainer.

The aim of this study is to reveal the perceptions of athletes, who do gymnastics for hobby purposes, towards their trainer through metaphors and to contribute to the literature.

METHOD

Qualitative research method was used in this study which aims to reveal the perceptions of gymnastics hobby group athletes towards their trainer through metaphors. Qualitative research can be defined as studies where a process is followed to reveal perceptions and events in the natural environment in a realistic and holistic manner, and which provide more in-depth information about psychological measurements and social events and are carried out to find answers to questions that are difficult to express with traditional research methods (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2014). Phenomenology design was preferred in the study. According to Moustakas (1994), the main purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences of a phenomenon to a universal explanation.

Research Group

Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was preferred in the selection of the study group. The basic understanding in the criterion sampling method is to study all situations that meet a predetermined set of criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The research group consists of 90 hobby group athletes in sports clubs in Ankara, who are between the ages of 9-12 and regularly doing gymnastics for at least 1 year.

Data Collection Tool and Data Collection

The data in the study were collected using a semi-structured interview form, which is frequently used in metaphor research (Döş, 2010; Inbar, 1996; Saban, 2009). At this point, the athletes of the sports club were asked to state a metaphor that explains their trainer and explain it. Participants were asked to complete the statement "my trainer is like, because" and, as a result, to explain the metaphors that the participants would state. Data were collected without any time limit. While the participants were writing the metaphors, no guidance was made to the child and the data was filled in an independent field in order for them not to be affected by the trainer or anyone.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, the data were analyzed by content analysis method. Content analysis is the categorization of data (Patton, 2014). Content analysis in the study was carried out in 8 stages: (1) examination of forms and elimination of inappropriate forms, (2) re-compilation of forms, (3) numbering of forms (4) examination of metaphors, (5) development

of categories, (6) ensuring validity and reliability (7) calculation of frequencies and (8) interpretation (Saban, 2008; Ekici, Gökmen and Kurt, 2014; Ekici, 2016).

The first stage is the examination of forms and elimination of inappropriate forms: 102 forms in total were obtained here, and those that did not contain explanations or did not indicate metaphors were eliminated. In the second step, the forms were recompiled and those that did not have a connection between the explanation and the metaphor were removed. In the third stage, the forms were numbered as "P1/P2" in order to determine the number of participants and to make the forms reference. In the fourth stage, the metaphors were examined and categories were created according to the explanation statements. In the fifth stage, the categories created were reviewed and new categories were developed with so many other expressions in the same category.

In the sixth stage, two researchers, apart from the researcher conducting the research, examined the forms and categorized them in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the categories created in the study. These were compared and their reliability and validity were established. Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Dissensus) formula developed by Miles and Huberman in 1994 was used to determine the reliability of data analysis. The reliability coefficient of the research data among the participants was calculated and this value was found to be 88%. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a reliability coefficient of 70% and above indicates that the research is reliable.

FINDINGS

This section presents the metaphors, categories and explanation examples of hobby group gymnastic athletes about the concept of trainer.

Table 1. Metaphors Developed by Gymnastics Athletes for their Trainer

Metaphor order	Metaphor name	f	Metaphor order	Metaphor name	f
1)	Teacher	11	23)	Meat	1
2)	Angel	9	24)	Ladybug	1
3)	Mother	7	25)	Super hero	1
4)	Fun	6	26)	World Champion	1
5)	Flower	5	27)	Champion	1
6)	Athlete	5	28)	Instructor	1
7)	Good	4	29)	Educator	1
8)	Candy	3	30)	A sweet bird	1
9)	Butterfly	2	31)	Good hearted	1
10)	Rose	2	32)	Sweat	1
11)	Supermen	2	33)	My Heart	1
12)	Funny	2	34)	Brother	1
13)	Horizon	2	35)	Father	1
14)	My Favorite	1	36)	Friend	1
15)	Cotton	1	37)	Happiness	1
16)	Heart	1	38)	Power	1
17)	Dove	1	39)	Doctor	1
18)	Beautiful	1	40)	Flexibility	1
19)	Sweet	1	41)	Lantern	1
20)	Gymnastics	1	42)	Helper	1
21)	Supporter	1	43)	Source of Energy	1
22)	Vitamin	1		Total Views	90

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that hobby group gymnastics athletes have produced a total of 43 metaphors for the concept of "Trainer" and stated 90 views for it. It was determined that the metaphors *Teacher* (11), *Angel* (9), *Mother* (7), *Fun* (6) and *Flower* (5) were the most frequently repeated metaphors. Hobby group gymnastics athletes often drew analogies to abstract expressions (*angel, fun, love, happiness, power, beautiful, supporter, etc.*) to explain the concept of trainer. It was determined that the majority of the metaphors according to the frequencies are metaphors that the trainer is a good-hearted helper.

When the metaphors developed by the hobby group gymnastic athletes about the concept of trainer are evaluated together with their explanations, the classification into seven categories is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Metaphors Developed by Gymnastics Athletes by Categories

Categories	Number of metaphors (f)	%
1. Being a love representative	12	27.9
2. Being useful	10	23.2
3. Being a representative of goodness	7	16.2
4. Being a hero	6	13.9
5. Being a family	4	9.3
6. Being fun	2	4.6
7. Being enlightened	2	4.6
Total	43	100.0

According to Table 2, hobby group gymnastics athletes stated metaphors under seven categories for the concept of trainer. These categories are *being a love representative* (12-27.9%), *being useful* (10-23.2%), *being a representative of goodness* (7-16.2%), *being a hero* (6-13.9%), *being a family* (4-9.3%), *being fun* (2-4.6%) and *being enlightened* (2-4.6%).

The categories and the explanation statements of the participants in these categories are given between Tables 2.1 and 2.7.

Table 2.1. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being a love representative"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=12)
1. Being a love representative	Flower (5), Candy (3), Butterfly (2), Rose (2), My Favorite (1), Cotton (1), Heart (1), Dove (1), Beautiful (1), Sweet (1), Meat (1), Ladybug (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Flower;</i> Because I love him so much. (K85)	
<i>Candy;</i> He helps us with the movements. He doesn't get angry with us about the movements we can't do. (P12)	
<i>Butterfly;</i> I love that sport and my trainer. (P80)	
<i>Rose;</i> She smells so good. (P47)	
<i>My favorite;</i> My real teacher, I love her like my mother. (P40)	
<i>Heart;</i> She is full of love. (P51)	

When a total of 12 metaphors and explanations stated in the "being a love representative" category are examined in Table 2.1, hobby group gymnastics associate their trainer with objects such as flowers, candy, roses and hearts, emphasizing that they are representatives of love.

Table 2.2. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being Useful"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=10)
2. Being useful	Teacher (11), Instructor (1), <i>Educator</i> (1), Doctor (1), Supporter (1), Helper (1), Vitamin (1), My Energy Source (1), Gymnastics (1) Flexibility (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Teacher;</i> He teaches us everything with compassion as it should be. (P61)	
<i>Teacher;</i> My teacher at school teaches a lot, and my gymnastics trainer teaches a lot like my teacher. (P79)	
<i>Educator;</i> He teaches us useful things. (P27)	
<i>Doctor;</i> She keeps us healthy. (P86)	
<i>Supporter;</i> I always find him saying that you can do it. So he's always behind me. (P57)	
<i>Vitamin;</i> She always keeps me strong. (P23)	
<i>Gymnastics;</i> Because he is very useful like gymnastics. (P3)	
<i>Flexibility;</i> She makes me more flexible. (P4)	

When the 10 metaphors and explanation sentences stated in Table 2.2 "Being useful" category were examined, the participants stated that the trainer was beneficial through physical and cognitive teachings.

Table 2.3. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being a representative of goodness"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=7)
2. Being a representative of goodness	Angel (9), Good Person (4), Sweet Bird (1), Sweat (1), My Heart (1), Good-hearted (1), Happiness (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Angel;</i> My trainer is very kind-hearted like an angel. (P56)	
<i>Good-hearted;</i> She treats us very well. (P45)	
<i>Sweet bird;</i> He treats us very well and he is very nice. (P33)	
<i>My heart;</i> She treats me very well. (P50)	

When a total of 7 metaphors and explanation sentences specified in the "being a representative of goodness" category in Table 2.3 are examined, the good attitude and behavior of the trainer towards his/her student caused metaphors like an angel, a good person, a sweet bird in the eyes of his/her athlete.

Table 2.4. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being a superhero"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=6)
2. Being a superhero	Athlete (5), Superman (2), Superhero (1), World Champion (1), Champion (1), Power (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Athlete;</i> He makes movements better than the movements we do. (P74)	
<i>Athlete;</i> He is muscular and very strong. (P69)	
<i>Superman;</i> Because he's so strong. (P8)	
<i>World Champion;</i> My teacher is muscular and my world champion. (P21)	
<i>Champion;</i> I want to be a champion by winning competitions like him. (P10)	

When a total of 6 metaphors and explanation sentences stated in the "being a superhero" category in Table 2.4 are examined, the trainer being strong, doing the movements well and similar expressions show that they have become heroes in the eyes of the athletes.

Table 2.5. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being a family"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=4)
2. Being a family	Mother (7), Father (1), Brother (1), Friend (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Mother; She thinks, loves and cares about us all. She cancels her own business for us and refuses to even spend time with her own children. That's why she is like our mother. (P81)</i>	
<i>My Mother; She is good and makes me feel safe. (P58)</i>	
<i>Father; He loves me, defends, helps and protects me in all matters. (P72)</i>	
<i>Brother; I can always explain whatever happens to my teacher and he is always helping. (P37)</i>	
<i>My Friend; Because we are having such a good time. (P41)</i>	

When a total of 4 metaphors and explanation sentences specified in the "being a family" category in Table 2.5 are examined, the trainer's warm approach, giving confidence and being with his-her athlete in all kinds of problems caused the athlete to see and perceive him/her as the closest person.

Table 2.6. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being fun"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=2)
2. Being fun	Fun (6), Funny (2)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Fun; He is a very kind and very good tutor. At the same time, he entertains us a lot by playing games. (P63)</i>	
<i>Funny; Our teacher is very funny and entertains us so much. (P42)</i>	

When the 2 metaphors and explanation sentences specified in the "being fun" category in Table 2.6 are examined, factors such as the fun time spent by the athlete in training and the trainer entertaining them caused them to perceive trainer as fun.

Table 2.7. Metaphors and Explanation Statements Belonging to the Category of "Being enlightened"

Category	Number of Metaphors (f=2)
2. Being enlightened	Horizon (2), Lantern (1)
<i>Explanation samples quotes of gymnastics athletes;</i>	
<i>Horizon; My trainer opens new horizons and prepares us for competitions. (P49)</i>	
<i>Lantern; She enlightens us with very important information. (P2)</i>	

When a total of 2 metaphors and explanation sentences specified in the "being enlightened" category in Table 2.7 are examined, it is understood that the trainer being a leader and teaching new things caused his/her athlete to see the trainer as an object that enlightens.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

When the data obtained within the scope of the research were examined, it was determined that the participants mostly developed metaphors regarding the concept of trainer in the categories of "being a love representative" and "being useful", these categories were followed by "being a representative of goodness", "being a superhero", "being a family", "being fun" and "being enlightened". All of the metaphors developed by hobby group gymnastic athletes for their trainer are positive.

In the study of Güler (2017), a total of 706 athletes who attended summer sports schools in 18 different branches were asked to express their perceptions on their trainers through metaphors. 72 of the 706 athletes participating in this study were gymnastics

athletes. As a result of this research, a total of 7 categories (As a source of information and as a transmitter, as a person to be desired, as a relaxing-curative person, as a protective-caring and helpful person, as a repeller-scary, and pure and clean person). Almost all of the students stated positive metaphors. The "being a source of information" category obtained in Güler's study and the "Being useful category" obtained in this study; "Being a superhero category" and "a person to be desired"; "Being a representative of goodness-being a family category" and "as a protective-caring and helpful person" are similar categories. In the studies conducted on gymnastics trainer, it was noticed that almost all of the trainer perception was positive.

In this study, Güler also asked athletes of 17 different branches (basketball, athletics, badminton, boxing, football, wrestling, handball, table tennis, tennis, karate, hockey, darts, modern pentathlon, taekwondo, volleyball, weightlifting and swimming) to specify metaphors for their trainer, apart from the gymnastics trainer. As a result of the study, it was seen that athletes expressed positive metaphors for their trainers in most branches. The fact that almost all of the metaphors obtained for trainers in Gülerin's study are positive metaphors is similar to our study. Similar to the study group of our research, Gülerin's study was conducted only on hobby group athletes. Looking at the results, athletes revealed positive metaphorical perceptions towards their trainers. This result supports the findings of our study.

In their study, Karaşahinoğlu and İlhan (2019) tried to determine the metaphorical perceptions of 547 students studying at secondary school in 2014-2015 towards physical education and sports teachers through drawings. As a result of this study, it was seen that students mostly made drawings on the themes of " physical education teacher as an angry person ", " physical education teacher as an instructor", "physical education teacher as an element of love " and " physical education teacher as an element of negativity". When we compare the perceptions of trainer and physical education teachers here, it is seen that negative perceptions towards physical education teachers are higher.

In the study by Yeniceri (2019), 346 high school teachers in different branches in 2018-2019 were asked to state metaphors for "physical education and sports teacher" and "physical education and sports lesson". As a result of the research, it was seen that the majority made positive statements such as "health, life, water, etc." for physical education and sports teachers and lessons. The results of our study on the perception of trainer show similarity with the Yeniceri's study on physical education and sports teachers. The closeness of athletes' attitudes towards trainers and their attitudes towards physical education teachers can be thought of as a result of the common purpose of sports activities.

As a result, all of the metaphors developed by the hobby group gymnastic athletes for their trainer are positive. This is thought to be due to the study group being chosen from the hobby group.

SUGGESTIONS

In this study, the perceptions of gymnastics athletes towards their trainer were examined. It is an undeniable fact that children are the guarantee of our future or that healthy generations will create healthy societies and that children will affect the future of societies in almost every way (Parasız, Şahin & Çelik, 2015). It is very important for our children to be in safe environments physically, mentally and spiritually in the sports environment as in every field. In order to learn the factors that will create a negative

perception or impact for children in the sports environment and to carry out the studies related to this, studies should also be carried out to measure the perceptions of other important elements in the sports environment.

1. This study, which was done for hobby group athletes, can be done to competitors in a similar way and the results can be compared, and the effects of being a competitor on the sports and trainer perception of the athletes can be observed. When the goal changes in sports, the perception of the trainer in the athlete will probably change.
2. Although there are studies related to other branches, studies can be carried out to reveal the perceptions of children on "trainer, the branch they do and other elements in the sports environment" in all branches one by one. With these studies, the necessary data will be obtained in order to change the judgments against the branches.

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