ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Evaluation of sports services to be provided by local governments by rural area managers (village headmen). Example of elazig province

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ABSTRACT

Background: The villages, which are the smallest of the local government and rural units, have increased their proximity to the cities with the developing technological opportunities and thanks to the developing mass media, the desire to present the social, sportive, and cultural opportunities offered in the cities to the villages has increased.

Aim: This study was planned to determine the views of village headmen in rural areas on the sports services to be provided by local governments to the countryside.

Methods: In the research, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 Headmen using the phenomenology design which is one of the qualitative research methods. The collected data were analyzed by content analysis and descriptive analysis methods. In this context, the expressions obtained from the opinions of headmen were themed.

Results: when the opinions of the Headmen who participated in the study were examined, it was observed that the explanations they expressed were compatible with scientific studies. When the issue is looked at from this point of view, it has been determined that the evaluations of the headmen on local governments and sports issues are at a level that cannot be underestimated.

Conclusion: In our research, it has been revealed that local administrations do not give sufficient support to the villages regarding sports activities. Most of the headmen stated that they will not be taken care of and their demands will not be taken into consideration. In this study, the sensitivity of the village headmen, who are considered as the closest service unit to the public, regarding sports services and youth, and their thoughts on serving them are important in terms of showing the level of Turkish society.

Keywords: Local Governments, Village Headmen, Sports Services, Elazig, Rural Area

INTRODUCTION

In our constantly growing and developing societies, local governments have great responsibilities in identifying all kinds of services needed by people and providing them in a balanced and efficient manner. In the Turkish administrative system, local governments are considered as special provincial administrations, municipalities, and villages. When compared to central government institutions and in the context of closeness to the public in service, the rural administration units, which are elected in the provinces and districts and which are closest to the people, are the neighborhood and village headmen. The headman is the person chosen by the residents of the villages and neighborhoods to carry out the legal affairs of the villages and neighborhoods.[1]When the countryside (rural area) is mentioned in Turkey, villages come to mind. Villages, on the other hand, are considered as the smallest of the local government organizations within the Turkish Administrative System. According to the Village Law No. 442; Although it has been defined from different perspectives, when it comes to village in Turkey, it is defined as a settlement unit with a population of at least 150-2000, far from important settlement centers, economic structure largely based on agriculture and having unique social relations.[2] Along with globalization, in public administration, the delivery of public services predominantly by local units has revealed the tendency of localization in public service.[3] Local governments, as the closest administrative units to the

public, have opportunity of identifying local needs in a short time and meet them effectively and efficiently.[4-5]

The production of public services by the units closest to the public both facilitated the determination of the real needs of the people and ensured the effective use of public resources.[6] Along with localization, ensuring the public participation in public services will undoubtedly ensure that public services are provided according to the expectations of the people.[7] If the field of activity of the public service units get smaller, it will be easier to determine the preferences of the society and to participate them in the administration.[8] The principle of proximity to the public in services plays an important role in providing public services, using resources more rationally and providing democratic education of the people. In this principle, the essential thing is to see the service in its place and at the same time "from its place". This concept is sometimes understood as bringing the service to the people.[9]

In modern societies, the concept of sports, which has begun to be accepted as an important part of the leisure industry, appears as a social phenomenon with its effects on society increasing day by day.[10-11-12]

The sport of our age can be defined as a group of movements made with the aim of positively affecting the mental health of people as well as its physical benefits and providing social and moral gains.[13]

The importance and dimensions of the subject can be understood more easily when we look at the social

institutions and phenomena that sports have an intense relationship with. Within the social dimension of sports, society, family, youth, women, children, education, culture, economy, politics, management, law, social security, sportsmanship, leisure time, personality, advocacy, etc. similar social institutions, concepts, facts, and events can be displayed. These show us how much sports are intertwined with the social system and social life.[14]

Today, the developing and growing economic opportunities, technological developments and the prevalence of mass media have transformed even the world into a small village and it also increases and changes the needs, desires, and expectations of the rural population, which includes the smallest settlements. As a natural consequence of this, in this study, it is aimed to reveal the opinions of rural administrations about the sports services to be provided.

MATERIAL & METHODS

2.1. Research Model: In the conduct of this research, the case study method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The most basic feature of the qualitative case study is that it is used to investigate a situation in depth and to understand, define and describe the reasons, causes and consequences of the situation.[15] The phenomenology design is used in this study since it is aimed to determine the opinions of village headmen in rural areas in Elazig, Turkey, about the sports services to be provided by local governments, by using their experiences. According to Patton,[16] phenomenological studies focus on phenomena that we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of and how people make sense of experience. In other words, in this design, it was tried to define the reactions and perspectives of people who shared a common experience with in-depth interviews.[17]

2.2. Participants of the Study: This is a study in which a single research method was used gradually in the province of Elazig in eastern Turkey. 133 village headmen in the rural areas of Elazig in Turkey in 2020-2021 constituted the universe of the study according to the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The purpose of the purposeful sampling is to be useful in obtaining detailed and in-depth information from the participants about the problems and hypotheses studied in the work, in the discovery and explanation of facts and events.[18] Considering the young population rates and geographical conditions in the region selection of the research, village headmen who are far from the center in rural areas were preferred. In the interest of the villages in the province of Elazig to be instrumental in producing wide-ranging data for the research, the data were created by taking expert opinion on various features of these villages. The saturation point was used to determine the number of participant.[19] Accordingly, no further action was taken when the responses from the participants were satisfied. As a result, the total number of participants was determined as 30. Information such as age, education level, and duration of being a headman of the participants are presented in Table 1.

HEADMEN	AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	PERIOD OF HEADMAN	VILLAGE
M1	60	Secondary School	16-20	K1
M2	55	Primary School	11-15	K2
M3	59	High School	5-10	K3
M4	53	High School	21 +	K4
M5	56	Primary School	5-10	K5
M6	47	High School	5-10	K6
M7	58	High School	5-10	K7
M8	55	Secondary School	5-10	K8
M9	51	Secondary School	11-15	K9
M10	51	Secondary School	5-10	K10
M11	49	High School	5-10	K11
M12	61	Primary School	11-15	K12
M13	55	High School	5-10	K13
M14	59	Secondary School	21+	K14
M15	48	High School	5-10	K15
M16	60	Primary School	11-15	K16
M17	56	Secondary School	11-15	K17
M18	57	Primary School	11-15	K18
M19	51	High School	11-15	K19
M20	52	Primary School	5-10	K20
M21	55	High School	21+	K21
M22	48	High School	5-10	K22
M23	48	High School	5-10	K23
M24	52	High School	11-15	K24
M25	54	High School	5-10	K25
M26	48	High School	5-10	K26
M27	55	Secondary School	5-10	K27
M28	58	High School	11-15	
M29	60	Primary School	21+	
M30	58	Primary School	11-15	

2.3. Data Generation Process and Tools: In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool which is developed by the researcher. While creating the semi-structured interview form, the relevant literature was scanned in detail and the opinions of 3 academicians were sought on qualitative research. As a result of the examination of the experts and the preliminary application with 2 headmen, the questions in the interview form were rearranged and the form was given its final form in a way that is suitable for the purpose of the research, understandable and applicable. The qualitative data generation tools used in this research are as follows:

1. Demographic Information Form: A demographic information form was created by the researchers in order to determine the demographic characteristics of the headmen. These forms were used to determine the individual characteristics that may have a significant impact on the process of determining the opinions of the headmen, such as their age, educational status, and duration of being a headman.

2. Semi-Structured Interview: Interview has been used as a data generation technique because there is interaction between the researcher and the data source and it facilitates the researcher to confirm, explain and elaborate the data produced.[20-21]

2.4. Analysis: Braun & Clark's [22] six-stage thematic analysis was used to determine the views of the village headmen in rural areas about the sports services to be provided by the local governments. For the interviews, the headmen were requested to be interviewed by phone and face-to-face interviews were held at convenient times for them. Each interview lasted approximately 20-40 minutes. The interviews of all the participants were recorded with audio recording and the frequency of each opinion was

found by using the content analysis technique in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. For this reason, primarily the voice recordings were decoded by transferring them to the computer. Nvivo 10 package program was used in the analysis of the data. Moreover, the descriptive analysis technique was used by making direct quotations from the data obtained from the interview.[23]

2.5. Validity and Reliability of the Research: In qualitative research, it is important to use credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability strategies to ensure validity and reliability.[24] Credibility is related to the internal validity of the research.[15-25] For credibility, expert opinion was sought after the interview forms were developed. Furthermore, while presenting the findings, some of the views of participants were included in the form of direct quotations. Transferability is related to the external validity and generalizability of the research. In this study, purposive sampling method was used to ensure external validity. Consistency is related to the reproducibility and reliability of the research. The data obtained for reliability were first analyzed by each researcher individually, then the analyzes were checked together and common themes were determined.[26] In this direction, it was ensured that all researchers agreed on the results during the data collection, analysis, and finalization stages during the research. For confirmability the final version of the themes and codes were sent to the experts and confirmed.[27] Since it was deemed ethically appropriate to keep the identities of the participants in the study confidential, they were abbreviated as Headmen M1, M2… Villages as K1, K2… in the presentation of the findings.

RESULTS

The data obtained in this study were tried to be presented in the following order in themes.

Opinions of the headmen on the provision of sports services to the countryside.

The views of the headmen on the provision of rural sports services are shown in Figure 1 as themes.
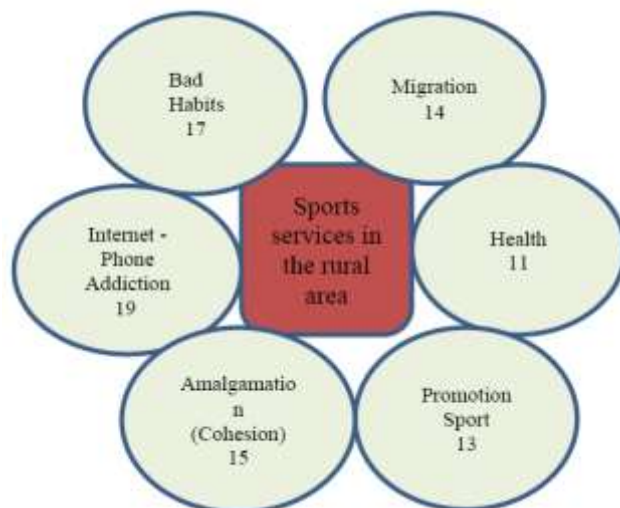

Figure 1. Opinions of headmen on the provision of rural sports services.

In Figure 1, "Do you think sports services should be provided to rural areas by local governments?" If your answer is Yes or No, please explain your answer. To this question, 100% of the headmen stated that they want sports services to be provided to the rural areas and that there are areas where young people can do sports. In line with the answers given by the headmen, it is seen that the themes of internet and telephone addiction, bad habits, migration, health, cohesion, and sports promotion are formed. Concordantly, sample sentences expressing the opinions of the headmen by quoting directly are presented below:

"Yes, it should be, I believe it will be very useful, especially for eliminating internet addiction." (M24)

"It keeps young people away from bad habits. Young people make useful use of their free time and merge with each other." (M10)

"The villagers get to know each other; the young people get together and merged." (M12)

"Villages are emptying, young people are not staying here, if these sports services are available, they will connect young people here and prevent migration." (M7)

"There are very talented young people here, if we had sports places, they would encourage young people to do sports and make them love sports." (M18)

"In terms of health, it benefits everyone. It is very important not only for us, but especially for the elderly, and it brings the young together." (M4).

Opinions of headmen about their applications to local governments for sports services.

Opinions of village headmen about their applications to local governments for the provision of sports services are shown in Figure 2 as themes.
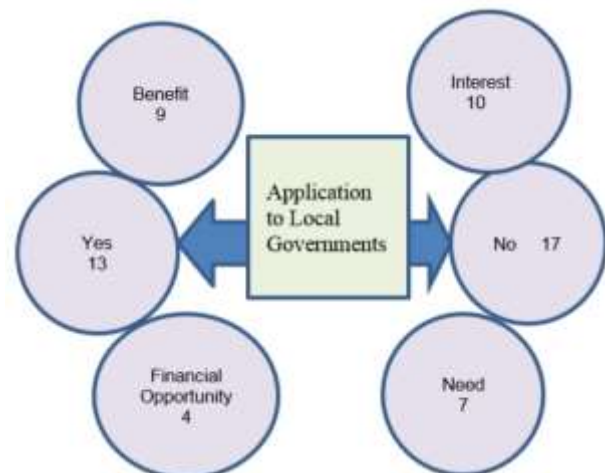

Figure 2. Opinions of headmen about their applications to local governments for sports services.

In Figure 2, "Have you applied to local governments for the provision of sports services?" If your answer is Yes or No, please explain. To the question, about 45% of the headmen stated that they applied to the local administrations for the construction of sports facilities in their villages, and about 55% of them stated that they did not apply in this regard. In line with the opinions of the headmen who applied and those who did not, it is seen that the themes of benefit, financial opportunity, interest, and need are formed. Concordantly, sample sentences

expressing the opinions of the headmen by quoting directly are presented below.

"Yes, I applied. I did it so that I could benefit my village and the youth of my village." (M9)

"Yes, I have had ventures for sports services. Because financial power is required to provide such services. Since we do not have this, I applied to the local authorities." (M17)

"No, I did not apply. Because we had requests on other issues, they were not taken care of and we were not responded to. I thought they wouldn't be interested again." (M3)

"No, I did not apply. My village had other needs. I couldn't think about it because I was interested in other needs." (M1

Opinions of local governments on support of sports services.

The opinions of the headmen on the support of rural sports services by local governments are shown in Figure 3 as themes.

Figure 3. Opinions of headmen on sports services support of local government.

As rural settlements, what are your expectations from local governments regarding sports services? Considering the answers given to the question,

100% of the headmen stated that they want sports facilities for their villages from the local governments, whichever it is, where young people can do sports and come together.

DISCUSSION

In today's societies, very rapid changes are experienced and local governments have great responsibilities in identifying and meeting the increasing social and economic needs of the societies, and in delivering the services provided to all segments of the society in an equal and balanced way. In determining local and rural needs, neighborhood and village headmen are more prominent than central governments. Thereby, the headmen's perspectives and views on issues are important in providing needed services.

In this study, all the headmen stated that they wanted sports services in their villages and especially the young people to do sports. Moreover, in this study, it was determined that four main headings came to the fore while the consulted headmen explained why they wanted sports services to be provided to their villages. As a matter of fact, it has been determined that these are the problems that have turned into today's social diseases and that affect almost all youth of today, and that these problems have been drawn attention to in various scientific studies.

As the first main topic, the headmen stated that the young people in their villages spend almost all their time on the internet, they do not engage in any social activities, this affects them negatively, and headmen believe that if sports services are provided, they can be removed from the internet environment through sports activities. Regarding internet addiction, it is reported that "Over 1 billion people play digital games in the world, according to the 2012 data of the Turkish Digital Games Federation, which is included in the Turkish Grand National Assembly research commission.[28] As a result of the research conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute on children aged 6-15, the age at which children start using computers is 8, and the age at which they start using the internet is 9. It has been determined that 50.8% of these children use the internet and 45.6% of them use the internet every day.[29]

Herein, when 2020 World Internet, Social Media and Mobile Usage Statistics are analyzed, it is seen that there are 4.57 billion internet users, 3.81 billion social media users and 5.16 billion mobile users. On average, these users spend 7 hours a day for the Internet and 3.5 hours for mobile use, and 90% of them spend their days watching online videos on the Internet.

As the second main topic, the headmen stated that smoking, alcohol and drug addiction increased among the youth and that there was a moral decline and stated that they believed that the way to get rid of these bad habits and to keep the youth away from these harmful habits is through sports activities.

"There is a need for suitable places where children and young people can spend their free time outside of school and work, but the lack of such places and inequalities of opportunity, and the absence of places to spend their free time can cause them to slide into bad environments that may negatively affect their mental and physical development. The number of children and young people who use drugs and other harmful substances in consequence of being in bad environments or forming wrong friendships, and commit crimes by committing illegal acts, can be given as an example to this.[30-31]

Kant believes that "if a person is left unattended at a young age and no intervention is made, he will continue some bad habits of savagery and primitiveness until the end of his life." [32-33]

As the third main topic, the headmen stated that they believe that the way for people to merge and socialize is through sports activities, and therefore they attach importance to sports services and they want everyone in their villages, especially young people, to do sports. Socialization spaces are transformed over time, and with the developing technology, it prevents face-to-face meeting in real terms, causing a decrease in the need for meeting. Social networks allow individuals to communicate independent from time and place. This situation causes people to become lonely by making them addicted to the screens, without speaking a word to each other even though they share the same space, and subsequently alienation from their surroundings and themselves.[34-35] Sport is an important function of the socialization process. Therefore, sports services should be restructured to reach not only a segment of the society, but also segments from various socio-economic levels of the society and should be extended to the neighborhoods and villages by being extended with local governments.[31-36]

As the fourth main topic, the headmen stated that

they believed that the sportive activities in the villages would push the young people to love their villages, thus the migration from the villages to the cities would decrease and they would even receive reverse migration. It is not possible to explain the internal migration movements in Turkey only with the industrialization process. Internal migration rate is a population movement that occurs under the influence of repulsive and attractive forces. The repulsive factors are those that push the population away from the countryside and agriculture. Attractive factors are the economic, cultural, and social factors that attract those who are ready and willing to leave the countryside towards the cities.[37]

One of the reasons for the migration to the cities, especially those with a strong social and cultural infrastructure, is that those who want to migrate are attracted to the social, cultural and other similar services of these cities and want to benefit from these services. Increasing adequate educational opportunities by removing the unattractiveness of the rural areas, providing social and cultural development, and following such policies will be effective in this direction.[38,39, 40]

CONCLUSION
Consequently, all the headmen who participated in the study stated that they believed that the sports activities to be held in the countryside would contribute greatly to the development of the youth. They want the rural areas to host talented athletes who can represent their country both in team sports and in individual sports, and therefore, they want rural areas and villages to be provided with sports services by local governments and to build areas where they can do sports, especially for young people. However, although this is the case, they stated that there are no sports fields in rural areas, that the local governments they are affiliated with should support them in this regard and that they have serious expectations in this regard. Nearly half of the headmen (45%) stated that they applied to the local governments for sports facilities, while 55% did not. While doing this, the headmen who applied stated that "They have a benefit to the youth and their villages, their financial strength and knowledge on this subject are not sufficient, so they applied to the local governments, but they could not get any support". The headmen who did not apply stated that they would not be taken care of and that they did not take any action because they thought they had other needs. Again, all the headmen who participated in the study stated that "They want sports facilities for their villages, whether big or small, where people can do sports and come together".

In this study, the sensitivities of the headmen, who are accepted as the closest service unit to the public, regarding sports services and youth, and their thoughts on serving them are important in terms of showing the level of Turkish society.

Suggestions: From now on, the opinions and thoughts of the headmen should be considered in the planning of the services to be offered to the villages. Nevertheless, in this study, it has been revealed that local governments do not provide sufficient support to the rural areas in terms of sports services. Most of the headmen stated that they will not be taken care of and their demands will not be taken into consideration. In future scientific studies, it should be investigated and clarified why the headmen think this way and what local governments can do about it.

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