

Collective Efficacy as a Factor in Group Empowerment among People with Disabilities: A Case Study of Wheelchair Tennis Players of Bogor District's National Paralympic Committee of Indonesia

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Abstract- Persons with disabilities are frequently underestimated because of their impairments. However, they have the same potential abilities as non-disabled people. One such potential is participating in physical activities, such as sports. Sport is not only a leisure activity for people with disabilities; it can also lead to group empowerment. For people with disabilities, group empowerment through participation in sport can consist of collective efficacy, group identity, and the creation of a motivational environment. This paper examines collective efficacy that supports the group empowerment of people with disabilities in sport by focusing on wheelchair tennis players who belong to the National Paralympic Committee of Indonesia (NPCI). Based on qualitative methods, this research describes the collective efficacy of the empowerment of the wheelchair tennis group of the NPCI of Bogor District. This is a descriptive paper based on qualitative research methods. The results of the research suggest that the members of the wheelchair tennis group feel empowered. Team members are empowered through intensive and frequent practice that builds social cohesion. This social cohesion is strengthened through good communication, coordination, and cooperation, particularly when facing competition. However, group empowerment is less effective when athletic coaches lack experience and knowledge to help disabled players develop their tennis skills.

Keywords: empowerment, group work, disability, sports, collective efficacy

Introduction

According to the World Bank, 600 million people, or 10% of the global population, live with disability and 80% of them live in developed countries. People with disabilities who live in developed countries are associated with poverty (WHO, 2008). The results of a survey conducted in 2012 by the Indonesian Centre of Data and Information and Directorate of Social Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities showed that 2,126,000 people or 0.85% of Indonesia's total population have disabilities.

People with disabilities continue to face social discrimination that prevents them from participating in many of the activities that non-disabled people take for granted (Oliver, 1990). People with disabilities face social obstacles, negative attitudes, and social discrimination. They and their families encounter stigma, disempowerment, and social and economic marginalization. As a result, opportunities are lost for individuals to develop their potential and contribution to their communities or society in general. The negative meanings that are often associated with people with disabilities are affected by the societal paradigm of normality. The construction of this paradigm is formed around concepts of a "normal" body as a complete structure without impairment (Oliver, 1990).

Discrimination against people with disabilities results in the loss of rights and opportunities to

develop according to individual capabilities. One such lost opportunity is the development of sporting potential. Sport has the potential to encourage people with disabilities and offer opportunities for inclusivity (World Health Organization [WHO], 2008). Despite social discrimination against people with disabilities, according to Mockeviciene and Savenkoviene (2012), people with disabilities are generally able to do the same activities, including sports, as non-disabled people. Research has found that people with disabilities who participate in sports are less reliant on others and are less likely to suffer from stress, depression, or illness (Mockeviciene & Savenkoviene, 2012). Moreover, people with disabilities who participate in sports are more likely to rely on their own strengths and capabilities.

Furthermore, by participating in sport, people with disabilities demonstrate a preference for sporting activities in their leisure time. Membership of sports clubs or teams has been found to increase independence and self-confidence among people with disabilities (Oliver, 1996). Sport not only encourages people to achieve their potential, it may also be tool to empowerment. Rappaport (1987) approaches the concept of empowerment from the perspective of self-help, arguing that empowerment is a strong belief in one's ability to determine one's own fate and to involve oneself in community life. According to Gutierrez (1990), empowerment is a process to increase personal, interpersonal, or institutional strength, so that one can take action to elevate one's life condition. This definition explains how individuals from disadvantaged social groups may develop skills and abilities to control their lives and take action to change the conditions of their lives.

The National Paralympic Committee of Indonesia (NPCI) of Bogor District provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sports with fellow disabled athletes. Connections are made between disabled individuals through the social interactions that are part of sporting activity. Strengthening social relationships encourage the development of collective identity, social solidarity, participation in collective action, and maintenance of peaceful social relations (Lawson, 2005). Therefore, participation in sports and in collective action encourages group empowerment, which is reflected in routine group practices.

According to Aitchison (2003), leisure time sporting activity plays an important role in enhancing self-esteem and confidence, improving health and physical fitness, decreasing risk of diseases and contributing to social interaction and relationships. By participating in leisure time sports, people with disabilities experience psychological and social well-being because of interactions and relationships with teammates. In NPCI Bogor District, not only do individuals play sports, but they also interact with each other, thus connecting through playing games and the social interactions that accompany those games. Because of this social interaction, collective identity is established, the group feels social solidarity and is more likely to participate in collective action as well as maintain peaceful relationships (Lawson, 2005). Thus, participation with others in routine practices and collective action encourages the empowerment of people with disabilities in sports groups. However, a difference exists between participating in sports during leisure time and practicing sports intensively in order to compete in national or international competition. The members of the NPCI Bogor District Paralympic wheelchair tennis team belong to the latter category. These athletes perform

intensive group work and practice intervention at the group level. Group work is intended to facilitate intellectual, emotional, and social development of the individual through group activities. Different groups have different purposes, such as improving socialization, exchanging information, providing recreation opportunities, changing socially unacceptable values, and helping to establish better relationships between cultural and racial groups (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007). Group activity and focus can be diverse, such as arts and culture, games, sport, information exchange, and discussion topics, such as politics and religion. According to Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman (2007), different types of groups include recreation groups, recreation-skill groups, education groups, task groups, problem solving and policy making groups, self-help groups, socialization groups, therapy groups, and sensitivity groups. The wheelchair tennis group of NPCI Bogor District is an education group that focuses on learning and improving skills and obtaining knowledge. The leader of the group is usually a professional expert in a specific field. As an education group, each wheelchair tennis group member of NPCI Bogor District practices and improves their tennis skills in order to prepare for competition. The improvement of tennis playing abilities involves the implementation of a strength-based approach to improving ability and strength (Saleebey, 1996). In other words, this approach helps athletes to build on the skills they already possess and decide which skills require improvement in the future. This research, therefore, explores how a wheelchair tennis group is empowered through training and improving their ability as a group.

The empowerment of the members of the wheelchair tennis group is manifested in enhanced independence, self-confidence, ability to socialize and, most importantly, the efficacy of each member. Collective efficacy is an important supporting factor in the empowerment of the group. It is not only important during pre-competition training and preparation but also during routine practice and tournaments because of its effect on group capability. Collective efficacy during training and preparation results from group cohesion, the coordination and cooperation of members, and leadership. According to Carron (1982) (as cited in Horn, 2008,), cohesion is a dynamic process reflected in a group's tendency to adhere and to unite toward common goals and objectives. In sport, there are three fundamental assumptions about group cohesion. First, cohesion is a group property, the value of which is perceived by each group member. Second, members' beliefs derived from their experience reflect the belief in the group. Third, group orientation and members' perceptions are different. Therefore, strong group cohesion encourages group members to work together to realize their common objectives (Jung & Sosik, 2002).

The coordination and cooperation of the group is dependent on group size. Group size is a situational factor which differs according to cohesive factors (Carron, et. al., 1995 in Horn, 2008). From study of Widmeyer, Brawley, and Carron (1990) in Horn (2008) for non-disabled sports group, if group size is small (1–3 members) task and group orientation are low. However, if group size is medium (3–6 people) group orientation is high. Therefore, group size is a contributing factor to collective efficacy and has a particular impact on group coordination and cooperation. Larger groups have a negative effect on collective efficacy, as group coordination is more difficult, making it more difficult maintain cohesion (Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001 in Horn, 2008). Ultimately, collective efficacy requires effective leadership to contribute

to the functioning of the group. A leader is a role model who exhibits positive attitudes and actions that are socially important for collective efficacy. Thus, a self-confident and successful leader is more likely to increase collective efficacy (Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001 in Horn, 2008). The current research, therefore, aims to explore how collective efficacy supports the empowerment of groups of people with disabilities, focusing on the wheelchair tennis group of NPCI Bogor District.

Method

A qualitative approach was taken to exploring the question of collective efficacy and empowerment. According to Neuman (2003), qualitative research emphasizes the process and meaning of social reality rather than quantity or frequency. Data were collected using a literature review, in-depth interviews with informants, observation, and photo documentation. Informants consisted of one wheelchair tennis coach (HM), the head of wheelchair tennis at NPCI Bogor District (AA), and three wheelchair tennis athletes (PS, AS, and NS). To acquire valid information, researchers chose informants who are involved in wheelchair tennis activities and who possess a sound understanding of the activities, practice regimes, and competitions of the NPCI Bogor District wheelchair tennis group, as well as those in leadership roles who design, lead, and supervise activities and practice. The three participants are professional athletes who have been playing competitive tennis for ten to twenty years, have been members of NPCI Bogor District for five to ten years, and who possess a sound understanding of the NPCI Bogor District members and activities.

Collected data were analyzed, according to the procedures described by Creswell (2009). Raw data, consisting of interview transcripts, photo documentation, field notes, secondary sources and documents related to the research, were collected and organized. These data were re-read and re-organized, coded, and categorized according to the themes and descriptions that emerged from data coding. The categorized themes and descriptions were then interpreted to generate meaning. These meanings are analyzed based on the research framework, synergized with other meanings and elaborated into a research narrative. To improve research quality (trustworthiness), research triangulation was undertaken, by checking relevant supporting references to prove the validity of the research and veracity of participants (Moleong, 2001). A descriptive research and analysis method was chosen as it was the most appropriate method to describe group empowerment through the collective efficacy of people with disabilities in the NPCI Bogor District.

This research was conducted at the National Paralympic Committee of Indonesia (NPCI) in Bogor District. This organization was chosen because of its contribution to wheelchair tennis in Indonesia. Its athletes have competed in national competitions, such as the Pekan Paralimpiade Nasional (abbreviated Peparnas or National Paralympic Week) in 2012 and 2016 and international competitions, such as the ASEAN Paragames 2011 and the Athens Paralympics in 2004. Wheelchair tennis was chosen as the focus of this research as, unlike other sports, such as wheelchair basketball, it is an individual or pairs sport. Team sports require group collaboration and intensive team practice to achieve their goals. In the case of team sports, all group members

regularly discuss their playing and team strategy. However, a sport such as tennis requires no such collaboration but rather discussion between individual players regarding targets, including, for instance, winning a team gold medal or a medal for mixed tennis. Wheelchair tennis athletes do not have the same intensive relationships with teammates to achieve common goals. Nevertheless, social interaction does exist between teammates and requires good communication and relations, particularly when preparing for tournaments, such as the intensive practices that took place in Bandung for five months in preparation for the Peparnas games. The research was conducted onsite at the tennis courts of the Government of Bogor District, the tennis courts at the Center for Rehabilitation of Indonesia's Ministry of Defence, the tennis courts at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia when athletes were preparing for Peparnas 2016, and at the Siliwangi tennis court at Bandung during Peparnas 2016.

Results

Collective efficacy within the wheelchair tennis group of NPCI Bogor District centers on group capabilities to achieve the best result. It is supported by group cohesion, coordination, and cooperation, as well as by strong leadership by the head of wheelchair tennis in the NPCI Bogor District.



Fig. 1. Routine Practice of Wheelchair Tennis Athletes of NPCI Bogor District in Preparation of Peparnas 2016

A. Group Cohesion

1) Cohesion of Group Focus

Both individual and group capabilities are affected by the individual athlete's and the group's focus during practice sessions in preparation for a tournament. Therefore, if all group members believe in the group's ability in both practice and tournament, they also believe that everyone is focused in both practice and tournament. To elevate tennis skills and group focus, all team members followed an intensive five-month training program at Bandung. Team members practiced six days a week, from 9am to 3pm.

This intensive training program prepared all team members by improving their focus during practice and their readiness for tournament action. The outcome was a high level of achievement. However, this intensive training program did not support the tennis players to achieve the maximum result. This may be because the training program designed by the coach

was not feasible or was inappropriate for these athletes. One of the athletes, PS, said, “In terms of focused practices, we already focus on it, but it might not be the right practice program for us... It could be the duration of coaching, training methods, physical training methods. I don’t think any of the practice programs are appropriate enough for us.” (PS, wheelchair tennis athlete of NPCI Bogor District, on April 17, 2017). At this point in tournament preparation, the team members were already highly focused on their practice, particularly because of the intensive five-month regime. However, the practice program designed by their coaches could not improve the athletes’ tennis playing skills, so the target of winning many gold medals was not achieved.

2) Cohesion on Group’s Problem Solving

Both focus on achievement and group cohesion reflected the group’s ability to resolve problems. Group problems occurred both inside and outside the court. Problem arose between fellow tennis players, between players and organization board members, and between players and coach. The head of NPCI Bogor District, research participant AA, said that tennis players are usually left alone to solve their own problems, but he would intervene if problems arose related to coach or organization board members.

“When I see that the problem is a small one, I think it can be solved without my intervention because these athletes are already mature, so they can solve their own problems... When we face a problem, we must know it very well, verify it, and know how to solve it. If it is a big problem and related to the coach or the organization board members of NPCI Bogor District or even the province, I must intervene so as not to disturb the athletes’ mental health while they are preparing to compete in a tournament.” (AA, Head of NPCI Bogor District, on April 13, 2017). As the head of the organization and of the wheelchair tennis group, before AA intervenes in a problem, he first determines the severity of the problem, and whether intervention is necessary or if group members have the maturity to resolve the problem themselves. However, if the problem is related to a coach or organization board member, AA must intervene in order to avoid any psychological disturbances the athletes might experience that could affect them when practicing and competing.

3) Cohesion on Group Responsibilities

Every individual in a group has their own responsibilities to the group. The responsibilities of wheelchair tennis players in the NPCI Bogor District include attending practices and obeying group rules. As stated by tennis player AS, “Everybody in this group is responsible for practices, our rules, and so on. Everyone will make it succeed until the end.” (AS, wheelchair tennis athlete of NPCI Bogor District on April 17, 2017).

B. Coordination and Cooperation among Ten Group Members

It is known that group size affects collective efficacy. The group of wheelchair tennis players of NPCI Bogor District has ten members. This number could affect coordination and cooperation between group members. With regard to this, AA stated that, with the aid of technology, the group size does not hinder coordination, “It is all good. Especially in this modern era, technology makes it easier to coordinate and cooperate. We already have a *WhatsApp* group.” (AA, Head of NPCI Bogor District, on April 13, 2017).

C. Leadership of Head of Wheelchair Tennis Group of NPCI Bogor District

To ensure cohesion, coordination, and cooperation among all group members, an effective leader is needed who can embrace and guide his group members' so that they are enthusiastic about participation and feel empowered to achieve the targets they have set. However, the group failed to meet its gold medal targets at Peparnas 2016. AA, the head of NPCI Bogor District, admitted that these targets had not been achieved and said he is planning some improvements to his leadership for the future, "Yes, it has to. Indeed, if we are talking about results, our gold medals dropped from six to five. That's what we need to improve. Next time, there will be some improvements to wheelchair tennis." (AA, Head of NPCI Bogor District on April 13, 2017).

Despite this, tennis player PS believed that AA had led and developed his athletes well. He compared informant AA with heads of NPCI in other regions and he thought that AA's leadership was better than others. His good leadership could be observed during practice sessions, where he paid attention to athletes' welfare and incentivized them to do well, "For wheelchair tennis overall, Mr. AA is really good in developing his athletes... Until now, if comparing leadership with other NPCI, I thought that he is doing better. Technically, he provides welfare for disabled athletes. We have followed all practices, but the priority is welfare. He really pays attention on it. Besides practices, he cares about our welfare... For example, he gives us such incentives for athletes. For communication, it also matters. He always communicates everything to his athletes." (PS, wheelchair tennis athlete of NPCI Bogor District, on April 17, 2017).

Table I. Summary of Collective Efficacy among Wheelchair Tennis Group of NPCI Bogor District

Supporting Factors of Collective Efficacy	Elaboration (results of coding and taxonomy from observations and interview)
Group Capabilities	- Good preparation among group members
Group Cohesion Cohesion of Group Focus	Degradation of achievement between Peparnas 2012 and Peparnas 2016 Focus on practicing is not supported by a right and feasible practice program Group became more focus on practice because of intensive practice for five months at Bandung to prepare athletes Peparnas 2016
Cohesion of Group Problem Solving	Problems among fellow athletes, athlete with coach, or athlete with organization board members Cohesion among group members to solve their own problems
Cohesion on Group Responsibilities	Balance between individual responsibilities and of the group Responsible to attend routine practices

Coordination and Cooperation among Ten Group Members	Technology <i>WhatsApp</i> makes coordination among group members easier
Leadership of Head of Wheelchair Tennis Group of NPCI Bogor District	Concern of group head to his athletes' welfare and incentive giving Group head who always communicates with his athletes to embrace and listen to their needs and complaints

Theoretically, group collective efficacy is affected by group members' efforts and contributions. Those efforts and contributions come from capabilities and abilities of group members to reach the group's target (Zaccaro, *et. al*, 1995 in Maddux, 1995). Furthermore, collective efficacy is divided into three supporting factors: group cohesion, group size, and leadership.

Adherence among group members can be observed in group focus, particularly during practice in preparation for the Peparnas 2016 games at Bandung. All informants were of the opinion that the entire team was focused during the practices. As stated earlier by PS, all group members were highly focused during intensive training. If group members are cohesive and focused on routine practices, their focus and cohesiveness is also reflected in the group's ability to resolve problems. In addition, group cohesion also arises from fulfilling group responsibilities such as attending routine practices.

Coordination and cooperation among group members is also supported by group size. However, modern communication technology makes for easier coordination and cooperation among group members, irrespective of group size. Coordination and cooperation of the wheelchair tennis group of NPCI Bogor District is facilitated by the use of the mobile communication application *WhatsApp*, as stated by informant AA.

In addition to cohesion and group size, leadership is a supporting factor of collective efficacy. In this case, AA, the group leader, embraced his group members through continuous communication, caring for the athletes' welfare, and giving them incentives to succeed. Each of these three factors (group cohesion, group coordination and cooperation, and leadership) is essential to the development of the group's collective efficacy. Adherence of group members to group focus, group problem solving, and to group responsibilities result in members becoming reliant on each other and establishing a mutual belief in collective efficacy.

Good coordination and cooperation boost belief in the group among its ten members. Group cohesion, coordination, and cooperation require a leader who values communication and who embraces his members so that cohesion, coordination, and cooperation collaboratively create a sense of collective efficacy that empowers all group members. If collective efficacy comes from good leadership that can unite cohesion, coordination, and cooperation among group members, it will be a supporting factor in creating empowerment because of the power distribution resulting from collaboration through participation. The distribution of power due

to collective efficacy is reflected in a growing group belief about future possibilities if group members support, coordinate, and cooperate with each other. This unity is facilitated by a leadership that embraces and communicates with all group members. Cohesion, coordination, cooperation, and leadership to create empowerment from collective efficacy can only happen with the collaboration and participation of every group member (Lawson, 2005). This explanation is summarized in Table II.

Table II. Elaboration of Collective Efficacy Theory and Findings

Collective Efficacy Findings	Group Cohesion	Group Coordination and Cooperation	Leadership of Group Head
Intensive practices for preparation competing on Peparnas 2016	√	√	√
Focus Group	√	√	√
Group Problem Solving	√		√
Group Responsibilities	√		
Coordination and cooperation among group members	√	√	√
Leadership by group head	√	√	√

Conclusion

Collective efficacy is one factor, of three, that supports group empowerment of people with disabilities, as observed among the wheelchair tennis group of NPCI Bogor District. This factor consists of group cohesion, coordination and cooperation among group members, and strong leadership. Adherence of group members to group cohesion creates mutual dependence and relationships between these members, and a strengthened belief in collective efficacy. Coordination and cooperation among group members promotes group belief. To ensure cohesiveness, coordination, and cooperation among members, a strong leader is needed who can communicate and embrace all group members, and thus unite and empower all. Collective efficacy is, therefore, a supporting factor of empowerment. The power distribution created through collective efficacy is reflected in emerging group beliefs about their capabilities. When all group members support and agree, coordinate and cooperate with each other, their unity is facilitated by good leadership that embraces all group members through ongoing communication. Encourage empowerment from collective efficacy can only happen when there is collaboration between and participation from of each group member.

It can be concluded, therefore, that with collective efficacy, a group is empowered with the belief that cohesiveness, coordination, and cooperation make them stronger; this unity is

supported by a leadership that supports the group through ongoing and open communication. Despite the participants in this research being professional athletes, intervention programs were still required, especially with regard to an appropriate practice program to further improve their tennis playing skills. Appropriate intervention could be given by a coach with enough experience to work with athletes with disabilities. It is recommended that a coach with experience in training athletes with disabilities should be hired for such a job or, if an organization does not have a coach with such experience, existing coaches should seek advice on practice programs from the head of the wheelchair tennis group and from the athletes themselves.

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