

Perceptions of Women in Turkey on the Concepts of “Caesarean Section” and “Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section”: A Metaphor Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Background

Determining how women make sense of their birth preferences with metaphor analysis will be an important step in determining perceptions about birth options.

Objective

The aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of women who had cesarean section regarding the concept of “cesarean birth” and “Vaginal birth after cesarean section” with metaphor analysis.

Materials and Methods:

This study is a qualitative research based on the philosophy of Husserl’s phenomenology, which was carried out between June and November 2022. Within the scope of the research, 50 women who had a cesarean section were interviewed face to face. The metaphor form prepared in line with the international literature was used to determine women’s perceptions of the concept of “Caesarean section” and “Vaginal birth after cesarean section”.

Results

25 metaphors for cesarean birth and 28 metaphors for vaginal birth after cesarean section were identified. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, three themes were determined within the scope of cesarean section and vaginal birth after cesarean section.

Conclusions

This study took a unique approach to revealing women’s birth experiences and perceptions. Vaginal birth after cesarean section is a very valuable birth method for women who have had a cesarean section and are curious about the feeling of vaginal birth.

Keywords

Cesarean Birth; Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section; Metaphor Analysis; Midwife

INTRODUCTION

It has been reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) that the reliable cesarean section rate is 10-15% ¹. However, when we look at the world-wide, cesarean section (CS) preference rates are well above the specified range. While Turkey ranks first with a cesarean rate of 54%, Korea has 47%, Poland 38%, Hungary 38%, and Italy 32% cesarean rates ². The rapid increase in caesarean section rates is a major threat to both the health system and public health in the future.

The main factor in the increase in CSs is that women who prefer CS during pregnancy are likely to choose CS again in their next delivery ^{3,4}. Vaginal birth after cesarean section (VBAC) is an important step to break the “once a cesarean, always a cesarean” mentality.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) stated that VBAC is more reliable than repeated cesarean sections, and vaginal birth should always be preferred if the conditions are suitable ⁵. Birth preferences of women and obstetricians are affected by various factors ^{6,7}. Social norms, culture, fear of vaginal birth, belief that CS is safer and controlled, and not wanting to remember the birth with the effect of anesthesia are among the reasons why women prefer elective cesarean section ⁸. It has

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been mentioned in the literature that there are limited studies on the in-depth examination of women's views on VBAC, and it has been underlined that there is a need for qualitative research on choosing VBAC ^{6,9}.

Metaphors are tools that help people make sense of events and objects and embody abstract concepts. Using metaphors allows people to more accurately convey what they feel ^{10,11}. On the other hand, using metaphors gives important clues in defining people's perceptions. It is a matter of curiosity what are the metaphors developed by women who prefer CS regarding "cesarean birth" and "vaginal birth after caesarean section". Therefore, performing a metaphor analysis on women's birth preferences will be an important step in determining how women make sense of CS and VBAC. In addition, this study is extremely important in terms of diagnosing women's knowledge and attitudes towards VBAC. Therefore, with this study, it is aimed to examine women's perceptions of the concept of "cesarean birth" and "vaginal birth after caesarean section" with metaphor analysis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

In this study, qualitative research method was used to investigate women's thoughts about their birth experiences in depth. The philosophy of Husserl phenomenology was adopted within the scope of the study. For descriptive phenomenological studies, it is thought that more reliable results can be obtained by choosing Husserl phenomenology, which is philosophically rigorous ¹². Husserl cares about obtaining data from the perspective of the person who has personally experienced the event to be investigated ¹². In this study, by obtaining the data through metaphors, women were provided to convey their perceptions about their birth preferences more accurately.

Participants

The research population will be composed of women who have given birth for the first time in seven geographical regions of Turkey. There were 1 million 79 thousand 842 live births in Turkey in 2021. ¹³. 54% of these births were women who preferred CS ². The research sample consisted of women who lived in different provinces of Turkey, who could speak and understand Turkish, preferred CS, and volunteered to participate in the study.

Since almost one out of every two women gives birth with CS, the most commonly used easily accessible situation sampling technique was used for the purpose of this study.

Looking at the qualitative studies in the literature where metaphors were determined, the number of participants varied between 20-50 ^{14,15}. A similar sample size was reached in this study, and a total of 50 women were interviewed. Pilot study data were not included in the final analysis.

Data collection

The research data were collected between June and November 2022 through the socio-demographic information form and the Metaphor form [There are two spaces for each birth type in the metaphor form prepared in line with the national and international literature. The women participating in the study were asked to fill in the blanks with their own words. "Caesarean section is like Because" "Vaginal birth after caesarean section is like Because"]. All women were informed about the study beforehand. Interviews with the women who volunteered to participate in the study were conducted one-on-one and face-to-face. Each woman was given about 10-15 minutes of reflection time and asked to fill out the form.

Socio-demographic Information Form:

The socio-demographic information form, which was developed by the researchers in line with the literature, consists of a total of eight questions, including the introductory characteristics of the participants (age, educational status, etc.) and information about their obstetric history.

Data analysis

SPSS 25.0 package program was used to analyze the descriptive data of the women participating in the study.

In the analysis of the study, the naming phase, the elimination phase, the category development phase, the validity and reliability phase, and finally the frequency calculation and interpretation phase were followed.

The metaphors produced during the naming phase were first transcribed in the Microsoft Word program. All metaphors are listed in alphabetical order separately for both birth options.

In the elimination phase, a meaningful relationship was examined between the metaphors developed by women

for CS and VBAC and their reasons, and the data that did not show a logical relationship were evaluated.

In the category development stage, the qualifications of the metaphors were examined. Then, metaphors were categorized within the scope of related themes.

The statements of the women are given exactly in the table in order to ensure validity in the validity and reliability phase. For reliability, both researchers in the study evaluated and categorized the determined metaphors independently of each other. Finally, a comparison was made and a joint decision was made.

Metaphors produced during the calculation and interpretation of frequencies are presented in tables with their percentages and frequencies, and the results of the analyzes are interpreted in the text.

Ethical clearance:

The study approval was obtained from the Ege University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (date:23.06.2022 protocol no: 1547). Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Permission was obtained from each participant to participate in the study. Sequence numbers have been given to the forms of all participants and the confidentiality of personal information has been given importance.

RESULTS:

The age of the women in the study group ranged from 25 to 48 years, with an average of 32.54 ± 6.69 years. 56% of women are undergraduate and 38% are high school graduates. They gave birth between 2001 and 2022. The birth of 54% of women is a pre-planned CS. 84% actually wanted a vaginal birth. 92% have heard of VBAC before. The majority of CS is due to recurrent CS and fear of childbirth.

Within the scope of the study, the metaphors that women created for CS and VBAC were determined.

A total of 25 metaphors created by the women participating in the study within the scope of CS were identified. The metaphors obtained were divided into three categories among themselves: A Bad Experience “Caesarean Section”, A Sensual Birth “Caesarean Section” and Life-Saving “Caesarean Section”. In Table 1, the metaphors that the women participating in the research created for CS are given together with their reasons. According to frequency values, the

most frequently used metaphors are “surgery” (f=18), “savior” (f=4), “unfinishedness” (f=2), “shelter” (f=2), “torture” (f= 2) and “nightmare” (f=2).

Category 1: Bad experience “Caesarean section”

Within the scope of this category, 15 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study mentioned cesarean section as a bad experience.

Cesarean birth is like incompleteness. Because it was a very bad feeling not being able to act as I wanted and not be able to take care of my baby.

Cesarean birth is like nightmare. Because you sleep at the time of birth, you wake up, and then the pain, worries and unhappiness begin.

Category 2: A numb birth “Caesarean section”

Within the scope of this category, 25 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study emphasized that they did not feel pain during CS.

Cesarean birth is like surgery. Because you are having a surgical operation and you do not experience the feeling of giving birth.

Cesarean birth is like free motherhood. Because the baby is born without pain, before the baby is ready for birth. It gave the impression that I could not fully feel my feelings of being a mother.

Category 3: “Caesarean section” that saves lives

Within the scope of this category, 10 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study emphasized that cesarean section is a life-saving operation.

Cesarean section is like a lifesaver. Because Cesarean section is to help save the baby who cannot be born with his own efforts in the water and drowns.

Cesarean birth is like a shelter. Because women who are afraid of Vaginal birth take shelter in cesarean section and it is believed that they will feel a lot of pain in Vaginal birth. Caesarean section sounds like an escape.

A total of 28 metaphors created by the women

Table 1. Frequencies, Justification and Category of Metaphors Created for Cesarean Section

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
1	Obligation (2)	Cesarean section is like an obligation. Because it was a risky pregnancy, I had to give birth by cesarean section. Cesarean section is like an obligation. Because I never wanted to have a caesarean section. But I was compelled. After the birth, I could not recover immediately, I had pains. I couldn't take care of my baby.	Bad experience "Caesarean section"
2	Necessity (1)	Cesarean section is like a necessity. Because when they cannot have a Vaginal birth, they immediately take a caesarean section.	
3	Death (1)	Cesarean section is like death. Because I closed my eyes on the operating table and then when I opened my eyes, everything was over. Cesarean section is very difficult. No one should ever choose. You do not have any pain at the time of delivery, but you suffer a lot after Cesarean section. Whether it's back pain, whether it's body pain. It has very bad consequences.	
4	Regional Injury (1)	Cesarean section is like a regional injury. Because of that area, you are forced not to be able to do anything alone.	
5	Ball of Fire (1)	Cesarean section is like a ball of flame. Because Cesarean section burns every woman who prefers it. It is not healthy at all for both mother and baby. After the Cesarean section, I had intestinal problems, bloating problems. My children also have allergic asthma bronchitis. I think all this is always due to Cesarean section.	
6	Trauma (1)	Cesarean section is like trauma. Because you feel more pain after childbirth and the recovery lasts much longer.	
7	Torture (2)	Cesarean section is like torture. Because there is a long period of surgery pain after birth. Cesarean section is like torture. Because I had a lot of pain after the caesarean section. I couldn't even take care of the baby.	
8	Nightmare (2)	Cesarean section is like a nightmare. Because I slept in the hospital where I went because I was going to have a Vaginal birth, I woke up by giving birth by cesarean section. I couldn't recover for three months after giving birth. Cesarean section is like a nightmare. Because you sleep at the time of birth, you wake up, after birth, pain, worries, unhappiness then begin.	
9	Helplessness (1)	Cesarean section is like despair. Because I had a caesarean section before, I was not given another chance.	
10	Splitting Up (1)	Cesarean section is like dividing into two. Because they literally split me in two. They tore it apart. I think so. I see my half region as another half region as different. I wouldn't recommend a caesarean section to anyone, and I never wanted to.	
11	Incompleteness (2)	Cesarean birth is like incompleteness. Because it was a very bad feeling not being able to move and take care of my baby as I wanted. Cesarean birth is like incompleteness. Because the bond that will form between mother and baby is delayed.	

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
12	Separation of Brain and Body (1)	Cesarean section is like the separation of the brain and body. Because you don't see your baby come into the world, but you can hold it in your arms.	A numb birth "Cesarean section"
13	Surgery (18)	<p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because with the effect of narcosis, the waist down is anesthetized and you do not feel anything.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because the symptoms that will develop next are uncertain.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because after the birth, I felt a lot of pain in my abdomen. It was as if someone was putting salt on that cut area in my stomach. I felt so much pain.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because with the effect of narcosis, you do not feel any pain at the time of birth.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because I had to have a caesarean section. My baby's lack of a normal position pushed me to a caesarean section and I had to.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because you can't stand up immediately after birth, as you would in a Vaginal birth. You go through a very painful and painful process.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because you give birth without feeling pain and pain.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. 'Cause you don't feel anything during childbirth</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because there is an incision scar in the abdominal area. The recovery period after childbirth takes a long time. And you go through a very painful process.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because after birth, you can not stand up immediately. Recovery takes a long time.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because they give you narcosis, you sleep, they cut your stomach.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because you are undergoing a surgical operation and you do not experience the feeling of giving birth.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because there is an instant birth and you do not feel anything.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because all the steps of the surgical operation are applied in the birth.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because general anesthesia is given. You close and open your eyes and hold your baby in your arms. It's all over.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because after birth, you can't recover immediately and you can't benefit your baby.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because after the insect bites, you experience its pain for a long time. The wound does not heal immediately. You do not feel anything at the time of Cesarean section, but you will suffer after the birth.</p> <p>Cesarean section is like surgery. Because you go through the same process. You're getting ready. You take anaesthesia. A surgical procedure is performed.</p>	
14	False Birth (1)	Cesarean section is like a false birth. Because it takes longer to collect after childbirth. The interaction with your baby is much weaker than normal.	
15	Free motherhood (1)	Cesarean section is like free motherhood. Because without pain, before the baby is ready to give birth. It gave me the impression that I could not fully feel the feelings of being a mother.	
16	Hypnosis (1)	Cesarean section is like hypnosis. Because you know something is going on, but you can't feel it, you can't react.	
17	Stage Curtain (1)	Cesarean section is like a stage curtain. Because you are put to sleep by the effect of narcosis. You are watching the birth process in a cold room with labor pains without any control. When the film is over, the curtain closes.	
18	Waking Up from Sleep (1)	Cesarean section is like being woken up from sleep. Because before the baby's birth, they intervene from the outside and wake up the baby.	
19	Plucking the Raw Fruit (1)	Cesarean section is like plucking the fruit that is not complete. Because we give birth before the baby develops before the day is filled	

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
20	Savior (4)	Cesarean section is like a savior. Because I am very afraid of the vaginal examination to be performed during delivery. Cesarean section is like a liberating birth from pain. Because vaginal birth is very scary. Cesarean section is like a savior. Because it is a huge advantage for those who are afraid of normal childbirth. Cesarean section is like a savior. Because there is no waiting. Was he born? He doesn't have to worry about whether he will be born. No pain. No pain.	"Caesarean section" that saves lives
21	Real Birth (1)	Cesarean section is like a real birth. Because I think the risks are much higher in a Vaginal birth.	
22	Shelter (2)	Cesarean section is like a shelter. Because women who are afraid of Vaginal birth take refuge in caesarean section and it is believed that they will feel very painful in Vaginal birth. A caesarean section feels like an escape. Cesarean section is like a shelter. Because although they say that Cesarean section is more difficult, you also suffer from pain in Vaginal birth. In a caesarean section, at least you do not feel your pain at the time of birth.	
23	Experience (1)	Cesarean section is like an experience. Because if you have not had surgery before, you experience how and through which stages the surgery goes.	
24	Vaginal birth (1)	Cesarean section is like a Vaginal birth. Because I think the main goal is to bring the baby into the world healthy.	
25	Lifesaver (1)	Cesarean section is like a lifesaver. Because Cesarean section is to help save the baby who cannot be born with his own efforts in the water and drowns.	

participating in the study within the scope of VBAC were determined. The metaphors obtained were divided into three categories: Vaginal Birth is Every Woman's Right, Post Cesarean Vaginal Birth is a Risky and Scary Situation, and Post Cesarean Vaginal Birth is Unsafe. Looking at Table 2, metaphors for VBAC are given with their justifications. According to frequency values, the most frequently used metaphors are "taking risks" (f=6), "gambling" (f=5), "second chance" (f=4), "bomb" (f=2), "testing board" (f=2), "real birth" (f=2), "suffering" (f=2), "uncertainty" (f=2), "horror movie" (f=2), "miracle" (f=2), "born again" (f=2) and "gift" (f=2).

Category 1: Vaginal Birth Every Woman's Right

Within the scope of this category, 21 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study emphasized that vaginal birth is an experience that should be experienced.

Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a very desirable gift. Because a mother who has to give birth by cesarean will always wonder about that moment.

Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a miracle. Because it makes you feel how strong your body is.

Category 2: Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section a Risky and Scary Situation

In this category, 18 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study emphasized that VBAC is a very risky and frightening situation.

Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a bomb. Because I think my stitches that were thrown in the previous CS can be opened. This scares me.

A Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like a horror movie. Because every moment of birth is stressful, anxious and tense.

Category 3: Vaginal Birth After Cesarean An Unreliable Situation

Within the scope of this category, 11 metaphors were discussed. Considering the common features and analogy aspects of the metaphors obtained, the women participating in the study emphasized that they had

Table 2. Frequencies, Rationale and Category of Metaphors Created for Vaginal Delivery After Cesarean Section

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
1	Giving Birth for the First Time(1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like giving birth for the first time. Because I think the real birth is vaginal delivery.	Vaginal Birth Every Woman's Right
2	Dream (1)	A Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like the realization of my dream. Because to me to choose a Vaginal birth is to feel that I am really giving birth and that I am a mother.	
3	Experience (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a new experience. Because I experience both cesarean section and vaginal delivery.	
4	Real Birth (2)	A Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like what should be (real birth). Because what should happen for the health of mother and baby is definitely Vaginal birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a real birth. Because as long as there is no problem in terms of health, Vaginal birth should be preferred. Motherhood is felt most deeply because it is the most special moment of mother and baby.	
5	Story with a Happy Ending (1)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a story with a happy ending. Because you are going through a difficult process, but you recover very quickly after the baby is born. You're getting healthier. You also become more productive to both yourself and your baby.	
6	Happiness (1)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like complete happiness. Because suffering from the pain of childbirth, living in that moment, would make me feel like a real mother.	
7	Miracle (2)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a miracle. Because it makes you feel how strong your body is. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a miracle. Because it is a way of birth that is more natural in every aspect and easier for the aftermath.	
8	Must Be (2)	A Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like what should be (real birth). Because what should happen for the health of mother and baby is definitely Vaginal birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is as it should be. Because although the pain before Vaginal birth is high, there is no pain after birth and recovery is fast.	
9	Born again (2)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like being born again. Because the human body, the body, is being renewed. You recover very quickly and stand up. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like being born again. Because the emptying of my heart and the Vaginal birth of my baby is a miracle that God sent him to me.	
10	Second Chance (4)	Normal delivery after Cesarean section is like a second chance. Because it is an opportunity for women who want a Vaginal birth and have a cesarean section. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a second chance. Because it is a second chance for a woman who wants to have a Vaginal birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a second chance. Because with an experienced and knowledgeable doctor and a compatible mother who does her part, the baby can be born in a healthy way again. Normal delivery after Cesarean section is like a second chance. Because I would love to experience Vaginal birth.	
11	Gift (2)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a very desirable gift. Because a mother who is forced to give birth by cesarean section will always wonder about that moment. Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a gift. Because I don't want to have a Cesarean section again. Cesarean section is very scary.	
12	Cleaning (1)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like cleaning. Because the inside of his stomach empties without any outside intervention.	
13	Sunrise (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like sunrise. Because when the time comes, the baby should be born spontaneously.	

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
14	Explosive (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like an explosive. Because Vaginal birth is already a very difficult way of birth. It must be much more difficult to have a Vaginal birth after a caesarean section.	Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section a Risky and Scary Situation
15	Danger (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a danger. Because I think vaginal delivery after a caesarean section is much more difficult.	
16	Bomb (2)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a bomb. Because it's a good advantage. But when I push during the birth, I notice that my stitches burst. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like a bomb. Because I think that my stitches can be opened at birth first. That scares me.	
17	Torture (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like torture. Because you will struggle with pain, you will wait for so many hours. The pains of the previous caesarean section will be added.	
18	Suffering (2)	Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like suffering. Because during Vaginal birth, the pain in the cesarean section scar can be felt quite intensely and there may be tearing in that area. Vaginal birth after a cesarean section is like suffering. Because I will suffer for a long time due to the pains and I will be hurt because of the old cesarean section.	
19	Horror Movie (2)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a horror movie. Because the idea of having a Vaginal birth after a cesarean section scares me. A bad scenario comes to life in my eyes. Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a horror movie. Because every moment of birth is stressful, uneasy and nervous.	
20	Death (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like death. Because everything that is uncertain when and how it will happen affects people badly. During pregnancy, not knowing when and how the birth will take place has a bad psychological effect.	
21	Separation of Flesh and Bone (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like the separation of flesh and bone. Because childbirth is a very painful and difficult thing.	
22	Piercing the Wound That Has Been Bound by the Scab (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like piercing the wound that binds the scab. Because it makes me feel scary and bitter. I think the old cesarean section at birth will hurt a lot.	
23	Taking Risks (6)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because it makes me think my stitches are going to explode. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because in a Vaginal birth, I put my baby at risk. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because it makes me think my baby is in danger and gives me the feeling that my baby won't be born. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because it suggests that my internal stitches will burst due to straining at the time of birth and that the risk of bleeding will increase after birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because a woman who has experienced the ease of Cesarean section will be afraid and worried about the pain of Vaginal birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like taking risks. Because having a Vaginal birth after a caesarean section can be risky. Can I push during childbirth? After all, they had cut off my abdomen before.	

Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section a Risky and Scary Situation

No	Metafor (f)	Rigged	Category
24	Unnecessary Experience (1)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like an unnecessary experience. Because once I have experienced a birth preference, it can be difficult to try another way of giving birth.	Vaginal Birth After Cesarean An Unreliable Situation
25	Test board (2)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a test board. Because there is no experience of vaginal delivery after Cesarean section. This increases my fears. Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like a test board. Because we don't know how the moment of birth will progress. Normal delivery after a caesarean section can be difficult.	
26	Gambling (5)	Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like gambling. Because as someone who has given birth by cesarean section three times, what if I can't give birth? What if my stitches open? Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like gambling. Because there is a risk that the previous cesarean section delivery incision will be opened. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like gambling. Because I find it very risky after a caesarean section. You take risks and prefer a vaginal birth, whatever chance you get at the time of birth. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like gambling. Because vaginal birth after cesarean section is to put the mother and baby at risk. Vaginal birth after Cesarean section is like gambling. Because having a Vaginal birth after cesarean section can be a very risky situation. It makes me think about what can happen at the time of birth.	
27	Uncertainty (2)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like an uncertainty. Because I can't identify her because I haven't had a birth like this before. Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like an uncertainty. Because I can't define it completely because I did not have a Vaginal birth after Cesarean section.	
28	Game of Chance (1)	Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like games of chance. Because having a Vaginal birth after Cesarean section can be risky. You never know what will come to your fortune. A negative situation may be encountered at the time of birth.	

confidence problems towards VBAC.

Vaginal birth after cesarean section is like gambling. Because as someone who has CS three times, what if I can't give birth? What if my stitches open?

After cesarean birth, it is like a Vaginal birth test board. Because there is no experience of VBAC in my environment. This adds to my fears.

DISCUSSION

For every woman, the moment of birth is very precious and unforgettable. Women remember this process as good or bad. The use of metaphors by women to describe their birth memories is the best expression to summarize this process. Metaphors are very important in terms of emphasizing the meaning, facilitating the

narration, and expressing oneself better¹⁶. Therefore, the metaphors that women use for their birth processes are an important approach in revealing their birth experiences and expectations.

With the increase in CS rates, maternal mortality and morbidity rates also increase¹⁷. Compared to vaginal birth, CS has a higher complication rate in the mother and newborn. Therefore, health expenditures are higher¹⁷. Women who participated in our study frequently mentioned CS as a bad experience because of the problems experienced after CS.

CS is the most common surgery performed in childbearing age (Antoine and Young, 2020). In our study, the majority of mothers defined CS as an operation and mentioned that they did not experience the feeling of birth. Similarly, in another study, women

stated that they did not experience the feeling of giving birth at the time of CS, that they felt worthless, and that CS had a traumatic effect on them¹⁸.

CS is a life-saving operation in cases such as placental problems, malpresentation, and presence of infection. However, even in cases where there is no medical indication, women prefer CS¹⁹. The women who participated in our study stated that CS is a life-saving practice for women who have fear of childbirth as well as situations where it is necessary. In studies, it has been determined that women prefer cesarean section for reasons such as prolonged vaginal birth, fear of birth and the danger of the fetus^{20,21}.

In our study, women stated that they would prefer VBAC because they wanted to experience vaginal birth. In the study of Attanasio et al. (2019), the most common reason for women to prefer VBAC was that they wanted to experience vaginal birth²².

In the study of Lazarou et al. (2021), seventy percent of 408 women who requested VBAC delivered vaginally. It has been stated that factors such as high BMI and fetal distress are effective as cesarean indications for women who were not successful in vaginal birth²³. The women who participated in our study mostly talked about the complications that may develop at the time of birth. Therefore, they found VBAC to be more risky and scary. This suggests that there is a need for valid and reliable tools that can evaluate women's eligibility for VBAC in the prenatal period.

Although VBAC is recommended, cesarean rates are increasing rapidly¹⁷. Studies have shown that informing women about VBAC is highly effective in choosing vaginal birth²⁴. Similarly, in our study, women stated that they did not trust VBAC because they did not have enough knowledge and experience about VBAC. Therefore, within the scope of antenatal care, in addition to CS and vaginal birth, every woman

should be informed in detail about VBAC by health professionals.

Limitations

In this study, only women who did CS were included in the sample. In future studies, perceptions of CS and vaginal delivery of women with VBAC experience can be determined through metaphors.

CONCLUSION

This study, which describes birth experiences through metaphors, determined women's perceptions of CS and VBAC.

Some women expressed regret about CS. Women who wanted to experience vaginal birth saw VBAC as a chance. Therefore, women should be given detailed information about VBAC as well as CS and vaginal birth during pregnancy. In the choice of birth, a joint decision should be made with the health professionals, the woman and her family. In addition, it is an important requirement to inform women in detail about the birth preferences within the scope of antenatal care, about the moment of birth and the positive or negative situations to be experienced in the postpartum period.

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Conflict of interest

None declared

Authors's Contributions

NUB; Data gathering and idea owner of this study, study design, data gathering, writing and submitting manuscript. ECT: Data gathering and idea owner of this study, study design, editing and approval of final draft. All authors contributed to this work and read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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