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Artificial Intelligence Radio Presenters from A Listener Perspective: Innovation or Distance?

Dinleyici Perspektifinden Yapay Zeka Radyo Sunucuları: Yenilik mi, Mesafe mi?

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ABSTRACT

With the acceleration of technological advances in recent years, many innovations that were dreams in the past have rapidly become a part of our lives. The most remarkable among these innovations is undoubtedly Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. AI technology, which has shown its effect in various fields such as medicine and engineering, has also taken its place in the broadcasting sector and has opened the door to brand new applications in the use of traditional communication tools with the opportunities it provides. AI technology has been used in radio broadcasting for some time, and even a radio presenter produced entirely with AI has been operating in the broadcasting sector. The radio programmer created with AI within Alem FM broadcasts 2 hours of radio broadcasting per week. The aim of this research is to investigate the listeners' attitudes towards the AI radio presenter and the motivations behind their decision to listen to this programme. Within the scope of the research in which qualitative research method was used, in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve people who were identified as listeners of this AI radio programme. The findings obtained were analysed within the framework of Elihu Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the listeners had a positive approach towards the AI presenter and listened to this programme with motivations such as having fun, curiosity, witnessing differences and innovations.

Keywords: AI, AI Radio Presenter, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Radio Listener, Ai Radio Presenter Listener.

ÖZ

Son yıllarda teknolojik ilerlemelerin ivme kazanmasıyla birlikte, geçmişte hayal olan birçok yenilik hızla hayatımızın bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Bu yenilikler arasında en dikkat çekeni, şüphesiz yapay zekâ teknolojisidir. Tıp ve mühendislik gibi çeşitli alanlarda etkisini gösteren yapay zekâ teknolojisi, yayıncılık sektöründe de yerini almış, sağladığı imkanlarla geleneksel iletişim araçlarının kullanılmasında yepyeni uygulamalara kapı aralamıştır. Yapay zekâ teknolojisi bir süredir radyo yayıncılığında kullanılmakta, tamamen yapay zekâ ile üretilen bir radyo programcısı yayıncılık sektöründe faaliyet göstermektedir. Alem FM'in bünyesinde bulunan yapay zekâ ile oluşturulmuş radyo programcısı haftada 2 saat radyo yayını yapmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı dinleyicilerin yapay zekâ radyo sunucusuna olan yaklaşımlarını ve hangi motivasyonlar ile dinlediğini belirlemektir. Nitel araştırma yönteminin kullanıldığı araştırma kapsamında, yapay zekâ ürünü olan radyo programının dinleyicisi olduğu belirlenen 12 kişi ile derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular Elihu Katz'ın Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Kuramı çerçevesinde irdelenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda dinleyicilerin yapay zekâ sunucuya karşı olumlu bir yaklaşım içinde oldukları ve bu programı eğlenme, merak, farklılıklara ve yeniliklere şahit olma gibi motivasyonlar ile dinlediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay Zeka, Yapay Zeka Radyo Sunucusu, Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Kuramı, Radyo Dinleyicisi, Yapay Zeka Radyo Sunucusu Dinleyicisi.

Introduction

With the development of AI technologies, innovations have been witnessed in many fields, especially the realisation of things that a human cannot do or are technically difficult to do with AI-supported programmes has been met with interest. However, it has recently been observed that AI technologies have started to do the work done by humans. In addition to the technical possibilities provided by AI in the broadcasting sector, a radio programmer who is a product of artificial intelligence offers a radio programme completely prepared by himself. The AI radio programmer, who prepares the programme flow and content himself, presents the programme like a real person and conveys the issues on the agenda to the listener with a humorous and sincere language. It is seen that the AI radio programmer, who has been broadcasting for a year, is liked by the listeners and adopted in a short time, although it is a first in Turkey.

The aim of this study is to understand how the AI radio presenter is perceived by radio listeners; to determine with which motivations the listeners listen to the radio programme created with AI and to determine which social-psychological expectations are met with this programme. In the theoretical part of the study, firstly, the concept and history of AI is discussed. Then, the development process of radio broadcasting in Turkey was briefly mentioned and the radio programme created with AI was evaluated in the context of the uses and gratifications theory. In the application phase of the research, the findings obtained from the interviews with twelve people who were identified as the listeners of the AI presenter were analysed in the light of the Uses and Gratifications theory.

In the literature review, it is seen that research on AI technologies has been increasing in recent years. However, although topics such as AI-supported newscasters and AI journalism (Furtakova & Janackova, 2023; Ndlovu, 2024) have been discussed, no research on radio presenters created with AI has been found in the literature. From this point of view, it is thought that this research will make a unique contribution to the literature since it is one of the first studies on the effects of AI on broadcasting.

The Concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It is known that mankind has been trying to produce automatic machines by giving motion capability to inanimate devices or designing simple robots with human characteristics since ancient times. However, AI studies officially started in the 1950s. Alan Turing, the founder of AI studies and one of the most important names in computer science, published his article “Computing machines and intelligence” in 1950, in which he sought an answer to the question “Can machines think?” and started scientific studies on AI (Kuşçu, 2015; Lewis & Writer, 2014). The term “AI” was used as a term by John McCarthy, who made significant contributions to computer technology at the Darthmouth Conference in the USA in 1956 (Mijwil, 2015).

Since the concept of AI is used by many different disciplines and acquires new features day by day, there is no clear definition. From a general framework, AI can be defined as a branch of science that focuses on imitating human behaviours and skills through algorithms and machines without the need for any living organism (Keleş et al., 2017, p. 113; Mijwil, 2015, p. 3).

Pirim (2006) defines AI as “a branch of science that develops intelligent computer programmes and machines that can carry out processes such as thinking, understanding and decision making”. AI is the technology of developing intelligent machines and computer programmes that can perform tasks that require human intelligence. In simpler terms, they are mechanical systems that can mimic human skills. Using big data, these systems utilise external data to achieve the highest possible performance on specified tasks. Such advanced AI products are often referred to as “robots” (Aydın & Değirmenci, 2018, p. 20).

Although AI is defined in different ways depending on the areas of use, it is explained as follows in a comprehensive definition made by the European

Commission: AI refers to designed systems that analyse the database to solve a complex problem, perceive environmental stimuli and produce responses in line with the information obtained, and can act with mechanical abilities in physical or digital environments (EU Commission, 2018).

When the literature on AI is analysed, it is evident that this concept is generally handled in two dimensions. Accordingly, in the first dimension, it is stated that the machine supported by a computer programme can think and make choices just like a human being. From this point of view, the aim of AI technology is to imitate human beings, with the possibility that it may one day become exactly like them. In the other dimension, machines are expected to think and act in a extremely rational and durable manner, independent of human emotions and weaknesses. In this approach, AI is intended to reach the ideal intelligence with a higher performance than humans (Russell & Norvig, 2003).

Similarly, it is seen that AI studies are divided into two categories as weak AI and strong AI in terms of performance (Topal, 2017). In weak AI evaluations, it is stated that machines exhibit intelligent behaviours by programming in the desired direction. In this way, machines do not actually understand or reason independently, but only fulfil the commands given within the framework of the programming imposed on it (O'Regan, 2012, pp. 237-238). Strong AI, on the other hand, is considered as machines that can perform complex algorithmic calculations with the uploaded data and offer different solutions by interpreting the data, although they still work with a programmed software.

AI technologies have four important features used today. These are voice recognition and understanding, image processing, natural language processing and reasoning (Sucu, 2019, p.208). Voice recognition and understanding is technically a very complex thing for computers. In this process, the sound is digitised and coded through the microphone, and the letters and words are separated from dialects to ensure a logical understanding of what is spoken. The fact that machines perceive meaningful words by making this decomposition shows that AI algorithms are developing rapidly. Siri and Cortana technologies, which are the most widely used applications with virtual assistant service today, can be shown as examples in this field.

Image processing and understanding is also an important area of AI technology. With this feature, machines store every image uploaded as an image as a digital representation, similar to how the human brain processes visual input. Each pixel captured by a camera is converted into a digital code, and the AI algorithm finds out what these pixels are and draws meaningful conclusions. The natural language processing feature enables reading and understanding the written text. Thus, it is possible to ask questions to AI programmes and learn information. The most important feature of AI that shows that it has gone far beyond being a programmed technology is its ability to reason. With this feature, AI technologies provide services such as taking initiative, making decisions, and making choices (Sucu, 2019, p.203-2015).

AI technologies are classified as behaviour-based, rule-based and knowledge-based according to their intended use (Barth & Arnold, 1999, p. 134). Behaviour-based AI technologies are used to facilitate decision-making processes in various fields. For example, thanks to the software developed for the sector, producing solutions to the problems that a business has with its customers is behaviour-based AI technology (Power, 2003, p.1). One of the purposes of using AI is to apply rules. Expert systems, especially in medicine and military fields, enable AI to classify and evaluate a large number of data (Önder & Saygılı, 2018, p.636). One of the most applications of AI is knowledge-based use. The quality of education increases with these technologies. With the AI programmes used, both teachers and students can follow current scientific developments without lagging behind the age and learning and teaching are facilitated. In this way, it is aimed to increase the quality and quantity

of scientific activities (Barth & Arnold, 1999).

Development of Radio Broadcasting in the World and in Turkey

Radio broadcasting in the world started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the advancement of wireless communication. Radio broadcasting first started in Europe in the UK in 1922. Radio broadcasts, which were initially carried out by private initiatives, were soon followed by the establishment of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) as a state broadcasting organisation and the first regular broadcasts were started by the BBC. In Europe, radio broadcasts began in France, followed by Germany and Russia in 1923. By 1925, radio broadcasts had become widespread throughout Europe and by 1930 in Asia. The countries that started radio broadcasts the latest were African countries (Yılmaz, 2017, p.10).

In Turkey, amateur radio broadcasting experiments were made between 1921 and 1923 (Peltekoğlu, 2007), and radio broadcasts started in 1927 under the Turkish Wireless Telephone Corporation. Radio broadcasting, which started with the technical equipment of foreign organisations with extremely limited means, was taken under state management in 1936 due to the economic difficulties of private companies and the fact that radio was an important propaganda tool, and from this date onwards, the era of state radio broadcasting began in Turkey (Cankaya, 2003, p. 25).

After the 1960 coup d'état, broadcasting in Turkey was reorganised and radio broadcasting was placed under the auspices of TRT. From 1961 to 1990, radio broadcasting in Turkey was under the state monopoly, and radio broadcasts assumed a broadcasting function directed by changing governments and Turkish political life. Although it was attempted from time to time during this period to pave the way for private radio broadcasting, it could not be finalised until 1990 due to political pressures. In 1993, the legal regulation on radio broadcasting with private capital paved the way for private radio broadcasting in Turkey. Following this decision, many privately owned radio channels were established in a short period of time and the number of private radio stations has reached over a thousand (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 28).

In addition to many administrative decisions affecting radio broadcasting in Turkey, technological developments have also had an impact on radio's field of activity. Radio, which is one of the most important mass media in many countries, has had to compete with every platform, especially television, which was thought to take its place in its own development process. Although it was thought that radio would lose value with each new development, radio somehow continued on its way by adapting to the innovations brought by technology. In the face of developments such as the widespread use of television and digitalisation in every field, radio has incorporated innovations and evolved as required by the age (Ataman, 2009, p. 215).

AI applications have affected the field of publishing as in every field and have started to shape the sector with the innovations it has brought. Considering the progress made by AI technology, it seems likely that it will be included in all areas of daily life in the near future. Some radio channels, which are aware of the power of AI, are experimenting with this technology instead of resisting it. Alem FM radio, which broadcasts nationally in Turkey, has been working with an AI presenter as a radio programmer since February 2024. This innovation is an indication that we are entering a very interesting period about the future of traditional broadcasting.

Global Development of Artificial Intelligence Supported Radio Broadcasting

Artificial intelligence technologies have an increasing impact on media and broadcasting. Especially in recent years, advances in areas such as voice synthesis, text generation and natural language processing have made it possible to develop systems that can replace human presenters in radio broadcasting. In this context, artificial intelligence-supported radio broadcasts

implemented in different countries are as follows.

As the starting point of these developments, the full-day artificial intelligence broadcasting experiment conducted on 27 April 2023 at the Couleur 3 radio station in Switzerland draws attention. In this broadcast, the voices of human presenters were cloned with artificial intelligence; all speeches, transitions and announcements in the broadcast stream were produced by artificial intelligence systems. All elements of the programme, including music selection, were carried out without human intervention. Couleur 3 thus pioneered the first holistic artificial intelligence broadcast by a public broadcaster (Reuters Institute, 2023).

Shortly after this experimental implementation in Switzerland, on 13 June 2023, the radio station Live 95.5 (KBFF) in Oregon, United States, adopted this technology as a permanent broadcast policy by introducing an AI DJ named 'AI Ashley'. This project was implemented with RadioGPT software, which works with GPT-4 based content generation. Artificial intelligence produces broadcast content by analysing current news, social media trends and listener contributions, and presents these contents with a cloned human voice. Live 95.5 thus became the first radio station in the world to regularly integrate artificial intelligence into its broadcast stream (RadioInsight, 2023).

Artificial intelligence-supported radio broadcasting started to become widespread in Europe after this date. In the Czech Republic, Expres FM introduced an artificial intelligence presenter named 'Hacsiko' in June 2023; the voice of this presenter was prototyped with GPT-4 based systems and it was enabled to undertake night broadcasts (Seznam Zpravy, 2023). In July 2023, Radio Piekary in Poland launched an experimental programme by introducing an artificial intelligence presenter named 'Basia'. Basia produced content discussing the human brain and its own limitations of artificial intelligence, while the music selection was made by humans. This programme is planned to run until September 2023 (Radio Piekary, 2023).

In Germany, bigFM announced an artificial intelligence-based webcasting project called 'bigGPT' on 8 August 2023. In this system, only sounds and content produced by artificial intelligence are included; music lists and announcements are created completely synthetically. This application in Germany has been an important step in the commercialisation of AI-based broadcasts (BigFM, 2023).

In Turkey, Alem FM, which has been broadcasting nationally as of February 2024, has been introduced to listeners with a broadcasting character created entirely by artificial intelligence. This programme, in which every stage from announcement texts to voiceovers was produced by artificial intelligence, was a first in Turkish radio broadcasting. The relationship the programme established with the audience provides a productive example of the social acceptance of artificial intelligence presenters (TRT Haber, 2024).

Finally, on 14 February 2025, a radio station named Tingo AI Radio 102.5 FM started broadcasting in Lagos, Nigeria. This station is the first fully artificial intelligence-supported radio station on the African continent. The entire broadcast stream is prepared by artificial intelligence systems; each element of the content presented to the audience is produced algorithmically (African Business Insider, 2025).

These examples show that artificial intelligence technologies are not just experimental applications but have created a permanent transformation by being adopted in different continents and broadcasting traditions. AI-powered servers are not only a technical innovation, but also part of a cultural transformation that has redefined broadcasting ethics, audience psychology and content production processes.

AI Radio Presenters in the Context of Uses and Gratifications Theory

Although the phenomenon of communication has existed in parallel with the history of humanity, research on communication science has started to develop with the spread of mass media. In

communication studies conducted in the 1920s, it is accepted that mass media have a very strong influence on people. According to this view, the listener/reader/viewer is in a passive position and is affected in the desired direction by the messages given by the mass media. These studies focus on the question of what the media do to people. Although studies conducted since the 1940s have argued that mass media are not so powerful on the public and can only have a limited impact, listeners/readers are still seen as passive and passive (Yıldırım et al., 2018). The weakening of this perspective in the field of communication and the strengthening of approaches that evaluate the listener/reader in an active position in the communication process came to the fore in the 1960s (Erdoğan & Alemdar, 2005: 58).

One of the important theories that prioritises the listener/reader is the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Elihu Katz (1959, p.2) approached the communication process from the perspective of the listener/viewer and started a new era in communication research by asking the question of what people do with the media. According to the theory, people are not completely passive in the face of mass media but are considered in an active position that can make choices among media contents in line with certain needs and purposes. (Güngör, 2011: 122).

In essence, the uses and gratifications approach focus on exploring how and in what way people use media to meet their needs, the motives underlying people's media consumption, and the positive or negative consequences of personal media use (Toker, 2016). The starting point of the theory is the idea that individuals reach satisfaction by meeting their needs through media. According to this idea, people have needs with social and psychological bases, and they use mass media to fulfil their expectations. By consuming media contents, these needs are fulfilled, and often even make people feel unexpected satisfaction (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

According to the uses and gratifications theory, which is based on the view that mass media are used to fulfil people's social and psychological needs, since each person is different, their expectations from media content are also different. Although each individual turns to different communication tools in line with different needs and requirements, studies show that people generally consume media content for self-improvement, gaining respect, having fun and getting information (Erdoğan & Alemdar, 2002, p.11). Sundar and Limperos (2013, pp. 518-520) list the satisfactions that listeners/viewers achieve with media content as reality, attractiveness, novelty, being there, creating community, joining the majority, filtering, interacting, search and convenience, and entertainment.

Denis McQuail (2005), within the framework of the uses and gratifications theory, deals with the gratifications that people obtain by using communication tools under four main headings. These are distraction, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. According to this:

Distraction: Individuals prefer content that is suitable for them in order to get away from the troubles caused by the problems in their social life and to get some emotional satisfaction and enjoyment. Personal relationships: Individuals try to meet the need for socialisation that they cannot meet in their daily lives through communication tools and alleviate the feeling of loneliness with the content they listen to/watch. Personal identity: Individuals try to cope with the problems of daily life by establishing a connection with the people and events in media content. Surveillance: Individuals use communication tools to obtain information about the country and society they live in and to stay away from the developments.

Since the development of the uses and gratifications theory, mass media have been changing in line with technological developments and continue to broadcast with new features and content. During this period, the theory has provided an explanation of which needs are fulfilled by the

audience/viewers of the mass media, and with which contents the media fulfil these needs. The theory has been utilised in research on the use of newspapers, radio, television and social networks with the development of the internet. Today, mass media continues to develop by incorporating new technological features into its structure.

While AI technologies show their effects in almost every field, they have made a name for themselves with the innovations they bring to communication tools. While the existence of AI technology in many areas of media and communication is known, in February 2024, Turkey's first radio presenter created with AI started broadcasting. The AI application presents a radio programme completely prepared by itself for 2 hours a week. This is undoubtedly an important innovation in terms of broadcasting history.

When this situation is evaluated in the context of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, it is possible to interpret it as AI radio presenters have brought an innovation to the media content and this innovation has found a response by the listeners. Because the fact that the AI radio presenter has been on the air for 1 year shows that he has been doing his job and more importantly, he has not been reacted by the listeners. According to the uses and gratifications theory, if we assume that listeners listen to programmes made with real radio presenters in order to satisfy certain needs, it would not be wrong to think that AI presenters also satisfy certain needs. At this point, questions such as with which expectations listeners listen to AI radio presenters and what kind of needs are fulfilled by this listening experience arise. The answers to these questions will be analysed in the application phase of the research.

Research Methodology

Within the scope of the research, it was conducted with a qualitative method as it focused on the listener experiences of the radio programme created with AI operating within Alem FM. The aim of the research is to analyse in depth the motivations with which listeners listen to radio presenters created with AI and their positive or negative opinions about these presenters.

Research Questions

1. What are the requests and expectations listeners have when listening to radio presenters created with AI?
2. What kind of needs do listeners seek to fulfil by listening to AI radio presenters?
3. What kind of effects do AI radio presenters have on listeners compared to human radio presenters?
4. Are there any significant differences in listeners' motivations to listen to AI presenters across different age and gender groups?

Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the research consists of the listeners of radio programmes created with AI. There are a small number of radio programmes created with AI in different countries of the world. As a sample, 12 people of different ages and genders who listen to the programme called "Almost Real", which is broadcast within Alem FM and prepared and presented by AI technology called Meltem, were determined. Purposive sampling method was used to determine these people. The inclusion of the participants in the study was based on the criteria of being over the age of 18 and listening to the programme for at least 3 months. With 6 female and 6 male participants, sufficient data saturation was reached, and it was observed that the data repeated itself after a while. The purpose and scope of the research were explained to the participants, and they were informed in writing that their names would remain confidential, and that the data would not be used outside this research. In addition, a voluntary participation form was organised between the participants and the researcher that they voluntarily participated in the research. Participants were given pseudonyms during the analysis phase.

Table 1

Name, Age and Gender Information of The Participants

Name	***Age***	***Gender***
Ferit	36	Male
Nihan	34	Female
Hakan	31	Male
Ayşe	55	Female
Mehmet	65	Male
Melek	45	Female
Volkan	47	Male
Duru	22	Female
Ege	25	Male
Sena	40	Female
Hasan	32	Male
Damla	28	Female

Data Collection Technique of the Research

In the research, in-depth interview technique, one of the qualitative data collection techniques, was preferred. Interview is a research technique that is pre-planned for a purpose, progresses in the form of asking and answering questions within the framework of a certain subject and mutual interaction is established between the parties. The interview technique is divided into structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 20 open-ended questions in order to preserve the integrity of the subject during the interview, to enable the participants to express their views without limitation and to elaborate the answers when necessary. Interview is frequently used in qualitative studies as it clearly reveals the participants' views, experiences and preferences on the subject.

Analysing the data

Online interviews were conducted with the participants between 20.12.2024 and 10.01.2025 in the time periods determined by them, and audio recordings were made by informing them during the interview. The voice recordings were transcribed by the researcher, and the data obtained were analysed by dividing them into themes in the MAXQDA program. The themes are as follows: 1- General attitudes of listeners towards AI radio presenters, 2- Listeners' views on the technical features of AI radio presenters, 3- Listeners' evaluation of the radio programme created with AI in terms of content and performance, 4- Listeners' emotional state towards AI presenters, 5- Differences between AI presenters and real presenters for listeners, 6- Listeners' views on the possibility of AI presenters replacing real presenters in the future.

Ethics Committee Approval of the Research

In order to carry out this research, ethics committee permission was obtained from Çankırı Karatekin University Science, Mathematics and Social Sciences Ethics Committee at its meeting dated 20.12.2024 and numbered 49.

Findings

In this section, the data analyses and interpretations made to answer the research questions are presented. The categories covered by the research are as follows:

Table 2

Listener Reviews of AI Radio Host

Category 1:	General attitudes of listeners towards the AI-generated presenter
Codes:	Distant approach, sincere approach
Category 2:	Listeners' opinions on the technical features of the AI-generated presenter
Codes:	Natural, Unnatural
Category 3:	Listeners' motivations for listening to AI-generated radio programs
Codes:	Finding it fun and interesting, witnessing innovations, curiosity
Category 4:	Listeners' emotional states about the AI-generated presenter
Codes:	Creating a sense of personality, Establish an emotional bond, Assessment as a technological tool
Category 5:	Differences between AI presenters and real presenters from a listener perspective
Codes:	Positive aspects, Negative aspects
Category 6:	Listeners' views on the possibility of AI servers replacing real servers in the future
Codes:	Can not replace, can replace

Listeners' General Attitudes towards the AI-Generated Presenter

This section focuses on whether the participants find the communication style of the AI presenter

sincere and realistic and the effect of the fact that the presenter of the programme is an AI product on their listening experiences. While most of the listeners have a friendly approach towards the AI presenter, a small portion of them have a distant attitude.

Damla: *The fact that she touches on issues related to the agenda makes me feel like one of us. In these parts, I sometimes forget that it is AI. I listen to it to distract myself.*

Duru: *When I listen to the AI presenter, I feel like there is a person in front of me. In my imagination, I think there is a female robot at the microphone.*

Nihan: *It is very pleasant to listen to Meltem. I think it will get better and better, that is, it will become more human. The fact that it is AI does not bother me at all. Why should it? Even though I know she is a robot while listening, sometimes I forget and start to perceive her as a normal person.*

Hasan: *I feel like I'm witnessing a conversation or a discussion on human servers, but because I know it's AI, I feel like I'm in a simulation instead of a conversation, which is a different experience. This also adds distance*.

It is important in terms of the social manifestation of AI that the AI presenter is found interesting by the listeners, is curious and gets used to it over time. These evaluations mean that the production of programme content by AI is not a negative situation. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that the participants stated that they sometimes forgot that they were robots while listening to AI, or that listening to the AI presenter was likened to a simulation experience and that they feel that this creates distance.

Listeners' Opinions on the Technical Features of AI-Generated Presenter

Under this theme, the participants' opinions on the technical characteristics of the AI radio presenter such as tone of voice and speaking style are mentioned. While some of the participants find Meltem's tone of voice and speech natural, some of them find it quite artificial. Participants Ege, Duru and Ferit express their opinions on the subject as follows:

Ege: *I do not find it disturbing that her voice is artificial. She tries to speak with emotion. If she says something funny, she reads it with emphasis. She is not a totally robot.*

Duru: *Even though her tone of voice gives away that she is a robot, she is cute to me. I think I find it cute because it is different. I like the effort to do something like a human. While listening, I think that we are technologically advanced, and I get excited about what will happen in the future.*

Ferit: *Her voice and speech are not like a normal person, it sounds artificial. Even though I know it is artificial, I enjoy listening to it. Maybe the reason why I want to listen to it so much is that artificiality. If the voice was natural, it would be no different from a human. I think it should remain artificial.*

Generally, AI technology is considered as successful as its ability to realise human abilities and its resemblance to humans. It is noteworthy that these participants, who are young in terms of age, find the voice tone of AI cute although it is artificial. It is possible to interpret the fact that young people are not disturbed by a mechanical tone of voice but rather find it cute as an indication that young people prioritise difference when making media preferences and have a tolerant attitude towards differences. This situation is also related to the fact that the young generation grows up with mass media during their upbringing (Fillion, 1992: 157). Rogers (2003) states that those who are curious about discoveries and differences are often young.

The uses and gratifications theory states that listeners seek satisfaction for a need while preferring media content and that this satisfaction corresponds to the feeling of satisfaction they feel thanks to the preferred content (Bayram, 2007,

p.43). The fact that the participants experienced the satisfaction of technological progress and wondered what would happen in the future while listening to AI shows the satisfaction that the listeners reached by listening to AI presenters. However, there are different opinions about the voice tone of AI.

Ayşe: *The tone of voice scratches the ear a little, but it's a robot, so it's normal. Of course, I would listen more comfortably if her voice tone were a little more human-like. This is the missing part of Meltem.*

Volkan: *Her voice is like a machine, yes. Once there was a technical glitch. Meltem could not catch him. It needs to develop a little more. We are witnessing the infancy of AI. Even this is a revolution. Even if the tone of voice is artificial, it's worth it.*

While young participants find the tone of voice of AI cute and even state that they listen for this artificiality, older participants argue that this artificiality in the tone of voice is a deficiency that needs to be eliminated. However, the fact that the listeners ignore this deficiency means that the satisfaction of witnessing this technological development is more important for them. Despite all its shortcomings, the preference of the AI presenter shows that the listeners have reached this satisfaction.

Listeners' Motivations for Listening to AI-Generated Radio Programs

In this section, the listeners' jokes, comments, and conversations during the announcements of the AI presenter are emphasised. Participants express different opinions on this issue.

Hakan: *I listen to real presenters casually, but when Meltem starts talking, I listen attentively. I wonder what she will say and how she will explain it. I find the content quite creative. She says remarkable things.*

Ferit: *I find her talking about the agenda better than her jokes, because I'm curious. It sounds different. I do not want to miss this change.*

Melek: *I find it good in terms of content. It is good that it rhymes and touches on current issues. It does not bore me while listening, it entertains me.*

Sena: *I wonder what she will say and how she will explain it. She presents the programme in a fluent and funny way. She tells it in a short and concise way. It feels very different for a robot to make a joke.*

When the opinions of the participants about the programme content of the AI presenter are examined, there is no significant difference between the participants in terms of age and gender. Participants from different age groups generally stated that they were curious about the programme content because it was different, entertaining, unusual and therefore they listened to it. McQuail states that individuals use communication tools in order not to stay away from the developments in the category of surveillance within the satisfactions he classifies while explaining the uses and gratifications theory. The fact that the participants are curious about the programme content and do not want to miss this change shows that the listeners listen to the AI presenter to satisfy their curiosity and surveillance needs. Sundar and Limperos (2013) also state that one of the motivations of viewers to consume media content is to catch and witness innovation. The statements of the participants also support this view.

Listeners' Emotional States About the AI-Generated Presenter

In this section, the opinions of the listeners on whether they have an emotional bond with the AI presenters and whether a personality perception has formed in their minds about the AI presenter are given. While some of the participants stated that they formed an emotional bond with Meltem over time and that she had a unique style, some of the participants stated that they only saw Meltem as a technological tool and did not attribute a real personality to her.

Nihan: *After a certain period of time, I can say that I bonded with him because I got used to his voice. This experience feels like witnessing a child grow up. In the future, I want to say, 'we know what you are like Meltem'.*

Mehmet: *I find it close to reality. If I did not know it was a robot, I would find it sincere. I did not feel anything like that when I first listened to it, but over time I started to feel familiar. When I hear it on the radio, I say "our Meltem is on".*

Ferit: *Meltem has her own style, albeit artificial. She has an imaginary silhouette that appears in my mind. Maybe if there were other AI presenters, I would have found her distinctive features. I think I formed a personality perception about her over time.*

The fact that these participants created a personality perception about the AI presenter, embraced her as "our Meltem" and had the feeling of witnessing her growing up shows that the listeners established an emotional bond with her. McQuail (2005) states that listeners try to fulfil their emotional deficiencies through media content. According to this view, listeners establish an emotional bond with media characters and evaluate the relationships in their own lives through these characters in their inner worlds. The fact that AI addresses its listeners with popular appeals, speaks like one of them, and tells current issues about life the sides that strengthen this feeling. Because the fact that AI has social, emotional and physical characteristics resembling human beings makes it easier for people to connect with it. These human-like features make it easier for people to adapt and be influenced by them (Portela & Granell, 2017; Elliott, 2019). However, there are also participants who do not feel emotional closeness to the AI presenter.

Duru: I *do not connect emotionally; I just give it an entertainment-orientated meaning. I cannot say it's sincere and real, and it does not have to be. I listen, smile and pass by*

Ege: *I do not feel any emotional or social closeness; I can only say that I have got used to it over time.*

In line with these statements, it is seen that most of the middle-aged and older participants tend to establish an emotional bond with the AI server. However, it is possible to say that although young participants have a positive approach to AI in general, they do not establish an emotional closeness. AI presenters prepare programme content based on the realities that people experience concretely, in a sense combining the virtual and the real. While middle and older age group individuals approach the integration of virtual and real with a human and emotional attitude, the generation born into the digital world does not expect sincerity from AI. Because this generation, called digital natives, grew up in a period when technological developments were actively used and concepts such as internet, social media, virtual environment, AI are ordinary for them.

Differences Between AI Presenters and Real Presenters From a Listener Perspective

This section focuses on the differences in listeners' experiences of listening to real radio presenters and AI radio presenters and the positive or negative characteristics of these two types of presenters. Participants compare AI and human presenters as follows

Damla: *I find AI more sincere and impartial than real radio stations, because when we listen to them, we listen to the reflections of a certain ideology and thought. Listening to Meltem is just fun because she has no thoughts, beliefs or experience. I cannot say that it is as natural as real programmers, but it is a very good performance at this stage.*

Ayşe: *Most of the real radio presenters have boring conversations. We switch on the radio for music, but we listen to the presenter's conversation more than the music. Meltem makes a short transition about the song and connects it. It also appeals to*

people of all ages and walks of life. In this respect, I like the AI style.

Hakan: *I do not have high expectations from AI because human drivers already produce bad content. I switch on the radio to have fun; I listen to a man's conversation. Meltem at least does not bore me; she just lets me have fun.*

Participants were mostly dissatisfied with the real presenters' unnecessary prolongation of the speech, whereas they considered the fact that the AI presenter was clearer in this regard as a positive feature. Most of the participants said that they preferred the AI presenter because it did not interfere with their entertainment purposes. Katz et al. state that an important reason for listeners to consume media content is to be entertained and to get away from the troubles of real life.

It is also noteworthy that some participants preferred Meltem rather than listening to the ideological reflections of real presenters. The fact that a robot is preferred because it has no emotions, life experience and subjective interpretation of events gives important clues for future approaches to AI. Fiske (1996, p.199-200) states that even media producers cannot fully understand what kind of an effect media programmes have on the audience and what needs they are consumed to meet. This is because the purpose of broadcasting media content and the purpose of the audience to watch it can be very different from each other. People with different social and economic characteristics can consume the same content for different needs. The fact that AI does its job without adding emotions and thoughts to its work is a reason for preference is also an indicator of unexpected satisfaction.

Listeners' Views on the Possibility of AI Servers Replacing Real Servers in the Future

In this section, the audience's views on the replacement of real presenters by AI presentations in the future were addressed.

Melek: *Everyone says AI will replace humans. But real presenters connect with the audience. I do not think it can ever completely replace real presenters in professions where there is communication. If it does, AI will have no meaning. Now I listen to it because I find it different and different.*

Hasan: *AI will never completely replace humans. I do not want AI to dominate not only for radio programmes but for all professions. Because a human cannot do the things that AI does, and AI cannot give the things that a human feels. It would be more successful for the two to work together and in co-operation. It is necessary to benefit from the speed of technology and not to lose the human touch. If there is only AI, there will be monotonisation*

Volkan: *It is something that is constantly evolving. It has all the resources. While humans have features such as fatigue and boredom, AI has a system that can work non-stop. When it provides continuity in a subject, it can surpass humans, but I do not think radio will be completely offered by AI.*

Mehmet: *I do not think it will completely replace real people. Then it will not be radio, it will be something else. But it is certain that their number will increase a lot. There will be many people who prefer it. But if AI presents all of them, then the programmes presented by humans will gain importance.*

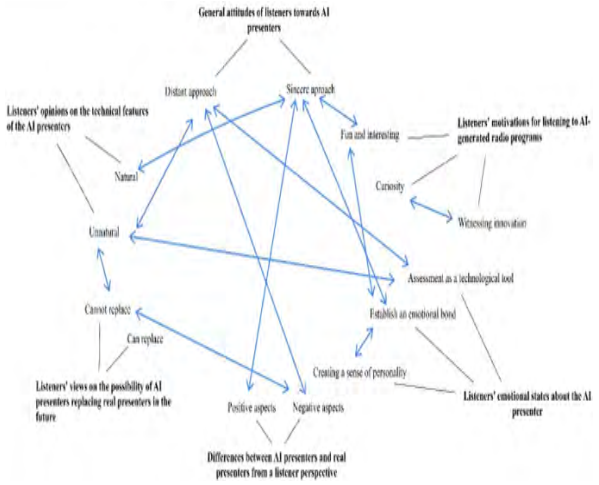
Most of the participants, regardless of age and gender, stated that AI cannot completely replace real presenters. Most of the participants stated that if all programmes were to be presented by AI in the future, they would not prefer this, and that they would like to see AI as an alternative. These statements reveal that mass media are used to fulfil social and psychology-based needs such as difference, innovation, change, curiosity. Participants' listening to AI presenters is based on the fact that it is a new and different alternative. Here, the active audience approach, which is particularly emphasised by the uses and gratifications theory, gains importance. Listeners

are not passive consumers in the face of media content, on the contrary, they say that AI presenters make sense as long as they feel that they are active decision makers.

An Assessment of the Meaningful Relationships Between Themes and Codes

Image 1

Code-Based and Relational Analysis of Listener Opinions on AI Presenters



In line with the findings obtained in this study, various significant relationships were identified between the themes and sub-themes derived from listener opinions. These relationships show that the participants' evaluations of the AI radio presenter are not only limited to individual codes, but also that certain intellectual attitudes and perception patterns overlap with each other.

First of all, a consistent and significant relationship was observed between the participants who were distant towards the AI radio presenter and those who found the AI radio presenter artificial, focussed on its negative aspects and evaluated it only as a technological tool. Participants in this group question the technical aspects of the artificial intelligence server, state that it is far from human warmth, and therefore position artificial intelligence as an advanced technological product rather than a communication subject. This attitude shows that the participants approach their relationship with artificial intelligence from a cautious and critical perspective.

However, a strong relationship was found between the participants who approached the artificial intelligence presenter more sincerely and those who found the presenter fun and interesting, found it natural, emphasised its positive aspects and expressed an emotional connection. This group of participants evaluates the AI presenter as a figure who can communicate and evoke an emotional response in the audience as well as being a technical innovation. There is also a parallel relationship between the participants who stated that they had an emotional connection and those who attributed a personality to the presenter. This shows that some listeners perceive the AI presenter not only as a voice or information transmitter, but also as an entity with certain personality traits.

There are also some thematic overlaps in terms of the motivation for listening to the AI presenter. There is a clear connection between the participants who listen to the presenter with a sense of curiosity and those who listen with the desire to witness innovation. This finding reveals that the AI presenter is positioned not only as a content producer but also as an object of experience in the eyes of the listener.

Finally, most of the participants think that artificial intelligence will not completely replace real presenters in the future. However, this idea was observed more intensely especially among the participants who found artificial intelligence technically inadequate and artificial, emphasised its negative aspects, kept their distance and considered it only as a technological development. This participant profile shows that the critical stance towards artificial intelligence is also closely related to expectations and assumptions about the future.

When all these relationships are brought together, it is seen that the evaluation of listener approaches not only within the framework of individual themes but also with the contexts between themes provides a more holistic understanding of the perception of AI presenters. This contextual analysis shows the importance of analysing

qualitative data not only descriptively but also in analytical depth that reveals the relationality between meanings.

Image 2

Lexical density map of prominent concepts in participant expressions

Conclusion

The rapid development of AI technology and the impact of this development on mass media has paved the way for the realisation of innovations in the broadcasting sector that have so far been a dream. With the technical possibilities provided by AI supported programmes, a radio programme is prepared and presented on Alem FM radio. This situation, which is a first in Turkey, is considered as an important development about the future of traditional broadcasting.

In the research, the radio programme created with AI was handled from the perspective of the listeners, and in line with the Uses and Gratifications approach, it was tried to understand which needs of the listeners were satisfied by listening to this programme. The opinions of the participants of different ages and genders were categorised on 6 themes. In the first theme, which examined the general approaches of the listeners towards the AI radio presenter, it was found that the participants mostly perceived the AI radio presenter as a normal person. They were not disturbed by the fact that he was a robot and reported that they enjoyed listening to the programme. In the second theme, where the technical features of the AI presenter are mentioned, young participants stated that they mostly liked the mechanical voice tone of the presenter and that they listened to the programme for this artificial voice, while older participants stated that it would be good if the voice tone was a little more human-like.

In the third theme, where listeners were evaluated in terms of their motivations for listening to the artificial intelligence radio programme, the participants generally stated that they listened to the programme because they were curious, it was out of the ordinary and they did not want to miss this innovation. Sundar and Limperos (2013, pp. 518-520) evaluate the desire to “be there” while an innovation is taking place as the needs that listeners/viewers want to satisfy by consuming media content. In addition, the participants stated that they listened to the programme mostly for entertainment, distraction and distraction from troubles. There is no significant difference in the views expressed in this theme in terms of age and gender. The motivation to have fun and escape from the troubles of real life are motivations that are frequently included in the Uses and Gratifications theory (Mc Quail, 2005; Katz et al. 1973).

In the fourth theme, which tried to understand whether the listeners had an emotional bond with the presenter, it was found that the participants belonging to the middle and older age group felt emotional closeness to the AI presenter, while the young participants did not have an emotional bond with the presenter. In the fifth theme, which deals with the differences between real and AI presenters, the participants find AI presenters better than real presenters in terms of speaking shorter and clearer than real presenters, while they find them weaker in issues such as conveying emotions. In addition, young people see it as a positive feature that AI presenters do not reflect their ideological thoughts to the audience.

In the last theme, which deals with the views on AI presenters replacing real presenters in the future, it was found that although the participants think that AI will develop further in the future,

they do not approach the possibility of all radio programmes being presented by AI positively. Participants, regardless of age and gender, want AI presenters to remain as an alternative. The main starting point of the Uses and Gratifications theory is the view that listeners/viewers are fully active in their media preferences. The findings obtained support this view of the theory.

In the study, various significant relationships were identified between the themes obtained from the listener opinions. Participants who are distant to the artificial intelligence presenter overlap with individuals who generally find it artificial, technically inadequate and far from human warmth, and focus on its negative aspects. This attitude reflects a critical approach that sees technology as a functional but non-communicative tool. On the other hand, the participants who approached the presenter sincerely overlapped with those who found it fun, interesting and natural, and those who stated that they had an emotional connection were closely related to those who attributed personality. This group sees artificial intelligence as a communicable figure beyond being a technology.

In addition, a strong connection was found between those who listened to the presenter out of curiosity and those who wanted to witness the innovation. This shows that the AI presenter is perceived as an experiential element, not just a content provider. Finally, the idea that AI cannot replace real presenters is particularly prevalent among participants who are negative, distant and critical of the technology.

When the views of the participants in the research are analysed in terms of the Uses and Satisfactions Theory, it is concluded that listeners generally listen to AI radio presenters in order to meet the following needs and satisfaction is achieved. These are; having fun, curiosity, witnessing differences and innovations.

Entertainment: Listeners listen to AI radio programmes in order to distract themselves from daily life, to be involved in a different environment and to entertain themselves.

Curiosity: Unlike radio programmes presented by real presenters, listeners are curious about the content of the programme presented by a robot, how it is and the feeling of listening to this programme. They listen to the AI presenter to satisfy this curiosity.

Witnessing differences and innovations: Listeners listen to this programme because they do not want to miss the innovations in the period they live in, and they want to witness differences that are out of the ordinary.

In this study, AI radio presenters were analysed from the perspective of listeners, and the opinions of listeners about AI presenters and the reasons for listening were evaluated with a qualitative research method within the framework of Uses and Gratifications theory. Different theoretical approaches can be applied in other studies on this subject. In addition, ethnographic studies can be conducted in which the opinions of real radio presenters about AI presenters are evaluated. In addition, it can be supported by quantitative research using the survey technique by reaching a higher number of listeners.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Yapay zekâ teknolojilerinin hızla gelişmesiyle birlikte son yıllarda birçok sektörde köklü değişimler gerçekleşmiş ve geçmişte hayal olan birçok yenilik, günlük hayatın bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Tıp, mühendislik ve iletişim gibi çeşitli alanlarda kendini gösteren yapay zekâ, yayıncılık sektöründe de kullanılmaya başlanmış ve geleneksel yayıncılık anlayışına yeni bir boyut kazandırmıştır. Yapay zekâ teknolojisinin ilerlemesiyle birlikte özellikle radyo yayıncılığı alanında yapay zekâ destekli sunucuların kullanımı dikkat çekici bir gelişme olarak görülmektedir. Dünyada radyo yayıncılığında yapay zekâ sunucular insan sunuculara alternatif olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Türkiye'de ise bir ilk olarak Alem FM radyosu bünyesinde geliştirilen ve haftada iki saat yayın yapan yapay zekâ radyo programcısı, dinleyiciler tarafından ilgiyle takip edilmektedir.

Bu araştırma, yapay zekâ ile oluşturulmuş radyo sunucularının dinleyiciler tarafından nasıl algılandığını ve hangi motivasyonlarla dinlendiğini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada, dinleyicilerin yapay zekâ ürünü olan bir radyo programını hangi sosyal ve psikolojik beklentiler doğrultusunda dinledikleri, Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Kuramı çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Araştırma, nitel yöntem kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiş, yapay zekâ radyo programının dinleyicisi olduğu belirlenen 6 erkek ve 6 kadın olmak üzere 12 kişiyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, belirli temalar altında değerlendirilerek analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırmada, yapay zekâ radyo sunucusuna yönelik dinleyici algıları altı temel tema çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır. İlk olarak, dinleyicilerin çoğunluğunun yapay zekâ sunucuyu doğal bir radyo programcısı gibi algıladığı, robot olmasının kendilerini rahatsız etmediği ve programı dinlemekten keyif aldıkları belirlenmiştir. İkinci temada, yapay zekâ sunucunun teknik özellikleri değerlendirilmiştir. Genç katılımcılar, yapay zekâ sunucunun mekanik ses tonunun farklı ve ilgi çekici olduğunu düşünürken, ileri yaş grubu dinleyiciler sesin daha insana benzer hale getirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Üçüncü temada, dinleyiclerin programı dinleme motivasyonları ele alınmıştır. Katılımcıların programı dinlenme nedenleri arasında merak duygusu önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Dinleyiciler, alışılmışın dışında olan bu yeniliği kaçırmak istemedikleri için programı takip ettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Dördüncü tema, yapay zekâ sunucuyla duygusal bir bağ kurulup kurulmadığını ele almıştır. Orta ve ileri yaş grubundaki katılımcılar, yapay zekâ sunucuya karşı duygusal yakınlık hissettiklerini ifade ederken, genç katılımcılar sunucuyla duygusal bir bağ kurmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Beşinci temada, yapay zekâ sunucuların gerçek insan sunucularla karşılaştırılması yapılmıştır. Katılımcılar, yapay zekâ sunucunun gerçek sunuculara göre kısa ve net konuşmasının avantajlı olduğunu, ancak duygu aktarımı konusunda yetersiz kaldığını belirtmiştir. Özellikle genç dinleyiciler, yapay zekâ sunucunun tarafsız ve ideolojik düşünceler yansıtmamasını olumlu bir özellik olarak değerlendirmiştir.

Son temada, dinleyicilerin gelecekte yapay zekâ sunucuların insan sunucuların yerini alıp almayacağı konusundaki düşünceleri ele alınmıştır. Katılımcılar, yapay zekâ teknolojisinin gelişeceğini kabul etmekle birlikte, tüm radyo programlarının yapay zekâ sunucular tarafından sunulmasını istememektedir. Genel görüş, yapay zekâ sunucuların bir alternatif olarak kalması gerektiği yönündedir.

Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Kuramı çerçevesinde yapılan analiz sonucunda, dinleyicilerin yapay zekâ sunucuyu dinleme motivasyonlarının üç temel kategoriye ayrıldığı görülmüştür: eğlenme, merak etme ve farklılıklara şahit olma.

Eğlenme: Dinleyiciler, günlük hayatın stresinden uzaklaşmak, kafa dağıtmak ve farklı bir ortama dahil olmak amacıyla yapay zekâ sunucunun programını dinlemektedir.

Merak etme: Katılımcılar, yapay zekâ sunucunun nasıl bir radyo programı sunduğunu, içeriklerin nasıl oluşturulduğunu ve dinlemenin nasıl bir his vereceğini merak etmektedir.

Farklılıklara ve yeniliklere şahit olma: Dinleyiciler, teknolojik yenilikleri kaçırmak istememekte ve yapay zekâ ile oluşturulmuş bir radyo programını deneyimleyerek bu farklılığı bizzat yaşamak istemektedirler.

Sonuç olarak, yapay zekâ teknolojisi yayıncılık sektöründe önemli yenilikler sunmakta, dinleyiciler tarafından merakla takip edilmekte ve farklı motivasyonlarla dinlenmektedir. Ancak, dinleyiciler, yapay zekâ sunucuların geleneksel sunucuların tamamen yerini almasını istememekte, insan sunucuların hâlâ önemli bir yere sahip olacağını düşünmektedirler.

Konuyla ilgili alan yazın incelendiğinde, yapay zekâ gazeteciliği, yapay zekâ destekli haber spikerleri gibi konulara yönelik birçok araştırma bulunduğu, ancak yapay zekâ ile oluşturulmuş radyo sunucularına dair akademik çalışmaların oldukça sınırlı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, bu araştırma alan yazına özgün bir katkı sunma potansiyeline sahiptir. Bu araştırma, yapay zekâ destekli radyo programlarının dinleyici perspektifinden nasıl algılandığını anlamaya yönelik önemli bir başlangıç niteliğindedir. Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Kuramı doğrultusunda yapılan analizler, yapay zekâ sunucuların belirli ihtiyaçları karşıladığını ve dinleyiciler için anlamlı bir deneyim sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Yapay zekâ destekli yayıncılığın gelecekte nasıl evrileceği ve dinleyici alışkanlıkları üzerindeki etkileri, ilerleyen yıllarda yapılacak daha kapsamlı araştırmalarla daha iyi anlaşılabilir. Yapılacak araştırmalarda farklı kuramsal çerçevelerin kullanılması, daha geniş bir dinleyici kitlesiyle çalışılması ve anket gibi nicel yöntemlerle desteklenmesi önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, insan sunucuların yapay zekâ sunucular hakkındaki görüşlerini inceleyen etnografik çalışmalar da bu alandaki bilgi birikimine katkı sağlayabilir.

Yazar Bilgileri

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Conflict of Interest

Herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır. **None**

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