A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SUPER CHAT MESSAGES IN LIVE STREAM ON YOUTUBE FOOTBALL CHANNELS

Burak İLİ
Iğdır Üniversitesi, Türkiye
burak.ili@igdir.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2816-101X

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the interaction dynamics between fans and channels by analyzing Super Chat messages in live streams on YouTube football channels using the content analysis method. The data consists of Super Chat messages collected over a specific period and was analyzed using MAXQDA software. The findings indicate that viewers' messages are concentrated around various themes. The main themes identified through the analyses are as follows: questions for broadcasters (27.6%), criticism of the rival team/management (18.7%), support for broadcasters (17.3%), transfer suggestions (9.5%), criticism of club management/technical staff/players (9.5%), criticism of the Turkish Football Federation (7.5%), support for club management/team (7.1%), and criticism of referees (2.7%). These themes reflect viewers' motivations to support broadcasters, provide criticism, and engage with various football-related topics through the use of Super Chat. This study offers significant insights into the dynamics of how fans engage with digital platforms through paid interaction models.

Keywords: *SuperChat, YouTube, Fan Interaction, Live Stream, Football.*

YOUTUBE FUTBOL KANALLARINDAKİ CANLI YAYINLARDA SÜPER CHAT MESAJLARININ NİTEL BİR ANALİZİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, YouTube futbol kanallarındaki canlı yayınlarda Süper Chat mesajlarını içerik analizi yöntemiyle inceleyerek, taraftarlar ile yayıncı kanallar arasındaki etkileşim dinamiklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın verisi, belirli bir zaman aralığında toplanan Süper Chat mesajlarından oluşmakta olup, MAXQDA yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, izleyici mesajlarının çeşitli temalar etrafında yoğunlaştığını göstermektedir. Analizler sonucunda elde edilen başlıca temalar şunlardır: yayıncılara yöneltilen sorular (%27,6), rakip takım/yönetim eleştirisi (%18,7), yayıncılara destek ifadeleri (%17,3), transfer önerileri (%9,5), kulüp yönetimi/teknik ekip/oyunculara yönelik eleştiriler (%9,5), Türkiye Futbol Federasyonu eleştirisi (%7,5), kulüp yönetimi/takıma destek mesajları (%7,1) ve hakem eleştirileri (%2,7). Bu temalar, izleyicilerin yayıncılara destek verme, eleştiride bulunma ve futbol bağlamındaki çeşitli konulara katılım sağlama motivasyonlarını yansıtmaktadır. Çalışma, taraftarların dijital platformlarla ücretli etkileşim modelleri aracılığıyla nasıl ilişki kurduklarına dair önemli bir bakış sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *SüperChat, YouTube, Taraftar Etkileşimi, Canlı Yayın, Futbol.*

INTRODUCTION

As in all areas of society, digitalization in the world of sports creates significant opportunities, making the adoption of innovative approaches an inevitable necessity. Today, change and innovation are not merely matters of choice but fundamental requirements for competitiveness and achieving sustainable success (Öner et al., 2024, p. 138). Over the past decade, research on the digitalization of football events has shown a remarkable increase, revealing the widespread adoption of multifaceted digital communication processes among football networks (Lawrence & Crawford, 2022). While studies have predominantly focused on the use of social media by football clubs and fan engagement (Aguiar-Noury & Garcia-del-Barrio, 2022; Faria et al., 2022; Guzmán et al., 2021; Küster-Boluda et al., 2024; McCarthy et al., 2022), a significant gap exists in the literature regarding social media content creators and fan interactions. In this

context, the significance of the present study lies in its focus on alternative digital broadcasting football channels on YouTube.

The widespread use of mobile devices, the increasing influence of social media platforms, and the demand for instant content from fans have created a remarkable transformation in the context of YouTube football channels and fan interactions. The ability to facilitate sports-related communication in real-time through mobile channels offers the potential for more rapid growth compared to traditional broadcasting systems (Dugalić, 2018, p. 66). Platforms like YouTube, enabling users to access content anytime via mobile devices, are spearheading a new paradigm in sports broadcasting. These platforms not only cater to content consumption but also provide an interaction-driven experience. Fans' participation through tools such as Super Chat during live streams, as well as their feedback to content creators through comments and likes, exemplify this flexible and personalized experience. Super Chat serves as a mechanism for viewers to financially support their favorite content creators. Viewers can select the amount they wish to donate, and their messages are displayed based on their contribution level. This feature allows viewers to attract the attention of content creators and ensures their messages are visible to both the creators and other viewers during live streams (Falaakh & Cahyono, 2023).

Football clubs are undergoing significant transformations with the adoption of digital technologies. These technologies hold the potential to profoundly reshape clubs' operational processes, communication strategies, and relationships with stakeholders. The impact of digitalization is particularly evident in interactions with key stakeholders such as fans, sponsors, and players (Balzano & Bortoluzzi, 2023). Among the primary stakeholders of the football industry are fans. In addition to the money spent on attending matches in stadiums or subscribing to television broadcasts, fans contribute to the financing of sports organizations by purchasing club merchandise. This economic support serves as a critical source of revenue, enabling clubs to maintain their income streams and sustain their operations (Jones, 2000).

Sports broadcasts have attracted the attention of large audiences from their inception, and this interest continues in the digital sphere, particularly on online platforms. For instance, platforms like YouTube, which allow free content distribution, have witnessed a rapid increase in the number of sports channels and sports-related content. Both amateur content creators and journalists working for traditional television channels produce sports content on YouTube. The transition from traditional to online media has led to significant changes in the production methods of sports programs. This shift marks a period in which content creators

strive to adapt to the requirements of online platforms (Kısaoğlu, 2024, p. 412). Sports news, broadcasts, and events have become one of the core components of the sports industry, establishing themselves as a significant domain on a global scale. Developments in this field have resulted in the increasing prominence of sports broadcasting on new media platforms and the rapid expansion of content circulation (Kantürk & Turaç, 2024, p. 84). In recent years, social media platforms and online broadcasting models have largely replaced traditional media tools, with fans turning to new and dynamic tools to interact with sports clubs and content creators. At the center of this transformation is YouTube, emerging as an interaction-driven platform that connects football content creators and fans. YouTube has created a media ecosystem that not only provides football channels with access to a large audience but also offers content creators opportunities to generate revenue.

This study analyzes the live stream performances of two Turkey-based YouTube football channels, 343 Digital and Eski Açık Online, during December 2024 and January 2025, examining their interaction dynamics with viewers and content strategies. Adopting a qualitative approach, the research aims to systematically analyze data obtained using MAXQDA software, thereby providing an in-depth understanding of interaction strategies within the digital football ecosystem. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How is the interaction between YouTube football channels and fans facilitated through the Super Chat feature?

RQ2: What is the thematic distribution of fans' Super Chat messages?

YOUTUBE AND FOOTBALL ECOSYSTEM

In today's digital age, content consumption predominantly takes place through online platforms, offering various forms such as news, commentary, and entertainment. YouTube, one of the most popular platforms for content viewing, hosts over 1 billion users each month. Additionally, more than 1 billion hours of video are watched on YouTube daily (Zappin et al., 2022, p. 24). These figures highlight YouTube's significant role within the digital media ecosystem and its extensive engagement among users. YouTube is a publicly accessible online video platform where users can engage at varying levels of interaction to strengthen and maintain social relationships. This platform facilitates various forms of engagement, from daily video viewing to content sharing, providing individuals with a broad space for self-expression and communication with others (Lange, 2007, p. 361).

Professional journalists and broadcasters operating through traditional media have begun leveraging YouTube's interactive structure, large user base, and high accessibility to establish their personal brands and digital identities. Journalists who continue to work on traditional media platforms have increasingly entered the digital media landscape, taking advantage of the opportunities and growing popularity of social media (Özmen, 2022). In traditional TV broadcasting, sports content typically adheres to specific formats and is often limited to standard types of content such as broadcast footage, highlights, and news. In contrast, YouTube sports content is far more diverse and flexible (Kim & Kim, 2021). YouTube, sports-related content is not confined to match highlights and news; it also includes transfer rumors, analysis videos, giveaways, fan commentary, and interactive broadcasts, among other formats. This variety enables content creators to develop their unique styles and cater to the diverse interests of viewers. YouTube distinguishes itself from traditional media as a platform that facilitates the dynamic evolution of sports content, fostering interaction and enabling closer connections between creators and their audience.

The growing popularity of football and YouTube's vast user base have paved the way for the emergence of diverse content offered by both traditional media outlets and niche sports channels. These contents include news briefs, in-depth match analyses, and reviews, often prepared in video format and frequently broadcast live. Viewers can participate in these broadcasts with real-time comments, which may express positive emotions, critical feedback, or hate speech, among other sentiments (Pookpanich & Siriborvornratanakul, 2024). Today, YouTube is particularly compelling for television journalists, compelling them to create their own channels on the platform. This situation allows journalists to remain relevant in the field of information, interact with viewers by offering exclusive content that captures their attention, and attract new audiences. In recent years, driven by the digital transformation, there has been a rise in the number of infotainment video channels on YouTube, representing a completely new sports segment (Kyrlyova et al., 2022). These channels combine the informative aspect of sports with entertainment, providing audiences with both educational and entertaining content while building a large following.

As a modern television platform, YouTube retains the traditional features of television while also offering content and an interactive structure that appeal to a new generation of viewers (Zinderen, 2020, p. 221). YouTube represents a significant transformation in the media evolution, as it not only allows viewers to passively consume content but also provides opportunities for them to create content, comment, and engage interactively. This dynamic structure turns the platform into not just a viewing space but an active media environment. Unlike

other social media platforms, YouTube offers a revenue model that distributes advertising income to channels with over 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours in the last 12 months. This revenue model has led to the emergence of professional YouTubers and created new employment opportunities (Byun, 2018).

Today, followers of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others significantly contribute to the commercialization process of football. This indicates that the revenues of football clubs are closely tied to the number of social media followers. Moreover, influenced by social media, football clubs and other sports organizations have become more active in live streaming, particularly finding the opportunity to reach a larger audience through platforms like YouTube (Majewska & Majewska, 2022, p. 2075).

Due to the nature of sports events, users not only take advantage of features that provide viewing conveniences, such as recording, but also place significant importance on live viewing (Lotz, 2014). Live streaming platforms, especially those with interactive and real-time characteristics, such as Twitch and YouTube, offer multifaceted communication opportunities between content creators (broadcasters) and viewer communities. These platforms enable real-time social interactions through tools like chat, making content shaped not only by the broadcaster but also by the viewers, turning it into a collective process (Giertz et al., 2022). Live streams make it more appealing to follow the dynamic nature of sports, as well as the immediate unfolding events and excitement. User participation in live chats typically consists of instantaneous and spontaneous actions. Users can react to developments in the game during the chat, or bring up pre-planned content. For instance, they may use the live chat forum to emphasize the greatness of a team or create a discussion environment around specific claims. Additionally, fans of different teams often join live chats of rival organizations to make mocking or provocative comments. Such "trolling" behavior can lead to emotional responses and often escalate into insults or other forms of aggressive content (Rodríguez Ortega, 2019, p. 2108).

From the perspective of the football industry, the impact of football on the economy has grown significantly due to the high level of participation and widespread engagement (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2020). In this context, YouTube has transformed into a crucial income source for many users, going beyond being just an entertainment and information platform, thanks to the possibilities of the digital age. Content creators, in particular, generate economic opportunities through various tools offered by YouTube, such as ad revenues,

sponsored deals, subscription models, and donation systems. The "Super Chat" feature, introduced in 2017, which is the focus of this study, has redefined YouTube's role as a platform where participatory culture takes center stage. According to YouTube's official statement, Super Chat allows users to send a highlighted message in the chat stream to attract the attention of their favorite content creators. This feature can only be used during live streams, allowing users to pay for personalized messages that remain at the top of the chat stream for a specified period. Super Chat aims to increase user participation and create an additional revenue stream for content creators. During live streams, Super Chat messages vary based on the amount of money spent by the user, with higher-paying users' messages being more prominent and staying at the top of the chat for a longer time. This situation not only provides financial support for content creators but also creates a competitive environment among viewers to ensure their messages are noticed (Lin, 2024). While this feature enhances user participation and the potential for direct support for content creators, it has also faced criticism regarding the egalitarian nature of participatory culture.

FAN INTERACTION

A fan is a concept that encompasses individuals who feel a sense of support for a team, including those who support idols or famous figures associated with the team (Lee, 2022). Fan engagement is the process of establishing not only a superficial but also a deep and sustained connection between a football club and its supporters (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). This process allows the club to strengthen its bond with its fans, increase club affiliation, and build a loyal following by maintaining regular communication with them. All activities that a football club carries out to encourage its fans to contribute to the club and make financial expenditures can be defined as efforts to enhance fan engagement (Wann & James, 2018). This engagement enables the club to establish strong emotional, social, financial, and digital relationships with its supporters. These bonds are reinforced not only by the results in matches but also by content, events, and digital platforms through which fans feel included in the club's culture.

Contemporary football fandom exists in an ever-evolving, complex cultural, ideological, and technological media environment, as a result of the continuous exchanges between capital-oriented businesses and users (Rodríguez Ortega, 2019). Football clubs aim to establish a constant connection with their fans by investing in sports content production. In a world without media, professional sports and the existence of sports itself would not be possible without fan

engagement. Today, regardless of the media or technology used, it is inevitable for clubs to be in constant interaction with their fans (Borges, 2018, p. 275). Participatory comments, which allow fans to instantly react to content and share their opinions, have become an important strategy for sports clubs, media producers, and content providers. These comments create a sense of community among fans and provide the fundamental basis for clubs and media platforms to build a loyal follower base (Diel et al., 2021).

The representation of national football news in new media is shaped not only by the rapid rise of sports media but also by the active role of internet users involved in football journalism. These users significantly contribute to football reporting by spreading news through social media, initiating discussions, or delivering content to major media outlets (Athalarik, 2024, p. 572). According to a study, the primary factor influencing football fans to follow their clubs on social media and establish a connection with them is the desire to interact with other fans. Following this, the desire for information and entertainment emerges (Krzyżowski & Strzelecki, 2023). The interaction of football fandom with social media has brought about two fundamental changes. First, it has become evident that the relationships fans build with their teams and other fans are shaped by the opportunities social media tools provide, but they are not entirely determined by these tools. This has led to a transformation of fandom into a more appealing, multifaceted, interactive, and attention-grabbing form of belonging. Second, the phenomenon of fandom has expanded its influence to a broader scope, growing in scale (McManus, 2018, p. 763).

YouTube channels have become one of the most dynamic and popular areas of football media. Fans have the opportunity to quickly learn about developments within their clubs by watching match summaries, transfer updates, training footage, player interviews, and exclusive content on YouTube channels dedicated to their teams and football commentators. Many football clubs and channels aim to create deeper connections with fans through membership programs offered on YouTube and other digital platforms. These membership programs have become a revenue source for clubs and commentators while offering benefits like exclusive content for fans. These memberships serve as a crucial tool for increasing fan loyalty and helping them feel closer to their clubs.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study, a qualitative research design was adopted to collect data from the pages of two football channels engaged in live streaming on YouTube. This research design allows for an in-depth examination of content production strategies, interaction dynamics, and audience engagement in the digitalization process of football media. The study also focuses on how the connections these channels establish with their audiences shape and develop sports culture within the digital media environment. The research aims to understand the impact of live streaming on the football industry and highlight the differences between these impacts and traditional sports media. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the new dynamics that emerge at the intersection of digital media and sports. In this context, the types of content, broadcasting formats, visual-audio elements used, and audience feedback of the YouTube channels have been analyzed in detail. The study is considered a crucial tool for understanding the transformation of the football industry through digital media and aims to provide valuable insights for both academic literature and digital content creators in practical terms.

Study Sample

In this study, YouTube channels producing football content and live streams in Turkey were examined. The purposive sampling method was used to select the football channels @343digital and @eskiacikonline for analysis. The selection was based on factors such as the impact level of these channels in the industry, their subscriber counts, their live streaming capacity, and their lack of involvement in traditional television broadcasting. As of January 16, 2025, @343digital has 216,000 subscribers, and @eskiacikonline has 118,000 subscribers. These channels were chosen as samples for the study due to their unique content representing the digital transformation of the football industry, their live stream programs, and their capacity to reach different target audiences. The analysis aims to reveal the interaction levels of these channels on digital platforms, their content production strategies, and the relationship they build with their audience.

Data Collection

Since the data collected for the analysis is publicly available, there are no ethical concerns related to this research. The study focuses on randomly selected live streams between December 2024 and January 2025. This time frame was chosen because it covers a period during which matches in the Turkish Super League were ongoing and the winter transfer window had started, providing an

opportunity to access detailed content and data. Additionally, when selecting the channels, the criterion that the live chat messages should be viewable again for data review was taken into consideration. In this context, five videos from each channel, along with Super Chat messages and broadcaster interactions, were selected for evaluation.

Data Analysis

In the current study, the data analysis process was conducted using qualitative methods. The qualitative research method aims to reveal all aspects of the subject being examined in depth (Seggie & Bayyurt, 2017). In qualitative research, which allows for a more detailed examination of data through words rather than numerical expressions, the researcher is concerned with exploring how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and the meanings they attribute to those experiences (Merriam, 2018). Within the scope of the current study, content analysis was employed for the qualitative examination of live stream content. Content analysis is the systematic analysis of written or visual material (Aziz, 2015, p. 133). This technique can be used in various communication patterns that occur between people and includes not only written documents but also photographs, videos, and audio recordings (Berg & Lune, 2015). The topics discussed during the live streams, the language used, the methods of interaction with the audience, and the channel moderation strategies were analyzed in detail. Additionally, the Super Chat messages from the live streams were examined using MAXQDA 24 software to construct a thematic framework. This framework was used to evaluate the nature of the connection between viewers and the broadcasts. A total of 294 codings were performed, with the analysis focusing exclusively on the Super Chat messages during the live streams.

RESULTS

Within the scope of the study, the live streaming performances and audience interactions of the @343digital (343 Digital) and @eskiacikonline (Eski Açık) channels were evaluated based on criteria such as content types, fan opinions, interaction levels, broadcast durations, and Super Chat messages. It was observed that both channels commonly encouraged viewers in every live broadcast to subscribe to the channel, like the broadcast, and send their questions through Super Chat. Additionally, while sending free messages via the chat section or participating in polls did not require payment, users needed to be subscribed to the channel. Super Chat comments from fans were taken into account by the

broadcasters, with the middle and end portions of the broadcasts typically allocated for reading and responding to these messages. Both channels focus exclusively on football-related content. However, 343 Digital targets matches and topics related to Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, and Beşiktaş, whereas Eski Açık dedicates its content solely to Galatasaray Sports Club. Both channels serve as significant representatives of digital sports media in Turkey, offering viewers up-to-date and diverse sports content. Another finding from the study is that 343 Digital conducts broadcasts with an average duration of 1.5-2 hours, while Eski Açık averages 2.5 hours per broadcast.

Key findings related to the 343 Digital channel indicate that it was launched on November 28, 2022, and as of January 16, 2025, it has produced a total of 2,400 videos and achieved 179 million total views. The channel focuses on football matches involving Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, and Beşiktaş in league and European competitions, as well as current events, statements, and transfer news. An analysis of the selected live streams revealed that brief advertisement breaks were incorporated into the streams.

Image 1.

Example of a Super Chat Message During a Live Stream on the 343 Digital Channel

(Reference: YouTube 343 Digital Channel, 2025).

The Super Chat message depicted in the figure represents a feature on YouTube that allows users to highlight their messages by making monetary contributions during live streams. In Image 1, a user named Barış Küpçü donated 219.99 TRY

during the live stream of the 343 Digital channel on January 16, 2025, accompanied by the following message:

"One of the biggest issues in Turkish football is that businesspeople, rather than football professionals, assume the role of club presidents. This leads to significant ego clashes and a diversion from the core matters at hand."

This message contains a critique of football management in Turkey, emphasizing that businesspeople serving as presidents of football clubs hinder the development of the sport and lead to ego conflicts. The content of the message reflects a critical perspective on the developments within the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) and football management in general, which was the topic of discussion during the live stream. In their response to the message, the broadcasters agreed with the user's viewpoint, stating that football clubs should be managed by professionals with a background in football.

Image 2.

Example of a Super Chat Message During a Live Stream on the Eski Açık Channel
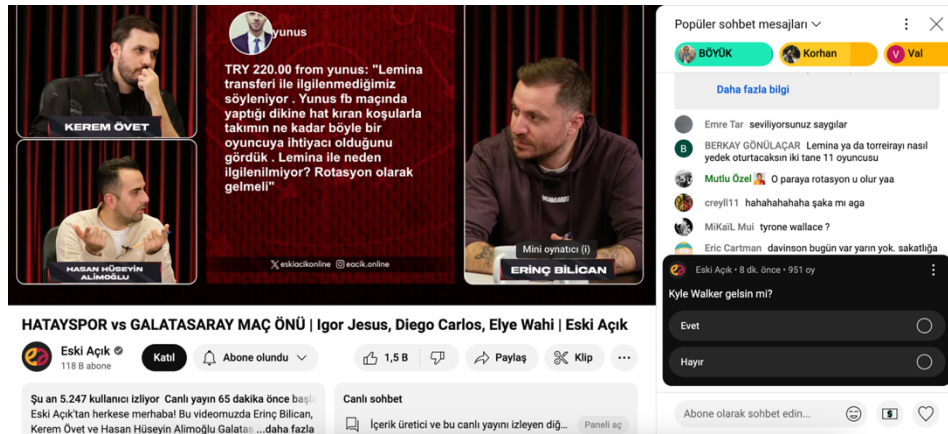
(Reference: YouTube Eski Açık Channel, 2025).

Eski Açık is a YouTube channel that focuses exclusively on Galatasaray and discusses current topics such as pre- and post-match analyses and transfer news within the football agenda. As illustrated in Image 2, from the broadcast dated January 16, 2025, the channel hosted a live discussion analyzing the Hatayspor vs. Galatasaray match and ongoing transfer rumors. Super Chat messages are prominently displayed in the middle of the screen, allowing the broadcasters to

read and respond to them. An examination of Eski Açık's live streams revealed that approximately 45 minutes of the broadcast duration were dedicated to Super Chat interactions. In the screenshot shown in Image 2, a message from a user named "Yunus" is observed, sharing views and posing a question regarding the transfer of footballer Mario Lemina. Additionally, a poll displayed in the lower right corner of the screen, asking viewers, "Should Kyle Walker join?" serves as a tool to increase audience engagement. Another finding indicates that Eski Açık also features sponsored advertisements during its live streams.

In addition to Super Chat, it has been observed that viewers employ various methods to increase their interactions during live streams and support content creators. For instance, members gift subscriptions to other viewers, thereby strengthening the sense of community and contributing to the content creator's additional income. Furthermore, features like Super Stickers, which are fun and eye-catching, are purchased to add a more visual and interactive dimension to the live chat environment. These elements stand out as components that enrich both the viewers' and content creators' experiences while promoting community engagement.

Another notable finding from the research is that, despite having a higher number of subscribers, 343 Digital receives fewer Super Chat messages compared to Eski Açık. Initially, 343 Digital produces content related to not only Galatasaray but also other major clubs such as Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş, catering to a more diverse and larger audience. On the other hand, Eski Açık's Galatasaray-focused content and its higher levels of interaction with viewers reflect the emotional connections that the audience has with the club. The higher volume of Super Chats directed towards Eski Açık indicates that the channel's content is perceived as more valuable by viewers, and fans have formed a stronger connection with the channel. Eski Açık's focus on producing content exclusively about Galatasaray contributes to the creation of a loyal audience base. This situation reflects viewers' desire to maintain their bond with their club on digital platforms as well.

The data obtained from the analysis of fans' Super Chat messages during the live streams of 343 Digital on December 3, 2024, December 10, 2024, January 6, 2025, and January 16, 2025, as well as Eski Açık on December 6, 2024, December 15, 2024, January 5, 2025, and January 16, 2025, are shared in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Code Frequencies for Super Chat Messages
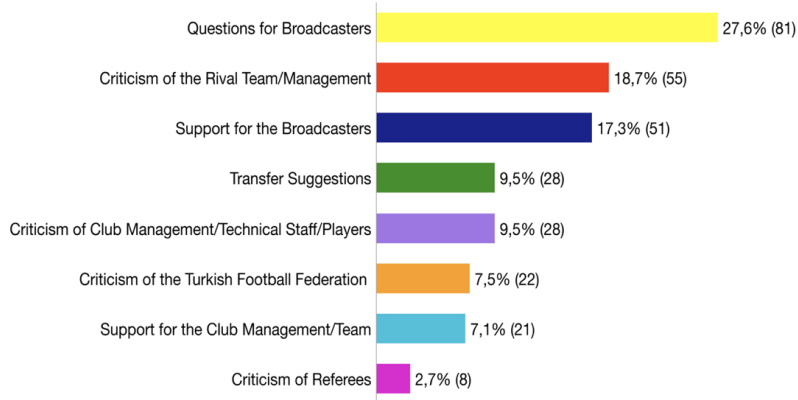
In Figure 1, the distribution of themes and the frequency of each theme's code resulting from the analysis of Super Chat messages on YouTube are shown. According to the findings related to themes and frequencies, the "Questions for Broadcasters" category has the highest frequency in Super Chat messages (27.6%). It is observed that fans wish to interact directly with broadcasters and ask questions about the program's content. This indicates that the program has an interactive structure, and viewers place significant importance on the broadcasters' opinions. The desire to communicate directly with broadcasters reflects the viewers' need for active participation and information.

The second highest frequency theme in the messages sent by fans is "Criticism of the Rival/Management" (18.7%), indicating that fans frequently express their criticisms towards rival teams or their management in Super Chats. These criticisms are generally based on dissatisfaction with the policies, statements, players, or match results of the opposing teams. This high frequency reflects that the competition among fans has been transferred to digital platforms, and such programs are used as a platform for debate.

The theme "Support for Broadcasters" (17.3%) consists of messages expressing support for the broadcasters, and it forms a significant portion of the Super Chats. This indicates that viewers appreciate the broadcasters and their content, value their opinions, and support the program. From this, it can be concluded that the broadcasters leave a positive and trustworthy impression on their audience.

The fourth and fifth most frequent themes, each with an equal frequency of 9.5%, are "Transfer Suggestions" and "Criticism of Club Management/Technical Staff/Players." In their messages, fans shared their thoughts on their clubs' squad

structures by making transfer suggestions and asking broadcasters questions. This category reflects fans' interest in football and their desire to participate in the decision-making processes related to their clubs. Fans providing such suggestions demonstrates their passion for football and their efforts to share their knowledge. The "Criticism of Club Management/Technical Staff/Players" category, on the other hand, highlights a space where fans express their criticisms of their own club's management, technical staff, or players. These critiques typically focus on poor results, transfer policies, or tactical decisions. The lower frequency of criticisms directed towards their own club compared to rival clubs suggests that fans may prefer to adopt a more constructive approach when addressing their own team's performance.

The other themes are as follows: "Criticism of the Turkish Football Federation" (7.5%), "Support for the Club Management/Team" (7.1%), and "Criticism of Referees" (2.7%). Criticisms directed at the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) are primarily related to referee decisions, attitudes towards clubs, and management policies. The intensity of these criticisms and the impact of the TFF on fans suggest a general perception of distrust towards the federation. Additionally, fans have expressed their loyalty by sending support messages to the club management or team, indicating that they adopt not only a critical stance but also a supportive one, wishing to demonstrate their love for their teams. Criticisms of referees, however, have the lowest frequency among the themes. Although this is a less expressed topic compared to others, it reflects fans' dissatisfaction with the referees' performances. These criticisms generally relate to controversial decisions or the influence referees had on match outcomes.

In conclusion, the graph in Figure 1 clearly demonstrates the thematic diversity and focal points of fans' Super Chat messages. While asking questions to broadcasters emerges as the most common theme, criticism of referees is the least discussed topic. These results highlight fans' strong desire to engage in direct communication with broadcasters and exchange opinions. Furthermore, it is evident that critical and supportive themes are distributed in a balanced manner, with fans effectively utilizing this platform to express their views.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Many studies focus on the impact and interaction of social media in strengthening the relationship between fans and sports clubs (Annamalai et al., 2021; Cao & Matsuoka, 2024; Hajli, 2025; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). These studies typically examine how social media is used not only as a communication tool but also as

a platform that enhances fan loyalty, deepens the club-fan relationship, and enables the development of interaction-based strategies. This study is expected to contribute to the literature by focusing on the interaction between football channels producing content on the YouTube platform and their fans, which differs from existing research.

The study provides a detailed examination of the viewer interactions and broadcast content of digital sports media channels. The fan interactions of the 343 Digital and Eski Açık channels offer important insights into the relationships these two channels have built with their audiences, as well as their strategies for viewer engagement and community building. Firstly, both channels encourage their fans to subscribe to their channels, like live streams, and send messages through Super Chat. These interactive features are among the methods used to increase viewer participation and support content creators. Through Super Chat, fans engage directly with broadcasters, making the content more interactive and dynamic. By carefully reading and responding to these messages, broadcasters strengthen fan loyalty. This process allows fans to become more than passive viewers; they evolve into stakeholders who actively participate in content creation and contribute to the broadcasters' revenue.

YouTube content creators generate income through various payment elements such as ads shown in their videos, sponsored content agreements, view counts, and channel memberships. Additionally, Super Chat serves as a model in which viewers support content creators by highlighting their special messages during live streams. Furthermore, donations and other direct payment methods also provide extra income sources for content creators. The highlighting of messages from donating users and their reading and responding by broadcasters is a key feature that allows users to engage more actively in discussions during the broadcast and express their thoughts. From the broadcasters' perspective, Super Chat revenue provides direct financial support. The global reach of digital platforms enables football fans from different geographic regions to come together and interact. This research reveals that fans from countries such as Liberia, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, and the United States have participated in live streams and provided support. This situation demonstrates the potential of digital media platforms to create a cross-border communication network. Moreover, the ability for fans to make payments using different currencies emphasizes the platforms' integration with local financial systems and their success in reaching an international user base. In this context, platforms like YouTube contribute to the globalization of digital football communities by offering not only content consumption but also a space for cultural and economic interaction.

In today's digital age, fandom has become a significant part of the football industry, particularly through football programs on YouTube channels. These platforms have transformed the way football fans access information, engage in discussions, and express their loyalty to their clubs. Football programs not only provide fans with match analyses and player comments, but also offer opportunities for active participation in the football world through topics such as transfer news, current team statuses, and pre/post-match evaluations. These programs serve as crucial content sources for fans who wish to stay updated on the latest news and gain deeper insights into their club's culture.

Fan engagement forms the foundation for a football club to establish a profound connection not only in sports but also in social, cultural, and digital aspects. This interaction offers a sustainable growth model for clubs and content creators while strengthening fans' sense of being a part of their clubs and broadcasts. Research findings indicate that by interacting directly with content creators through features like Super Chat, viewers are not only passive consumers but become part of an active community involved in the content creation process.

Furthermore, the participation of fans from different countries highlights that YouTube football channels provide global access and interaction opportunities. This demonstrates how digital media platforms transcend geographical boundaries, contributing to the development of a global football culture.

Super Chat stands out as a feature in live streams where users' messages are highlighted, read aloud, and answered, in contrast to the regular chat section filled with thousands of free messages. It serves as a prime example of interaction. Users have different options within Super Chat, with various price ranges that determine the visibility and priority of their messages based on the amount of the donation. As the payment amount increases, messages are typically pinned for a longer period, highlighted in more prominent colors, and displayed at the top of the chat window. This provides viewers with the opportunity to attract more attention from the content creator and stand out among other viewers.

Football channels broadcasting on YouTube cater to a broad audience, targeting a younger, internet-savvy demographic as an alternative to traditional sports channels. Many traditional sports channels also produce content on YouTube and other social media platforms. YouTube has become a crucial part of the digital media ecosystem, offering content creators various revenue opportunities. These revenue models vary depending on the content creator's channel size, audience base, and content type. The most common revenue model is ad revenue generated through the YouTube Partner Program (YPP). In this model, content creators earn money from ads shown on their videos. Ad revenues can vary based on factors

like viewer interaction time and the demographic characteristics of the audience. However, this revenue model typically provides significant income potential only for channels with high viewership and large audiences. This motivates content creators to explore other revenue models to diversify their income. Sponsorships and brand collaborations play a significant role in YouTube channels' revenue generation processes. Brands pay content creators to promote their products or services in order to reach the creator's audience. Sponsorship revenue depends on the size of the channel's audience and how well it aligns with the target market. Another revenue model involves content creators selling their own products and services, which can range from physical goods to digital products, depending on the channel's content theme. For channels with a loyal audience, this model can provide a sustainable income stream. Additionally, YouTube's channel memberships and Super Chat features allow content creators to earn direct income from viewers. Channel memberships offer viewers access to exclusive content for a monthly fee, while Super Chat enables viewers to donate during live streams, further enhancing direct financial support for creators.

In conclusion, football programs on YouTube channels play a significant role in the evolution of fandom in the modern world. These channels create a bidirectional interaction environment for both content creators and fans, establishing a new model for digital sports communication. These platforms not only strengthen fans' connections to football but also accelerate the flow of information and contribute to the creation of sustainable revenue models for clubs and sports commentators. As more opportunities for fan interaction arise, it is anticipated that the transformation within football media will continue to evolve in various forms.

REFERENCES

Aguiar-Noury, A., & Garcia-del-Barrio, P. (2022). Performance and revenues in European football: Clubs' media visibility and brand value. *International Journal of the Economics of Business*, *29*(3), 241–269.

Annamalai, B., Yoshida, M., Varshney, S., Pathak, A. A., & Venugopal, P. (2021). Social media content strategy for sport clubs to drive fan engagement. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *62*, 102648.

Athalarik, F. M. (2024). The phenomenon of citizen journalism in national football in Liga 1 competition. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, *5*(3), 570–588.

Aziz, A. (2015). *Sosyal bilimlerde araştırma yöntem ve teknikleri*. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık

Balzano, M., & Bortoluzzi, G. (2023). The digital transformation of soccer clubs and their business models. *Impresa Progetto*, 1–20.

Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2015). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Konya: Eğitim Yayinevi.

Borges, F. V. (2018). Always together: How football clubs want constant connections with fans. *Athens Journal of Sports*, *5*(4), 263–278.

Byun, T. H. (2018). Analyzes the characteristics in the contents production and usage environment of YouTube and its popular channels and examination of its implications. *The Treatise on The Plastic Media*, *21*(4), 227–239.

Cao, Y., & Matsuoka, H. (2024). Consumer engagement on social media in the sport context: a scoping review. *Leisure Studies*, 1–28.

Diel, S., Ifland, S., Wytopil, F., & Buck, C. (2021). *How digital technologies transform football - A structured literature review*. 7–12. https://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2021/81

Dugalić, S. (2018). Sport, media and digitalization. *Sport, Science & Practice*, *8*(1), 56–69.

Escamilla-Fajardo, P., Núñez-Pomar, J. M., Ratten, V., & Crespo, J. (2020). Entrepreneurship and innovation in soccer: Web of science bibliometric analysis. *Sustainability*, *12*(11), 4499.

Falaakh, M. F., & Cahyono, S. (2023). Attitude apprasial of virtual YouTuber viewers interaction in the Super Chat: An SFL perspective. *Undergraduate Conference on Language, Literature, and Culture*, *3*(1), 283–292. http://publikasi.dinus.ac.id/index.php/unclle

Faria, S., Sousa Pereira, M., Ferreira, P., & Rodrigues, P. (2022). Understanding the effect of social media marketing activities on football fans' satisfaction and engagement: A study of Portuguese 2nd League professional football clubs. *IBIMA Business Review*, 448483.

Giertz, J. N., Weiger, W. H., Törhönen, M., & Hamari, J. (2022). Content versus community focus in live streaming services: how to drive engagement in synchronous social media. *Journal of Service Management*, *33*(1), 33–58.

Guzmán, E. M., Zhang, Z., & Ahmed, W. (2021). Towards understanding a football club's social media network: An exploratory case study of Manchester United. *Information Discovery and Delivery*, *49*(1), 71–83.

Hajli, N. (2025). Exploring fan engagement and value co-creation in virtual sport communities: A comparative study of virtual sport communities over time. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *212*, 123934. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123934

Jones, I. (2000). A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom. *Leisure Studies*, *19*(4), 283–298.

Kantürk, K., & Turaç, G. (2024). Transition from conventional media To new media in the context of sports broadcasting: Sports Digitale Youtube channel example. *Yalova Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, *3*(1), 78.

Kim, J., & Kim, K. (2021). Determinants of Consumption for YouTube Sport Contents: A Big Data Analysis using Multi-level Regression. *Korean Journal of Sport Management*, *26*(3), 28–51. https://doi.org/10.31308/KSSM.26.3.28

Kısaoğlu, Ö. (2024). Yeni medya olanaklarıyla değişen yayıncılık biçimleri ve YouTube'da spor yayıncılığı. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, *25*(46), 411–427.

Krzyżowski, F., & Strzelecki, A. (2023). Creating a fan bond with a football club on social media: a case of Polish fans. *Soccer & Society*, *24*(5), 668–681.

Küster-Boluda, I., Ruiz-Mafé, C., & Orozco-Grover, G. (2024). Sports brand love 2.0 in the context of football teams. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 1–18.

Kyrlyova, O., Krupskyi, O. P., & Bakhmetieva, A. (2022). *Transforming Lasswell′s linear model in the digital football discourse: The level of Youtube communication*. *1*(52), 1–19.

Lange, P. G. (2007). Publicly private and privately public: Social networking on YouTube. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13*(1), 361–380.

Lawrence, S., & Crawford, G. (2022). Towards a digital football studies: Current trends and future directions for football cultures research in the post-Covid-19 moment. *Leisure Studies*, *41*(1), 56–69.

Lee, C. W. (2022). Watching the FIFA World Cup under cosmopolitanisation: how football fans in Hong Kong followed the 2018 World Cup. *Leisure Studies*, *41*(4), 587–600.

Lin, H. (2024). 'Let's purchase coloured live chat messages': the impact of user engagement with Super Chat on YouTube. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1–19.

Lotz, A. D. (2014). *The television will be revolutionized*. New York University Press.

Majewska, A., & Majewska, A. (2022). Are social media matter for the football club finance? *Procedia Computer Science*, *207*, 2068–2076.

Merriam, S. B. (2018). *Nitel araştırma: Desen ve uygulama için bir rehber*. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.

McCarthy, J., Rowley, J., & Keegan, B. J. (2022). Social media marketing strategy in English football clubs. *Soccer & Society*, *23*(4–5), 513–528.

McManus, J. (2018). Modern Enchantments: Media, Fandom and Distraction Amongst Diaspora Turkish Football Supporters. *Ethnos*, *83*(4), 762–781.

Öner, İ., Karataş, Ö., & Öztürk Karataş, E. (2024). Dijital gelir modellerinin futbol kulüplerine ekonomik etkisi. *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *8*(14), 137–148https://doi.org/10.56677/mkuefder.1575323

Özmen, K. (2022). Gazeteciliğin değişimi ve Youtube'daki temsili. *Medya ve Kültür*, *2*(1), 10–27.

Pookpanich, P., & Siriborvornratanakul, T. (2024). Offensive language and hate speech detection using deep learning in football news live streaming chat on YouTube in Thailand. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, *14*(1), 18.

Rodríguez Ortega, V. (2019). Online soccer fandom: From social networking to gaming. *Sport in Society*, *22*(12), 2104–2121.

Seggie, F. N., & Bayyurt, Y. (2017). *Nitel araştırma yöntem, teknik, analiz ve yaklaşımları.* Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.

Vale, L., & Fernandes, T. (2018). Social media and sports: driving fan engagement with football clubs on Facebook. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *26*(1), 37–55.

Wann, D. L., & James, J. D. (2018). *Sport fans: The psychology and social impact of fandom*. Routledge.

YouTube 343 Digital. (2025). *TFF'de çok ilginç olaylar yaşanıyor | Serhat Akın geri döndü | Sergen Yalçın kırdı geçirdi | Salvo*, Retrieved January 16, 2025, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhWDJnnNwL0&t=4s

YouTube Eski Açık. (2025). İlk hedef olmalı | Hatayspor vs Galatasaray Maç Önü, Igor Jesus, Diego Carlos, Elye Wahi, Retrieved January 16, 2025, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzCS3V7VViI&t=7109s

Zappin, A., Malik, H., Shakshuki, E. M., & Dampier, D. A. (2022). YouTube monetization and censorship by proxy: A machine learning prospective. *Procedia Computer Science*, *198*, 23–32.

Zinderen, İ. E. (2020). Yeni medya ekolojisi ekseninde YouTube: Türkiye örneği. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, *24*(1), 215–232.