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## FREEBIE ACCEPTANCE AND MOONLIGHTING IN TURKISH SPORTS MEDIA: OPINIONS OF SPORTS WRITERS\*

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of "freebie" and "moonlighting" applications on Turkish Sports Media according to sports writers. Thirty nine sports writers who periodically write a column in a national newspaper participated the study. The interview method was used in the study formed in the qualitative research model. The interviews were performed face to face or by the telephone, recorded by a voice recorder, and put into a written document in accordance with the original. Because of the sample size the qualitative data were transcribed into quantitative data. According to the research findings, 41% (16) of the sports writers emphasized that 'freebie' acceptance occurs in sports media, 43.6% (17) reported that it does not occur and 15.4% (6) stated that it is not so common to be considered as a problem. In addition, 51.3% (20) of the sports writers stated that 'moonlighting' is seen in sports media, 28.2% (11) stated that there is no such practice, and 20.5% (8) reported that it is not so common to be considered as problem. It was found that code of ethics is violated in the Turkish sports media by freebie acceptance and moonlighting, which creates some problems especially in objectivity and accuracy in sports media.

**Key Words:** Sports, Media, Ethics, Moonlighting, Freebie.

### TÜRK SPOR MEDYASINDA AVANTA ve EK İŞ UYGULAMALARI: SPOR YAZARLARININ GÖRÜŞLERİ

#### ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı; avanta (freebies) ve ek iş (moonlighting) uygulamalarının Türk Spor Medyasına ve gazetecilik etiğine etkilerini spor yazarlarının görüşlerinden hareketle ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmaya periyodik olarak ulusal bir gazetede köşe yazısı kaleme alan 39 spor yazarı katılmıştır. Nitel çalışma modelinde şekillenen araştırmada görüşme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmeler yüz yüze veya telefon aracılığı ile yapılmış, ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedilmiş ve aslına uygun olarak yazılı doküman haline getirilmiştir. Seçilen örneklem sayısı fazla olduğu için nitel veriler, nicel veriye de dönüştürülmüştür. Araştırma bulgularına göre; spor yazarlarının %41'i (16 kişi) spor medyasında 'avanta' kabul etme uygulamasının görülmekte olduğunu, %43,6'i (17 kişi) böyle bir uygulamaya rastlanmadığını, %15,4'ü (6 kişi) ise bu durumun sorun yaratacak boyutta olmadığını vurgulamışlardır. Spor yazarlarından %51,3'ü (20 kişi) spor medyasında kulüplerin ek işlerini yaparak çıkar elde etme uygulamasının görülmekte olduğunu, %28,2'si (11 kişi) böyle bir uygulamaya rastlanmadığını ve %20,5'i (8 kişi) görüldüğünü, ancak sorun yaratacak düzeye ulaşmadığını belirtmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, Türk spor medyasında avanta ve ek iş uygulamaları ile etik kodların ihlal edildiği ve bu durumun özellikle spor medyasında objektiflik ve doğruluk konusunda bazı sorunlar yarattığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Spor, Medya, Etik, Ek İş, Avanta.

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## INTRODUCTION

Media is today's most effective environment despite all the criticisms and also it is one of the most significant actors shaping the social life with functions it fulfills. The most striking functions of media are affecting general perceptions of the society (Lee, 2005; Hughes & Shank, 2005), notification, entertaining, transferring education and culture, introducing goods and services, and informing (Aziz, 1994). The fulfillment of these roles in a positive way is directly related to the ethical codes to be adopted and obeyed by the media employees. For this reason, there is a list of ethical codes relevant to all media of the media associations of different countries and the international media organizations, and also there is a list of ethical codes published by several related bodies, e.g. Associated Press Sports Editors-APSE, for some special areas of the media, such as sports media (Çimen, 2012).

Within this context, the Turkish Press Council published a declaration consisting of 16 articles and including the codes of media ethics in 1987. This declaration includes also some ethical codes involving several subjects, such as truthfulness, privacy, news gathering methods, freebie acceptance, and moonlighting, which are universally accepted and frequently involved in the body of literature (Avşar, 2002).

In journalism, these common manifests of moral values usually state the written ethical codes, and the organizations guide the journalists by sharing these standards (Garrison & Salzven, 1994). However, according to Hardin (2005), although the list of ethical codes has a feature of explaining the ethical issues, guiding and determining behavior standards, and is accepted as valuable for journalism, it cannot guarantee the ethical behaviors and solve the ethical problems. For this reason, the ethical

codes are considered as a problematic field in journalism.

Considering the general poor image of journalism and codes of journalism ethics, and daily violations (Wulfemeyer, 1985), sports journalism is considered as a field in which ethical problems occur most (Hardin, 2005). Sports journalism is regarded as shady by the society and especially the clubs, trainers, managers, and sportsmen in respect of the unethical news and consequently the ethical codes. Two of the ethical codes commonly discussed are *moonlighting*, which provides financial returns for media employees and is considered as ethical violation by journalism organizations all over the world, as well as *freebie acceptance*, which can be simply defined as receiving gifts, e.g., travel opportunities from various organizations, in exchange for making news.

There exist very few studies conducted on sports media and ethics in Turkey, and there is no report in the literature investigating media employees in terms of providing financial gains in the forms of moonlighting and freebie. From this point of view, with reference to the opinions of the sports writers who personally take part in the center of the discussions, the purpose of the study was to reveal the effects of the unethical applications such as getting financial opportunities by moonlighting and accepting freebies like free trips, gifts etc. in exchange for news the journalists on the Turkish sports media, which have been frequently discussed in the Turkish sports.

**Freebie;** Freebie is defined in dictionary as "*something given for free*" (<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/freebie>) and, in the present study, it is considered within the scope of the media employees' practice of exploiting their professions for personal interests, which is also part of the codes of media ethics. In this regard, media organizations

developed several regulations against these ethics violations. For example, while the US Society of Professional Journalists emphasizes that media employees should “refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility.” (<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>). Furthermore, the 11<sup>th</sup> article of the Turkish Journalists Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities, which was accepted on 3 November 1998, states that “*journalist cannot seek after a material or nonmaterial advantage in return of publication or non-publication of information, news.*” Moreover, it is also stated in the Rules of Correct Behaviors of Media Employees, which is a part of the same declaration that “*all kinds of gifts and material benefits that could create doubt, prejudice on the pre-publication decisions and the publications should be rejected.*” (<http://www.tgc.org.tr/bildirge.asp>).

Media organizations declare their organization policies related with freebie acceptance. For example, Washington Post declares that “We pay our own way. We accept no gifts from news sources. We accept no free trips. We neither seek nor accept preferential treatment that might be rendered because of the positions we hold. Exceptions to the no-gift rule are few and obvious – invitations to meals, for example. Free admissions to any event that is not free to the public are prohibited. The only exception is for seats not sold to the public, as in a press box. Whenever possible, arrangements will be made to pay for such seats” (<http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=236&sl=19&contentid=335>). In addition, David Broder, who is an author of Washington Post, maintains that “*Presidents and all politicians love to lavish invitations, gifts on us. Falling into such traps means to lose the independence little more at every turn.*”(Cited by Bülbül, 2001: p. 50-51),

which is an important explanation showing that they cannot be neutral when the media employees accept trip, meals, and gifts.

In the following statement “*...Any gifts and privileges against professional ethics and practices cannot be accepted from persons and institutions that have been or considered to be subjects of publications*” in Articles 1 and 4 of the Dogan Media Professional Policies ([www.dmgayayinkonseyi.com/meslek\\_ilkeleri.asp](http://www.dmgayayinkonseyi.com/meslek_ilkeleri.asp)), limitations related to the freebies are listed. In short, media associations and organizations determined in detail what cannot be accepted as freebie, from concert tickets to business dinners (<http://ilef.ankara.edu.tr/etik/haber-kaynaklariyla-maddi-iliskiler>).

Unethical practices and the practice of publishing or non-publishing for a freebie, which are usually seen in all fields of the media, also occur in the sports media. When the sports media is in question, different gifts enter into the scope of freebie. Wulfemeyer (1985) listed the gifts in the scope of freebie for the sports media as follows: “*...abound in sports journalism There are the ever-present free passes and tickets to sporting events, free food and drink before, during, and after sporting events and at parties, receptions, meetings, press conferences, banquets, tours, and conv ent ions There's t he free use of equipment such as telephones, teletvpes, photocopvinu machines, and tape recorders There are outright gifts ot merchandise that range from insignificant promotional items to liquor, clothing, championship rings, and sports equipment There are free trips and free lodging upon arrival. There are discount rates for club memberships and consumer items.*”

The media employees accepting freebies may ignore the negativities about the relevant company/club, and may give place to supportive and laudatory writings more. For this reason, the practice of

offering trips aiming advertising is criticized, and some organizations had to force restrictions regarding this issue (Uzun, 2007, p. 78). According to Uzun (2001, p. 221), while sports journalism is also seen as a tool of providing benefits in some environments today, journalists who make news for expensive gifts, money, and the free trips become a topic of discussion.

Sometimes sports media employees also criticize the freebie ethical code violation. Among these, the master journalist Bapçum, who is a sports writer for more than half a century, states that *"I did not sit at nobody's table, I went to training. I did not make friends with anybody by making news. Ali Şen is my friend. I stayed away from him when he was the FB President. And I always say the young journalists; don't sit at the table of club... Then they suppose you as the man they will make write whatever they want. I sit at nobody's table. I went to the training. I called the President, asked question, received answer, and went..."* (www.aksam.com.tr/arsiv/aksam/2003/02/24/yasam/), which emphasizes how the sports journalist should approach to the issue of freebies. Besides, Ali Sami Alkış's statement that *"A sports writer eats at a restaurant and does not pay the bill which makes about 600 million liras (300 USD). The man goes, eats, drinks, also buys for twenty people in the camps abroad, and the bill comes to Fenerbahçe Sport Club. Well-known names do that"* (Radikal Newspaper, 27 December 1999) can be shown as an example of freebie in Turkish media.

Within the frame of the statements made, it can be said that the freebie ethical code is generally accepted by all media organizations in the world as well as in Turkey, and besides the media organizations, it is important in terms of the reputation and credibility of the profession.

**Moonlighting;** Moonlighting is defined as "to work at an additional job after one's

regular employment, as at night" (<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/moonlight>) and *"paid work that you do in addition to your normal job, especially without telling your employer"* (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/moonlighting>). When ethical codes of the media institutions and organizations in the world as well as in Turkey were examined, regulatory articles on freebie journalism were found, but no article directly involving the subject of moonlighting could be located.

Even if there is not a concrete article on this subject, it can be said that this absence is clearly involved in the definition of the journalist concept. Journalist is defined as *"those who take on the task of information receiving, processing, transmitting, or stating opinion or view as permanent, contractual or freelance for a daily or periodical printed, video, audio, or electronic press and media organ, and whose primary job and main source of livelihood is that, and whose position against the legislations related to the establishment they work is in accordance with this definition"* (<http://www.tgc.org.tr/bildirge.asp>). When evaluated in the scope of this definition, the person-persons moonlighting in any institution or organization cannot be accepted as a "journalist". Consequently, the persons with a journalist identity cannot work at an additional job. However, real-life practices reveal the necessity of this ethical problem to be taken into the scope of the regulation concretely.

Wulfemeyer has been among leading names of the conceptualizing and defining efforts on moonlighting in the field of media. According to Wulfemeyer (1985), moonlighting in the sports journalism is evaluated in the scope of that *"such opportunities include serving as an official scorer or statistician, doing play-by-play or color commentary on radio or television, writing for sports*

publications, or writing for game programs, yearbooks, press guides, and highlight films As with accepting freebies, there are obvious advantages connected with moonlighting—additional income, prestige, notoriety, and ego satisfaction Sports journalists can also improve their skills and knowledge, plus speak to a larger audience.”

Even if there is not a concrete ethical code related to the moonlighting within the scope of the definition of Wulfemeyer, studies have been made on the subject of moonlighting in the literature. For example, Limor and Himmelboim (2006) clearly report what kind of problems moonlighting may create as “Moonlighting journalists focus attention on the real or potential conflict between a commitment to the profession and to the public trust and a commitment to other employers or extraneous interests represented by additional work. For example, a journalist who also works for an advertising agency may jeopardize his or her commitment to the public to report in an unbiased manner or the obligation to promote the interests of the agency’s customers”. Besides that, although there is the concept of moonlighting in the title of the study on Mexican media conducted by Ramirez (2012), it is not given a sufficient coverage in the content of the study, and it basically dwells on the application of journalism for bribe and freebie.

Although media employees have lack of knowledge about the “moonlighting” ethical code in Turkey, writings in some news that features moonlighting practices are striking. For example, with regard to the statements of Alkış, “There are ones who make commission business among the sports journalists. They mediate the football player transfers. He says this, this says that, and when the transfer happens, a money transfer takes place from the football player to the journalist.” Bülbul (2001, p. 51) states that “by

benefiting from the power of the profession; efforts such as making business and even tender pursuits for personal interest, mediating to the sportsman transfers, and entering into artist organizations humiliate, even corrupt the profession of journalism”. These statements show that sports writers gain additional income apart from their main works. Hürriyet newspaper readers’ representative Bildirici (Hürriyet Newspaper, 6 June 2011) states that journalist should avoid situations that may create conflict of interests and the actions damaging professional dignity while making another work except their own job, and emphasizing that playing the stock by economy correspondents, pursuing files by court correspondents, or being sportsmen manager by sports correspondents are all wrong, which is important because it shows that moonlighting is wrong for all media employees, not only for the sports media employees.

The most astonishing claim on this subject is put into words by the sports writer Erkan Goloğlu. In his book named “Ben Söyleyince Kötü Oluyorum”, Goloğlu states that Aziz Yıldırım gave a Passat brand automobile to some journalist and writers, and these journalists act as an employee of Fenerbahçe (Goloğlu, 2006, p. 158).

To be objective in the news and give accurate news, sports journalists should maintain their relationships with people, institutions, and organizations out of the financial ground, and should not go over the limits of the relationships required by the profession. Exceeding this limit will cause the journalist to become in the position of an employee of the relevant institutions and organizations by losing the responsibility towards the readers. Under these circumstances, it can be said journalism cannot be performed.

The study is a qualitative study in which the interview method based on dialog, which is the most common form of communication (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006) was used. Consequently, it is one of the methods of data collection used in the qualitative research.

In this study purposive sampling method was used, because of the importance of the expertise interviewers in quantitative researches (Baş & Akturan, 2008). For this reason, participants of this study were composed of 39 (38 male and 1 female) sports writers who have columns in national newspapers and magazines, write articles periodically and they have over than the five year experience. The study was performed with the interviewers by getting appointment beforehand, and by using the form of face to face interview (31 writers) or via telephone interview (8 writes). In this research, open ended questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006) about freebie and moonlighting were directed to the interviewees. Question I: *“freebie practices are seen in sport media like accepting small gifts, free ticket, food, drink, receptions, tours, sports equipment, and licensed products. How does it affect the sport media?”*.

## FINDINGS

Direct quotations towards the findings obtained from the study and the findings from the interviews made with the sports

Question II: *“moonlighting practices are seen in sport media like working for a sport club as a transfer manager, working for sport club televisions or magazines as a journalist. How does it affect the sport media?”*.

A voice recorder was used in the interviews, and the recordings were converted to written document before the descriptive analysis. By staying loyal to the original form of the data, quotations were made from the statements and presented with a descriptive approach. In order to reach some causal and explanatory results, systematic analysis was made and the sub-themes were determined by examining the interviews thoroughly. By considering the number of sample representing a significant part of the population, percentage and frequency distributions were also given to support the qualitative study with the quantitative data.

Reliability and validity of this study was ensured by clear explanation of research methodology and procedures, making direct quotations from the findings and predicating the results on these quotations, preventing the data loss voice recorder was used and participants were clearly described.

writers in accordance with the core of qualitative studies are presented in this section. Because the number of samples selected was high, the qualitative data were also used as quantitative data.

**Table 1. Opinions of the Sports Writers on Freebie Applications**

Options	f	%
Yes	16	41.0
No	17	43.6
Yes, But Not a Problem	6	15.4
Total	39	100

According to Table 1, 17 writers (43.6%) don't believe that there exist freebie

practices, 16 writers (41%) believe that freebie practices occur, and 6 writers

(15.4%) believe that freebie practices occur but it is not problematic.

Interviewer 1 opinion, *there were also people who made close contact, established commercial relations with some club presidents. The managers, presidents provided various helps to be able to keep the effective names of journalists, writers on their side*” emphasizes that the freebie application occurs, interviewer 36 view that *“Today, because the people, especially the correspondents, those who are in contact with the clubs have an important financial problem, they consider these sort of things unavoidable. Of course it is saddening, but also it is not possible to prevent these”*, the emphasis on *“unavoidable”* he made for the freebie practice indicates a sub-theme.

Another sub-theme that *‘to be able to find more place in the media’* can be understood from interviewer 3 opinion that *“Unfortunately because the failure of being welcomed of the sports branches by the media with sufficient interest has exacerbated the sponsors and clubs in Turkey, we came up against situations such as being covered of the travel and hotel expenses of the journalists from important broadcasting organizations especially encountered in the basketball in some periods. These examples still continue in the sports media today in Turkey”*.

The interviewer 31 opinion that *“Entering into such a relationship with the news source out of the news means that the reporter wrote his prestige off”* is important in terms of showing that these sorts of relationships destroy the reputation of journalism. Interviewer 11 states what the media employees may face as a result of

the freebie practice with the statement that *“The extensions of freebie may bring other demands, going beyond the limits, and some claims along”*.

Some sports writers have stated they consider the freebie as normal and harmless such as the interviewer 18 *“If what in question is the small gifts and travels in promotion campaigns, in my opinion these are normal and harmless. In also the Turkish sports media, these organizations have been performed by sponsors and federations sometimes. Journalists have been also taken along to the activities and competitions taking place at home and abroad by covering their expenses”* and interviewer 34 *“I don’t remember that we faced with a situation in the ethical violation line on this subject”*.

Among the sports writers stating that the freebie practices did not occur or have not yet become in a state causing a problem, interviewer 17 is one of the sports writers having the opinion that *“There are exceptional cases, but I think the Turkish sports press acts ethical in this sense. I mean except old-boy relation, I don’t believe the employees act biased for interest especially in the material sense from anyone”*. The interviewer 32 is the other one stating that *“I don’t think that there are people who have any interest from the others among journalists. I don’t even want to think. Even I don’t feel the need to answer this question”* and the interviewer 7 is another one stating that *“At least 2 thousand people are working in the Turkish sports media as of today. Professionally, semi-professionally and amateur. The rate is not even 1 percent. In other words, the Turkish sports media does not have such a problem”*.

**Table 2. Distribution Relating To The Situation Of Providing Additional Benefit Of The Sports Media Employees By Making Some Works Of Sports Clubs (Moonlighting)**

Options	f	%
Yes	20	51,3
No	11	28,2
Yes, But Not a Problem	8	20,5
Total	39	100

Table 2 illustrates that 20 sports writers (51.3%) accepted the moonlighting in Turkish sport media, 11 sport writers (28.2%) don't accepted the moonlighting, and 8 sports writers (20.5%) accepted the moonlighting in Turkish sport media but they believed that it is not problematic.

Most of the writers have emphasized that there is moonlighting practice in Turkish sports media. The interviewer 1, used the statement that *"A considerable part of our friends who are sports writers have expectations such as serving in boards, being chairmen of boards, serving in transfer committees and other parts of the clubs they feel they belong. You will be in these expectations, and also you will make journalism on that subject. The both do not comply with each other and meet in the same point. But, unfortunately Turkey has serious troubles in this subject. It has been continuing for long years and there is not even a slightest hope for the solution"*, and the interviewer 35 said that *"Unfortunately there are common claims on this subject also for the Turkish sports media. Some of them are proven, and moreover there are also "silenced" claims. There are sports writers, commentators who are official, even "professional official" in the federation... official, even "professional official" in the "recent club TVs"; is it possible; but it is possible in us and also nobody objects. If "this is the case" in Istanbul, who knows "what's happening in Anatolia"; does anybody know or "want to know"? If you are a journalist, you are the "journalist"; one may claim that you are not a journalist, you are doing business and using the profession of the journalism for that."*

The interviewer 4 stated the negative effects of the moonlighting practice on media employees as *"Especially the journals, the private TV channels of clubs are the suitable places for additional income. But if you accept such a work, you cannot write anything against that club"* and the interviewer 5 said that *"If you issue the journal of the club, then go and work within the body of that club. But, working in a sports page of newspaper X and on the other hand holding statistics of three clubs, this is not working. What will you write when you catch something tomorrow? Can you write? You cannot. Because, you have an interest from there, you are doing a task. And they give you money in return"*.

The wages policy in media, which some sports writers laid emphasis on, was determined as sub-theme. Among these, the interviewer 39 explained his opinions as *"Because the name of journalism in Turkey is very good, has much popularity; but economically the money the employees gain is in very low level. Consequently, the people mostly do additional works to feed their families and educate their children in better conditions. And the best known job by these is media publishing. If the club issues a journal, make a web site; of course they are working there"* and the interviewer 27 said that *"Yes, it is practiced unfortunately, and even very commonly. It is very evident that it is unethical. It is practiced much more by those who cannot earn in return for the work, and also there are others doing it because of greediness. And others do it because of they feel compulsory"*.



Some sports writers have the opinion that moonlighting practice does not occur in sports media, or it is not in the level of concern. Among them, the interviewer 11 stated his opinions as *“So far as I know there is not moonlighting practice in Ankara. But sometimes I heard some in Istanbul. There are some talks around that some journalist friends are preparing the journals of Beşiktaş, Galatasaray, making*

*contribution with writing, photo and getting a financial support in return. Of course because these could not be proven, they will be stay as mere claims”* and the interviewer 30 said that *“I don't remember even one person who gains money by making an additional work of the club. I think there is not an environment the press members can use the club”*.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As required by the *rule of refusing personal interests* which has primary and privileged place among ethical principles of journalism all over the world, it can be said that the employees of any profession should stay away from the practice of accepting gifts, freebies, free travel, special treatment and privileges, and doing a different job beyond the main employer's knowledge and thereby gaining income. From this viewpoint, the present study revealed significant data in terms of understanding the effects and current situation of the freebie and moonlighting applications in the sports media.

The answers given by the sports writers to the question about the acceptance of freebie are distributed as 16 sports writers (41%) believe it, 17 sports writers (43.6) do not believe it, and 6 sports writers (15.4%) believe that sport media workers accept freebies but they don't believe it creates a problem (Table 1). The 16 sports writers who stated freebie accepting occurs in sports media says that such practices have been mostly at the correspondent level, and usually seen as foods, free travels, coverage of travel and accommodation expenses, and expensive gifts. The same sports writers also state that this situation cannot be subjected to a generalization spreading over all sports media and including everybody.

Also, some sub-themes are remarkable in the study. Especially, the *“compulsion emphasis”* comes into prominence in the

answers of some writers. These sports writers have tried to put the situation in a legitimate basis by stating that the wages policies in the sports media direct the correspondents to similar practices sometimes. By putting emphasis especially on that the sports correspondents who are deprived of the press insurance and employed at low wages exceed the fine line between making news and being used, and may be weak against such applications; they state that the journalists should use only the opportunities of their institutions.

The 43.6% (17) of sports writers stated that the free travels, foods, gifts and relations of interest have not yet become in the state of causing problem for the sports media, and according to them the claims have only been unconfirmed rumors. And the 15.4% (6) of sports writers stated that the small gifts and travels are normal and harmless.

Hürriyet Newspaper readers' representative Faruk Bildirici published statements supporting the conclusions of the present study: *“it should be absolutely indicated that the trip is funded by the organization firm/club in news and interviews. Because when this does not happens, then the reader is misguided”* (<http://www.yeniduzen.com/Yazarlar/suleyman-irvan/bedava-gezi-baldan-tatlidir/1228>).

In the study conducted by Ramirez (2012), the participants stated that freebies journalism (gifts, free travels, accommodation etc.) occurs in the

Mexican media, and taking small gifts or news-purpose travels of which expenses are covered are harmless and will not bias the journalist. The researcher also stated that such applications cause compromise and give damage to the journalist independence in the conclusion of the study. From this study, which shares similarity with the research, we can say that this practice occur in the world media; however, because its material value is not so high, it is not perceived as a significant ethical violation.

The 51.3% (20) of participants gave response of “occurs”, the 28.2% (11) “not occurs”, and the 20.5% (8) “not so as to cause problem” to the question addressed about providing additional benefits of the sports media employees by making some works of the sports clubs (Table 2). Giving the “occurs” response of the more than half of the writers indicates clues about revealing the situation that the sports media is in and the need to re-consider in accordance with the ethical principles. The findings show that sports media employees get additional income apart from their main jobs, and this situation comes to the fore mostly in football player transfers and issuing club journals.

In Turkey, there exist very few studies regarding the freebies and moonlighting subjects. Uzun’s (2004) study titled “Ethical Approach of the Sports Media in Turkey” (Türkiye’de Spor Basını’nın Etik Anlayışı) is the pioneering study examining the sports media specifically and involving also the subject of freebies journalism. Uzun’s analysis that the profession is used as a benefit obtaining tool in some environments shows parallelism with our study. And Cerrahoğlu’s (2004) study titled “The Image of Sports Journalism in Turkey” (Türkiye’de Spor Gazeteciliği İmajı), even if not directly related to our subject, emphasized that the sports journalism is not performed professionally, and this situation causes ethical problems.

In conclusions, to be able to criticize institutions, organizations, clubs, companies, and professionals in moral and ethical sense; the media should firstly obey these rules in itself and base its foundations on these principles.

Also, Belsey and Chadwick (2002, p. 430), by emphasizing that any legal framework cannot secure the ethical behavior in any field of the social life, have added that “Legislations can provide an area where some course of actions are encouraged and some of them are tried to be prevented at the most. There will be some deterrence in form of sanctions and punishments; however, a society ultimately depends on the sense of moral and responsibility of its members. Unless the media professionals possess the sense of moral and responsibility, the quality will be lacking.”

In the present study in which the ethical codes related to providing material benefits in the sports media have been examined, it was found that as a result of violation of these ethical codes, media employees may get away from the truth value by exhibiting behaviors far from the objectivity, have difficulties in the point of informing or not in accordance with the relations of interest, and destroy credibility of the profession in the long run, and it may negatively affect independence and image of the journalists.

To avoid the unethical practices examined in the scope of the study, increase the quality of the works performed by sports media employees, and provide them an independent working environment; providing adequate wages and decent and safe working conditions, creating associations, syndicates, councils, communities and boards for effective journalism, similar to the ones in Europe, and developing self-audit mechanisms are seen important. All of these conditions will make the sports journalists more independent, and also make them stronger against pressure and interventions coming from both inside and outside.

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