



Understanding "The Athletic Labour of Femininity" Through the Experiences of Turkish Female Personal Trainers

Yeliz ERATLI ŞİRİN¹ İrem KAVASOĞLU^{1*} Tayfun ŞİRİN² Berna CAN³

¹Department of Sports Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey

²Department of Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Kahramanmaraş, Turkey

³Physical Education and Sports Department, Institute of Health Sciences, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The momentum of social media in the world of sports has created a wide range of opportunities for women in sports. One of the most obvious of these opportunities is undoubtedly related to economic visibility. The current research aims to examine how female trainers in the health and fitness sector, who actively participate in the creation and consumption of sports, represent themselves on Instagram through the concept of the athletic labour of femininity in the light of Turkey's gender regime and neoliberal feminism. In this study, which applied quantitative content analysis to a total of 1100 photographs of eleven individual coaches (11), eight in-depth individual interviews were conducted, and these qualitative data were analyzed by thematic analysis method. The quantitative and qualitative findings of the research show that women trainers in the health and fitness sector construct coaching that is in line with neoliberal femininity. On the other hand, power relations based on Turkey's neoconservative, religious patriarchal norms influence the market-based decisions trainers make about their sharing. As a result, Turkey-specific dynamics are at the forefront of trainers' athletic endeavours, which they focus on building a brand image. This study offers a perspective on how personal trainers serving in the healthy living and fitness industry use Instagram as a marketing tool, what economic opportunities they get, and what they negotiate while improving their visibility on Instagram, in the context of neoliberal femininity and Turkey's gender regime.

Keywords

Brand image,
Female personal trainer,
Instagram,
Social media

Article History

Received 07 July 2023
Revised 30 November 2023
Accepted 27 December 2023
Available Online 14 March 2024

* Corresponding Author:

Irem KAVASOĞLU
E-mail Address:
kavasogluirem@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Today, the widespread and effective use of social media by the sports world has brought about significant changes in the production and consumption of sports (Abeza et al., 2019; Abeza, 2023; Bruce, 2016; Hayes et al., 2019; López-Carril et al., 2020a, 2020b; Osborne et al., 2021) and social media platforms have become an integral part of today's sports culture (Abeza & Sanderson, 2022). A notable aspect of these changes concerns women athletes and women's sports. Unlike traditional media, social media platforms provide many advantages to female athletes such as being more visible, interacting with fans, representing themselves as they wish, presenting different aspects of their lives, developing a personal brand image, sponsorship and collaboration opportunities, and creating their advertisements (Bruce, 2016; Burch & Zimmerman, 2019; Geurin, 2017; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Thorpe et al., 2017; Toffoletti et al., 2022). Yet the increasing visibility of female athletes on social media has also created some risks. Much research has shown how female athletes are constantly judged by their fans and followers, with some subjected to various forms of online abuse and virtual maltreatment (Kavanagh et al., 2019; Kavanagh et al., 2022; Litchfield & Osborne, 2022; Litchfield et al., 2016; Toffoletti et al., 2022).

The international literature on female athletes and social media analysis emphasizes that female athletes use social media platforms for a wide variety of purposes and that these platforms provide economic visibility and gains for female athletes that they cannot achieve in mainstream media (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Thorpe et al., 2017; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a, 2018b). While sports and social media researchers in the Western context continue to present their analyses on sportswomen in a nuanced and complex manner and deepen the debates, the literature in Turkey has missed the mark (Kavasoglu & Koca, 2022). As yet, no research in Turkey has explored the athletic labour of femininity that women who are physically active in online spaces present on Instagram.

Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a), two of the most influential and agenda-setting researchers in sports and social media research, suggest that we pay attention to the complexities that female athletes must negotiate when trying to produce an authentic feminine sports identity and brand in a postfeminist consumer culture. Bruce (2016) emphasizes the need for further exploration of different cultural contexts to understand the much greater diversity of representation of sportswomen. Turkey has a cultural context dominated by a neoliberal, neo-conservative climate, and patriarchal power relations. On the other hand, Turkey is said to be the only modern, democratic, Islamic country, which makes it somewhat

of an anomaly in the Islamic world, and the status of Turkish women visibly marks this difference (Müftüler-Bac, 1999). Modern Turkey is also unique among Islamic countries because it is a secular state (Arat, 1996). Therefore, the Instagram experiences of women in Turkey's sports ecosystem allow us to hear different and unique voices on gender relations. To hear these different voices, the current research will try to explore the athletic endeavours of female coaches within the health and fitness sector on Instagram (Rahikainen & Toffoletti, 2021; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a).

Theoretical Framework

In this research, the concept of *athletic labour of femininity* developed by Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a) was used as a conceptual framework. This concept emphasizes the economic visibility of women in sports and was developed about neoliberal feminism. In this context, in this part of the study, we will touch upon neoliberalism, neoliberal feminism and the femininity values produced by this feminism, and we will try to understand the neoliberal femininity values produced by women in sports fields.

Neoliberalism is a dominant political rationality that moves to and from the management of the state to the inner workings of the subject, normatively constructing and interpellating individuals as entrepreneurial actors (Rottenberg, 2014). In this context, a neoliberal subject construction takes place, centring on the ideals of self-discovery, autonomy, and self-realization. In the construction of the neoliberal subject, the feminine has gained a unique importance and women are encouraged to produce themselves as objects of the gaze (Özyeğin, 2018).

According to neoliberal feminism, women are entrepreneurial subjects, neoliberal feminism is hyper-individualizing (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020) and this feminism offers no critique – immanent or otherwise – of neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014). This neoliberal feminism is helping to produce a particular kind of feminist subject. Using key liberal terms, such as equality, opportunity, and free choice, while displacing and replacing their content, this recuperated feminism forges a feminist subject who is not only individualized but entrepreneurial in the sense that she is oriented towards optimizing her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative and innovation (Rottenberg, 2014).

In late capitalist economies individuals are primarily valued and understood in market terms as buyers, sellers and consumers. What is being "sold", then, in a neoliberal marketplace is the female athletic body as a gendered product (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018b). As Rottenberg (2014) underlines, in connection with this, "a new trend is on the rise: increasingly, high-

powered women are publicly and unabashedly espousing feminism." (p. 418). This statement also bears evidence of the emergence of neoliberal femininity and how it was popularly adopted.

Feminist analyses of neoliberal feminist sentiments are valuable in helping us to understand the broader cultural conditions that influence how many sportswomen engage with social media, particularly as a form of self-branding in the context of neoliberalism (Thorpe et al., 2017). Toffoletti and Thorpe are among the first feminist sports scholars to critique how sportswomen are internalizing neoliberal discourses of self-entrepreneurialism about their self-branding and use of social media (Thorpe et al., 2017). They propose a new conceptual framework – the athletic labour of femininity – to understand how elite sportswomen cultivate an authentic brand in the sports marketplace. More than a type of 'bodywork', the athletic labour of femininity responds to consumer expectations that women demonstrate a successful feminine subjectivity characterised by notions of personal choice, individual responsibility and self-management (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a). For example, many Western studies have identified that sportswomen emphasize their personal lives and sexuality on social media. These studies reveal that female athletes' posts that embrace sexually attractive and heterosexual femininity are one of the contents in which they build their brands and present themselves on social media (Clavio & Eagleman, 2011; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Thorpe et al., 2017). This desirable, sexy and attractive female body can be interpreted as the neoliberal subject's regulation of herself according to market conditions and expectations. Because the female body that gains economic visibility on social media for the consumption culture strengthened by neoliberal policies is the female body that the followers/market want/desire.

Neoliberal feminism is the manifestation of a new kind of mainstream feminism, where gender inequality is being called out (rather than repudiated) but responses and reactions to such inequalities are framed by neoliberal discourses of individual entrepreneurialism and economic independence only. Simply, women who can individually overcome structural inequalities and obtain economic independence and success are celebrated as feminist subjects (Thorpe et al., 2017). To Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a), positioned as neoliberal subjects required to respond to market conditions, elite sportswomen do so by marketing their lifestyles online, with a particular focus on curating authenticity via bodily appearance, as a means to achieve sporting visibility (p.313). For example, emphases such as love yourself (or love your body), self-disclosure, and self-empowerment in the branding strategies of

contemporary athlete women on social media platforms may mean that athletes respond to the needs of the market by neoliberal femininity (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018b).

Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a) argue that studies of athlete self-presentation and branding on social media would be considerably enriched by paying greater attention to the social conditions influencing how sportswomen represent the self online and the gender power relations that serve to govern expressions of desirable athletic femininity (p. 300). Instead, they argue that social media interaction between female athletes and fans is governed by gender norms and arrangements that expect and reward female athletic articulations of empowerment, entrepreneurialism and individualization in the context of postfeminism, and as it intersects with consumer cultures of leisure, lifestyle, sport and fitness (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a).

There is a need for further exploration of different cultural contexts to understand the much greater diversity of representation of sportswomen (Bruce, 2016). In this respect, Turkey presents a cultural context in which a neoliberal, neo-conservative climate prevails, and patriarchal power relations are dominant. Due to this context, the experiences of women in sports in Turkey are different from their counterparts in both Western and Muslim countries. The present research offers an opportunity to hear these different voices.

The current research focuses on understanding how women with coaching experience in the health and fitness sector in Turkey, a secular and Muslim state of law, use Instagram as part of their profession. The concept of the athletic labour of femininity developed by Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a) is highly functional for our research problem. As emphasized by Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a) research on sportswomen's self-presentation on social media, applying the athletic labour of femininity framework would enable researchers to attend to the complexities that female athletes must negotiate when attempting to produce an authentic feminine sporting identity and brand in a postfeminist consumer culture (p. 313). We use the concept of the athletic labour of femininity as a conceptual framework since it allows us to explore the social conditions of our country and the gendered power relations that serve to govern desirable expressions of athletic femininity in the self-representations that Turkish women coaches construct while branding themselves on Instagram.

Women, Sports and Social Media in Turkey

In Turkey, female athletes experience various discriminations and disadvantages due to gender inequality and patriarchal power relations in the fields of sports and physical activity (Öztürk & Koca, 2019; Koca, 2021; Koca et al., 2009). These experiences of inequality

and discrimination, or the difficulties experienced by women in participating in sports and exercise due to traditional gender roles, are not limited to licensed female athletes but also include women participating in physical activity and exercise (Bulgu et al., 2017;; Hacisoftaoğlu, 2005; Kara, 2016; Koca et al., 2009). On the other hand, the Gender Equality in Sports in Turkey 2021 Report emphasizes that in recent years, women athletes have made significant progress in the fields of participation in sports and participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. For example, according to the data of this report, the proportion of female athletes in the total number of licensed athletes in Turkey is 34.84% (4,001,245) and has increased by 109.47% in 2021 (Kasfad, 2021).

With this increase in women's participation in sports, their visibility on social media has also increased. When we follow successful female athletes on social media, it is understood that social media provides economic opportunities for female athletes in our country. We can say that Turkish elite female athletes develop their brand image through their social media accounts just like their counterparts abroad. For example, Nike sponsored Yasemin Adar, the world champion, 4 times European Champion in a row and the first women's wrestling medalist in the history of our country at the Olympics. And this sponsorship formed an important part of Yasemin Adar's Instagram posts. In addition, Kübra Dağlı (796B followers) is another athlete who has represented Turkey in taekwondo -poomse- branch with significant success -three world and four European championships- and has a sponsorship agreement with Red Bull. In many of her posts, especially in her sports life poses, she makes this brand visible. Another elite athlete sponsored by Red Bull is Hazal Nehir. Hazal Nehir is Turkey's first female parkour athlete and the first athlete to represent Turkey at the Red Bull Art of Motion Final. In many of his posts, we see a trace of Red Bull. Finally, Ebrar Karakurt (1.6M followers) is a national volleyball athlete who comes into question with her short pink hair and her shares with her girlfriend on Instagram. In Turkey, which has homophobic values both in social life and in sports (Bilgehan Öztürk, 2011; Kavasoglu, 2021; Nuhrat, 2022; Ozeren et al., 2016; Öztürk, 2018; Sakallı-Uğurlu & Uğurlu, 2016; Saraç & McCullick, 2017; Yertutanol et al., 2019), she is well-known for her notable volleyball accomplishments, her short pink hair, and the commercials she appeared in for Elidor, a well-known Turkish shampoo company. In these advertising campaigns, the slogans "Dedim Olabilir (I said it could be)" and in the following advertisement, "Dedik Olabilir (We said it could be)" developed discourses pointing to difference and diversity. In the Elidor commercials, with the words "They said if it would be a girl with short hair. I said it could be", Karakurt emphasized that there are different representations of femininity and that all of them are valuable, in an advertisement that has

been viewed millions of times. Thus, we can say that a female athlete in Turkey who is not in line with norms of normative femininity has come to the forefront in traditional and social media. All these developments encourage women in sports and physical activity in Turkey, especially young women, to use social media for collaboration, sponsorship opportunities, and improving their brand image.

Research on women's sports and social media in Turkish sports fields is quite new and limited compared to the international literature (Ayhan & Demir, 2022; Demir & Ayhan, 2022; Ekinci & Koca, 2022; Kavasoglu & Koca, 2022; Kavasoglu et al., 2023). However, significant research on women and social media in sports has been conducted for several years. Thanks to this research, we have an idea about the problems such as discrimination, sexism, cyber violence and harassment experienced by women in different areas of sports (such as elite sports, exercise, and sports media) on social media platforms and can see how women represent themselves on these platforms. Moreover, we can learn about the emphasis on femininity and nationalist images in the brand-building of elite female athletes on Instagram. And in these areas, we can understand what kind of sexist, patriarchal and gender-based violence women are subjected to (Demir & Ayhan, 2022; Kavasoglu & Koca, 2022; Kavasoglu et al., 2023). In the current research, we focus on the experiences of female personal trainers in the health and fitness sector who play an active role in the production and consumption of sports on social media. We will try to understand the content produced by these coaches on Instagram and their branding experiences on Instagram through the concept of *the athletic labour of femininity* (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a). We will foreground the dynamics of this labour specific to Turkey's gender regime.

METHODS

In this study, we used a mixed methods design with a feminist lens because both Instagram posts and the experiences of the personal trainers were important in explaining the research problem. Mixed method is defined "as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry" (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). We followed implemented data collection sequentially, first collecting quantitative data on trainers' Instagram posts followed by qualitative interview data (quan followed by qual; Hanson et al., 2005) and we used partially mixed sequential dominant status design. This design refers to a study that is implemented sequentially in two stages and in which one of the qualitative or quantitative components is more dominant (Baki & Gökçek,

2012; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In the research, the qualitative research phase was the more dominant phase. Our methodological decision-making is shaped by the theoretical understanding offered by Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a, 2018b) on the economic visibility of sportswomen on social media and the athletic labour of femininity, which guided our data collection and analysis procedures. In this research, we will try to understand how female coaches in the culture of exercise, healthy living, and fitness in Turkey use Instagram as a marketing platform and how they present themselves on this platform. How do the representations of Turkish personal trainers (PTs) on social media make themselves visible in a neoliberal and neo-conservative culture? What techniques of oppression and surveillance do they negotiate in the current political and cultural climate? Considering this information, we first analyzed the last 100 posts (1100 photos in total) on the Instagram accounts of female PTs (11 participants) and then conducted in-depth (online) individual interviews lasting an average of one hour with 8 PTs who agreed to participate in the interviews. We analyzed the 100 most recent posts shared by each participant. Our data collection process started on August 2, 2022 and ended on November 8, 2022.

Participants

We used two methods to reach the participants. The first one was to reach out to women who are pursuing their PhD studies at our faculty and have been coaching for many years (around 10 years) in areas such as fitness, pilates and reformer pilates. One of the two PhD students had her studio and used Instagram as part of her job (Buket). The other one had just opened her studio and stated that she did not actively use Instagram. We asked both coaches to help us contact women coaching in Adana and other provinces in Turkey for the research invitation. In addition, Buket became the first participant in the research since she was a very suitable person for the research purpose and showed great dedication in reaching out to other coaches throughout the process. Our second method was to use the Instagram account of one of the authors. Since we used Instagram as a research field, we typed the letters PT into the search engine, as well as the participants who have existed in our Instagram account from previous studies (Kavasoglu & Koca, 2022). We asked the coaches if they would like to participate in the research. 11 coaches, whom we contacted with these two methods and received positive feedback, constituted the participants of the research. However, these responses only covered the cities of Adana and Istanbul.

The ages of the participants, all of whom are university graduates, vary between 29 and 42. They identify themselves as Turkish and Kurdish and have different religious beliefs

such as Muslim, Christian, and Deist. They are middle- and upper-class women. They may be single, divorced or married and some have children. We have participants who have their studio, who go to the homes of their members and give private lessons, who serve through Instagram lessons or videos, or who work in a studio. Some of the participants also have YouTube channels. Among the other social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), the participants reported that they actively use Instagram the most. The participants have sports experiences in different sports - tennis, swimming, gymnastics, volleyball, and athletics - with various forms of participation - competitive or recreational (Table 1). Their various sports experiences, identities, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and social media platforms contributed to the richness of the data.

Procedures

To analyze the photos, we used the codebook developed by Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a). The following categories were included for our analysis, and we used them without modification: Family and friends, fashion, and beauty do not fit into any of these categories. Their health and lifestyle-related category was adapted as an Exercise program, health and lifestyle in this study. We did not use the sporting performance, training and achievement and athlete corporate sponsors categories that Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a) used in their study. Because in the exercise program, health and lifestyle categories, coaches presented their sporting performance. In addition, our participants had collaborations and promotions rather than sponsorship agreements. In the current research, the following new categories emerged: Brand promotion and marketing; Being wife, partner and/or mother; Social sensitivity, solidarity, celebration; vocation and entertainment. Thus, we had a total of nine categories (Table 2). We subjected these categories to quantitative content analysis separately as two authors. We used Miles and Huberman's formula of coding reliability. Our agreement percentage is 90.1%.

Our participants Derya, Zeynep, Elif, Eda and Zehra have their own studios. Büşra works as a trainer at someone else's sports center. Merve goes to the homes of her members and gives private lessons. Şeyma has both private lessons and gives lessons through social media platforms. There are different social media platforms that coaches use. However, they stated that they use Instagram most actively. In addition, after a while, they started using Instagram as a part of their coaching.

Table 1
Personal Information of the Interviewed Participants

Name	Age	Marital status	Ethnicity and Religious	Education	City	Year of Employment in the Profession	Social media platforms used	Year of using Instagram	Instagram as part of your profession
Derya	34	Married	Turkish/Muslim	Doctorate	Adana	12 years	Instagram	7 years	6 years
Merve	42	Single	Turkish/Muslim	University	Adana	5 years	Instagram Facebook	8 years	3.5 years
Büşra	29	Married	Turkish/Muslim	University	Adana	7 years	Instagram Facebook	8 years	3 years
Zeynep	38	Single	Turkish/Deist	University	Adana	7 years	Instagram Facebook Twitter	11 years	7 years
Elif	43	Single	Turkish/Muslim	University	Adana	21 years	Instagram Facebook	8 years	8 years
Eda	40	Married	Armenian/Christian	University	İstanbul	20 years	Instagram YouTube Spotify	9 years	8 years
Zehra	36	Single	Turkish/Muslim	Masters	İstanbul	19 years	Instagram Facebook YouTube Tiktok	7 years	7 years
Şeyma	40	Married	Turkish/Muslim	University	İstanbul	12 years	Instagram YouTube	3 years	3.5 years

Table 2
Participants' Instagram Content

Category	Definition
Exercise programme, health and lifestyle related	It refers to the exercise videos, exercise photos, healthy eating and healthy living shares that the trainer prepared for his members and followers.
Fashion and beauty	These are the posts that emphasize the beauty and fashionable femininity of the trainer.
Brand promotion and marketing	It is the trainer's promotion and marketing of a brand, product.
Media appearances	Involvement of the coach in media such as magazines and television.
Family and friends	Private life and leisure time sharing with family and friends.
Being wife, partner and/or mother	These are the posts emphasizing that she is married, has a boyfriend and/or is a mother.
Vocation and entertainment	It is the sharing that makes the holiday and entertainment life visible.
Social sensitivity, solidarity, celebration	These are posts that celebrate Turkish holidays, special days, and express sensitivity to nature, animals, and all living things.
Did not fit into any of these categories	Posts that do not fall into any of the above categories.

Most of the interviews were conducted via digital platforms (WhatsApp and Zoom) and ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews explored themes such as the meaning of social media platforms in terms of their professions, their purpose of using social media, the advantages it brings to their professions, the risks of visibility, cultural norms, and strategies for dealing with risks, and the methods they use to earn more from social media.

Data Analysis

We used the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to conduct an interpretive thematic analysis. First, familiarization with data – the data were organized in the transcripts. Then authors read and re-read transcripts to become familiar with the content. Second, the generation of initial codes – authors and two colleagues from the sports sciences field (one sport management, and one gender studies researcher) separately identified features in a systematic manner using general codes across the data set. Third, searching for themes – the researchers met and discussed their preliminary codes and compared interpretations of further themes. Fourth, reviewing themes – the coded data were developed by consensus into a thematic map, whereby the researchers considered the arrangement of themes and sub-themes. Fifth, defining and naming themes – to refine all themes, definitions were derived for each label. Sixth, producing the report – each theme's title was amended to reflect the study's data and these were related to the research questions and the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Çukurova University (Year 2021 and decision number 41) and adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants received written and oral explanations regarding their participation and the importance of providing accurate information. Before the Instagram analysis and the interviews, we made them sign a voluntary participation form and asked them again during the interviews. We explained their rights to end the interview at any time and to skip any question they did not want to answer. We kept the identities of all participants secret and gave them pseudonyms. We shared the transcripts of the research with them and told them that we would remove any parts they did not want us to use in the analysis. There were no parts they wanted to remove. We used triangulation of data (quantitative and qualitative) and researcher (two researchers made independent evaluations during the analysis of data) to ensure the credibility of the study (Denzin, 2012).

RESULTS

In this section, we have collected our findings under three themes:

1. A sine qua non of the profession: "Our Instagram profiles are our electronic resume."
2. Components of Building Brand Image
3. The athletic labour of femininity is unique to Turkey: "This is Turkey, we cannot share such things here."

The first theme gives us information about the purposes for which they use Instagram regarding their profession and what kind of content they produce on Instagram. In the second theme, we understand how Instagram has turned into a marketing and brand-building area for female personal trainers. This theme also allows us to see what benefits Instagram posts provide for their profession and what advertising, sponsorship and collaboration opportunities they provide. In the last theme, we make inferences about understanding the negotiations in the coaches' Instagram posts and how their athletic labour of femininity is established to avoid conflict with their followers and damage the brand image.

A sine qua non of the profession: "Our Instagram profiles are our electronic resume."

In this theme, we will try to understand how the coaches we interviewed interpret Instagram as a platform for their profession and what sort of profile (content) they try to create on Instagram. All of the participants see Instagram as an indispensable part of their profession. Therefore, they think that using Instagram actively is very important for their careers. They think that using Instagram actively has numerous benefits for their professions, especially in terms of gaining more followers and members (customers) and being visible in the sector they work in:

"The more actively you use it in your profession, the more you shine your profession and the more people you reach, the side network. I can say that Instagram is the medium that helps you make a difference in your sector, ensures that people do not forget you, allows you to have interactive conversations with people, and keeps you on the agenda. The reason why I call it a visual feast is that Instagram has become a platform that allows you to share the knowledge you want to convey through your competencies, actually your show" (Zehra).

"I started using Instagram as a part of my profession around 2016. At that time, Sinem (her daughter) had just been born and I took a break. In this period, at first, I started using it in order not to stay away from the market. I was sharing the movements I did at home as stories and posts, so that people would not forget me, to say that I am still in the business. And nowadays, I think that the heart of sports beats there, especially in our business" (Derya).

It is acknowledged that the participants take care to ensure that the female coaching they display on Instagram is genuine, joyful, happy, and brimming with positive energies. In addition, they take care to present all aspects of their lifestyle to their followers:

“Right now, our Instagram profiles are our electronic CVs. Even a woman who does not know me can get information about me when she enters Şeyma Alpay. Therefore, this was opened up all over the world. How would you like to introduce yourself? By the way, are you her? My page is a real page, it reflects real life... I share images of a mother, a wife, a sports trainer, a woman, a working woman, and whatever I do in my daily life (Şeyma).”

On Instagram, the participants take care to present themselves as athletic, strong, self-confident, successful, knowledgeable, entrepreneurial, full of good (positive) energy, beautiful, attractive, and healthy lifestyle female coaches:

I want them to see a successful, strong female coach, and more importantly I want them to see a knowledgeable trainer... I would like them to speak of me as an experienced knowledgeable and successful trainer and to trust me. As a woman, I want my followers to respect me and my work. I would like them to look at me and say, "Well done, she is doing her job, she is a disciplined female trainer". For example, it is often said that I am very energetic. They say, "You have a lot of energy, you motivate us". I want to reflect this energy to them when they look at Instagram too (Derya).

The research in this area demonstrates that female PTs share various types of content on Instagram. The quantitative findings of the study show that female PTs post the most on exercise programs, health, and lifestyle (56.60%) and fashion and beauty (17.20%) content; the least on media appearance (1.40%) and promotion and sponsorship (1.20%) content. In their posts, the participants mostly convey the message that women who follow them should turn exercise and healthy eating into a lifestyle for a healthy life. Qualitative findings support this too. Qualitative findings reveal that the participants' Instagram content, too, emphasizes turning exercise, healthy eating, and healthy consumption into a lifestyle. To do this, they share stories, posts, and reels with snippets and poses from their own and their members' workouts, about how they eat, dress, live (such as cafes, holidays, family, friends, and personal life), and how informed, energetic, and highly motivated they are. According to the respondents, Instagram provides them with various benefits in their industry. To take advantage of these benefits, the participants shape it according to the needs of the market and the expectations of their followers. All of this, as Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018a; 2018b) underline, is related to the construction of elite women of sport on social media in conformity with neoliberal femininity. In other words, these posts have a relationship with neoliberal femininity. These contents reflect the representations of women who are active, strong, at peace with their bodies, have high self-confidence, have economic power, and manage their

own lives (Şener, 2019) put forward by neoliberal femininity. In the market, they serve – wellness and fitness – these trainers are trying to establish their self-branding as entrepreneurial subjects through their posts. Moreover, they create a new market with their own women's individual trainer bodies, in which the female body celebrates active values such as exercise, healthy living, fashion, beauty and entertainment. The bodies (and lives) of female individual trainers, who are both subjects and objects of consumption, are marketed to their followers and consumed by their followers (members). This body and this lifestyle as a whole are marketed to the trainers' followers. Here we ask the following question: Isn't this body and lifestyle that the trainers present on their Instagram pages a body and lifestyle constructed by patriarchal power relations and neoliberal policies (and market-based relations)? (Akgöz, 2016; Bozok & Küçükdoğan, 2022; Timurturkan & Demez, 2018). We can find the answer to this in the explanations of Toffoletti and Thorpe (2018): In late capitalist economies individuals are primarily valued and understood in market terms as buyers, sellers and consumers. What is being "sold", then, in a neoliberal marketplace is the female athletic body as a gendered product (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018b).

Components of Building Brand Image

The participants described Instagram as a very important advertising and marketing opportunity for promoting their athletic abilities, and coaching skills and building their brand image. According to the participants, Instagram is an important advertising tool for them to express themselves and promote their coaching and they believe that they have become a brand with the lifestyle and coaching they present on Instagram. They think that as their visibility on Instagram increases, they will become more known and reach more members and followers: Mine, for example, explained this by saying, "I generally use Instagram more actively to promote myself and make my name known".

"In our business, you need to find a different channel to reach more people. That's why Instagram has to be there ... The more you are known on Instagram, the more you come to mind ... Most importantly, awareness of people about you increases. Now, instead of searching for Pt on Google, everyone looks at you by tracing hashtags on Instagram, typing Pt (Zeynep)."

"When I first opened my studio, I was aiming to attract customers and people, to attract students on Instagram. Therefore, I was sharing photos and videos about the exercises I did, and the equipment I used, so that I could attract people to the studio. That was my first goal. From there, I reached a lot of people, even more than my capacity. And they

reached me too. I was able to continue pleasantly working in my studio in this way. In that sense, it was very, very useful (Eda)."

Participants stated that as their visibility on Instagram increased, potential customers reached them via DM and asked them questions about the exercise service they would provide. At this point, for example, Derya, who has her studio, emphasized that she increased her Instagram posts when the number of members decreased. She underlined that when she made these shares, the number of new members coming to her studio increased. Similarly, Merve, who gives private lessons to women by going to their homes, stated that more than half of her members reached her through Instagram after she opened her profile on this platform and started to post regularly. Thus, coaches are aware that their active use of Instagram provides them with new members.

"I see it as a showcase. I can consider it as an advertising medium with a visual feast where I can convey information to people, be a role model in the areas I know best and make announcements by sharing content about my current school, my training and my schools (Zehra)."

"I think Instagram is the platform where you can express yourself and advertise yourself the best. I started personal training and my Instagram page first with my circle of friends. After my page became active, I met people I just corresponded through DM and started classes in Adana. Instagram is that effective (Merve)"

Coaches think that one of the main advantages of Instagram for their professional lives is advertising.

"When it comes to advertising, I think of Instagram directly. I mean, its heart is beating there. No matter how good a trainer you are, if you cannot use Instagram, neither your members increase, nor you are counted (cared about) by the trainers in the profession. I am experiencing this firsthand. For example, when things get a little stagnant when the number of members decreases, I use Instagram more actively, stories and so on, messages come immediately, can we get price information, where is your place? The number of members coming to the hall is starting to increase (Derya)."

"Instagram has been very effective for me as a business, I used to advertise a lot before Instagram, but after I started using my page actively, I didn't need to advertise at all...I promote my classes and studio, I actively share which classes are available in the salon... These make a profit for me, people see what we do from there and want to register. Every new member I get also provides me with financial income (Elif)."

Osborne et al., 2021 highlight that social media provides a space, a phenomenon that was ignored in traditional media fields until today, for female athletes to create their media (and advertising). One of the greatest opportunities that social media usage provides for female athletes is undoubtedly for their economic gain (visibility), such as personal marketing, advertising, self-branding, and catching sponsorship opportunities (Geurin, 2017; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Thorpe et al, 2017; Toffoletti et al. 2022, Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a; 2018b). In Turkey, although no studies are focusing on the personal brand advertising and sponsorship opportunities of female personal trainers in social media, we realize that it is important for women in sports in Turkey to use social media actively and have high follower numbers in their collaborations with world-famous brands.

Participants are aware that as the number of followers increases, brands attract their attention. With this awareness, they promote themselves and their coaching on Instagram and create their brand image. Participants believe that when they develop their brand image in a quality way, collaboration opportunities will increase, and they experience this. For example, Merve, who stated that she currently has around 23 thousand followers, stated that she goes to her summer house in Bodrum during the summer period and regularly shares her exercise program there and her own exercise life, which she places in her holiday life. She said that after these shares, Trendyol company reached out to her and signed a cooperation agreement with this company. After this cooperation, she started to share the links of the sports products she uses (such as sneakers, tights, bras, pilates equipment), special day clothes or care products she uses as a story or post. She stated that she earned 20% for each member who shopped from the links she prepared. Like Merve, all participants of the study have made important collaborations with local, national, and international brands.

As the participants' visibility on Instagram increased, they stated that when they successfully developed their brand image on Instagram, they, not the brand, decided which brands to deal with anymore. They emphasized that this made them feel stronger and more confident:

... I work with fewer and fewer but concise brands and people. I get a lot of project offers, for example, but if it doesn't fit, I don't think it suits me to accept it just to make money, and I don't have such a character ... Instagram is a platform for me where I only want to announce things I approve of... If I get ten offers, I turn eight of them down. A vegan frozen food came in yesterday for example, I won't name it, it's being vegan was very good, but since I don't eat frozen food, I can't promote it (Şeyma).

The findings show that the participants use Instagram for economic purposes such as promoting their coaching in the sector, promoting their studio (if any, or where they work), personal advertising, introducing themselves to brands, and increasing the number of their members. The most important opportunities provided by social media use for female athletes are for their economic gain such as personal marketing, advertising, self-branding, and sponsorship opportunities (Geurin, 2017; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Thorpe et al, 2017; Toffoletti et al. 2022, Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a; 2018b). We can interpret the effort of the participants as “the athletic labour of femininity” (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a) and we can say that they gain strength through these posts.

The athletic labour of femininity is unique to Turkey: "This is Turkey, we cannot share such things here."

In this theme, we will try to understand how negotiation with Turkey's religious patriarchal and conservative norms plays a role in the athletic labour of the female coaches we interviewed in the health and fitness sector. The findings reveal that although the coaches take care to display attractive sporty femininity, they are very careful not to make overly sexy posts and they attach importance to emphasizing the representation of the athletic female body on their Instagram profiles. In addition, self-censorship of their bodies is part of their athletic endeavours on Instagram. Finally, not sharing about religious and political issues is one of the strategies that coaches pay attention to avoid conflicts with their followers and not to damage their brand image.

"Today I am half a million on YouTube, 135 thousand on Instagram. If I change my outfit, or my style, I can become a trending topic in an instant. I know this a lot, but I pay attention not to wear that décolleté, that is, not to wear exaggerated clothes. Even though I am a very civilized and very free, comfortable person in my own life, I pay attention to the perception in people's eyes in those shares. Sometimes I also share posts in bikinis. For example, I do somersaults in the sea and sometimes I get comments saying that I exaggerate, usually from women... I pay attention to this, I take care not to give any freckles, and I take care not to shift my content to a different side other than the perception of sports. So those posts are not sexy (Zehra)."

Participants care about having an athletic and attractive body. On the other hand, they pay attention to the fact that the female coaching they represent on Instagram is not to be too sexy. Participants believe that such posts would lower the quality of their pages and do not find overly sexy female coaches respectable.

"First of all, my debut team, YouTube, production, agency, and the people I know and follow, always tell me that if you get naked, it will happen. I said there is no such thing. I mean, dress more openly, let's shoot from the ass, let's shoot from the breast and so on. It's a way, it's a choice, it's a preference. I mean, I could be 5 million right now if I showed my ass, my head, my breast ... (on other pages) the body is very much in the foreground. there can be pornographic content... but I mean, that image seems to me to be something that cheapens women a lot ... There is someone called XXX, for example, I think she is a great woman, she does a lifestyle just like me. She is a mother and a wife and she started her own business. That woman is very stylish, and I think she is a top-of-the-line woman. I respect those kinds of things, but for others, I just look at the movements and pass by (Şeyma)."

Western research examining how women in sports use social media and construct their brand image reveals that elite female athletes do not hesitate to post sexually suggestive as well as athletic femininity and embrace heterosexual femininity in their posts (Clavio & Eagleman, 2011; Geurin & Burch, 2016; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Thorpe et al., 2017). According to some research results in this context, elite female athletes exist on social media platforms in accordance with market conditions, with little challenge to the over-sexualized female athlete body (Thorpe et al., 2017; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a; 2018b). Kavasoglu and Koca (2022) examined the Instagram use of elite-level Turkish bikini fitness athletes and found that these athletes were extremely careful not to make overly sexy posts. They stated that athletes practised self-surveillance about Turkey's religious patriarchal norms. Kavasoglu et al., (2023), in a qualitative study conducted with 15 female students of the faculty of sports sciences who were physically active on Instagram, revealed that these young women self-censor their Instagram posts to avoid being exposed to cyber neoconservative, religious and patriarchal violence. For the young female athletes they interviewed, protecting themselves against online and offline violence and potential risks could mean not sharing in sportswear such as tights and bustiers. This research allows us to understand the reasons for the experiences of the participants of the current study.

The findings reveal that different conservative and patriarchal norms married coaches and coaches with children have to negotiate in their Instagram displays of female coaching. For example, Büşra said, "My circle, my husband's friends say, 'Son, how do you let her post these videos? I would not let.' Sometimes my female members who are in very good positions say, 'You post such videos, but doesn't your husband say anything? I mean, you wear a lot of décolletés, but doesn't your husband interfere?'" and thus expressed the social pressures she received from her

environment regarding her Instagram posts. The quantitative findings of the study also revealed that the participants pay attention to making posts indicating that "wife, partner and/or mother" (7.82%; Table 3).

Table 3
Participants' Instagram Content

Photo Content	Merve	Derya	Beyza	Zehra	Sibel	Büşra	Tuğba	Zeynep	Elif	Şeyma	Eda	Total	%
Exercise Programme Health and Lifestyle Related	57	50	53	36	86	58	17	60	91	58	84	650	59.09
Fashion and Beauty	25	8	27	24	13	17	37	13	-	8	-	172	15.64
Brand promotion and marketing	2	-	-	3	-	-	3	4	-	-	3	15	1.37
Media appearances	3	-	-	10	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	20	1.81
Family and friends	-	-	1	-	1	4	5	5	2	2	-	20	1.81
Being wife, partner and/or mother	-	36	9	4	-	13	16	-	-	8	-	86	7.82
Vocation and Entertainment	12	4	9	16	-	7	22	7	3	12	-	92	8.37
Social Sensitivity, Solidarity, Celebration	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	11	4	6	6	34	3.09
Did not fit into any of these Categories	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1	11	1.00
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1100	100

The contents on the participants' Instagram profiles reveal the market conditions constructed according to the gender regime in Turkey, and it is understood that the participants pay attention to this when presenting the athletic labour of femininity. Moreover, Şeyma's experiences show that she consults her husband while sharing her posts:

"Even if I consider that now I am married and a mother too, I try to share according to my judgments, customs, traditions, and practices, not according to what this country or people think. For example, when I am going to share a content in a swimsuit, or something like that, I ask Tarık (her husband), 'Darling, is it suitable for you' ... By the way, even if Tarık is not there, I still pass it through a filter. Because I never want to break my stance and line. I mean, breasts come to your mouth, a very short skirt, etc. ... Yes, I make money

with my body, but I also show my body as much as my job requires. I mean, that's femininity and let me tell you that I know I'm doing it right since, if I have 100 followers, 91.8 of them are women. If I can provide this, yes, I am doing something right (Şeyma)."

In addition to Şeyma's experiences above, some participants also mentioned that they may have problems with Instagram posts about their female members. These problems are more evident among participants living in Adana. The coaches we interviewed stated that they could not share the athletic development about the sports lives of their female members on Instagram. These coaches stated that some of their female members said, "*Coach, my husband does not allow it, please do not share on Instagram*" and therefore they did not share anything with these members:

"I've had a lot of members who don't want me to post about our workouts on Instagram. They don't even want me to post when we are side by side on the mat. Not even posts about movement. She says: 'My husband doesn't want me to share them on social media.' or 'my fiancé doesn't want'. It happens a lot, a lot. (Merve)"

Research conducted from the perspective of sports and communal gender in Turkey has revealed that patriarchal power relations create serious obstacles to women's participation in sports and exercise. Body policies, especially those in which female athletes are controlled and disciplined, disrupt the free, equal and empowering context of their sports and exercise experience (Hacısoftaoğlu, 2005; Koca et al., 2005; Koca & Hacısoftaoğlu 2011a; 2011b; Koca et al., 2010; Öztürk & Koca, 2019; Talimciler, 2006; Yarar, 2005; Yarar et al., 2015). Attempts to control women's bodies and sexuality and cultural barriers to their participation in sports are undoubtedly common experiences of women in Turkey and other Muslim countries (Ben et al., 2010; Hacısoftaoğlu & Pfister, 2012; Harkness, 2017; Koca, 2021; Sehlíkoglu, 2015, 2016). Not only studies in the field of sports sociology but also studies in the literature on gender and femininity reveal that the female body and sexuality are controlled by religious, patriarchal, traditional and cultural norms, and neoconservative values, and disciplined and punished by discourses such as honour and morality (Acar & Altunok, 2013; Atuk, 2020; Cindoglu & Unal, 2017; Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017; Kandiyoti, 2016). Accordingly, the trainers we interviewed are influenced by these cultural codes while constructing themselves as objects of gaze, and these codes can be decisive in the construction of the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject.

Participants feel tension while browsing Instagram. One of these tensions is the self-control they apply to their bodies. However, this self-control is more evident among coaches living in Adana. While some coaches stated that they do not share with a bra, others stated

that they do not share bikini poses on their pages. Some participants stated that they do not share videos in which their hips are in the foreground, that they pay attention to the angle of the camera when sharing squat movements, and that if they wear shorts in their training videos, they wear tights under these shorts:

"Of course, there are things I pay attention to when I post on Instagram ... yes, we all wear a bra, but I would never wear a bra that shows off all of your breasts ... or in the posts, I share in summer, in my videos with shorts, I always wear tights under the shorts...wear tights underneath and shorts on top... I don't like décolleté very much. I mean, I think these poses in the profile lower the quality of the page. (Merve)"

The body that some coaches living in Adana, such as Derya and Merve, discipline by the Turkish religious and patriarchal gender regime is not only their own body. They also monitor and control the bodies of other female colleagues who use Instagram as a marketing tool. For example, Merve pointed to the Instagram post of a fitness trainer in İzmir and said "I would never do Pilates with such a swimsuit". We think that behind this discourse is the adoption of a femininity that is specific to Turkish culture, that is, a femininity that is valued in Turkey and not criticized or judged. Although other participants did not use such a sharp expression, it is understood that there are some elements that they pay attention to in their Instagram posts. In this context, while some of the coaches we interviewed carry out their promotions and brand-building on Instagram, there is a representation of women's coaching that they expect other women in the market to follow. In this representation, the coach may be strong, attractive, independent and cheerful, but he is expected not to be extremely attractive. This situation may be related to the fact that traditional Turkish femininity norms are established far from overly suggestive sexual femininity (Kandiyoti, 2013, 2014). In addition, we can also highlight that some of the female trainers we interviewed here were in a role that controlled the bodies and sexuality of other women in the industry. The patriarchal view is maintained by some female trainers and they are trying to create docile bodies (Foucault, 1980).

Another aspect of the participant's athletic labour of femininity is their care not to post about religious and political issues. According to the findings, all participants were careful not to post about religion and politics on their pages, and not to interact or discuss these issues with their followers:

"I certainly do not share anything about religion or politics on my page. I mean, the elections are approaching, and I don't share anything about the elections or politics (Elif)."

"After my morning class, I shared a post saying "coffee break." That day was the first day of Ramadan, I forgot, and I got distracted. I don't fast. Because of this, I got a lot of messages. A very close friend of mine immediately warned me on Instagram and said that I would be lynched, so I should remove it. But by the time she wrote this to me, I had already received a lot of messages. There were some disturbing ones too, such as, we don't think it suits you to be so far away from religion, don't you fast... (Büşra)."

Rahikainen and Toffoletti (2021) mentioned the concept of 'noncontroversial demeanour' as a specific strategy used by female climbers to maintain an attractive profile and minimize criticism and controversy. This concept was used to describe sportswomen's experiences of avoiding online discussions that could deter followers, jeopardize their online brand, and cause personal distress. One of the sponsored and professional female climbers in this study, who faced backlash from her followers for expressing her opinions on Instagram, said: "As an athlete girl, you don't talk about politics, religion". According to the authors, this led to athletes learning to self-censor. The findings of this study also suggest that female athletes may prefer not to comment on religious and political issues both depending on Turkey's current cultural and political climate and through some of the reactions they receive on Instagram.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we explored how female personal trainers in the health and fitness sector represent themselves on Instagram through the concept of the athletic labour of femininity in light of Turkey's gender regime and neoliberal feminism. According to the results of the research, Instagram is an important marketing tool/area where female trainers can build and strengthen their coaching (personal brands) for the sector they serve. In this context, for the participants of the study, Instagram is seen as an integral part of their profession and is considered an effective tool for their economic visibility.

According to the results of the research, the trainers we interviewed promote themselves and their coaching through their Instagram shares. In this promotion effort, the trainers' goals of building and developing their brand image are at the forefront. While branding their coaching, the participants take care to present themselves as strong, self-confident, energetic, happy, positive, natural, knowledgeable, and successful female coaches on this platform. They try to convey the message to their followers that they are in control of a healthy life and that this can be realized through their efforts. In this respect, the athletic

labour of the participants in their Instagram use is compatible with the neoliberal narratives of femininity.

The results of this study show that being active and visible on Instagram brings participants more followers and members and that this platform provides a significant economic benefit to their profession through opportunities such as advertising, marketing, promotion and collaboration. There are some factors that participants, who gain more members and economic power thanks to their Instagram posts, pay attention to in order not to lose these advantages. The female trainers we interviewed are aware that the needs or expectations of the market expect them to build a style of coaching and femininity that complies with Turkey's neoconservative, religious and patriarchal norms. Moreover, quantitative findings show that personal trainers have the content of being a mother and a wife in their brand building (Table 3). This content is one of the findings that show the athletic labour of femininity unique to Turkey. For this reason, in addition to the cheerful, self-confident, knowledgeable, enterprising, positive and disciplined female coaching they offer on Instagram, they do not adopt coaching that is careful not to be overly attractive sexually. The discourse of sex selling for women in sports in the Western world should be rearranged for the trainers in the context of this research. The trainers we interviewed also embrace sexy and attractive femininity and celebrate it, but they think that overly attractive femininity will harm their brand image due to the negative interaction they will receive, sometimes from their followers and sometimes from their social circles. We interpret this cultural context and the trainers' experiences of negotiating with them as the athletic labour of femininity specific to Turkey. This labour differs from the embrace of sexually attractive femininity by women in the Western sports world (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018a; 2018b; Thorpe et al., 2017).

According to the results of the research, for the coaches we interviewed, not posting religious and political content is at the forefront of the athletic labour of femininity specific to Turkey. This is in line with the *uncontroversial stance* that Rahikainen and Toffoletti's (2022) research with elite-level female mountaineers, argued that athletes use an to describe their experiences of avoiding online discussions that might deter followers, jeopardize their online brands, and cause personal distress. The participants in this study also preferred not to comment on religious and political issues to avoid jeopardizing their brand image.

This study offers a perspective on how personal trainers serving in the healthy living and fitness industry use Instagram as a marketing tool, what economic opportunities they get, and what they negotiate while improving their visibility on Instagram, in the context of

neoliberal femininity and Turkey's gender regime. Future research will focus on understanding women in the field of sports, who perform gender-based labour to present themselves in an online world that develops almost every day, to build brands, capture economic opportunities, make sponsorship and cooperation agreements, in different sports branches and different positions such as athlete, coach, manager, fan, media.

Acknowledgements

The authors of this article would like to sincerely thank all participants who voluntarily participated in our research and shared with us their experiences of being a female personal trainer in Turkey and using Instagram as a marketing tool as a female trainer.

The candidate themes of this research were presented as an oral presentation at the ERPA 2022 International Congresses on Education on September 22, 2022 Kyrenia, Cyprus.

Authors' contributions

The first author's contributions are conceptualization, methodology, writing - review and editing. The second author's contributions are conceptualization, methodology, data analysis, writing-original draft, writing - review and editing. The third and fourth author's contributions are data collection, discussion, review and editing.

Conflict of interest declaration

No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

Ethics Statement

The study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Çukurova University in Year 2021 and decision number 41.

REFERENCES

- Abeza, G. (2023). Social Media and Sport Studies (2014–2023): A Critical Review. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 16(3), 251-261. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2023-0182>
- Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., & Seguin, B. (2019). Social media in relationship marketing: The perspective of professional sport managers in the MLB, NBA, NFL, and NHL. *Communication & Sport*, 7(1), 80–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479517740343>
- Abeza, G., Sanderson, J. (2022). Theory and social media in sport studies. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 15(6), 1-9.
- Acar F., Altunok G. (2013). The 'politics of intimate' at the intersection of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism in contemporary Turkey. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 41(1), 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2012.10.001>
- Akgöz, G. (2016). From unhappy marriage to dangerous liaison: feminism, neoliberalism and social movements. *Fe Dergi*, 8(2), 85-100.

- Arat, N. (1996). Women's studies in Turkey. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 24(1/2), 400-411.
- Atuk S. (2020). Femicide and the speaking state: Woman killing and woman (re) making in Turkey. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 16(3), 283-306. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-8637409>
- Ayhan, B., & Demir, Y. (2022). Systematic Sexism: Women's Sports News in a Circle of Gatekeepers and Users on Twitter. *Communication & Sport*, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795221147644>
- Baki, A. & Gökçek, T. (2012). An overview of mixed method research. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(42), 1-21.
- Banet-Weiser, S., Gill, R., Rottenberg, C. (2020). Postfeminizm, popüler feminizm ve neoliberal feminizm? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill ve Catherine Rottenberg sohbeti. *Feminist Teori*, 21(1), 3-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700119842555>
- Benn, T., Pfister, G., & Jawad, H. (2010). *Muslim women and sport*. Routledge.
- Bilgehan Öztürk, M. (2011). Sexual Orientation Discrimination: Exploring the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Employees in Turkey. *Human Relations*, 64, 1099-118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726710396249>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Bruce, T. (2016). New rules for new times: Sportswomen and media representation in the third wave. *Sex Roles*, 74(7), 361-376. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0497-6>
- Bozok, N., & Küçükdoğan, N. (2022). Fatness as a difference, gaze and outgrowth issue: A feminist discussion on the worlds of emotions and experiences attached to women's fatness. *Fe Dergi*, 14(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46655/federgi.1070026>
- Bulgu, N., Koca Arıtan, C., Aşçı, F.H. (2007). [Daily life, women and physical activity](#). *Hacettepe Journal of Sport Sciences*, 18(4), 167-181.
- Burch, L. M., & Zimmerman, M. H. (2019). Female athletes find a place for expression on Instagram. In *Routledge Handbook of the Business of Women's Sport* (pp. 468-479). Routledge.
- Clavio, G., Eagleman, A.N. (2011) Gender and sexually suggestive images in sports blogs. *Journal of Sport Management*, 7, 295-304. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/jsm.25.4.295>
- Cindoglu D., Unal D. (2017). Gender and sexuality in the authoritarian discursive strategies of 'New Turkey. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 24(1), 39-54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050681667900>
- Güneş-Ayata A., Doğangün G. (2017). Gender politics of the AKP: Restoration of a religio-conservative gender climate. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 19(6), 610-627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2017.1328887>
- Demir, Y., Ayhan, B. (2022). Being a female sports journalist on twitter: online harassment, sexualization, and hegemony. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 15(3), 207-217. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2022-0044>
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Nirengi 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80-88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186>

- Ekinci, M.A. & Koca, C. (2022). Self-branding of olympic women athletes on social media: an analysis of postfeminism context. 20th International Sport Sciences Congress, Antalya, Turkey.
- Filo, K., Lock, D., & Karg, A. (2015). Sport and social media research: A review. *Sport Management Review*, 18(2), 166-181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2014.11.001>
- Foucault, M. (1980). Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977. Pantheon Books.
- Geurin, A.N. (2017). Elite female athletes' perceptions of new media use relating to their careers: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Sport Management*, 31(4), 345-359. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2016-0157>
- Geurin-Eagleman, A.N., and Burch, L.M. (2016). Communicating via photographs: A gendered analysis of Olympic athletes' visual self-presentation on Instagram. *Sport Management Review*, 19(2), 133-145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2015.03.002>
- Hacısofıtaoglu, İ. (2005). The effect of physical activities on the bodies and social identities of women. Hacettepe University Institute of Health Sciences, Ms. Thesis in Sport Sciences and Technology, Ankara.
- Hacısofıtaoglu, İ., Pfister, G. (2012). Transitions: life stories and physical activities of Turkish migrants in Denmark. *Sport in Society*, 15(3), 385-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2012.653207>
- Harkness, G. (2017). Out of bounds: Cultural barriers to female sports participation in Qatar. In *Sport in the Middle East* (pp. 64-84). Routledge.
- Hanson, W.E., Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L, Petska, K.S. and Creswell, J.D. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 224-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.224>
- Hayes, M., Filo, K., Riot, C., & Geurin, A. (2019). Athlete perceptions of social media benefits and challenges during major sport events. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 12(4), 449-481. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2019-0026>
- Kandiyoti, D. (2013). *Cariyeler, bacilar, yurttaşlar*. Metis Yayınları. İstanbul.
- Kandiyoti, D. (2014). Gender of the modern: Missing dimensions in Turkish modernization studies. S. Bozdoğan & R. Kasaba (Ed.), *Modernization and national identity in Turkey* içinde (ss.99-117). Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Kandiyoti D. (2016). Locating the politics of gender: Patriarchy, neo-liberal governance and violence in Turkey. *Research and Policy on Turkey*, 1(2), 103-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23760818.2016.1201242>
- Kara, F. M. (2016). Cinsiyetlendirilmiş Rekreasyonel Mekânlarda Kadınların Deneyimleri. *Sporun Toplumsal Cinsiyet Halleri*, 200-216.
- Kasfad (2021). *Gender equality in sports monitoring report in Turkey*. Hacettepe University, Ankara.
- Kavanagh, E., Litchfield, C., & Osborne, J. (2019). Sporting women and social media: Sexualization, misogyny, and gender-based violence in online spaces. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 12(4), 552-572. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2019-0079>

- Kavanagh, E., Litchfield, C., & Osborne, J. (2022). Social media, Digital technology and athlete abuse. *In Sport, Social Media, and Digital Technology*, 15, 185-204. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1476-285420220000015022>
- Kavasoglu, İ., Eratlı Şirin, Y., & Uğurlu, A. (2023). A space of one's own? The tensions of being visible on Instagram for Turkish female athletes. *Communication & Sport*, 12(2), 347-369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795231154913>
- Kavasoglu, İ., Koca, C. (2022). Gendered body of Turkish bikini fitness athletes on Instagram. *Communication & Sport*, 10(4), 685-707. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479520961370>
- Kavasoglu, İ. (2021) The construction of compulsory heterosexuality by referees in women's football in Turkey, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 30(8), 949-963. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1869535>
- Koca, C. (2021). Analysis of women and sport in Turkey. *Women and sport in Asia*. Routledge, 226-236.
- Koca, C., Aşçı, F.H., Demirhan, G. (2005). Attitudes toward physical education and class preferences of turkish adolescents in terms of school gender composition. *Adolescence*, 40(158), 365-375.
- Koca, C., & Hacisoftaoğlu, İ. (2011a). Struggling for empowerment: sport participation of women and girls in Turkey. *Muslim women and sport*, 154-166.
- Koca, C., & Hacisoftaoğlu, I. (2011b). Religion and the state. The story of a Turkish elite athlete. *Muslim women and sport*, 198-210.
- Koca, C., Henderson, K. A., Asci, F. H., Bulgu, N. (2009). Constraints to leisure-time physical activity and negotiation strategies in Turkish women. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 41(2), 225-251. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2009.11950167>
- Koca, C., Hacisoftaoğlu, I., Benn, T., Pfister, G., & Jawad, H. (2010). Sport participation of women and girls in modern Turkey. T. Benn, G. Pfister, H. Jawad (4th eds.). *Muslim women in sport*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Li, B., Scott, O. K., Naraine, M. L., & Ruihley, B. J. (2021). Tell me a story: Exploring elite female athletes' self-presentation via an analysis of Instagram Stories. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 21(2), 108-120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2020.1837038>
- Litchfield, C., Kavanagh, E., Osborne, J., & Jones, I. (2016). Virtual maltreatment: Sexualization and social media abuse in sport. *Psychology of Women Section Review*, 18(2), 36-47.
- Lopez-Carril, S., Anagnostopoulos, C., Parganas, P. (2020b). Social media in sport management education: Introducing LinkedIn. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2020.100262>
- Lopez-Carril, S., Escamilla-Fajardo, P., Gonzalez-Serrano, M.H., Ratten, V., Gonzalez-Garcia R.J. (2020a). The Rise of Social Media in Sport: A Bibliometric Analysis. *International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management*, 17(6). <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0219877020500418>
- Müftüler-Bac, M. (1999). Turkish women's predicament. *International Forum for Women's Studies*, 22(3), 303-315.
- Nuhrat, Y. (2022). Linguistic taboo, ideology, and erasure: Reproducing homophobia as norm and lesbianism as stigma in women's football in Turkey. *American Anthropologist*, 124(1), 141-153. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13695>

- Osborne, J., Kavanagh, E., Litchfield, C. (2021). Freedom for expression or a space of oppression? social media and the female @thlete. in *The professionalization of women's sport*. Emerald Publishing Limited. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80043-196-620211010>
- Ozeren, E., Ucar, Z., & Duygulu, E. (2016). Silence speaks in the workplace: Uncovering the experiences of LGBT employees in Turkey. *Sexual orientation and transgender issues in organizations: Global perspectives on LGBT workforce diversity*, 217-232. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_13
- Özsoy, S. (2011). Use of new media by Turkish fans in sport communication: Facebook and Twitter. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, 28(1), 165-176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/v10078-011-0033-x>
- Öztürk, P., Koca, C. (2019). Generational analysis of leisure time physical activity participation of women in Turkey. *Leisure Studies*, 38(2), 232-244. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2019.1569112>
- Öztürk, P. (2018). Feminist Interventions in Physical Activity and Sport Science in Turkey. In: Mansfield, L., Caudwell, J., Wheaton, B., Watson, B. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and Sport, Leisure and Physical Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53318-0_47
- Özyeğin, G. (2018). Arzunun nesnesi olmak: Romans, kırılğan erkeklik ve neoliberal özne. C. Özbay, A. Terzioğlu & Y. Yasin (Ed.), *Neoliberalizm ve mahremiyet: Turkey'de beden, sağlık ve cinsellik içinde* (s.51-178). Metis Yayınevi.
- Pegoraro, A. (2010). Look who's talking-Athletes on Twitter: A case study. *International journal of sport communication*, 3(4), 501-514. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.3.4.501>
- Pegoraro, A. (2013). Sport fandom in the digital world. In P. Pedersen (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of sport communication* (pp. 248-258). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rahikainen, K., Toffoletti, K. (2021). "I just don't wanna deal with the headache of people fighting over the internet": A study of sponsored female climbers' digital labor. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 39(3), 251-260. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2020-0177>
- Rottenberg, C. (2014). The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism. *Cultural Studies*, 28(3), 418-437. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2013.857361>
- Sakallı-Uğurlu, N., Uğurlu, O. (2016). Predicting Attitudes Toward Gay Men with Ambivalence Toward Men, Questioning Religion, and Gender Differences. *Sex Roles* 74, 195-205. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0571-0>
- Saraç, L., McCullick, B. (2017). The life of a gay student in a university physical education and sports department: a case study in Turkey. *Sport, Education and Society*, 22:3, 338-354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2015.1036232>
- Sehlikoğlu, S. (2015). Female bodies and state power: Women-only sport centers in Istanbul. *Women's sport as politics in Muslim contexts*, 102-35.
- Sehlikoglu, S. (2016). Exercising in comfort: Islamicate culture of Mahremiyet in everyday Istanbul. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 12(2), 143-165. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/15525864-3507606>
- Smith, L.R., Sanderson, J. (2015). I'm going to instagram it! An analysis of athlete self-presentation on instagram. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 59(2), 342-358. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2015.1029125>

- Şener, G. (2019). Can Commodified Feminism Empower Women? Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of International Working Women's Day Advertisements. *Culture and Communication*, 22(2), 146-172.
- Talimciler, A. (2006). Sport and Sport Sciences as the Ideological Agent of Legitimation. *Spor Yönetimi ve Bilgi Teknolojileri*, 1(2), 35-40.
- Tanaltay, A., Langroudi, A. S., Akhavan-Tabatabaei, R., Kasap, N. (2021). Can social media predict soccer clubs' stock prices? the case of turkish teams and twitter. *Sage Open*, pp. 1-20.
- Tashakkori, A., Creswell, J.W. (2007). Exploring the Nature of Research Questions in Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(3), 207-211. DOI: [10.1177/1558689807302814](https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689807302814)
- Timurturkan, M., Demez, G. (2018). The body as a field of social power and reconstruction of aging body. *Journal of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty*, 5(2), 441-456. <http://doi.org/10.30798/makuiibf.402090>
- Thorpe, H., Toffoletti, K., Bruce, T. (2017). Sportswomen and social media: Bringing third-wave feminism, post feminism, and neoliberal feminism into conversation. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 41(5), 359-383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723517730808>
- Toffoletti, K., Ahmad, N., Thorpe, H. (2022). Critical encounters with social media in women & sport and physical culture. *In sport, social media and digital technology*. Emerald Publishing Limited. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S1476-285420220000015004>
- Toffoletti, K., Thorpe, H. (2018a). The athletic labour of femininity: The branding and consumption of global celebrity sportswomen on Instagram. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 18(2), 298-316. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1469540517747068>
- Toffoletti, K., & Thorpe, H. (2018b). Female athletes' self-representation on social media: A feminist analysis of neoliberal marketing strategies in "economies of visibility". *Feminism & Psychology*, 28(1), 11-31. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0959353517726705>
- Yarar, B. (2005). 'Civilized Women'and'Light Sports': Modernisation, Women and Sport in the Early Republican Period of Turkey. *Kadın/Woman 2000*, 6(2), 1-35.
- Yarar, B., Hacısöftaoglu, İ., Akcan, F., & Bulgu, N. (2015). Modernleşmenin Gerilimlerle Dolu Kimliği: Modern Turkey Tarihinde Hem Kadın Hem Sporcu Olmak. *Oyunun Ötesinde*, 187-210.
- Yertutanol, F. D. K., Candansayar, S., & Seydaoglu, G. (2019). Homophobia in health professionals in Ankara, Turkey: Developing a scale. *Transcultural psychiatry*, 56(6), 1191-1217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461518808166>