

The Effects of Digitalisation on Journalism: Changes and Transformations in Turkish Sports Journalism

Dijitalleşmenin Gazeteciliğe Etkileri: Türk Spor Gazeteciliğinde Değişim ve Dönüşümler

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative impact of digitalisation on sports journalism, with a specific focus on Turkish media. Historically, sports journalism evolved through traditional platforms such as newspapers, radio, and television, each shaping how sports were consumed and perceived. The advent of digital platforms has revolutionized this landscape, offering interactive and audience-centered experiences while challenging conventional norms and ethics. In Türkiye, digital platforms like YouTube and social media have become essential outlets for sports content, integrating real-time updates, fan-driven narratives, and personalized consumption. Text mining and content analysis were employed to examine the practices of prominent Turkish sports journalists and their interactions with audiences. The findings reveal that digitalisation has enhanced accessibility and engagement but also has amplified issues such as sensationalism, misinformation, and a narrow focus on football. The study highlights the hybrid nature of Turkish sports journalism, where traditional practices coexist with digital innovations. While digitalisation presents opportunities for inclusiveness and innovation, it also necessitates addressing persistent ethical and structural challenges. This research contributes to understanding the evolving dynamics of sports journalism in the digital age, emphasizing the need for a balance between technological advancements and professional integrity.

Keywords: Digitalisation, Sports Journalism, Turkish Media, Text Mining.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türk medyasına odaklanarak, dijitalleşmenin spor gazeteciliği üzerindeki dönüştürücü etkisini araştırmaktadır. Tarihsel olarak spor gazeteciliği gazetel, radyo ve televizyon gibi geleneksel medya aracılığıyla gelişmiş ve her biri sporun nasıl tüketildiğini ve algılandığını şekillendirmiştir. Dijital platformların ortaya çıkışı, geleneksel normlara ve etiğe meydan okurken, etkileşimli ve izleyici merkezli deneyimler sunmuş, geleneksel medyayı devrim niteliğinde değiştirmiştir. Türkiye'de YouTube ve sosyal medya, gerçek zamanlı güncellemeleri, taraftar odaklı anlatıları ve kişiselleştirilmiş tüketimi entegre ederek spor içeriği için temel çıkış noktaları haline gelmiştir. Bu süreçte metin madenciliği ve içerik analizi, önde gelen Türk spor gazetecilerinin izleyicilerle etkileşimlerini incelemek için kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, dijitalleşmenin erişilebilirliği ve katılımı artırdığını, ancak sansasyonelizm, yanlış bilgi ve futbola dar bir bakış açısından yaklaşma gibi sorunları da artırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışma, geleneksel uygulamaların dijital yeniliklerle bir arada var olduğu Türk spor gazeteciliğinin hibrit doğasını vurgulamaktadır. Dijitalleşme, kapsayıcılık ve yenilik için fırsatlar sunarken, aynı zamanda kalıcı etik ve yapısal zorlukları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Sonuç olarak bu araştırma, dijital çağda spor gazeteciliğinin değişen dinamiklerini anlamaya katkıda bulunarak, teknolojik gelişmeler ile mesleki dürüstlük arasında bir denge kurulması gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijitalleşme, Spor Gazeteciliği, Türk Medyası, Metin Madenciliği.



Introduction

Historically, newspapers played a pivotal role in promoting sports, often sponsoring events to increase readership. They provided essential information to a growing audience of sports enthusiasts, effectively acting as a bridge between sports culture and the masses. The introduction of radio in the 1920s was transformative: live broadcasts made sporting events, such as boxing matches, accessible to thousands, while iconic announcers like Graham McNamee—valued more for their vocal talent than sports knowledge—were central to the rise of live sports coverage. The next significant shift occurred with the advent of television, which has remained the primary medium for accessing sports since the mid-20th century. The first televised sports event in the United States—a baseball game between Columbia and Princeton—aired in 1939, albeit with technical challenges. By the 1960s, television had profoundly reshaped sports, turning them into visually captivating spectacles. Live sports broadcasts offered unique advantages, such as real-time excitement and minimal language barriers, making them universally appealing and cost-effective for networks. Television also elevated sports to the level of cultural celebrations, fostering national unity and attracting advertisers eager to capitalize on such events. The symbiotic relationship between sports and media has had profound economic, social, and cultural impacts. Economically, commercialized sports owe much of their success to media investments, particularly in broadcasting rights. Socially, the media has transformed simple games into grand spectacles, enhancing their entertainment value. Culturally, the media has increased accessibility, promoted local teams, and established athletes as role models. Despite these advancements, challenges persist. Gender inequality in sports media coverage remains a significant issue, with men's sports dominating over 80% of media content. Moreover, female athletes are often objectified, with the focus on their appearance undermining their achievements. In the modern era, sports journalism continues to evolve, shaped by technological innovations, shifting audience preferences, and broader cultural dynamics. As

a powerful force in shaping public perception and societal norms, sports media remains both a mirror and a driver of change in the world of sports (Dever & İslam, 2022, pp. 150-159).

Digitalisation has profoundly impacted journalism, transforming how news is researched, produced, and consumed. It integrates advanced technologies into traditional practices, creating opportunities for innovation while also posing challenges to professional norms and ethics. In journalism, digitalisation is not just about shifting content online; it represents a structural transformation in how information is disseminated and received. With the rise of the Internet and mobile networks since the 1990s, journalism has increasingly embraced digital tools, merging traditional practices with emerging technologies to meet the demands of a digitally literate audience. This shift has blurred the boundaries between traditional and digital journalism, as journalists across platforms now rely on similar digital systems and tools. The widespread adoption of digital journalism, including its narrower definition as content published on interactive networks, reflects the broader digitization of media globally.

The integration of digital technologies has also redefined the media landscape for niche areas, such as sports journalism. Historically, sports journalism occupied a unique position as a “soft” journalistic field, often criticized for prioritizing entertainment over critical scrutiny. However, digitalisation has revolutionized this sector, challenged traditional norms, and expanded the scope of sports reporting. Digital platforms have enabled sports journalists to engage directly with audiences through social media, transforming their roles into those of content creators and commentators. The advent of data-driven journalism has further deepened sports analysis, offering audiences statistical insights previously limited to professional analysts. Yet alongside these opportunities, challenges such as misinformation, ethical concerns, and financial sustainability have become central to discussions about the future of sports journalism.

In the context of Turkish sports journalism, digitalisation has brought both continuity and transformation. While traditional media still retains considerable influence, digital platforms, particularly YouTube, have become vital in delivering sports content to an increasingly interactive audience. Channels such as A Spor, TRT Spor, and Sports Digitale provide a mix of traditional reporting and innovative digital content, catering to the diverse preferences of Turkish sports enthusiasts. However, digitalisation has also amplified longstanding issues in Turkish sports journalism, such as sensationalism, misinformation, and a narrow focus on football. This study aims to examine how digitalisation has reshaped sports journalism in Türkiye, focusing on the practices of prominent journalists from leading digital platforms. By analysing their content, commentary styles, and audience interactions, this research explores the intersection of digitalisation, journalistic ethics, and audience engagement. Through this lens, the study highlights the evolving dynamics of Turkish sports journalism and its adaptation to the demands of the digital age.

Methodology

Text mining is used as a method in this study. This technique treats text as a valuable data source and aims to extract structured information from it by analysing textual data to identify patterns, trends, and insights that are not immediately apparent. The main objective of this process is to convert unstructured text into structured data suitable for further analysis. Common tasks include text classification, clustering, topic and concept extraction, sentiment analysis, document summarization, and entity relationship modelling. The method often overlaps with natural language processing (NLP), a field of artificial intelligence focused on understanding human language. While NLP emphasizes linguistic knowledge, this approach relies more on statistical methods, although the two fields frequently complement each other, as NLP tools are often employed to enhance feature extraction and analysis. Typically, the process begins with collecting textual data from sources such as books, articles, or web pages,

followed by extracting features like word frequency distributions, patterns, or themes. These features are then analysed—sometimes with machine learning algorithms or statistical techniques—to produce structured insights, although in some cases, the extracted features alone may be sufficient. Metadata, such as publication dates, authorship, or source information, can also provide valuable context. This method finds application in a wide range of fields, from analysing public sentiment in social media posts to summarizing large volumes of academic literature. By transforming unstructured text into meaningful data, it enables researchers and organizations to derive actionable insights and address complex analytical challenges (Seker, 2015, pp. 30-31).

The focus is on the narrative in these identified texts. In this context, narratology theory is utilized. Narratology, which originated within the structuralist tradition, has evolved into an interdisciplinary field that cannot be confined merely to semiotics. Emerging prominently in the 1960s, narratology draws upon methods from linguistics, rhetoric, and literary studies, aiming to analyse both literary and visual texts as forms of communication. Rather than focusing solely on the level of signs, narratology offers a comprehensive approach to understanding how meaning is constructed, organized, and conveyed within narratives. The core objective of narratology is to elucidate the structural, semantic, and functional processes involved in the production of narratives. In this regard, narratological inquiry proceeds along two principal axes: first, by investigating the linguistic, rhetorical, and formal elements that shape the construction of narratives; and second, by examining the functions that narratives fulfil at both individual and societal levels, as well as their effects on audiences either collectively or individually. Thus, narratology is concerned not only with what is told in a narrative but also with how it is told, and how such modes of storytelling reflect and contribute to broader social transformations. By analysing the interaction between structural properties of narratives and their socio-cultural representations,

narratology seeks to illuminate changes occurring at both the formal and substantive levels of texts. In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of the transformations within Turkish sports media requires an integrated analysis of shifts in narrative structure alongside the evolving social context in which these narratives are produced and received (Parsa, 2021, p. 18).

Digitalisation on Journalism

Digitalisation is transforming modern society and industrial environments by driving increased automation and complexity. Organisational systems now integrate people, machines, robots, and various assets enhanced by sensors, monitoring, and control technologies. A constant challenge is the effective incorporation of modern technologies, which involves adapting to digital transformation, managing frequent changes in processes, handling disruptions, and meeting rapidly changing market demands. Digitalisation extends far beyond the mere elimination of paper-based processes; it encompasses the systematic adoption of advanced technologies to organise, control, and extract value from data. This transformation facilitates enhanced sustainability, drives value creation, and generates new opportunities for both businesses and society. Relationships between organizations and customers are being redefined, and new business models are continually emerging, with technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) adding an additional layer of complexity. The proliferation of IoT devices—estimated to have reached fifty billion by 2020—has driven the integration of physical systems into digitalised cyber-physical spaces for applications in smart cities, factories, homes, and transportation. This transformation also has societal implications, including concerns about inequality, wage deflation, and workforce challenges due to increasing automation. To remain competitive in this disruptive environment, companies must be agile, adaptable, and innovative. Academic institutions play a vital role by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to understand, utilize, and innovate with digital tools for business and social value

creation. Digitalisation today emphasizes the integration of advanced technologies into the core of all processes, products, and services, pushing businesses to proactively adapt and innovate to stay ahead of the curve (Parida, 2018, pp. 23-24).

Digitalisation has also had significant effects on journalism. Digital journalism broadly encompasses all forms of journalism that employ digital technologies for researching, producing, and publishing news. In a more specific sense, it refers to journalism practiced on the Internet and mobile networks. Due to the widespread digitization that the media have undergone since the 1990s, the broader definition has become increasingly imprecise. Today, all forms of media—including television, radio, and even print—are moving towards full digitization. Journalists across these platforms work with similar digital tools and systems, making the distinction between “digital journalism” and traditional journalism increasingly irrelevant. In the twenty-first century, all journalism has become digital to a significant extent, making digital journalism synonymous with journalism. However, a narrower definition still considers digital journalism as the type that specifically uses interactive networks to publish news and differentiates it by the publishing platform. This approach follows the historical practice of distinguishing journalism according to the medium—such as press, radio, and television. Since the rise of the Internet in the 1990s, the Internet has often been called the “fourth medium,” where digital journalism is practiced. This term, however, is not universally accepted, and this form of journalism has been referred to by various names, such as “online journalism,” “multimedia journalism,” “web journalism,” and “cyberjournalism. These terms, while used differently depending on country and language, refer to the same concept: journalism that produces and publishes news through digital networks and technologies (Salaverría, 2019, p. 1).

Before discussing the effects of digitalisation on sports journalism, it is important to first examine the relationship between sports and

media. The relationship between sports and mass media is highly symbiotic, significantly impacting both spheres as well as audiences and the advertising industry. This dynamic extends to most contemporary industrialized societies. Both sports and the media aim to engage people as spectators, fans, and consumers, actively shaping the audience and influencing the advertising market, including sponsorships. Historically, sports have evolved alongside human civilization, with fitness and physical skills playing essential roles in survival. Early sports activities, such as running, wrestling, archery, among others, were often rooted in survival tasks like hunting and combat. The development of sports, from their origins to the present day, has been influenced by industrialization, modernization, and advances in telecommunications. Sports mirror societies by reflecting both individual and collective social values, such as discipline, competition, and the belief in productivity, aligning with the logic of capitalism. Sports also function as indicators of social and cultural change, intricately linked to prevailing lifestyles. They can even partially fulfil functions traditionally held by religion by establishing a specific hierarchy of values. Beyond entertainment, sports serve as integrative elements within societies, fostering social unity and shaping identities. They contribute to social acceptance, the construction of national identity, and cultural cohesion, thereby reinforcing group solidarity and shared values among individuals, communities, and nations (Beck & Bosshart, 2003, p. 3).

Digitalisation has significantly transformed sports journalism, redefining its traditional norms, professional practices, and economic structures. Historically, sports journalism was perceived as a "soft" form of journalism—often criticized for its lack of critical scrutiny and its role as a mere promoter of sports culture. Paradoxically, however, it held a vital commercial position for media organizations due to its ability to attract young male audiences. The advent of digitalisation has disrupted these dynamics, simultaneously reshaping, and expanding the field. Since the

1990s, digitalisation has revolutionized the production and distribution of sports content. Digital media platforms have enabled the transition of sports journalism online, fostering the emergence of fan-based information sources and adapting journalistic practices to the demands of the mobile age. Social media, in particular, has redefined news values and consumption patterns, introducing a new dimension to journalistic practices. Sports journalists are no longer confined to traditional outlets; they now build personal brands and engage directly with their audiences through social media platforms. Digitalisation has not only posed challenges but also created new opportunities in sports journalism. The rise of data-driven journalism has brought greater depth to sports analysis by making statistical insights more accessible. However, these advancements have also introduced questions about financial sustainability, ethical standards, and content quality control. Issues such as the spread of misinformation through social media and the influence of corporate relationships on journalistic objectivity have become critical topics of discussion in the digital era. This transformation has required sports journalists to redefine their professional identities and adapt their practices to the demands of the digital age. Digitalisation has pushed sports journalism beyond its traditional boundaries, embedding it within a broader media ecosystem and initiating an era where sports and media are increasingly interwoven. Consequently, sports journalism has entered a continuous process of adaptation, navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving digital landscape (Boyle, 2017, pp. 493-495). Digitalisation also affects the sports journalism atmosphere in Türkiye.

Turkish Sports Journalism Ecology

A notable feature is the specialization seen in covering major sports clubs such as Galatasaray, Beşiktaş, and Fenerbahçe, with dedicated reporters assigned to each team. These reporters face daily pressure to produce news, often leading to sensationalism or fabricated stories to meet the demand. The use of misleading photographs,

presented as evidence for stories, is a common tactic to enhance credibility, despite these images sometimes having no connection to the events described. This ethical issue, however, is not solely the responsibility of individual reporters. Editorial teams in sports media are equally accountable for maintaining ethical standards. Misleading reporting or agenda-setting in favour of commercial or political interests undermines journalism's core purpose: delivering accurate and reliable information to readers. In sports journalism, agenda-setting often involves deciding which events or narratives receive coverage and how they are framed, shaping public perception of the sports world. The intersection of sports with entertainment, advertising, public relations, and media industries has turned it into a multi-billion-dollar sector. Media organizations frequently purchase broadcasting rights for leagues and teams, and journalists sometimes hold positions on the boards of major sports clubs. Instead of offering critical, independent perspectives, this close integration often compromises journalistic integrity, sidelining ethical principles in favour of commercial gains. Sports journalism in Türkiye focuses on match reports, player transfers, and game strategies, neglecting the broader societal, cultural, and economic dimensions of sports. This lack of critical engagement misses the opportunity to explore how sports both influence and are influenced by social structures. Ethical issues are compounded by employment policies in Turkish media. Media outlets often prefer low-cost, inexperienced, or intern journalists over highly trained professionals to reduce costs, while simultaneously paying high salaries to celebrity athletes or public figures employed as columnists. This approach undermines journalistic expertise and further erodes the quality and credibility of sports journalism. In summary, Türkiye's sports media operates in a complex environment where commercial pressures, ethical challenges, and employment practices intersect. Addressing these issues requires a commitment to ethical standards, investment in skilled journalists, and a broader approach to sports reporting that transcends the

immediate spectacle of matches and engages with the societal dimensions of sports (Uzun, 2004, pp. 4-5).

The history of Turkish sports media highlights unique dynamics, particularly its strong focus on football due to its immense popularity. The so-called "big four" football teams—Galatasaray, Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe, and Trabzonspor—have consistently dominated sports media coverage, as news about these clubs generates higher readership and ratings. The 1990s marked a transformative era for Turkish sports journalism, with both print and broadcast media playing significant roles in shaping public discourse. During this period, newspapers such as *Fotomaç* (1990), *Tarafa* (1995), and *Fanatik* (1995) emerged, catering specifically to football enthusiasts. Despite their initial success, some publications, like *Süper Futbol*, were short-lived, reflecting the competitive nature of the industry. Turkish sports journalism has also faced criticism for its frequent violations of ethical standards. The lack of adherence to journalistic codes of conduct has led to concerns about credibility and trustworthiness, with sports sections in newspapers often mirroring broader challenges in the media landscape. Over time, sports journalism has evolved into a commercial enterprise, aligning its content with audience demands and prioritizing ratings and circulation figures. This has cemented football's dominance, as its straightforward rules, visual appeal, and widespread accessibility make it a favourite among the public, far surpassing other sports in media attention. Furthermore, sports journalism in Türkiye has neglected broader societal issues, focusing instead on match analyses, player transfers, and game strategies. This narrow scope underscores the media's failure to explore the deeper connections between sports and societal structures such as politics, culture, and economics. Football, as an industrialized and professionalized sport, continues to define the concept of "sports" in Türkiye, reflecting its entrenched position in both media and popular culture. These factors collectively shape the distinct trajectory of Turkish sports media (Aksoy, 2019, pp. 99-102).

The language of Turkish sports media often exhibits significant issues, particularly in its role in perpetuating violence in sports, most notably in football. The highly competitive nature of the sports media landscape, driven by circulation and viewership concerns, leads to sensationalist and provocative reporting. Examples include inflammatory headlines such as "Bloody Banner Clash" and "Konya-Beşiktaş Fans Clash," which not only dramatize events but also escalate tensions among fans. The use of emotionally charged and aggressive language fosters an environment of hostility, often encouraging the very violence it seeks to report. Another critical issue lies in the practice of "fan journalism," where writers openly support specific teams. This lack of objectivity combined with the intense rivalry between football clubs, exacerbates tensions among fans and fuels tribalism. For instance, media coverage often prioritizes content related to the "big four" football teams, further deepening the divide between fan bases. This approach aligns with the commercial interests of media outlets but undermines journalistic ethics and professionalism. The involvement of former athletes, referees, and coaches in sports journalism without adequate training or adherence to ethical standards also raises concerns. Their lack of journalistic rigor often results in biased reporting, contributing to misinformation and sensationalism. Moreover, interviews and comments from club executives and coaches are frequently used to deflect blame for deficient performance, further stoking animosity between teams and fans. Such practices show how the media can function as a catalyst for violence rather than a neutral observer. Research supports these observations, with findings indicating that provocative media content significantly influences fan behaviour. Reports suggest that many violent incidents in stadiums are linked to the rhetoric propagated by the media. For instance, studies reveal that over half of fans involved in violent acts admit to being influenced by pre-match media coverage. Despite occasional calls for ethical practices, these appeals are often overshadowed by the media's preference for sensationalism to drive engagement. While the

media undeniably plays a role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes, the responsibility for addressing violence in sports extends beyond journalists. Club executives, legal frameworks, and governing bodies must collaborate to create a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of violence. However, as long as sensationalism and tribalism remain profitable for the media, overcoming these issues will require significant structural and cultural changes within Turkish sports journalism (İlhan & Çimen, 2011, pp. 231-233).

The language used in Turkish sports media reveals deep-rooted issues, notably its role in normalizing violence and militarism in football coverage. Militaristic phrases such as "Life or Death Match," "High Voltage Clash," "Sniper," and "Destruction Plan" frequently appear in match headlines involving Türkiye's major football teams. These terms contribute to an aggressive and combative tone. Additionally, sports newspapers often employ metaphors related to violence, machinery, animals, and meteorology. This sensationalist approach, aimed at engaging readers, frequently compromises journalistic quality. The preference for sensationalism reflects a cultural trend where entertainment takes precedence over critical and balanced reporting. The media's populist strategy, aimed at mass appeal, leads to biased reporting and fanatical attitudes among readers. The heavy emphasis on the "big three" football teams (Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, and Beşiktaş) fosters a narrow narrative, resulting in repetitive, exaggerated, or fabricated stories that damage the credibility of sports journalism. This editorial and linguistic approach has broader societal consequences. Fan-oriented publications often intensify fanaticism and contribute to aggressive behaviour among supporters. The reliance on militaristic and violent imagery in headlines shapes public attitudes, amplifying hostility in sports culture. Furthermore, the sports media's focus on football to the exclusion of other sports narrows the scope of coverage, reinforcing sensationalism and mistrust. The media's current practices undermine its potential to promote a unifying and inclusive

sports culture. The pervasive use of violent and sensationalist language challenges efforts to foster healthier and more constructive attitudes toward sports, limiting its role as a positive societal force (Özsoy, 2011, pp. 98-99).

The language used in Turkish sports media often reflects and perpetuates a culture of sensationalism, bias, and hostility, particularly during international and national competitions. During international matches, the media frequently uses exaggerated, militaristic, or derogatory language that mirrors political tensions between Türkiye and other nations. For example, headlines following Turkish teams' victories over Israeli clubs have frequently contained hostile rhetoric, framing sports results within the context of political conflicts. Similarly, matches against countries like Switzerland or Greece have seen headlines filled with nationalist rhetoric, reinforcing historical animosities. These inflammatory expressions can escalate tensions both on and off the field. In domestic competitions, the rivalry between major Turkish football clubs such as Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray often leads to provocative reporting that fuels fan hostility. The media's use of aggressive metaphors, such as comparing players to combatants or encouraging physical dominance, reinforces tribalism and stokes tensions among supporters. For instance, coverage that pits players from rival teams against each other with violent or combative metaphors normalizes conflict as part of the sports narrative. The media's reliance on such sensationalist and inflammatory language contributes to a culture of fan violence and hostility. Headlines that trivialize or even glorify aggressive actions, such as encouraging children to "slap" symbols of rival teams, blur the lines between competition and outright antagonism. This sensationalist approach often prioritizes audience engagement over ethical journalism, with publications catering to fan biases to boost sales or clicks. Even in cases of serious allegations, such as match-fixing scandals, the media often adopts a biased tone, framing legal or administrative decisions as attacks on specific teams, thereby further polarizing fan bases. These practices not only undermine journalistic integrity

but also contribute to a toxic sports culture. The normalization of biased, inflammatory, and sensationalist language hinders the development of a healthier, more inclusive approach to sports reporting. Addressing these issues requires a shift towards responsible journalism that emphasizes fairness, objectivity, and respect, both for the sports community and for broader societal relations (Özsoy & Yıldız, 2013, pp. 52-56). Although Turkish sports media exhibits this structure, significant changes have occurred—particularly with the advent of digitalisation.

The digitization of Turkish sports media has significantly its structure and content through the integration of internet-based technologies. Digital platforms have transformed traditional one-way communication into interactive, user-centered experiences, allowing audiences to access real-time sports updates, highlights, and archival footage at their convenience. The internet has also personalized sports content, empowering users to tailor their consumption to specific interests. However, despite the rise of digital sports platforms, these outlets often rely on traditional media for news sources, leading to the reproduction of longstanding issues in sports journalism, such as sensationalism and limited coverage diversity. This dependency underscores the complex interplay between traditional and digital sports media in Türkiye's evolving media landscape (Bingöl, 2018, pp. 44-46).

Research Findings: Changing Ecology

The digitization of sports broadcasting in Türkiye has led to significant transformations, aligning with global trends in media and technology. Platforms such as Bein Sports, Tabii, D-Smart, Exxen, Tivibu, and others have embraced digital tools to enhance content delivery. Bein Sports' digital initiatives, such as Bein Connect and Digitürk Play, enable users to stream live matches and access on-demand content on various devices, including smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs. Similarly, D-Smart's integration of channels like S Sports and NBA TV into its platform demonstrates the shift toward multi-device accessibility. Social

media platforms have also become an integral part of sports broadcasting, with networks such as Bein Sports Haber and Tivibu utilizing YouTube to share live streams and program clips. Independent broadcasters and former media professionals have established a strong presence on YouTube, launching channels such as Sokrates Dergi and Asist Analiz that cater to niche sports audiences through in-depth analysis and commentary. Additionally, podcasting has become an important medium for sports content, with outlets such as Sokrates Dergi and Medyascope offering in-depth discussions on football, basketball, and other sports via platforms like SoundCloud and Spotify. The shift to digital broadcasting in Türkiye has not only diversified how content is consumed but also expanded the reach and interactivity of sports media. Platforms now allow users to customize their viewing experiences, access archived content, and engage with programs in real time. However, despite these advancements, traditional media practices still influence digital sports journalism, occasionally perpetuating issues like sensationalism and bias (Budak, 2019, pp. 237-241).

In this study, developments in digitalised sports journalism are examined through the lens of sports channels, with a focus on how they have transformed sports communication, style, and commentary. In Türkiye, sports media broadcasts primarily on digital platforms—especially YouTube—due to digitalisation, but traditional media channels remain important as well. Prominent channels like A Spor, TRT Spor, and beIN SPORTS Türkiye boast millions of subscribers and hundreds of millions of views, reflecting the increasing digital consumption of sports media in the country. Channels like Vole, Sokrates Dergi, and Sports Digitale focus on in-depth analyses, interviews, and commentary on football, basketball, and other sports, offering a mix of traditional reporting and innovative content. Football remains the most dominant subject, with channels emphasizing match highlights, player interviews, and expert commentary. Platforms such as Hodri Meydan and De Marke also explore fan-centric narratives, reflecting a growing trend of engaging directly with audiences. Additionally,

YouTube sports channels cater to niche sports and alternative formats, including podcasts and live discussions, which further enrich the viewing experience. With features like live streaming, archived footage, and interactive content, YouTube has reshaped how sports are consumed in Türkiye, making it accessible anytime and anywhere. The platform's versatility allows individual creators and established media outlets alike to connect with younger, tech-savvy audiences, making it an indispensable tool in modern sports broadcasting (Kobitek, n.d.).

In this study, a mixed-method approach combining text mining and narratological analysis was employed to investigate the transformation of sports journalism practices on digital platforms. The sample consists of YouTube videos featuring prominent journalists from six major sports channels: Furkan Yıldız (A Spor), Fatih Doğan (TRT Spor), Gürler Akgün (Bein Sports Türkiye), Ali Ece (Vole), Erman Yaşar (Sokrates Magazine), and Yağız Sabuncuoğlu (Sports Digitale). These channels and journalists were purposively selected to represent the diversity and breadth of Turkish sports media on digital platforms. A Spor, TRT Spor, and Bein Sports Türkiye were chosen as leading mainstream sports channels with high audience reach and institutional legitimacy in Turkish sports broadcasting, while Vole, Sokrates Magazine, and Sports Digitale represent new-generation, digital-first sports media platforms that have become highly influential in recent years, particularly on YouTube. The selected journalists are among the most recognizable figures on their respective channels, ensuring that the analysis captures prominent narrative styles and content strategies shaping contemporary sports journalism. This combination of traditional and digital-native channels enables a comparison of legacy media practices with emerging digital trends. For each journalist, the most relevant and recent video was selected based on YouTube search rankings and recency, ensuring that the sampled material reflects the latest developments and content formats in sports journalism and maximizes comparability across channels.

The analysis began with a systematic data cleaning process. All selected video transcripts were combined, yielding a raw corpus of 18,940 words. Non-Turkish and irrelevant terms were filtered out, resulting in a refined dataset of 14,796 words. This pre-processing phase also included the removal of stop words and non-content words to enhance the accuracy of subsequent analyses. Coding and categorization were conducted in two steps. First, a word frequency analysis was performed to identify the most salient terms within the corpus. The top recurring words—"oyuncu" (player), "transfer", "futbol" (football), "gol" (goal), and "maç" (match)—were identified as central themes reflecting the focus of sports discourse in the sampled content. Second, the content of each video was coded according to dominant narrative themes, such as "transfer news," "match analysis," and "entertainment." Four of the videos focused on transfer-related content, whereas two were primarily oriented toward entertainment and commentary.

Saturation was deemed achieved once consistent repetition of themes and word patterns across the analysed transcripts suggested that further sampling would be unlikely to generate novel findings. Metadata such as video publication date, journalist identity, and channel affiliation were recorded to provide additional contextual information. The narratological dimension of the study involved a qualitative examination of how narratives about football and other sports are structured and delivered across different channels. By integrating text mining with narrative analysis, the study highlights both quantitative patterns in language use and qualitative shifts in narrative forms within Turkish sports journalism.

The findings suggest that, while traditional media logic remains influential, digital platforms have fostered new narrative conventions and formats in sports journalism—particularly through the prominence of transfer news and rapid, informal commentary styles. To further strengthen future research, it is recommended that a more granular coding framework—potentially including

sentiment analysis and speaker turn-taking—be developed to deepen understanding of narrative dynamics. Moreover, expanding the sample size and including additional channels or journalists would enhance the robustness and generalizability of findings. In conclusion, understanding the transformation of Turkish sports media requires not only quantitative mapping of discourse trends but also attention to the evolving narrative strategies that shape audience engagement in the digital age.

These journalists openly declare their favourite teams on their X (formerly Twitter) accounts and frequently comment on their teams' progress, actively engaging with the interactive features enabled by digitalisation. Additionally, football players themselves share a remarkable amount of information on social media—from updates about national team camps to details about their flight schedules when transferring to a new club. Notably, sports programming on these platforms intensifies during transfer periods. The production, distribution, and consumption of transfer news is often marked by a significant degree of misinformation and disinformation. In many cases, such news becomes entangled with these processes, further blurring the line between accurate and inaccurate information.

Sports reporters who have made their names with transfer news coverage are also becoming major influencers, especially on social media platforms. The "rumours" received while making transfer news and the posts made on social media have a prominent place in this influence process. These "rumours", thought to be received from club managers, attract the attention of fans of different teams. Again, which reporter gives the "most accurate" news during transfer periods becomes a remarkable element. The increasing influence of sports journalists has led them to become sports commentators over time. The aggressive style used in sports commentary, like that used in traditional media, is also reproduced, and the fact that digital media is exempt from controls further intensifies this aggressive style.

Another notable aspect of YouTube-based sports channels is the presence of advertisements. In addition to platform-wide ads, sports broadcasts often incorporate advertisements within their own content, similar to practices in traditional media. These ads are frequently introduced by moderators, even during live streams. As a result, sports journalism holds a prominent position in digital media, much like its role in traditional outlets. While sports journalism retains certain core characteristics in the digital environment, it is also undergoing meaningful change. These shifts are shaped not only by the structural features of digital media and the demands of the digital economy, but also by cultural factors such as the greater freedom of expression facilitated by online platforms.

Discussion

When evaluated through the lens of sports ethics, the growing emphasis on transfer news and rumour-based reporting in Turkish sports journalism presents significant concerns. As a social phenomenon, sport plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and promoting values such as fairness, inclusivity, and respect for human rights. The sports media, therefore, holds a particular responsibility in upholding and disseminating ethical standards. Ideally, the foundational principles guiding sports journalism should include impartiality, accuracy, freedom, privacy, and integrity. Ethical sports reporting is expected to provide honest, unbiased news, respect the privacy of individuals, ensure accountability to sources, and avoid content that is defamatory, sensationalist, or incites violence. However, the findings of this study indicate that the intensification of transfer news and rumour-based journalism—often driven by commercial interests and audience demand—can undermine these ethical imperatives. The unchecked proliferation of speculative reporting risks not only spreading misinformation but also violating privacy, damaging reputations, and encouraging tribalism or hostility among fans. Furthermore, this focus detracts from the broader social, cultural, and educational functions of sports journalism,

narrowing its scope to market-driven spectacle at the expense of its public mission. Addressing these challenges requires renewed commitment to ethical guidelines and critical reflection on the professional responsibilities of sports journalists in the digital era (Tuncel, 2014, p. 20).

From the perspective of sports literacy, the central mission of sports journalism—and the wider sports ecosystem—should extend beyond merely reporting wins and losses or sensational news cycles. At its core, sports literacy emphasizes the development of an individual's potential for self-growth and self-realization, prioritizing learning, and holistic participation over outcome-focused narratives. Instead of reducing sports to a sequence of “movement blocks” or isolated skills, true sports literacy enables individuals to become fully engaged within the world of sport, nurturing a sense of belonging, agency, and critical reflection. In this context, sports journalism plays a formative role by shaping the knowledge, skills, and values that inform public understanding of sport. Effective sports media should encourage observation, inquiry, and constructive criticism, empowering audiences—especially youth—not only to follow results but also to appreciate the broader educational and social dimensions of sport. By fostering environments that value collaboration, respect, and shared experiences, sports literacy supports the growth and sustainability of sports culture, creating opportunities for people of all ages to remain engaged in physical activity and community life. However, when the media narrative is dominated by transfer rumours, winning-at-all-costs mentalities, or sensationalism, the deeper purposes of sports literacy are often undermined. Such coverage risks narrowing the social meaning of sport and discouraging critical thinking or long-term participation. For sports journalism to fulfil its educational and cultural mission, it must embrace and promote the principles of sports literacy—championing not just achievement, but also personal growth, inclusion, and the lifelong benefits of active engagement (Ülker, 2021, pp. 48-49).

The broader transformations brought about by digitalisation have fundamentally reshaped not only the practice of sports journalism but also its narrative forms. Historically, sports writing in newspapers can be categorized into three distinct modes: long-form storytelling, poetic or verse narration, and factual storytelling. Long-form storytelling evolved from oral traditions that celebrated great achievements with elaborate details and dramatic embellishments. Poetic narration sought to capture the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of sport, often presenting events in a stylized, literary fashion. Factual storytelling, which gained prominence in the modern era, is characterized by the straightforward, unembellished reporting of events—highlighting both the triumphs and failures of athletes with transparency. In earlier periods, long-form and poetic narratives were oral, allowing for the addition of imaginative elements and the continual reinvention of stories. As these traditions shifted into the written domain, particularly within newspapers, they both preserved and transformed the storytelling conventions of their time. Newspapers not only functioned as information channels for an expanding audience of sports enthusiasts but also played an active role in shaping the cultural imagination around sports, sometimes even sponsoring events to promote their own sports pages. The advent of radio—followed by television and digital media—introduced new narrative possibilities with each technological innovation, while simultaneously challenging existing forms. The emergence of digital platforms, especially, has accelerated this transformation by enabling more immediate, interactive, and personalized storytelling. While the modern era initially elevated factual reporting, digital environments now blur the boundaries between factual, narrative, and performative modes. Social media, live streams, and user-generated content have fostered hybrid storytelling forms, where elements of dramatization, poetic language, and real-time analysis coexist. In this context, sports narratives have become more fragmented, dynamic, and participatory, reflecting both the opportunities and

challenges of the contemporary media ecosystem. These shifts highlight how changes in media technology are inseparable from transformations in narrative style and audience engagement. The evolution from embellished oral traditions to factual reporting, and now to digitally mediated, multi-modal storytelling, reveals the complex and ongoing negotiation between tradition, innovation, and the demands of a changing sports audience (Dever & İslam, 2022, p. 150).

Within the context of these shifting narrative forms, Umberto Eco's concept of "sports chatter" becomes particularly relevant for understanding the contemporary dynamics of sports media. While news media studies have traditionally prioritized political journalism, sports journalism has often been overlooked, despite its profound integration with the commercial entertainment industry and its entanglement with broader power relations and social processes. In today's media landscape, sports—now highly professionalized and commercialized—serves not only as a stage for athletic competition but also as a critical arena for the representation and negotiation of social and political identities. Eco describes "sports chatter" as the compulsive need to talk and write about sports, and even to comment on others' conversations regarding the subject.. This incessant production of sports discourse has, in many ways, become a defining function of the sports media. As sports narratives have shifted from embellished storytelling and factual reporting to the perpetual real-time flow of commentary on digital platforms, the boundaries between meaningful reporting, entertainment, and mere "chatter" have become increasingly blurred. The proliferation of live updates, expert panels, social media debates, and rumour-driven content exemplifies this trend, often prioritizing quantity and immediacy over depth and analysis. Consequently, sports media today operates not merely as a channel for the dissemination of information, but as a space for the continuous production and circulation of discourse—a space where talking about sports becomes both an end in itself and a mechanism for shaping collective

identities and public opinion. This transformation, highlighted by Eco's notion of "sports chatter," underscores the growing importance of sports journalism in the broader media ecology, inviting renewed academic attention to its discursive power and social implications (Gökalp, 2005, p. 131).

The transformations identified in this study—shaped by digitalisation, changing media practices, and evolving narrative forms—must also be situated within the broader relationship between sport and ideology. While sport is frequently idealized as an open, meritocratic field accessible to all, the reality is that economic power and resource allocation play a significant role in defining which sports flourish, which narratives are amplified, and whose voices are represented within the media ecosystem. The digital shift in Turkish sports journalism, for instance, has not simply democratized access or diversified content; rather, it has often reinforced existing structures of visibility and influence. The expansion of digital platforms has allowed certain journalists and channels, backed by financial and institutional capital, to dominate the agenda and set the tone for sports discourse. These actors are not only able to shape which sporting events and issues receive coverage, but also to frame the values and ideals associated with sport itself—often aligning them with commercial interests and the priorities of dominant groups. As a result, the forms of sport and types of stories that are promoted through digital and traditional media tend to reflect and perpetuate existing social hierarchies and economic inequalities. In this sense, sport remains a powerful site for the reproduction of ideology, even as its organizational and narrative frameworks evolve. The concentration of economic and media power enables the ongoing prioritization of particular sports (most notably football), while marginalizing others and restricting the diversity of perspectives and experiences made visible to the public (Oakley & Pike, 2024, p. 406). The belief in the inherent openness or neutrality of sport is itself an ideological construct—one that masks the material and political interests at play in shaping both the practice of sport and the stories

told about it. The changes and transformations explored in this article therefore highlight not only the shifting forms of media and narrative, but also the enduring ways in which sport operates as a field where power, ideology, and inequality intersect and are continually renegotiated (Sert, 2000, p. 30).

The changes and transformations documented in this study are closely intertwined with the emergence of the "e-fan" phenomenon, which fundamentally reconfigures the relationship between sports clubs and their supporters in the digital era. In this new landscape, the communication process between clubs and fans is mediated by social media platforms, where clubs function as message senders and fans as recipients. Social media content—ranging from news and announcements to multimedia highlights—serves not only as a message but as an interactive artifact designed to elicit immediate feedback, such as likes, comments, shares, and downloads. This feedback loop is essential to the construction of a contemporary club identity and the cultivation of ongoing engagement. For e-fans, social media offers a seamless extension of everyday digital practices into the realm of sports fandom. It enables fans to maintain constant connectivity with their teams, participate in real-time conversations, and even shape club narratives through user-generated content and collective responses. The transformation from passive spectator to active participant represents a significant departure from traditional modes of fandom, where physical presence and in-person rituals were central. Now, digital platforms allow fans to enact their support and sense of belonging from virtually anywhere, blurring the boundaries between local and global communities. This shift also signals deeper changes in the nature of fan identity and club allegiance. E-fandom is characterized by immediacy, interactivity, and personalization, but also by the commodification of fan engagement, as clubs increasingly leverage social media analytics and digital content to build brand value and attract sponsorship. In this sense, the rise of the e-fan reflects both the democratizing

potential of digital technologies and the persistent influence of commercial imperatives in shaping the sports experience (Çelik, 2020, pp. 3-4). The e-fan phenomenon exemplifies how digitalisation not only transforms media practices but also redefines the very meanings of support, participation, and community within contemporary sports culture.

This process gives rise to the notion of the “model fan” (model supporter), who embodies the ideal interpretive subject constructed by the game’s communicative framework. The model fan is not merely a passive consumer of spectacle but an active decoder of football’s signs, narratives, and strategies. Through continuous engagement—watching matches, following tactical analyses, participating in debates, and consuming club-produced content—the model fan acquires a form of cultural literacy unique to football. This cultural competence enables them to participate meaningfully in the shared rituals and discussions that constitute contemporary sports fandom. Importantly, the production of the model fan is intricately linked to the evolution of media and technology. As clubs and media outlets produce increasingly sophisticated and interactive content, they also shape the norms, expectations, and “reading practices” of their audiences. Digital platforms amplify this process by offering fans countless opportunities to gain experience, perform, and display their expertise, further solidifying the boundaries of the model fan community. In this way, football and its media apparatus not only generate and disseminate meaning but also cultivate the very identities and allegiances necessary for the perpetuation of modern sports culture (Trifonas, 2004, p. 45). The complex and multilayered relationship between football and fandom is, to a significant extent, sustained and mediated by the role of the media. In the Turkish media landscape, the profound transformations since the 1980s have not only increased the volume and diversity of sports content across multiple platforms but have also expanded the space that sports, particularly football, occupy in the public agenda. As a result, the media’s role extends far beyond that of a

mere intermediary transmitting information. Rather, the media actively constructs the symbolic universe surrounding football, delineating the boundaries of experience and interpretation for fans. This process involves shaping not only the narratives and meanings associated with football, but also defining the contours of fan engagement and community. Through the creation and dissemination of stories, symbols, and rituals, the media establishes the frameworks within which fans relate to the sport and to each other. Media coverage does not simply reflect fan culture—it constitutes a central site for its negotiation and performance. In this way, the evolving practices of sports media are instrumental in structuring the lived experience of football fandom, influencing how football is felt, understood, and collectively imagined within society (Akbaş, 2012, p. 15).

The changes and transformations observed in Turkish sports journalism and the broader sports ecosystem can be critically understood as outcomes of an ongoing neoliberal process. In this context, the logic of marketing has not only penetrated the economic and organizational structures of sport, but has also fundamentally reshaped how sports are represented, narrated, and consumed in the media. Sports marketing—originally conceived as the application of general marketing principles to sports products and services—has evolved to encompass not only the marketing of sport itself, but also the use of sport as a platform for marketing unrelated products through sponsorship and branding (Bühler & Nufer, 2006, pp. 1-2). This dual function means that sport is no longer simply an arena for athletic achievement or communal celebration; it has become a key site for the deployment of marketing strategies and the generation of commercial value. This logic extends to sports journalism, where the boundaries between information, entertainment, and advertising are increasingly blurred. The rise of digital media has accelerated this trend, as clubs, media organizations, and journalists leverage social media and digital platforms not only to inform or engage audiences, but also to build brands, attract sponsorship, and monetize fan interaction.

The emergence of phenomena such as “e-fans” exemplifies how digital technologies enable new forms of commodified engagement, where fan activity itself becomes a data point and marketing asset. In this neoliberal framework, media coverage is often shaped by commercial imperatives: which sports receive attention, which narratives are amplified, and how events are framed are all influenced by considerations of marketability and brand alignment. The neoliberalization of sport and sports journalism challenges the traditional ideals of openness, meritocracy, and community that are often associated with sport. Instead, it foregrounds competition, consumption, and the relentless pursuit of market value as organizing principles. This not only transforms how sports are played and reported, but also redefines the social meanings and ethical commitments attached to sporting culture—raising important questions about inclusivity, authenticity, and the public role of sport in contemporary society.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that digitalisation has not democratized Turkish sports journalism as much as expected but has instead reinforced existing hierarchies and biases—especially the overwhelming dominance of football. Text mining analyses show that the discourse is still structured primarily around keywords like “transfer,” “match,” and “goal.” This singular focus means that other sports and broader societal aspects of sport continue to be marginalized, despite the opportunities offered by digital platforms for more inclusive coverage.

Secondly, the proliferation of transfer news and rumour-driven journalism is more intense than ever, fuelled by the immediacy and reach of digital platforms. Journalists now compete to be first with breaking transfer stories, often prioritizing speed over accuracy. This competition leads to a cycle of misinformation and “information pollution,” where rumours are amplified, and factual verification becomes secondary. As a result, ethical concerns such as accuracy, privacy, and impartiality are frequently compromised in pursuit of audience attention.

Thirdly, the transformation of fan engagement is a defining feature of the digital era. The emergence of the “e-fan” and the increasingly interactive relationship between clubs, journalists, and supporters has shifted the traditional boundaries of sports fandom. Social media enables fans to become active participants and content co-creators, but also turns their engagement into a commodity for clubs and sponsors. Thus, while digital platforms enable new forms of participation and community, they also reinforce the commercialization and commodification of sports culture.

Fourthly, narrative forms in Turkish sports journalism have become more fragmented and hybrid. The boundaries between factual reporting, entertainment, and “sports chatter” are increasingly blurred, with personality-driven commentary and performative debate often overshadowing investigative or analytical journalism. The language used—especially in football coverage—remains sensationalist, militaristic, and biased, further inflaming fan rivalries and sometimes encouraging aggressive behaviours both online and offline.

Finally, although digitalisation has provided a space for alternative voices and independent sports channels to emerge, the field as a whole remains constrained by commercial pressures and neoliberal marketing logics. Digital innovation often serves commercial goals as much as journalistic or public ones, and the challenges of sensationalism, narrow focus, and ethical lapses remain unresolved. Moving forward, Turkish sports journalism must find ways to balance technological innovation with a renewed commitment to ethical standards, broader coverage, and the core public mission of journalism—providing inclusive, accurate, and critical discourse about sports in society.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Bu çalışma, dijitalleşmenin spor gazeteciliği üzerindeki etkilerini incelemekte ve özellikle Türkiye medyasındaki kendine özgü dinamiklere odaklanmaktadır. Spor gazeteciliği tarihsel olarak gazete, radyo ve televizyon gibi geleneksel mecralardan geçerek biçimlenmiş; her bir ortam, kamuoyunun spora olan ilgisini ve katılım biçimlerini şekillendirmede belirleyici olmuştur. Yazılı basın ayrıntılı habercilik sağlarken, televizyon sporun izlenmeden deneyiminizenginleştirilmiştir. Buna karşın, dijital platformların yükselişi medyadaki bu

yapıyı kökten değiştirmiş ve içerik tüketiminde etkileşim, gerçek zamanlılık ve izleyici merkezlilik gibi yeni standartlar getirmiştir. Çalışma, özellikle YouTube ve sosyal medya üzerinden Türk spor gazetecilerinin dijital pratiklerini analiz ederek, alanın yapısal dönüşümünü ve beraberinde ortaya çıkan yeni habercilik biçimlerini mercek altına almaktadır.

Geleneksel medya, spor gazeteciliğinin hem kültürel hem de ekonomik bir güç olarak şekillenmesinde temel bir zemin oluşturmuştur. Gazeteler, spor kültürünün oluşumunda önemli rol oynamış ve okuyucunun ilgisini çekmek için büyük spor etkinliklerinin sponsorluğunu üstlenmiştir. Radyonun ortaya çıkışıyla birlikte, canlı spor yayınlarının takibi daha geniş kitleler için mümkün hâle gelmiş ve bu mecra, spora olan ilgiyi artırmıştır. Televizyon ise sporu ulusal ve kültürel bir fenomene dönüştürerek, bu alanın sosyoekonomik önemini güçlendirmiştir. Spor ve medya arasındaki bu karşılıklı çıkar ilişkisi, sporun görünürlüğünü artırmış, sporcuyu rol modele dönüştürmüş ve toplumla olan etkileşimi derinleştirmiştir. Ancak bu ilişki aynı zamanda toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliklerinin yeniden üretilmesine de zemin hazırlamıştır; erkek sporu medya içeriğinde ağırlıklı yer tutarken, kadın sporcular çoğu zaman cinsel obje olarak temsil edilmiş ve başarıları geri plana itilmiştir. Tüm bu tarihsel dinamikler spor gazeteciliğinin gelişiminde belirleyici olurken, dijital teknolojilerin yükselişi, sektörde benzeri görülmemiş yenilikleri beraberinde getirmiştir.

Dijitalleşme, gazeteciliğin araştırma, üretim ve dağıtım süreçlerinin tamamını etkileyen bir paradigma değişimini temsil etmektedir. Önceki teknolojik gelişmelerden farklı olarak, dijitalleşme geleneksel uygulamaları mobil bağlantı, sosyal medya platformları ve veri analizleri gibi yeniliklerle bütünleştirmektedir. Geleneksel olarak “yumuşak” haber kategorisi olarak değerlendirilen spor gazeteciliği, dijital çağda önemli bir evrim geçirmiştir. Gazeteciler artık yalnızca haber veren değil, aynı zamanda içerik üreten, izleyiciyle etkileşim kuran ve veri temelli analizler yapan

bireyler olarak konumlanmaktadır. Ancak bu ilerlemeler, yanlış bilgilendirme, etik ikilemler ve sansasyonizm gibi sorunları da beraberinde getirmiştir.

Türkiye’de spor gazeteciliği ekosistemi, özellikle futbolun baskınlığıyla şekillenmiştir. Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş ve Trabzonspor gibi “dört büyükler,” hem popülariteleri hem de ticari değerleri nedeniyle medya içeriklerinin büyük kısmını oluşturmaktadır. Tarihsel olarak, Türk spor gazeteciliği sıklıkla sansasyonel haberciliğe öncelik vermiş ve sporun daha geniş toplumsal ve kültürel boyutlarını ihmal etmiştir. Gündem odaklı anlatılar ve yanıltıcı haberler gibi etik ihlaller, gazeteciliğin güvenilirliğini zedelemiştir. Ancak dijital platformların yükselişi bu alana yeni dinamikler kazandırmıştır.

YouTube ve sosyal medya, Türkiye’de spor içeriklerinin üretim ve tüketim biçimlerinde önemli değişiklikler meydana getirmiştir. A Spor, TRT Spor ve Sports Digitale gibi kanallar, geleneksel habercilik anlayışını canlı yayınlar, yorumlar ve taraftar odaklı anlatılarla birleştirerek daha çeşitli içerikler sunmaktadır. Bu gelişmeler, gazetecilerin kişisel markalarını inşa etmelerine ve izleyicilerle doğrudan etkileşim kurmalarına imkân tanımıştır. Ancak dijitalleşme, Türk spor gazeteciliğinde uzun süredir var olan bazı sorunları da yeniden üretmektedir. Sansasyonel başlıklar, taraflı yorumlar ve futbol merkezli içeriklerin fazlalığı, diğer spor dallarının ve daha geniş toplumsal konuların görmezden gelinmesine yol açmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, Türk spor gazetecilerinin dijital etkileşim stratejileri ve izleyiciyle kurdukları ilişkileri analiz etmek amacıyla metin madenciliği yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Metin madenciliği, yapılandırılmamış metinlerden anlamlı ve yapısal bilgi çıkarma olanağı tanır; içerikteki kalıpları ve eğilimleri ortaya koyar. Vole, Sokrates Dergi, Tabii ve Bein Sports Türkiye gibi kanallardan alınan içerikler analiz edilerek, günümüz Türk spor gazeteciliğini şekillendiren ana temalar ve dinamikler belirlenmiştir.

Bulgular, Türk spor gazetecilerinin içerik yayımı için dijital platformlara giderek daha fazla bağımlı hâle geldiğini göstermektedir. Özellikle futbol haberlerinin analizlerinde, gazetecilerin transfer sezonlarında oyuncu transferlerine ilişkin “son dakika” haberlerine odaklandığı, bu süreçte hem doğru bilgiler hem de söylenti ve yanlış bilgilerin birlikte dolaşıma sokulduğu görülmektedir. Bu eğilim, gazetecilerin spor olaylarına yönelik kamu algısını şekillendirme ve etkileme gücünün arttığına işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca, yapılan analizlerde özellikle futbol haberlerinde saldırgan ve sansasyonel bir dilin yaygın olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu tür bir dil, taraftar grupları arasındaki fanatikliği artırmakta ve düşmanlık kültürünü pekiştirmektedir.

Dijital spor içeriklerindeki reklamlar, geleneksel medya uygulamalarının bir devamı niteliğindedir. Canlı yayınlarda ve kısa videolarda entegre reklamların belirgin biçimde yer alması, dijital gazeteciliğin finansal sürdürülebilirliğine katkı sağlamakta; öte yandan, bu durum spor anlatılarının ticarileşmesini hızlandırmakta ve gazetecilikte nesnellik ilkesinin korunabilirliğini sorgulamaktadır.

Tüm bu zorluklara rağmen dijitalleşme, Türkiye’deki spor gazeteciliğinde yenilik ve kapsayıcılık açısından önemli fırsatlar da sunmaktadır. Niş platformlar ve bağımsız içerik üreticileri giderek daha fazla ilgi görmekte; medyada daha az yer verilen basketbol gibi sporlar üzerine derinlemesine analizler ve alternatif perspektifler sunulmaktadır. Sports Digitale ve Sokrates Dergi gibi kanallar, futbol dışındaki spor dallarına da yer vererek spor gazeteciliğinin kapsamını genişletmektedir. Ayrıca, dijital platformların etkileşimli özellikleri, izleyicilerin spor söyleminin şekillenmesinde aktif rol üstlenmesine imkân tanımakta ve daha dinamik, kapsayıcı bir medya ortamı oluşturmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, Türkiye’de spor gazeteciliğinin dijital dönüşümü, süreklilik ve değişim arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi yansıtmaktadır. Dijital platformlar, erişimi artırmış ve içerik çeşitliliğini

zenginleştirmiştir; ancak mevcut yapısal ve etik sorunları da daha görünür hâle getirmiştir. Dijital spor gazeteciliğinin potansiyelinden tam anlamıyla yararlanmak için, teknolojik gelişmeleri benimserken mesleki standartlara ve eleştirel bakışa bağlı kalınan dengeli bir yaklaşım gereklidir. Dijitalleşmenin medya ortamını yeniden şekillendirmeye devam ettiği bu dönemde, spor gazeteciliğinin geleceği, bu zorluklar ve fırsatlar arasında doğru yönü bulabilmesine bağlı olacaktır. Böylece alan, hem güncelliğini hem de mesleki bütünlüğünü koruyarak gelişimini sürdürebilecektir.

Yazar Bilgileri

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