



Examination of Rumor Susceptibility in Professional and Amateur Active Athletes

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the susceptibility of professional and amateur athletes, competing in individual and team sports, to the influence of rumors. The research employed the relational survey model, which is one of the general survey designs. The sample of the study consisted of licensed athletes actively engaged in sports in Bolu and the surrounding provinces (Düzce, Sakarya, Kocaeli, Zonguldak, and Ankara). Among the random sampling methods, purposive sampling was utilized, and a total of 275 amateur and professional athletes were selected using the maximum variation sampling method. The data were collected through the "Rumor Influence in Sports Scale." In data analysis, descriptive statistics, t-test, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), and Pearson Correlation Analysis were applied. The findings revealed that rumors were more prevalent in the dimensions of motivation and intra-organizational dissemination, and that senior athletes experienced a higher level of intra-organizational circulation. It was also found that team athletes, despite being more negatively affected by rumors than individual athletes in terms of individual influence and intra-organizational dissemination, tend to use rumors as a means of communication. Furthermore, female professional athletes were found to be more positively influenced by rumors in the motivation dimension compared to female amateur athletes, whereas male amateur athletes were positively influenced in motivation but negatively affected in intra-organizational dissemination compared to their professional counterparts.

Keywords: Rumor, Amateur athlete, Professional athlete, Communication

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INTRODUCTION

Communication has continued to exist in every time period, in every environment and place, and people have used many types of communication until today (Alemdar and Taş, 2023). It is possible to encounter more than one type of communication in this process, which starts with the person himself/herself and needs other people and institutions to continue his/her existence in the society. Formal and informal communication are only two of these communication types. It is seen that the rules are more involved in formal communication, and the organizational culture and the harmonization process are in mutual interaction. However, informal communication, which is another phenomenon in communication, emerges as a form of communication with a high social impact that occurs spontaneously between people. For this reason, we cannot ignore formal and informal communication relations in the communication process, which can be defined as mutual sharing of feelings, thoughts and information. At the same time, we should not ignore the fact that the network of influence of the informal communication process can spread faster than the formal communication process (Mızrak et al., 2020).

Although informal communication provides individual and social functions in relationships, it can lead to positive or negative consequences at the organizational level. When evaluated in terms of negativities, informal relations can impair the power of the organization, cause chaos and turmoil, or lead to the spread of feelings of hostility among individuals within the organization (Çağlar et al., 2013). This is particularly the case with the widely used rumor and gossip mechanism. Kapferer (1992) stated that for rumors to emerge, conditions such as lack of information, insecurity, and contradiction must be present. Similarly, DiFonzo et al. (1994) noted that in situations where information is unreliable or insufficient, people tend to generate gossip and rumors based on their own beliefs. Although these two concepts are semantically different from each other, they are often considered together and confused in terms of semantics. While Turkish Language Association (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2024) defines rumor as hearsay that is circulating and uncertain. On the other hand, according to Snehapriya and Priya (2019), the difference between rumor and gossip is that rumor is a fact that is transmitted orally between people, of unproven information whose narrator is unknown, while gossip is a rumor that is similar but concerns a person's personal or private matters. It is noteworthy that the difference between these two concepts emerges as a form of informal communication that develops within wider social networks in terms of rumor (Atabek et al., 2021). Rumors serve a news-like function; however, they are distinguished by their dissemination outside the supervision of mass media or official authorities (Donovan, 2007). The common characteristics of rumor and gossip are as follows: (1) Both involve obtaining information from second- or third-hand sources, (2) both lack a clearly identifiable origin, and (3) both are developed as a means to relieve people from uncertainty (Michelson and Mouly, 2004).

However, the literature states that there is no harm in using the two concepts together in research. Taken together, Solmaz (2006) defines gossip and rumor as an informal form of

communication in which the employees whose needs cannot be answered in the hierarchical and formal order of the organizations are tried to be met through informal channels.

The first studies on rumours with a high probability of spreading throughout society were conducted on rumours that emerged between soldiers and the administration during the Second World War. According to findings in the literature, the main factors that cause the emergence of rumors among employees in organizations are: Lack of information of employees on the issues they need, negation or obstructions in the official communication channels, uncertainty on an issue concerning employees, fear and anxiety, sense of importance, organizational change and distrust in the organization (Han, 2019).

Although there are studies on the concept of organizational rumors in different types of organizations, it is seen that studies in the field of sports organizations have increased recently (Na et al., 2024; Sepahvand et al., 2016; Vettenniemi, 2010). These studies: Considering the role of sports organizations reflected in the media, rumors are encountered in many areas of sports. That's because it can be considered that many factors such as transfers specific to branches, sports media, sports marketing, sports economy, management-coach-athlete relationship, expectations of athletes, sexuality in sport, doping use and the like can create an environment suitable for the concept of rumor (Griffin, 1992; Tokish et al., 2004). It is possible to come across news related to rumors on social media platforms, which is a high-level use of technology especially in recent years (Kian et al., 2015). Thus, we can see that the element of informal communication is inevitable in every environment where people are present.

When we think of the branches in sports as team and individual sports, we can say that people come together to serve the purpose specific to that branch. In team sports, there are many people, such as a group of athletes, their families, trainers, management, masseurs, psychologists, equipment supervisors, and so on, and in individual sports, there are athletes and other people we refer to. We cannot ignore the necessity of these people being together. If the increase in the number of people serving the sport continues, whether it is individual or team sports, communication decreases and it may become difficult to coordinate people.

As in other organizations, when transferring athletes, choosing managers and management, choosing trainers or recruiting in-house personnel, the performance of the individuals is prioritized in sports organizations. No organization focuses first on the need for these people to use effective communication. When choosing an athlete, it is concerned whether the performance of that athlete is at the highest level, individually or in the team. Therefore, to achieve the branch-specific goal, there are two goals that lead to success. These are team performance and individual satisfaction. Although the gathering of individuals in sports and members of other organizations is similar in many ways, it should not be forgotten that members come together against their own will to a certain extent in sports (Ulukan, 2012). In such cases, no attention is paid to the effectiveness of interpersonal, person-group and person-organization communication. Thus, it may be inevitable to associate the concept of rumor, which is a type of informal communication, with sports.

In order for an athlete to be successful by showing high performance, desire, dedication and continuous work are necessary. Athletes who lack general sports motivation cannot have enough ambition to win, special sports motivation and regular work desire. When these are

missing, the athlete cannot show the desired performance. Athletes' communication with their coach, club and environment seriously affects their motivation in their own sports branch. Rumors in sports may have both positive and negative effects on athlete motivation. A review of the literature reveals that the topic of rumors in sports has been studied only to a limited extent, particularly in national and international literature. Therefore, this study is highly significant in that it contributes new information to the literature on rumors in sports.

For this reason, this study was carried out to determine the individual, organizational, communicative and motivational effects of rumor in professional and amateur athletes competing in individual and team sports.

In accordance with this aim, answers were sought to the following questions.

- To what extent are athletes affected by rumors?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between the undergraduate year and the sub-dimensions of rumors?
- Is there a meaningful difference between team and individual athletes and the sub-dimensions of rumors?
- Is there a significant difference between gender-status variables and rumor sub-dimensions?

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, which examines the level of being affected by rumors, the general screening approach and relational screening model, which are one of the quantitative research models, were used. In the general scanning model, in a universe consisting of many elements, the whole universe or a group of samples taken from it are scanned in order to make a general judgment about the universe. Relational screening model, on the other hand, is a screening approach that aims to determine the existence of co-variance between at least two or more variables (Karasar, 2011).

Universe and Sampling

The universe of this research consists of amateur or professional athletes who do sports under license in Bolu and its surrounding provinces (Düzce, Sakarya, Kocaeli, Zonguldak, Ankara). The sample group consisted of 178 individual (taekwondo, wrestling, gymnastics, kickboxing, tennis) athletes and 97 team (Football, handball, basketball, hockey, volleyball) athletes using the maximum diversity sampling method (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018) which is one of the non-random sampling methods. It consisted of a total of 275 athletes selected.

Data Collection Tool

Questionnaire technique was used as the data collection method in the study. For this purpose, in the first part of the scale used, 5 questions were used to collect data on the demographic

(gender, sports age, national athlete status, branch, status) characteristics of the participants, and in the second part, the "Rumor Impact Scale in Sports (SSES)" consisting of 25 questions and 5 sub-dimensions developed by Üzüm et al. (2020) was used. The scale was scored as "never=1, always=5" in a 5-point Likert type. As a result of the reliability analysis of the scale for this study, it was determined that "Individual Influence, $\alpha=0.88$, Communication, $\alpha=0.80$, Motivation, $\alpha=0.56$, Advertisement, $\alpha=0.44$ and Intra-Organizational Dispersion, $\alpha=0.70$ ". The total reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as $\alpha=0.89$. Since the reliability coefficient of the advertisement dimension is below $\alpha=0.50$, this dimension was not evaluated in this study because it has a low degree of reliability (Can, 2024:29). Permission to use the scale was obtained on April 12, 2022 from the researchers who developed the scale.

Ethics Approval

For this study, Ethics committee approval was obtained from Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University, Human Research Ethics Committee in Social Sciences (Protocol No: 2022/295), dated 27.06.2022 and numbered 2022/07.

Data Collection

In order to collect the data, the scale was applied face-to-face and via the internet between the dates -1 July 2022- 30 January 2023. The application made over the Internet was carried out through e-mail addresses and social media platforms. The face-to-face application process was carried out in the free time of the participants and with their voluntary participation.

Analysis of Data

In the analysis of the collected data, primarily by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values, it was determined that these values were between (+1 and -1) and that the given normal distribution showed (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018; Çokluk et al., 2016; Kalaycı, 2010). For this reason, descriptive statistics from parametric hypothesis tests, t-test to compare two-group variables, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) test to measure the effect of two independent variables, and Pearson Correlation analysis tests for variables with ungrouped continuous numerical data features were used in the analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Descriptive statistics - percentage and frequency distributions

Variables		f	%
Gender	Female	103	37.5
	Male	172	62.5
Status	Amateur	178	64.7
	Professional	97	35.3
Sports Branch	Individual	178	64.7
	Team	97	35.3
Total		275	100

When Table 1 is examined, 37.5% of the total 275 participants are female, 62.5% are male, 28.4% are national athletes, 35.3% are professional athletes and 64.7% are individual sportsmen.

Table 2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the sub-dimensions of the rumor scale

Sub Dimensions	n	\bar{x}	S	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Individual Influence	275	1.99	0.69	1.00	4.85	0.66	0.17
Communication	275	1.97	0.71	1.00	4.00	0.50	-0.45
Motivation	275	3.30	1.06	1.00	5.00	-0,38	-0.63
Intra-Organizational Diffusion	275	2.96	0.86	1.00	5.00	-0.39	-0.48
Total Score	275	2.29	0.57	1.00	3.86	-0.00	-0.30

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the average of motivation ($\bar{x}=3.30$) and intra-organizational diffusion sub-dimensions ($\bar{x}=2.96$), which are among the sub-dimensions of rumor, are higher than the other dimensions.

Table 3. The relationship between undergraduate year variable and rumor sub-dimensions

Correlation	n	Individual Influence	Communication	Motivation	Intra-Organisational Diffusion	
Undergraduate year	275	r	-0.051	-0.081	-0.072	.170**
		p	0.40	0.18	0.23	0.00

**p<0.01

When Table 3 is examined, a positive low-level ($r=0.170$, $p<0.01$) significant relationship was found between the undergraduate years of the athletes and the intra-organizational dissemination sub-dimension of the rumor scale.

Table 4. Comparison of the means of the sub-dimensions of rumor depending on the branch variable

Sub Dimensions	Branch	n	\bar{x}	Sd	t	p
Individual Influence	Team	97	2.23	0.70	4.34	0.00**
	Individual	178	1.86	0.65		
Communication	Team	97	2.14	0.73	2.98	0.00**
	Individual	178	1.87	0.69		
Motivation	Team	97	3.40	0.93	1.08	0.27
	Individual	178	3.25	1.12		
Intra-Organizational Diffusion	Team	97	3.26	0.74	4.40	0.00**
	Individual	178	2.80	0.87		

**p<0.01

When Table 4 is examined, statistically significant differences were found in the sub-dimensions of individual influence ($t_{(273)}=4.34$; $p<.01$), communication ($t_{(273)}=2.98$; $p<.01$) and intra-organizational diffusion ($t_{(273)}=4.40$; $p<.01$) from the branch variable of the participants and the rumor scale sub-dimensions. When the arithmetic averages in these three dimensions are examined, it is seen that the scores of team athletes are higher than individual athletes. No statistically significant difference was found in the t-test analysis comparisons of the participants' gender, national athletic status, and the league variables they competed in ($p>.05$).

Table 5. Comparison of the interaction effect of gender status variables on rumor sub-dimensions

Sub Dimensions	Gender	Status	\bar{x}	Sd	df	F	p	η^2	Pairwise Comparison
Individual Influence	Female	Amateur	1.96	0.08	1-271	0.57	0.45	0.002	
		Professional	1.95	0.12					
	Male	Amateur	2.07	0.06					
		Professional	1.92	0.08					
Communication	Female	Amateur	1.93	0.08	1-271	0.03	0.86	0.000	
		Professional	1.90	0.12					
	Male	Amateur	2.02	0.06					
		Professional	1.95	0.09					
Motivation	Female	Amateur	3.26	0.12	1-271	13.80	0.00**	0.048	FA<FP
		Professional	3.73	0.18					
	Male	Amateur	3.44	0.10					
		Professional	2.90	0.12					
Intra-Organizational Diffusion	Female	Amateur	2.90	0.10	1-271	5.99	0.01**	0.022	MA>MP
		Professional	3.10	0.14					
	Male	Amateur	3.09	0.08					
		Professional	2.74	0.10					

**p<0.01 FA: Female Amateur FP: Female Professional MA: Male Amateur MP: Male Professional

When Table 5 is examined, there is a statistically significant difference in the participants' gender*status variable interaction effect, motivation dimension (Wilks' $\Lambda=0.93$, $F(1-271)=13.80$; $p<.00$, $\eta^2=0.048$) and intra-organizational diffusion sub-dimension (Wilks' $\Lambda=0.93$, $F(1-271)=5.99$; $p<.01$, $\eta^2=0.022$).

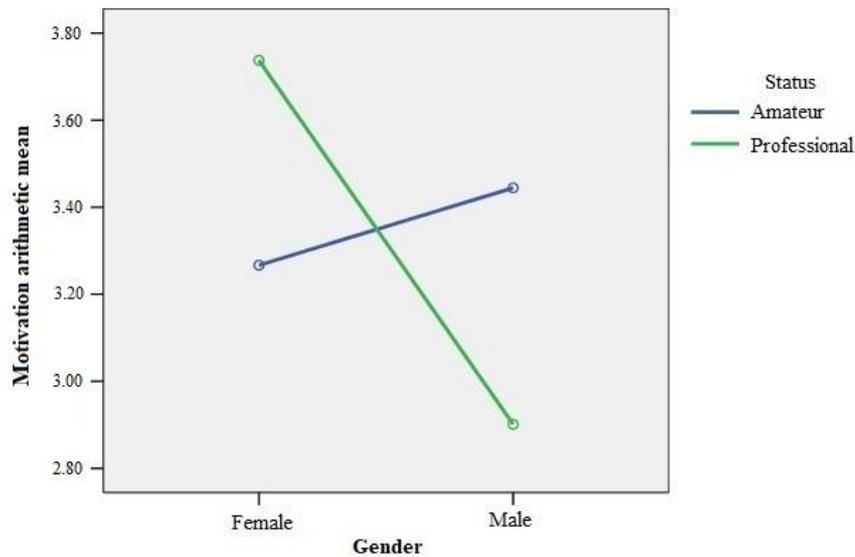


Figure 1. The effect of status*gender on motivation

When Figure 1 is examined, it can be seen that the scores of professional female athletes' being affected by rumor in terms of motivation, are higher than amateur female athletes, while male amateur athletes' being affected by rumor in terms of motivation is higher than male professional athletes (Table 5).

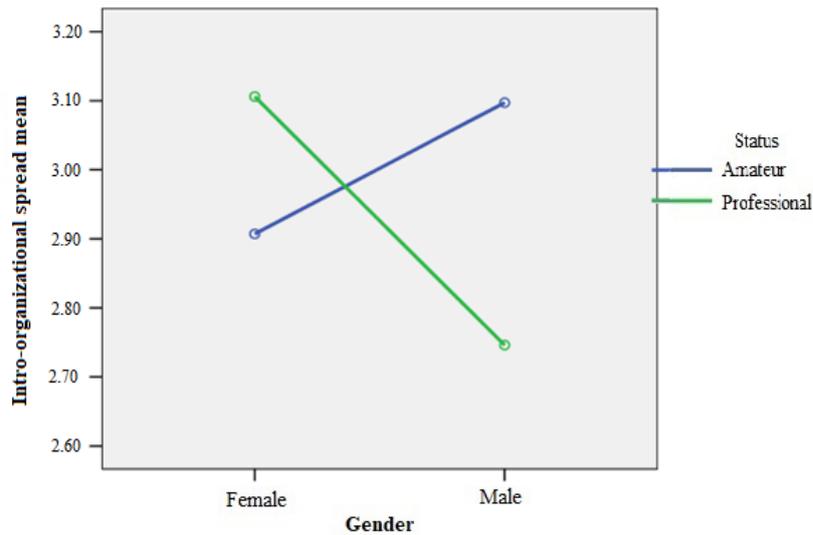


Figure 2. The effect of gender*status on intra-organization diffusion

When Figure 2 is examined, in the intra-organizational diffusion sub-dimension, it was determined that the average score of amateur male athletes was higher than that of professional male athletes and differed statistically significantly (Table 5).

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Considering the average of the sub-dimensions of the Rumor Impact Scale in Sports, which was used for the findings of this research conducted to determine this interaction between sports and rumor, it is seen that the 'motivation' dimension has a higher average than the other sub-dimensions as given in Table 2. The fact that the items related to the 'motivation' dimension used in the scale contain positive expressions indicating that this dimension provides positive motivation in terms of the concept of rumor in the research. In this sense, they state that if the rumors about professional or amateur athletes are positive, both their motivation and performance increase. In the literature, there are also articles in which it is concluded that the motivation of people who are exposed to rumors is high in studies on the subject. In their work Marett and Jossi (2009) discussed the rumor from the point of view of the people who spread the rumor and stated that the people who spread the rumor were motivated in different ways besides their internal and external motivations. Considered in terms of both situations, it shows that there is a positive motivational situation in terms of the relationship between the motivation of the people who are exposed to and spread the rumor and the rumor. However, there are also negative motivational situations that athletes can experience when exposed to negative rumors. In such cases, the influence of the media should not be ignored. It is seen that especially professional and mediatic athletes experience serious mobbing with the spread of rumors. In Garcia's 2017 research on Rafael Nadal's strategies to improve his image against rumors about his doping use, it was found that unfounded rumors could damage the relations between the athlete's stakeholders and the club, his reputation, social environment, harmony and motivation, therefore, he stated that the media should be more careful and transparent in this

regard. In addition, the author stated that Nadal's manager made corrective statements against these rumors in the name of transparency, which changed the media's perspective on the event in a positive way. Considering the relationship between the concept of rumor and motivation, it is a fact that when athletes are exposed to positive or negative rumors, their motivation is also affected positively and negatively.

When the Sports Rumor Impact Scale Questionnaire used in the research is examined from the point of view of the average athletes, it is seen that the meaning of the sub-dimension of 'intra-organizational diffusion' is higher than the other 'communication' and 'individual influence' dimensions. The average for this dimension, which states that rumors about referees, athletes, coaches and club managers are more common, is high. It can be thought that the reason for this may be that the clubs of elite athletes are heavily involved in the media, especially the club presidents and federation presidents, when viewed as a managerial dimension, are closely followed by the audience, the referees who will manage the sports competition are well-known or they have previously managed that competition. When evaluated in terms of amateur branch athletes, any personnel recruitment within the team and within the club, whether it is the athlete, coach or club president, can allow the spread of rumors. Especially when it comes to the transfer of a new athlete, if the athlete comes to a team, he/she may be subject to rumors by his/her teammates or by other athletes in the club if he/she comes to an individual sports club. Masrouf and Masrouf (2016) in their research on the spread of rumors in sports organizations stated that the rumors in sports organizations are caused by human resources problems and the different reactions of personnel, managers, trainers and athletes working in the organization to the same problems. In addition, they expressed the opinion that the issues of salary, bonuses, promotion, performance and assignment of the people in the sports organization are conducted with transparency. Karadal and Hekimoğlu (2020) emphasized that in organizations, rumors particularly arise during periods of salary increases, especially when formal communication is inadequate and significant changes are underway. Therefore, considering that sports organizations are also composed of athletes, trainers, managers and other personnel, the high average spread of the rumor within the organization in this study may have been caused by the changes in trainers and managers in the organization, athlete transfers, salary and media factors. The results of this research and other research are compatible with each other when considered in terms of intra-organizational rumor spread.

In the findings reached on the arithmetic averages of the sub-dimensions, the averages of the 'communication' and 'individual influence' dimensions were found to be low. Contrary to these research findings, Alemdar and Taş (2023), who examined the effect of rumors on the organizational commitment of amateur football players, found a low positive correlation between athletes' motivation and organizational commitment, but did not find a significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of rumors and organizational commitment. The reason for this situation is the averages containing the items; the professional and non-professional individual and team athletes participating in the research, being a substitute for the 'individual influence dimension', being excluded from the team, social relations, sportive image, financial income, alienation from the club, match performance, negative self-confidence, club reputation and family relations, are low. The low average of the items may be due to the fact that the participants were not exposed to rumors about their branch. The low

means of the 'communication' dimension may also be due to the fact that the participants tried to express that they were not actually a factor in the spread of rumors. In their study, Bektaş and Erdem (2015), it is stated that informal communication channels in organizations create many advantages and disadvantages for the organization. Informal communication channels should not be underestimated since informal communication (Rumor and Gossip) supports the formal communication process. The result of this research finds that the participant athletes who did not include negative statements for the communication dimension, did not prefer informal communication channels much and therefore, there was no rumor spread, contrasts with the other research finding.

When the relationship between the undergraduate year variable and the rumor sub-dimensions is examined in the research findings, it is an indication that the athletes whose years of doing sports increase, experience rumors more in the organization (Table 3). Therefore, it is possible to say that as the professional years of the athletes increase, the spread of rumors within the organization is also negatively affected. In fact, the undergraduate years of the athletes are directly proportional to the increase in the years they have performed. Professional athletes gain more control over the branch they are involved in over the years and gain a place in the club they are in. In this way, the athletes think that they know the club, their managers, their coaches, their teammates and other team athletes well. For this reason, it may be possible to spread rumors about the subjects that the athletes think they know well. In fact, their unawareness of certain uncertainties or the fact that they think that they have the right to spread rumors may lead to the formation of unproven statements in the organization they are in. According to his studies, Han (2019) suggests that the main factors that cause the emergence of rumors among employees in organizations are: Lack of information of employees on the issues they need, negation or obstructions in the official communication channels, uncertainty on an issue concerning employees, fear and anxiety, sense of importance, organizational change and distrust in the organization (Han, 2019). It supports the relationship between intra-organizational diffusion, undergraduate year and rumor in terms of uncertainty and lack of information within the organization.

There is a statistically significant difference between the branch variable of the participants and the sub-dimensions of the rumor scale, individual influence, communication and intra-organizational diffusion (Table 4). This result indicates that the use of rumors is more common among team sports players. It is also useful to consider factors about being professional and well-known or not. Because it is observed that the concept of rumor is frequently researched in the literature among well-known professional team athletes. Examining the research on football players, which is a popular branch, Caled and Silva (2018) stated that football players and their clubs created an increase in image and player market value thanks to rumors. Again, Herrero-Gutiérrez and Urchaga-Litago, (2021) point out that rumors are at the forefront of the football branch by expressing that half-truth information (rumor) is frequently shared in newspapers and media about the football branch in the Spanish press. Karasaridis (2014) also evaluates the rumor in well-known football players from a very different perspective, emphasizing that the transfer rumors of football players also have a great impact on the stock returns bought by the public. When compared to other research, In the research findings, the fact that the sub-dimension scores of individual influence, communication and intra-

organizational diffusion are high in professional participants who play team sports, are compatible with each other, perhaps only because of the popularity of the football branch and its being mediatic.

In the research about rumors involving individual and professional athletes, it is possible to see that professionalism and meditation are also effective in rumors. Studies on doping and rumors are frequently encountered, especially in Olympic individual athletes. The Guardian Newspaper, which was the first to announce the news that a Chinese swimmer achieved an important success in the 2012 London Olympic Games, made rumors about the athlete's performance with suspicion. With this false news, the necessity of including ethical statements about the use of rumors in sports journalism was mentioned and attention was drawn to the social responsibility of the media by using legal processes in this regard (Ramon, 2014). The club and manager of Nadal, who is also a professional and media tennis player, made a transparent statement to the media based on unfounded rumors, which changed the media's perspective on the issue (Garcia, 2017). In this context, it is possible to say that the rumors generally focus on popular and mediatic athletes, and the media is particularly influential in this. Because the media can often use the concept of rumor to be the first to announce the news, especially when they receive any transfer news, they often spread this news before it actualizes.

When the relationship between gender and status variables and Rumor Scale Sub-dimensions are examined, it is seen that professional female athletes are more affected by rumors in terms of motivation than amateur female athletes, while male amateur athletes are more affected than male professional athletes as given in Table 5. In the findings of this study, the fact that professional athletes are more prominent than amateur athletes and their athlete status and professional seniority (undergraduate years) are higher may have been factors in the higher score of being affected by rumors compared to female amateur athletes. However, the opposite situation in male athletes may be due to the uncertainties specific to the branches of male amateur athletes and the more sincere club-manager-coach relations. The literature indicates that professional and media-oriented male athletes are more exposed to rumor news. The fact that football, which is among the team sports, is the most watched and preferred branch in the world, brings male and professional athletes to the fore in this regard (Caled & Silva, 2018; Herrero-Gutiérrez & Urchaga-Litago, 2021; Karasaridis, 2014). The gender variable is associated with rumor in different ways in literature. There are studies that deal with the gender variable as spreading and using the rumor rather than being affected by the rumor. In her research titled "Gender Bias in Rumors Among Professionals", Wu (2019) stated that women included rumors are related to the possibility of deviating from professional issues such as physical appearance and family conditions rather than their organizational success as professionals. Michelson and Mouly (2000) expressed the opinion that women participate in rumors and gossip more than men in his research titled "Rumor and Gossip in Organizations".

When these research findings are examined in terms of gender variable, it is seen that the average score of amateur male athletes in the sub-dimension of intra-organizational diffusion is higher than that of professional male athletes. The reason for this situation is that male amateur athletes are more sincere with each other, they are treated more closely in club-coach and manager relations, and every rumor within the club can spread in a shorter time.

As a conclusion, the use of rumors within the organization and exposure to rumors appear as a very remarkable issue when considered both as an individual and team athlete from an amateur and professional point of view. The fact that sports have a mediatic aspect, individuals closely following the sports and the athletes their private lives, and the athletes' involvement in this rumor spreading, knowingly or unknowingly, shows how widely the rumor is used in sports. The findings of this research examined the athletes' exposure to and involvement in rumors in four sub-dimensions, and it was concluded that the concept of rumor is more common especially in the dimension of motivation and intra-organizational diffusion. When examined in terms of other variables, it is possible to say that as the professional years of the athletes increase, the rate of increase in intra-organizational rumor spread is low. Team athletes use rumor as a communication tool, although they are negatively affected by rumors in terms of individual influence and intra-organizational diffusion. According to the results of this research, it is determined that female professional athletes are positively affected by rumor in the dimension of motivation compared to female amateur athletes, while male amateur athletes are affected positively in the dimension of motivation and negatively affected in the dimension of intra-organizational diffusion compared to the professionals.

Since the research is carried out with athlete participants, it can be discussed from a 'manager-athlete-coach' point of view. It should be taken into consideration that subjects such as sportsman-media, athlete-club, athlete-manager, athlete-coach, where there are too many rumors, can be researched in the literature. In today's world where sports are very influential, the influence of the press should not be ignored, and it should be considered that the concept of rumor can be effective worldwide, especially in the life of professional athletes.

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Ethics Approval

Ethics Committee: Human Research Ethics Committee in Social Sciences

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