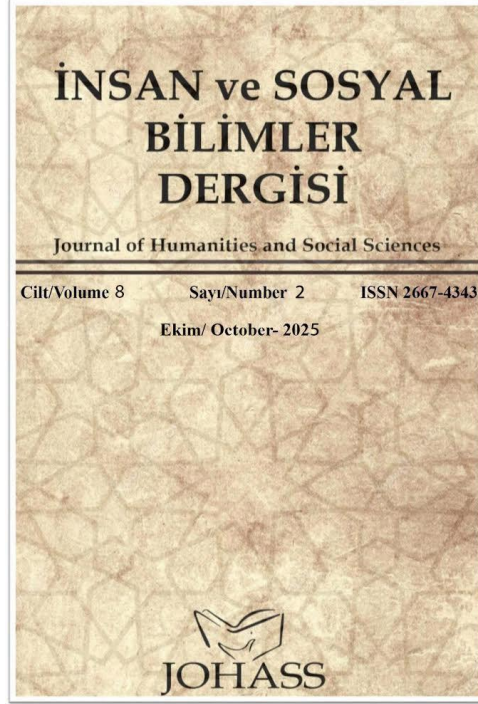


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The Digital Transformation of Local Media: A Case Study of Print and Online Journalism in Yozgat*

*This article is derived from the master's thesis titled "Digital Transformation of Local News: Comparison of Yozgat Printed Newspapers and Websites".

Yasin Nazım KAYHAN¹

*Yozgat Bozok University,
School of Graduate Studies,
Communication Sciences
Journalist*

ynkayhan@gmail.com

Orcid ID: 0009-0002-9402-9308

Nazmi Ekin VURAL²

*Yozgat Bozok University,
Faculty of Communication,
New Media and Communication
Asisst.Prof.Dr.*

ekin.vural@bozok.edu.tr

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-4198-0407

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**The Digital Transformation of Local Media: A Case Study of Print and Online
Journalism in Yozgat***

Yasin Nazım KAYHAN¹

Yozgat Bozok University, School of Graduate Studies, Communication Sciences

Nazmi Ekin VURAL²

Yozgat Bozok University, Faculty of Communication, New Media and Communication

Abstract

Research Article

This study examines the effects of the digitalization process on the local press. The research compares news production and content differences between the print and online editions of local newspapers, revealing the transformations brought about by new media technologies in local journalism. The study was conducted based on the case of Yozgat, a medium-sized city in Anatolia, and illustrates the trends in the digitalization process of local media. The data set consists of the print editions of six newspapers published in central Yozgat between February 1-15, 2024, and news items published on their websites. Both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods were employed; the category, source, scope, headline characteristics, and use of audiovisual elements in news items were systematically coded. According to the findings, digitalization increases news diversity and the use of audiovisual content, strengthening the local emphasis in headlines. However, the abundance of agency-sourced content limits editorial originality. Significant differences were found between print and digital newspapers in terms of the number of news items, scope, and content. Furthermore, it was observed that local newspapers are unable to take full advantage of technological opportunities and remain limited, particularly in terms of interaction and multimedia use. The research examines the digitalization process in local media through a current case study, contributing to the academic literature on the digital transformation of the Anatolian press and offering recommendations for practical application.

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Corresponding author:

¹Journalist

ynkayhan@gmail.com

Orcid: 0009-0002-9402-9308

Other author:

²Asist.Prof.Dr.

ekin.vural@bozok.edu.tr

Orcid: 0000-0003-4198-0407

Introduction

Digitalization is one of the most comprehensive dynamics that has transformed the media industry over the past thirty years. Advances in information and communication technologies have redefined the ways news is produced, distributed, and consumed, making journalism practices part of the digital ecosystem (Piepponen et al., 2022, p. 311; Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021, p. 234). Digitalization is not merely a technological innovation but a transformation with economic, cultural, and ethical dimensions. New media environments have changed the production and distribution structure of journalism with their speed, accessibility, interactivity, and multimedia capabilities. This transformation has blurred the traditional boundaries between news production and distribution, creating a multi-stakeholder market model consisting of publishers, readers, and advertisers (Martens et al., 2018, pp. 5-6). Digitalization has thus led to news evolving from being merely transmitted content into a form of information that circulates, is reproduced, and is interpreted on digital platforms (Topçu, 2023).

Local journalism is one of the areas most intensely affected by digital transformation. Compared to national media organizations, local press, with its limited economic and technical resources, has generally been able to adapt to this process only belatedly and in a limited manner (Akveran & Karaduman, 2023, p. 282). During the digitalization period, local newspapers in Türkiye have mostly transferred the production patterns of print journalism to the digital environment but have not been able to take full advantage of digital opportunities such as interaction, data analytics, and multimedia integration. However, local journalists are developing new skills while producing content on digital platforms, increasing news sharing via social media, and establishing more direct communication with online audiences (Delibaş, 2023, pp. 91-94).

Another important dimension of local press's digital transformation process is revenue models. In Türkiye, digital newsrooms are trying to develop mixed revenue strategies such as advertising, subscriptions, grants, and crowdfunding to maintain their independence (Demir, 2019). However, the issue of sustainability persists in this process; insufficient advertising revenues and low subscription rates make it difficult for local media organizations to maintain a stable presence in the digital sphere. Therefore, while digitalization provides advantages in terms of access to and production of local media, it also creates new risks in terms of economic sustainability.

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of digitalization on local press in a multidimensional manner through a case study of Yozgat province, analyzing news production, content diversity, emphasis on locality, multimedia integration, and AI-based news practices by comparing the print and online versions of local newspapers. This research is needed because, despite the rapid digital transformation in media, there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on small-scale local journalism in regions like Anatolia, where resource constraints exacerbate adaptation challenges, leading to potential "news deserts" and weakened democratic participation. Its importance lies in highlighting the structural, economic, and ethical transformations faced by local media, testing hypotheses such as digital editions containing more visuals and interactive elements, greater emphasis on locality and immediacy in online news, and differences in sourcing and thematic structures reflecting distinct production logics. The study's contributions include enriching the local media literature with comparative quantitative and qualitative data from Yozgat, informing digital transformation policies for sustainable journalism, and offering a new perspective on balancing technological opportunities with economic limitations to foster resilient local media ecosystems.

The findings of the research are expected to contribute to both the local media literature and digital transformation policies. The study aims to develop a new perspective on sustainable local journalism by identifying the opportunities and limitations encountered by local press in the digitalization process.

Literature Review

Digitalization and the Concept of New Media

Digitalization is a multidimensional process that completely transforms the forms of production, consumption, communication, and social interaction. Today, this concept has become directly linked to the restructuring of economic and cultural systems. According to Delibaş (2023, pp. 90-96), digitalization creates both opportunities and challenges in the media sector while offering advantages such as new advertising strategies, news formats, and current content production, it also causes job losses, economic contraction, and increased competition. Nadkarni and Prügl (2021, p. 234) state that digital transformation is not only a technological process but also an actor-based one; the structural and cultural alignment of organizations has become the key factor determining the success of technological innovations.

The most obvious effect of digitalization is seen in the relationship between media production and consumption. According to Robinson et al. (2019, p. 370), digital media is an area of transformation that redefines the processes of production, sharing, and consumption in journalism. This process has freed journalism from the constraints of time and space, placing the user in the position of both producer and consumer. In this respect, "new media" differs from traditional media; it is based on user participation, multidirectional communication, and network-based structures. Furthermore, digitalization has not only brought speed and accessibility to journalism; it has also diversified content formats. News is now presented in multiple formats, such as text, video, podcasts, graphics, and data visualization.

The concept of new media has gained importance with the development of technological infrastructures that enable two-way interaction in communication processes. The internet and social media have given rise to a "convergence culture" in the production and sharing of news, integrating different media tools into a single platform. This convergence has enabled individuals to be both news sources and news carriers, making citizen journalism one of the fundamental elements of this ecosystem. This cultural transformation has empowered individuals and paved the way for the spread of a "participatory culture." As a result, new media environments have transformed into multi-layered communication spaces where not only professionals, but also ordinary users actively contribute (Yılmaz & Özsoy, 2022, pp. 157-159).

The economic dimension of digital transformation also plays a decisive role in the media sector. A study conducted on the example of Elâzığ found that digitalization offers opportunities to reduce costs, expand access, and accelerate journalism for local media; however, financial sustainability has become difficult due to insufficient digital advertising revenues. Nevertheless, this transformation has made it easier for local media to reach young audiences and has made journalism more interactive (Yılar & Şen, 2022, pp. 209-211). Delibaş (2023, p. 93) emphasizes that digitalization has given rise to new business models in the transition from print journalism to digital platforms, but this process has been more painful for small-scale media organizations.

Digital transformation has also changed the ways in which media content is produced. At the heart of this process is the digitalization of content. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and cloud computing have accelerated the production, personalization, and distribution of news; media organizations have begun to offer personalized content by analyzing user preferences. While these developments have made the media experience more interactive, new presentation formats such as virtual reality, augmented

reality, and live streaming have enhanced the visual and auditory dimensions of news (Chen, 2024).

Digitalization has also eliminated time and space constraints in media production. News is no longer just a text produced by journalists; it is a holistic structure created by algorithms, user comments, visuals, and social media interactions. This transformation has paved the way for the development of new theoretical approaches in the field of communication, such as the "network society" (Castells, 2010) and "network-oriented value creation."

Local Media and the Fundamental Dimensions of Digital Transformation

Local media is one of the fundamental communication tools that shapes the social memory and public identity of its region. However, the digitalization process has redefined these traditional functions both economically and technologically. Gulyas & Hess (2023, p. 7) note that digital technologies have significantly altered production, distribution, and financing models in local media; the closure of newsrooms, the migration of printing facilities to digital platforms, and staff reductions are among the concrete outcomes of this transformation. Thus, local media have moved beyond being merely a print medium; it has evolved into a multi-layered structure at the center of online interaction and community communication.

The digital transformation of local media is not merely a technological adaptation but also a fundamental change in value creation models. Olsen's (2021, p. 812) "integrative value creation model" explains the new balance local newspapers have established between economic sustainability and social responsibility. Thanks to digitalization, local media have not only conveyed news more quickly and in a more up-to-date manner; it has also developed platforms where readers can comment, produce content, and strengthen their sense of community. Piepponen et al. (2022, p. 320) emphasize that this process has led to the "reshaping of value elements" in media companies. Thus, media organizations have transformed from being mere information providers into structures that create value together with users.

Another dimension of this transformation is the expansion of local media's reach. Delibaş (2023, pp. 93-96) notes that digital technologies enable local media organizations to reach not only regional but also global audiences. Today, local newspapers can reach readers in different parts of the world through social media, websites, and mobile applications. This situation has eliminated the time and space constraints of news, making local press competitive at the national level.

On the other hand, the growing influence of digital platforms threatens media diversity by monopolizing user attention in news circulation (Knuth et al., 2024, pp. 4-5). The shift of advertising revenues to these platforms also makes local media organizations economically vulnerable. As advertisers prefer digital media due to the low-cost access advantage, local newspapers' revenue losses are increasing.

Research conducted in Türkiye details the economic and professional challenges that digital transformation has created in local media. In their study on the example of Bolu, Yalınız & Özsoy (2022) state that digitalization accelerates news production, increases access, and provides the opportunity to publish on multiple platforms; however, technical infrastructure deficiencies, financial inadequacies, and digital literacy problems slow down the process. Erkal & Uçak (2018), in their study comparing print and digital local newspapers, found that digital newspapers have a faster and more interactive structure; however, they face serious challenges in terms of ethical oversight and revenue sustainability. These findings show that digital transformation is not merely a technical innovation but a multi-layered process that redefines professional practices and journalistic values.

The impact of technological innovations on human resources in the digital transformation of local journalism is particularly noteworthy. Waschková's (2023, pp. 90-96) study examining the European example indicates that many local newspapers struggle to adopt digital innovations and that some journalists show "silent resistance" to this change. This resistance mostly stems from lack of digital skills and economic insecurity. Akveran & Karaduman (2023) also emphasize that the concerns of local journalists in Türkiye regarding digital transformation are not only technical but also related to anxiety for losing their professional identity.

To ensure the sustainability of local media in the digital age, investment is needed in both technical infrastructure and human capital. This transformation has irreversibly changed the role of the journalist. Journalists are no longer just news writers; they are also content managers, data analysts, and visual designers. Uzunoğlu & Uyar (2021, p. 14) state that digital journalists have taken on the role of "multi-functional producers" in this new era and that technical expertise and creative skills must be developed together to sustain revenue models. These multiple roles transform journalism into a field of expertise that combines technical equipment and creative production.

The digital transformation process has also redefined the social responsibilities of local media. Çelikbaş & Özsoy (2022, p. 4) reveal that local journalists active on digital platforms

are turning to content that strengthens community communication in addition to news production; thus, local media have become not only a means of information transfer but also a space for social solidarity. Today, local media holds a central position in both public discourse and the construction of community memory in the digital environment.

Consequently, digital transformation provides local media with significant advantages in terms of speed, accessibility, and interaction; however, this process also gives rise to new problems in areas such as economic sustainability, professional standards, and technical competence. Therefore, the effects of digitalization on local media should be evaluated not only in the context of technological innovations but also in terms of its cultural, economic, and ethical dimensions.

Economic and Technological Transformation in Local Journalism

Local journalism is undergoing a significant transformation, both economically and technologically, with the digitalization process. This transformation has brought with it not only the use of new tools but also the redefinition of news production, distribution, and revenue models. Jenkins & Nielsen (2020, p. 474) state that local newspapers used to have a sustainable structure based on advertising revenue, subscriptions, and sales; however, with the digital age, these revenue sources have largely declined, and new strategies such as online advertising and digital subscriptions have come to the fore. This process threatens the economic sustainability of small-scale newspapers in particular, while also necessitating the development of innovative business models.

The study "The Three Cs of Digital Local Journalism," which addresses the digital transformation of local media, reveals that digital technologies have a two-way impact on the local media economy: while reducing production and distribution costs on the one hand, they weaken revenue models on the other (Gulyas & Hess, 2023, p. 7). The study defines this situation as a "double-edged crisis"; it emphasizes that despite the decline in printing costs, the shift to digital platforms makes it difficult to generate revenue from the value of news. As a result of these developments, many local newspapers have closed their printing facilities and centralized their newsrooms; some communities have become "news deserts," and democratic participation has weakened.

The research titled "The Digital Transition of Local Newspapers" conducted in Belarus and Russia reveals that local journalism in the digital age has redefined its communication strategies with technology. Hradziushka et al. (2024) note that social media, messaging apps,

and video platforms have become key distribution channels for local newspapers; in this new environment, newspapers are turning to personalized, visually rich, and interactive content to increase audience engagement. However, this trend also increases the risk of "tabloidization" as fast-consumed content replaces in-depth journalism. Similarly, Puijk et al. (2021) found that local newspapers in Norway developed new subscriber acquisition strategies by focusing on video journalism and local sports coverage during their transition to online platforms.

Research conducted in Türkiye also confirms the economic and technological dimensions of digital transformation. In a study conducted by Yalınz & Özsoy (2022) in Bolu, it was found that digitalization reduced printing and publishing costs; however, digital advertising revenues were insufficient, and technical infrastructure and human resource shortages were identified as one of the main obstacles to transformation. Delibaş (2023, pp. 90-92) states that digital transformation has brought speed and accessibility to local media, but the transition process is progressing slowly due to limited financial resources. These findings show that small-scale local newspapers struggle to implement digital investments and need institutional support mechanisms for sustainability.

The impact of technological innovations on professional practices is also increasing in the digitalization process of local journalism. Çavuş & Ede (2021, p. 26) emphasize that new tools such as drone journalism, data analysis, and crowdfunding are beginning to be used in news gathering processes; these applications both reduce news production costs and offer journalists alternative sources of income. However, ethical and legal regulations keep the use of these technologies within certain limits.

Digital transformation is also redefining the economic and social functions of local journalism. Heiselberg & Hopmann (2024, p. 2548) state that the economic value of local journalism should not be measured solely by revenue; it contributes directly to the regional economy by supporting local businesses, cultural events, and community life. Therefore, digital transformation has not only moved local journalism to digital platforms but has also made it a component of local development. Piepponen et al. (2022, pp. 319-320) emphasize that digital transformation in the media industry has changed not only production methods but also the "value proposition" of news; in the digital environment, the value of news is now measured not by the amount of information but by user experience, ease of access, and level of interaction. This situation is transforming journalism's function of "public value production" and increasing the pressure for economic efficiency.

At this point, it is necessary to go beyond theoretical discussions to understand the effects of digital transformation on local media. These transformation dynamics revealed in the literature point to a multi-layered phenomenon that includes both structural and cultural dimensions of local journalism. Therefore, empirically examining how digitalization is reflected in local journalism constitutes the main objective of this study. The research section presented below details the scope and application of a mixed content analysis model that aims to explain the digital transformation process of local newspapers through both quantitative and qualitative data.

Method

Model

This research is based on a mixed content analysis model that aims to explain the digitalization process of local newspapers using both quantitative and qualitative data. The study combines descriptive and interpretive approaches. Content analysis is a method used in communication research to systematically decipher the meanings contained in texts and classify them according to specific variables (Ültay, Akyurt, & Ültay, 2021, p. 190). In this regard, both numerical distributions and meaning structures were evaluated together in the study. Content analysis is a research method that allows the emergence of concepts, themes, and meaning relationships. The main objective of this method is to objectively determine the frequency and meaning of concepts in a given text (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001, p. 21). According to Neuman (2022, p. 589), content analysis enables the production of information in an objective, systematic, and measurable way in social research; therefore, it lies at the intersection of both quantitative and qualitative methods. For this reason, the content analysis method was preferred in the study to evaluate the explicit and implicit meanings of the news.

The research model was structured as a comparative descriptive analysis model. This model aims to evaluate the impact of new media technologies on journalism practices by comparing the print and digital versions of local newspapers published in Yozgat province. As Ültay et al. (2021, p. 192) state, examining data obtained from different sources together in content analysis increases the reliability of research results. In this context, data collected from both print and online newspapers were coded under the same criteria in the study. The main reason for choosing a mixed method is that digitalization creates not only technical but also cultural, economic, and content-related transformations in local journalism. Neuman (2022, p.

597) emphasizes that in such cases, numerical data alone is not sufficient, and researchers must also focus on the meaning dimension. Therefore, the research model aims to reveal quantitative trends and interpret qualitative differences.

Within this model, news texts were identified as the data source. The coding process was carried out based on sub-variables such as the category, subject, source, emphasis on locality, and use of photographs and videos in the news. The data obtained aimed to reveal, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the transformation in the production format of news and the effects of digitalization on news values. Data obtained from local press organizations during the research process was used solely for scientific purposes, and the names of individuals and institutions in the news content were excluded from the analysis in accordance with the principle of confidentiality. Ethical rules were adhered to during the coding and evaluation stages, with objectivity and data security as the basis. The scope of the study is limited to the news content of six local newspapers published in Yozgat province between February 1-15, 2024. Although this limits the direct generalization of the findings to local media outlets published in different periods and regions, the selected sample is considered representative of the digital transformation of the Anatolian press, and the results are expected to shed light on local media environments with similar structural characteristics. In conclusion, this study aimed to produce both measurable data sets and meaning-oriented inferences by applying a mixed content analysis model. This approach allows for a comprehensive assessment of the digitalization process of local media in the case of Yozgat.

Sample and Population

The population of this research consists of local newspapers published in the province of Yozgat. The sample of the research consists of both the printed and online versions of six local newspapers published between February 1-15, 2024. Yozgat was selected because it is a typical example representing the digitalization process of the Anatolian press in terms of the number of newspapers published in the provincial center. The city stands out for its newspapers that have been published regularly for many years, as seen in the history of the press, and which have also been undergoing a transition to digital platforms in recent years. Location, time, medium, and subject criteria were taken into account when determining the population (Koçak & Arun, 2006, p. 24). Yozgat province was selected as the "place" criterion; the period between February 1-15, 2024, was determined as the "time" criterion; the "type" criterion was defined as printed newspapers and websites; and the "scope" criterion was limited to local, national,

and global news content. This approach ensures both the spatial and temporal consistency of the research data.

In terms of population types, the study distinguished between the target population and the accessible population, and the accessible population was taken as the basis (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2020, p. 82). While the target population included all local newspapers operating in Yozgat, the accessible population was limited to those newspapers that were published regularly and were accessible on digital platforms. Purposive sampling was adopted for sample selection. Purposive sampling is a technique based on the conscious selection of units that will provide information appropriate to the purpose of the research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020, p. 92). Within this framework, six newspapers published regularly in central Yozgat and with accessible digital archives were included in the sample: İleri, Yeni Ufuk, Yozgat Çamlık, Yozgat Haber, Yozgat Hakimiyet, and Yozgat Merhaba. These newspapers were selected because they are local media outlets that have been publishing at least six days a week for a long time and also maintain regularly updated digital content production processes on their own websites. With these characteristics, the sample represents a typical example of the digital transformation of local press in Yozgat.

During the data collection process, printed copies of the newspapers were obtained daily, and digital content from the same period was downloaded and indexed from the relevant newspapers' websites via archives or site maps. When comparing content between print and digital media, examples where the same news item existed in both print and digital versions were specifically marked. This method increased data consistency and enabled a comparative analysis of the formal differences and similarities in news content. During the research process, the digital content of local newspapers was evaluated solely for scientific purposes, and care was taken to protect the privacy of individuals and institutions mentioned in the news content. Throughout the study, the principles of objectivity, data security, and accuracy were observed in accordance with ethical principles.

In this context, the sample enabled the evaluation of the digitalization process of local newspapers in Yozgat province in terms of its temporal, spatial, and content dimensions. However, the research is limited to the specified time frame and region. Therefore, the findings cannot be directly generalized to local media organizations in different provinces. Nevertheless, the selected sample is representative in terms of reflecting the trends in the digitalization process of the Anatolian press. Thus, the study has evaluated the transformation of local media from a

holistic perspective by revealing not only the transformation of a single newspaper but also the levels of digitalization of different institutions in the same region in a comparative manner.

Data Collection Tools

A content analysis coding form was used as the data collection tool in the research. This form was developed in line with the purpose of the research and ensured the systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data from printed and digital news content. In developing the coding form, in line with the standards recommended in the literature (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001, p. 22; Neuman, 2022, p. 597), the aim was to transform the specific characteristics of each news unit into observable categories.

In the design of the form, two main sections were created to measure both the formal and content-related characteristics of news content. Formal categories included the type of news, length, use of visuals, page position (in print newspapers), and multimedia elements (in digital news). The content categories coded the subject of the news, the type of source (reporter, agency, news center, institutional bulletin), the level of locality, the language of the headline, ethical elements, and the form of representation in the news. This structure made it possible to evaluate not only the formal structure of the news but also its semantic and discursive dimensions.

When preparing the coding form, the principles of objectivity and systematicity in content analysis were taken as a basis; criteria were clearly defined for each category. After the first draft of the form was completed, a pre-test was conducted to evaluate the functionality of the tool. During this pre-test process, 100 randomly selected print news articles and 100 digital news articles were reviewed by two independent coders; the clarity of the categories, consistency in the classification of news articles, and points open to interpretation were evaluated. Intercoder reliability was ensured through pilot testing and consistent category definitions.

The Miles & Huberman (1994) formula was used to determine inter-coder agreement, and the reliability ratio calculated as $(\text{Agreement}) / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100$ was found to be above 85%. This ratio indicates that the coding form is reliable and provides a suitable measurement tool for use in the research.

Based on the pre-test results, the necessary adjustments were made to create the final version of the form, which was then used in the actual data collection process. In this form, the

coding form served as a reliable and repeatable tool that enabled the systematic collection of data on the news production and presentation processes related to digitalization in local press.

Collection of Data and Analysis

In the study, data were obtained from the print editions and websites of newspapers within the defined sample. Print newspapers were obtained daily during the research period, while digital content was collected from the newspapers' official websites and site maps on the same dates. Online content was archived to prevent data loss and indexed along with the date of publication, category, headline, author, and source information. Thus, each news item was recorded in a way that could be matched both historically and categorically.

The coding form used to collect the data ensured that each news item was systematically analyzed under specific categories. During the coding process, care was taken to ensure that news items in print and digital media were comparable; in cases where the same news item existed in both print and digital versions, the differences were noted separately. A total of 2,142 print news items and 3,000 digital news items were examined within the scope of the research. In cases where the same content appeared in both media, repeated news items were removed to create a comprehensive data set. This method allowed for the comparative observation of the formal and content-related differences that digitalization has brought to journalism practices.

The collected data underwent a two-stage analysis process: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. In the quantitative analysis, the types, sources, page placements, and visual usage of news items were examined; frequency and percentage calculations were performed, and the results were supported by tables and graphs. The quantitative analysis process was carried out by processing the data obtained from the coding form into a Microsoft Excel-based table and then calculating the frequency and percentage distributions in the SPSS program. Thus, the quantitative differences in the production and presentation formats of news in print and digital media were revealed.

In qualitative analysis, the language used in news headlines, the context of the news, local emphasis, and ethical discourses were evaluated. As stated by Tavşancıl and Aslan (2001, p. 23), the purpose of qualitative content analysis is to reveal the semantic relationships between themes and conceptual patterns in the text. Accordingly, news texts were examined based on units of meaning, and themes and sub-themes were created. The data obtained from the qualitative analysis were evaluated within the framework of categories clustered around the axes of "digital journalism," "locality," and "interaction." These categories formed the basic

analytical framework for interpreting the effects of digitalization on content production, forms of representation, and news values. In this context, the study also seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. Which news categories are more intensely represented in local newspapers, and what distribution is observed in the use of news elements in these categories?
2. Which news categories are most frequently covered in print newspapers and websites? What are the similarities and differences between the print editions of newspapers and their websites?
3. What differences exist in the production and distribution of news based on reporters, agencies, and other sources in print and digital media?
4. What similarities and differences emerge between the print editions and digital versions of local newspapers in terms of news coverage, content structure, and presentation formats?

To ensure the reliability of the analyses, classifications made by two independent coders were compared; the inter-coder agreement rate calculated using the Miles & Huberman (1994) formula was found to be above 90%. This rate indicates a high level of consistency in the data analysis process.

The data obtained during the research process were evaluated solely for scientific purposes, the confidentiality of individuals and institutions was maintained, and ethical principles were adhered to. Data security was ensured, researchers remained objective during the interpretation process, and the integrity of the data was preserved.

As a result, this comprehensive structure regarding data collection and analysis revealed the digital transformation of local press at both quantitative and qualitative levels; thus, the effects of digitalization on journalism practices were evaluated from a comparative perspective in terms of technical, content, and representation dimensions.

Findings

This section presents a multidimensional and systematic analysis of the dataset that forms the basis of the research. The data collected within the scope of the research was evaluated separately according to each research question, and the results obtained were reported in detail. The analysis process did not focus solely on quantitative findings; data obtained from

qualitative content analysis was also taken into account comprehensively. Thus, going beyond the statistical trends presented by the data on the surface, in-depth conclusions were drawn about the structural and editorial dynamics of news production processes. The findings of the research were examined comparatively in two main media outlets: printed newspapers and news published on websites. In this context, fundamental variables such as the geographical scope of the news (local, national, regional, global), the news source (reporter, news center, agency, institutional bulletin, etc.), the categories (agenda, politics, health, sports, culture-arts, etc.), and the use of news elements (photographs and videos), as well as local emphasis in headlines, were analyzed with the support of an applied data set.

In evaluating the findings presented, statistical data obtained from tables, themes carried by news content from a qualitative perspective, and local media practices were also considered. In this way, not only numerical distributions but also topics such as current trends in the local media structure, the reflection of digitalization on editorial processes, and social representation were analyzed in depth.

The Impact of Digitalization on News Production Formats

The first research question, "Which news categories are more densely represented in local newspapers and what is the distribution of news item usage in these categories?", was analyzed to determine which categories contained more news items (photos and videos) in the news published in six local print newspapers published in Yozgat city center and on their websites between February 1, 2024, and February 15, 2024. The main objective of the research question is to examine, on a comparative basis, the reflection of editorial and technological transformations on content production by category and to reveal how digitalization and content diversity lead to differentiation in the presentation of news in local media. Therefore, the concept of news elements includes photographs used in news articles and videos for websites. The distribution across categories was examined, and a systematic comparison was made of the types of news supported by visual and audio content in print and digital newspapers. The data obtained were evaluated numerically using content analysis methods, and the findings are summarized in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Table 1

Ratio of News Items by Category in Printed Newspapers

Category	Number of News Items	Total Photos	Average Number of Photos
Other	117	236	2.02
Economy	86	142	1.65
Education	81	163	2.01
Agenda	698	1418	2.03
Column	163	175	1.07
Culture-Art-Magazine	98	197	2.01
Crime-Courts	148	242	1.64
Health-Life-Women	143	259	1.81
Politics	363	828	2.28
Sports	179	360	2.01
Agriculture-Livestock	54	104	1.93
Technology	12	21	1.75
Total	2142	4145	1.94

(The average photo column indicates the ratio of the number of photos to the total number of news items in the category.)

The use of photos in print newspapers is most prominent in politics, current events, other, and education categories. Politics category has the highest average number of photos per news item, at 2.28. This indicates that visuals are preferred in political news as both an informative and attention-grabbing element. Averages are also very close to 2 in the agenda and other categories. This ratio suggests that visual elements are an integral part of editorial strategies for covering current and social issues. The average number of photos in the column category is limited to 1.07. It is observed that the text-heavy content structure of columns naturally reduces the use of photos. Photo usage is lower in categories such as technology, economy, and agriculture-livestock. In these categories, the technical and expertise-focused nature of the content reduces the need for visuals. Overall, the average number of photos per news item in print newspapers is 1.94, and this ratio indicates that a relatively cautious approach to visual usage has been adopted due to technical and economic limitations. In conclusion, there is a meaningful and consistent variation in photo usage depending on the category, and visual support varies according to content type and social impact.

Table 2

Ratio of News Items by Category on Websites

Category	Number of News Items	Total Photos	Average Photos	Total Videos	Average News Item
Other	101	252	2.50	0	2.50
Economy	161	505	3.14	0	3.14
Education	195	593	3.04	0	3.04
Agenda	1327	4197	3.16	57	3.21
Column	121	121	1.00	0	1.00
Culture-Arts-Magazine	44	180	4.09	0	4.09
Crime-Courts	177	488	2.76	10	2.81
Health-Life-Women	368	1078	2.93	1	2.93
Politics	313	963	3.08	19	3.14
Sports	168	449	2.67	3	2.69
Agriculture-Livestock	3	11	3.67	0	3.67
Technology	22	69	3.14	0	3.14
Total	3000	8906	2.97	90	3.00

(The average columns show the ratio of the number of photos/news items to the total number of news items in the category.)

During the analysis period, newspapers' websites used the most news and visual content in the current events category, with 1,327 news items, 4,197 photos, and 57 videos. The health-lifestyle-women, politics, education, and police-justice categories also had high visual usage. The culture-arts-magazine category had the highest average photo ratio at 4.09. The average news item (photo and video) value is generally 3. Video usage was limited to a total of 90 and was mainly concentrated in the news and politics categories. This shows that photo usage on websites is very high, while video usage is still limited. The results clearly show that news presentation in the digital environment is moving towards more visual and auditory elements than traditional media.

Table 3

Comparison of News Elements by Category in Print and Online Newspapers

News Category	Print: Number of News Items	Print: Total Photos	Printed: Average Photos	Online: Number of News Articles	Online: Total Photos	Internet: Average Photos	Internet: Number of Videos	Internet: Video Ratio (%)
Other	117	236	2.02	101	252	2.50	0	0.0
Economy	86	142	1.65	161	505	3.14	0	0.0
Education	81	163	2.01	195	593	3.04	0	0.0

Agenda	698	1418	2.03	1327	4197	3.16	57	4.3
Column	163	175	1.07	121	121	1.00	0	0.0
Culture-Arts-Magazine	98	197	2.01	44	180	4.09	0	0
Crime-Courts	148	242	1.64	177	488	2.76	10	5.6
Health-Life-Women	143	259	1.81	368	1078	2.93	1	0.3
Politics	363	828	2.28	313	963	3.08	19	6.1
Sports	179	360	2.01	168	449	2.67	3	1.8
Agriculture-Livestock	54	104	1.93	3	11	3.67	0	0.0
Technology	12	21	1.75	22	69	3.14	0	0.0
Total	2142	4145	1.94	3000	8906	2.97	90	3.0

(The average columns show the ratio of the number of photos/news items to the total number of news items in the category.)

Comparative findings show that both average and total photo usage in digital media is significantly higher than in print across all categories. Photo usage in digital media is particularly high in the culture-arts-magazine, agenda, economy, and politics categories. Although the news, politics, and police-court categories stand out in terms of video usage, the number of videos remains quite limited. In print media, photo usage is more balanced and generally limited. Photo averages are particularly low in categories such as columns, technology, and economy. Overall, digital news shows a significant increase in multimedia usage compared to print, with an average of 2.97 photos per news item and a video ratio of 3.0%. These findings clearly demonstrate the role of digitalization in increasing and diversifying the use of news elements in media content, while showing that video usage remains symbolic in most categories and that photos are the main visual carrier of news.

The second research question, *"Which news categories are most frequently covered in print newspapers and websites? What are the similarities and differences between the print editions of newspapers and their websites?"*, aims to comparatively analyze the distribution of news categories covered in local print newspapers published in the Yozgat provincial center and on the websites of the same newspapers. It involves a comparative analysis of the numerical distribution and ratio of all news published in both printed newspapers and websites between February 1, 2024, and February 15, 2024, based on the category variable. This method will reveal the extent to which categorical priorities overlap or diverge between print and digital media in terms of which categories have more intensive content production. The original contribution of the research is to analyze how the categorical structure of local media production

has evolved with digitalization and how new balances have been formed in the flow of social information. In this research question, the news published in the print and digital versions of the same newspaper were compared categorically, and the findings are presented in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.

Table 4

Distribution of News Categories in Print Newspapers

Category	Number of News Articles	Percentage (%)
Other	117	5.46
Economy	86	4.01
Education	81	3.78
Agenda	698	32.59
Column	163	7.61
Culture-Art-Magazine	98	4.58
Crime-Courts	148	6.91
Health-Life-Women	143	6.68
Politics	363	16.94
Sports	179	8.36
Agriculture-Livestock	54	2.52
Technology	12	0.56
Total	2142	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of news items in the category to the total number of news items.)

The most frequently covered news category in print newspapers was agenda, at 32.59%. This category alone accounted for nearly one-third of all news items, placing it at the center of editorial priority. Politics category ranked second at 16.94%, demonstrating the strategic importance of political content in local press in terms of social agenda and debate. Sports news (8.36%) and columns (7.61%) are other prominent categories. The shares of police-court, health-lifestyle-women, and other categories ranged between 5% and 7%. These ratios indicate the breadth of social and daily events in the editorial spectrum. News production in categories such as economy, education, and culture-arts-magazine has a limited weight in the total news coverage on. The proportion of specialized and sectoral news such as technology and

agriculture-livestock is quite low. The findings clearly show that news production in print newspapers mostly focuses on social, political, and current events, with more limited content production in technical, economic, and cultural areas.

Table 5

Distribution of News Categories on Websites

Category	Number of News Articles	Percentage
Other	101	3.37
Economy	161	5.37
Education	195	6.50
Agenda	1327	44.23
Column	121	4.03
Culture-Art-Magazine	44	1.47
Crime-Courts	177	5.90
Health-Life-Women	368	12.27
Politics	313	10.43
Sports	168	5.60
Agriculture-Livestock	3	0.10
Technology	22	0.73
Total	3000	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of news items in the category to the total number of news items.)

The category with the highest number of news items on websites is the agenda category, with 44.23%. The health-lifestyle-women category ranks second with 12.27% and has a significantly higher editorial priority in the digital environment. Politics category ranks third with 10.43%. This ratio shows that political content, which is prominent in print newspapers, takes a back seat in digital media. Areas such as education, economy, police-judiciary, and sports are distributed in the 5-7% range. News production in these areas maintains its diversity in digital media as well. The share of columns and other categories is quite limited. The culture-arts-magazine, agriculture-livestock, and technology categories are covered at even lower rates in the digital sphere. In general, the majority of news on websites is devoted to current social developments and, in particular, content focused on health, lifestyle, women, and agenda. These

findings reveal that the digitalization process has reshaped the distribution of topics in news production, with categories centered on current events and social life coming to the fore.

Table 6

Comparison of News Categories in Print and Online Newspapers

Category	Print Number of News Articles	Print Percentage	Internet Number of News	Internet Percentage (%)
Other	117	5.46	101	3.37
Economy	86	4.01	161	5.37
Education	81	3.78	195	6.50
Agenda	698	32.59	1327	44.23
Column	163	7.61	121	4.03
Culture-Art-Magazine	98	4.58	44	1.47
Crime-Courts	148	6.91	177	5.90
Health-Life-Women	143	6.68	368	12.27
Politics	363	16.94	313	10.43
Sports	179	8.36	168	5.60
Agriculture-Livestock	54	2.52	3	0.10
Technology	12	0.56	22	0.73
Total	2142	100	3000	100

(The print/online ratio columns show the ratio of news items in the category to the total number of news items.)

The comparative table shows that there are clear similarities and striking differences in the distribution of news categories in both print and online media. Agenda category has by far the highest rate in both media, with a rate of 32.59% in print and 44.23% online. This increase shows that digitalization further reinforced interest in the social agenda and current events. The health, life and women category show a significant increase at 12.27% on the internet, while this rate remains at 6.68% in print newspapers. Social life and health categories are at the forefront in digital journalism. Politics category was very strong in print at 16.94%, but this rate fell to 10.43% online. This rate shows that political news is proportionally less prominent in digital media. There are also noticeable decreases in digital media compared to print in the column, sports, culture-arts-magazine, and other categories. It has been determined that cultural and artistic content is less represented on digital platforms, while news related to technical and

specialized fields remains limited in both media. There is a noticeable increase in the economy and education categories on websites. In general, with digitalization, it has been observed that socially topical and lifestyle-focused categories have gained prominence in the distribution of news categories, while traditional categories have relatively declined.

Differences Between Print and Digital Versions and Formal Differences

The third research question, *"What types of differences exist in the production and distribution of news based on reporters, agencies, and other sources in print and digital media?"*, aims to examine the distribution of news in both print and online editions of local newspapers published in the Yozgat city center according to their production sources (reporter, agency, news center, institutional bulletin, unspecified). Detailed presentation of the distribution by source is important to understand which actors play a more decisive role in the content production processes of local media and the impact of digitalization on editorial work division. The findings aim to explain the editorial, institutional, and practical preferences of local newspapers regarding content diversity, level of originality, and source diversity. The findings are presented in detail in Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9.

Table 7

Distribution of News by Source in Print Newspapers

Source	Number of News Articles	Percentage (%)
Agency	374	17.46
Unspecified	54	2.52
News Center	1098	51.26
Institutional Bulletin	17	0.80
Reporter	599	27.96
Total	2141	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of the news source to the total number of news items.)

In the distribution of news sources in print newspapers, the highest ratio is 51.26% for news originating from news centers. This finding indicates that editorial in-house production and centralized content creation are dominant trends. Reporter-sourced news ranks second with 27.96%. This reveals a certain degree of investment in original field reporting and local reporter networks. The ratio of agency news is 17.46%, indicating a limited but not negligible level of dependence on national agencies. The proportion of content sourced from institutional bulletins

is quite low at 0.80%. This proportion indicates that institutional bulletins are rarely consulted. Unspecified sources account for only 2.52% of the total. This data points to editorial sensitivity towards clearly indicating the source of the news. Although source diversity is generally observed in print newspapers, news centers and reporters dominate content production. Contributions from agencies and institutional bulletins remain in the background. This distribution of news sources provides important indicators for understanding the editorial content originality and social responsibility orientation of local press.

Table 8

Distribution of News by Source on Websites

Source	Number of News Items	Percentage (%)
Agency	545	18.17
Not specified	64	2.13
News Center	1425	47.50
Institutional Bulletin	3	0.10
Reporter	963	32.10
Total	3000	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of the news source to the total number of news items.)

News agency sources account for the highest percentage of news sources on websites, at 47.50%. This percentage reveals that content production in the digital environment is significantly centralized and that in-house editorial production is a widespread practice. Reporter-sourced news ranks second with 32.10%. This ratio shows that original field reporting and individual reporter contributions have strengthened on websites. The ratio of agency news is 18.17%, indicating that dependence on national agencies continues in online journalism, but that reporters and news centers are more dominant. Content sourced from institutional bulletins constitutes only 0.10% of the total. This shows that official and institutional communication bulletins are hardly ever preferred in digital news production. The percentage of news items with an unattributed source is limited to 2.13%. This percentage indicates editorial sensitivity regarding the attribution of news sources in the digital environment as well. In general, centralized editorial content and reporter contributions stand out on websites, while agency news plays a complementary role. This distribution shows that digitalization supports both content originality and editorial autonomy in news production processes.

Table 9

Comparison of News Items by Source in Print and Online

Source	Print Number of News Items	Print Percentage (%)	Internet Number of News (%)	Internet Percentage (%)
Agency	374	17.46	545	18.17
Not specified	54	2.52	64	2.13
News Center	1098	51.26	1425	47.50
Institutional Bulletin	17	0.80	3	0.10
Reporter	599	27.96	963	32.10
Total	2142	100	3000	100

(The printed/online ratio columns show the ratio of the news source to the total number of news items.)

The comparative table shows both similarities and significant differences in the distribution of news sources in print newspapers and online sites. In both media, the highest news source ratio belongs to the news center. The ratios of 51.26% in print newspapers and 47.50% in online sites show that editorial centralization is strong in both traditional and digital environments. The percentage of reporter-sourced news on websites is 32.10%, which is significantly higher than the 27.96% rate in print newspapers. This increase indicates the strengthening of original field reporting and individual reporter contributions in the digital medium. The percentage of agency news in print newspapers is 17.46%, while it is 18.17% on websites. The percentage of agency news is quite similar in both media. This shows that dependence on news agencies has not decreased with the digitalization of the media, but rather that they have taken on a complementary role. The proportions of institutional bulletins and unattributed news are extremely low in both media. These proportions indicate that official and anonymous content has a limited place editorially and that care is taken to transparently indicate the news source. The overall picture shows that digitalization increases reporter contribution and editorial diversity while maintaining the importance of news centers. The results reveal that source usage strategies in local media production differ according to media type and that digitalization has a significant impact on editorial practices.

Tuğrul (2020) states that most of the news shared in the printed and online editions of newspapers published in central Yozgat do not cite their sources. He found that agency news is almost never included or identified as such, and that almost all the news published in the printed

editions and on the websites of these newspapers is anonymous. New findings show that sources are cited in a high percentage of the news published in the print editions and websites of local newspapers (Table 6.6). According to the findings, sources were missing in 54 of 2,142 print items and in 64 of 3,000 digital ones. The usage rate of agency-sourced news was found to be 17.46% in print newspapers and 17.17% on websites. The findings show that the habit of citing sources in news articles published in Yozgat has changed, with the source of the news being cited in 95.32% of print and online news articles, and the use of agency news has increased significantly.

The fourth research question, "*What similarities and differences emerge between the print editions and digital versions of local newspapers in terms of news coverage, content structure, and presentation formats?*", aims to analyze what types of similarities and differences exist in terms of geographical coverage in the news published in both print and online media by local newspapers published in the center of Yozgat province. Conceptually, news coverage is a fundamental variable that determines the geographical area targeted by a news story and the boundaries of its social impact. It focuses on the systematic and comparative examination of findings based on the coverage variable obtained from the original data sets of print newspapers and websites. This analysis will evaluate the distribution of news at the local (Yozgat), local (other), national, and global levels, revealing the extent to which local journalism remains local or opens up to globalization and nationalization in traditional and digital media. The importance of the research question lies in the comparative analysis of the transformation in the geographic content policies of local media organizations with the emergence of digitalization, specifically in the province of Yozgat. The results will reveal both the dynamics of the transfer of social information flow from the local to the national and global levels and the areas on which editorial content focuses on local media production. In this question, the scope of news published in the print and digital versions of the same newspaper was compared, and the numerical data obtained are presented in Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12.

Table 10

Coverage Ratio of News in Print Newspapers

Coverage	Number of News Articles	Ratio (%)
Global	2	0.09

National	589	27.50
Local (Other)	185	8.64
Local (Yozgat)	1366	63.77
Total	2142	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of news coverage to total news.)

The geographical distribution of news in print newspapers clearly reveals the extent to which the principle of locality, one of the fundamental functions of local journalism, is preserved and how it is balanced with national/global content. The highest ratio, 63.77%, belongs to the local coverage of Yozgat, indicating that the editorial focus of the local print media is predominantly directed towards its own city. News published in the national coverage ranks second with 27.50%, showing that local media outlets also regularly follow the national agenda and keep their readers informed not only about urban developments but also about developments across the country. The proportion of news covering local news from other cities is limited to 8.64%. This proportion shows that other provinces and regional developments are further down the list of editorial priorities. The proportion of news with a global scope is only 0.09%. This proportion reveals that international news occupies a marginal position in printed local newspapers. The overall picture clearly shows that the social function of local press is largely built on locality and that editorial energy is essentially directed towards Yozgat and its surroundings.

Table 11

Coverage Ratio of News on Websites

Coverage	Number of News	Percentage (%)
Global	52	1.73
National	1028	34.27
Local (Other)	373	12.43
Local (Yozgat)	1547	51.57
Total	3000	100

(The ratio column indicates the ratio of news coverage to total news.)

The geographical distribution of news published on websites reveals how digitization has impacted content policies. News within the scope of the Yozgat local has the highest ratio at 51.57%, showing that local emphasis is strongly maintained in the digital environment.

However, the proportion of national news reaches 34.27%, which is significantly higher than the 27.50% rate in print newspapers. Digital journalism has brought the national agenda much more to the fore while maintaining a local focus, offering readers a wide variety of content. The scope of other local news has also increased to a higher level than in print newspapers, at 12.43%. This shows that websites have adopted a more flexible and expansive policy in producing content for other regions and provinces. Although global news on websites is limited to 1.73%, it has increased significantly compared to print newspapers. The overall picture clearly shows that digitalization has expanded content areas in local media at both national and global levels, while still maintaining an emphasis on locality. The results show that online journalism has diversified the flow of social information and provided flexibility and diversity in geographical coverage.

Table 12

Comparison of News Coverage in Print and Online Newspapers

Scope	Print Number of News Articles	Print Percentage	Internet Number of News	Internet Percentage (%)
Global	2	0.09	52	1.73
National	589	27.50	1028	34.27
Local (Other)	185	8.64	373	12.43
Local (Yozgat)	1366	63.77	1547	51.57
Total	2142	100	3000	100

(The print/internet ratio columns show the ratio of news coverage to total news items.)

The comparative table shows both continuity and a significant diversification related to digitalization in the distribution of news coverage in print newspapers and on websites. While Yozgat local news has the highest coverage rate in both media, this rate is 63.77% in print and drops to 51.57% online. This decrease indicates that, with digitalization, websites have adopted a content strategy that expands from local to regional and national coverage. The proportion of national news has risen to 34.27% on websites. This increase shows that the national agenda is editorially more prominent in digital media. The coverage of other local news has increased significantly on the internet, reaching 12.43% compared to print. This shows that websites are including more content about other cities and regional developments. The most striking increase is in global news. The proportion of global news, which was 0.09% in print, has risen to 1.73%

on the internet. Digital platforms are able to bring the world agenda closer to local readers. Overall, digitalization has brought greater diversity and flexibility to the geographical coverage of local media, encouraging more national, regional, and global content in content production. Nevertheless, local focus continues to be the fundamental editorial axis in both print and digital media.

Interpretation of Qualitative Data

The study examined the print and digital editions of six local newspapers published in central Yozgat (İleri, Yeni Ufuk, Yozgat Çamlık, Yozgat Haber, Yozgat Hakimiyet, and Yozgat Merhaba) using content analysis methods. The findings reveal that local press differs in terms of categorization, content presentation, and level of digitalization in both print and digital environments. In the print editions, it was observed that news items were generally grouped under the heading "current events" and that there was no clear categorization. In particular, while no category headings were used in the Yeni Ufuk and Yozgat Merhaba newspapers, the other newspapers included a limited number of categories such as "current events," "sports," "education," and "health."

İleri Newspaper is published seven days a week and features local agenda on its front and back pages, while its inside pages mostly feature mixed content under the heading "agenda." Although category names such as "sports" and "health" are used in some issues, this practice does not follow a consistent system. Yeni Ufuk Newspaper is published six days a week and publishes news directly on its inside pages without using any category headings. Yozgat Çamlık Newspaper features local agenda on its front pages, sports news on its back cover, and mixed content under the heading "agenda" on its inside pages. Yozgat Haber Newspaper is also published six days a week, using the "sports" category only on pages 10 and 11, while presenting news on different topics in a mixed format under the "current events" heading on other pages. Yozgat Hakimiyet Newspaper uses the "current events" category on all its pages, publishing content on politics, economics, public order, religion, and astrology under this heading. Yozgat Merhaba Newspaper was published with 8 pages between February 1-10 and 12 pages between February 12-15; it presented its news without using any category headings. These observations show that there is no standard in category differentiation in printed local newspapers, and that news is generally grouped under the "agenda" heading.

When examining the digital versions of the newspapers, it was determined that although the content was formally coded under 13 main categories, in practice, most of the news was

published under the "agenda" category without any systematic distinction. The fact that even news items on specific topics such as economy, agriculture, education, or health mostly appear in the "agenda" category indicates weak thematic standardization in digital archives. In particular, the inaccessibility of news URL links on the Yozgat Haber Gazetesi website after analysis points to structural problems in digital content management and archive continuity. In contrast, it was found that the digital news content of the İleri, Yeni Ufuk, Yozgat Çamlık, Yozgat Hakimiyet, and Yozgat Merhaba newspapers remained accessible after the research period. This situation shows that small-scale local media organizations have different levels of digital infrastructure, data storage, and economic sustainability.

Qualitative observations have also revealed that interactive content is limited on all newspapers' websites. It has been determined that user comment sections, audiovisual materials, and social media links in news articles are insufficient, and that new media elements that would strengthen two-way communication with readers are largely not used. Although all newspapers' websites are technically compatible (responsive) with mobile devices, it was observed that no local newspaper has an independent mobile application. This deficiency shows that local press faces technical infrastructure, qualified human resources, and financial resource shortages in the digitalization process.

Finally, a striking difference was found in terms of local emphasis in news headlines. It was determined that names of individuals, institutions, and places reflecting local identity were used twice as often in digital news headlines compared to print newspapers. This finding shows that digital platforms offer significant opportunities in terms of preserving local identity, making it visible, and keeping local memory alive in the digital environment. In contrast, it was observed that local emphasis was weaker in printed newspapers due to space limitations related to page layout.

Overall, the qualitative findings indicate that local newspapers in Yozgat need improvement in terms of category standards, digital interaction, technical infrastructure, and sustainability during the digitalization process; however, digital media offer new opportunities for preserving local identity and strengthening social belonging.

Results and Discussion

This study has revealed the multidimensional transformation of local media in the digitalization process by comparing the print and digital versions of six local newspapers

published in the provincial center of Yozgat. The study evaluated the formal, content-related, and thematic structure of news items; the types of sources used, audiovisual elements, and emphasis on locality through quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. Thus, not only numerical trends but also the meaning structures that guide news production processes were made visible.

The findings show that local media have made progress in certain aspects of its digitalization process, but that this transformation is not yet complete. The increased use of visuals on digital platforms and the production of news within a broader geographical framework reveal local newspapers' efforts to adapt to digitalization. However, the limited use of video, audio, and interactive content indicates that technical equipment and human resource deficiencies persist. This situation reveals that digitalization must be addressed not only as a technological transformation but also in its economic, cultural, and organizational dimensions. The digitalization process of local newspapers requires the redefinition of editorial structure, news production practices, and social functions. The inadequacy of the category structure in print media and the fact that news items are largely grouped under the heading "current events" points to a lack of standardization in content planning. In digital media, the fact that news items are mostly grouped under the "agenda" category shows that local media is still in the development stage in terms of thematic diversity. This situation also points to the need for a sustainable system in terms of digital archiving, content management, and accessibility.

With digitalization, local media have the potential to reshape not only the way content is produced but also the forms of social interaction. However, to effectively leverage this potential, it is necessary to strengthen the technological infrastructure, ensure the continuity of digital archives, and employ qualified personnel capable of effectively using new media tools. Furthermore, it is important for local newspapers to strengthen their social media integration, develop interactive content that encourages user participation, and expand their mobile access strategies. This study based on the case of Yozgat shows that the digitalization process of local media involves both opportunities and limitations. While digital transformation offers new opportunities for local press, it also brings structural, economic, and technical obstacles. Therefore, to maintain their competitiveness in the digital age, local media organizations need to strengthen their editorial standards, develop sustainable digital strategies, and turn to new journalism models that serve the public interest.

Qualitative observations show that local press shares common structural weaknesses in terms of news categorization, digital continuity, and new media integration. In print media,

although all newspapers regularly use the newspaper name, page number, and date information in their page headers, the categorical distinction of news items is largely grouped under the heading "current events." For example, İleri, Çamlık, and Yozgat Haber partially used tags such as "sports," "education," or "health," while Yeni Ufuk and Yozgat Merhaba did not specify any categories. This situation reveals that editorial planning in local journalism is limited and page design is not standardized. In the tracking test of the recorded URLs for the transparency of the study, the archives of five newspapers remained accessible, while the links of one newspaper became unusable within a short time. This situation highlights the structural fragility of small-scale local media organizations in terms of digital archiving and content sustainability, showing that local memory and academic data reliability are at risk.

The findings of the study show that local newspapers maintain their emphasis on locality in the digitalization process, but that this emphasis becomes more pronounced on digital platforms. Digital media increase the visibility of local identity and enable the reproduction of regional belonging through the media. In this respect, digitalization can be considered a process that transforms not only the means of production of local journalism but also its forms of social representation.

Future studies could expand the scope of this research by conducting comparative analyses across different regions to examine how local media organizations with varying resources adapt to digitalization. Further research may also focus on the relationship between audience engagement and digital content strategies, the long-term sustainability of digital archives, and the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing local journalism practices. Exploring these areas would contribute to a deeper understanding of how local media can achieve both technological innovation and community relevance in the evolving digital ecosystem.

In summary, this research demonstrates that the digital transformation of local media in Yozgat exemplifies broader challenges and potentials for Anatolian journalism, where print traditions persist amid uneven digital adoption. Key findings reveal enhanced visual and interactive elements in online versions, greater emphasis on locality and national coverage digitally, and persistent issues in revenue sustainability, source diversity, and infrastructure. The study's importance lies in bridging gaps in local media literature, underscoring the need for policy interventions to prevent "news deserts" and promote ethical, inclusive digital practices. Ultimately, it contributes a nuanced framework for sustainable journalism, emphasizing that successful digitalization requires not just technological upgrades but also cultural shifts, skill

development, and community-focused strategies to preserve local voices in a globalized media landscape.

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