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The Power of Sports Media: The Influential Role Played by Sports Media in the Rise of Sports and the Prominence of Athletes

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Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to analyse the influential role of sports media in the rise of sports and the prominence of athletes. In this study, which was modelled as a qualitative research, phenomenology design was preferred as the research design. The research sample includes 21 people from different regions of Turkey and with different personal and demographic backgrounds. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, particularly maximum diversity sampling, a non-probability sampling technique often preferred in qualitative research. A “personal information form” and a “semi-structured interview form” developed by the researcher were used for data collection. Fieldwork of semi-structured interviews took place between July 31, 2023 and August 18, 2023. The data obtained were analysed by content analysis method. According to the results of the research, the media coverage of sport events has positive results in terms of social dimension, economic dimension, mental and performance dimension and information access dimension for both athletes, institutions and organisations and viewers in general, while in some cases it leads to results that can be described as negative.

Keywords: athlete, media, sport.

1. Introduction

Today, societies have become a structure based on media tools, technologies and cultural structures that produce, disseminate and circulate social and cultural information. Sport is a valuable phenomenon with its ability to reach large audiences, to have a common language of communication nationally and internationally, and to trigger emotions such as sympathy and admiration in individuals and even societies. Therefore, sports have continuously garnered the media's attention, with the media playing a crucial role in amplifying their appeal (Durmaz, 2023).

Sports have encouraged young people through the media to participate in sports, resulting in significant improvements in their physical fitness. In addition, the media's sports news supports unity and diversity in society and brings together different races, religions, ethnicities and languages. For example, the coming together of athletes from different countries in the same team strengthens the feelings of friendship and solidarity and encourages the spirit of humanity. Sport

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also serves as a platform to reject racism and eliminate similar discrimination (Farzalipour et al., 2012). From this perspective, the phenomenon of sports has integrated deeply into modern society, and sports media serves as a driving force, significantly influencing the popularity of this phenomenon and reaching vast audiences. However, it's evident that the role of sports media extends beyond merely popularizing sports to also enhancing the visibility of athletes.

The wide availability and widespread consumption of sports news on various media platforms has greatly increased the media's influence on the lives and careers of athletes in recent years (Baker, 2023). Against this background, it can be said that the undeniable fact is that the continued improvement of athletes' images, achievements and personal lives has become a focus of sports media. Therefore, it can be said that the media gives athletes recognition and become an admirable.

The destiny of sports activities information is intently associated with the improvement of media and sports activities. Therefore, it could be said that the improvement of sports activities and the society's adoption of sports activities arise in large part via the media (Durmaz, 2023). In particular, visible progress in technology has led to the development of a mutually beneficial relationship between media and sports. Both sectors have influenced and benefited from each other. Nowadays, fans desire to interact directly with their favorite players. If athletes do not respond publicly, there is a high risk of losing their reputation. It can be stated that this situation may put great pressure on the current career opportunities of athletes. The fascinating effect of the media causes both young people and adults to spare time to watch sports in their daily lives and spend time in this area even without practicing (Burki et al., 2022). In this context, it can be stated that establishing a control mechanism over the possible effects of each news about sports in the media will provide opportunities to make significant progress in this regard.

As a result, this research will discuss the critical role of sports media in gaining popularity of the sports phenomenon and the visibility of athletes. In this respect, this research will examine the effects of sports media on the spread of sports, their contribution to increasing the recognition of athletes and the important dynamics in this process, while trying to evaluate how sports reach large audiences through the media and the effects of this situation on the future of sports. It is thought that this evaluation will contribute both by providing a guiding map to relevant stakeholders and by shedding light on researchers working on the field.

2. Methods

Model of the Research

This studies turned into modeled as a qualitative studies. One of the maximum simple capabilities of qualitative studies is that it examines in element the perspectives, reviews and perceptions of the folks who are the topics of the studies. This studies technique attempts to apprehend people's thoughts, perceptions and behaviors via way of means of specializing in information events, information and troubles in depth (Ekiz, 2023). In this context, the interview technique, one of the often used qualitative studies designs, turned into favored withinside the studies on the way to pay attention the participants' reviews at the situation at once from first hand (Yildirim, Simsek 2018).

Research Design

Qualitative research design is characterized as a strategy that establishes the basic approach of the research in question and ensures consistency across the different stages of the research process within a given framework (Yildirim, Simsek, 2018). In this research, phenomenology pattern was preferred as the research design. The phenomenology approach takes its basis from the personal experiences and experiences of individuals. In other words, this approach focuses on the researcher being interested in individuals' experiences (Merriam, 2018; Creswell, 2018). In addition, this design aims to examine individuals' perceptions and how they express the meanings they attach to events from their own perspectives. The main goal of this approach is to describe the reality in facts rather than making generalizations (Merriam, 2018). Therefore, as this research delves into the significant role of sports media in shaping the trajectory of sports and elevating the profiles of athletes, its objective is to unveil the underlying significance of individuals' experiences closely intertwined with sports media today and the interpretations they derive from these experiences. Hence, it is appropriate to position the research within the phenomenological framework.

Research Group

The research participants were chosen using purposeful sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly utilized in qualitative research (Merriam, 2018), specifically employing the maximum variation sampling method (Yildirim, Simsek, 2018). The sample comprised 21 individuals residing in various provinces across Turkey, each possessing diverse personal and demographic backgrounds.

The primary objective of employing the maximum diversity sampling method is to capture the varied experiences of different stakeholders across multiple contexts (Suri, 2011). This method aims to represent a broad spectrum of individuals who may be involved in the issue under study with a relatively small sample, allowing for the identification of both similarities and differences among diverse situations (Yildirim, Simsek, 2018).

Table 1. Distribution of data regarding personal and demographic information of the participants who make up the research group

Code	Age	Gender	Profession	Sports Branch Followed in the Media
K1	23	Male	Teacher	Football
K2	27	Male	Physiotherapist	Body building
K3	29	Female	Engineer	Badminton
K4	33	Male	Teacher	Football
K5	29	Male	Police	Football
K6	62	Male	Coach	Volleyball
K7	43	Female	Coach	Football
K8	28	Male	Textile Business Owner	Football-Basketball-Kick box
K9	20	Female	Sales staff	Kick box
K10	40	Male	Coach	Football
K11	40	Male	Teacher	Football
K12	24	Male	Barman	Basketball
K13	26	Male	Teacher	Football-Basketball
K14	43	Male	Teacher	Football
K15	28	Female	Medical secretary	Volleyball
K16	22	Male	Footballer	Football-Basketball
K17	23	Male	Teacher	Karate
K18	33	Male	Academician	Football
K19	47	Male	Security personal	Football
K20	35	Female	Academician	Football- Volleyball
K21	35	Female	Doctor	Volleyball-Football

Data Collection Tools

The researchers utilized a “Personal Information Form” and a “Semi-Structured Interview Form” developed specifically for this study. In the personal information form, participants; It includes information about their age, gender, profession and the sports branch they follow in the media. The semi-structured interview form includes an open-ended question posed to the participants, which is as follows:

What would you like to say about the influential role that media coverage of sports events plays in the rise of sports and the prominence of athletes?

Data Collection Process

- The researchers conducted field applications of the semi-structured interview form they developed between July 31, 2023, and August 18, 2023.

- Raw data for the research was obtained through obtaining permission and scheduling appointments with the participants, followed by face-to-face interviews.

- The researchers recorded interviews with participants using a mobile phone equipped with a voice recording feature, after obtaining the requisite permissions, to mitigate any potential data loss. This approach not only addressed note-taking challenges for the researchers but also facilitated easier questioning and listening during the interviews.

- The researchers transcribed the audio recordings from the interviews word by word on the computer and transformed them into an edited document.

Validity and Reliability of the Research

The fact that qualitative research determines a certain level of validity and reliability may affect the credibility and degree of acceptance of the research (Baltaci, 2019). This situation has been expressed in many studies (Punch, 2005; Golafshani, 2005; Baskale, 2016; Yagar, Dokme, 2018). Nevertheless, although it is feasible to ascertain validity and reliability despite employing varied measurement methods in quantitative research, making a conclusive determination of validity and reliability in qualitative research may pose challenges (Baltaci, 2019). However, ensuring the acquisition of accurate information (validity) and delineating the research process and data in a clear, detailed manner to facilitate evaluation by other researchers (reliability) are significant expectations that qualitative researchers must fulfill (Yildirim, Simsek, 2018). In this study, the research team meticulously detailed each procedural step. Moreover, to ensure the accuracy of information, participants were assured of the confidentiality of their personal data. The interviews were conducted with sincerity, prefaced by comprehensive information about the topic, and both audio recordings and word-format transcripts were securely retained to uphold research credibility. Additionally, three researchers independently coded the raw interview data, preserving the codebooks. Subsequently, direct participant quotes were incorporated to elucidate each code identified during analysis. Thus, the measures undertaken demonstrate a commitment to upholding validity and reliability throughout this research.

Analysis of Data

Qualitative data in this study were evaluated using the content analysis method, a common analytical approach in qualitative research designs (Miles, Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2000; Yildirim, Simsek, 2018). The reliability of the data was assessed using the formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which is outlined below:

$$[\text{Consensus theme} / (\text{Consensus theme} + \text{Theme of disagreement})] \times 100$$

The result of the above formula, which is intended to test the conformity between the experts doing the coding, is expected to be higher than 70 % (Miles, Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2014). Following the formula's application, 27 out of the 30 codes proposed by the experts received approval, resulting in a consensus rate of 90 % ($27/(27+3) \times 100$). The 3 codes lacking consensus were merged with other relevant codes.

3. Results

In this part of the research, findings based on the analysis results of qualitative data are included.

Table 2. Participants' opinions on what kind of effects media coverage of sporting events has

Theme	Category	Code Number	Code	Participants	Frequency
Social Dimension	Popularity	1	✓ Making athletes popular by giving them reputation and fame	K ² , K ³ , K ⁵ , K ⁶ , K ¹⁰ , K ¹¹ , K ¹² , K ¹⁵ , K ¹⁶ , K ¹⁷ , K ¹⁸ , K ²⁰ , K ²¹	13
		2	✓ Increasing interest in sport	K ⁴ , K ⁵ , K ⁹ , K ¹⁷ , K ²¹	5
	Relavancy	3	✓ Encouraging young athletes to the luxurious lifestyles of athletes	K ⁹ , K ¹³ , K ¹⁴ , K ¹⁷ , K ²¹	5
		4	✓ Boost self-confidence	K ² , K ²¹	2
	Value development	5	✓ Unifying role playing	K ⁵ , K ²¹	2
		6	✓ Increasing respect and love for athletes	K ¹⁸ , K ²¹	2

Theme	Category	Code Number	Code	Participants	Frequency
		7	✓ Guiding individual and social behavior regarding values	K ¹⁵	1
	Spreading	8	✓ Spreading sports to large audiences	K ³ , K ⁴ , K ⁶ , K ⁹ , K ¹¹ , K ¹⁵ , K ¹⁷	7
	Publicity	9	✓ Allowing athletes to prove their talents and skills	K ¹⁴ , K ¹⁷ , K ¹⁸ , K ¹⁹	4
	Identity creation	10	✓ Providing branding opportunities	K ²⁰	1
		11	✓ Technology killer	K ¹ , K ⁵	2
		12	✓ Lack of interest in lower level athletes	K ⁷	1
	Criticism	13	✓ Damaging the reputation of sport and athletes	K ⁸	1
		14	✓ A structure that does not contribute to human development for the sake of ratings	K ¹⁵	1
		15	✓ Athletes being role models	K ⁴ , K ¹⁰	2
	Suggestion	16	✓ Not exaggerating the promotion of athletes in the media	K ¹⁰	1
		17	✓ Training of athletes to exhibit appropriate behaviors	K ¹⁹	1
Total		17			51
	Advert	1	✓ Becoming the face of advertising and generating income through advertising campaigns	K ¹ , K ⁴ , K ⁵ , K ⁸	4
	Sponsorship	2	✓ Generating income through sponsorship agreements	K ⁸ , K ¹⁷ , K ²⁰ , K ²¹	4
Economic Dimension	Transfer	3	✓ Generating revenue by making it easier to make transfer agreements	K ¹ , K ¹⁷ , K ²⁰	3
	Sports industry	4	✓ Providing economic contribution by supporting all stakeholders within the sports economy	K ¹² , K ¹⁷ , K ²¹	3
	Basis of popularity	5	✓ The economic dimension forms the basis of the popularity of sports	K ¹³	1
Total		5			15

Theme	Category	Code Number	Code	Participants	Frequency
Mental and Performance Dimension	Positive impact	1	✓ Allowing athletes to be happy and feel good mentally	K ¹ , K ⁵ , K ⁹ , K ¹² , K ²¹	5
		2	✓ Supporting success by providing motivation	K ⁵ , K ¹¹ , K ¹² , K ¹⁴	4
	Negative impact	3	✓ Decreasing performance by putting psychological pressure on	K ⁸ , K ¹⁰ , K ¹²	3
Total		3			12
Access Dimension	Opportunity to gain knowledge	1	✓ Supporting access to information on all topics related to the field of sport	K ² , K ⁴ , K ⁸ , K ⁹ , K ¹⁵ , K ¹⁷ , K ¹⁸ , K ²⁰	8
	Quick access to audiences	2	✓ Enabling people to be reached faster	K ²	1
Total		2			9
Grand total		27			87

In Table 2, the themes determined in terms of objectives and the codes that make up these themes are listed as headings below according to the frequency of repetition, and the sentences in which the participants' views on the subject are expressed are stated with direct quotations:

Theme 1: Social Dimension (f:51)

The codes related to this theme, along with sample opinions directly cited from the participants, are provided below.

Code 1: Making athletes popular by giving them reputation and fame (f:13) “*In my own opinion, I think that the media coverage of sporting events has a great impact especially in terms of the popularity of athletes. If we need to give a recent example, while Arda Guler's transfer to the world giant Real Madrid is a sensational and important effect, I think that the most important factor that makes it so sensational is the media and mass media. If the media had not voiced it effectively, it would not have been considered so important and would not have spread to such a wide audience. The influence and importance of the media is so great that almost the whole world is aware of this situation. Or in volleyball, the influence of the media in the spread of the success of the sultans of the net in this recent tournament cannot be ignored, and in football, volleyball and other branches, if athletes are so widely popular, the media has just as much influence as their talents. In short, I think that media coverage of sporting events is an important and useful factor*” (K¹⁶).

Code 2: Increasing interest in sport (f:5) “*...The development of mass media has directly or indirectly increased the number of people interested in sports...*” (K⁵).

Code 3: Encouraging young athletes to the luxurious lifestyles of athletes (f:5) “*...The flamboyant cars of football players, basketball players, volleyball players, etc. we see in the media, the villa architectural style houses in which they live, and their interesting lives that arouse pleasure in the society, especially in the young generation, which we call Generation Z, enable a great curiosity and a strong orientation movement to the sports world*” (K¹³).

Code 4: Boost self-confidence (f:2) “*With sports being broadcast in the media...the achievements of athletes are heard. This allows athletes to receive praise. In this way, athletes increase their self-confidence as they receive many appreciations...*” (K²¹).

Code 5: Unifying role playing (f:2) “*...I can say that broadcasting sports events in the media helps people get together...*” (K⁵).

Code 6: Increasing respect and love for athletes (f:2) “*With the broadcast of sports in the media...feelings of respect and love towards athletes are increasingly developing...*” (K²¹).

Code 7: Guiding individual and social behavior regarding values (f:1) “Today, it is obvious that the media is an indispensable element of social life with technological developments. Mass communication, which is the product of these technological developments, has handled and examined individual and community life from a sociological point of view and has significantly affected individual and community behaviour patterns. Mass media, which is seen as a unilateral source of communication, has become a means of communication that educates individuals and societies about values, teaches them where and how to behave, how to perceive what they perceive and even what is good or bad, rather than just being tools that convey information to individuals and societies...” (K¹⁵).

Code 8: Spreading sports to large audiences (f:7) “In today’s conditions, thanks to media technologies, events reach the whole world at the same time, helping sports to reach large audiences...” (K⁶). “...Thanks to the media, all teams and individual sports around the world have the opportunity to be introduced to the masses. I think the media is important and useful in this regard as it becomes easier to follow sports and athletes as technology continues to develop” (K⁹).

Code 9: Allowing athletes to prove their talents and skills (f:4) “...Our age is the age of information and technology. You can reach different audiences by sharing all kinds of sports activities through various media and social networking sites. Of course, this is very important for sports and athletes to show themselves. I think that it will contribute to increasing the motivation of athletes and enable them to carry their skills and achievements further in their fields. In the past, many talents in some different sports branches were lost without being discovered. Now, thanks to the media, it is possible to follow people who show their talents all over the world...” (K¹⁴).

Code 10: Providing branding opportunities (f:1) “...The popularisation of social media as well as the popularisation of traditional media directly affects the branding of the athlete...” (K²⁰).

Code 11: Technology killer (f:2) “...Of course, the media is a technology killer that often leads to fame but also to frustration for some athletes” (K⁵).

Code 12: Lack of interest in lower level athletes (f:1) “...If anything, footballers from higher leagues are always in the limelight. Because we are at a lower level, we have not gained any popularity in this regard. ...So what I'm saying is that in the media, the higher seniority is always in the spotlight...” (K⁷).

Code 13: Damaging the reputation of sport and athletes (f:1) “...The coverage of sporting events can also have some negative effects. For example, ...exaggerated comments by the media can also affect the reputation of athletes and sporting events” (K⁸).

Code 14: A structure that does not contribute to human development for the sake of ratings (f:1) “...With the commercialisation of sports, the media has started to broadcast ineffective sports programmes that do not contribute to human development by pursuing more ratings instead of presenting effective and useful sports broadcasts to people...” (K¹⁵).

Code 15: Athletes being role models (f:2) “...It is very important that football is widely covered in the media and that athletes are the biggest part of this. It is especially important that footballers serve as role models for the masses. In this way, I think it will become inevitable to reach a wider advertising strategy and a much wider audience with it” (K⁴).

Code 16: Not exaggerating the promotion of athletes in the media (f:1) “...I am not close to the idea that athletes are too popularly promoted. I mean, media coverage of sporting events is a very good thing, but exaggeration of athletes in separate brackets is a negative thing. When you look at it, young Muhammed Demir was once known as the little Messi. The media took him, raised him, brought him to great places, but now he is a name that runs the ball in the lower leagues. The only reason for this, in my opinion, is the media. If we give an example from today, young talent Arda Guler. I don't want him to end up like Muhammed” (K¹⁰).

Code 17: Training of athletes to exhibit appropriate behaviors (f:1) “...In order for an athlete to carry himself to the best level, he must always study and receive the best education. Today, when an athlete brother comes and wants to do such an interview, if he does not have a good infrastructure, he will have a very difficult time and will leave all his efforts behind. When this situation reflects badly on social media, unwanted reactions arise” (K¹⁹).

Theme 2: Economic Dimension (f:15)

The codes related to this theme, along with sample opinions directly cited from the participants, are provided below.

Code 1: Becoming the face of advertising and generating income through advertising campaigns (f:4) “...Advertising campaigns carried out in the media at sporting events generate significant economic power for athletes...” (K⁵).

Code 2: Generating income through sponsorship agreements (f:4) “...Media offers more opportunities for sponsorship deals for athletes...” (K⁸).

Code 3: Generating revenue by making it easier to make transfer agreements (f:3) “I think it causes the athlete to enter a new market worldwide through the media. Recently, it was the media that followed Arda Guler's football through the media and caused him to be transferred worldwide...” (K¹).

Code 4: Providing economic contribution by supporting all stakeholders within the sports economy (f:3)

“...The broadcasting of sports events in the media and thus the spread and reach of sports to large masses is an important situation in terms of sports economy. This situation contributes to many companies or organisations such as sports media, advertising companies, television channels and social media pages. The sport that spreads to large masses quickly gains popularity and the number of people doing that sport increases. In this way, many institutions that sell sports equipment for that branch, perform facilities or open academies will also be profitable. We can think of all of these as the links of the chain” (K¹²).

Code 5: The economic dimension forms the basis of the popularity of sports (f:1) “I think that the media coverage of sporting events should not be viewed only from the dimension of popularity, because the fact that the sports media has a large trade volume and a strong employment area leads to an increase in popularity. This relationship shows us that the commercial dimension of the media comes before the popularity dimension. Therefore, I think that an attractive monetary factor is clearly a prerequisite for any social asset to gain popularity and attract the attention of the masses” (K¹³).

Theme 3: Mental and Performance Dimension (f:12)

The codes related to this theme, along with sample opinions directly cited from the participants, are provided below.

Code 1: Allowing athletes to be happy and feel good mentally (f:5) “I would also say that media coverage of sporting events ... plays a role in boosting morale by providing happiness and mental comfort to all people...” (K⁵).

Code 2: Supporting success by providing motivation (f:4) “...It plays an active role in improving the performance of the athlete by providing motivation...” (K¹¹).

Code 3: Decreasing performance by putting psychological pressure on (f:3) “...Media coverage of sport events may also have some negative effects. For example, competitive aspects over-emphasised by the media may cause some athletes to feel under psychological pressure and affect their performance...” (K⁸). “...As well as the good aspects of the athlete, the bad aspects or wrong actions of the athlete are also published by the media. Therefore, as much as there are those who think positively about athletes, there are also those who think negatively. This situation can also affect the psychology of the athlete. Negative comments from the media can affect the athlete mentally and reduce their performance...” (K¹²).

Theme 4: Access Dimension (f:9)

The codes related to this theme, along with sample opinions directly cited from the participants, are provided below.

Code 1: Supporting access to information on all topics related to the field of sport (f:8) “...As a matter of fact, I would like to evaluate this media event more on social media because social media is used more actively than traditional media today. Athletes, coaches, managers, teams, clubs, leagues and fans are all more active on this platform, on social media, where we can instantly learn a lot of information about the field of sports. We can watch and learn about an athlete's winning or losing match, his/her performance and emotions in that match. ...In this sense, we can access much more information in national and international areas by following the tournaments and olympiads organised directly from social media accounts rather than traditional media...” (K²⁰).

Code 2: Enabling people to be reached faster (f:1) “Today is the age of technology and the age requires it. Thanks to social media, people can be reached more quickly...” (K²).

4. Discussion

In the research, the social dimension theme (f:51) was one of the most recurring topics in the opinions of the participants about the impressive role that the media coverage of sports events played in the rise of sports and the prominence of athletes (Table 2). When we look at the codes that make up this theme by ranking their frequency values, it can be seen that broadcasting sports events in the media makes athletes popular by giving them reputation and fame (f:13). When the literature is examined, it is stated that mass media, especially television and sports programs, are one of the most important socialization institutions in the context of society due to their social and cultural effects (Batmaz, Aksoy, 1995). According to this approach, sports media spreads sports to all people. A competition held in one corner of the world reaches the whole world as news and images, sometimes at the same time, sometimes the next day, depending on its importance. Athletes who are the subject of these news and images can become stars promoted by the media, just like in art (Ozsoy, 2008) and increase their interaction with their fan bases (Baker, 2023). Again, it is revealed in the literature that sports media plays an important role in determining the professional success of players. In this regard, it is stated that players' media coverage is important in terms of influencing their fans and expanding their popularity worldwide (Burki et al., 2022; Giraudon et al., 2020; Setyawati et al., 2016). Based on this information, it can be said that sports media plays a critical role in increasing the popularity of athletes and reaching large audiences. Therefore, it is seen that the studies cited from the literature overlap with the results of the current research.

According to the results of the research, broadcasting sports events in the media increases the interest in sports (f:5) and makes young athletes more enthusiastic about sports by increasing their interest in the luxurious lifestyles of athletes (f:5). When the literature is examined, it is seen that the power of the media to influence society affects the behavior of individuals (Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013) and in this sense motivates social change (Baker, 2023). Therefore, sports media, which fulfills the function of announcing sports events to the public, has the power to influence large masses in Turkey as well as all over the world (Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013). Thanks to the media, many fans turn to different platforms to follow their favorite athletes. In addition, they are looking for ways to connect with them, feel connected to them, and perhaps become like them. In this regard, there is value in building strong relationships between athletes and fans. It is thought that this value will provide opportunities to increase interest in the phenomenon of sports (Huttunen, 2021). Additionally, the media plays a crucial role in introducing sports to individuals who may not typically engage in physical activities. By showcasing sports events and stories, the media has the potential to inspire people to pursue physical fitness through sports participation. Given its influence on public perceptions, the media may also incentivize individuals to take up sports favored by celebrities, as extensively covered by various media outlets (Burki et al., 2022). This situation was also stated in a study in the literature. Accordingly, sports-related visuals on television can inspire people to practice the sports they watch. This effect of sports through television becomes even more evident when different sports such as football and boxing are broadcast on various television channels. For example, bodybuilding competitions shown on television may cause people to flock to fitness centers (Trolan, 2013). In fact, today the media has become such that research shows that young people's media consumption has become a habit and even affects their career choices (Apostol, Năsi, 2013). In this context, the proactive dissemination of matches, events, and athletes' accomplishments by sports organizations and teams through the media is paramount. This strategy is believed to stimulate greater audience and fan engagement with sports (Bal Turan, 2023). Because especially for athletes, it should not be forgotten that with the media, the best athletes unintentionally become online influencers (Giraudon et al., 2020). Studies show that especially high-level athletes firmly believe that they can influence people through social media (Mandić et al., 2022). As a result, a large sports public has been formed as a result of the increasing interest in sports day by day. Therefore, it can be said that mass media have a great share in the formation, informing and directing of this public opinion (Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013). As can be seen, based on this information in the literature, it can be said that broadcasting sports events in the media can increase interest in sports and make young athletes more enthusiastic about sports by increasing their interest in luxury lifestyles.

According to the results of the research, media coverage of sports events increases the self-confidence of athletes (f:2), plays a unifying role (f:2), increases respect and love for athletes (f:2) and directs individual and social behavior in terms of values (f:1). A study in the literature states

that social media and the way athletes use social media have positive effects on the self-efficacy of athletes (Gorrell, 2018). However, in another study, participants' body mass indexes were measured and it was concluded that the media coverage of events related to the athletes' athletic status caused body dissatisfaction in the athletes (Swami et al., 2009). Apart from this, sports media has the power to influence very large masses of people as an effective propaganda tool when necessary and direct them towards certain goals. It can develop national culture and fulfill very important functions such as peace, friendship, brotherhood, love and respect (Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013). In addition to this information, sports, as a subsystem of society, contains many values and norms (Horvath et al., 2013). Other research findings on this topic suggest that engagement in sports positively impacts individuals' self-confidence, promotes socially accepted behaviors, fosters societal usefulness, steers communities toward positive conduct, bridges societal divides, combats racism, cultivates values of love and respect, and fosters a sense of brotherhood (Alincak et al., 2022a; Alincak et al., 2022b). Another study states that those who are interested in sports, both recreationally and professionally, through the media will understand the various skills that can be learned by participating in sports (Kovacs, Doczi, 2020). From this point of view, it can be stated that the communication provided especially with the media can convey the important messages stated above, and at the same time, the media has an important place in creating the values in question for individuals. Therefore, media has important elements that need to be taught to individuals. However, the media should be remembered as a force that not only conveys messages, but also guides society in determining what behavior will be perceived as acceptable or deviant. Through these processes, media can influence social norms and values (Horvath et al., 2013). In their research, many social scientists have questioned mass communication and individual and social life with sociological and social psychological approaches and tried to explain individual and social behavior patterns from there. Mass communication has taken the place of society and groups and has an important place in the development process of the individual. Mass media, which is seen as a one-sided source of communication, has become a means of communication that not only conveys information to individuals and societies, but also educates them, teaches them where and how to behave, how to perceive and understand what they perceive, and even how to decide what is good or bad, depending on what (Yuksel et al., 2003). As evidenced by the literature, media coverage of sports events has the capacity to enhance athletes' self-confidence, serve as a unifying force within society, elevate admiration and affection for athletes, and influence individual and societal behavior regarding values.

According to the research results, media coverage of sports events plays an important role in spreading sports to large masses (f:7), enabling athletes to prove their talents and skills (f:4) and branding (f:1). When the literature is examined, it is seen that the sports phenomenon has become the focal point of media news in terms of being a great center of attention. This situation facilitates the transfer of sports events to large masses (Ozsoy, Eksioglu, 2007; Trolan, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that the wide coverage of sports and sporting events in all platforms of the media will of course provide the opportunity to promote the talents and skills of athletes. This can easily turn them into a brand. Kovacs and Doczi (2020) suggest that through media exposure, athletes have the ability to shape their brand image, presenting their on-field excellence and remarkable achievements to broad audiences, thereby solidifying their reputation. In other studies in the literature, it has been asserted that the media plays a pivotal role in initiating a new form of promotion by spearheading the establishment of athletes' brand image and brand awareness (Giraudon et al., 2020; Mandić et al., 2022; Baker, 2023). In the light of this information, it can be said that the role played by sports media in reaching large audiences and gaining popularity is of great importance. But of course, the role of sports media has a great impact not only on the popularization of sports, but also on the visibility of athletes. In this respect, media enables athletes to be recognized, create their brand images and become admired figures. In this case, while it can be a source of inspiration for young athletes, it can also enable sports to reach a wider audience.

According to the results of the research, media coverage of sports events was criticized by the participants for being a technology killer (f:2), not paying attention to low-level athletes (f:1), damaging the reputation of sports and athletes (f:1), and not contributing to human development for the sake of ratings (f:1). Today, the news in the media scapegoat athletes for various issues. For this reason, when a fanatic fan witnesses the failure of his team with a negative result, unfortunately, he may take threatening and violent actions against the athletes who are responsible

for this situation. One of the participants summarizes this situation as follows. *“It is also possible that media coverage of sporting events may sometimes lead to negative consequences. ...Let’s give an example of an event that resulted in negativity as a result of an event published in the media; He intercepted the ball from the cross opened by American midfielder John Harkes and scored the goal into his own goal. But he didn’t know that this goal would end his life. After Escobar’s unfortunate goal, Colombia could not get out of the group, where they were favorites. After the 1994 FIFA World Cup, Escobar decided to return to Medellin instead of visiting his relatives in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Colombian star was having fun with his friends at a bar called “El Indio” in the El Poblado district of Medellin on the evening of July 2, 1994. Escobar, who was left alone in the parking lot of the bar at approximately 03:00 at night, was attacked by three men and shot with a 38-caliber pistol. Although his friends took Escobar, who was shot six times, to the hospital, the Colombian died 45 minutes after he was shot”* (K⁵). According to this opinion expressed by the participant, it is clearly seen that the media even causes individuals to become murderers. Therefore, this situation reminds us again that we need to think about how serious the issue is. In addition, it is a fact that the media takes actions based on the fame of the athletes or teams in order to attract attention. Because the audience potential of lower-level athletes or sports teams is very low. For example, while the broadcasting rights of only the Super League and 1st League competitions are purchased by the relevant broadcaster at the highest level in terms of football in Turkey, it can be said that such a situation is not the case for the lower leagues. About this situation, Ozsoy and Eksioglu (2007) stated that the dominance of football, which is the sports branch that the society shows the most interest in, overshadowing other sports branches, sometimes causes the reaction of sports fans interested in branches other than football, and that the fact that the sports media is reduced to three big clubs, especially in the context of football in Turkey, is also an unpleasant situation (Ozsoy, Eksioglu, 2007). In another study in the literature, it is stated that the sports media is biased in presenting news and that only a few popular sports attract the attention of the media and thus the public (Burki et al., 2022). In addition to these situations, sports constitute the most important element of the media in terms of ratings (Dosyilmaz, 1998). In this respect, media platforms broadcast especially with commercial concerns (Ozsoy, Yildiz, 2013; Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that the main goal of the media is to attract more consumers by using an attention-grabbing style and publishing interesting news (Briggs, Burke, 2009). However, the media’s focus on profitability reduces the importance given to quality (Kovach, Rosenstiel, 2014). As a result of such an understanding, athletes may be exposed to more scrutiny and criticism. This may damage their marketability and professional reputation (Baker, 2023; Burki et al., 2022). Based on the insights gleaned from the literature, it is apparent that the findings of the present study are corroborated.

According to the results of the research, the broadcasting of sports events in the media brings along various problems. Therefore, the participants who participated in the research also made suggestions. These suggestions are grouped under the topics of athletes being role models (f:2), not exaggerating the promotion of athletes in the media (f:1), and training athletes to exhibit appropriate behaviours (f:1). When the literature is examined, it is stated that especially elite athletes are accepted as heroes and role models by the society, and elite athletes are aware of this mission. For this reason, it has been stated through the media that elite athletes should not forget that they set an example for the society about the situations they represent (Billings et al., 2015; Kovacs, Doczi, 2020; Burki et al., 2022). In other words, it is a fact that the success stories of both male and female players in the media are used as a tool to encourage children to follow their dreams (Burki et al., 2022). In addition, according to research, it is stated that television programs are an effective tool in conveying professional knowledge to younger generations. Consequently, the media's portrayal of individuals as societal heroes can wield considerable influence over the career trajectories favored by young individuals. This underscores the media's dual role in shaping both the vocational preferences of youth and their personal characteristics (Saleem et al., 2014). However, the inclusion of athletes who are overly praised by the media in promotional campaigns can often lead to a dangerous trend. Therefore, it can be said that the promotion of athletes in the media should not be brought to the point of exaggeration. This can lead people to adopt the perception that being the best athlete in the world is not measured by education or literacy. Young people who understand this idea can turn to sports instead of education. In particular, this situation may cause sports to be preferred before completing basic education with the aim of

success and fame (Burki et al., 2022). For this reason, it is thought that the media not paying too much attention to athlete promotion will prevent undesirable situations from occurring.

With all this together, athletes are in uncertainty approximately the way to gift themselves withinside the media and bring their messages to the public (Kovacs, Doczi, 2020). Therefore, it is recommended that athletes have media awareness so that they do not get harmed and can use these technologies in a healthy way (Yuceturk, Besna, 2022). For this reason, as a result of a study in the literature, it is stated that it is of great importance for athletes to receive training in order to exhibit the desired behaviors while conveying their messages through the media (Kovacs, Doczi, 2020). In addition, the media should consider the sports public from the unifying, integrative and socializing aspect of sports, instead of seeing it only in a consumer sense (Unsal, Ramazanoglu, 2013). Within the light of this data within the writing, it can be said that the comes about of the current consider are bolstered.

According to the results of the research, the broadcasting of sports events in the media supports athletes to generate income through being the face of advertisements and advertising campaigns (f:4), to generate income through sponsorship agreements (f:4), to generate income by facilitating transfer agreements (f:3), to provide economic contribution by supporting all stakeholders in the sports economy (f:3). In addition, the participants also stated that the economic dimension constitutes the main basis of the popularity of sports (f:1). According to the literature, the intermediary role of the media in the presentation of sports has affected millions of followers, included almost all types of media platforms and attracted the attention of large investors. This situation has created an environment where financiers have great opportunities to increase their profit margins. In addition, thanks to the media, many teams have managed to contribute to both the team's and the country's economy by selling more tickets to the fans who will come to watch their matches (Burki et al., 2022). Of course, it should not be forgotten that social media is the only driving force of high levels of athlete endorsement income (Giraudon, 2020). Because today, sports media has become a structure that constantly supports them economically by making male and female athletes the center of attention of a wide audience (Trolan, 2013). Based on this, it can be stated that sports media has a significant impact on the promotion and marketing strategies of the sports world. In particular, sports brands can reach more audiences than targeted by making different sponsorship agreements for athletes, sports organizations and sports developments, and spreading their products and services to a wider area, thanks to the media. This situation provides mutual economic support to all stakeholders (Bal Turan, 2023). It can even be stated that the sponsorship agreements that a sports brand makes with athletes who have become well-known thanks to the media may even provide benefits for the athletes in question after their careers (Huttunen, 2021). According to a study in the literature, various brand customers stated that although high-level athletes could not persuade them to buy a product, only high-level athletes increased the value of various brand products as media influencers (Mandić et al., 2022). As a result, as stated in the opinion of a participant regarding the relevant theme, the economic power contained in sports actually forms the basis of sports becoming popular by attracting many individuals. Therefore, today, we observe that all stakeholders, whether within or outside the realm of sports, generate substantial incomes through their interactions. Sports media emerges as a key catalyst in fostering this economic symbiosis. Examination of the literature reveals a consensus that aligns with the findings of the current study.

According to the results of the research, media coverage of sports events contributes positively to the athletes to feel mentally good by allowing them to be happy (f:5) and to support their success by motivating them (f:4). On the other hand, the media coverage of sports events puts athletes under psychological pressure in a negative way and causes them to decrease their performance (f:3). Based on these results, it can be stated that announcing the development and performance of athletes to the society in general through mass media has an important role for athletes. Because criticisms in the media help athletes to improve their weaknesses. In this respect, news covering the weaknesses of athletes can make athletes think and improve themselves. Athletes are actually happy when the media make news about them and this news increases their motivation. Therefore, it can be said that positive news about athletes in mass media make them proud (Setyawati et al., 2016). As a result of a study in the literature, it is stated that it is very important for athletes to gain the ability to critically evaluate media content. According to this study, it was stated that the comments that athletes see about themselves on social media,

especially after losing competitions, can significantly affect their motivation. In addition, in this study, it was determined that new media technologies have the potential to increase the performance and motivation of athletes when used in accordance with their function (Yuceturk, Besna, 2022). However, this situation does not always have a function that can have positive results for athletes. Because, in some cases, social media comments on athletes' performance may further increase stress, anxiety, mental fatigue, and cognitive load on athletes and cause their mental health to deteriorate (Ng et al., 2023; DesClouds, Durand, 2020; Faustin et al., 2022; Merrill, Faustin, 2023). In this respect, intense external pressures applied to athletes to perform may hinder performance by increasing stress and anxiety (Faustin et al., 2022) and may cause burnout and mental health problems (Baker, 2023). For example, the US gymnast Simone Biles was an example of this by withdrawing from the competitions in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics due to mental health problems caused by external pressures (Faustin et al., 2022). In addition, as a result of a study in the literature, it is stated that the intensive use of social media by athletes has a significant negative effect on their performance (Gruettner et al., 2020). As a result, it can be said that the media should provide a platform where athletes can tell their stories, support projects that improve mental health, and act as role models to eliminate these negative consequences (Baker, 2023).

Finally, according to the research results, broadcasting sports events in the media supports access to information about all issues related to sports (f: 8) and enables people to be reached faster (f: 1). According to the literature, a large sports public has emerged as a result of the increasing interest in sports today. Mass media have played a major role in creating, informing and directing this public opinion. Thanks to the sports press, the public can critically interpret the decisions made after the match and the athlete's performance within the framework of the rules (Unsal, Ramazanoglu 2013). In fact, passive sports consumers generally obtain their information about sports and elite athletes largely through the media (Kovacas, Doczi, 2020). In this context, it can be stated that mass media have an impact on people by obtaining information and providing information on a wide range of subjects (Karakucuk, Yenel, 1997). As a result, it can be said that today, media tools have become an important tool for sports followers to obtain instant information and to instantly reach individuals regarding a developing situation. Therefore, it can be stated that the current research results are supported by this information expressed in the literature.

5. Conclusion

According to the results of the research, media coverage of sports events plays a very effective role in the rise of sports and the prominence of athletes. Accordingly, by broadcasting sports events, the media performs social tasks in terms of popularising athletes by giving them reputation and fame, increasing interest in sports, encouraging young athletes to aspire to the luxurious lifestyles of athletes, increasing self-confidence, playing a unifying role, increasing respect and love for athletes, guiding individual and social behaviour in terms of values, spreading sports to large masses, enabling athletes to prove their talents and skills, and providing branding opportunities. However, the media is also criticised by the society as a technology killer, lack of interest in lower level athletes, damaging the reputation of sports and athletes and not contributing to human development for the sake of ratings. In this context, based on the research findings, it is advised that athletes, in particular, assume the role of role models, emphasizing the importance of tempering media portrayal without exaggeration, and advocating for athletes to undergo training aimed at demonstrating socially appropriate behaviors.

According to the results of the research, the broadcasting of sports events in the media fulfils an important function in terms of providing economic contribution to all stakeholders in the sports economy by supporting all stakeholders in the sports economy while supporting athletes in terms of being the face of advertising and generating income through advertising campaigns, generating income through sponsorship agreements and facilitating transfer agreements. In this respect, the economic dimension constitutes the main basis of the popularity of sports.

According to the results of the research, the media coverage of sports events has positive effects in terms of mental and performance dimensions, allowing athletes to be happy, making them feel good mentally and supporting their success by motivating them, but on the contrary, sometimes it puts athletes under psychological pressure and causes them to decrease their performance.

Finally, according to the research results, media coverage of sports events offers opportunities to support the access of all stakeholders involved in sports to information on all issues related to the field of sport and to reach people faster in terms of increasing access.

6. Suggestions

It is suggested that media organizations prioritize content centered on athletes' accomplishments, imbued with positive messages, and fostering societal integration when disseminating sports news and events. It is thought that this understanding of responsibility can contribute to a more positive social, performance and economic impact of the media.

The research outcomes indicate that the media is responsible for various ethical infractions. In this context, evaluations can be made about the ethical problems in the sports media in new researches related to the current research topic.

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