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Attitudes of Turkish academics towards the effects of digital journalism on shaping the political image

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This study aimed to know the nature of the effects of digital journalism in shaping the political mental image of Turkish university professors. It also aimed to know the motives and reasons for their follow-up to digital journalism while following political events around the world. To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher relied on descriptive studies, and within its framework, he used the survey method, by applying the method of a public opinion poll with the sample, and distributed the electronic questionnaire to the study sample, which numbered (103) academic professors working in the universities according to the appropriate sample method. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which was that Most Turkish professors use digital journalism to follow current political events (42.7%). The reason for following political events through digital journalism is that it displays political events quickly (29.0%). Concerning the most prominent digital arts that contribute to the formation of the political mental image, Turkish professors pointed out that the technology of "news" (AVT = 4.01) followed by video technology where "video" (AVT = 3.91) is the most prominent digital arts in forming a political mental image. As for the most prominent element that digital journalism contributes to the formation of its image, the answer was "the image of political events" (Ort. 3.99) and the "parliament" (Org = 3.40) was the lesser victory. On the effects side, "cognitive effects" came first with an average (mean = 2.42), and the item with the highest average cognitive effects "gave me detailed information about the candidates" (AVT = 2.65). The least at all was to "give me different information about MPs" (mean = 1.96). The highest average emotional impact, according to Turkish academics involved in the study, was "saturate my cognitive curiosity about political issues and events" (AVT = 2.11). The statement with the highest average behavioral influences was "It enabled me to follow the speeches and reactions of heads of state in all activities and areas" (AVT = 2.40). Finally, a low positive correlation (0.307**) was found between the effects of the general political mental image and the image of the electoral candidate ($p < 0.05$), in addition to a low positive correlation between the digital journalism arts and the elements of the general political mental image, where the value of ($p < 0.05$) was found.

KEYWORDS

digital journalism, image, political image, Turkey, multi-faceted approach, attitudes, academicians

1 Introduction

It has been observed that the influence of the media in the image-building process has gradually increased in recent years, and researchers continue to conduct studies that reveal how media tools affect public opinion (Buinitskyi and Yakovets, 2019). The first person to point out the importance of the media in the image creation process is the journalist and

researcher Walter Lippmann. In his book *Public Opinion* (Lippman, 1922) he mentions this issue. From that time until today, numerous studies have been carried out on the effect of contemporary media tools on image creation in each period (Wilding et al., 2018). In the current era, research has been undertaken on political image and media. When evaluated in the political arena, the image is an impression that carries a symbolic meaning and is formed in people's minds by integrating the interpretations of voters, society, and political organizations. The term "political image" may also be related to the fields of foreign policy making and international behavior education. By broadcasting messages to entire countries or people in general, the media attempts to create a special image of a particular country or people. In this process, media and information technology has reached a stage in which it complements traditional media tools (newspapers, radio, television). The most important technological mass communication tool at this stage is the Internet. With the widespread use of the internet, a new type of news broadcasting, also referred to as alternative media, has emerged. Internet journalism has now undertaken the former contribution of traditional media tools to image formation in the current technological age. For this reason, internet journalism is used to express certain views create political images, and communicate and share information with people, institutions, states, societies, and many others. Usually, a certain perception succeeds by fixing an image or canceling it, or by changing it from negative to positive or vice versa. One of the most important factors in digital journalism, especially in the current era, is the dissemination of international events and ideas. Based on the aforementioned, digital journalism is thought to have a significant impact on building a political image in the minds of university academics working at universities in Turkey. Based on this information, in this research; the influences of electronic journalism in the formation of political image will be examined according to the opinions of academics in Turkey who are interested in political science and political communication, The subject of the study was determined to be an analysis of academics in Turkey that examined the impact of electronic journalism on political image building. Research in the literature shows that academics rely on Digital journalism to gain a variety of information. Malkawi's study revealed that academics in general are using internet journalism intensively at universities also that academics' confidence in Digital journalism allows them to pursue various political issues around the World (Malkawi, 2024a, 2024b).

In this study, the researcher has chosen to examine the views of academics in Turkey to determine the impact of digital journalism on creating a political image according to various elements. Therefore, the reason academics were chosen in each of the faculties of political science and international relations was that these disciplines are connected to media and digital journalism, and academics within them follow political events closely. This is what the researcher personally noticed through his studies in Turkey and his work for nearly 7 years, where he noticed the reliance of Turkish academics in the faculties of political science, international relations, and media on following various political news using digital journalism, which prompted him to choose it in this research. Such a study is of great importance in explaining the impact of digital journalism on creating a political image according to various elements. Because there has not been much research that deals with the political image according to its various elements, it is

thought that this aspect of the research will contribute to the literature.

2 Literature review

The researcher reviewed many studies related to the political image and the impact of digital journalism on its formation.

Ting et al. (2024) "Digital government: social media as a mediator in technology acceptance with political knowledge, interest, and participation": The study, which was applied to a sample of 338 young people at the University of Malaysia Sabah through the convenient sampling method, indicated that digital media in general is an essential tool for governments to disseminate political information in the digital world. Accordingly, the main problem lies in the lack of clarity surrounding the factors that influence citizens' adoption of socio-political networks and how this affects political interest, knowledge, and participation. The purpose of this study is to explore factors and social media as an intermediary in political dynamics. The most striking finding of the study is that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived pleasure, political engagement, and political interest are highly correlated with the use of social media related to government and politics.

Lauerer and Beckert (2024) "Pushing Boundaries-Hybrid Advertising in Digital News Media: A Content Analysis of Media Kits": By applying quantitative content analysis, this study sought to examine the hybrid ad sets offered by digital news media and how they openly promote their hybrid nature. The results showed that digital media most often feature editorial content such as articles and sometimes in other formats. The bold promotion of increasing forms of hybrid advertising is also rhetorically contributing to the normalization of bypassing the iconic wall that separates journalism from advertising and makes it difficult for audiences, regulators, and scientists to follow through.

Forja-Pena et al. (2024) "The Ethical Revolution: Challenges and Reflections in the Face of the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Digital Journalism": This research analyzes communication professionals' perception of the use and practice of AI tools in editorial departments as challenges to digital journalism in this new landscape by analyzing 99 codes of ethics and 14 international press associations. In addition, audience perception is addressed through a survey conducted by nearly 2,000 people. The study found that the public and journalists are concerned about the disinformation that AI may cause and the potential erosion of trust between the journalists and the public. An overwhelming majority of people call for external regulation to be used to maintain the values, ethical principles, and good practices of journalism.

Lindblom et al. (2024) "Digitalizing the Journalistic Field: Journalists' Views on Changes in Journalistic Autonomy, Capital and Habitus": This study sought to find out the nature of the change that occurs as a result of the entry of technology into the field of journalism in general and its impact on capital and habits. The study relied on the integration of key ideas from field theory with the philosophy of technology and accordingly analyzed 40 qualitative interviews with agents across a wide range of positions in the Swedish field of journalism from journalists working in the field. One of the highlights of the study was that positions become ranked again when new skills such as metrics and engagement management are collectively

recognized as capital. The journalistic capital of the field is supplemented by viral capital.

Olsen et al. (2024) “Do Small Streams Make a Big River? Detailing the Diversification of Revenue Streams in Newspapers’ Transition to Digital Journalism Businesses”: This study aimed to know the nature of the business of digital journalism through the lens of revenue diversification and draws how sources of income shift to the national press industry, especially after the collapse of the advertising side in the news industry process due to intense competition with global technological platforms. The study therefore applied a case sample to the sources of income of Norwegian newspapers from 2006 to 2019. The study measured revenue diversification through the application of revenue diversification, which is an indicator that measures the number of sources of income and the distribution between them to the entire newspaper industry. The study found that revenue structures have shifted from an advertising-based model to an audience-dominated one, and rising digital journalism prices may be widening knowledge gaps among the population between those willing and able to pay and those unwilling.

Sjøvaag et al. (2024) “Capture Beyond the Platforms: The Material and Infrastructural Conditions for Digital Journalism”: Through socio-technical theory, this paper discusses the dependence of digital journalism on the basic Internet infrastructures that transmit, exchange, receive, and host data and on which journalism in Norway relies as a case. A key question of the paper was how the underlying infrastructures create interconnections in the political news-making process. One of the study’s highlights was that news organizations increasingly rely on digital infrastructures for news distribution and data management.

Hurcombe (2024) “Conceptualizing the ‘Newsfluencer’ Intersecting Trajectories in Online Content Creation and Platformised Journalism”: This study sought to clarify the nature of the work of news influencers across the digital world through four intersecting dimensions: platforms, business models, employment, and cultures. The study pointed out the influence of many factors in how influencers present and make news, such as the culture they enjoy. The study found that the authentic and relational traits of news influencers help make journalism more accessible to audiences in general.

Kotišová and van der Velden (2023) “The Affective Epistemology of Digital Journalism: Emotions as Knowledge among On-the-Ground and OSINT Media Practitioners Covering the Russo-Ukrainian War”: This study asked a series of questions to introduce the term emotional epistemology into digital journalism studies: What is the cognitive value of the feelings of media practitioners? How do emotional attachments affect how media professionals and open-source analysts approach fact-finding and impartiality? Twenty-seven interviews were conducted with media workers covering the Russian-Ukrainian war and the analysis of digital documents. The study indicated, inter alia, that emotions motivate journalistic practices are motivated by reality on the ground and available knowledge, and can serve as a methodological and cognitive tool, and form part of reality. Emotions also drive innovations and facilitate cooperation. In addition, the work of journalist’s changes as they harmonize with discourses on human rights and justice and legal fact-finding bodies committed to legal objectivity.

Plekhanova et al. (2023) “Internet journalism in modern society: an overview of mechanisms for resisting media manipulation”: The

research started from the idea that there is a very noticeable influence of digital journalism in the process of shaping public opinion. Accordingly, the purpose of the study was to analyze these influences in modern society in terms of the existence and use of media manipulation mechanisms. The study applied analysis and synthesis as a general approach in addition to abstraction and embodiment as special approaches. Accordingly, the manifestations of the manipulative effect of online digital journalism on human awareness were tracked, specifically while dealing with video content and photographic materials, as it pointed out the importance of verifying those contents to resist manipulation.

Bjerknes (2022) “Images of Transgressions: Visuals as Reconstructed Evidence in Digital Investigative Journalism”: This study analyzed how the collected images and videos were used as evidence in 14 visual investigations conducted by The New York Times, by conducting a visual discursive analysis through the application of the Sociology of Knowledge for Discourse (SKAD) approach to mapping how to create an investigative way of seeing through simultaneous discursive practices, including narrative, coding schemes, discrimination techniques, and comparing video footage in split-screen mode. The study found that these discursive practices act as markers of authority that together facilitate a presentation that brings the context of the assembled visuals back into evidence, reactivating them as external objects of knowledge that can be interrogated in epistemological conflicts related to the definition of controversial events.

Törnberg (2022) “How digital media drive affective polarization through partisan sorting”: The study indicated that politics has entered the era of extreme polarization in recent decades, and many interpretations have indicated that digital media has the largest balance in these political polarizations, specifically when talking about the so-called echo chamber as a dominant causal hypothesis against empirical evidence. The study found that digital media is polarized through partisan sorting, creating a spiral where more and more identities, beliefs, and cultural preferences are drawn into an all-encompassing societal divide.

Planer et al. (2022) “Journalistic Quality Criteria under the Magnifying Glass: A Content Analysis of the Winning Stories of World Press Photo Foundation’s Digital Storytelling Contest”: This study sought to explore aspects of journalistic quality in complex digital stories. Based on a tailored overview of the potential of online journalism and longitudinal digital stories for journalistic quality, all award-winning stories available in the interactive subcategory of the World Press Photo Foundation’s Digital Storytelling Contest from 2011 to 2021 (n = 31) were examined according to their structure and journalistic quality standards using foundation theory. One of the results of the study was to distinguish between linear stories and quarterly stories with linear elements. While the nature of multimedia, continuous text, and video content prevailed in both formats, they differed in their complexity as well as certain expressions of quality standards. Gamification and immersion have emerged as new and controversial aspects of journalistic quality in digital stories.

Rodríguez-Breijo et al. (2021) “Council Press Offices as Sources of Political Information: Between Journalism for Accountability and Propaganda”: This study sought to find out what the political and technical leaders of the municipalities understand about the meaning of transparency and public information and what role they perceive the various parties involved such as the government, the opposition,

and the public should play. The study adopted a qualitative approach where the websites of 605 Spanish councils with a population of more than 100,000 were analyzed and three focus groups were held with political and technical leaders from a selection of sample councils. One of the results presented by the study was that technical and political leaders do not have a clear awareness of their function in administrative accountability or the need to apply journalistic standards to the statements they publish. They even defend in minute detail the use of propaganda standards to focus on the actions and information of the local government.

Pantic and Cvetkovic (2020) "Journalism Practice in a Digital Age: Utilization of Social Media in Online News": The current study used a gatekeeper perspective to examine the media practices of 10 prominent US-based news sites when extracting content and sources from social media. A careful content analysis of 180 online articles shows that journalists rely primarily on institutional official sources when using social media in the news production process. Moreover, information written in online news is more likely to appear than information in multimedia form, such as photos and videos. Based on the results, Twitter has emerged as the cornerstone of modern journalism because it is the main platform adopted by news organizations seeking content on social media. Finally, the results show that social media is more likely to be used by journalists writing stories about entertainment and politics.

Geise et al. (2021) "The effects of digital media images on political participation online: Results of an eye-tracking experiment integrating individual perceptions of 'photo news factors'": The study aimed to answer two questions: How does sharing news images affect the political process and what are the characteristics of the image that play a role in this regard? The study concluded that the public's following of news images published through the media contributes to making them more willing to participate in political events.

Şen (2020) "Video journalism and online news videos as a digital journalism application. In *New journalism: channels, experiences, possibilities*": The researcher in this study indicated that video is increasingly used in a wide range of social science research areas, providing rich recordings of social processes and providing an entirely new type of data. Online video has revolutionized traditional broadcasting and changed the way journalists approach journalism. Video journalism is a type of journalism in which the journalist shoots, edits, and presents his or her video material. Video journalism is used effectively to engage viewers in the story, emphasizing digital storytelling over traditional TV and incorporating professional video techniques to enhance web projects.

Aaldering et al. (2018) "Mediated leader effects: The impact of newspapers' portrayal of party leadership on electoral support": The study aimed to find out the effect of newspapers publishing pictures of party leaders on electoral support, and one of the most prominent findings was that the personal traits of party leaders that appear in the media greatly affect voters, both negatively and positively.

Tang and Chan (2017) "The impact of online advertising on Generation Y's purchase decision in Malaysia": The study showed that images play a crucial role when the public evaluates politicians because the public looks for certain qualities such as honesty, intelligence, and sincerity when making electoral decisions.

Çağlar and Köklü (2017) "The use of new media as a political communication tool: a research on the official websites of political Parties": The study found that political parties use their websites

extensively and continuously to inform their voters, establish interactive communication, and create public opinion.

Boomgaarden and Boukes's (2016) "Image versus text: How newspaper reports affect evaluations of political candidates": The study found that news coverage has become more visible thanks to Internet journalism and that news formats are effective in voters' evaluations of political candidates.

Hermstein (2016) "Developing and implementing a social media communication training guide for the US Army Kansas City recruiting battalion": The study aimed to identify best practices through social media sites for army recruits, as the results showed that advertising on social media supports the army's national advertising campaigns.

Sharlamanov and Jovanoski (2014) "The role of image in the political campaigns": The two researchers conducted a study on the role of image in political campaigns and the extent to which it is possible to determine the image of candidates in contemporary political campaigns, especially election winners.

Boehmer (2014) "The negative effect of flaming on learning from political news online": The study indicated that the media has a role in the public making political democratic decisions by providing them with information about current political events through their participation in commenting on political news and facilitating the discussion of various political topics.

By reviewing previous studies, we note that they generally focused on explaining the impact of digital journalism on the news production process and dealing with media content for the public or the communicator in general according to several aspects. The basic ideas contained in these studies can be summarized as follows:

- Dealing with media content provided through digital journalism by governments, for example, and its impact on people's involvement in the political process in general.
- Many digital journalistic arts contribute to the news publishing process and are presented by digital journalism, the most important of which are news, video, audio, etc.
- Referring to the changing ethical principles in the world of digital journalism and artificial intelligence applications from the point of view of journalists and what is the change in journalistic principles.
- Using field theory with the philosophy of technology to know the extent of the impact of technology on the work of journalism in the digital world.
- Addressing the impact of digital journalism on traditional national journalism, especially after the collapse of the advertising aspect in the news production process due to fierce competition with global digital technology platforms.
- Digital journalism relies on the basic infrastructure of the Internet that transmits, exchanges, receives, and hosts data and clarifies the relationship of this in creating the basic infrastructure for the connections of the political news production process.

Thus, it can be said that the current study agrees with previous studies in stating and clarifying the importance of digital journalism as a means of modern digital media that influences several aspects and levels during the news-making process, specifically in the world of politics. The study also agreed with some studies in the methodology used based on the questionnaire according to the quantitative method to monitor the effects of digital journalism on the aspect of forming

the political image. The researcher benefited from those previous studies in using the elements that represent the political mental image, and this point, in particular, is one of the most prominent features that distinguish this study and make it different from other studies because it deals with the aspect of the political mental image according to multi-faceted elements, and therefore this study is considered one of the first scientific studies that deals with the aspect of the impact of digital journalism on the formation of the political mental image according to the multifaceted nature.

3 The meaning and scope of the concept of the image

The word “image” derives from the Latin “imago” and is linked to “imitation.” Webster’s dictionary defines “image” thus: “a common mental perception among members of a given group that refers to a particular person or thing in that group” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Merrill (1962) defines “image” as, “the general impression of a state, government, or country as a system of ideas, opinions, and trends.” American journalist Walter Lippman was the first to address the issue of the image in his well-known *Public Opinion*, first published in 1922. In his book, Lippman pointed out that the world we live in cannot be directly surrounded by our known senses, and he expressed the need to explore this world through imagination. Thanks to this fact, he learns to see with his mind and to imagine a large part of this world that he cannot especially see, touch with his hand, or perceive with his other senses. Thus, people gradually begin to create in their own minds images that they cannot form with their senses: “This mental image of the external world is a simplified representation of an unreal environment (Lippman, 1922). Therefore, it can be said that people live in two different worlds, one of which is near but small and limited. The first is the medium in which people receive information directly about themselves through their traditional senses. The other world is distant and not directly perceived by the senses, but this wider world is used to obtain information through transportation, communication, and social interaction. Hayakawa refers to this world as the reported world, which is directly opposed to the world perceived by the individual, and the image of this transformed world consists of a period that passes through the stages of human growth and development (Hayakawa, 1939). According to Scott (1966), the image is composed of three basic elements in the human mind: the first is the set of cognitive qualities that a person can perceive mentally, the second is the emotional element related to tilting or predisposition to that thing, and the third element is the behavioral component of the set of practical reactions to the object that the person considers appropriate according to the qualities in his mind. Boulding (1956) claims that the way a person behaves depends on the image he has created in his head, and, therefore, if there is any image change, it necessarily requires a behavior change.”

4 The concept of the political image

The concept of political image refers to the perceptions and representations of political figures, parties, or ideas as shaped by various forms of communication and media. This image is crucial in influencing public opinion and electoral outcomes, as it encompasses

both the intentional portrayals crafted by political entities and the interpretations made by the electorate (Stoyanov Rossen, 2022). When evaluated in a political sense, the image is an impression that has a symbolic meaning and is formed in the minds of people by integrating with the voter comments (Bennet, 2000). Image lies, deception, “not being what you seem,” and “not appearing as you are” are associated with many negative attributes. There is mixed information about what the image is. In the face of the numerous and difficult connotations that influence the formation of the institutional image of political parties, there is a serious problem of planning, managing, and supervising. The answer to the question of what the party will manage and control is an image. It is believed that the image is an illusion that it is more directed, more created, than reality. The image is considered a differentiating value illusion between products or individuals in any kind of competitive environment. It is claimed that the picture that is attempting to be created in the minds is an illusion; its reality is disputed. The image is negatively associated with “lying and untruth” (Uztuğ, 2004). In terms of a political image, the subject of the media image may be related to a political issue for which the public wants to create a mental image. A political image can be negative or positive; perhaps the problem here is largely subject to media policy. But the goal is to create an image in the mind of the individual. The term “image” is also associated with the fields of foreign policy making and international behavior education. By broadcasting messages to countries or people in general, the media is trying to create a specific image of a particular country or people. Finally, it should be noted that some associate a political image with international political decision-making because the political image represents the psychological environment in which the decision-making process takes place. Therefore, it is difficult to understand and interpret critical decisions and policies without referring to the image of decision-makers about themselves and others, which then helps us understand not only the decision maker and their decision but also their expected response to future events, issues, and situations (Tarabshi, 2007).

5 Elements of the political image

As elements of the political image, in this section, the election candidate, election campaigns, political parties, political events, the head of state, the political image of the country, the government, the army, and the parliament are examined (Sfez, 1993; Fiden, 2016; Buhmann, 2016; Ismail, 1998).

- The Election

The image of the candidate can be defined as the whole of suicides created in the mind of the political representative who is the candidate. In this context, it is seen that during the election process, political party leaders want to direct and influence the perceptions of voters through the discourses they produce and use about their political opponents.

- Election Campaigns

The political communication of elections is based on five principles: the sender of political information, the political discourse, and the receiver of political discourse, the channels of political communication, and the expected results.

- Political Parties

The images of political parties include elements such as the characteristics of the party leader, the quality of the method they use, the political attitude they exhibit in the face of problems and events, and the solutions they produce. At the same time, the political party consists of the image, political party identity, political vision and mission, political party culture, and characteristics of the political party leader.

- Political Events

To talk about political events, the concept of “events” must first be defined: any event that occurs, or that may be of interest or interest to you; a historical phenomenon; the occurrence of acts that constitute and are considered to constitute a crime according to legal regulations; (science) an observation which is open to all kinds of facts or conditions; and (science) the first matter, object, or natural fact which is perceived or known by experiment.

- The President of the Republic (Leader)

The concept of the head of state is close to the concept of a leader in terms of meaning. In general, each social structure has its expectations from its leader. While all leaders have some common characteristics, the specific qualities that make leadership essential are not fully differentiated.

- The Political Image of the Country

An image of a country is a collection of beliefs, attitudes, and opinions that one or another group has about a country.

- The Government

The government is the political system by which a country or society is governed and organized. There are many terms related to the concept of government, for example, democracy and property.

- The Army

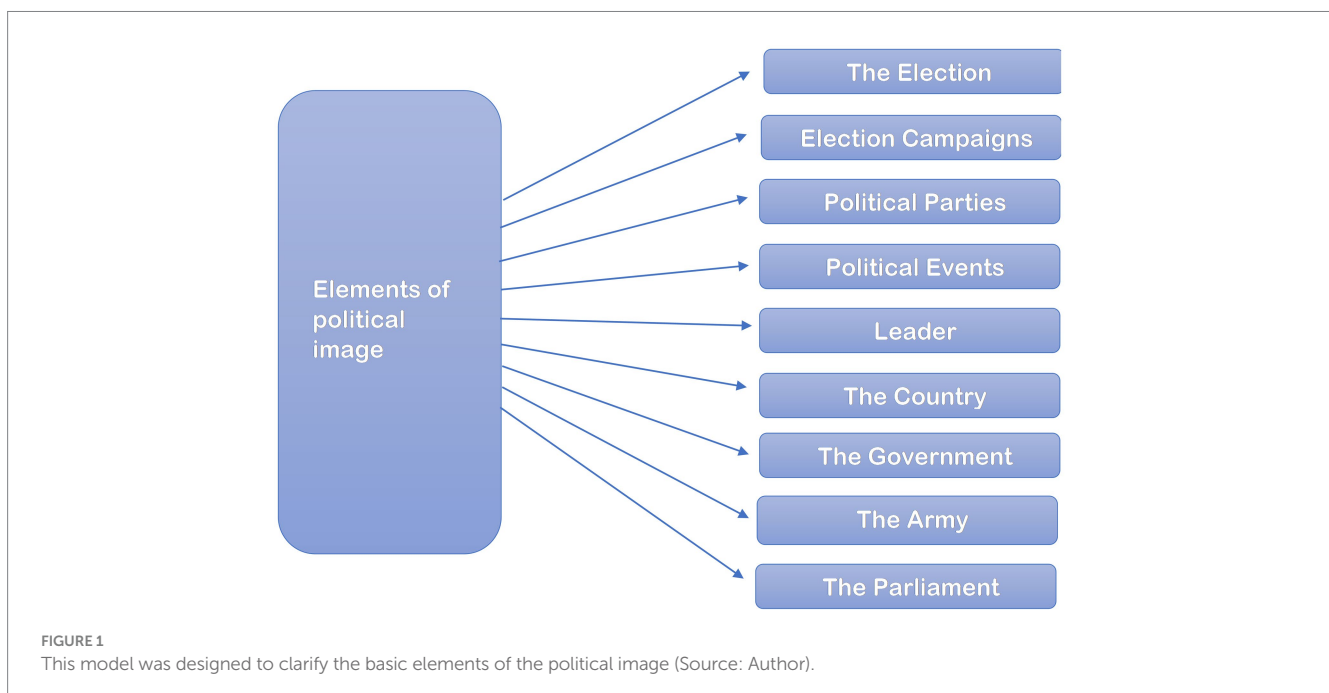
In general, the army is known as a group of well-trained combat personnel. At the same time, the military is a group that can take independent measures and decisions and maintain general leadership. Or it may be known as a military force with combat power, training, and combat equipment belonging to a particular country.

- The Parliament

The Parliament, the House of Representatives, or the People’s Assembly shall be fully competent to all applications of legislative authority according to the principle of separation of powers. Therefore, it is the legislative body that represents the legislative power in constitutional states. It consists of a group of individuals called representatives. Their participation in parliament is carried out using democratic methods with the right to elections and universal suffrage to clarify the basic elements of the political image (See Figure 1).

6 The history of journalism and the emergence of digital journalism

Industrialization, mechanization, and urbanization are the basic components of the capitalist economy. Since the second half of the 20th century, the newspaper has been decisive in taking its place in society as a social and technological institution. Newspapers that existed since the beginning of the century in the second half of the 20th century turned from being newspapers of the elite to being mass



newspapers. The mass newspaper, which is based on the reporting understanding for all sections of society, created various breakthroughs in terms of news monitoring. When the people of every tribe are in the news, the people of every tribe are in the news. The phenomenon of melanization has been oriented towards gaining weight in the mass newspaper arena. Technological developments in the direction of typesetting, printing, and paper production have led to the sale of newspapers at cheaper prices. It is one of the main efforts to attract the attention of the person who comes to the agenda as a novelty, to sell newspapers cheaply, and to direct the broad masses to buy and read newspapers.

While technology has brought about changes in the formal development of the newspaper, journalism has taken its place in society as a profession and the newspaper as a social institution. It was widely distributed in the community with the mass newspaper (Tokgöz, 2000, pp. 23–24). This new medium, called Internet media, has taken a very important position in our age. The opportunities it provides in terms of communication such as access to and dissemination of information and the facilities it brings have spread this new medium as an indispensable tool for journalism. However, the effects of digitalization in the field of journalism are not limited to a new medium, changing news, distribution, and consumption. As a result of the use of artificial intelligence in news production, the start of news production by robot newspapers is the second stage of digitalization in the field of journalism (Uçak, 2018, pp. 20–21).

7 Types of digital journalism

Deuze (2001) identified four types of digital journalism based on the classification of news sites. These are as follows.

- Journalism Operated by Mainstream News Sites

Considered the most widely published type of news media production over the Internet, it is the main news site that offers a

selection of editorial content. Examples include the highly acclaimed CNN, BBC, and MSNBC sites. Most online newspapers fall into this category.

- Index and Category Sites

The second type is far less involved in mainstream media and journalism organizations. It is often attributed to specific search engines (such as Altavista or Yahoo), marketing research companies or agencies (News Index), and sometimes to entrepreneurial individuals (Paperboy).

- Criticism and Comment Sites

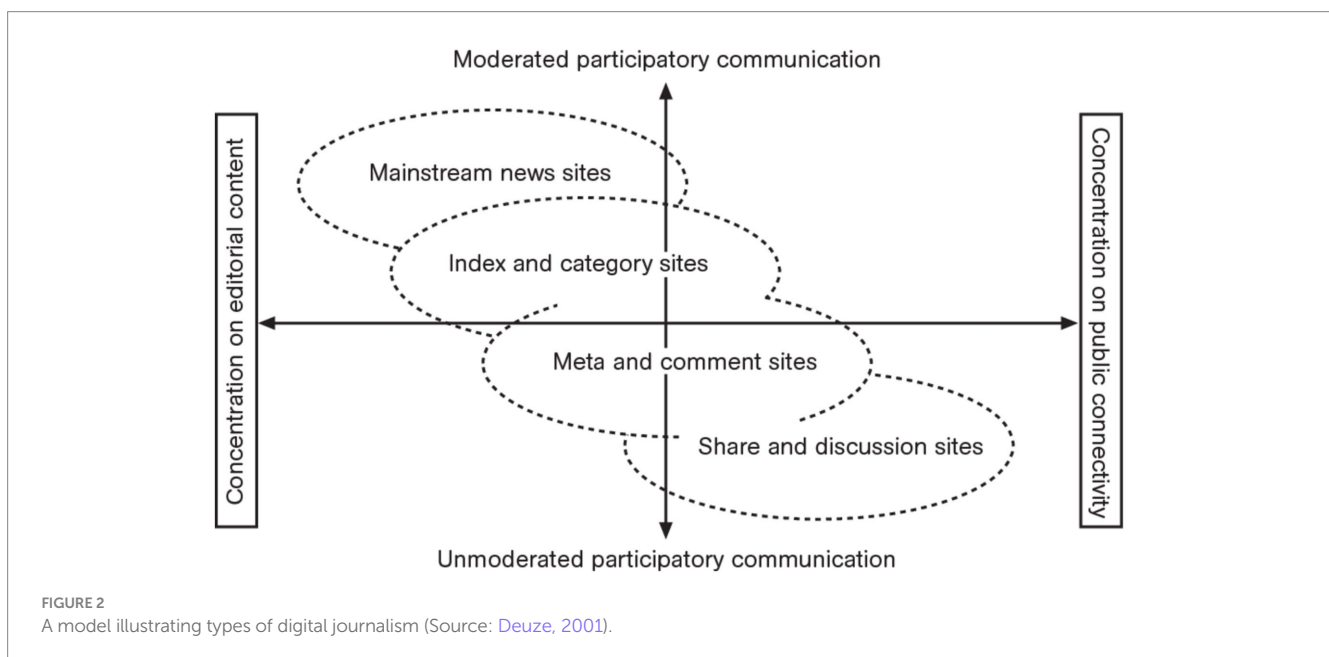
The third type of categories are news media and media-related sites in general; they are sometimes also described as media watchdogs. They are sometimes said to be designed as an expanded directory and category sit. European examples include Media News, European Media, and the European Journalism Centre.

- Sharing and Discussion Sites

This type of Internet journalism is also defined as “group weblogs,” which offer personal accounts of an unlimited number of people about their experiences on the Internet (see Figure 2).

8 Characteristics of digital journalism

The advent of the internet did not cause major radical changes in journalism at first. However, when they realized that the Internet, which had become widely used over time, was also very effective in the function of receiving news, traditional newspapers turned to the Internet. Realizing that their news would lose a lot of their readers if it was not on web pages, newspapers gradually moved their pages



from traditional newspapers to their websites (Tokgöz, 2014, p. 101). The advantages of news being available via the Internet are numerous. The news can be delivered very quickly and is constantly updated; readers can access news 24 h per day; audio-graphic-video files can be used on a multimedia basis, interactivity is provided to the reader in which the reader can immediately communicate their comments; links provide easily assessable background information on news-related topics, and readers can also find different news stories that do not appear in other media (Karaduman, 2003, p. 147). Internet journalism has an update feature introduced throughout the day, and an archiving or news archive feature allows the reader to easily and comfortably receive news and information at any time. This feature allows users to access the specific information they want, among the many pieces of information that the newspaper provides. This property may be called news in demand (Garrison, 1997, p. 81). In the same vein, digital journalism is characterized by its ability to quickly adapt to new technologies and audience needs. Journalists can experiment with formats and storytelling techniques, such as live blogs, podcasts, and interactive graphics, to enhance the user experience (Thorsen and Jackson, 2018).

9 Techniques of digital journalism

Many sources have pointed to the existence of a set of techniques provided by digital journalism, which are: (Ismail, 1998; Al-Lahham et al., 2015; Kuyucu, 2017).

- Digital News

News is, of course, the basis of modern internet journalism as it is for print journalism; techniques including reports, and research, interviews articles, etc. are all simply methods of communicating news.

- Digital Article

The article is defined as a group of paragraphs published by the newspaper to cover interests related to events or issues of public interest. Normally, the article takes the ideology of the newspaper or the author.

- Digital Report

The report is an indispensable and one of the most important techniques of journalism. It is a complete description of an event that occurred; in other words, the press report lists events dynamically and in detail. The report is also different from other techniques of internet journalism because it is not limited to the basic elements but rather to the spatial and temporal definition of the event and addresses the subject in clear and easy language and attractive expressions.

- Digital Research

Research is one of the most important techniques of Internet journalism and involves many editorial techniques. Simply put, research is the process of researching and examining a specific subject.

The research aims to find the causes and solutions to problems by analyzing them.

- Digital Interviews

An interview is a kind of news. However, rather than strictly information in the interview, the interviewee's attitudes, thoughts, and opinions are also covered. The journalist who prepares the interview should learn the subject thoroughly, make relevant and important examinations, and collect the necessary documents.

- Digital Cartoons

A cartoon is a type of drawing that explains the topics to the masses using a joke and critical method. Some kinds of pictures have meaning. The word cartoon came from French to Turkish. Leonardo da Vinci wrote the first known cartoons in history. Gian Lorenzo Bernini was also one of the building blocks of cartoon art. This art has grown in Italy and France.

- Video, Audio, and Photography

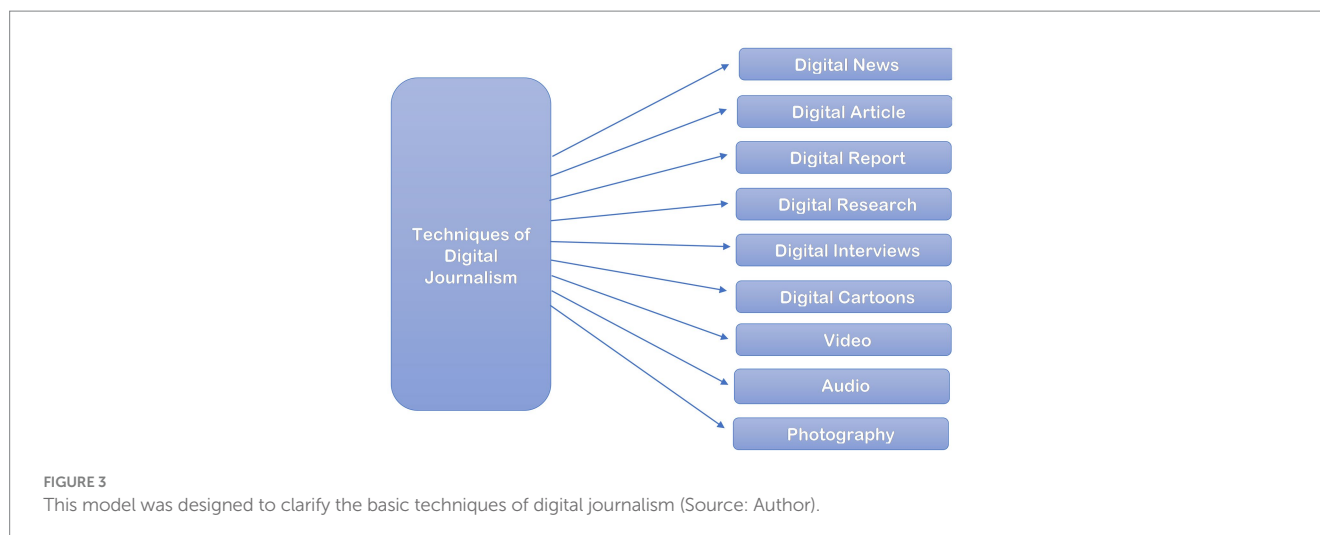
Content such as audio, images, text, and video can be easily distributed everywhere via the internet. Since the first half of the 1990s, the internet has had a significant impact on journalism, enabling the use of computer technologies in journalism and access to news in real-time by news consumers. Among the facilities that the internet brings is access to audio, video, and video archives and access to supporting elements and information (to clarify the basic techniques of digital journalism see Figure 3).

10 Digital journalism in Turkey

Journalism is changing in Turkey as much as it is in the rest of the world. This change in the basic qualities of the journalistic profession is seen. This situation was especially evident with the Gulf Crisis in 1990 and the Gulf War in 1991 (Tokgöz, 2000, p. 41).

The organization was the first to publish on the Internet in Turkey was Aktuel Magazine on July 19, 1995. Lemana Magazine followed in October of the same year, and the Zaman newspaper began to publish news and articles in its printed version as headlines on its website as of December 2, 1995 (Karaduman, 2003, p. 2). The first newspaper to publish all of its printed newspaper content on its website was Milliyet on November 27, 1996. Hürriyet and Sabah newspapers started publishing their online versions in January 1997. In 1995, a company called Yeni Yayınları Network was established to present newspaper pages ready for printing to its readers online and thus started the era of virtual-only news broadcasting (Gürcan, 1999, p. 32).

Internet journalism in Turkey is generally studied in two periods. In the first period spanning the years 1995–2000, internet newspapers were not yet popular since internet technology was an innovation. Online newspapers were often merely an extension of traditional newspapers, and news websites were simply a copy of the newspaper. The second period of internet journalism started in 2000, and it can be said that internet journalism in the real sense started to be carried out in this period. One of the reasons for the strengthening of Internet journalism in this period was the fact that workers from four media



companies were unemployed in the economic crisis of 2000. Many unemployed media workers turned to the internet and started to do internet journalism by opening websites (Gürçan, 2005, p. 41). Today, almost all national and local newspapers have publications on the Internet, as well as a large number of Internet newspapers that are published only on the Internet. When looking at internet journalism practices in Turkey, some researchers say that it would be right to make a duo group. The first group consists of the websites of traditional media organizations, while the second group consists of news sites that exist only on the Internet.

Features such as the speed, updating, interaction, and low cost provided by the internet have caused new internet-based media to gain strength against traditional media (Bulunmaz, 2014, p. 23). With the advent of internet newspapers, in addition to being able to access the publications of traditional newspapers on the internet, only websites that provide news on the internet can also access them. Many of the sites that broadcast news over the internet receive news from agencies and publish it on their sites. Due to the lack of a full-fledged correspondent staff on news sites, the news is usually broadcast through agencies. For this reason, many internet newspapers have the same news.

11 How does digital journalism affect the formation of the political image?

Digital journalism is involved in all kinds of political communication processes with information, information, and sometimes even entertainment content. This can manifest itself in many areas, from events that develop in an electoral process to problems caused by political power or the service it produces to the ancient issues of political philosophy. At the same time, the relationship between Digital journalism and the political sphere can be seen as a natural relationship and interaction of the social system that emerged due to ontological reasons. Both institutions of the social system claim that they take authority and responsibility from the people, which they perform with a public conscience for the people on behalf of the people. A lot of research on the subject of political communication, elections of mass communication, candidates,

images, and, accordingly, election campaigns, parties, programs, promises, and debates, concluded that Digital journalism serves to inform the public on issues such as political scandals, public opinion surveys, and the results of forecasts. The information that individuals receive about political issues has become indirect in the age of Digital journalism. It is possible to talk about a similar process in the development of the political image. The information, opinions, attitudes, and opinions reflected in the communication environment about the characteristics of any political candidate, even the rumors that favor or oppose them, will become symbiotic relations that will gain new meaning when their subjects are expanded to other dimensions. It is possible to say that in today's communication environment, the political image has developed in a symbiotic way. It is now generally accepted that Digital journalism will not be separated from the debates of democracy as part of the system. In this regard, Digital journalism is considered a positive contribution by some thinkers while according to others, it comes to the fore as dynamite for democracy. All these approaches show the importance of Digital journalism in the debate on democracy (Damlapinar and Balci, 2016, p. 58). In addition, there are significant and clear effects of digital journalism on the process of shaping the political image, through several important points such as its role in visual impact, represented by containing a lot of content supported by pictures and videos, which contribute to shaping public attitudes towards political figures. Research has indicated that visual elements in news coverage can influence how the public evaluates political candidates (Boomgaarden et al., 2016). This also applies to the results of studies that indicated the impact that digital media has on shaping public attitudes in the political aspect in general, such as the style of public attitudes towards political parties, elections, and many other issues (Malkawi, 2024a, 2024b) Also on this side, Research indicates that the use of AI-generated images in political articles can enhance readers' understanding and engagement. For instance, a study found that AI-generated images aligned better with the content of political articles than traditional images, leading to improved comprehension among readers. This effect varied by political alignment, with conservative participants favoring generated images in factual reports and liberal participants preferring them in biased contexts (Park et al., 2024). Also, Digital journalism fosters political participation by

making information more accessible and engaging. The ability to share and interact with news content online encourages individuals to engage politically, thereby shaping their political identities and perceptions (Boler, 2008). Studies show that exposure to political content through digital media can mobilize voters and increase turnout, which in turn influences the political landscape and the image of political figures. While digital journalism can enhance participation, it also has the potential to create polarization. The systematic review of studies on digital media's impact on democracy highlights that while digital platforms can increase political knowledge, they can also foster echo chambers—environments where users are exposed primarily to information that reinforces their existing beliefs. This phenomenon can distort political images by amplifying partisan perspectives and reducing trust in traditional media sources (Dimitrova et al., 2014). The relationship between digital journalism and trust in political institutions is complex. While digital media can enhance political knowledge, it can also undermine trust in political figures and institutions. The decline in trust is attributed to the prevalence of misinformation and biased reporting, which can negatively affect how the public forms and perceives political images.

12 The research topic and research questions

It is known that the media has effects on image building in different areas. Experts have tried to measure the potential effects of media on the image-building process from the past to the present. Thus, research aimed at determining the effectiveness of newly emerging media tools has attracted the attention of experts. Some of the most important media tools that have created digital journalism in our age are computers and mobile phones. Digital journalism has flexibility, ease of use, and interactivity. In this research, the effects of digital journalism on creating a political image are discussed. In the process of creating a political image of digital journalism (the image of the election candidate, election campaigns, political parties, political events, the army, etc.), the idea that it may have potential effects is the starting point of the research. For this reason, the researcher aimed to measure the influence of digital journalism on creating a political image in line with the opinions of academics working in universities in Turkey in the field of political science and international relations. Here is the problem sentence for this research: According to the opinions of Turkish academics, what level of contribution does digital journalism make in the process of creating a political image?

12.1 Research questions

- 1 What are the types of habits of using digital journalism to create a political image in the minds of academics?
- 2 What political images does digital journalism influence in the minds of academics?
- 3 What are the levels of influence on the formation of political image in the minds of academics?
- 4 What are the most effective digital journalism techniques/methods in creating a political image, according to academics?

12.2 Hypotheses

H1: There are significant relationships between Elements of political image (image of an election candidate, image of election campaigns, image of political parties, image of political events, image of the head of state, political image of the country, government, army, parliament) and the effects of digital journalism on creating political image (cognitive, emotional and behavioral).

H2: There are significant relationships between Elements of political image (image of election candidate, image of election campaigns, image of political parties, image of political events, image of the head of state, political image of the country, government, army, parliament) and the digital journalism techniques that contribute to creating a political image (news, articles, reports, research, interviews, cartoons, video, audio, photography).

13 The universe and sample of the research

The study population consists of professors of Turkish universities, and data were collected quantitatively by distributing an electronic questionnaire to a sample of (103) academic professors working in Turkish universities. The main reason for targeting Turkish university professors was the researcher's personal experience in this field and his closeness to Turkish professors directly through his doctoral studies and his work as a fellow professor at Suleyman Demirel University for nearly 2 years, so he had the opportunity to communicate directly with them and observe the extent to which Turkish professors rely on and use digital journalism to follow political events and keep up with and influence developments in the world. In terms of the sampling method, the convenience sampling method was applied, which is a type of non-probability sampling, where participants are selected based on their accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This approach is often used when time, resource or accessibility issues make other sampling methods impractical (Jager et al., 2017). Accordingly, the electronic questionnaire was distributed to the universities where the researcher had academic friends and they were asked to distribute it to their acquaintances in all the colleges of those universities where they work. Thus, after waiting for a long time, the number of participants reached 103 items that were analyzed using the statistical analysis program and the results were extracted from them.

14 Data collection tool

In the research, data were collected by survey method. The survey in question consists of three main sections. In the first part: There is a form for determining internet journalism usage habits, in the second part there is an attitude and behavior scale, and in the third part there are demographic multiple-choice questions.

14.1 Internet journalism usage habits determination form

There are 8 multiple choice questions to learn the internet journalism usage habits of the academics participating in the research.

14.2 Attitude and behavior scale

A five-point Likert-type scale divided into 4 sections to determine the views of academics participating in the study on internet journalism's political image formation. 1. It consists of 9 propositions regarding how much internet journalism contributes to political image formation, respectively. Proposition response options are arranged as: never contributes, small extent, medium extent, large extent, and very large extent. 2. It consists of 27 propositions in total, 9 under each factor, to measure the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of internet journalism on political image formation. Proposition response options are arranged as: never affects, small extent, medium extent, large extent, and very large extent. 3. There are 9 propositions consisting of techniques regarding how much internet journalism's techniques/methods contribute to political image formation. Proposition response options are arranged as: never contributes, small extent, medium extent, large extent, and very large extent.

14.3 Demographic information form

This part of the survey contains 4 multiple-choice questions to determine the demographic status of academics. Here, participants were asked questions regarding age, gender, years of experience, department, and academic title.

About its theoretical aspect, this study relies on the media reliance model, which represents one of the most important communication and media models that appeared specifically in 1976 at the hands of Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DE-fleur, where its basic idea was that individuals derive everything, they want to know about the events and facts around them on communication tools. In addition, the model refers to specific goals that individuals seek by following up on media tools, namely: (understanding, guidance, and entertainment). The basic assumptions of the model can be referred to as follows:

- There is a disparity in the environment in which each individual lives with the other, due to the stability and stability in each of them, so the more instability there is, the higher the dependence of individuals on different communication and media tools.
- The more common provisions and laws in an environment help people reach their goals, the higher the dependence of people in that environment on the media.
- The difference in the percentage of individuals' dependence on the means of communication and media is related to their diverse qualities, conditions, and goals (DeFleur and Rokeach, 1982).

15 Effects of media and communication

- Cognitive effects: According to the accreditation model, cognitive effects include ambiguity, where the individual seeks ambiguous information through the use of the media to provide him with the news he seeks to know, especially in times of war and global accidents. Attitude Formation this is shown significantly in the style and manner of the media in the process of disseminating certain ideas and information about a lot of diverse issues and a lot of people to influence their ideas and attract their attention, specifically at the time of elections or disasters and the like.

Prioritization Setting this is represented in the media following a special method according to what it wants so that it makes the audience focus on a set of things and issues without the other sequentially through repetition of their presentation more than others. Values this point is represented by many values and qualities shared by a group of people in a particular environment who seek to preserve and spread them to others and for this purpose use the media to achieve this goal.

- Emotional effects: They are the effects related to feelings such as love and hate. And the means of communication have very large effects on the emotional side of the human being (Hijab, 2007).
- Behavioral effects: Doing something or not wanting to do something is one of the most prominent behavioral effects of the media. This is only an extension of both cognitive and emotional effects. It is indicated that behavioral effects consist of several elements, the most prominent of which is activation, which is the reaction of a person when he does something influenced by what he has followed through the media (Makkawi and Al-Sayed, 1988).

While preparing the survey questions, the studies of Malkawi (2024a, 2024b) and Afifi (2013) were used for questions regarding internet journalism usage habits. In determining 9 propositions about how much internet journalism contributes to political image creation: The work of these researchers has been utilized (Boomgaarden and Boukes, 2016; Tang and Chan (2017); Tran, 2010; Muthanna, 2017; Aaldering et al., 2018; Segev, 2003). These studies have been utilized to measure the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of Internet journalism on political image creation: Alfrehat (2015), Al-Ghamdi (2017), Malkawi and Al-Samasiry (2017), Wissam (2009), Malkawi (2018), Abdul-Razzaq (2009), Al-Din (2001), Al-Aythawi (2015), Abu Amoud (1994), Al-Anzi (2016). The study benefited from the studies of Suleyman (2009) in determining 9 propositions about how much the techniques/methods of digital journalism contribute to creating the political image. It is worth noting that what distinguishes the study from previous studies is that it deals with the aspect of the political image according to several diverse elements and is not limited to just one element. These elements number nine, (Political Events, The Election candidate, The President of The Republic (Leader), The Country, Election Campaigns, The Government, Political Parties, The Army, and The Parliament) and they are the ones that were adopted as standards to determine the impact of digital journalism on the formation of the political image in general.

16 Data analysis

The data obtained from the surveys were analyzed in a computer environment with the SPSS (25.0) program. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the demographic characteristics of academics and their internet journalism usage habits. In testing the research hypotheses, Pearson correlation analysis was used. The results were tested at the significance level of (0.05).

17 The findings of the study

It may be seen in Table 1 that in terms of gender, the Turkish academics consisted of 58 (56.3%) men and 45 (43.7%) women. In terms of age, there were 31 (30.1%) each in the 25–34 and 35–44 age

TABLE 1 Demographic characteristics of the academics involved in the study.

	Frequency	Percent
The gender		
Male	58	56.3
Female	45	43.7
Total	103	100.0
Distribution of academics according to their ages		
25–34	31	30.1
35–44	31	30.1
45–54	33	32.0
Older than 55	8	7.8
Total	103	100.0
According to the experiences of the academics involved in the study		
Fewer than five years	21	20.4
Between 5–10 years	22	21.4
Between 10–15 years	19	18.4
More than 15 years	41	39.8
Total	103	100.0
Distribution of academics participating in the study		
Professor	15	14.6
Associate professor	30	29.1
Doctor	22	21.4
Readership	0	0
Research assistant	33	32.0
Lecturer	3	2.9
Total	103	100

groups, 33 (32.0%) in the 45–54 age group, and eight (7.8%) in the group older than 55. In terms of academic experience, 21 (20.4%) had fewer than 5 years, 22 (21.4%) had between 5–10 years, 19 (18.4%) had between 10–15 years, and 41 (39.8%) had more than 15 years. In terms of academic rank, 15 (14.6%) were full professors, 30 (29.1%) were associate professors, 22 (21.4%) held the rank of doctor, three were (32.0%) research assistants, and three were lecturers.

17.1 Findings on the habits of internet use by academics participating in the study

When the data in Table 2 are examined, it may be seen that 51 (49.5%) of the Turkish academics who participated in the survey stated that they Always used internet journalism, 40 (38.8%) said that they used it frequently, and 10 (9.7%) said that they used it sometimes (1.0%). A Turkish academic who answered this question with “I never use it” said there was no time to follow up.

There is no doubt that this result is logical and correct and is in line with the results of many studies that have indicated the great use of digital journalism by academics working in universities around the world (Malkawi, 2024a, 2024b). This is related to the

TABLE 2 The use of digital journalism by Turkish academics.

	Frequency	Percent
Never use	1	1.0
Rarely	1	1.0
Sometimes	10	9.7
Frequently	40	38.8
Always	51	49.5
Total	103	100.0

TABLE 3 Daily use of digital journalism by Turkish academics.

	Frequency	Percent
More than 3 h per day	7	6.8
For 1–2 h	49	47.6
For less than 1 h	46	44.7
Total	102	99.0

nature of digital journalism as one of the most important modern digital means that has become widely used by the public after its great superiority over traditional paper journalism. The era in which we live in general has become the era of digital media and its various means and the primary source of information on various events and issues that occur around the world (Salaverría-Aliaga, 2019).

When the data in Table 3 are examined, it may be seen that seven (6.8%) of the Turkish academics surveyed said they used internet journalism for more than 3 h per day, 49 (47.6%) for 1–2 h, and 46 (44.7%) for less than 1 h.

This result indicates the average daily use of digital press by this category of the public. This can be explained by the work conditions and obligations that govern their work. Therefore, the period available to them during the day is between 1 and 2 h. This is considered a logical time for the public that aims to know specific information about events and issues directly without wasting more time browsing everything without specifically benefiting from that media content. This is an important point that clarifies the characteristic enjoyed by faculty members in universities when dealing with digital media in general, as each of them knows the main goal of following up scientifically and consciously, unlike other audiences that may follow up on a specific medium for long hours to waste time because they did not previously determine the main goal of following up on the media content provided through digital media. This point is one of the important points in media and communication research that was taken into consideration when selecting the research sample from the academic category.

When the data in Table 4 is examined, it may be seen that 73 (28.7%) of the Turkish academics participating in the survey said that they used internet journalism because it was easy to use, 54 (21.3%) said that using the internet journalism did not require time and effort, 35 (13.8%) said that internet news is published in a more timely manner than in traditional journalism, 30 (11.8%) said that internet news includes topics not covered by traditional journalism, 26 (10.2%) said that internet news is considered an alternative to traditional journalism, 19 (7.5%) said that internet news is more focused on analysis and detail,

TABLE 4 Reasons Turkish academics use digital journalism.

	Frequency	Percent
Easy to use	73	28.7
It does not waste time and effort on me.	54	21.3
Is published in a more timely manner than in traditional journalism	35	13.8
Includes topics not covered by traditional journalism	30	11.8
Considered an alternative to traditional journalism	26	10.2
Is more focused on analysis and detail	19	7.5
It is about my area of expertise.	17	6.7
Total	254	100.0

TABLE 5 Use of digital journalism by Turkish academics to pursue political events, problems, and various political issues.

	Frequency	Percent
Never use	0	0
Rarely	1	1.0
Sometimes	13	12.6
Often	44	42.7
All the time	44	42.7
Total	102	99.0

17 (6.7%) said that internet news provided more articles in their area of expertise.

These results, in turn, proved the validity of the basic features mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study, such as the ease of use of digital journalism, the lack of time and effort, the direct publication of news without delay, and many other characteristics and features that made this type of modern journalism completely superior to journalism (Thorsen and Jackson, 2018; Tokgöz, 2014; Karaduman, 2003).

When the data in Table 5 are examined, it may be seen that Turkish academics who participated in the study indicated that 44 (42.7%) used internet journalism all the time and often, 13 (12.6%) sometimes, and 1 (1.0%) rarely.

The result of this question regarding the use of digital journalism by the study sample of Turkish academics specifically to follow political news and political issues is largely consistent with the results of the question dedicated to the general use of this digital medium. It is logical for academics to rely on digital journalism to follow various political news and events around the world, as it is one of the most important and famous modern digital media, and it is mostly specialized in the political aspect, as it is considered by many audiences to be the appropriate source for obtaining information related to political aspects around the world (Homero Gi, 2019).

When the data in Table 6 is examined, it may be seen that 74 (29.0%) of the Turkish academics participating in the survey said that the reason they used digital journalism for politics-related issues was that internet sources presented political events quickly, 50 (19.6%) said that internet sources provided various perspectives on political events, 46 (18.0%) said that internet sources conveyed

TABLE 6 Reasons Turkish academics use digital journalism to pursue politics-related events, problems, and various political issues.

	Frequency	Percent
Internet sources present political events quickly	74	29.0
Internet sources provide various perspectives on political events	50	19.6
Internet sources convey political events utilizing video, sound, and photos	46	18.0
Internet sources provide political information that could not be accessed from other sources	32	12.5
Internet sources provide more than one political source	31	12.2
Internet sources provide a sufficient analysis of political information and events	11	4.3
For my confidence in the political information that Internet sources provide	7	2.7
Internet sources provide honesty in political information.	4	1.6
Total	255	100.0

political events utilizing video, sound, and photos, 32 (12.5%) said that internet sources provided political information that could not be accessed from other sources, 31 (12.2%) said that the internet sources provided more than one political source, 11 (4.3%) said that the internet sources provided a sufficient analysis of political information and events, seven (2.7%) had confidence in the political information they obtained from the internet, and four (1.6%) said that the internet sources provided honesty in political information.

The results of this table represent the prominent role of the basic characteristics of digital journalism in providing the public with information related to the political aspect and thus the great ability to influence them according to several elements. This is what was referred to in several studies when the impact of the various aspects of digital journalism on the public was addressed, such as the role of speed in publishing political news and ease of use (López-García et al., 2022). In addition to the digital arts used by digital journalism that were not present in traditional journalism, such as audio, video and images (Şen, 2020; Sharlamanov and Jovanoski, 2014).

17.2 Findings of academics participating in the study regarding the impact of the digital journalism in the process of building a political image

When the data in Table 7 is examined, it may be seen that “News” (AVT = 4.01) generated the highest average of the techniques/methods of internet journalism that Turkish academicians who participated in the study believed created political images; “video” (AVT = 3.91) was next, followed by “interviews” (AVT = 3.84). “Cartoons” (AVG = 1.16) had the lowest average of all techniques/methods.

TABLE 7 Views of Turkish academics on how much the techniques/methods of digital journalism contribute to the formation of political images.

	Frequency	AVT	AVG
News	102	4.01	0.80
Video	102	3.91	0.98
Interviews	102	3.84	0.96
Photography	102	3.69	1.00
Research	102	3.57	0.93
Sound	102	3.57	1.07
Article	102	3.41	0.95
Report	102	3.32	0.95
Cartoons	102	3.15	1.16
Total	102		

The results of this question show the importance of digital journalistic arts in the process of publishing news and political information and the impact of digital news on this, as news is one of the most prominent forms of traditional and digital journalistic arts at the same time. In addition, there are new journalistic arts that have a very large impact on the process of political influences, such as images and video clips. This result is in common with the results of many previous studies that indicated the great role played by images and video in influencing and creating the political image in general (Bjerknes, 2022; Geise et al., 2021).

As shown in Table 8, the highest factor contributing to the political image by internet journalism for the Turkish academics who participated in the survey in terms of interest was “the image of political events” (Ort = 3.99), followed by “the image of the election candidate” (Ort = 3.95), and “the image of The President of the Republic (Leader)” (Ort = 3.91) and “the political image of the country” (Ort = 3.89). “Parliament” (Org = 3.40) had the lowest average.

Political events and facts such as wars, past Turkish presidential and municipal elections, in addition to the US elections and many other political events in the Middle East and the world are direct evidence of the validity and logic of this result reached by the current study, as Turkish academics rely on this digital medium in order to follow all political events in Turkey, the Middle East and the world as a whole.

As may be seen in Table 9, in terms of internet journalism influencing political image building, “cognitive effects” (Avg = 2.42) was the highest average of the Turkish academics participating in the study, followed by “emotional effects” (Avg = 1.81); “behavioral effects” (Avg = 1.73) had the lowest average of all. According to the Turkish academics who participated in the study, the element that scored the highest average for cognitive effects was “It gives me detailed information about the candidates” (AVT = 2.65); next was “It contributes to the acquisition of political parties and information about them” (AVT = 2.63), followed by “It contributed to my knowledge of the role played by the election campaigns” (Ort = 2.62). The lowest of all was “It gives me various pieces of information about the members of Parliament” (average = 1.96). In addition to the elements mentioned above, the highest average for emotional impact, according to Turkish academics participating in the study, was this statement, “satisfied my cognitive curiosity about political issues and

TABLE 8 Views of Turkish academics participating in the study on the contribution of digital journalism to creating a political image.

	Frequency	AVT	AVG
Political Events	102	3.99	0.81
The Election candidate	102	3.95	0.75
The President of The Republic (Leader)	102	3.91	0.87
The Country	102	3.89	0.85
Election Campaigns	102	3.89	0.72
The Government	102	3.83	0.85
Political Parties	102	3.78	0.78
The Army	102	3.44	0.97
The Parliament	102	3.40	0.94
Total	102		

events” (AVT = 2.11), followed by “increased my concern towards certain political parties” (Ort = 2.05), and “increased my belief in the importance and role of election campaigns” (Ort = 1.93). “I am satisfied with the performance of the government” (AVG = 1.43) had the lowest average of all.

Finally, according to the Turkish academics who participated in the study, the statement with the highest average for behavioral effects was “has enabled me to follow the speeches and reactions of the heads of state in all activities and areas” (AVT = 2.40); this was followed by the statement, “It has made me comment on news and information about the country” (Ort = 2.37), and “it has enabled me to discuss the relevant news with family and friends” (Ort = 2.27). “It has enabled me to join political parties” (average = 0.89) had the lowest average of all.

Such a result represents the logical sequence and gradual progression in the process of influencing any media outlet in any aspect on the masses, as the cognitive influence process must take place first because the audience will not reach the stage of emotional and then behavioral influence without having knowledge and information that contributes to the formation of emotional and behavioral trends towards any issue or incident that it follows through the means of communication, and this is what this result that the study reached confirms. As for the nature of this cognitive influence and the emergence of the answer to satisfy curiosity about political events and then increase interest in some political parties, this is consistent with the current circumstances that the Middle East region is going through in general, as political events are accelerating at a high pace due to wars and their many consequences in general, and for the Turkish state, such a result is also a very logical result. Those who follow Turkish affairs closely and those who have the opportunity to live and study in Turkey realize the great interest in political parties among the Turkish masses, so digital journalism is one of the most important modern digital communication tools that the audience uses to know everything related to Turkish party life.

18 Results of hypotheses

H1: There are significant relationships between Elements of political image (image of an election candidate, image of election

TABLE 9 Views of Turkish academics participating in the study regarding how much internet journalism can influence political image building.

	Frequency	AVT	AVG
1. The cognitive effect	102	2.42	0.66
It gives me detailed information about the candidates	102	2.65	0.86
Contributes to the acquisition of political parties and information about them	102	2.63	0.82
It contributed to my knowledge of the role played by the election campaigns	102	2.62	0.83
It gives me information about the political aspects of Turkey and other countries	102	2.52	0.89
It provides me with comprehensive information about political events.	102	2.50	0.96
It tells me about the presidents I did not know before.	102	2.44	0.89
It gives me detailed information about the method adopted by governments.	102	2.43	0.92
It shows me the military strength and readiness of the army	102	2.04	0.97
It gives me various pieces of information about the members of Parliament	102	1.96	0.92
2. The emotional effects	102	1.81	1.02
It satisfies my cognitive curiosity about political issues and events	102	2.11	1.09
Increased my concern about certain political parties	102	2.05	1.08
Increased my belief in the importance and role of election campaigns	102	1.93	1.05
It has contributed to supporting some candidates and electoral programs.	102	1.91	1.11
It has contributed to improving the image of some heads of state.	102	1.83	1.05
It has contributed to beautifying the image of many countries.	102	1.81	1.06
It raised my concern about the performance of the parliament.	102	1.70	1.01
It makes me feel confident in the strength and readiness of the army.	102	1.51	0.94
I am satisfied with the performance of the government	102	1.43	0.96
3. The Behavioral effects	102	1.73	0.71
It has enabled me to follow the speeches and reactions of the heads of state in all activities and areas	102	2.40	1.00
It has made me comment on news and information about the country	102	2.37	0.94
It has enabled me to discuss the relevant news with family and friends	102	2.27	1.03
It has enabled me to comment on various political events.	102	2.13	1.04
It has helped me stand by some candidates.	102	1.66	1.19
It has allowed me to follow the sessions of the parliament.	102	1.53	1.13
It has helped me to participate in various election campaigns.	102	1.18	1.09
It allowed me to post Photography, videos, and news about the Army.	102	1.11	1.18
It has enabled me to join political parties	102	0.89	1.08

campaigns, image of political parties, image of political events, image of the head of state, political image of the country, government, army, parliament) and the effects of Internet journalism on creating political image (cognitive, emotional and behavioral).

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the views of the academics participating in the research on political image elements and their views on the effects of internet journalism on political image formation. The data for the analysis results are given in Table 10.

According to the data presented in Table 10, a low positive relationship (0.307**) was found between the effects of the general political mental image and the image of the electoral candidate ($p < 0.05$). As for cognitive effects, a low-level positive relationship was found between them and the image of the electoral candidate, the image of the electoral campaigns, the image of the head of state, the image of

the government, the image of the army, and the image of parliament, where ($p < 0.05$). There was also a low-level positive relationship between emotional influences and the image of the electoral candidate (0.203*). Low positive relationships were also found between behavioral influences and all nine elements of the political mental image.

H2: There are significant relationships between Elements of political image (image of election candidate, image of election campaigns, image of political parties, image of political events, image of the head of state, political image of the country, government, army, parliament) and the Internet journalism techniques that contribute to creating a political image (news, articles, reports, research, interviews, cartoons, video, audio, photography).

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the views of the academics participating in the research on political image elements and their views on Internet

journalism techniques (News, articles, reports, research, interviews, cartoons, video, audio, photography) that contribute to creating political image. The data for the analysis results are given in Table 11.

According to the detailed data presented in Table 11, a low positive relationship was found between the arts of electronic journalism and the elements of the general political mental image, where ($p < 0.05$).

19 Conclusion

It has been observed that the influence of the media in the image-building process has increased gradually in recent years (Kaur, 2013). Researchers continue to conduct studies that reveal how media tools affect public opinion. From that time until today, numerous studies have been carried out on the effect of current media tools on image creation in each contemporary period. In the current era, some research has been started in the field of political image and media (Farkas and Bene, 2021). When evaluated in the political field, the image is an impression that carries a symbolic meaning and is formed in the minds of people by integrating with the interpretations of voters, society, and political organizations. The term “political image” may also be related to the fields of foreign policy making and international behavior education. As it is known, there have been and continue to be significant developments in the field of communication and information technology over the last 20–30 years. In this process, media and information technology has reached a stage of development in which it is a complement to traditional media tools (newspapers, radio, and television). The most important technological mass communication tool at this stage is the Internet. The former contribution of traditional media tools to image formation has been undertaken by internet journalism in the current technological age (Farkas and Bene, 2021). Therefore, internet journalism is used to express specific political views create political images in general, and communicate and share information with people, institutions, states, societies, and many others. The main reason for choosing the sample from academics working in universities was the researcher’s personal experience, as he studied for a doctorate in Turkey for 5 years and also worked after that at a Turkish university for about 2 years.

Therefore, he had the opportunity to interact with the Turkish academic community and observe their great reliance on digital journalism. The appropriate sample was used, through which 103 professors participated. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed with the SPSS 25.0 computer program. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the demographics of academics and the habits of academics using Internet journalism. These were the most prominent results the study reached:

The main reason why Turkish academics follow digital journalism is to present political news quickly and provide different points of view on political news in audio, photo, and video.

The most influential digital journalism technology in shaping political images is video. This result greatly supports the result of the study of Şen (2020) this study indicated that the emergence of video technology via the Internet and the digital space has revolutionized traditional publishing and classroom institutions and changed the way and method of dealing with the press.

Digital journalism has contributed more to shaping the image of political events and then to shaping the image of the electoral candidate. This result agrees with the results of several studies, including Geise et al.’s (2021) study he studies concluded that the public’s following of news images published through the media contributes to making them more willing to participate in political events. Also, the study by Boomgaarden et al. (2016) the study found that news coverage has become more visible thanks to Internet journalism and that news formats are effective in voters’ evaluations of political candidates.

The most prominent effects of digital journalism are cognitive effects, specifically its effects in presenting detailed information about candidates and political parties. This result is consistent with many results of previous studies, for example: Çağlar and Köklü (2017) the study found that political parties use their websites extensively and continuously to inform their voters, establish interactive communication, and create public opinion. Tang and Chan (2017) the study showed that images play a crucial role when the public evaluates politicians because the public looks for certain qualities such as honesty, intelligence, and sincerity when making electoral decisions.

Digital journalism contributes to behavioral influences, specifically in following the speeches of heads of state, commenting

TABLE 10 The relationship between political image elements and the effects of internet journalism.

		E. candidate	E. campaigns	Parties	Events	President	Country	Government	Army	Parliament
Effects of internet journalism	P	0.307**	0.250*	0.206*	0.151	0.202*	0.190	0.244*	0.200*	0.202*
	S	0.002	0.011	0.038	0.129	0.042	0.055	0.014	0.044	0.042
Cognitive effects	P	0.381**	0.358**	0.218*	0.212*	0.262**	0.252*	0.293**	0.282**	0.298**
	S	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.033	0.008	0.011	0.003	0.004	0.002
Emotional effects	P	0.203*	0.139	0.110	0.076	0.125	0.128	0.179	0.157	0.186
	S	0.041	0.163	0.271	0.447	0.212	0.201	0.072	0.116	0.061
Behavioral effects	P	0.180	0.127	0.182	0.090	0.117	0.095	0.133	0.063	0.023
	S	0.070	0.204	0.068	0.369	0.242	0.340	0.181	0.529	0.820

*, **It means there is a high positive relationship.

TABLE 11 The relationship between political image elements and internet journalism techniques.

		E. candidate	E. campaigns	Parties	Events	President	Country	Government	Army	Parliament
Internet journalism techniques	P	0.534**	0.479**	0.438**	0.345**	0.333**	0.379**	0.298**	0.401**	0.329**
News	S	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.001
Articles	P	0.495**	0.519**	0.431**	0.531**	0.413**	0.478**	0.470**	0.376**	0.324**
	S	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
Reports	P	0.377**	0.299**	0.296**	0.223*	0.237*	0.324**	0.321**	0.306**	0.291**
	S	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.024	0.016	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.003
Research	P	0.316**	0.286**	0.230*	0.146	0.180	0.215*	0.180	0.264**	0.277**
	S	0.001	0.004	0.020	0.144	0.071	0.030	0.071	0.007	0.005
interviews	P	0.282**	0.272**	0.144	0.178	0.198*	0.215*	0.172	0.290**	0.258**
	S	0.004	0.006	0.149	0.074	0.046	0.030	0.083	0.003	0.009
Cartoons	P	0.511**	0.478**	0.404**	0.453**	0.445**	0.437**	0.430**	0.467**	0.389**
Video	S	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Audio	P	0.337**	0.209*	0.276**	0.137	0.072	0.116	0.035	0.152	0.091
photography	S	0.001	0.035	0.005	0.169	0.474	0.247	0.725	0.126	0.365

*, **It means there is a high positive relationship.

on the news, and participating in it. This result, in its second part, is consistent with the result of the study by [Boehmer \(2014\)](#), as the study indicated that the media has a role in making democratic political decisions among the public by providing them with information about current political events through their participation in commenting on political news.

As a general result, we can explain that most Turkish professors rely on digital journalism to follow all current political events around the world. This can be attributed to the importance of digital journalism as a popular means of digital media in general, which has become today one of the most used means by the public, specifically the audience of university academics. The reason for relying on digital journalism is that it displays political events quickly, making it the appropriate choice for the audience of academics and others. This characteristic is one of the most important qualities provided by all modern digital media, as the feature of speed in transmitting news and events step by step was not available in the time of traditional media. As a follow-up to this, the digital journalistic arts provided by digital journalism also contributed to its great spread and the dependence of audiences on it. For example, journalistic news presented through videos, photos, and audio plays a major role in the way of acceptance and influence of audiences in terms of emotional, cognitive, or behavioral influence. This also explains that these digital arts were one of the most important factors that contributed to the formation of the image of political events exactly as the study concluded. As for the reflection of these results on the image of the Turkish state in general, it can be said that digital journalism plays a pivotal role in shaping Turkey's political image, as digital news platforms have become a major tool for conveying events and analyzing Turkish policies to a wide local and international audience. One of its most important roles is to shed light on Turkey's domestic policies, including issues

related to public freedoms, human rights, and political reforms ([Akser and Baybars-Hawks, 2012](#)). Covering major events such as elections, economic transformations, or security issues also contributes significantly to shaping international public opinion impressions about the country. On the international level, digital journalism highlights Turkey's role as a major player in regional issues such as the Syrian crisis, the refugee issue, and the conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean, making its image a subject of continuous interest and analysis. Global digital media, along with Turkish media, also focuses on the impact of Turkish foreign policy in Africa, Asia, and Europe, including strengthening trade and military partnerships. In addition, digital journalism allows different parties to express their opinions, as digital platforms are used by the Turkish government to provide a positive narrative about its achievements, such as major infrastructure projects, or its successes in the defense industry. In contrast, the opposition and international organizations use the same means to criticize Turkish policies, sometimes presenting a contradictory or even distorted image. One major challenge is the spread of misleading or inaccurate news that can negatively affect Turkey's image. Media coverage that focuses on negative events such as political arrests, protests, or restrictions on local journalism can reinforce a negative image while overlooking some political and economic successes. Ultimately, the impact of digital journalism on Turkey's political image remains a reflection of the complex interaction between the government, the opposition, and local and international media institutions, making it a constantly changing arena that reflects the dynamics of Turkish politics.

In conclusion, it can be said that digital journalism had significant effects on the formation of the political image. This generally confirms the great influence that digital communication tools play in the formation of different images in different fields, taking into account that the results of this study require new studies that address the

potential effects of digital journalism from several other directions, as this study dealt with a group of Turkish professors as a sample for the research. Accordingly, the researcher recommends conducting future studies on a more comprehensive sample and in several countries according to the multi-approach method of the mental image, a study that addresses the effects of digital journalism or other modern digital means in the formation of the economic, social and religious mental image, which will contribute to making significant contributions to the literature.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent from the [patients/ participants OR patients/participants legal guardian/next of kin] was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

Author contributions

OM: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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