



## A review of the transition from traditional marketing to phygital marketing in the sports industry

Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU<sup>1</sup>, Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Sivas, Türkiye.

<sup>2</sup>Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Department of Physical Education and Sport, Institute of Health Science, Sivas, Türkiye.

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### Abstract

Phygital marketing, a relatively new concept in marketing literature, has been accepted by sports businesses and consumer groups within the sports industry. The sports industry, where goods and services are intensively produced, is an important sector with a huge consumer and producer base with millions of users, viewers, fans and businesses. The marketing process of sports products has always been important for the industry. The technological developments and transformation of social networks that started all over the world after the 2000s have been rapidly reflected in marketing strategies within the sports industry. The sector first started to evolve from traditional marketing to digital marketing, and then from digital marketing to phygital marketing. This transformation has led to the formation of phygital marketing platforms that both consumers enjoy and manufacturers benefit from many advantages and promote and advertise their products in different ways. In this study, which compiles the transformation and change in marketing strategies in the sports industry, articles on phygital marketing published in the Scopus database after 2015 were compiled. Then, examples of phygital marketing in the sports industry were analyzed. This study is important in terms of understanding and spreading phygital marketing in the sports sector. As a result of the study, it was concluded that phygital marketing channels provide great convenience in reaching consumers and phygital marketing applications provide businesses with an advantage in the competitive environment. Phygital marketing strategies have the potential to offer great opportunities to sports businesses and other businesses that benefit from the sector in economic terms.

**Keywords:** Traditional marketing, digital marketing, phygital, phygital marketing, sports product

### *Spor endüstrisinde geleneksel pazarlamadan fijital pazarlamaya geçiş üzerine bir derleme*

#### Öz

Pazarlama literatüründe oldukça yeni bir kavram olan fijital pazarlama, spor endüstrisi içinde yer alan spor işletmeleri ve tüketici kitleleri tarafından kabul görmüştür. Mal ve hizmet üretiminin yoğun bir şekilde yapıldığı spor endüstrisi; milyonlarca kullanıcı, izleyici, taraftar ve işletmeleriyle devasa bir tüketici ve üretici kitlesine sahip önemli bir sektördür. Spor ürününün pazarlanma süreci endüstriler için her zaman önemli olmuştur. 2000'li yıllardan sonra tüm dünyada başlayan teknolojik gelişmeler ve sosyal ağların dönüşümü, spor endüstrisi içinde pazarlama stratejilerine hızlı bir şekilde yansımıştır. Sektör önce geleneksel pazarlamadan dijital pazarlamaya, sonra da dijital pazarlamadan fijital pazarlamaya doğru evrilmeye başlamıştır. Bu dönüşüm hem tüketicilerin keyifle deneyimlediği hem de üreticilerin birçok avantajından faydalanarak ürününü daha farklı yollarla tanıtır, reklamını yaptığı fijital pazarlama platformlarının oluşmasına sebep olmuştur. Spor endüstrisinde pazarlama stratejilerinde meydana gelen dönüşüm ve değişimin derlendiği bu çalışmada Scopus veri tabanında 2015 yılından sonra yayınlanan fijital pazarlama ile ilgili makaleler derlenmiştir. Sonra spor endüstrisinde fijital pazarlama ile ilgili örneklerin analizi yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma, fijital pazarlamanın spor sektöründe anlaşılması ve yaygınlaştırılması açısından önemlidir. Çalışma sonucunda fijital pazarlama kanallarının tüketiciye ulaşmada büyük kolaylık sağladığı ve fijital pazarlama uygulamalarının işletmelere rekabet ortamında avantaj sağladığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Fijital pazarlama stratejileri ekonomik anlamda spor işletmelerine ve sektörden faydalanan diğer işletmelere büyük fırsatlar sunma potansiyeline sahiptir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital pazarlama, fijital, fijital pazarlama, geleneksel pazarlama, spor ürünü

**Sorumlu Yazar/ Corresponded Author:** Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU, E-posta/ e-mail: [yurtsiz@gmail.com](mailto:yurtsiz@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

The growing and changing structure of the sports industry has caused changes in the marketing method and marketing channels of sports goods and services. Sports consumers, who adapt very quickly to changing technological conditions, want to reach the product faster and experience the sports product with different applications as both users of sports goods and fans of the offered sports service. As a result, sports businesses have started to use changing and developing marketing channels (Yurtsızoğlu & Fişne, 2020; Yurtsızoğlu & Gül, 2022). Thus, traditional marketing methods have given way to digital marketing in the marketing of sports products and sports services in the sector. The sports industry, which has experienced a very rapid transformation in marketing strategies, has started to transform its marketing methods and marketing channels from digital to phygital since the early 2000s with the contribution of technological developments and the change in the use of social platforms. “Phygital marketing”, a relatively new concept in marketing literature (Odabaşı, 2017; Yalçınkaya, 2017), has been accepted very quickly by consumers and sports businesses in the sports industry. This has led to the formation of platforms where both consumers experience with pleasure and manufacturers introduce their products with different experiences by benefiting from many advantages.

Phygital is a marketing terms that mixes “physical” and “digital” terms, and it describes combining digital and physical experiences. Simply put, phygital links the physical and digital worlds together (Moravcikova & Kliestikova, 2017). After the consumer moved from traditional marketing to digital marketing, they quickly adopted then experience of phygital marketing.

The transfer of virtual universes to the physical world has enabled the physical and digital to merge to a higher segment. In this way, marketing tools have merged with digital media tools and integrated them creatively (Başev, 2024). The label “Phygital” (physical plus digital) is a word that has been suggested to describe how businesses communicate with customers by using smart technologies and bringing them together (Mele et al., 2023).

Developing and changing technology in all industries has not only changed the lives of consumers but also created significant changes in behavioral patterns such as consumption and purchasing. Shopping for goods and services through digital environments has provided cost advantages by saving time and speed for the consumer, and this has been quickly adopted by consumers (İzgi & Şahin, 2013). The widespread use of marketing services by businesses

through digital platforms has enabled not only the customer to interact with the business but also with other customers, and thus customers have the right to have a say in all processes interactively (Açıkgoz & Biçer, 2022). The consumer's perspective has been accepted as the main determinant in phygital marketing. With this acceptance, an integrative ecosystem has been created by combining physical, digital, media, extended realities and human elements (Batat, 2022b).

The transformation in the sports sector has transformed from traditional marketing to digital marketing, and in recent years, it has begun to evolve towards phygital marketing. In this transformation, the sports consumer has begun to experience products and services with pleasure. The sports producer, on the other hand, has reached its consumers by using phygital marketing channels in the promotion and advertisement of the product. This study, which compiles the transformation and change in marketing strategies in the sports industry, aims to analyze phygital marketing examples in the sports sector by compiling studies on phygital marketing conducted after 2015 in the Scopus database. The study is important in terms of understanding and popularizing phygital marketing in the sports industry.

## **METHOD**

This study is a study that compiles the transformation to phygital marketing in the sports industry. The study was attempted to obtain publications on phygital marketing after 2015 in the Scopus database. Duplicate studies were eliminated in the study. Since there were not many studies on the subject in the sports industry, studies that included the expressions “sports” and “sports product” in other industries were specifically included in the study. Studies that did not include examples from the sports industry were excluded. In this context, the findings of the compilation section of the study were collected under three subheadings. These headings are “from traditional marketing to digital marketing”, “from digital marketing to phygital marketing” and “phygital marketing examples in the sports sector”.

## **FINDINGS**

In the findings section of the study, the transformation in the sports industry is given in terms of literature. Traditional marketing in sports marketing is explained and the transition from traditional marketing to digital marketing is given. The transformation from digital marketing to digital marketing in the sports industry has been tried to be given in general terms. Finally, the transformation in the industry has been tried to be compiled with examples of digital marketing in sports marketing.

### **From traditional marketing to digital marketing**

Many marketing channels have been used from past to present to reach the consumer of products and services. For example, in traditional marketing, sports businesses have tried to reach sports consumers or fans by using traditional mass media such as newspapers, radio and TV. Although traditional marketing, which uses physical media such as television, newspapers, radio and magazines, aims to reach a wider audience, both the interaction and the number of target audiences have remained low compared to digital marketing. As a result of the developments and changes in computer technologies, a rapid journey towards digital marketing has begun in the sports sector.

The efforts of businesses to highlight their brands, products and services have led businesses to use digital channels such as search engines, websites, social media and mobile applications. By including their customers in the purchasing process through digital marketing, businesses have increased brand awareness and gained a significant competitive advantage in the market (Bilge, 2021). In a highly competitive market, it is very important for businesses to understand the wishes and opinions of customers, so that businesses use this information to build their advertising and marketing goals; And this helps to develop and improve business performance, recognition and competitiveness (Yurtsizoğlu & Golmohammadi, 2023). The use of digital marketing channels by businesses has made it possible to create empowered, more informed customer groups in the virtual and real world (Krishen et al., 2021). Unlike traditional marketing strategies, digital marketing promotes the product and brand through digital channels while also conducting all marketing activities through these channels. These channels, which generally help marketing, are mobile and interactive platforms (Chaffey & Smith, 2013). Digital marketing channels use e-mail, mobile applications, online channels and social media platforms via the internet to reach the target audience. In this way, reaching more consumers has become easier than traditional methods. Digital marketing has paved the way for the creation of personalized content, creating more opportunities for analysis and measurement. In this context, the most important differences between traditional marketing and digital marketing are the communication channels and technologies used (Lawrence et al., 2018).

Digital marketing aims to analyses the customer's profile, behaviors, and values and provide online services that are appropriate for their individual needs (Holder, 2008). One of the most important advantages of digital marketing is that personalized methods are used in the presentation of marketing activities, reducing costs for the business. In addition, by establishing

a two-way relationship between the consumer and the business, it becomes easier to measure and analyses the market as a result of feedback from the consumer (Jothi, 2019).

There are other advantages that digital marketing provides to both the customer and the consumer. The most important of these is that digital marketing provides a very widespread and wide geographical reach. This wide reach facilitates the channels of connection with the consumer and makes it easier to reach a wider audience. These connections with the consumer emerge as real-time communication. This allows both the customer to easily communicate with the company and the business to easily collect customer data and offer personalized offers. The ability to measure data is important in all of these. In this way, digital marketing minimizes advertising expenses and many other expenses, providing efficiency in costs for the business (Royle & Laing, 2014; Smith, 2011).

#### **From digital marketing to phygital marketing**

Phygital marketing, which is defined as the combined use of physical and digital experiences, is a result of the change that has occurred in both technology and consumer behavior. In phygital marketing, the business and the consumer can establish physical communication through digital channels. This situation has given rise to the idea of the digital and physical environment coming together in the customer's experience of the product, and phygital marketing has emerged as a new marketing strategy in the field of marketing (Batat, 2022a). In phygital marketing, actors in the market interact with the customer indirectly or directly, and this interaction includes both physical and sensory, as well as social, cognitive and emotional elements (De Keyser et al., 2015).

Businesses have used phygital marketing by combining their brand websites, digital sales points and applications with traditional marketing experiences. In this way, they have increased their interaction with their consumer audiences and have had the chance to better influence the consumer. Phygital marketing has begun to be used as an important channel for reinforcing brand perception for the business (Çakın & Yaman, 2020). While exhibiting consumer consumption behavior patterns, they enjoy shopping in stores, attending entertainment and concerts, as well as surfing the internet, playing video games and experiencing virtual reality (Drell & Davis, 2014).

Businesses can evaluate the options of advertising posters and product packaging using physical communication channels and manage these evaluations in digital environments, on websites and social platforms. These methods and channels used in marketing can make both

the branding process of the business and the communication of the business with the consumer effective (Moravcikova & Kliestikova, 2017).

In the phygital marketing experience, the experience must primarily take place in a physical environment. This experience in a physical environment must attract and engage the customer by including them in the experience. In this experience, a personalized environment is provided for the customer using object, face and voice recognition technologies, touch and mobile technologies. These important criteria are required by phygital marketing (Cevher, 2023; Van Tichelen, 2019). When creating strategies in phygital marketing, it is important to map out which channels will be used when connecting with the customer and to be able to manage the harmonious operation of these channels. It is important for these channels to be compatible with the brand and to develop a messaging system that is consistent with the customer by offering a personal experience. At the same time, the business should be transparent in its communication with the customer and should give importance to the confidentiality of customer information by taking ethical values into account. All these are issues that should be considered when creating phygital marketing strategies (Gedik, 2021).

Phygital marketing has eliminated the boundaries between physical and digital. This has allowed marketers to combine the benefits of face-to-face shopping with the benefits of digital marketing. Thus, the consumer experience has been further enriched (Johnson & Barlow, 2021). Positive consumer experiences developed in phygital marketing have a significant and positive increase in loyalty to the brand and product (Pangarkar et al., 2022). Businesses producing goods and services believe that phygital solutions are important in order to improve the consumer's in-store purchasing behavior and to meet the different demands and behaviors of the customer (Belghiti et al., 2018).

Many international companies such as sports, tourism, fashion, architecture and brand recognition such as Adidas, Nike, McDonald's and Mac frequently benefit from phygital marketing applications. Augmented reality and virtual reality technologies, which have been used in many areas in recent years and offer people an advanced experience opportunity, have begun to be used frequently in marketing (Milgram & Kishino, 1994). Digital marketing is done with applications known by many people such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and Apple Watch. The first example and pioneer of phygital marketing is considered to be the game "Pokemon Go" (Yüce et al., 2021). Due to its many advantages all over the world, companies have started to market brands and products that combine both virtual and physical applications.

One of the important applications in the field of phygital marketing in Türkiye is the Migros application. Migros has successfully combined its physical stores and virtual market applications. It offers its customers the opportunity to experience its products phygitally by using the “Mkolay”, “Monepay” and “Jetkasa” applications. All of these applications allow the use of both the digital payment system and the individual payment opportunity with the jet cash application in the store (Cevher, 2023).

The “Amazon Go” application is an application that will set an example for phygital marketing. In this application, the company appealed to its customers with the slogan “Just walk out”. In this application, a personal account is created by downloading the company’s application from a smartphone. Customers enter the store with the QR code given to them by the company through this application. Then, the consumer buys the product they want from the shelves by adding it to both their virtual basket and their physical shopping basket and leaves the market without waiting in line for payment (Çakın & Yaman, 2020).

#### **Phygital marketing examples in sports industry**

Over time, the sports industry has undergone continuous transformation, with many of these changes being technological in nature (Pashaie et al., 2023). The use of rapidly changing technologies continues to change consumer behavior patterns. Sports consumers, who are just starting to get used to demanding products in a digital environment, want to experience goods and services in a physical sense. For this reason, companies in the sports industry have quickly adapted to consumers’ changing demands and have begun to use phygital marketing as an alternative in the marketing of sports products.

In phygital marketing, which is carried out by obtaining digital data from physical products, many devices used for fitness among wearable technologies attract attention as a popular technology. By using wearable technologies, the sports and health activities of the consumer using the product can be followed, and personalized product ranges and offers can be created for the consumer (Karamehmet, 2019). For sports businesses that produce fitness equipment within the sports industry, it is possible to gain a more advantageous position in the market by using wearable and smart device technologies both in product development and in the promotion and marketing of their products and brands.

Applications for phygital experiences are widely used in many different branches within the sports industry. For example, while doing physical exercises online, training can be provided using simulator bikes. Again, phygital marketing is frequently used in the promotion

of fitness centers and other sports venues by making video tours. Using “slalom dribbling”, many activities such as jumping, jumping and running are done in real time and athletes are trained through phygital means (Çelik, 2021).

Leading brands in the sports industry such as Nike and Adidas have started to look into phygital marketing. These brands have offered their customers the opportunity to order special products and personalized productions by participating in sports events (Fisk, 2022). At the same time, Nike, a large and well-known company in the sports industry, uses phygital marketing through the “SNKRS” application. With this application, pop-up stores have been opened in places where customers tend to go. By offering the shoes they have produced in a certain number in these stores, customers are sent notifications about the shoes (Gedik, 2021).

Companies such as Adidas, Sephora, and Nike support and guide their consumer base using personalized in-store experience applications to increase their sales and profit margins. Again, along with smart technological wearable devices, self-adjusting smart clothing and innovative technologies have begun to be produced by Nike (Jamal & Kapoor, 2022).

Decathlon, a company that has an important place in the sector, is in search of new personalized experiences for its customers. For example, it personalizes both online and in-store experiences through the company’s physical channels by determining the customer’s favorite sport, the store closest to the customer, and the customer’s preferred communication tool (Van Tichelen, 2019). Another important area of use of phygital marketing is Physical Virtual Sports (PVS), and phygital technologies are used when performing and evaluating sports performance analyses (Huszár & Adhikarla, 2024). All these applications are attractive for the customer.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Phygital marketing is a very suitable marketing area for businesses in the sports industry. Doing physical activities through a phygital environment, watching a gym’s virtual promotion, using these applications for activities and physical exercises in the training of athletes will provide more enjoyable and more productive experiences to the consumer. In addition, phygital marketing plays a very important role in both the promotion and promotion of sports products and brands during these experiences. Many of these areas where phygital technologies are used offer the sports consumer a real and enjoyable sports experience.

The continuous development of the digital society relies on the increase of information technology and their application in all industries (Feiz et al., 2022). Phygital marketing has



begun to become a preferred marketing approach in the sports sector thanks to the many advantages it provides. Many clothing companies in the sports industry are looking for ways to attract their customers with these applications. With the spread of phygital marketing in the sports sector, competition between businesses will become fiercer and this change will be inevitable for all sports businesses.

Çelik (2021) in his study on phygital marketing, noted that smart mirrors supported by Augmented Reality technology are used in this marketing method in physical stores and restaurants, and phygital marketing is done through virtual menus in restaurants. He stated that these applications will increasingly improve the consumer's shopping experience. The fact that many sports activities are carried out with augmented reality within the sports industry and the combination of augmented reality with physical environments will provide a significant advantage in the sector for sports businesses.

Huseynli (2021) stated that retailers in different sectors use physical display windows that offer their customers a wider experience. He stated that in the physical display window application, the consumer can easily order from the online store and the physical purchase process with click and collect applications provides significant advantages to the customer. Because in these applications, the convenience of online shopping is combined with the instant satisfaction of purchasing in the store. In this way, the consumer can shop online without waiting for shipping and receive the product from the store immediately.

Çakın and Yaman (2020) in their study, stated that the frequent use of virtual reality and augmented reality applications in advertising and product promotion activities strengthens loyalty to the brand. Davutoğlu et al. (2021) emphasized that augmented reality and virtual reality technologies create the illusion of reality on the consumer, thus facilitating the consumer's experience of all information about goods and services. They stated that the use of these technologies will accelerate purchasing processes and this will bring great opportunities to businesses.

Karaağaoğlu and Ülger (2020) found that interacting with the consumer via mobile application and sending notifications to the consumer about stores and campaigns in the location will direct the consumer to the store. Taşkın et al. (2023) conducted that with the combination of the emotional satisfaction created by the physical in the consumer and the convenience of the digital, businesses receive positive feedback from their target audience.

The results of the study are important in terms of understanding and popularizing phygital marketing in the sports sector. As a result of the study, it was concluded that phygital marketing channels provide great convenience in reaching consumers and that phygital marketing applications can provide businesses with an advantage in the competitive environment. Because phygital marketing strategies have the potential to offer great opportunities to sports businesses and other businesses that benefit from the sector in economic terms. All studies conducted on phygital marketing have shown that using both marketing types together, not just digital marketing or traditional marketing, has a very positive effect on the consumer. We believe that phygital marketing techniques can be used better for companies in the sports industry than in other sectors. Because sports contain many concepts such as entertainment, competition, pleasure, activity and spending free time. Integrating all of these concepts with phygital marketing channels can provide great convenience in reaching the consumer.

### **Recommendations**

Businesses that provide services in the sports industry can have the chance to offer much more enjoyable experiences to sports consumers by using virtual reality and augmented reality technologies together with mobile technologies in halls, stadiums, swimming pools, ski resorts. In this sense, companies that provide sports services in the sports industry in particular can benefit from phygital marketing methods and gain high benefits from the competitive environment. In addition, other businesses that are not in the sports industry can bring their brand and product promotions to sports facilities and sports events through phygital marketing. In this way, they can provide a consumer experience to thousands of people at the same time. For example, during an important football match, they can provide a simultaneous phygital experience about their brands and products to all spectators. This will be unforgettable for those who experience it there and will resonate with the public. In this way, businesses will have the chance to reach their target audience in a very short way. This situation can offer great opportunities for these businesses in economic terms.

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Fikir ve Kavramsal Örgü <i>Idea or Notion</i>	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak <i>Form the research hypothesis or idea</i>	Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI
Tasarım <i>Design</i>	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak <i>To design the method and research design.</i>	Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI
Literatür Tarama <i>Literature Review</i>	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak <i>Review the literature required for the study</i>	Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI
Veri Toplama ve İşleme <i>Data Collecting and Processing</i>	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak <i>Collecting, organizing and reporting data</i>	Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI
Tartışma ve Yorum <i>Discussion and Commentary</i>	Elde edilen bulguların değerlendirilmesi <i>Evaluation of the obtained finding</i>	Zühal YURTSIZOĞLU Hamed GOLMOHAMMADI
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