

The Relationship Between Digital Transformation and Performance Management in Sports Organizations

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Abstract: In this study, it is aimed to examine the effect of digital transformation on the performance management of sports organizations in terms of youth center employees in Batman province. Relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the study. In this context, the questionnaire form consisting of three stages was conducted online with 90 people working in youth centers in Batman province. The first part of the study included demographic questions, the second part included the 12-item Digital Transformation Scale developed by Nadem et al. (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Sağlam (2021), and the last part included the 24-item Performance Management Scale developed by Beeri et al. (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Demir et al. (2020). The demographic information of the participants and the distribution of the answers to the survey questions were analyzed by frequency analysis. Whether the scale and its sub-dimensions showed significant differences according to demographic information was analyzed by independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The relationships between the scales were analyzed by correlation analysis. Analyses were performed with SPSS 20.0 software at 95% confidence level. As a result of the research, it was determined that digital transformation has a positive effect on performance management in sport organizations.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Performance Management; Sports Organizations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Is it possible to make progress without digital transformation? In the current century, technology, along with the rapid advancements it brings, is influencing daily life and transforming paradigms in various domains. It is virtually impossible to remain indifferent to these developments in the field of technology. In this context, technology encourages individuals to merge digitalization with creativity and innovation. Monumental changes such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and virtual reality highlight the significance and necessity of progress and innovative approaches in digital technologies. These transformations emphasize the global necessity for digital transformation.

Digital transformation is a dynamic and ongoing process that involves aligning processes, competencies, and models with changes in digital technology (Betchoo, 2016; Teichert, 2019). It can be defined both as the use of digital technologies to improve existing conditions and as

technological change and development driven by digital innovation in organizations (Berghaus & Back, 2016). Digital transformation, with its widespread impact, has become effective in almost every sector by enabling change and development. Sports, as part of the scope of digital transformation, also encourages change in our working methods, interactions, and communication in many environments. Today, sports are not only considered a form of entertainment or leisure but also a reflection of social values and behaviors. Sports bring together various cultures, encouraging both social interaction and physical activity while simultaneously reflecting the social and cultural values of communities. While addressing social issues such as gender, racism, and inequality, sports also serve and contribute to the society as a source of economy and employment. Hence, given the undeniable impact of sports on societies, transformation in sports has become essential (Akkaya, 2023). Various digital transformation practices are currently being observed in many aspects of sports. These practices are particularly significant for sports organizations

that attract global interest. Innovations in digital transformation are highly beneficial for sports organizations and constitute a key factor in the management and planning processes of organizations (Smith et al., 2020).

Historically, sports organizations were built upon traditional customs and practices. However, with technological advancements and demands for innovation, traditional structures have gradually faded into the background (Akgöl, 2019; Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020). The use of digital technologies and tools in the management of sports organizations following transformational technologies has made operational processes more efficient. The integration of systems, devices, and resources throughout organizational activities allows for more objective and productive data generation, processing, and completion. Digital transformation contributes to clubs, teams, coaches, sponsors, media, and many other stakeholders within the sports sector (Price et al., 2023; Salman, 2022). Digital transformation utilizes innovative work-sharing, workspaces, and in-office communication technologies in sports organizations (Barnhill et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2020). Digital transformation activities such as dynamic ticket pricing, stadium self-service kiosks, performance analysis, Wi-Fi service, fan applications, digital match results, and online sports broadcasting are among the opportunities offered in the sports environment (Hoerber et al., 2015; King et al., 2017; Mondello & Kamke, 2014; Troilo et al., 2016). Performance management concerns the efforts and resources utilized to achieve organizational goals. The basis of performance management is support for success, in which the organization's activities are integrated with the organizational goals in line with achievable goals and objectives. To assess how well-predefined objectives are achieved in sports organizations, performance must be evaluated and measured using specific criteria and dimensions. Evaluating performance helps determine the effectiveness of implemented transformations and whether expected results are being achieved. Investigating the impact of digital transformation on performance management is therefore considered crucial, as it is expected to have a positive influence on the performance management of sports organizations (Çıta & Keçecioglu, 2015; Öztürk, 2006).

II. METHOD

➤ *Research Model*

In this study, quantitative research methods were employed to examine the relationship between digital transformation and performance management in sports organizations. The research was designed using a relational screening model of descriptive nature. This model aims to determine the presence or degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2011).

➤ *Population and Sample*

The population of this research comprises youth centers in Batman province. The sample includes 90 participants—35 women and 55 men—working as management staff, administrative personnel, coaches, and youth workers in the Batman Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports, Batman Youth Center, and Batman Petrolkent Youth Center.

➤ *Data Collection Tools*

The data were collected via surveys and personal information forms completed by participants. Surveys were distributed online using Google Forms.

➤ *Personal Information Form*

This form included questions regarding participants' name, gender, age, marital status, education level, department, and monthly income level.

➤ *Digital Transformation Scale*

The Digital Transformation Scale (DTS), developed by Nadem et al. (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Sağlam (2021), consists of 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as .95.

➤ *Performance Management Scale*

This section used the Performance Management Scale, developed by Beer et al. (2018) and adapted by Demir et al. (2020), which consists of 24 items across three subdimensions: (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Observation Stage, and (3) Review and Lesson-Learning Stage. The reliability coefficients were respectively 90, 86, and 90. It is also based on a 5-point Likert scale.

➤ *Data Analysis*

Demographic information and survey responses were analyzed using frequency analysis. Whether there is a significant difference in the scale and its sub-dimensions according to demographic information was examined by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test in independent groups. Relationships between the scales were analyzed using correlation analysis, with all analyses conducted using SPSS 20.0 at a 95% confidence level.

III. FINDINGS

➤ *Distribution of Demographic Information*

Participants' demographic information was analyzed using frequency distribution.

Table 1. Distribution of Demographic Information for Participants

		n	%
Age	18-24	5	5.6
	25-34	58	64.4
	35-44	23	25.6
	45-54	4	4.4
	Total	90	100.0
Gender	Female	35	38.9
	Male	55	61.1
	Total	90	100.0
Marital Status	Single	40	44.4
	Married	50	55.6
	Total	90	100.0
Educational Status	High school	8	8.9
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	83.3
	Post-Graduate	7	7.8
	Total	90	100.0
Unit of Employment	Coach	39	45.3
	Youth Worker	24	27.9
	Administrative Staff	21	24.4
	Management	2	2.3
	Total	86	100.0
Monthly Income Level	5000-17000	26	30.6
	17500-25000	21	24.7
	25500-30000	9	10.6
	30000 TL and above	29	34.1
	Total	85	100.0

Table 1 shows that the majority of participants were aged 25–34 (64.4%), followed by 35–44 (25.6%), 18–24 (5.6%), and 45–54 (4.4%). Female participants constituted 38.9%, and male participants 61.1%. Regarding the marital status of the participants, it is seen that 44.4% were single and 55.6% married. In terms of education, 8.9% were high school graduates, 83.3% held an associate or bachelor's degree, and 7.8% had postgraduate education. The unit of employment included coaches (45.3%), youth workers (27.9%), administrative staff (24.4%), and management (2.3%). Regarding monthly income, 30.6% earned between 5,000–17,000 TL, 24.7% between 17,500–25,000 TL, 10.6% between 25,500–30,000 TL, and 34.1% above 30,000 TL.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	\bar{X}	S
Digital Transformation Scale	90	5.0	60.0	42.3	10.9
Performance Management Scale	90	0.0	120.0	86.3	21.3
Strategic Planning Stage	90	0.0	25.0	17.9	4.7
Observation Stage	90	0.0	45.0	32.1	8.4
Review and Lesson-Learning Stage	90	0.0	50.0	36.3	8.9

Table 3 presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to examine whether the mean scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, along with their sub-dimensions, based on educational status.

Table 3. Gender-Based Variation of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale

Gender		N	\bar{X}	S	t	p
Digital Transformation Scale	Female	35	42.80	10.29	0.322	0.749
	Male	55	42.04	11.40		
Performance Management Scale	Female	35	88.46	19.30	0.761	0.449
	Male	55	84.95	22.55		
Strategic Planning Stage	Female	35	18.43	4.01	0.913	0.364
	Male	55	17.49	5.16		
Observation Stage	Female	35	32.89	7.78	0.688	0.493
	Male	55	31.64	8.76		
Review and Learning Stage	Female	35	37.14	8.08	0.690	0.492
	Male	55	35.82	9.35		

The examination of Table 3 reveals that, according to the results of the independent samples t-test, there were no statistically significant differences in the Digital Transformation Scale and the sub-dimensions of the Performance Management Scale based on gender ($p > .05$). It can be concluded that female and male participants scored at similar levels on the overall Digital Transformation Scale as well as on the overall Performance Management Scale and its sub-dimensions.

Table 4 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, along with their sub-dimensions, based on educational status.

Table 4. Age-Based Variation of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale

		N	\bar{X}	S	F	p
Digital Transformation Scale	18-24	5	46.4	9.1	1.512	0.217
	25-34	58	43.5	10.2		
	35-44	23	39.7	12.8		
	45-54	4	35.3	8.8		
	Total	90	42.3	10.9		
Performance Management Scale	18-24	5	92.8	17.9	1.943	0.129
	25-34	58	89.4	17.7		
	35-44	23	79.1	28.3		
	45-54	4	74.3	19.6		
	Total	90	86.3	21.3		
Strategic Planning Stage	18-24	5	18.8	4.4	1.361	0.260
	25-34	58	18.4	4.1		
	35-44	23	16.7	6.0		
	45-54	4	15.0	5.3		
	Total	90	17.9	4.7		
Observation Stage	18-24	5	35.4	6.5	1.742	0.164
	25-34	58	33.2	7.4		
	35-44	23	29.5	10.7		
	45-54	4	27.8	6.0		
	Total	90	32.1	8.4		
Review and	18-24	5	38.6	7.2	2.252	0,048*

Learning Stage	25-34	58	37.8	7.2		
	35-44	23	33.0	11.8		
	45-54	4	31.5	8.7		
	Total	90	36.3	8.9		

*p<0.05

The examination of Table 4 indicates that, according to the results of the one-way ANOVA, there were no statistically significant differences by age in the overall scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, as well as in the sub-dimensions of the Strategic Planning Stage and the Observation Stage ($p>0.05$). However, significant differences were observed in the sub-dimensions of the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage based on age ($p<0.05$). According to the results of the Tukey test conducted to determine the source of the significant differences in these sub-dimensions, participants in the 18–24 and 25–34 age groups scored significantly higher than those in the 35–44 and 45–54 age groups.

Table 5 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, along with their sub-dimensions, based on educational status.

Table 5. Educational Status-Based Variation of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale

		N	\bar{X}	S	F	p
Digital Transformation Scale	High school	8	42.4	11.8	0.018	0.982
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	42.4	10.6		
	Post-Graduate	7	41.6	15.0		
	Total	90	42.3	10.9		
Performance Management Scale	High school	8	88.1	21.2	0.422	0.657
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	86.8	20.6		
	Post-Graduate	7	79.3	30.3		
	Total	90	86.3	21.3		
Strategic Planning Stage	High school	8	18.9	4.7	0.436	0.648
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	17.9	4.6		
	Post-Graduate	7	16.6	7.0		
	Total	90	17.9	4.7		
Observation Stage	High school	8	33.1	7.5	0.282	0.755
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	32.2	8.3		
	Post-Graduate	7	30.0	10.8		
	Total	90	32.1	8.4		
Review and Lesson-Learning Stage	High school	8	36.1	9.3	0.644	0.528
	Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree	75	36.7	8.5		
	Post-Graduate	7	32.7	12.7		
	Total	90	36.3	8.9		

The examination of Table 5 shows that, according to the results of the one-way ANOVA, there were no statistically significant differences in the sub-dimensions of the Performance Management Scale or in the Digital Transformation Scale based on educational status ($p>0.05$). In other words, individuals with different levels of education demonstrated similar scores on the overall Digital Transformation Scale as well as on the overall Performance Management Scale and its sub-dimensions.

Table 6 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, along with their sub-dimensions, based on the unit of employment group.

Table 6. Unit of Employment-Based Variation of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale

		N	\bar{X}	S	F	p
Digital Transformation Scale	Coach	39	41.1	13.0	1.311	0,012*
	Youth Worker	24	45.8	9.5		
	Administrative Staff	21	40.4	8.5		
	Management	2	37.0	9.9		
	Total	86	42.2	11.1		
Performance Management Scale	Coach	39	83.9	25.9	1.501	0.220
	Youth Worker	24	93.3	17.0		
	Administrative Staff	21	83.1	16.5		
	Management	2	70.5	17.7		
	Total	86	86.0	21.7		
Strategic Planning Stage	Coach	39	17.3	5.6	1.297	0.281
	Youth Worker	24	19.2	4.1		
	Administrative Staff	21	17.4	3.9		
	Management	2	14.0	2.8		
	Total	86	17.8	4.8		
Observation Stage	Coach	39	31.1	9.8	2.417	0,032*
	Youth Worker	24	35.6	6.6		
	Administrative Staff	21	30.5	7.0		
	Management	2	24.5	7.8		
	Total	86	32.0	8.5		
Review and Lesson Learning Stage	Coach	39	35.6	11.0	0.787	0.504
	Youth Worker	24	38.5	6.8		
	Administrative Staff	21	35.2	6.9		
	Management	2	32.0	7.1		
	Total	86	36.2	9.0		

*p<0.05

The examination of Table 6 reveals that, according to the results of the one-way ANOVA, the Digital Transformation Scale and the Observation Stage sub-dimension of the Performance Management Scale show statistically significant differences based on the unit of employment ($p < 0.05$). In order to identify the source of these differences, a Tukey test was conducted.

Regarding the Digital Transformation Scale, the results indicate that youth workers scored significantly higher than participants working in other units.

For the 'Observation Stage' sub-dimension, youth workers also had significantly higher mean scores compared to those working in other units. Additionally, coaches and administrative staff scored significantly higher on this sub-dimension than those working in management positions.

Table 7 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale, along with their sub-dimensions, based on the monthly income level group.

Table 7. The Relationship Between the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale

		DTS	PMS	SPS	OS	RLLS
DTS	r	1	.919**	.886**	.893**	.893**
	p		.000	.000	.000	.000
PMS	r	.919**	1	.945**	.980**	.973**
	p	.000		.000	.000	.000
Strategic Planning Stage	r	.886**	.945**	1	.915**	.874**
	p	.000	.000		.000	.000
Observation Stage	r	.893**	.980**	.915**	1	.923**
	p	.000	.000	.000		.000
Review and Lesson-Learning Stage	r	.893**	.973**	.874**	.923**	1
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	

The examination of Table 7 reveals that the Digital Transformation Scale is positively and significantly correlated with the overall Performance Management Scale at a rate of 91.9%, the Strategic Planning Stage sub-dimension at a rate of 88.6%, the Observation Stage at a rate of 89.3%, and the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage at a rate of 89.3%.

When examining the interrelationships among the sub-dimensions of the Performance Management Scale, it is observed that the Strategic Planning Stage is positively and significantly correlated with the Observation Stage at a rate of 91.5% and with the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage at a rate of 87.4%. Furthermore, the Observation Stage is positively and significantly correlated with the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage at a rate of 92.3%.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between digital transformation and performance management in sports organizations. The concepts of digital transformation and performance management were addressed with a specific focus on the influence of digital transformation in the context of sports organizations. In this context, an online survey was administered to a total of 90 individuals—comprising 35 women and 55 men—who serve in managerial, administrative, coaching, and youth worker positions at the Batman Youth Center, the Batman Petrolkent Youth Center, and the Batman Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports.

In this study, demographic distributions were determined for participants serving in management, administrative staff, coaching, and youth worker positions.

Among the 90 respondents, 35 (38.9%) were female and 55 (61.1%) were male. Age breakdown: 5.6% aged 18–24, 64.4% aged 25–34, 25.6% aged 35–44, and 4.4% aged 45–54. Educational attainment: 8.9% high school graduates, 83.3% with associate or bachelor's degrees, and 7.8% with postgraduate education. Occupation-wise, 45.3% were coaches, 27.9% youth workers, 24.4% administrative staff, and 2.3% worked in management.

The study utilized the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale. In this context, validity and reliability analyses demonstrated that the scales used were appropriate for the study.

In the study, the means of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale were examined by participants' age, gender, educational status, and unit of employment, and whether the calculated means differed significantly was determined. The findings show that:

With respect to gender, the Digital Transformation Scale and Performance Management Scale and its sub-dimensions did not differ significantly based on gender; women and men had similar scores on both the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale and its sub-dimensions. Kumru and Kasımoğlu (2022) reached a similar conclusion in their study.

Regarding age, one-way ANOVA results indicated that the overall Digital Transformation Scale and the Strategic Planning Stage and Observation Stage of the Performance Management Scale did not differ significantly by age, but the

sub-dimension of the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage did demonstrate significant age-based differences. In this regard, participants in the 18–24 and 25–34 age groups scored significantly higher on the Review and Lesson-Learning Stage than those in the 35–44 and 45–54 age groups. Koçan (2024) found that different age groups exhibited different attitudes toward digital transformation.

By educational status, one-way ANOVA results showed that the Digital Transformation Scale and its sub-dimensions in the Performance Management Scale did not differ substantially between educational levels, indicating that individuals with different education levels had comparable scores.

In terms of unit of employment-based differences, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of the Observation Stage. For the Digital Transformation Scale, youth workers scored significantly higher than staff in other units. For the Observation Stage sub-dimension, youth workers again had significantly higher means than those in other units, and coaches and administrative staff scored significantly higher than those working in management. Alkahlout and Karabat (2024) found that participants' perceptions of digital transformation did not differ significantly based on their department within the institution.

The relationship between the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale among youth center employees was examined. The analysis showed that the overall and sub-dimensions of the Digital Transformation Scale and the Performance Management Scale were significantly correlated. As a result of the study, it can be said that attitudes toward both scales among management, administrative, coaching, and youth-worker units in youth centers significantly influenced each other.

Santomier (2024) found that digital transformation completely and positively changed the management of sports organizations and the way they engage with sports fans. Dasic (2023) argued that digital transformation is used extensively across many areas of sports, leading to unprecedented growth and sophistication. Dashkov et al. (2021) concluded that digitalization in sports has opened the way for successful theoretical and methodological development in investment and attractiveness in sports. Ak (2021) determined that digital technologies already reflect in many aspects of daily life for athletes and sports enthusiasts, including training techniques, analytics, statistics, AI innovations, and sports organizations. Schmidt (2023) suggested that digital transformation applications—such as software, hardware, wearable technologies, and data-providing sensors—intersecting with sports are shaping and advancing the future of sports. Miah (2017) emphasized the importance of digital transformation technologies for the future of sports, urging the sports world to adopt and disseminate such technologies.

In conclusion, technological advancements profoundly impact all areas of life, including sports. Digital transformation is evident in every facet of sport, from organizational structures and training techniques to

equipment. Digital transformation has been observed to enhance the effectiveness of sports organizations by enabling the delivery of improved services and new products, thereby promoting the dissemination of sporting activities to broader audiences. It is anticipated that digital innovations implemented in the field of sports organizations will contribute to the promotion of sports, an increase in the number of spectators, fairer management of competitions, and a rise in revenue generated through sports. The findings suggest that digital transformation has a positive long-term relationship with performance management in sports organizations. This finding highlights the significance of digital transformation, indicating that it enhances the performance of sports organizations, encourages the adoption of digital transformation practices in sports events, and contributes to the sustainability of sports and the performance management of sports organizations by improving the overall quality of sports through digital technologies.

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Youth centers should actively monitor digital transformation applications within their own facilities and other institutions, and participate in the transformation process consciously and in an organized manner.
- Digital transformation applications can be expanded within youth centers to be beneficial and knowledge-based.
- Prioritizing digital transformation efforts in accordance with available infrastructure will facilitate the transformation process in youth centers.
- Increasing the number of digital transformation projects in youth centers will be beneficial for athletes and staff.
- Informative training should be provided on innovations to enable rapid adaptation by staff and athletes to digital transformation applications used in youth centers.
- Youth centers should continuously innovate and update their technologies to remain current.
- The sports sector should adopt a strategic approach to digital transformation and innovation.

Note: This study is adapted from a master's thesis.

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