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Research Article

Paid digital distribution networks as visibility infrastructure in public relations and news circulation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines practitioners' perceptions of paid digital distribution networks as communication infrastructures for public relations (PR) visibility, media placement, reportability, and news circulation. The empirical center of the study is the B2Press case. B2Press is treated not as representative of the entire field, but as a critical case through which the promises of visibility, reportability, search engine discoverability, and the editorial tensions surrounding paid distribution can be examined. The article brings critical political economy and digital PR scholarship into the same analytical frame to discuss the commodification of news and the commercialization of news value. Methodologically, it integrates closed-ended and open-ended responses from 50 purposively selected participants through a convergent parallel mixed-method design. Participants rated media placement most highly among effectiveness items, while B2Press users rated reporting and reach more favorably than placement quality. Qualitative responses emphasized operational relief and measurability alongside concerns about outlet quality and credibility. These findings describe professional perceptions rather than measured campaign performance or audience trust. The article argues that paid distribution should be understood not merely as an instrument of operational efficiency, but as a visibility infrastructure whose technical and commercial logic raises questions about the circulation and value of news.

Keywords: digital public relations, visibility economy, commodification of news, commercialization of news value, political economy of media, B2Press

INTRODUCTION

As public relations (PR) has become increasingly digital, the logic of visibility production has changed in consequential ways. Press releases, media relations, and corporate announcements no longer circulate only through editorial evaluation and journalist contact. They also move through distribution platforms, search infrastructures, and systems of measurable output. Recent PR reviews map this expanding digital field, while research on publishers' relations with platforms identifies tensions between operational opportunities and dependence on intermediaries (Ki et al., 2024; Nielsen & Ganter, 2018; Wang et al., 2021). The central issue is therefore how paid digital distribution networks organize the circulation of PR content and how practitioners assess the resulting visibility.

Digital PR scholarship has focused largely on social media use, engagement, data-driven communication, and multiplatform visibility processes. This literature has examined the opportunities digitalization offers for speed, flexibility, engagement, and measurement. The relationship between these operational opportunities and news value, editorial autonomy, and public trust nevertheless warrants closer examination. That gap

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makes it necessary to examine digital PR not only as a strategic communication function, but also as part of the broader political economy of media (Kent & Li, 2020; Ki et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021).

This article addresses a straightforward but consequential question: Do paid digital distribution networks move PR content from editorial circulation toward a technical and commercialized circulation of visibility? That question requires digital PR to be considered not only in terms of instrumental utility, but also in relation to media power, visibility infrastructures, and the commercial reorganization of circulation itself (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Mosco, 2009; Nieborg & Poell, 2018).

The empirical center of the article is the B2Press case. B2Press is not treated here as a model representative of the entire field. Rather, it is approached as a critical case that makes visible, in concentrated form, the promises of reach, placement, and reporting associated with paid distribution, while also exposing tensions around credibility, outlet quality, and editorial independence. The core argument of the article is that paid digital distribution networks can deepen both the commodification of news and the commercialization of news value by giving technical access, metrics, packaging logic, and budget power a greater role alongside editorial judgment. The study examines this proposition through practitioners' perceptions; it does not directly observe editorial decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The traditional distinction between advertising and media relations rests on the contrast between purchased promotional space and earned editorial attention. PR is broader than media placement, but this distinction remains useful for identifying who pays for circulation and who controls publication (Theaker, 2016). Digital communication complicates these boundaries. Tong and Chan (2023), studying PR and marketing practitioners in Hong Kong, describe convergence between the functions through digital content and influencer marketing, while media relations remains more closely associated with PR. Their findings concern professional roles rather than press-release distribution, but show why payment, control, and communication purpose must be examined separately.

Recent scholarship also cautions against reducing digital PR to a collection of tools. Wang et al. (2021) systematically review social-media-related PR research, while Wiesenberg et al. (2017) examine the opportunities, challenges, and professional applications of big data and automation in strategic communication. Together, these perspectives help distinguish the availability of technical capabilities from their interpretation and use. The question for this article is not simply whether organizations can measure reach more efficiently. It concerns the infrastructures through which visibility circulates and the power relations within which that circulation acquires meaning.

Recent research gives this question a more precise context. Kretschmer and Winkler (2024) read digitalization as a broader transformation of communication and social relations, showing how recurring promises of control, connection, and innovation coexist with risks that a narrow focus on tools can obscure. In a different empirical setting, O'Neil et al. (2023), drawing on interviews with 28 senior communicators, identify both the strategic possibilities of analytics and the difficulties of interpreting data and aligning it with communication objectives. Read together, these studies suggest that technical capacity and strategic value should not be treated as the same thing. A distribution system may make an output easier to count without resolving what that output means for the relationship between an organization, the media, and its publics.

This is where the notion of the visibility economy becomes analytically useful. Here it denotes a regime in which attention, discoverability, reach, and algorithmic recognizability acquire economic and strategic value. Visibility can become a reportable service output, but a countable output is not necessarily a communication outcome. Macnamara's (2018) evaluation framework emphasizes outcomes and impact, while Buhmann et al. (2019) show that the development and adoption of measurement standards involve organizational and professional negotiation. These distinctions inform the present analysis: placement and reporting may be valued by practitioners without demonstrating changes in audience trust, relationships, or public understanding.

The infrastructural dimension also becomes clearer in recent journalism research. Giomelakis (2023), through interviews with Greek SEO experts, examines how semantic search and structured data enter the

work of making news discoverable. This is a study of search optimization rather than paid distribution, and the distinction matters: organic search visibility is not a purchased editorial placement. Yet it shows why circulation cannot be understood through editorial selection alone. The technical organization of content also conditions how it can be found. For the present article, the implication is conceptual rather than causal. Paid distribution is examined as one part of this wider organization of visibility; the participant data do not establish whether B2Press improves search rankings or changes newsroom decisions.

Native-advertising research illustrates why commercially enabled visibility raises questions about recognition and credibility. Amazeen and Muddiman (2018) examine audience perceptions of publishers, and Ferrer-Conill et al. (2021) investigate the visual convergence of editorial and commercial content. Amazeen and Wojdynski (2019), studying US adults, find that recognizing a sponsored news article depends partly on audience characteristics and that transparency matters to its evaluation. Wojdynski and Evans's (2020) CARE model explains recognition as a condition shaping persuasion in masked advertising formats. These studies address sponsored content, not paid press-release distribution; they provide concepts for asking whether readers can identify commercial relationships without establishing that every distributed release is an advertisement.

The boundary question has also remained open in more recent work. Schauster (2025), analyzing 136 articles in the advertising trade publication Adweek, finds that native advertising involves contested transparency norms and collaboration among publishers, technology platforms, and content creators. This evidence concerns professional discourse rather than the operation of paid press-release networks. It nevertheless helps locate the present problem: commercial and editorial boundaries are negotiated through organizational relationships as well as through the appearance of a particular text. Applying that insight here does not mean that every distributed release is a native advertisement. It means asking which actors authorize circulation, what commercial relationship supports it, and whether that relationship is made intelligible to readers.

Paid digital distribution networks raise a related ambiguity at the level of infrastructure. Paying for distribution is distinct from paying an outlet to publish a placement, and neither should automatically be equated with native advertising. The present data do not establish the financial or editorial arrangement behind each placement. Disclosure effects also depend on context: Boerman et al. (2017), in a Facebook experiment, found different effects of sponsorship disclosure for celebrity and brand sources. The relevance here is the need to distinguish the funding of circulation from readers' recognition and evaluation of content. Practitioners' assessments can reveal tensions between editorial value and technical access value but cannot establish audience responses to particular placements.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The political-economic backbone of this article links media, capital, and advertising to the commodification of communication. Herman and Chomsky (1988) treat advertising dependence as a structural influence on media output. Contemporary platform research extends attention to the economic and infrastructural conditions through which cultural content is produced and circulated (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). This article retains the critical concern with ownership, dependence, and exchange value while examining a specific distribution service. Its theoretical question is how visibility becomes a product, a package, and a performance indicator; its empirical evidence remains practitioners' perceptions of that process.

Read together, Marx's (1867/1976) theory of exchange value, Debord's (1967/1994) society of the spectacle, Smythe's (1977) audience commodity thesis, and Mosco's (2009) account of the commodification of communication suggest that digital distribution networks produce a new economic layer within news circulation. What becomes commodified here is not only audience attention. The infrastructure of visibility production itself also becomes commodified. News, in that context, is no longer only something to read or watched. It becomes a technical output that can be amplified through budget and distribution design (Debord, 1967/1994; Marx, 1867/1976; Mosco, 2009; Smythe, 1977).

Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model identified advertising as one of the central filters shaping media output. The present article updates that logic by arguing that digital PR networks reorganize similar filtering mechanisms through technical and commercial distribution formats. Advertising dependency

has not disappeared. Yet it now exists alongside infrastructures that promise guaranteed visibility or reportable output. The conceptual proposition advanced here is therefore this: the classical political-economic pressure exercised through advertising expands in the digital era through infrastructures that reorganize the circulation of news.

This expansion requires the commodification of news and the commercialization of news value to be thought together. The commodification of news refers to the growing exchange value of news within market relations. The commercialization of news value refers to a shift in the criteria by which content comes to count as news, from editorial judgment toward technical reach, SEO performance, outlet placement, and budget-enabled distribution. Paid digital distribution networks connect these two processes. PR content thereby acquires a form that remains close to news in appearance yet is more open to commercial circulation in practice (Debord, 1967/1994; Marx, 1867/1976; Mosco, 2009).

One point needs to be kept clear. This article does not construct a totalizing argument that declares digital PR inherently unethical. Critical political economy is used to examine relations among power, capital, technical infrastructure, and visibility (Mosco, 2009). Edwards' (2018) socio-cultural approach similarly situates PR within wider social and political relations rather than treating it only as an organizational tool. This perspective accommodates the dual pattern in the present findings: participants describe operational advantages while also raising editorial and ethical concerns.

The relational understanding of PR also has a place in Turkish-language scholarship. Asna's (1997) emphasis on public interest and mutual understanding provides a historical basis for questioning whether dissemination alone fulfills PR's purpose. Contemporary strategic communication theory locates communication within the pursuit of organizational goals, requiring attention to how those goals are defined and supported (Zerfass et al., 2018). In Türkiye, Kuşku Özdemir (2024) examines managers from seven companies in İzmir and identifies perceived opportunities and risks of social media for reputation management. That study concerns social media rather than paid distribution but reinforces the need to distinguish technical opportunities from reputational consequences.

Digitalization does not by itself displace the one-way publicity and public-information models described by Grunig and Hunt (1984). Faster distribution and more detailed reporting can expand dissemination without establishing reciprocal relationships. Dhanesh (2017) conceptualizes engagement through affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, while Kent and Taylor (2021) distinguish the potential for online dialogue from the conditions needed to realize it. These approaches provide a basis for examining paid distribution as a communication practice: reach and placement should not be treated as direct evidence of engagement. B2Press is considered here as a case in which technical circulation and relational expectations may coexist or diverge.

Akbulut's (2015) doctoral study provides an earlier Turkish account of the relationship between press releases and editorial uptake. Comparing releases from five organizations with national press coverage, it emphasizes the relevance of news value and strategically prepared communication. Current research adds to a different infrastructural problem. Nielsen and Ganter (2018) describe publishers' tension between the operational benefits of digital intermediaries and concerns about long-term dependence. The settings and evidence differ, but both studies make the conditions of circulation important. The present case therefore examines how practitioners evaluate distribution services without assuming that access to a network guarantees editorial acceptance or quality.

The relationship between PR and marketing also requires historical and contemporary perspectives. Tunçel (2009) discusses the contribution of PR to integrated marketing communication and the growing role of marketing-oriented PR from the 1990s. Tong and Chan (2023) revisit the relationship in a digital setting, identifying convergence alongside continuing distinctions between PR and marketing functions. These accounts help frame paid distribution as a combination of institutional communication, commercial access, and visibility services. They do not justify classifying every placement as advertising: the particular payment and editorial arrangements remain an empirical question.

Platform research offers a contemporary extension of the political-economic framework. Nieborg and Poell (2018) explain how platform infrastructures and markets reshape cultural production, including news, and make content dependent on changing governance and data feedback. Poell et al. (2019) define

platformization through the interrelation of infrastructures, economic processes, governance, and cultural practices. van Dijck et al. (2018) place public values and accountability at the center of these transformations. Paid distribution networks are not identical to the large platforms examined in this literature. The conceptual connection is that circulation takes place through infrastructures whose technical arrangements also have economic and institutional consequences.

This connection helps specify the visibility argument. Caplan and Boyd (2018) show how algorithmic arrangements can carry organizational dependencies into other institutions' practices. Petre's (2021) study of newsroom metrics examines how performance analytics shape journalistic work. Neither study tests B2Press, but both caution against treating technical measures as neutral descriptions of value. Applied here alongside Mosco's (2009) account of commodification, they support examining visibility as a service that can be packaged, priced, and reported. The resulting proposition is that news value may coexist with budget power, network access, and performance measures; the participant accounts do not independently establish their effects on newsroom decisions.

The theoretical framework therefore acknowledges both the practical rationale for distribution services and the broader purposes of PR. The historical emphasis on public understanding and news value remains relevant (Akbulut, 2015; Asna, 1997), while contemporary critical PR scholarship encourages attention to power and social consequences (Edwards, 2018). B2Press is not treated as representative of the entire field or as an exceptional deviation. It is a bounded case for examining how a professionally diverse sample in Türkiye interprets the relationship between operational visibility and editorial credibility.

METHOD

Research Design and Case Rationale

This study is structured around a convergent parallel mixed-method design in order to examine how practitioners assess paid digital distribution networks and what those assessments suggest about the circulation of PR content. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the same field instrument, from the same sample, and within the same time frame. They were then subjected to separate analytic procedures before being interpreted in an integrated manner. This design was chosen because it allows patterns in ratings of visibility, satisfaction, and perceived return on investment (ROI) to be read alongside more interpretive dimensions such as trust, outlet quality, and editorial autonomy.

The empirical focus of the study is the B2Press case. B2Press is treated here in neutral methodological terms as a digital distribution infrastructure that brings together online press release circulation, outlet placement, reporting functions, and search engine visibility logic. Its value as a case lies in the fact that it makes visible, at the same time, the advantages associated with paid digital distribution and the tensions those advantages generate around quality, trust, and editorial boundaries.

Population and Sample

The study focuses on communication actors involved in press release and media visibility processes as decision makers or practitioners. Participants came from a range of sectors and professional settings, including technology-related work. The sample was constructed through purposive sampling. Two main criteria guided selection: direct involvement in digital visibility processes, and a professional position that would allow participants to offer experience-based observations or judgments about paid digital distribution networks. Participants were reached through the researcher's professional networks, sectoral contacts, and direct individual invitations. Participation was voluntary.

Inclusion criteria were as follows: active involvement in PR, corporate communication, media planning, entrepreneurship, brand management, or related fields; a decision-making or implementation role in press release or media visibility processes; and the ability to provide concrete experience-based or observation-based evaluation of paid digital distribution networks. The resulting sample was predominantly private-sector, but it also included a public-sector press adviser and a nongovernmental organization representative. These participants are retained in the analysis because their recorded roles concern communication and media visibility.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

The study used a structured interview schedule combining closed-ended and open-ended questions. The instrument consisted of seven sections and 18 main question headings in total. Sixteen of these were closed-ended and two were open-ended. The sections covered general background information; awareness and use of digital press release distribution networks; perceived effectiveness of digital distribution networks; their effects on PR strategy and planning; B2Press-specific experience and satisfaction; the measurement of outcomes and ROI; and expectations regarding the future role of digital distribution networks. The complete archived Turkish instrument and an English translation are supplied in **Appendix A**, including all item wording, response options, conditional questions, and discrepancies between the form and the recorded responses.

The closed-ended questions produced quantitative data on awareness, frequency of use, perceived effectiveness, satisfaction, ROI perceptions, and challenges encountered during the distribution process. The open-ended questions gathered participants' comments on improvement needs and on the future role of paid digital distribution networks in PR. Rather than using two separate field instruments, the study generated quantitative and qualitative data within a single framework, allowing the two layers to be compared across the same sample. Data were collected through telephone and face-to-face interviews over eight months following ethics approval in December 2024, with interviews completed in August 2025. Most interviews were conducted by telephone because the first author was in the Netherlands for much of this period, while the participants were based in Türkiye. The response records derive from actual participants and were subsequently anonymized. Participant numbers are used throughout the article.

Data Analysis and Integration

The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, responses were coded and summarized by frequencies, means (Ms), and sample standard deviations (SDs). Each effectiveness or satisfaction mean summarizes one item across participants; no overall effectiveness or satisfaction score was constructed. Percentages use N = 50 unless stated otherwise; satisfaction ratings use the 45 B2Press users. Non-user ratings were left missing, not coded zero or imputed. Three recorded "familiar" responses were retained separately from the questionnaire's "somewhat familiar" option. The multiple-choice challenge question has one recorded category per participant; explanatory annotations and multiple measurement-method choices were retained. SPSS was used for the original numerical analysis, and study materials were shared with the second author for supervisory review. The new calculations reported in this revision were reproduced from the anonymized records in Python.

Approximate 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated as $M \pm t(.975, N-1) \times SD/\sqrt{N}$. For the two item contrasts, the calculation uses within-participant differences. These unadjusted intervals assume independent responses and equal spacing of the numerical categories. They are model-based summaries for the purposive sample, not design-based estimates for all PR practitioners. Full category frequencies and calculation details are supplied in **Appendix B**.

Second, professional segment was cross-tabulated against perceived ROI. "Much higher" and "somewhat higher" were combined as high ROI; "about the same" and "lower" as low/neutral ROI. Six "not sure" responses were excluded. Five of ten expected cell counts were below five, with a minimum of 1.273. A two-sided Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test therefore replaced the asymptotic chi-square inference. The calculation enumerated all 330 fixed-margin tables and summed probabilities no greater than that of the observed table. Pearson's chi-square and Cramér's V are descriptive companion statistics (Freeman & Halton, 1951).

Third, the qualitative analysis examined both open-ended questions and explanatory annotations, including the comment about "spam sites" quoted below. The first author's thematic interpretation was based on readings of recurring expressions and their relation to the research question. Materials were shared with the second author for supervisory review; this is not treated as independent duplicate coding, and no intercoder-agreement coefficient is claimed. During revision, an AI-assisted audit read all 50 records, covering 100 short open-ended answers, and mapped explicit excerpts to stated theme definitions. Participants were counted once per theme, with multiple themes allowed. This audit is additional documentation, not a reconstruction of undocumented original coding procedures. **Appendix C** sets out definitions, supporting

participant IDs, contrary examples, and translation pairs. These are short response records rather than verbatim interview transcripts.

In the fourth stage, the quantitative and qualitative findings were interpreted together through the joint display. At this stage, the analysis distinguished between findings that converged, findings that generated tension, and findings that limited or qualified one another. The analysis therefore moves beyond a simple listing of numerical tendencies and toward a level of interpretation that considers the professional meaning and possible editorial implications of those tendencies.

Validity, Ethics, and Reflexivity

The questionnaire contains five separate effectiveness ratings and four service-satisfaction ratings. To address their within-block consistency transparently, raw coefficient alpha was calculated during revision: $\alpha = .836$ for the five effectiveness items ($N = 50$) and $\alpha = .651$ for the four satisfaction items ($N = 45$). These are exploratory covariance diagnostics for hypothetical pooled scores. They do not establish uni-dimensionality or the reliability of the individual items reported here (Sijtsma, 2009). The weaker covariation in the satisfaction block supports retaining distinct service assessments. No item was removed to raise alpha, no total score was used, and reliability across repeated administrations was not assessed.

Qualitative credibility is supported by traceable excerpts and the retention of contrary assessments; transferability is bounded by the professional and case description rather than statistical representativeness. Dependability is supported by explicit coding definitions and a record-to-theme audit trail, while confirmability is strengthened by separating participant wording from interpretation and disclosing the ownership interest in the case. These provisions make the analysis inspectable; they do not establish agreement between independent coders. No contemporaneous saturation log or chronological stopping record is available. Participant numbers reflect professional grouping, not collection order, so no saturation point is retrospectively assigned. The four themes are a bounded interpretation of the completed corpus, not a claim of exhaustive thematic coverage.

The research proposal received approval from the authors' institutional ethics committee. All participants gave informed consent before their responses were collected. Their responses were subsequently anonymized. Identifying interview materials have been deleted, while anonymized response records and derived analyses have been retained. Full ethics approval details are provided on the title page for editorial review.

The researcher's proximity to B2Press enabled access but also creates a potential source of bias. An author has a financial interest in the case organization; full identifying details are supplied to the editor on the title page. The case is therefore assessed through both favorable and critical responses. Perceived service benefits are kept separate from independently verified campaign outcomes, and disagreement with the article's critical interpretation is retained rather than removed. These precautions do not eliminate the possible effects of recruitment, social desirability, or researcher interpretation.

Limitations

The limitations of the study should be stated openly. First, the sample is limited to 50 participants. The purposive sample supports a bounded descriptive and interpretive account, but not statistical generalization. Second, recruitment through professional networks and the equal allocation to five segments do not establish a representative distribution of the field. The sample spans several sectors and is predominantly private-sector, with limited public-sector and nongovernmental representation. Its findings cannot establish sector-wide differences or represent the field of journalism.

Third, the empirical analysis is centered on the B2Press case. Other paid distribution infrastructures, including large international networks such as Cision and PR Newswire, fall outside the scope of the present research. Fourth, the study relies on a cross-sectional design. For that reason, it cannot establish longitudinal or causal claims about how attitudes or effects might change over time. Fifth, the quantitative structure does not rely on standardized campaign data directly comparing the paid and organic distribution of identical content. The available evidence is therefore interpretive, perception-based, and pattern-oriented rather than experimental.

Table 1. Sample segments and distribution

Segment	Description	n
Group 1	Digital PR and technology-focused agencies	10
Group 2	Corporate and traditional PR professionals	10
Group 3	Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and start-up representatives	10
Group 4	Hybrid users and strategists	10
Group 5	Actors representing future-oriented, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven, and data-centered approaches	10

Note. n: Number of participants in each segment; Each segment contains 10 participants; Only the summary segment distribution is presented here in order to support the analytical flow of the article

Table 2. Participant characteristics

Characteristic	Value
Total participants	N = 50
Segment structure	Five professional segments, n = 10 each
Role-based composition	PR/public relations specialists: 24 (48%); company representatives, founders, or managers: 18 (36%); other strategic, advisory, or sector-specific roles: 8 (16%)
Professional experience	Less than 1 year: 1 (2%); 1-3 years: 6 (12%); 4-6 years: 11 (22%); 7+ years: 32 (64%)
Distribution frequency	Weekly: 15 (30%); monthly: 16 (32%); quarterly: 10 (20%); less frequent, project-based, crisis-based, or no regular use: 9 (18%)
Familiarity with digital distribution networks	Very familiar: 34 (68%); somewhat familiar: 12 (24%); familiar: 3 (6%); not familiar: 1 (2%)
Usage pattern	Regular: 23 (46%); occasional: 17 (34%); rare or crisis-based: 8 (16%); never: 2 (4%)

Note. N: Total number of participants; n: Subgroup frequency; %: Percentage; Participant characteristics are reported in role- and experience-based terms because the profiling framework was designed around professionally relevant variables rather than personal demographic identifiers

A final limitation concerns measurement and interpretation. Visibility ratings do not directly measure audience trust or editorial autonomy. Single-item reliability over time was not tested, the five-point responses are ordinal, and several items have concentrated on high ratings. The qualitative material is brief; neither a documented saturation stopping rule nor independent duplicate coding can be established from the retained record. Supervisory review and the revision-stage evidence audit improve transparency but do not remove these limitations. Professional proximity and ownership also remain potential sources of bias.

Participants

The study included a total of N = 50 participants organized into five equally sized professional segments (n = 10 each) (**Table 1**). In line with the research questions, the participant profile was constructed around professionally relevant variables rather than personal demographic identifiers. The sample was therefore profiled in terms of sectoral role, professional position, years of experience, familiarity with digital distribution networks, and distribution-use patterns.

In role-based terms, the sample included 24 PR or PR specialists (48%), 18 company representatives, founders, or managers (36%), and 8 participants in other strategic, advisory, or sector-specific positions (16%). Professional experience ranged from less than 1 year to more than 7 years, with 32 participants (64%) reporting 7+ years of experience, 11 (22%) reporting 4-6 years, 6 (12%) reporting 1-3 years, and 1 (2%) reporting less than 1 year. Distribution activity also varied, with 15 participants (30%) reporting weekly distribution, 16 (32%) monthly distribution, 10 (20%) quarterly distribution, and 9 (18%) less frequent, project-based, crisis-based, or no regular use. Familiarity with digital distribution networks was high overall: 34 participants (68%) reported being very familiar with such tools, 12 (24%) somewhat familiar, 3 (6%) familiar, and 1 (2%) not familiar (**Table 2**).

FINDINGS

Visibility, Reportability, and Measurability as Perceived Advantages

The quantitative data indicate that paid digital distribution networks are a familiar media relations tool among the professionals in this sample. Sixty-eight percent of participants reported being very familiar with such networks, 24% somewhat familiar, and 6% familiar. Only 2% stated that they were not familiar with them. Use frequency patterns reinforce this picture. Forty-six percent reported regular use, 34% occasional use, 16%

Table 3. Awareness of and frequency of use of digital distribution networks

Variable	Category	n	Percentage (%)
Awareness level	Very familiar	34	68.0
	Somewhat familiar	12	24.0
	Familiar	3	6.0
	Not familiar	1	2.0
Frequency of use	Regularly	23	46.0
	Occasionally	17	34.0
	Rarely/in crisis situations	8	16.0
	Never	2	4.0

Note. N: Total number of participants; n Subgroup frequency; Percentages are calculated over N = 50; "Familiar" is retained as a distinct category because it occurs in three response records; the archived questionnaire lists very familiar, somewhat familiar, and not familiar

Table 4. Perceived effectiveness of digital distribution

Effectiveness item	N	M	SD	95% CI
Media placement	50	4.74	0.49	[4.60, 4.88]
Brand awareness	50	4.48	0.54	[4.33, 4.63]
Reaching a targeted audience	50	4.04	0.88	[3.79, 4.29]
Enhancing brand reputation	50	3.96	0.75	[3.75, 4.17]
Influencing public perception	50	3.66	0.59	[3.49, 3.83]

Note. Each row is a separate item, not a composite; CI: Approximate, unadjusted, model-based 95% CI; Coding: 1 = very ineffective, 5 = very effective; **Appendix B** provides category frequencies and assumptions

Table 5. Satisfaction levels across service dimensions

Satisfaction item	N	M	SD	95% CI
Reporting and analytics	45	4.47	0.55	[4.30, 4.63]
Reach and distribution	45	4.40	0.58	[4.23, 4.57]
Customer service	45	4.16	0.56	[3.99, 4.32]
Quality of placements	45	3.62	0.61	[3.44, 3.81]

Note. N = 45 B2Press users; Four non-users and one participant considering use have no ratings and are excluded; Each row is a separate item; CI: Approximate, unadjusted, model-based 95% CI; Coding: 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied

rare or crisis-based use, and 4% no use at all. Together, these figures suggest that paid digital distribution is a routine part of media visibility work for many participants in this sample. These patterns describe the selected participants and should not be read as estimates of adoption across the wider profession (**Table 3**).

Perceived effectiveness scores sharpen this pattern. Media placement has the highest mean at 4.74 on a 5-point scale. It is followed by brand awareness at 4.48 and reaching a targeted audience at 4.04. By contrast, enhancing brand reputation remains at 3.96, while influencing public perception falls to 3.66. The distribution is revealing. Paid digital distribution networks are perceived as especially strong in terms of volume-based visibility, outlet placement, and reach. They appear less persuasive in areas that depend more heavily on trust, reputation, and qualitative influence.

Table 4 presents intervals for each mean; these ratings compare perceived functions and do not independently measure trust.

Satisfaction data produce a similar pattern. The 45 participants who had used B2Press reported high satisfaction with reporting and analytics, with a mean of 4.47, and with reach and distribution, with a mean of 4.40. Customer service was evaluated positively at 4.16, whereas placement quality remained lower at 3.62. This result is especially important because the strongest promise of paid digital distribution lies precisely in its ability to produce measurable and demonstrable outcomes. The concentration of satisfaction around reporting and reach helps explain the appeal of digital PR as a performance-oriented instrument within this sample. At the same time, the more reserved evaluation of placement quality suggests that the tension between numerical performance and outlet credibility is also reflected in user satisfaction (**Table 5**).

ROI, Segment Difference, and Overall Tendency

Perceptions of ROI further reinforce this picture (**Table 6** and **Table 7**). Forty-eight percent of participants associated paid digital distribution with a much higher ROI than traditional methods, and another 26% associated it with a somewhat higher ROI. In other words, 74% of the sample reported a positive tendency in favor of paid digital distribution. Even so, the association analysis did not provide clear evidence of a

Table 6. Perceived ROI and group-level differentiation

ROI perception	n	Percentage (%)
Much higher	24	48.0
Somewhat higher	13	26.0
About the same	6	12.0
Not sure	6	12.0
Lower	1	2.0

Note. n: Number of participants in each segment; N = 50; n = category frequency; Percentages describe perceived ROI; positive ROI is 37/50 (74%); Only the summary segment distribution is presented here in order to support the analytical flow of the article

Table 7. Group counts used in the ROI association analysis

Professional segment	Low/neutral ROI	High ROI
Group 1	1	8
Group 2	3	5
Group 3	2	8
Group 4	0	8
Group 5	1	8
Total	7	37

Note. Percentages in the ROI distribution use N = 50; positive ROI is 37/50 = 74.0%; The association analysis excludes six "not sure" responses (N = 44); Group counts use low/neutral = about the same or lower, and high = somewhat or much higher; Five expected cell counts are below five; Two-sided Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact p = .376; Pearson χ^2 = 4.736; Cramér's V = .328

Table 8. Summary indicators

Indicator	Calculation	Value	Interpretation
Reported familiarity	Very familiar + somewhat familiar + familiar	49/50 (98%)	Familiarity is common among the selected sample.
Regular or occasional use	Regular + occasional use	40/50 (80%)	Describes reported use, not market penetration.
Placement-public-perception contrast	Mean paired difference, N = 50	1.08 [0.93, 1.23]	Difference between two effectiveness-item means; not a trust measure.
Reporting–quality contrast	Mean paired difference, N = 45	0.84 [0.61, 1.07]	Difference between two service-satisfaction means.
Positive ROI share	Much higher + somewhat higher	37/50 (74%)	Perceived advantage, not audited financial return.
Most recorded challenge	Maintaining content quality	19/50 (38%)	Most common challenge category in these records.

Note. Differences are means of unrounded within-participant item differences; their 95% CIs are model-based and unadjusted; They are not validated measures of trust or editorial quality

relationship between professional segment and perceived ROI. After excluding six "not sure" responses, the two-sided Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test gave p = .376 (N = 44). Pearson's χ^2 was 4.736 and Cramér's V was .328; the exact result is used for inference because the table is sparse. Positive assessments occurred across the sample, but non-significance does not establish that the segments are equivalent. These ratings describe perceived ROI, not independently measured financial returns.

The data on perceived challenges strengthen the article's critical dimension. The most frequently identified problem was maintaining content quality, reported by 38% of participants. Measuring effectiveness, cost, and targeting specific audiences each remained at 20%. Only 2% referred independently to other credibility-related problems. This distribution indicates that paid digital distribution is not viewed solely as a mechanism that produces visibility advantages. It is also perceived as a structure that carries risks of standardization, repetition, outlet-quality pressure, and erosion in content quality.

The mean within-participant contrast between media placement and influencing public perception is 1.08 points (95% CI [0.93, 1.23], N = 50). The contrast between reporting and analytics and placement quality is 0.84 points (95% CI [0.61, 1.07], N = 45), calculated before rounding. These exploratory contrasts concern specific items; they are not validated measures of trust, editorial quality, or causal impact. Moreover, 38 of 50 media-placement ratings were at the highest category, indicating a substantial ceiling concentration. The intervals make precision visible under the stated assumptions, but do not justify population-wide rankings (**Table 8**).

Qualitative Themes and Integrated Interpretation

The qualitative findings add distinctions to the quantitative pattern. In the revision-stage audit, explicit material concerning operational assistance appeared in 7 of 50 records; trust, quality, or standards in 15; reporting and measurement in 14; and cross-market visibility in 4. These overlapping counts describe the evidence under the definitions in **Appendix C**. Nonmention is not disagreement, and trust-related material includes positive expectations as well as criticism. The themes differ in density and should not be presented as equally widespread.

The first theme concerned speed and operational efficiency. Some participants described paid distribution as a way to reduce uncertainty, accelerate circulation, and generate outputs that could be reported to clients or investors. One participant called it "a lifeline in moments of crisis" (P20, group 2), while another said it "will take over the operational burden and allow a stronger focus on strategy" (P31, group 4). These statements reflect the practical appeal of speed, control, and reduced coordination costs.

A second theme centered on trust and outlet quality. Some participants questioned outlet credibility, editorial standards, and the reputational risk of appearing in weakly curated environments. One participant warned that "there are too many spam sites" (P6, group 1), and another argued that the model "will dominate the sector, but it may also lower quality" (P14, group 2). Read together, these comments show that visibility gains do not automatically resolve concerns about editorial legitimacy. Other responses qualify that account: P7 described distribution as "the digital counterpart of the mechanism for building trust," while P26 anticipated credibility gains. Trust-related responses therefore express differing expectations rather than a uniform judgment that distribution undermines credibility.

A third theme highlighted the strategic appeal of measurability. Participants repeatedly link paid distribution to reportable visibility, clearer campaign outputs, and easier performance communication inside organizations. For one participant, it was "the easiest way to prove the work to the client" (P18, group 2). Another described it as "the foundation of data-driven PR" (P34, group 4). These responses clarify why reporting and analytics emerge as one of the strongest perceived advantages in the quantitative findings.

A fourth theme involved scalable or cross-market visibility. A small subset of responses emphasized the usefulness of paid distribution for reaching multiple outlets or markets within a more controlled and manageable process. One participant said it "will become standard for global reach" (P4, group 1), while another described it as "a bridge for brands that want to globalize" (P35, group 4). These quotations illustrate the appeal of paid distribution as an infrastructure for expansion beyond single-market media relations. Four records explicitly support this cross-market theme; broader requests for sectoral or local targeting are distinguished from international expansion.

Taken together, the themes show why participants may value manageable visibility while remaining concerned about its editorial and relational limits. Desired improvements and future expectations form much of this evidence; they do not establish current service performance. Ten records ask for more sectoral or local access, five address affordability, and six qualified technological substitution. For P11, "strategic communication is done by people"; P46 finds distribution "useful for announcements, but it cannot replace a critical review." These qualifications keep the interpretation connected to human and editorial judgment (**Table 9**).

DISCUSSION

The first message of the findings is clear enough. Participants perceive paid digital distribution networks as operationally useful. They value speed, reporting capacity, SEO visibility, and more predictable media placement. From the standpoint of these practitioners, that is a rational and highly practical value. Once client accountability, campaign proof, and scalable visibility become pressing needs, the appeal of such systems is easy to understand. The data documents professional assessment; they do not independently verify campaign performance.

That is also precisely why a technical-efficiency narrative is not sufficient on its own. Read through the political-economic framework, the findings raise a further question: how does the growing importance of metrics alter the value attached to news circulation? In a classical editorial regime, the value of news is shaped

Table 9. Joint display of quantitative patterns and qualitative responses

Quantitative pattern	Qualitative response	Integrated interpretation and limit
Media placement M = 4.74 (N = 50)	P31: "will take over the operational burden and allow a stronger focus on strategy"	A high placement rating coexists with expectations of operational relief. No elapsed-time measure was collected.
Reach satisfaction M = 4.40; placement quality M = 3.62 (N = 45)	P14: "will dominate the sector, but it may also lower quality"	Service reach can be valued alongside quality concerns. These are practitioner assessments, not an outlet-quality audit.
Reporting and analytics M = 4.47 (N = 45)	P18: "the easiest way to prove the work to the client"	Reporting has practical value for client accountability. Reportability does not establish campaign causality or financial ROI.
Targeted-audience effectiveness M = 4.04 (N = 50)	P35: "a bridge for brands that want to globalize"	Reach ratings align with aspirations for expansion. Cross-market performance was not directly measured.

Note. Quotations are English translations of Turkish responses; The joint display integrates existing evidence and does not introduce additional outcome measures

through novelty, significance, public interest, social relevance, and journalistic filtering. In a paid digital distribution regime, technical reach, volume of placement, SEO discoverability, reportable output, and budget-enabled spread come to the foreground. That is where the commodification of news and the commercialization of news value intersect. News becomes not only something worth publishing, but also something that can be distributed, measured, and packaged as visibility (Debord, 1967/1994; Mosco, 2009; Petre, 2021).

The relation among media, capital, and advertising therefore takes on renewed significance. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) account of advertising dependence identifies a structural problem that remains relevant, while Nielsen and Ganter (2018) examine publishers' dependence on digital intermediaries and Caplan and Boyd (2018) locate institutional relationships within algorithmic arrangements. Read against this literature, the present findings suggest that practitioners value access to the conditions of circulation as well as exposure itself. This is an interpretation of professional assessments, not evidence that a specific distribution network controls editorial decisions. The analytical issue is how technical access and reportable output can become commercially valued alongside editorial selection.

That connection also matters for the normative foundations of PR. The two-way orientation associated with Grunig and Hunt (1984) remains distinct from one-way dissemination. Recent accounts of engagement and dialogic communication further caution against treating measurable activity as evidence of reciprocal relationships (Dhanesh, 2017; Kent & Li, 2020; Kent & Taylor, 2021). The distribution logic described by participants values announcement, placement, and reporting. It may support communication objectives, but the present design cannot establish whether it also strengthens dialogue or relationships. This distinction prevents favorable assessments of technical performance from standing in for unmeasured relational outcomes.

At the same time, it would be analytically weak to turn this into a total collapse narrative. The findings do not support the claim that such systems produce unquestioned legitimacy. Participants remain cautious, especially in relation to outlet quality and editorial independence. These accounts are consistent with a coexistence of editorial and commercial distribution logics. They raise questions about the pressures placed on editorial space, without establishing how individual newsrooms make their decisions. Earned media still matters. In assessments of trust, reputation, and content quality, organic visibility continues to carry a distinct weight.

Recent work on organizational legitimacy helps explain why these distinctions should be retained. Using survey and archival evidence from 44 US nonprofit organizations, Fu and Wang (2024) examine legitimacy through combinations of information visibility, organizational listening, and partnerships. Their setting differs substantially from commercial PR distribution, but their configurational approach cautions against treating visibility as a self-sufficient account of legitimacy. In the present study, favorable assessments of reporting and placement coexist with reservations about outlet quality. That coexistence is not evidence that credibility has declined, because credibility was not measured independently. It is evidence that practitioners distinguish being visible from being represented in an editorial environment they consider valuable. The political-

economic question concerns how commercial distribution packages the former while leaving the latter less certain.

Seen in this way, the B2Press case is better read not as a model representative of the whole field, but as a strong symptomatic case that points toward a broader direction of change. The tendency described by this sample may take different forms across sectors and media systems. Even so, the underlying issue remains stable. The accounts point to a tension between the success metrics of digital PR and practitioners' concerns about credibility, a tension that deserves to be examined through both ethics and the political economy of visibility. That tension also has a social dimension. Strategic communication does not only shape campaign outcomes. It also affects broader questions of social impact and communicative legitimacy, a point that makes the concerns raised by Hurst and Johnston (2021) particularly relevant here.

Practical Implications

For PR professionals, the findings suggest that paid digital distribution should be used as a strategic instrument rather than a substitute for earned media. The strongest perceived advantages of these systems lie in speed, reportability, and controlled visibility, but those advantages do not eliminate the need for outlet selection, editorial judgment, and reputation management. For editors and journalists, the study points to the growing difficulty of maintaining a clear boundary between editorial circulation and commercially enabled visibility. For regulatory and self-regulatory bodies, the findings reinforce the importance of transparent labeling practices, clearer disclosure norms, and stronger guidance on how paid visibility should appear within digital news environments.

Future Research

Future research could extend this line of inquiry in several directions. First, comparative studies across sectors would help clarify how the patterns described here differ across technology, finance, healthcare, consumer goods, and public-sector communication. Second, comparative case studies involving other paid distribution networks, including Cision and PR Newswire, would help determine which findings are case-specific and which reflect a broader infrastructural logic. Third, the editorial side of the equation deserves fuller attention. Journalists, editors, and newsroom managers may interpret the same circulation mechanisms differently. Finally, future work could develop more systematic measurement tools for trust, outlet quality, and editorial perception in order to strengthen the empirical study of paid visibility regimes.

CONCLUSION

This article argued, through the B2Press case, that paid digital distribution networks move PR content from editorial circulation toward a technical and commercialized circulation of visibility. The empirical contribution is a bounded account of how practitioners experience and evaluate that proposed shift. Participants see paid digital distribution as highly advantageous in terms of visibility, media placement, speed, SEO discoverability, and reportability. Yet the same participants become more cautious, and at times explicitly critical, when the discussion turns to outlet quality, credibility, sponsored-content perceptions, and editorial autonomy.

The article's main theoretical contribution lies in reading digital PR not merely as an efficiency-enhancing communication practice, but as a visibility regime connected to the commodification of news and the commercialization of news value. This perspective updates the classical media-capital-advertising framework by examining how, in the digital era, visibility is understood as a commodity and a service output. The key point is not that editorial judgment has disappeared. It is that technical and commercial distribution logics have begun to penetrate more deeply into the value regime of news circulation (Marx, 1867/1976; Mosco, 2009).

Even so, the B2Press case does not authorize sweeping claims about the whole field. It documents a pattern of professional perceptions, not a universal template. That is precisely why the case matters. It shows that enthusiasm for measurable visibility can coexist with concerns about credibility, and provides a basis for studying that tension through newsroom and audience evidence.

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Declaration of interest: The first author is the founder and a 95% owner of the B2Press businesses, B2Press BV and B2Press LTD. This constitutes a financial interest in the case examined. The research received no financial support from those businesses. The study critically examines the model of paid digital distribution that B2Press represents, including perceived tensions surrounding news value, credibility and editorial autonomy; it is not intended to endorse the company or promote its services. The first author's direct involvement provided operational knowledge and established relationships through which the company and its clients could be approached and participants' experiences examined. Comparable access to other providers and their clients was not available within the conditions of this study, making B2Press a feasible case for this inquiry. This access explains the case selection; it does not establish objectivity or remove the financial interest. Favorable, critical and contrary participant assessments are retained, and participants' perceptions are not treated as independently verified campaign outcomes. Ownership, professional relationships, recruitment and interpretation remain possible sources of bias. The second author reports no conflict of interest related to the study.

Data availability: Aggregated findings are reported in the article. Identifying interview materials have been deleted, while anonymized response records and derived analyses have been retained. Participant-level records are not publicly deposited because of confidentiality. Requests concerning supporting materials should be directed to the corresponding author; any access is subject to participant consent, the applicable ethics approval, and the study's retention arrangements.

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APPENDIX A: FULL STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Appendix A supplies the full instrument. The archived Turkish form contains seven sections and 18 main question headings, comprising 16 closed-ended headings and two open-ended questions. The five effectiveness subitems and four satisfaction subitems are reproduced below. The English text is a translation prepared for this revision, not a separately validated English instrument. Numbering is added for cross-reference; substantive option order is retained. The source is the standalone instrument retained with the ethics and research documents and corroborated by the participant forms. Collection was mainly by telephone, with some face-to-face interviews; the archived form does not establish that every spoken prompt was delivered verbatim.

Section 1. General Background Information

Q1. What is your role in the organization?
Turkish: Organizasyondaki rolünüz nedir?
Options in archived order: Public relations specialist; Company representative; Other (please specify).
Turkish options: Halkla ilişkiler uzmanı; Şirket temsilcisi; Diğer (belirtiniz).
Q2. How many years of experience do you have in public relations?
Turkish: Halkla ilişkiler alanında kaç yıllık deneyiminiz var?
Options in archived order: Less than 1 year; 1-3 years; 4-6 years; 7+ years.
Turkish options: 1 yıldan az; 1-3 yıl; 4-6 yıl; 7+ yıl.
Q3. How often does your organization distribute press releases?
Turkish: Kuruluşunuz basın bültenlerini ne sıklıkla dağıtıyor?
Options in archived order: Weekly; Monthly; Quarterly; Less often; Never.
Turkish options: Haftalık; Aylık; Üç Aylık; Daha seyrek; Hiçbir zaman.

Section 2. Awareness and Use of Digital Press-Release Distribution Networks

Q4. Are you familiar with paid digital press-release distribution networks (such as B2Press)?
Turkish: Dijital ücretli basın bülteni dağıtım ağlarını (B2Press gibi) biliyor musunuz?
Options in archived order: Very familiar; Somewhat familiar; Not familiar.
Turkish options: Çok aşina; Biraz aşina; Aşina değil.
Q5. How often do you use paid digital press-release distribution networks in your public relations activities?
Turkish: Halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerinizde dijital ücretli basın bülteni dağıtım ağlarını ne sıklıkla kullanıyorsunuz?
Options in archived order: Regularly; Occasionally; Rarely; Never.
Turkish options: Düzenli olarak; Ara sıra; Nadiren; Hiçbir zaman.

Section 3. Perceived Effectiveness of Digital Distribution Networks

Q6. How effective do you consider digital distribution networks in achieving the following public relations objectives?
Turkish: Dijital dağıtım ağlarını aşağıdaki halkla ilişkiler hedeflerine ulaşmada ne kadar etkili buluyorsunuz?
Response format: Five items, each rated separately
• Building brand awareness / Marka bilinirliği oluşturma
• Enhancing brand reputation / Marka itibarının artırılması
• Reaching a targeted audience / Hedeflenen bir kitleye ulaşmak
• Securing media coverage / Medyada yer almak
• Influencing public perception / Kamuoyu algısını etkilemek
Options in archived order: Very effective; Effective; Neutral; Ineffective; Very ineffective.
Turkish options: Çok etkili; Etkili; Nötr; Etkisiz; Çok etkisiz.
Analysis coding: 1 = very ineffective; 2 = ineffective; 3 = neutral; 4 = effective; 5 = very effective.

Q7. In your experience, how does the reach of digital distribution networks compare with that of traditional public relations channels?

Turkish: Deneyimlerinize göre, dijital dağıtım ağlarının erişimi geleneksel halkla ilişkiler kanallarına kıyasla nasıldır?

Options in archived order: Much wider reach; Somewhat wider reach; Similar reach; Narrower reach.

Turkish options: Çok daha geniş erişim; Biraz daha geniş erişim; Benzer erişim; Daha dar erişim.

Section 4. Effects on Public Relations Strategy and Planning

Q8. To what extent has paid digital press-release distribution changed your PR planning?

Turkish: Dijital ücretli basın bülteni dağıtımı PR planlamanızı ne ölçüde değiştirdi?

Options in archived order: Substantially; Moderately; Slightly; Not at all.

Turkish options: Önemli ölçüde; Orta derecede; Biraz; Hiç.

Q9. What challenges have you encountered in digital press-release distribution? (Select all that apply.)

Turkish: Dijital basın bülteni dağıtımında ne gibi zorluklarla karşılaştınız? (Geçerli olan tümünü seçin)

Response format: Multiple response permitted

Options in archived order: Cost; Targeting specific audiences; Measuring effectiveness; Maintaining content quality; Other (please specify).

Turkish options: Maliyet; Belirli kitleleri hedefleme; Etkinliğin ölçülmesi; İçerik kalitesinin korunması; Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz).

Q10. How has digital press-release distribution affected your organization's approach to traditional media relations?

Turkish: Dijital basın bülteni dağıtımı kuruluşunuzun geleneksel medya ilişkilerine yaklaşımını nasıl etkiledi?

Options in archived order: Greater reliance on digital distribution; A balanced approach; Still greater reliance on traditional channels; No significant effect.

Turkish options: Dijital dağıtıma olan bağımlılık arttı; Dengeli yaklaşım; Hala geleneksel kanallara daha fazla güveniliyor; Önemli bir etki yok.

Section 5. B2Press-Specific Experience and Evaluation

Q11. Have you used B2Press to distribute press releases?

Turkish: Basın bülteni dağıtımı için B2Press kullandınız mı?

Options in archived order: Yes; No; Considering it.

Turkish options: Evet; Hayır; Düşünüyorum.

Q12. If you have used B2Press, how satisfied are you with the following aspects?

Turkish: B2Press kullandıysanız, aşağıdaki yönlerden ne kadar memnunsunuz?

Response format: Four items, each rated separately; users only

- Reach and distribution / Erişim ve dağıtım
- Quality of placements / Yerleştirmelerin kalitesi
- Reporting and analytics / Raporlama ve analiz
- Customer service / Müşteri Hizmetleri

Options in archived order: Very satisfied; Satisfied; Undecided; Dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied.

Turkish options: Çok memnunum; Memnunum; Kararsızım; Memnun değilim; Çok memnun değilim.

Analysis coding: 1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = dissatisfied; 3 = undecided; 4 = satisfied; 5 = very satisfied.

Q13. Would you recommend B2Press to other public relations professionals?

Turkish: B2Press'i diğer halkla ilişkiler profesyonellerine tavsiye eder misiniz?

Options in archived order: Definitely; Probably; Not sure; Probably not; Definitely not.

Turkish options: Kesinlikle; Muhtemelen; Emin değilim; Muhtemelen hayır; Kesinlikle hayır.

Section 6. Measurement of Outcomes and Return on Investment

Q14. Which metrics do you prioritize when measuring the effectiveness of digital press releases? (Select all that apply.)

Turkish: Dijital basın bültenlerinin etkinliğini ölçmek için hangi metriklere öncelik veriyorsunuz? (Geçerli olan tümünü seçin)

Response format: Multiple response permitted

Options in archived order: Number of media placements; Audience reach / impressions; Click-through rates; Social-media engagement; Sentiment analysis; Other (please specify).

Turkish options: Medya yerleşimi sayısı; Kitle erişimi / gösterimler; Tıklama oranları; Sosyal medyada etkileşim; Duygu analizi; Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz).

Q15. How does the return on investment of digital press-release distribution compare with that of traditional PR channels?

Turkish: Dijital basın bülteni dağıtımının yatırım getirisi geleneksel PR kanallarına kıyasla nasıldır?

Options in archived order: Much higher; Somewhat higher; About the same; Lower; Not sure.

Turkish options: Önemli ölçüde daha yüksek; Biraz daha yüksek; Yaklaşık aynı; Daha düşük; Emin değilim.

Section 7. The Future of Digital Press-Release Distribution in Public Relations

Q16. How likely are you to increase your use of digital press-release distribution networks over the next year?

Turkish: Önümüzdeki yıl dijital basın bülteni dağıtım ağlarını kullanımınızı artırma olasılığınız nedir?

Options in archived order: Very likely; Likely; Undecided; Unlikely; Very unlikely.

Turkish options: Çok olası; Olası; Kararsızım; Olası değil; Çok olası değil.

Q17. What improvements would you like to see in digital press-release distribution services?

Turkish: Dijital basın bülteni dağıtım hizmetlerinde ne gibi iyileştirmeler görmek istersiniz?

Response format: Open-ended

Q18. What role do you think digital press-release distribution networks will play in the future of public relations?

Turkish: Sizce dijital basın bülteni dağıtım ağları halkla ilişkilerin geleceğinde nasıl bir rol oynayacak?

Response format: Open-ended

Administration and Record Differences

The author confirms that interviews were conducted mainly by telephone, with some face-to-face interviews. This appendix supplies the archived instrument; it does not establish that every spoken prompt was delivered verbatim.

Q4 lists three options. Three participant records contain the additional answer Aşina (familiar); it is retained as a distinct recorded category in descriptive analysis. This is a form–record discrepancy, not a fourth prelisted option.

Q9 permits multiple choices, but the retained response forms record one challenge category per participant. Frequencies describe those recorded categories; they cannot establish whether additional unrecorded challenges were discussed.

Q14 permits multiple responses and multiple recorded metrics are retained; those percentages would not sum to 100.

Q12 is conditional on prior B2Press use. Ratings exist for 45 users; four non-users and one participant considering use have blank ratings, not zero scores.

Q6 and Q12 are separate item batteries. Individual item means are reported; no composite index is formed. Scale coding shown is the analysis coding, not a numerical scale printed in the archived form.

The main article does not analyze every question. The full instrument is provided for reproducibility, not to imply that all item results were reported.

Open responses and parenthetical explanations retained in the response forms are short written records, not verified verbatim recordings. The wording should be described as excerpts from anonymized response records.

APPENDIX B: QUANTITATIVE AUDIT

Appendix B makes the revised numerical analysis reproducible. The analyses below were calculated for this revision from the retained anonymized responses. They are not presented as recovered historical SPSS output. Python, NumPy and SciPy were used for deterministic checks and calculations. The original numerical work used SPSS. No records were altered to improve the results.

Item Coding and Missingness

Effectiveness responses were coded very ineffective = 1, ineffective = 2, neutral = 3, effective = 4, and very effective = 5. Satisfaction was coded very dissatisfied = 1, dissatisfied = 2, undecided = 3, satisfied = 4, and very satisfied = 5. A parenthetical explanation does not change the response category. All 50 participants have five effectiveness ratings. The same 45 B2Press users have four satisfaction ratings; four non-users and one participant considering use have structural non-responses. Those entries were excluded rather than coded zero or imputed.

Within Block Covariance

Raw coefficient alpha was calculated from complete cases as $\alpha = [k/(k - 1)] \times [1 - \Sigma s^2(\text{item})/s^2(\text{sum})]$. No item was deleted or reversed to raise alpha. These coefficients describe covariance in hypothetical pooled scores; no pooled score is used in the article. Alpha does not establish uni-dimensionality or the reliability of each single item, and its usual reliability interpretation requires measurement assumptions that have not been established here (Sijtsma, 2009). The weaker satisfaction covariance reinforces the decision to retain separate service assessments. No test-retest evidence is available.

Table B1. Within block covariance

Item block	k	N	Raw α	Mean r	Range of r
Effectiveness item block	5	50	0.836	0.530	0.396–0.744
Satisfaction item block	4	45	0.651	0.323	0.131–0.544

Note. r denotes Pearson correlations between numerically coded items; Values are diagnostic summaries of this sample, not established measurement properties

Means and Confidence Intervals

Approximate intervals use $M \pm t(.975, N - 1) \times SD/\sqrt{N}$, with sample SD. For the two exploratory item contrasts, the SD is that of within-person differences; means are not treated as independent. Intervals are unadjusted for multiplicity. The calculation assumes independent responses and equal spacing of numerical response categories. These model-based intervals do not provide design-based coverage for all practitioners under purposive recruitment, remove selection bias, or turn ordinal items into validated continuous scales.

Table B2. Means and confidence intervals

Item	N	M	SD	95% CI
Media placement	50	4.74	0.49	[4.60, 4.88]
Brand awareness	50	4.48	0.54	[4.33, 4.63]
Reaching a targeted audience	50	4.04	0.88	[3.79, 4.29]
Enhancing brand reputation	50	3.96	0.75	[3.75, 4.17]
Influencing public perception	50	3.66	0.59	[3.49, 3.83]
Reporting and analytics	45	4.47	0.55	[4.30, 4.63]
Reach and distribution	45	4.40	0.58	[4.23, 4.57]
Customer service	45	4.16	0.56	[3.99, 4.32]
Quality of placements	45	3.62	0.61	[3.44, 3.81]

Table B3. Paired contrasts

Contrast	N	Mean difference	95% CI
Media placement minus influencing public perception	50	1.08	[0.93, 1.23]
Reporting and analytics minus quality of placements	45	0.84	[0.61, 1.07]

Note. The reporting-quality contrast is 0.844444 before rounding, hence 0.84; Subtracting the already rounded displayed means (4.47-3.62) produces 0.85 and is not the calculation used here

Table B4. Full response distributions

Item	1	2	3	4	5	N
Media placement	0	0	1	11	38	50
Brand awareness	0	0	1	24	25	50
Reaching a targeted audience	0	3	9	21	17	50
Enhancing brand reputation	0	2	9	28	11	50
Influencing public perception	0	2	14	33	1	50
Reporting and analytics	0	0	1	22	22	45
Reach and distribution	0	0	2	23	20	45
Customer service	0	0	4	30	11	45
Quality of placements	0	3	11	31	0	45

Note. Media placement has 38/50 (76%) category-5 ratings, while placement quality has no category-5 rating; Means and approximate intervals should be interpreted alongside these concentrations

Sparse Contingency Table and Exact Calculation

The five-by-two table, in low/neutral and high ROI order, is (1, 8), (3, 5), (2, 8), (0, 8), and (1, 8). Six “not sure” responses are excluded, leaving N = 44. Row totals are 9, 8, 10, 8 and 9; column totals are 7 and 37. Five of ten expected counts are below five and the minimum is 1.273. The asymptotic chi-square p-value is replaced by the two-sided, probability-ordered Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test (Freeman & Halton, 1951).

For each possible allocation x of the seven low/neutral observations to rows of sizes r, the fixed-margin table probability is $P(x) = \Pi \text{ choose}(r_i, x_i)/\text{choose}(44, 7)$. All 330 admissible tables were enumerated, and their probabilities sum exactly to one. Summing probabilities no greater than that of the observed allocation gives $p = 1801351/4790071 = .3760593528$. No simulation or asymptotic approximation is used. Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.735993136$ and Cramér’s $V = .3280795752$ are descriptive companion statistics. The result does not establish equivalence between segments and cannot overcome nonprobability recruitment.

APPENDIX C: QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE AND AUDIT TRAIL

Appendix C documents the evidence underlying the qualitative interpretation.

Appendix C documents a new AI-assisted audit of the retained response records undertaken during revision. It makes the existing thematic interpretation inspectable; it does not represent independent human duplicate coding or establish intercoder reliability. All 50 anonymized records were examined, including 100 short answers to Q17 and Q18 and relevant explanatory annotations. The first author led the original interpretation and shared study materials with the supervisor. The depth of that earlier review does not establish independent recoding. SPSS was used for numerical work only.

Q17 asks about desired improvements and Q18 about the future role of distribution. A request or expectation must not be treated as evidence that a feature or effect already exists. The records are brief written responses and annotations, not verified verbatim recordings. English excerpts below preserve their recorded meaning; the Turkish wording is retained to permit checking.

Audit Procedure

The audit read each record, retained both open responses, and inspected annotations relevant to the four existing themes. Explicit inclusion and exclusion rules were applied to source passages. Each participant was counted once per code, with overlapping codes allowed; an absence of an explicit mention was not coded as disagreement. Additional patterns and contrary cases were retained. A source-linked matrix records participant assignments. The assignments and translations were produced with AI assistance, while deterministic scripts checked record identities, exact source strings and tally consistency. Such checks establish traceability and arithmetic consistency, not independent human agreement. No contemporaneous saturation log or chronological stopping record was recovered; grouped participant IDs cannot establish a saturation threshold.

Code Definitions and Evidence Density

T1. Speed and operational assistance

Explicit references to automation, copywriting assistance, reducing operational work, rapid response or speed of circulation. General technology integration without an explicit work/speed connection is excluded. Some mentions concern desired improvements or future expectations, not demonstrated current efficiency.

Explicit evidence: 7 of 50 participants. Participants: P2, P5, P20, P23, P31, P39, P48.

T2. Trust, outlet/content quality and standards

Explicit evaluation of credibility, trust, quality of outlets or content, spam, ethical/legal standards or challenges in preserving content. Includes positive expectations and requests for improvement, not only criticism. Fifteen records discuss this broad issue; that count is not fifteen criticisms or independent demonstrations of low quality. P7 and P26 explicitly anticipate trust/credibility gains.

Explicit evidence: 15 of 50 participants. Participants: P3, P6, P7, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P26, P32, P33, P38, P40, P43, P46.

T3. Measurability and reportability

Explicit references to reports, analytics, data/measurement integration, proving/showing work, or substantive annotations explaining what metrics should establish. Merely selecting a prelisted measurement option is excluded. Requests for better reporting/attribution reveal limits and unmet needs as well as perceived benefits. A requested feature is not coded as evidence that the service already provides it.

Explicit evidence: 14 of 50 participants. Participants: P3, P5, P8, P10, P12, P18, P29, P31, P34, P37, P39, P44, P45, P47.

T4. Cross-market visibility

Explicit references to global reach, promotion abroad, globalizing brands, international marketing, or multilingual/translation support. Sector/site expansion alone is excluded. This narrower subtheme is present in four records, not a majority or evidence of realized international reach.

Explicit evidence: 4 of 50 participants. Participants: P4, P9, P35, P50.

S1. Sector-specific or local access (supplementary pattern)

Explicit request for sector-specific, niche, local or specialist-press access. Improvement request; does not establish that desired access already exists.

Explicit evidence: 10 of 50 participants. Participants: P1, P7, P17, P22, P25, P27, P29, P36, P42, P46.

S2. Affordability (supplementary pattern)

Explicit open-ended request for lower, flexible, discounted or optimized costs. Closed-ended cost selections are excluded here. Only open-ended answers used for this supplementary count.

Explicit evidence: 5 of 50 participants. Participants: P2, P16, P21, P30, P35.

S3. Limits to technological substitution (qualifying pattern)

Explicit indication that technology is supplementary, mechanization is objectionable, people/creativity remain, or announcements cannot replace another communicative form. Qualifies any claim of wholesale replacement of human strategic or editorial work.

Explicit evidence: 6 of 50 participants. Participants: P11, P12, P13, P32, P40, P46.

The four principal themes are T1–T4. S1–S3 are supplemental patterns retained to qualify the interpretation. Counts are overlapping descriptions of the corpus under these definitions; they are not estimates of population prevalence or endorsements of one position. In particular, T2 includes positive trust expectations as well as criticism. The qualitative T2 count is distinct from the closed-ended challenge frequencies in the main article.

Table C1. Participant assignment matrix

Participant	Group	Theme and pattern codes
P1	1	S1
P2	1	T1, S2
P3	1	T2, T3
P4	1	T4
P5	1	T1, T3
P6	1	T2
P7	1	T2, S1
P8	1	T3
P9	1	T4
P10	1	T3
P11	2	T2, S3
P12	2	T2, T3, S3
P13	2	T2, S3
P14	2	T2
P15	2	T2
P16	2	S2
P17	2	S1
P18	2	T3
P19	2	No explicit assignment under these definitions
P20	2	T1
P21	3	S2
P22	3	S1
P23	3	T1
P24	3	No explicit assignment under these definitions
P25	3	S1
P26	3	T2
P27	3	S1
P28	3	No explicit assignment under these definitions
P29	3	T3, S1
P30	3	S2
P31	4	T1, T3
P32	4	T2, S3
P33	4	T2

Table C1 (Continued).

Participant	Group	Theme and pattern codes
P34	4	T3
P35	4	T4, S2
P36	4	S1
P37	4	T3
P38	4	T2
P39	4	T1, T3
P40	4	T2, S3
P41	5	No explicit assignment under these definitions
P42	5	S1
P43	5	T2
P44	5	T3
P45	5	T3
P46	5	T2, S1, S3
P47	5	T3
P48	5	T1
P49	5	No explicit assignment under these definitions
P50	5	T4

Supporting and Contrary Excerpts

P5. Group 1 Q18

Turkish: “Ajansların operasyonel yükünü hafifleten ana araç olacak.”
English: “It will become the main tool for lightening agencies’ operational burden.”

P20. Group 2 Q18

Turkish: “Kriz anlarında can simidi.”
English: “A lifeline in moments of crisis.”

P31. Group 4 Q18

Turkish: “Operasyonel yükü alacak, stratejiye odaklanmayı sağlayacak.”
English: “It will take over the operational burden and allow a stronger focus on strategy.”

P6. Group 1 A2

Turkish: “Memnun değilim (Çok fazla spam site var)”
English: “Dissatisfied (there are too many spam sites)”
Source item: Q12 placement quality.

P14. Group 2 Q18

Turkish: “Sektörü domine edecek ama kaliteyi düşürebilir.”
English: “It will dominate the sector, but it may also lower quality.”

P38. Group 4 Q18

Turkish: “Kirlilik yaratma potansiyeli yüksek.”
English: “It has a high potential to create pollution.”

P18. Group 2 Q18

Turkish: “Müşteriye işi kanıtlamanın en kolay yolu.”
English: “The easiest way to prove the work to the client.”

P34. Group 4 Q18

Turkish: “Veri odaklı PR’ın temeli.”
English: “The foundation of data-driven PR.”

P37. Group 4 Q17

Turkish: “Raporların müşteriye sunulabilir formatta (white-label) gelmesi.”
English: “Reports delivered in a client-ready, white-label format.”

P4. Group 1 Q18

Turkish: “Global erişim için standart hale gelecek.”
English: “It will become standard for global reach.”

P35. Group 4 Q18

Turkish: “Globalleşmek isteyen markaların köprüsü.”
English: “A bridge for brands that want to globalize.”

P50. Group 5 Q18

Turkish: “Uluslararası pazarlamanın en önemli ayağı.”
English: “The most important pillar of international marketing.”

P7. Group 1 Q18

Turkish: “Güven oluşturma mekanizmasının dijitaldeki karşılığı.”
English: “The digital counterpart of the mechanism for building trust.”

P26. Group 3 Q18

Turkish: “Güvenilirlik sağlamak için kullanılacak.”
English: “It will be used to establish credibility.”

P11. Group 2 Q18

Turkish: “Sadece duyuru aracı olarak kalacak, stratejik iletişim insanla yapılır.”
English: “It will remain only an announcement tool; strategic communication is done by people.”

P46. Group 5 Q18

Turkish: “Duyurular için faydalı ama eleştiri yazısı yerini tutmaz.”
English: “Useful for announcements, but it cannot replace a critical review.”

P1. Group 1 Q17

Turkish: “Daha fazla sektörel kırılım ve niche site seçeneği olmalı.”
English: “There should be more sector-specific categories and niche-site options.”

P16. Group 2 Q17

Turkish: “STK’lar için ücretsiz veya indirimli gönderim.”
English: “Free or discounted distribution for NGOs.”

Theme IDs are traceable to the participant matrix above. Q17 and Q18 refer to the two open questions in **Appendix A**; A2 for P6 is the explanatory annotation attached to placement-quality satisfaction. These excerpts include favorable expectations, requests, criticism, and qualifications; they should not be read as a uniform stance.

