

About the 66th issue,

We are delighted to present the latest issue of the *ConnectIST: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences*. This issue features 9 original research articles. It gives us great pleasure to express our gratitude to our esteemed guest editors, Professor Badran A. Badran from Liwa College in the United Arab Emirates and Professor Tevhide Serra Görpe from the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. The process of curating the issue involved significant dedication and effort. As the editorial team, we navigated the challenging task of reviewing and evaluating numerous submissions every two weeks over seven months. The volume of submissions made this endeavor demanding, requiring meticulous attention to detail and rigorous assessment.

Nevertheless, the culmination of this process is always rewarding. Witnessing the evolution of the manuscripts through peer revisions and observing their final form is undeniably thrilling. We take pride in the scholarly contributions featured in this issue and hope they will inspire further research and discourse in the field of communication sciences.

In this issue, we present the following articles: Adwoa Sikayena Amankwah's study delves into how individual attitudes of cynicism, political efficacy, and elaboration shape the motivations of university students to use digital media as political communication tools in elections. Titled "Role of digital media as political communication tools in elections: A study on political science students at a public university in Ghana," the research is a significant contribution to our understanding of political communication in the digital age. The author's findings, derived from a comprehensive survey and focus group discussions, reveal that political attitudes of university students do not generally influence motivations for using digital media as political communication tools in elections. Melis Gey and Cihan Becan, in "A field research on the effect of consumer sensitivity to equality in gender roles on their involvement in advertisements," analyzing a survey and in-depth interviews, found that consumers' sensitivity to equality in gender roles has a significant and positive impact on cognitive and affective involvement in advertisements.

In "Use of free labour in the media within the scope of citizen journalism: A case study of the main news bulletin on *Show TV*" Sertaç Kaya offers a unique perspective on citizen journalism practices in one of the national channels of Türkiye. Kaya's use of content analysis to determine the proportion of non-professional broadcast images, coupled with his in-depth interview with the person in charge of *Show TV*'s WhatsApp Notification Line, piques curiosity and invites further exploration. Salvatore Schinello provided a comprehensive and meticulous systematic literature review of existing scientific publications on new media and communication in creative societies in "New media and communication in creative society: A systematic review of articles published between 2012 and 2024, indexed in Web of Science". Çiçek Topçu and Meral Serarşlan focused on the relationship between social media use and the political knowledge gap in "The view of political knowledge gap among social media users in Türkiye." Field research with 1.076 people showed that education level and gender variables are no longer determining factors in the knowledge gap hypothesis research.

Simge Uğurluer and Mert Seven, in their article "A bibliometric analysis of extended reality research trends in communication studies written in English: Mapping the increasing adoption of extended reality technologies," have made a significant contribution to the field by offering a systematic review of studies published in English in important indexes on extended reality technology in communication studies over a three decades interval. These findings, derived from a rigorous review process, contribute to understanding the evolution of extended reality research in communication studies.

Derya Gül Ünlü and Elif Karakoç Keskin, in their research titled "From pandemic to post-pandemic: Understanding the digital platform usage experiences of older people," undertook a comprehensive study by conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a substantial number of 22 participants. This research aimed to shed light on how individuals aged 65 and over interpret their digital platform usage experiences in the new period called 'post-pandemic'. The findings of the study have significant implications for digital platform designers and policymakers, as they highlight the need for user-friendly interfaces and digital literacy programs for older adults.

In the research article titled "A study on the Kahramanmaraş Earthquake survivors: 'Social media platforms were more effectively used than the traditional media'", Yusuf Yurdigül, Recep Bayraktar, and Serdar Çil aim to uncover the communication practices of the earthquake survivors after the incident and their opinions on the news coverage of the earthquake. Erkan Yüksel, Abdullah Koçak, and Ali Emre Dingin, in their study titled "The optimal time-lag for media's third-level agenda-setting effect," employed a robust methodology. They first identified the media agenda network connections through content analysis and then conducted two separate surveys in 12 provinces

representing the population of Türkiye. This meticulous approach lends credibility to their findings, which indicated that six weeks is required for the highest similarity to media network connections to occur in the public mind on a specific issue.

Before closing this introduction, let me remind everyone that our journal can continue to publish academic studies in communications sciences through your valued support and participation. We look forward to appearing before you once again with our 67th issue.

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