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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 Serarslan 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.

Prof. Aysen Akkor Gül
Istanbul University, Istanbul, Türkiye

Remarks from the guest editors

As the guest editor of *ConnectIST: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences*, published by Istanbul University, I found it an immensely valuable experience. This role has been like embarking on a journey of discovery, where each manuscript I encountered offers a unique insight into the vibrant and dynamic fields of communication sciences and media. It is through this journey that I have come to appreciate the depth and breadth of research conducted by scholars from Türkiye and across the globe as well as the significant contributions they have made to our understanding of communication phenomena.

From the moment I started this role, I was impressed by the diversity of topics addressed in the manuscripts submitted to the journal. Each paper I read served as a window into the fascinating world of communication, shedding light on various issues pertinent to our contemporary society. Whether it was an exploration of social media's impact on public opinion, an analysis of intercultural communication practises, an investigation into the role of media in political discourse, or an exploration of how women are portrayed or used in advertising, each manuscript brought with it a wealth of knowledge and a fresh perspective on the ever evolving and expanding landscape of communication.

What stood out to me was not just the topics themselves but also the thorough way in which researchers approached their studies. Reading about the background and significance of various issues allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the context within which these studies were conducted. It was enlightening to see how each researcher framed their questions, developed their hypotheses, and chose their methodological approaches to seek answers. This process affirms the rigour and dedication that scholars bring to their work.

I have come to liken a research manuscript to a work of art. Just as an artist uses a canvas to draw or sculpt his/her vision, researchers use their manuscripts to present their vision of the phenomena they are studying. Each paper, with its unique methodology and theoretical framework, is a different canvas that reflects the researcher's creativity and intellectual rigour. Some manuscripts employ quantitative methods, painting a picture with numbers and statistics, while others use qualitative approaches, creating rich, descriptive, and sometimes rather personal narratives that bring their subjects to life. The variety and diversity of these canvases demonstrates the richness of communication studies.

In my humble opinion, the *ConnectIST* plays a crucial role in opening doors for scholars who have a yearning to share their discoveries with others. As an open-access journal, it serves as an accessible platform on which researchers can present their findings, engage in scholarly dialogue, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of communication. By providing a space for diverse voices and perspectives, *ConnectIST* fosters an environment of intellectual curiosity and innovation.

This experience has not only deepened my appreciation for the fields of communication sciences and media, but it has also reinforced the importance of scholarly publishing to advance our understanding of complex issues. As co-editor, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the dedication and passion that researchers bring to their work. It has been an honour to be part of this journey of discovery, and I am grateful to the journal's chief editor Professor Ayşen Gül for the opportunity to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge through the *ConnectIST*. I also appreciate the unique opportunity to work with Professor Serra Gorpe on this assignment.

In conclusion, my role as a guest editor of *ConnectIST* has been a profound experience that has enriched my understanding of communication sciences and highlighted the critical role of scholarly collaboration and dialogue. It is my hope that *ConnectIST* will continue to inspire and support scholars, professionals, and students from different backgrounds and visions in their quest for knowledge, fostering a community of researchers who are dedicated to exploring and understanding the complex world of human communication.

Prof. Badran A. Badran
Liwa College, Abu-Dhabi, United-Arab-Emirates

Working on the 66th issue of *ConnectIST: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences* was a truly gratifying experience for me in 2024. There were several reasons for this satisfaction, with one significant factor witnessing the exceptional quality the journal has achieved. I have been away from my home institution, Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, for some time. Our journal has always been among the quality academic journals in my home country. Collaborating as a co-editor in this particular edition alongside the *ConnectIST* team allowed me to uncover the secret behind its continuous growth and commitment to excellence.

Being involved as a guest editor in this issue reconnected me with my former colleagues. Furthermore, witnessing the hard work, coordination, and dedication of our early-career academic colleagues who were involved with producing the journal and contributed to the 66th issue was not only inspiring for the advancement of the journal but also for the Faculty of Communication of Istanbul University and the wider academic community. Having worked on this issue with my former colleague and mentor from Zayed University of the United Arab Emirates- Prof Badran- was a delightful experience.

I forgot how many times we got together while preparing this issue! The collaborative effort put into this issue was evident in the volume of submissions received showcasing *ConnectIST* as a sought-after academic journal. Our screening and evaluation process is guided by the journal's scope, and its future aspirations, ensuring a preservation of its identity and appeal to a broader academic community.

Reviewing the submissions for this issue shed light on the diverse interests of scholars within the field of communication and beyond. Since the 66th issue was not a "special issue", I believe that the array of topics covered in this issue spanning from various specializations and methodologies promises an engaging read for readers and encourages scholars to delve deeper into the subject matter.

Looking ahead, my aspiration for *ConnectIST* is for it to evolve into a truly international academic journal within our field. While the 66th issue saw contributions from other countries' scholars, increased participation from the international academic community would enhance the journal's visibility, and accessibility and foster more robust academic dialogues.

In closing, as a guest editor of the 66th issue, I extend my gratitude to *ConnectIST* team for this invaluable opportunity. I hope that our readers will enjoy reading this issue...

Prof. Tevhide Serra Gorpe
University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United-Arab-Emirates

