



Communication science in Türkiye: how communication research and education developed over the years

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Abstract In Türkiye, communication science falls under the category of social sciences and is regarded as an interdisciplinary scientific field focused on empirical research. The field is influenced by communication science developments of the West in terms of developing theories and methodology, and it faces challenges when it comes to the systematisation of theories and research methods created by different research traditions; their critical evaluation, development, and the failure to put theories to practical use. In order to ascertain the present condition of the field, this article explores the institutionalisation of communication science at universities and its potential tendencies as an academic field of study, its research trends, and the characteristics of communication science studies.

Keywords History of communication science · Communication science research · Communication theories · Research methods · Communication science education

1 Introduction

The emergence of communication science in Türkiye is based on journalism and journalism studies, and its institutional foundations date back to *Institutes of Journalism* which were created at universities and later became *Schools of Press and Broadcasting* and eventually *Faculties of Communication* (cf. Uzun 2007; Tokgöz

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2003; Altun 1999; Abadan Unat 1972). The fact that communication science research and education are influenced by politics and economics as well as the field's own inner dynamics create a significant obstacle in the path of institutionalisation and development. Additionally, since the field is focused on studying the development of communication and media technologies as well as researching their effects on communication processes and forms, it is difficult to monitor, analyse, and interpret fast-paced changes or transformations. Brosius (2003, p. 43) states that as the conditions of the technological and social framework required for communication, and media, computer, and information structures change rapidly, it becomes even more important to question how much scientific fields monitoring these changes must change themselves, and stresses that in order to respond to emerging developments from a theoretical and methodological perspective, we must ascertain whether existing theories, methods, and research fields are sufficient. This question is also important with regard to the self-understanding and tendency trajectories of communication science in Türkiye. The rapid development of communication and media technologies, as well as new tendencies or problems which emerge during this process expand the reach of communication science research areas, research questions, and problematics. In Türkiye, where the field is not yet fully institutionalised, it becomes difficult to understand these developments within their context, and formulating solutions for communication problems becomes even more complicated.

This article aims to explore the institutionalisation of communication science at universities in Türkiye, its development tendencies as an academic field of study, and its research trends. As well as the characteristic features and the present state of education in the field will be determined in order to inspect current problems.

2 The institutionalisation of communication science at universities: from journalism institutes to communication faculties

The institutionalisation of communication science within higher education in Türkiye begins with journalism education. Before being incorporated into universities, journalism was taught at dedicated *Private Schools of Journalism*. These schools were then taken over by *Institutes of Journalism* which focused on educating students on newspapers and journalism; later, they became *Schools of Press and Broadcasting*, and finally the institutionalisation process culminated in the creation of *Faculties of Communication* under the roofs of universities. The institutional development of communication science in Türkiye has had a fraught history since 1949 as it progressed towards institutionalisation from its beginnings in journalism research and education.

The idea of establishing a school for journalism in Türkiye dates back to the early 20th century. The concept was publicised for the first time by author and journalist Ahmet Rasim (1864–1932). Rasim conducted important studies on the history of Turkish journalism and on biographies of Turkish journalists (cf. İnuğur 1993, pp. 333–334). He eventually came upon the idea of founding a journalism school, as he was struck by the idea that there were schools to train tram conductors, bus drivers, and police officers at the time, so founding a school for journalists did not

seem far-fetched. He recommended the establishment of a journalism school and a journalists' union. Rasim held the view that students at school needed lessons in order to learn how to read newspapers and understand their contents (cf. İnuğur 1993, pp. 333–334). A journalism school wasn't established in Rasim's era, but a law regulating the press was passed in 1931 to improve the educational status of journalists. This idea was motivated both by the newly established (1923) Turkish Republic's official policy to improve literacy in society, and the idea that journalists needed to be well-educated. The early Republic government issued a law determining the minimum level of education required for journalists, since journalists could play an important part in conveying the various reforms targeting different sections of society to the public and encouraging their acceptance. In this context, the *Press Bill* set out some minimum criteria regarding the educational level of journalists and in particular administrative staff, and stipulated that newspaper owners, head columnists, and editors in chief possess a university or high school degree at the least (cf. Alemdar 1981, pp. 2–3). Those who occupied these positions when the law came into effect but who did not meet the criteria were tasked with attaining the required level of education within three years. This legal requirement for certain journalists to have high school or university level education was not put forward by journalists, newspaper owners, or the public. "It was the government that saw it necessary for journalists to have higher education, because it held the view that the press had to act responsibly. It was probably surmised that well-educated journalists would have a better understanding of the country's present conditions and the importance of their duties" (Alemdar 1996, p. 30; own translation). An amendment was made to the *Press Bill* in 1933 which repealed the article requiring journalists to have a high school or university degree, due to the difficulties encountered in implementing this requirement.

2.1 From institutes of journalism to schools of press and broadcasting

Türkiye made the switch from a single-party political system to a multi-party system in 1946, which influenced the increase of the number of printed newspapers and magazines, and consequently created a need for more journalists, therefore marking the beginning of the effort to establish a university-level institution for journalism education. As well as *Istanbul University* and *Ankara University*, the presidents of the *Istanbul and Ankara Journalists' Association* played an important role in establishing journalism education in those cities. The first attempt to institutionalise journalism education under the roof of a university was made in 1947 by Sedat Simavi, the chair of *Istanbul Journalists' Association*. Simavi put forward the idea of establishing an *Institute of Journalism* under the *Faculty of Economics* at *Istanbul University*. In his statement, he highlighted the importance of journalism for societal advancement, and recommended the creation of a curriculum that included both theoretical and practical professional skills (cf. Abadan Unat 1972, pp. 4–5). In 1949, the *Istanbul University* senate agreed to establish an *Institute of Journalism* under the *Faculty of Economics*.

The first students were enrolled at *Istanbul University's Institute of Journalism* in 1950. Students would graduate from the Institute after two years of instruction.

“The Institute accepted both high school graduates and those who had been actively working as journalists for two years, regardless of their education level, as stated in the temporary amendment to the Institute’s charter. Classes were taught by staff from the Faculty of Economics, as well as renowned journalists” (Uzun 2007, p. 121; own translation). The first curriculum of the course was focused on journalism but also included social sciences classes. *Istanbul University’s Institute of Journalism’s* name was changed to the *School of Journalism and Public Relations* in 1980, and a number of classes on public relations were added to the curriculum.

Efforts began to establish a similar *School of Press and Broadcasting* in Ankara, and *Ankara University, Ankara Journalists’ Association, Ankara Journalists Union’* and *Anadolu Press Agency* played an important role in the project. A department was incorporated into the *Faculty of Political Sciences* at *Ankara University* in 1964, with a curriculum that focused on television, radio, cinema, and public relations in addition to journalism. It was designed as a practical education which would establish strong professional connections. The *School of Press and Broadcasting* included the departments of *Radio-Television and Public Relations*, and students began to enrol in the program in 1965. Despite the important contributions of scholars such as Tahir Çağatay, Nermin Abadan Unat, İlhan Öztrak, Ünsal Oskay and Feyyaz Gölcüklü, the institute began its actives without the interest and support needed to advance studies in communication science (cf. Erdoğan 2013, p. 193; Tokgöz 2003, pp. 14–15; Abadan Unat 1972, pp. 70–71). The curriculum was geared towards social sciences and communication science, however, due to a limited knowledge of the theoretical foundations of communication science and its research areas, the classes focused more on professional training in journalism, radio, and television.

The *School of Press and Broadcasting* founded at Istanbul and Ankara universities were separated from their respective faculties due to a new higher education law that came into effect in 1982, and continued to function as separate institutions governed by the rectorate of their respective universities.

Starting in 1983, Master’s and PhD programs in the field became available, allowing candidates to obtain a degree in *Journalism; Public Relations and Advertisement; or Radio, Television, and Cinema*. This provided the required perspective to place communication studies on a scientific foundation and to advance studies in the field. In 1988, the centralised exam system created by the *Higher Education Board* offered exams for PhD graduates in communication studies, creating post-graduate tenure tracks for scholars in the field. The law stated that five years after qualifying for the postgraduate position, provided that sufficient scientific studies had been conducted in that time, candidates could apply for professorship positions in communication science and related disciplines.

2.2 From schools of press and broadcasting to communication faculties

In 1992, a change was made to the law regulating higher education institutions, and *Schools of Press and Broadcasting* became *Faculties of Communication*. Communication faculties began to open up at universities in various cities starting from the mid-1990s. As of 2022, there are 65 *Faculties of Communication* in Türkiye. These faculties took over the departments of *Journalism; Radio, Television and Cinema;*

and *Public Relations and Advertisement*, and starting from the early 2000s began to increase the number of departments they contain and to form new departments to meet contemporary requirements.

Developments in the professional sector had a significant impact on the transformation of *Schools of Press and Broadcasting* into *Faculties of Communication*. Private radio stations and television channels began to emerge in certain European countries starting in the latter half of the 1980s; however, in Türkiye it began as a non-regulated sector in the early 1990s and private radio and TV broadcasting was only lawfully permitted following a change to the law in 1993. “As privately owned radio stations and TV channels began their broadcasting lives, there was an increased demand for workers in the sector, which called for more departments under communication faculties and more students. Private academies, institutions, and training courses were also founded to meet sectoral demand” (Korkmaz 2012, p. 12; own translation). After *Schools of Press and Broadcasting* became *Faculties of Communication*, departmental curriculums were revised to meet university-level education requirements, and were also influenced by the needs of the continuously developing and privatising radio and television sector.

3 Theoretical and methodological tendencies in communication science

In the early Turkish Republic (1923–1946), there was a very limited field of scientific knowledge inherited from the Ottoman Empire, and neither natural nor social sciences had made the desired advancement because of political, financial, technical, and cultural constraints. The curtailed development of social science fields such as sociology and psychology provided only a limited pool of knowledge for the emergence and development of communication science, despite their relatively more established academic tradition.

Turkish social scientists, particularly sociologists and psychologists, were heavily influenced by French scholars in the field and the *Chicago School* in the USA, choosing to focus primarily on urban research (cf. Kıray 2005) and interaction analyses (cf. Başoğlu 1944). Some researchers chose to employ a Marxist perspective in social studies (cf. Boran 1945) and conducted analyses of social structures (cf. Kıray 1982) and modernisation (cf. Berkes 1973). Within cultural studies, literature and Turkish Folklore research indirectly influenced the communication science field (cf. Başgöz 2005; Boratav 1939). Some researchers and scholars who made indirect contributions to the development of communication science in Türkiye are as follows: Mümtaz Turhan, Muzaffer Şerif Başoğlu, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, Behice Boran, Pertev Naili Boratav, İlhan Başgöz, Mübeccel Kıray, Niyazi Berkes, Emre Kongar, Şerif Mardin, Nermin Abadan Unat, Cavit Orhan Tütengil and Kayıhan İçel (cf. Alemdar 2018, pp. 11–12; Erdoğan 2013, pp. 193–194; Öztürk 2008, pp. 102, 145, 155; Tokgöz 2000, pp. 17–21, 25).

3.1 Vanguard researchers in communication science

The roots of communication science in Türkiye are in journalism studies, which as a discipline in the early 20th century focused on the study of newspapers from the Ottoman Empire, where newspaper journalism began in the late 18th century. Studies on press qualitatively and quantitatively diversified with the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and the focus shifted to the historical development of the press and Turkish journalism (cf. Refik 1970; Şapolyo 1969; Oral 1967; Başkut 1967; Nüzhet 1931). One of the earliest studies in the field is the book “Lessons on Journalism” (“Gazetecilik Dersleri”) by Cevat Fehmi Başkut (1967), journalist and researcher at the *Institute of Journalism at Istanbul University’s Faculty of Economics*. Başkut (1967, pp. 5–12, 57, 95) researched journalism practices in the USA, Germany, Italy, the UK, France, the USSR, and Türkiye; explored the concepts of the newspaper, journalism, and news; tried to determine the duties of newspapers and journalists; and analysed the idea of press freedom and what it entailed. He made use of writings by German scholars Karl Bücher (1926) and Emil Dovifat (1956), who were representatives of the normative individualism approach (Löffelholz 2004, p. 62). Başkut’s view that the newspaper was a type of factory or business was influenced by Bücher (1926), and like Dovifat (1956), he focused on the personal qualities he believed a journalist must possess, attempting to define journalism through the personal responsibilities of the journalist to an extent.

The earliest journalism studies were mostly published by intellectual journalists who also taught at journalism institutes (cf. Refik 1970; Şapolyo 1969; Oral 1967; Başkut 1967; Nüzhet 1931), and were centred on the history of the press and biographies of journalists. The first scientific studies in communication science were the PhD dissertations and other research conducted by assistant researchers at the *School of Press and Broadcasting* at Istanbul and Ankara universities. Pioneering researchers in communication science were graduates of political science, international relations, and law departments. The first research assistants at the *School of Press and Broadcasting* under *Ankara University’s Department of Political Science* completed their PhD dissertations on communication studies in the 1970s. “Known as the first five, the dissertations were written by (in order of completion) Ünsal Oskay, Oya Tokgöz, Aysel Aziz, Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, and Nilgün Abisel” (Tokgöz 2014, p. 118; own translation). The fact that three out of five researchers were women shows the importance of female scholars in the establishment, groundwork, and development of communication science in Türkiye.

3.2 The self-conception of communication science

Though the origins of communication science research in Türkiye date back to early 20th century journalism studies, the concept of the science of journalism wasn’t put forward at the time.

Following the transformation of *Institutes of Journalism* into *Schools of Press and Broadcasting*, journalism and radio and television studies set out on a trajectory of development and was grouped under the heading *Press and Broadcasting Studies*, however, the approach wasn’t scientific. After *Schools of Press and Broadcasting*

became *Faculties of Communication, Press and Broadcasting Studies* were placed under the discipline of communication, and its research field expanded in line with new developments, problems, and requirements. “The aim of communication studies research in Türkiye, and the answers sought in these studies, are not that different to the rest of the world. The purpose is to define, describe, and surmise through causality based on trustworthy, valid, and useful data, and therefore to obtain reliable knowledge and understanding, in order to find solutions and take precautions” (Erdoğan 2013, p. 189; own translation). Nevertheless, it is seen that studies on the aims of communication science and discussion and scientific research regarding its self-understanding were limited. The positioning of communication science within social sciences happened over a long period of time. The most intense debates regarding the self-conception of communication science happened during the transformation of *Schools of Press and Broadcasting*, within the context of debating whether communication could be considered a field of science (cf. Çaplı 2006; Arık and Bayram 2011). The profoundly quick development of communication and media technologies, the increased importance of communication processes on a global level and various social areas, and their influence on transformation made this debate largely irrelevant after around 2005.

As of today, communication science is regarded in Türkiye as an interdisciplinary field focused on empirical research (cf. Akgül and Akdağ 2018; Erdoğan 2013; Tokgöz 2003, 2014). The interdisciplinary nature of communication science is clearly evidenced by communication and media history research, its focus on communication and media technology developments, and its study of political, financial, social, and cultural contexts (cf. Özer 2019; Akgün 2018; Aktaş 2014; Aziz 2013; Kaya 2009; İnuğur 1993). The central aspects in communication science research are public, organisational, and interpersonal communication processes, the factors influencing these processes, and their consequences (cf. Gürüz and Temel Eğinli 2021; Özkoçak 2021). When determining research questions and problematics, the focal point is mainly the political and legal framework of mass communication, its economy, and its social and cultural context (cf. İçel 1977). Additionally, studies also pay attention to the production and processing of communication content, the circumstances under which it is disseminated, reception processes, and its impact. Studies conducted regarding the dynamic and constantly expanding research questions and issues in the field are expected to yield results that will be beneficial to public knowledge, awareness, and development.

The connection between communication science and the humanities is revealed mostly in studies related to culture and literature. There is not yet a detached media studies field; media studies are instead conducted within communication science research through a social sciences perspective, in the same way that journalism and media studies, public relations studies, advertising research, studies on visual communication and its design, and film studies are considered sub-categories of communication science.

3.3 Theoretical perspectives, research areas, and research methods

Journalism studies began in the 1930s, and from the latter half of the 1950s to the 1980s, it covered radio and television broadcasting (cf. Abadan 1960, 1956; Abadan Unat 1972) as well as the emergence of newspapers and journalism, and the study of their historical development (cf. Refik 1970; Şapolyo 1969; Oral 1967; Başkut 1967; Nüzhet 1931). During the early years of the Turkish Republic, the field focused on how mass communication tools could be used as a means of education and mobilisation. Since there wasn't a well-established research tradition in the social sciences field during the emergence of journalism studies and communication science, social sciences had only a limited impact and did not make any significant contributions to the development of communication science. Furthermore, the establishment and development of communication science research was directly influenced by research traditions, theoretical perspectives, and research methods from the USA and Europe. Initially, this was done by translating of scientific studies conducted in Europe and the USA into Turkish and using them as resources.

Western research traditions and theoretical perspectives which proved influential in Türkiye are as follows: Within studies focusing on the impact of mass communication, *communication models* focused on the sender and recipient (cf. Shannon and Weaver 1949; Lasswell 1948); *news value and news factor studies* (cf. Østgaard 1965; Galtung and Ruge 1965; Lippmann 1964); *two-step flow of communication model* (cf. Katz 1957; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955); the *uses and gratifications approach* which centres on the media user rather than the media's influence, and which created a paradigm shift in communication studies (cf. Katz et al. 1974; Katz 1959), are popularly used.

Additionally, *gatekeeping* research which began within the framework of social psychology (cf. Lewin 1947) and was adapted to journalism (cf. Breed 1955; White 1950); the *news diffusion model* (Greenberg 1964); Rogers and Shoemaker's (1971) *model of innovation diffusion*; the oft-used *agenda-setting model* (cf. McCombs and Shaw 1972); the *spiral of silence* model, which is believed to possess a strong potential to explain the communication and media environment in Türkiye (Noelle-Neumann 1974); the *knowledge gap hypothesis* (cf. Donohue et al. 1975) and the *cultivation hypothesis* (cf. Gerbner et al. 1994, 1986; Gerbner and Gross 1976) are worth a mention. While studies utilise models and hypotheses put forward as part of impact research, empirical research is rarer (cf. Yüksel and Dingin 2020; Yüksel et al. 2015).

Outside of impact studies, studies on *symbolic interaction* (cf. Mead 1980a, b; Blumer 1973) which emerged as a movement in the *Chicago School of Sociology* in the USA during the early 20th century were influential on sociology research in Türkiye (cf. Kızılcılık 1996; Şenol 1994); however, their potential use in the field of communication science was discovered late. Nevertheless, studies employing this perspective have been published in recent years (cf. Alver 2020, 2016; Alver and Çağlar 2015; Morva 2013). Additionally, the *economic-political approach* (cf. Herman and Chomsky 1988; Schiller 1973) is a preferred perspective. With the implementation of liberal economic policies in Türkiye starting from 1980, the owners of small and medium-sized media outlets who were generally journalists in

the past began to be replaced by businesspeople, and media outlets began to turn into holding companies which created their own economy. When state ownership of radio and television channels ceased to be the only option in the early 1990s and private radio and television broadcasting began to be allowed alongside public broadcasting, it increased competitiveness in the media sector and created a stronger tendency to concentrate. This perspective is used in studies on the financial and political angles of ownership changes of media organisations and its horizontal, vertical, and diagonal concentration tendencies, and when analysing social control (cf. Dağtaş 2021; Akgün 2018). It is also employed when exploring public and privately owned radio and television outlets (cf. Sarmaşık 2000; Topuz et al. 1990). Additionally, Postman's (1985, 1982) *media ecology* perspective is also popular and used as a signpost for media, technology, and culture-related analyses (Yalman et al. 2022; Alver 2004). Within the context of the development of communication and media technologies, studies which investigate *Canadian School* representatives Innis (1950) and McLuhan's (1962; McLuhan and Powers 1989) analyses on how media technologies effect individuals and society are also available (cf. Erdoğan and Alemdar 2002, 1990).

European theoretical perspectives also have a discernible influence on communication studies, the most notable being the *materialist media theory*. The materialist media theory determines the functionality of mass communication tools within the capitalist financial system and focuses on conditions required for production and the creation of added value during the mass communication process, the media organisations which carry out the production, and their content (cf. Holzer 1994; Hund and Kirchoff-Hund 1980). The theory has the potential to analyse the tangible connection between mass media and the prevailing economic and political system during production and distribution processes, and to define the media field, and is often used in scientific research (cf. Alver 2011; Erdoğan 2002; Erdoğan and Alemdar 2002, 1990).

Another European research tradition used popularly is *critical theory*. In addition to Althusser (2014) and Gramsci's (1971) studies on ideology and hegemony, the analyses of how mass communication tools are produced and distributed within the framework of the capitalist economic system, conducted by German researchers from the *Frankfurt School* (cf. Horkheimer and Adorno 1998; Horkheimer 1986; Adorno 1963) are significantly popular amongst researchers in Türkiye. This perspective is used in analyses on ideology and hegemony (cf. Özer 2020; Poyraz 2002), the media industry (cf. Kaya 2009; Adaklı 2006), and mass culture (cf. Erdoğan and Alemdar 2011; Mutlu 2005). Another *Frankfurt School* representative who is influential in Türkiye is Habermas. Habermas's *theory of communicative action* (1981a, b), and his treatise on the *structural transformation of the public sphere* (cf. Habermas 1962) are analysed within the context of discussing the conditions of communicative actions, and the potential of the media and online social networks to create a form of public space (cf. Alver 2016; Dağtaş and Dağtaş 2003).

It can also be claimed that *British Cultural Studies* (cf. Hall 1997; Williams 1974, 1971) have provided a regularly employed perspective for scientific studies (Özmen and Parlayandemir 2021; Alver 2012, 2009; İnal 1995). This perspective is mostly used in cultural studies and cultural identity studies, popular culture analyses,

gender studies, the use of new communication and media technologies, migration, and reception studies.

Amongst British researchers, Giddens's (1979) *structuration theory* is popular, however, there are as yet a limited number of studies (Alver 2011). As well as these, French scholars' *post-structural works* (cf. Deleuze 1989; Barthes 1985; Foucault 1985; Derrida 1981) and Bourdieu's *social theory* and *culture analyses* (1998a, b) have had a noticeable impact on communication science research in Türkiye. Studies on the female body and power; semiotics; and film analyses have been conducted using a post-structuralist perspective (cf. Elpeze Elgeç 2021; Aydoğmuş Ördem 2020; Yılmazok 2018). There are also studies based on Bourdieu's *concepts of field, networks, types of capital, and habitus* (cf. Çelik 2020; Alver 2011). Additionally, postmodern French thinker Baudrillard's (1994, 1983) media theory is popular and studies using this perspective are available (cf. Taş 2021).

With the development of communication and media technologies, the *network society theory* has gained in importance with regard to research studies. Within this context, Castells' (2009, 1996) theory of the network society, which describes how technological developments have influenced the creation of an interconnected society, is used in scientific research (cf. Keleş 2018). Additionally, the concept of *mediatisation*, which studies changes in daily life, social relationships, culture, and society in relation to the transformation of the media (cf. Krotz 2006, p. 32) and shows how the communicative construction of reality can define itself through certain forms of media, as well as how certain properties of the media influence the contextualisation of communicative construction processes (cf. Hepp et al. 2017, pp. 181–206), is becoming increasingly popular, however, only a limited number of studies are currently available on the subject (cf. Alver 2021, 2020; Şen 2018).

Certain influential theoretical perspectives developed in the West are hardly ever used. Luhmann's (1996, 1984) studies on the functions of mass media and its social impact from a *system theory* perspective are largely unknown by communication science researchers in Türkiye, and system theory does not provide a conceptual framework for journalism studies. There are rare instances of this theoretical perspective being analysed (cf. Alver 2011, 2006). Moreover, studies from a *constructivist perspective* (cf. Schütz and Luckmann 1979; Schütz 1974; Berger and Luckmann 1966) are used in the field of sociology (cf. Balkız and Öğütler 2012), but there are limited studies on the structures of the world we live in and the social structuring of reality in the media in the communication studies field (cf. Alver 2021).

In communication studies focusing on the complicated relationships between financial crises and the media and the political field (cf. Kılıç 2021; Kaya 2009), political broadcasting and propaganda (cf. Yegen 2022; Doğan and Göker 2021) are highly important, but research is not extensive. Organisational communication, public relations, and advertising (cf. Akdağ 2021; Krom 2021); studies on public opinion (Yüksel and Dingin 2020); culture industry and popular culture analyses (cf. Adıgüzel 2001; Mutlu 2005) and intercultural communication (cf. Kartarı 2014) are increasingly popular subjects of research studies. It can also be observed that starting from around 2000, communication science studies have tended to focus on the development trajectories of communication and media studies. Foremost among these are studies on the development of communication and media technologies

(cf. Aktaş 2014), the changes they create in different social areas (cf. Türkoğlu 2012), online journalism (cf. Büyükbingöl 2021), social media (cf. Binark et al. 2014), online public relations (cf. Koçyiğit 2017), media pedagogy (cf. Uçar İlbuğa 2010; Alver 2006), and traditional and digital media literacy (cf. Türk 2022; Bilişli 2021). It is worth mentioning that in Türkiye, research on the increasing use of artificial intelligence systems and the ensuing algorithmisation of communication processes is considered relatively uncharted territory in communication science, but initial studies on the challenges of these new technologies can already be obtained, such as a study on the perception of algorithm-generated news by recipients and its implications for journalism (cf. Sarısakaloğlu 2020).

Other research subjects becoming more prevalent are the representation of women in the media and on social media (Yıldırım 2022; Arslan 2021), gender studies (cf. Usta and Aygün 2019; Abadan Unat and Mirdal 2015), and digital gaming (cf. Binark and Bayraktutan 2020). There is also an increasing interest in *media sociology*. *Media sociology studies* focus on daily life, group identity, subcultures, lifestyles, social network analyses and social change, children's use of traditional and new media and communication technologies, and the effects of violence. It also relates the concept of migration to digital communication platforms and digital media, and how migrants use these and are represented there, to get a better understanding. While research studies on *media sociology* are easier to find, there are almost no studies on *media psychology*.

There are limited number of communication theories (cf. Özer 2021; Güngör 2011; Erdoğan and Alemdar 2002; Kaya 1985; Oskay 1985, 1982) and research method studies (cf. Ergül 2013; Erdoğan 2003), and these are generally translations of Western sources. Some important issues for debate, such as globalisation, cultural imperialism, the one-sided transfer of information, and studies on crisis and risk communication, are broadly overlooked. Additionally, partly because of the lack of revised legislature to correspond to the impact of new communication and media technologies, internet law studies (cf. Kaya 2021; Ünver 2013) are rare. There is a distinct gap in this new field of research, which requires the support of law scholars.

Communication science studies in Türkiye employ qualitative and quantitative research methods (cf. Yıldırım 2015; Erdoğan 2003). Discourse analyses, qualitative content analyses, and in-depth interviews are the most popular qualitative research methods, while quantitative content analyses and surveys are the most popular quantitative research methods. When using quantitative research methods, hypothesis testing is preferred over theory testing. When using qualitative research methods, hypothesis development and answering research questions take precedence over theory exploration. Observation, experimentation, and statistical methods are almost never applied. While there is an increased interest in digital social network research thanks to widespread digital communication and its increased impact, digital communication research methods are rarely used.

Despite the use of Western theoretical perspectives and research methods in studies conducted in Türkiye, there isn't a single prevalent research method or communication science theory which is widely accepted to have the potential to explore and explain all communicative phenomena, processes, and results. Studies are conducted using Western-centric existing theories, nevertheless, these theories are not

developed further, and coupled with the limited number of empirical studies, this has so far prevented the emergence of a communication science theory. However, influenced by the developments in the media sector starting from the 1990s and the establishment of faculties of communication, communication science research is qualitatively and quantitatively improving.

4 Characteristics and limitations in communication science education

The problems encountered in communication science education in Türkiye can be listed as follows: insufficient number of academic staff and lack of desired levels of qualification; increasing numbers of communication faculties and students enrolled in programs; insufficient theoretical knowledge and practical methods involved during the education process; limited number of job opportunities for graduates.

4.1 Academic staff

As faculties of communication began to be established at universities in the early 1990s and 2000s, the need for qualified academics was met by recruiting scholars who had completed their PhDs in other fields. For this reason, the academic profile of lecturers in faculties of communication has a heterogeneous makeup in terms of their educational background. Research shows that teaching staff at faculties of communication within state universities usually have a background in social and natural sciences (cf. Akgül and Akdağ 2018, p. 1). The inclusion of scholars with varying scientific backgrounds in communication faculty staff is beneficial in terms of contributing different perspectives to studies and curriculums; however, it also brings about certain problems.

The fact that there were lengthy debates on whether communication could be a field of science, and the lack of academics trained in the field prevented the creation of a self-identity that the field could adopt and develop, and made it susceptible to the influence of other fields of study. The interdisciplinary nature of communication science blurs the boundaries of the discipline so they are no longer defined clearly, to the point that “every sociologist and psychologist, every linguist and historian, every political scientist and economist can designate themselves as a communication scientist” (Ronneberger 1988, p. 87; own translation) so long as they are concerned with communication processes between human and/or non-human entities. Ronneberger’s statement has been proven right in Türkiye’s case in a complicated fashion over many years. The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary tendencies of communication science can be a source of rich and meaningful perspectives obtained via studies conducted in cooperation with other fields and the creation of interdisciplinary curriculums; however, the unregulated availability of positions within communication faculties to scholars from different fields, and the management of faculties of communication by directors with professorships from disparate scientific areas is a significant issue.

It is seen that academic staff from other scientific fields rarely use knowledge from their respective fields and instead limit themselves to communication science,

depriving the field from the potential contributions of social and cultural studies which possess a longer tradition and a more extensive wealth of knowledge. The fact that there are many variations of academic backgrounds when it comes to teaching staff and directors at faculties of communication creates an obstacle in the path of the not-yet sufficiently institutionalised communication science field with regard to forming its own academic identity, culture, and tradition.

4.2 Quality of education

Over the past twenty years, no research has been conducted in Türkiye to determine the number of skilled workers required based on field of employment and qualifications; this prevents the formation of a logical plan for the future and creates a lack of perspective.

After the initial foundation of communication faculties, their curriculums were designed to provide students with theoretical and practical instruction in communication science and fields considered adjacent to it, such as journalism, public relations, and cinema. This tendency is mostly observed in faculties of communication wishing to be internationally accredited, as international accreditation becomes more and more important. “Shaped by an interdisciplinary approach to instruction, communication faculties appear to teach *a little bit* of everything when compared to faculties in other fields. Theoretical classes have a broad range from economics to sociology, psychology to politics, and history to law. [...] Receiving a partial education in all these subjects usually does not guarantee that students are able to sublimate this knowledge within the context of communication science” (Arik and Bayram 2011, p. 89; own translation). In addition to social sciences, classes offered in communication science and related fields include journalism and media studies, new communication and media technologies, online journalism, digital social network research, intercultural communication, public relations studies, organisational communication, advertisement and communication management, risk and crisis communication, and market and public opinion research. Faculties with no plans for accreditation in the medium term focus on practical courses, and their curricula are lacking when it comes to foundational knowledge of social sciences and communication science theories. Further, there are debates as to the correct ratio of theoretical and practical modules in the faculties’ curriculums, nevertheless, ascribing undue importance to the practical components shows that the main concern is meeting sectoral demand.

4.3 Limited number of job opportunities for graduates

Despite the increasing number of communication faculty graduates working in the communication and media sector over the past twenty years, there are limited job opportunities for graduates in the field. In their study, Arik and Bayram (2011, p. 86) explore why graduates in the communication field are not as sought-after as graduates in fields such as international relations, business management, economics, linguistics, sociology, etc. The answer, they state, reveals manifold problems. Representatives from the communication and media sector state that despite commu-

nication faculties providing sufficient foundational knowledge, there needs to be a greater focus on the practical professional aspects, claiming that many graduates can't write an adequate news article or press release. They consider education in the field as being sub-par and are disinclined to recruit graduates. As well as inadequacies in education, the rapidly transforming and dynamic structure of the sector and its constantly changing demands also prevent communication faculty graduates from meeting the demands of the communication and media sector with their existing theoretical and practical knowledge and skillset.

5 Discussion and conclusion

The emergence and development of modern social sciences in Türkiye has been determined by geographical position and historical, political, financial, and cultural factors as well as the field's own internal dynamics and the country's higher education policies. Communication studies in Türkiye has had a late start compared to Western countries, and has not yet displayed the desired level of development. Research on communication science which focused on journalism and public communication in its early days has been tied to the West in terms of the formation of theories and methodologies despite the valuable contribution of Turkish scholars (cf. Tokgöz 2003, 2000; Erdoğan and Alemdar 2002, 1990; Kaya 1985; Oskay 1985, 1982; Abadan 1960). Despite utilising theories and research methods developed in the West, the diversity of these theoretical perspectives and research methods has not found sufficient reflection in studies conducted. As the field continues to try and establish its own tendency while being influenced by communication science studies in the USA and the West, it faces problems when it comes to the systematisation of theories and research methods created by different research traditions, their critical evaluation, their development, and the practical use of theoretical knowledge. This problem causes studies to be devoid of historical context, theoretical background, and research methodology, resulting in a lack of discussion regarding their practical significance and value, and prevents them from being fully understood.

Having been unable to adequately solve its theoretical and methodological problems during its institutionalisation process, not to mention the fast and dynamic advancement of communication and media technologies, the field of communication science struggles to monitor, obtain a full and in-depth understanding, analyse, and interpret the transformation of communication processes in mass media, the public sphere, and the interpersonal sphere, in addition to their impact on different social fields as well as the ensuing changes. The changes and transformation in the sector influence journalism practices and the data collection, production, enhancement, and dissemination processes of media organisations, and create new principles of reception for the recipient. These developments alter the research and discussion subjects, problems, terminology, and self-understanding of communication science, and requires it to further develop its interdisciplinary tendency. However, there are not enough studies in Türkiye to define complicated communication processes within a social and technological context. There is a need to move towards new research areas and subjects, though studies which are significantly impactful in an

academic and social sense and their findings are unable to coincide with change and transformation processes in a timely fashion.

Another problem when it comes to the study of emerging phenomena and developments, in addition to the existing dead-ends in the field and its theoretical and methodological problems, is the un-impartial nature of research areas or the self-censorship of scholars that cast doubts on the reliability and validity of research results (cf. Erdoğan 2013).

The number of students enrolled in faculties of communication and interest in postgraduate programs are growing, however, new communication faculties, particularly those at universities located in small towns, lack the required quantitative and qualitative properties and conditions required for educational planning. Faculties of communication located at universities in bigger cities have larger numbers of academic staff, while those in small cities recruit limited teaching staff. The low numbers of academic staff, the limited amount of scientific research, inadequate physical conditions, and technical infrastructure shortcomings create obstacles in the education process and cause students to graduate without possessing the necessary knowledge or skills. The state of communication science and its instruction must be debated independently of Türkiye's higher education, science, and employment policies, and solutions must be sought within the context of profound structural change.

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