Public Diplomacy in Other Words: A Meta-Review and Analysis of Turkish Language Literature

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Abstract

This study surveys the public diplomacy (PD) scholarship in Turkish from 2001 to 2022 through an analysis of 221 peer-reviewed articles. Following a mixed methods approach, the study looks both at the meta data and the content of publications. Meta data analysis identifies trends in publication volume, and authorship patterns. Content analysis looks at most frequently studied topics and countries, as well as methods used. The findings indicate a growing interest in PD, with significant contributions from communication and social sciences journals. The analysis also highlights the dominance of Türkiye as a case study and the frequent use of literature reviews as a methodology. Thematic analysis identifies seven main topics, including soft power, international presence, NATO and military relevance, political and foreign policy outcomes, digital media, broadcasting, and health diplomacy. The paper concludes with recommendations for enhancing methodological rigor, and expanding comparative studies to deepen the understanding of PD in Turkish.

Keywords: public diplomacy; meta review; Turkish; Türkiye; Yunus Emre Institutes; TRT World; Turkish Soap Operas

Introduction

Türkiye[1] is a relatively late adopter of public diplomacy. The country is not technically a stranger to activities of public diplomacy nature. Its first attempt at international broadcasting came during its War of Independence following World War I. Anadolu Ajansi (*Anatolian Agency*) was established in 1920 to inform both domestic and foreign audiences about the country's demands and wartime activities (Anadolu Ajansı, 2024). Since the contemporary Republic of Türkiye was founded in 1923, it can be claimed that Turkish public diplomacy predates the Turkish state.

The phrase public diplomacy itself was not used until the early 2000s in the Turkish context. Jan Melissen (2006) made one of the earlier references during his presentation to Turkish ambassadors. The first institution that had public diplomacy in its name was established in 2010 (KDK, 2010) under the Office of the Prime Minister, named Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü (*Office of Public Diplomacy*). With the abolishment of the Prime Minister's position in 2017, the responsibilities were transferred to the newly formed Kamu Diplomasisi Dairesi Başkanlığı under the Presidency's Directorate of Communications.

The Turkish practice of public diplomacy has attracted some global scholarly attention. In 2015, a volume edited by Phil Seib and Senem Cevik entitled *Türkiye's Public Diplomacy* was published. The volume claims to be the first work to examine the history of Turkish public diplomacy in English. There have been earlier books in Turkish, such as Meltem Ünal Erzen's (2012) Kamu Diplomasisi (*Public Diplomacy*) and Muharrem Ekşi's (2014) Kamu diplomasisi ve Ak Parti dönemi Türk dış politikası (*Public diplomacy and Turkish foreign policy during the AK Party era*). The country's expanding pop culture products (Kraidy & Al-Ghazzi, 2013), primarily through its export of soap operas to neighboring regions (Yalkin & Halkias, 2016), also attracted scholarly attention from both within and outside Türkiye.

This study analyzes the landscape of Turkish public diplomacy literature by analyzing peer-reviewed articles. Our research team originally included five members, listed alphabetically by last name: Banu Akdenizli (Northwestern University Qatar), Senem Çevik (Woodbury University), İlknur Gümüş, Gözde Kurt (Beykent University), and Efe Sevin (Towson University), with Dr. Gümüş leaving the group after the coding process was completed.

The rest of the paper is structured in four parts. First, we introduce our methodology, starting with our research questions and moving on to our data gathering, cleaning, and analysis processes. In the second section, findings, we present the descriptive results of our analysis in three parts: metadata, content analysis, and thematic analysis. The third section discusses our findings. We conclude the paper by presenting recommendations for moving forward.

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[1] Turkey officially changed the country's name to Türkiye in 2022. In this manuscript, we follow the country's new name.

Methodology

This study aims to explore public diplomacy scholarship in Turkish. Our approach was guided by one main research question in this literature, as stated below:

RQ1: How did public diplomacy scholarship in Turkish develop between 2001 and 2022?

Exploring the evolution of an entire literature requires us to come up with more specific questions to lead the parts of our analysis. As explained in the next section in more detail, our dataset included metadata belonging to articles (e.g., authors, journal name, publication year) and the manuscripts. Accordingly, our research questions focused on both aspects. At the metadata level, we posed questions to explain more structural changes in the literature and to identify influential figures, outlets, institutions, and disciplines:

RQ_{MD1}: What is the volume of publications across the years?

RQ_{MD2}: Who are the most prolific authors and institutions?

RQ_{MD3}: Which journals and disciplines house the highest number of public diplomacy articles?

Next, we asked four questions that attempted to show the topics and countries studied in the literature:

$RQ_{Content1}$: What specific types of public diplomacy activities were studied?

$RQ_{Content2}$: What research methods were used in these studies?

$RQ_{Content3}$: Which countries were studied?

$RQ_{Content4}$: Which topics were studied?

In the next two sections, we outline how we collected, cleaned, and analyzed data to answer these research questions.

Data Gathering

Our team held a consultation meeting with two public diplomacy scholars based in Türkiye to understand the academic landscape in the country better. Following their advice, we used "*kamu diplomasisi*" as the search keyword. We carried out all our research on *DergiPark,* which is a national online database of academic journals used by institutions based in Türkiye. DergiPark enabled us to capture as many articles as possible. There were articles written in other languages, such as English, in our search results since there are national journals published in these languages in Türkiye. We initially decided to keep these articles in our dataset since their primary audience was other academics in Türkiye, regardless of the language. However, we removed them after consultation with the rest of the Public

Diplomacy in Other Words team, as explained below.

Using *DergiPark's* own search engine, we carried out three rounds of searches looking for "kamu" AND "diplomasisi" as search strings in the titles, abstracts, and keywords. In all three searches, the start date was set at 2001. No end date was set. All searches were carried out in March 2023.Our initial search was carried out in three waves. The title search yielded 138 results. The abstract search yielded 241 results. Keyword search yielded 100 results. We combined all 479 results in an Excel file. In order to remove duplicate entries, we sorted the results by year, title, and DOI number. We looked for repeated DOI numbers and repeated titles, as not all articles had DOI numbers. We first removed duplicate entries based on DOI. We removed 126 entries based on DOI matching. An additional 91 entries were removed based on title counts. We removed one book review and one book. Our dataset had 260 articles.

We shared our preliminary results with the other teams working in the *Public Diplomacy in Other Words* project during the Korean Public Diplomacy Association's International Conference in 2023. During the discussion, teams agreed to focus solely on articles published in one language—in our case, Turkish. We removed articles published in English from our dataset. There were 39 such articles, making the final article count 221.

We used the first ten articles for an initial pilot analysis. Each team member coded these articles for topic, subtopic, hyphenated diplomacy, countries studied, and methodology. The authors held a debriefing meeting afterward to revise the content analysis approach. The decision was to streamline existing categories. *The hyphenated diplomacy* variable looked at what specific type of public diplomacy was studied. A draft list of possible types was created by one of the researchers. The list was finalized with input from the entire team. *The countries studied* revealed two points of disagreement among researchers. The first point was whether to include all the countries named within a manuscript or solely focus on the ones that were empirically studied. The second point was about naming countries or regions. The research team decided to include all the countries named in the articles' methodology section as cases. Regions were not to be used in lieu of country names except for International Organizations (e.g., European Union). For further analysis, the countries studied were split into two variables: *Practitioner Countries* and *Target Countries*. As the names suggest, the former variable looks at countries engaging in public diplomacy and the latter at target audiences. *Methodology* showed the need for a joint vocabulary among researchers in naming research methods as there were minor differences (e.g., discourse analysis vs. critical discourse analysis). Another preliminary finding was the mismatch between a manuscript's methodology claim and its actual methodology. Therefore, the researchers decided to split methodology into two variables: Methodology *As-stated in the text* and *Coder-decision*. The former was coded in an open-ended manner based on what the manuscript called its methodology. The latter was based on the coder's assessment. A list of different methods was created by one of the researchers, which was then reviewed, revised, and finalized by the rest of the team.

We randomly selected a new batch of 10 articles for the second round for the pilot study. After the second round, the coders disagreed on two types of articles: those that talked about a country's public diplomacy without discussing specific projects and those that did not have empirical data. While there were no disagreements about the ambiguous nature of these articles, coders disagreed on the specific labels. As a result, we added a new methodology label called "*Review of Existing Studies*" and a new label in the target country called "*No specific target country*." We expanded on hyphenated diplomacy by introducing *gastro-diplomacy* and identifying the difference between humanitarian and health diplomacy. We acknowledge humanitarian technically encompasses health diplomacy. We identified it as a specific subset of humanitarian diplomacy with a healthcare component that might include building hospitals, sending medication, or providing healthcare services.

After the consultation, five coders split the dataset among themselves equally. One of the coders left the team after the coding was completed. The subsequent analyses were carried out by the remaining four coders - all listed as co-authors in this manuscript.

Data Analysis

Once coding was completed, all data was transformed into an SPSS file to run descriptive statistics. The results were used to understand the general tendencies of the existing data. Authorship information for the articles was restructured into a dyadic network and imported into Gephi (Bastian et al., 2009) for network analysis.

Abstracts, titles, and keywords were imported into the R environment (R Core Team, 2021) for analysis in the *topicmodels* (*Grün & Hornik, 2011*) and *tm* (*Feinerer et al., 2008*) packages. The text was preprocessed in each textual analysis. Given that Turkish is a highly agglutinative language, stemming and lemmatization processes were challenging, and required manual corrections throughout the process.

Findings

This section begins by presenting the findings from our metadata analysis, followed by an examination of the articles' content. To gain deeper insights and answer content-related questions more comprehensively, we employ thematic analysis alongside reporting the results of content analysis coding.

Metadata

The metadata research questions focus on three areas: overall volume, authorship, and outlets.

Trends in Publication Numbers.

Our dataset includes a total of 221 articles published in the Turkish language. Three of those articles were published in 2023. Since the data gathering was carried out in March 2023, in our publication volume visualizations do not include 2023.
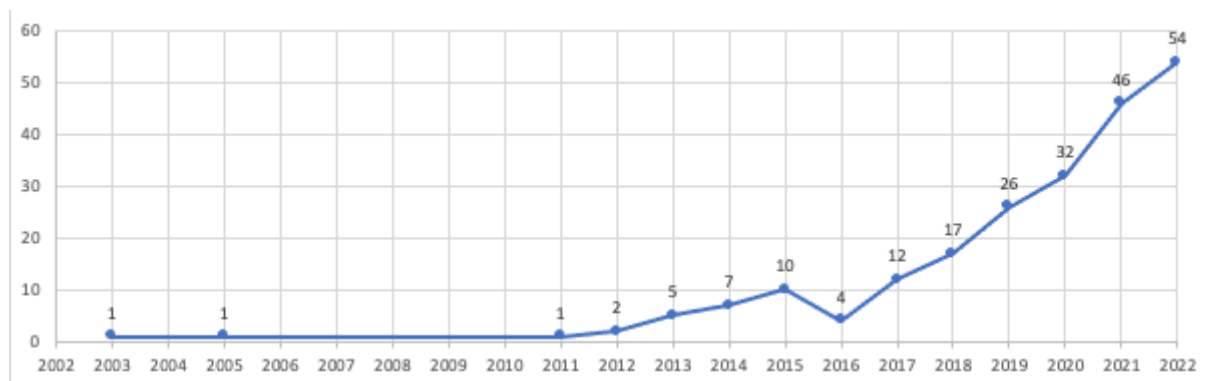

Figure 1. Number of Articles Published across Years (n = 218)

Since 2011, there has been at least one article published per year. There is a clear upward trend in the event frequency or occurrence over the years. From just 1 in 2003, the frequency increases to its peak of 54 in 2022. From 2016 onwards, the increase in frequency becomes more pronounced. From 2019 to 2022, the frequency of articles doubles.

Author Patterns.

Most articles in our dataset (67.42%, 149) were solo-authored; 67 articles had two co-authors, and five articles had three co-authors. There were no author teams larger than three. In other words, there was a total of 298 author spots. 234 unique authors occupied these spots. Over 80% of these authors (199) were only observed once in the dataset. Only 36 authors had more than one article. The below table shows (Table 1) the authors with the ten highest number of articles, their affiliations, faculty and department. The authors highlighted in yellow had solely solo-authored articles.

Table 1. Most Prolific Authors and Institutions

Author	Number of Articles	Affiliation	Faculty and Department
Muharrem EKŞİ	6	Kirklareli University	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations
Ayhan Nuri YILMAZ	5	Samsun University	Faculty of Political Sciences, Department of Political Sciences and Administration

Author	Number of Articles	Affiliation	Faculty and Department
Ergün Köksoy	5	Marmara University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity
Aslı Yağmurlu	5	Ankara University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity
Erdem EREN	5	Istanbul Rumeli University	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Political Sciences and Administration
Gökmen KILIÇOĞLU	4	Duzce University	Faculty of Political Sciences, Department of International Relations
Emel POYRAZ	4	Marmara University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity
Serhan KOYUNCU	4	Ankara Haci Bayram Veli University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Journalism
Elif GÜRDAL	3	Gumushane University	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations
Abdulsamet Günek	3	Muş Alparslan University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Journalism
Emine Kılıçaslan	3	Aydın Adnan Menderes University	Aydın Vocational School, Printing and Publishing Techniques Program
Emrah Aydemir	3	National Defense University	Turkish Military Academy, Alparslan Defense Sciences and National Security Institute
Samet Kavoğlu	3	Marmara University	Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity
Melih Duman	3	Aksaray University	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations
Faruk Yazar	3	Necmettin Erbakan University	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Public Relations and Advertising

We further looked at the affiliations of all 36 authors. We were not able to identify the affiliations of two. The remaining 34 authors belonged to 28 different institutions. Only five institutions had more than one affiliated public diplomacy researcher: Marmara University (4), Ankara Haci Bayram Veli University (2), Galatasaray University (2), Gumushane University (2), and Kirklareli University (2).

To understand the authorship structure in Turkish publications, we looked at co-authorship networks from 72 co-authored articles. We created an undirected dyadic network map, which is shown below. The network had 127 nodes, representing unique authors, forming 74 edges, representing co-authorships. Most of these co-authorships were one-time only. There were only five repeated partnerships, as shown in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2. Repeated Co-Authorships

Author	Author	Repetition
Gokmen Kilicoglu	Ayhan Nuri Yilmaz	5
Burak Medin	Serhan Koyuncu	2
Mehmet Sahin	Seyedmohammad Seyedi Asl	2
Ercan Akar	Muharrem Gurkaynak	2
Ahmet Aydin	Emel Poyraz	2

We carried out a final social network analysis to examine the structure of partnerships (Figure 2). We sought authors who had more than one partner. In our network, most of the edges and nodes - both partnerships and partners - were repeated only once. Therefore, we asked whether there were individuals who partnered with more than one author and could act as a bridge between other authors. We identified four individuals (Muharrem Eksi, Emel Poyraz, Erdem Eren, and Ozgur Aslan - all shown in red in the network map below). Drs. Eksi and Poyraz had three different co-authors, while Drs. Erden and Aslan had two.
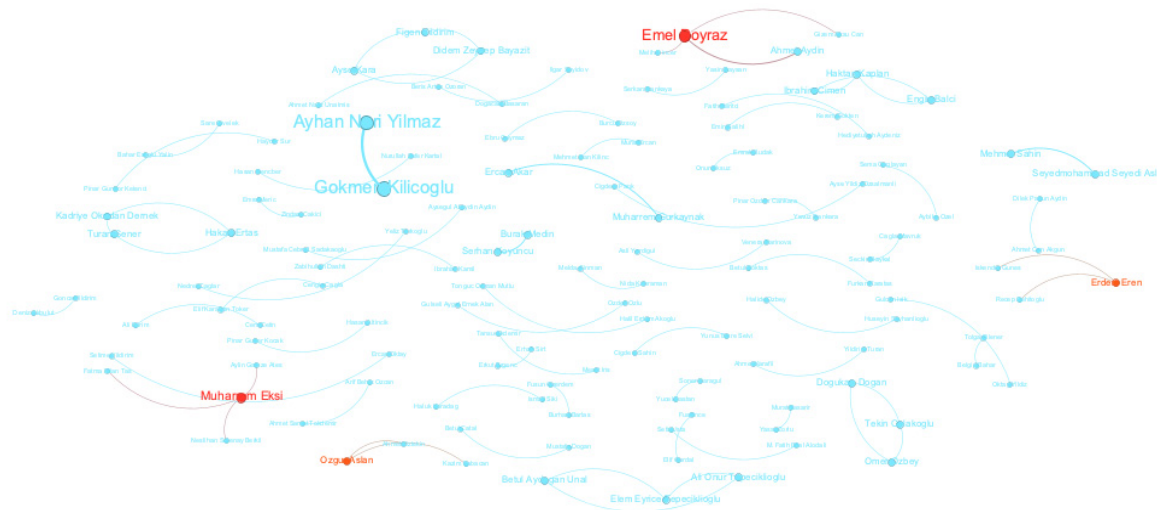

Figure 2. Network Map of Co-Authorship

Journals and Disciplines.

Next, we moved our analytical attention to journals. 221 articles were published in 142 journals. 99 of these journals published only one article, with 25 additional journals publishing only two. The table below (Table 3) shows the top 10 journals with the most articles. There are 19 journals on the list since ten are tied for 10th place.

Table 3. Journal Names and Disciplines

Journal Name	Number of Articles	Discipline
İletişim ve Diplomasi (Communication and Diplomacy)	11	Communication
Erciyes İletişim Dergisi (Journal of Erciyes Communication)	8	Communication
Galatasaray Üniversitesi İleti-ş-im Dergisi (Galatasaray University Journal of Communication İleti-ş-im)	6	Communication
Akdeniz Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi (Journal of Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication)	4	Communication
Selçuk İletişim Dergisi (Journal of Selcuk Communication)	4	Communication
OPUS Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi (OPUS International Journal of Society Researches)	4	Social Sciences
Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi (Journal of International Relations)	4	International Relations
Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal of Crises and Political Research)	3	Political Science
İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi (Journal of Communication Theory and Research)	3	Communication
International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research	3	Social Sciences
Intermedia International E-journal	3	Communication
İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches)	3	Social Sciences
Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi (Gümüşhane University e-Journal of Faculty of Communication)	3	Communication
Turkish Online Journal of Design Art and Communication	3	Arts & Humanities
Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi (The Journal of Strategic and Social Research)	3	Social Sciences
İletişim Çalışmaları Dergisi (Journal of Communication Studies)	3	Communication
Avrasya Etüdleri (Eurasian Studies)	3	Social Sciences

Most journals on the list have a frequency of 2 or 3, indicating a relatively low level of publication. A few journals, like 'Galatasaray University Journal of Communication,' 'Journal of Erciyes Communication,' and 'Communication & Diplomacy' have higher frequencies of 6, 7, and 11, respectively, indicating moderate activity. Communication journals in this table house most articles (63%, 45 out of 71), followed by social sciences (23%, 16 out of 71).

Content

Our content questions are answered both through a deductive content analysis and a thematic analysis. Our deductive content analysis, as explained above, includes three elements:

hyphenated diplomacy / PD category, methodology, and countries studied. The thematic analysis relates to topics.

PD Category.

Our initial analysis looked at specific sub-categories of public diplomacy used in the studies. As shown in the figure below (Figure 3), advocacy was the most frequently used category, followed by digital diplomacy and international broadcasting. 17 of the articles in our sample did not cover any specific hyphenated diplomacy and were coded as articles on public diplomacy as a general practice. These articles typically fall into three discernible categories: (1) articles on the history of public diplomacy in general, focusing on distinctions and similarities of the field from propaganda and public relations and the tools; (2) articles focusing on a practitioner country's general public diplomacy activities (such as Türkiye's public diplomacy activities towards the Balkans; Russia's public diplomacy efforts; the relationship between Iran's foreign policy and public diplomacy); and (3) the influence of current events on public diplomacy strategies and implementations (such as the influence of COVID-19 on public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy).
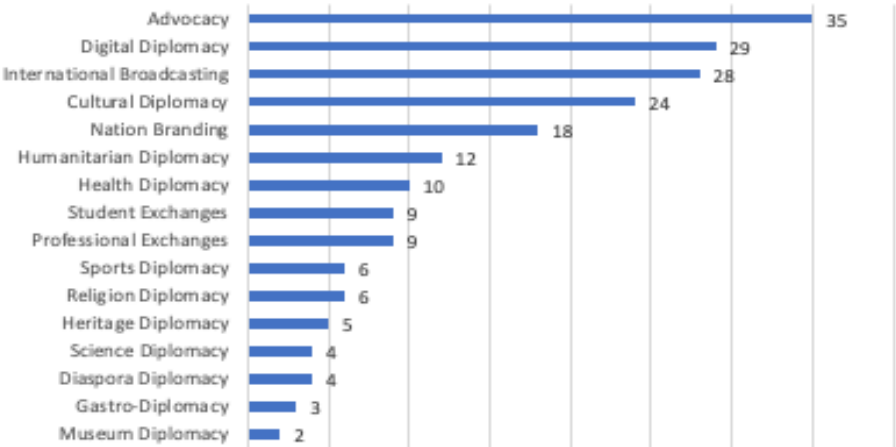

Figure 3. Public Diplomacy Categories (n=221)

Articles on the role of civil society organizations in the practice of public diplomacy; the role of ministries in the formulation of strategies and practice, specifically in the case when Türkiye was the practitioner country; the EU and UN as organizations; and a particular emphasis on security and terrorism concerns, as well as countering extremist ideology, were some of the significant study topics under articles coded as advocacy. Greece, Armenia, the Middle East, Russia, China, Israel, and Türkiye stand out in this category as countries of interest. Enhancing image and reputation, promoting stability and development, and building international coalitions were emphasized.

The topics of the digital diplomacy articles were centered around: (1) social media platforms use by political leaders, ministries, and embassies; (2) countering narratives and misinformation in the digital media landscape; and (3) the role of the diaspora and nongovernmental actors' use of social media.

We then looked at articles studying Türkiye as the practitioner country. Cultural diplomacy was the most frequently observed category, as shown in Figure 4. The majority of articles on Türkiye's cultural diplomacy focus on language programs directed towards the Balkans, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Russia, and China, with a particular emphasis on Yunus Emre Institutes. The Balkans and Azerbaijan, particularly, are regions with historical and cultural ties. Türkiye's focus on language programs in these regions indicates an attempt to strengthen its influence and foster positive perceptions, which could have broader geopolitical implications, including in areas like trade, security, and regional politics. By engaging in comparative research (for example, looking into Türkiye's efforts vis-à-vis Russia and France's language programs), articles in this category emphasize not only the focus on culture and tradition but also how these goals "fit" into Türkiye's foreign policy actions (such as seeing the Balkans as an extension of Türkiye, a reconnection with Ottoman traditions and legacy).
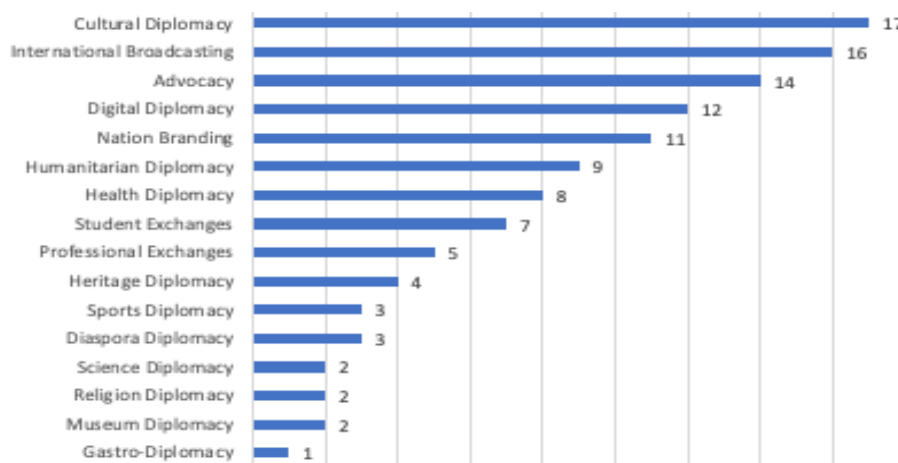

Figure 4. Public Diplomacy Categories with Türkiye as the Practitioner Country (n=121)

Articles on international broadcasting, with the second highest frequency among articles with Türkiye as the practitioner country, focused more on TRT (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), the state-owned public broadcaster. This is relatively surprising considering the scholarly popularity of Turkish TV drama series, as well as their global consumption (see, for example, Berg, 2020; Buccianti, 2010; Celikkol, 2021; Köksal & Gjana, 2015; Kraidy & Al-Ghazzi, 2013; Yörük & Vatikiotis, 2013). The emphasis on TRT, TRT World, and TRT Avaz in these articles could indicate a recognition of the importance of having a strong state-backed media presence in the competitive global media landscape, and aiming to reach foreign audiences with content that is informative and

potentially more aligned with the country's diplomatic goals.

Methodology.

132 articles did not explicitly mention a methodology (59.7% of all articles). During our content analysis, coders were asked to provide a methodology for each and every article, regardless of the articles' claims. Out of the 132 articles that had no in-text methodology mentioned, the coders decided to label 73 of them as reviews of existing literature[2]. For the remaining 59 articles, the coders were able to assign a methodology: 27 case studies, 14 systematic reviews, seven content analyses, six historical analyses, two discourse analyses, one comparative historical analysis, one statistical analysis, and one textual analysis.

The remaining articles (n=89) mentioned a methodology explicitly in the text. The distribution is shown in Figure 5. The codes are translated from Turkish phrases used by the authors in their articles as their primary methodology.
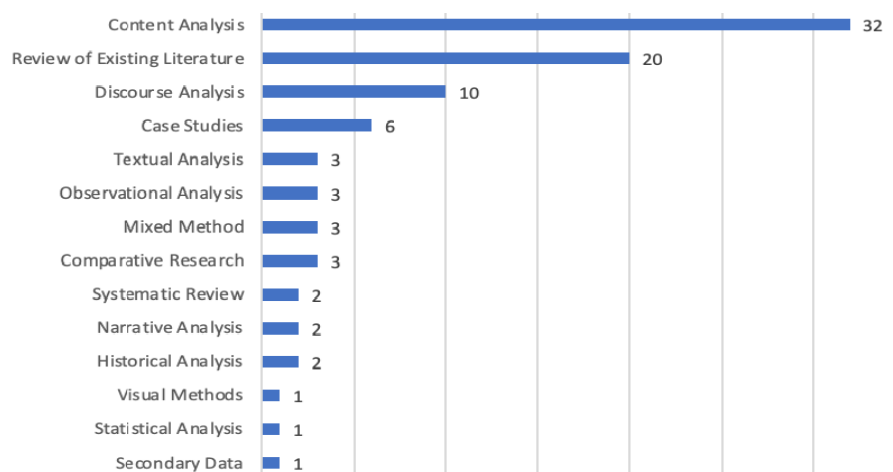

Content Analysis	32
Review of Existing Literature	20
Discourse Analysis	10
Case Studies	6
Textual Analysis	3
Observational Analysis	3
Mixed Method	3
Comparative Research	3
Systematic Review	2
Narrative Analysis	2
Historical Analysis	2
Visual Methods	1
Statistical Analysis	1
Secondary Data	1

Figure 5. Methodology as Mentioned in Article

Of the 89 articles that have stated methodology in-text, we had 26 cases where the decision of the coder and the in-text differed. In other words, coders did not agree with the authors' methodological claims. The most significant discrepancy occurred when the in-text decision was stated as content analysis. There were 11 such instances. Coders decided three were reviews of existing literature, two were case studies, two were mixed methods, two were narrative analyses, one was a historical review, and one was a systematic review. The second category in which authors and coders had differing views was discourse analysis with three being coded as case studies, one as content analysis and one as review of existing literature.

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2) We used two codes that sound similar for methodology "Review of Existing Literature" and "Systematic Review". The latter refers to studies that use other scholarly studies as empirical data, such as meta reviews. The former refers to studies without any empirical data that presents relatively subjective overviews of the field.
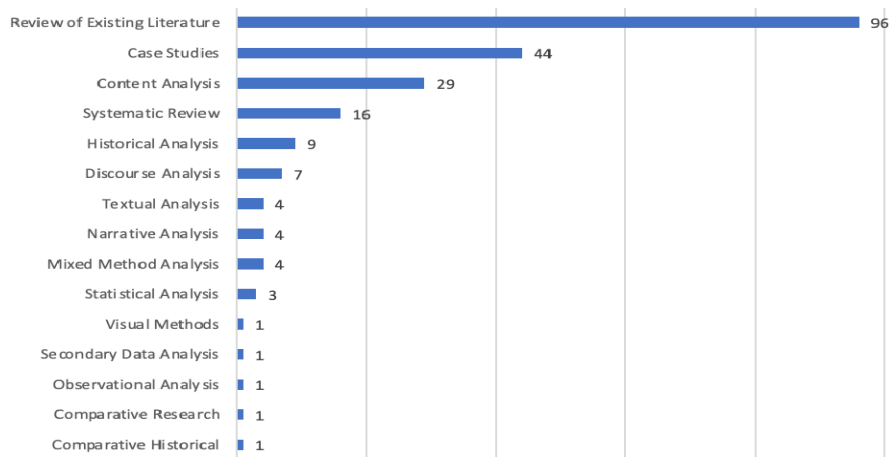
Figure 6. Methodology Coder Decision

When looking at the coder's decision for methodology of all articles (n=221), the most frequent label is review of existing literature (96), followed by case studies (44) and content analysis (29). These three codes account for nearly 75% of all the articles included in this study. The rest of the distribution is shown in Figure 6.

Countries Studied.

Practitioner countries.

Thirty-two articles did not include any practitioner country. The remaining articles studied roughly 50 different practitioner countries. We are hesitant to give a specific number for practitioner countries. As further discussed in the final two sections of the paper, we found fundamental issues with empirical research design in the literature. There have been cases in which authors argued they were studying a specific practitioner country or a set of countries while the manuscript did not necessarily cover all of them.
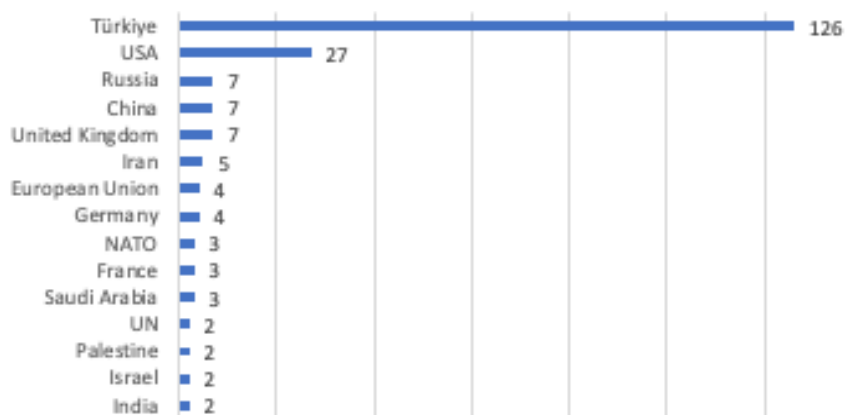

Figure 7. Practitioner Countries

The most frequently studied country was Türkiye, followed by the United States, Russia, Iran, and China. The figure above (Figure 7) shows the top 10 most frequently studied countries (13 countries, with six countries tied for the last spot). In this frequency table, we used the country as a unit of analysis. Our research included all the countries mentioned in the article. Thus, if an article presented a comparative study of Türkiye and the US, it counted as an observation of both countries. If a study mentioned an international organization as the practitioner, we also used the organization as the practitioner country.

Target Countries.

The majority of the articles (133) did not name a target country. The remaining articles named nearly 120 countries as targets. In addition to the previous empirical disclaimer about articles including multiple countries, a coding decision contributed to this high number. When a region was named as a target, such as the Balkans or Sub-Saharan Africa, the coders agreed to code individual countries in the region. Two exceptions were made. First was for international organizations, such as cases that included the European Union, NATO and the UN. They were coded as the regions. The second exception was larger regions such as Africa and the Middle East. The table below shows the 10 target countries with the highest frequency (12 countries, with three countries tied for the last spot).
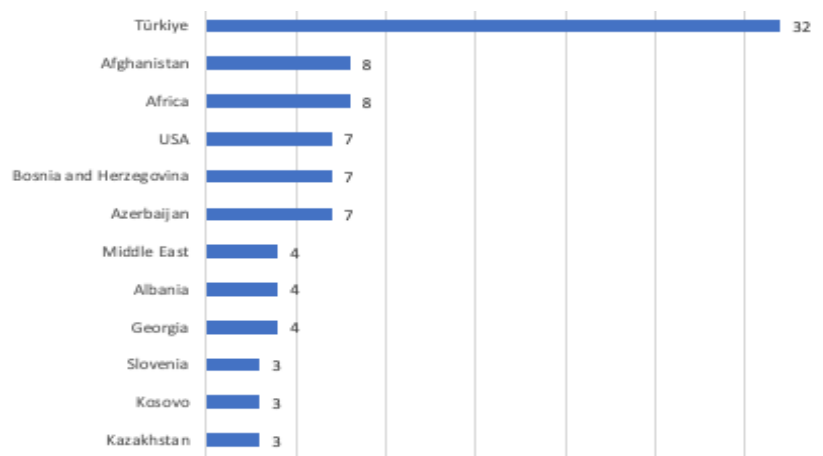

Figure 8. Target Countries

Türkiye constitutes an important study area even as the target. In other words, foreign countries' public diplomacy projects targeting the country are studied frequently by scholars. The rest of the countries hold specific geopolitical and foreign policy significance for Türkiye. These include major powers, Turkic countries, the Balkans, neighboring countries, and Türkiye's new public diplomacy target region: Africa. Thus it is not surprising to see these countries as a second group of target countries.

Thematic Analysis

Distant Reading.

Our metadata included titles, abstracts, and keywords for each article. We created a separate dataset for distant reading by keeping only Turkish titles, abstracts, and keywords for all the articles. Two articles did not have abstracts or keywords, one article did not have an abstract in Turkish, and one article did not have keywords. While we kept these four articles in the dataset, their missing data was not included in the corresponding analyses.

We initially carried out a keyword frequency analysis. There were a total of 1016 keywords with 471 unique keywords. 360 out of 471 were only used once. 22 keywords were used five or more times in the dataset as shown in the table (Table 4)

Table 4. *Keyword Frequencies*

Keyword	English keywords	Frequency
kamu diplomasisi	public diplomacy	166
yumuşak güç	soft power	63
türkiye	Türkiye	26
dış politika	foreign policy	19
diplomasi	diplomacy	17
dijital diplomasi	digital diplomacy	16
kültürel diplomasi	cultural diplomacy	13
türk dış politikası	Turkish foreign policy	13
iletişim	communication	11
sosyal medya	social media	11

These keywords are in line with the observations in content analysis. They portray a literature that highlights Turkish interests and foreign policy. Cultural diplomacy is a hyphenated diplomacy frequently mentioned. Communication, more specifically social media and digital communication, also makes an appearance.

In order to understand the relationship among keywords, we looked at which keywords were used together most frequently. The table below (Table 5) shows the top 10 phrases used together.

Table 5. Keyword Dyad Frequencies

Keyword Used Together	English Translations	Frequency
kamu diplomasisi & yumuşak güç	public diplomacy & soft power	52
kamu diplomasisi & Türkiye	public diplomacy & Türkiye	18
dış politika & kamu diplomasisi	foreign policy & public diplomacy	15
diplomasi & kamu diplomasisi	diplomacy & public diplomacy	13
dijital diplomasi & kamu diplomasisi	digital diplomacy & public diplomacy	11
kamu diplomasisi & kültürel diplomasi	public diplomacy & cultural diplomacy	11
kamu diplomasisi & Türk dış politikası	public diplomacy & Turkish foreign policy	9
kamu diplomasisi & sosyal medya	public diplomacy & social media	9
kamu diplomasisi & medya	public diplomacy & media	8
halkla ilişkiler & kamu diplomasisi	public relations & public diplomacy	7
dış politika & yumuşak güç	foreign policy & soft power	7
kültürel diplomasi & yumuşak güç	cultural diplomacy & soft power	7

Once again, our observations in the content analysis are supported as public diplomacy is used together with the country's name and foreign policy. We also see repeated references to soft power. A point that might be relatively unique to our case at hand is the role of cultural diplomacy.

As the last step in our distant reading, we carried out an additional frequency analysis of the words used in titles. The table below (Table 6) shows the top 10 words.

Table 6. Title Keyword Frequencies

Turkish Keyword	English Translation	Frequency
diplomasisi	diplomacy	188
kamu	public	144
Türkiye / Türk	Türkiye / Turkish	99
örneği	example	28
uluslararası	international	26
dijital	digital	24
faaliyetleri	activities	24
yumuşak	soft	22
güç	power	18
iletişim	communication	11

The words in the list suggest that the articles use case studies frequently. The focus is still on Türkiye. Digital diplomacy, which was also observed in keywords and keyword dyads, is mentioned in titles, whereas cultural diplomacy is not. It is possible to argue that digital diplomacy makes it to the titles as the overall concept, whereas cultural diplomacy is shadowed by the names of assets, organizations, festivals, and other instruments.

Close Reading.

As our final textual analysis, we ran multiple automated topic modeling analyses and reflected on the results generated. Using the *topicmodels* package (Grün & Hornik, 2011), we looked at the abstracts of 218 articles, excluding the two articles with no abstract and one article with no abstract in Turkish. We ran modeling with 5, 7, and 10 different models. In each separate analysis, the script assigned a topic for each article and gave us 50 words frequently used in these topics.

Table 7. Topics

Topic Description	Frequency
Türkiye's Soft Power: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy and Diaspora Engagement	45
Türkiye's Collaborative Efforts: Culture, Economy, Tourism, and Education	36
Soft vs. Hard Power Diplomacy: Studies on NATO	34
Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy: Studies on Türkiye, Russia, and the USA	33
Digital Diplomacy: Utilizing Technology in International Relations	33
International Broadcasting: Strategies and TRT's Role	25
Global Health Diplomacy: Türkiye's Response to COVID-19	12

Going through the list of words, we discussed the viability of each topic. We decided that 10 had overlapping ideas across topics, and 5 had lists that could have been split. We inductively named the seven categories based on the list of words provided.

The first topic included articles that looked at a number of different hyphenated diplomacy projects as input and soft power as output for Türkiye. These projects included gastrodiplomacy through the Yunus Emre Institute, literary diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy through television series. Soft power was seen as a way for the country to increase its visibility in the international arena, to be more influential in foreign policy, and to maintain stronger relationships with other countries. The second topic covers Turkish presence in the international arena through other means, such as student exchanges, technical exchanges, development diplomacy, and economic relations.

NATO and military-relevant articles were prevalent enough by themselves to establish as

the third topic category despite not being seen in the frequency analysis. Studies in this category focused on Türkiye's role in Afghanistan, smart power, security studies, and other case studies related to security, such as Palestinian and Ukrainian public diplomacy. The fourth topic looks at the political and foreign policy outcomes of major players in the Turkish context. A qualifier here is necessary since the studies focus on Russia and Türkiye in addition to the US. While American public diplomacy is universally seen as an important case study, the Russian and Turkish presence is more contextual to the literature in Turkish. Studies in this topic included historical cases, such as works on the United States Information Agency, as well as institutional analysis of Russian public diplomacy and Turkish development diplomacy.

The fifth and sixth topics look at specific tools of public diplomacy: digital media and broadcasting, respectively. Digital diplomacy presents a more diverse selection of case studies that have non-Turkish practices, whereas broadcasting studies almost all focus on Türkiye. The last topic is on health diplomacy. The majority of the articles cover Covid-19 and Türkiye's response. This is perhaps partially because of the structural changes in the literature. The majority of the articles in our dataset were published during the pandemic years.

Discussion

Public diplomacy literature in Turkish is relatively dynamic. While the overall volume of scholarship is limited, we observed an important change in publication numbers starting in 2016. We assumed there might have been external factors encouraging authors to publish in the journals indexed in DergiPark, namely promotion criteria. Within the Turkish higher education system, these criteria are governed by a central accreditation agency named Üniversitelerarası Kurul Başkanlığı (Inter-University Council Presidency), and all faculty members, regardless of their university affiliations or disciplines, follow the same criteria. While there have been changes in these criteria, we could not identify any criterion that might explain the sudden jump. Therefore, we posit that this change shows an increased interest in the topic as a field of study.

The most prolific author in our study was Muharrem Ekşi. In addition to the articles included in the study, we were able to locate four books authored by him. Moreover, he established a research center on public diplomacy named *Kamu Diplomasisi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi* (Center for Public Diplomacy Practice and Research). The following two authors in the list, Drs. Yilmaz and Koksoy, also published books in addition to their articles.

The authorship dyads are relatively coincidental. Fatma Dilan Taş, Neslihan Setenay Berkil, and Aylin Gamze Ateş collaborated with Muharrem Ekşi in penning an article while enrolled as graduate students in the International Relations Master's Program at Kırıkkale

University, where Muharrem Ekşi assumes a faculty role. Emel Poyraz, affiliated with Marmara University, provided scholarly guidance as the master's thesis advisor to Gizem Aksu Can, Ahmet Aydın, and Melih Dinçer within the same institution. Further academic engagements reveal Erdem Eren and Recep Şehitoğlu as alumni of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, where the former completed his master's degree and the latter pursued doctoral studies. The inclusion of these two faculty members in the YK Academic database is notable evidence that Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University serves as a hub connecting their academic endeavors. Ahmet Öztekin occupies a pivotal role as a doctoral faculty member within the Faculty of Communication at Erciyes University. Özgür Aslan is actively engaged in doctoral studies within the Communication Sciences Program at the same institution.

One particular journal should be highlighted in this table: İletişim ve Diplomasi (Communication and Diplomacy). This journal was initially founded by the Directorate General of Press and Information (DGPI) under the Office of the Prime Minister in 2013 as a biannual refereed publication. DGPI also supported Türkiye's first official public diplomacy institution, Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatorlugu (KDK). In other words, DGPI has been involved in the practice of public diplomacy. The Communication and Diplomacy journal took a hiatus after three regular and one special issues. It started its operations again in 2021, this time under the Directorate of Communications (DoC) within the President's office. As Türkiye moved to a presidential system and abolished the Office of the Prime Minister in 2018, DGPI's responsibilities were taken over by the DoC. KDK was replaced by a board of public diplomacy experts under the DoC. This is to say, the Communication and Diplomacy journal was still managed by the country's external communication and public diplomacy practitioners. Apart from this particular journal, the publication record has been spotty. However, the contribution of communication journals far exceeds other fields, even without Communication and Diplomacy.

The analysis of the PD category shows a close link between practice and study in the literature. Advocacy, digital diplomacy, and international broadcasting are the most frequently studied subfields. Given Türkiye's practice and the recency of most articles, these three categories are expected.

Methodology could be seen as a weakness of Turkish literature. The fact that the overwhelming number of articles analyzed were literature reviews could indicate multiple things: (1) Literature reviews are often conducted to synthesize and summarize existing knowledge, suggesting that there is enough prior work to warrant such synthesis (good news); (2) this trend could also suggest that the field is in a phase of consolidation and assessment. Researchers are focusing on understanding and integrating the findings from previous studies rather than conducting new primary research (not so good news); (3) the prevalence of literature reviews might also point to methodological challenges or difficulties in conducting empirical research in the field (practical, ethical, financial, or political reasons). The disagreements between the authors of the articles and coders might reflect the evolving nature

of understanding in the field and also its early stages of scholarly development (indicating the need for more research to fully understand the field of study). These types of differences underscore the importance of peer review in research, critical analysis, and ongoing research in advancing knowledge and understanding in the field.

The focus on Türkiye as a target country in the field of public diplomacy in Turkish may be interpreted in the following ways:

1. The scholarship is self-reflective, focusing on analyzing the country's own strategies, policies, and identity.

2. Concentrating on Türkiye may reflect a case study approach, where Türkiye is used as a specific example to understand broader phenomena in public diplomacy. This can provide detailed insights into the unique aspects of Turkish public diplomacy, potentially offering lessons or models that can be applied more broadly.

3. Focusing on Türkiye in the context of public diplomacy could also be indicative of interest in Türkiye's role and influence in its immediate region, such as the Middle East, the Balkans, and Central Asia, where it has historical, cultural, and strategic ties.

4. The focus on Türkiye itself in public diplomacy research could reflect an interest in how domestic political dynamics, including leadership, political ideology, and internal policy changes, shape the country's approach to public diplomacy.

Africa is an emerging, vital player in global politics and economics. Interest in Africa could be driven by the need to understand African perspectives and to establish Türkiye as a key partner. Research articles with Africa as a focus primarily center around language programs and humanitarian and cultural diplomacy. Africa's growing markets and natural resources could be areas of interest.

Afghanistan, an extended neighbor of Türkiye, is a country whose stability and development are crucial for regional security. The research focused on this area centered around the themes of regional security and counter-terrorism through the establishment of humanitarian aid.

The political and cultural relationship between the USA and Türkiye is complex. Both NATO allies have cooperated on various regional issues, such as combating terrorism and managing the fallout of conflicts in Syria and Iraq. However, their approaches and interests in these regions have sometimes diverged, leading to tensions. Numerous educational and cultural exchange programs exist between these two countries. American movies, music, and lifestyle have noticeable influences.

With historical and cultural ties to the Balkans, Türkiye has a vested interest in the stability and development of the region. With a concentration on promoting the language and

fostering cultural ties stemming from Ottoman heritage, many articles focused on international broadcasting, particularly on TRT; cultural diplomacy (Yunus Emre Institutes); and student exchanges.

Thematic analysis revealed a relatively intriguing result. While most articles are published in communication journals, we see a soft power and foreign policy-based approach to public diplomacy. The grouping of keywords portrayed a similar finding. Public diplomacy is seen as a foreign policy instrument and is closely associated with soft power. Outreach elements, such as social media and cultural diplomacy, are also articulated within the literature, yet they stay within soft power. This approach can be seen as closely linked with Turkish practice, as well as resembling earlier days of the public diplomacy literature in English.

Conclusions

This paper presented our study of 221 articles published in Turkish on public diplomacy. Moving through the manuscripts' metadata, manual coding for different variables, and automated text mining for textual analysis, we established the boundaries of the literature. This study, of course, is not without its limitations. First, the relatively small number of observations requires the authors to rely on their contextual knowledge of Türkiye, Turkish higher education, public diplomacy, and Turkish public diplomacy.

We can summarize our findings and discussion points into three recommendations. First, there is a need for methodologically robust scholarship in Turkish public diplomacy literature. It should be noted that Turkish literature is not the only one with this particular need. Ayhan and Sevin (2022) argued for the lack of such literature in the English language in a special issue of the *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* journal dedicated to methodology and public diplomacy. What we observed was a literature based on narrating a limited number of projects coming mostly from Türkiye. While these studies are instrumental in chronicling the country's experience with public diplomacy, additional research methods need to be incorporated to answer more complicated questions about, for instance, the impact of public diplomacy programs or the logics of practice beyond observations.

Second, the majority of authors included in the study published only one article. This observation signals that scholars do not dedicate research time to producing public diplomacy literature in Turkish. Scholars might either commit to projects in other fields or other languages. Regardless, the lack of continuity is problematic. Further institutional encouragement might coax authors to work towards building Turkish literature.

Third, the studies heavily rely on Türkiye as a single case study. This is not unexpected in the early days of practice-based literature. Indeed, the same observation was made about English language literature in the late 2000s, which was mostly composed of single case studies of American public diplomacy practice (Gregory, 2008). Yet, such studies tend to be

normative and/or descriptive in their nature. Turkish literature should follow the advice given to English literature: introduce more cases and comparative case studies (Gilboa, 2008). This change will deepen the conversation around Turkish public diplomacy as scholars can draw upon other experiences. Moreover, increasing the number of observations will enable scholars to have findings that might be applicable beyond the Turkish case.

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