Research article

Education and artificial intelligence in communication studies: A technical-practical-ethical discussion in students' experience of use

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Abstract
Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are reshaping human-machine relationships in today's digital world, offering new opportunities in the field of communication. AI-based tools are widely used across various sectors, from education to professional practices, prompting interdisciplinary discussions. Integrating AI applications in universities provides a new experience in communication education, generating new debates around ethical issues, university regulations, student-academic relationships. This study aims to explore the AI usage experiences, perspectives of undergraduate students in universities, focusing on technical knowledge, consumption routines, and the context of original production and ethics. The research, employing a qualitative methodology, was conducted through structured in-depth interviews with twelve undergraduate students across three different departments in the faculty of communication at a private university in Ankara. The findings indicate that AI usage experiences differ according to demographic variables; routine use of AI has become widespread in undergraduate education, but awareness of original production and ethical responsibility remains limited.

Keywords
communication studies, communication education, artificial intelligence, user experience, ethics

Highlights

- AI tools and applications that offer an alternative "text-visual-motion production tool" experience at the interface of communication education and higher education studies are developing and spreading within universities' changing and transforming structures.
- AI, which is evaluated as a new communication "technique" and "practice", generates arguments that can still be considered quite new in the literature on three main points such as bureaucratic-legal regulations of universities, planning of education-training processes, and reshaping student-academician relations, including the ethical debate.
- The results of in-depth interviews revealed that the use of AI differs according to demographic variables, that students are more familiar with AI in routine use, but that they have a limited awareness of ethical responsibility and original production.

Araştırma makalesi

İletişim çalışmalarında eğitim ve yapay zekâ: Öğrencilerin kullanım deneyiminde teknik-pratik-etik bir tartışma

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Atıf
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Öz
Yapay zekâ (YZ) teknolojileri, günümüz dijital dünyasında insan-makine ilişkilerini yeniden şekillendirerek iletişim alanında yeni olanaklar sunmaktadır. YZ tabanlı araçlar, eğitimden iş pratiğine kadar çeşitli alanlarda yaygın olarak kullanılmakta, bu da interdisipliner tartışmaları beraberinde getirmektedir. Üniversitelerde YZ uygulamalarının entegrasyonu, iletişim eğitimine yeni bir deneyim kazandırırken, etik sorunlar, üniversite düzenlemeleri ve öğrenci-akademisyen ilişkileri gibi konularda da yeni tartışmalar ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, üniversitelerde lisans eğitimi alan öğrencilerin YZ kullanım deneyim ve görüşlerinin; teknik bilgi, tüketim rutini, özgün üretim-etik bağlamında incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemi çerçevesinde Ankara'da bir vakıf üniversitesi bünyesinde bulunan iletişim fakültesinin üç farklı bölümünde, farklı sınıflarda eğitim alan on iki lisans öğrencisi ile yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucunda, YZ kullanım deneyiminin demografik değişkenlere bağlı olarak farklılaşan görüş ve deneyimler üzerinden aktarıldığı; lisans eğitiminde YZ'nin rutin kullanımın yaygınlaştığı; buna karşın özgün üretim ve etik sorumluluğa ilişkin farkındalığın sınırlı olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler
iletişim çalışmaları, iletişim eğitimi, yapay zekâ, kullanıcı deneyimi, etik

Öne çıkanlar

- İletişim eğitimi ile yükseköğretim çalışmaları ara yüzünde alternatif bir "metin-görsel-hareket üretim aracı" deneyimi sunan YZ araç ve uygulamaları, üniversitelerin değişen ve dönüşen yapısı içerisinde gelişmekte ve yaygınlaşmaktadır.
- Yeni bir iletişim "tekniği" ve "pratiği" biçiminde değerlendirilen YZ; *a-priori* "etik" tartışmasını da kapsayacak şekilde, üniversitelerin bürokratik-hukuki düzenlemeleri, eğitim-öğretim süreçlerinin planlanması, öğrenci-akademisyen ilişkilerinin yeniden biçimlenmesi gibi üç temel noktada literatürde henüz oldukça yeni sayılabilecek argümanlar üretmektedir.
- Yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelerin sonuçları; YZ kullanımının demografik değişkenlere göre farklılık gösterdiğini, öğrencilerin rutin kullanımda YZ'ye daha aşina olduklarını ancak etik sorumluluk ve özgün üretim konusunda sınırlı bir farkındalık taşıdıklarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Introduction[1]

In the literature, technology, defined as "artificial intelligence" (AI) was conceptually discussed for the first time during the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence in 1955, with the participation of multiple researchers (McCarthy, Minsky, Rochester, and Shannon, 2006). This project, where the definition and scope of AI were first introduced, proposed that certain attributes of learning or intelligence could be simulated through machines and that large datasets could be organized into information pools appropriate to the desired context and place. According to a broader definition recommended by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2021) and accepted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union (EU) member states, AI is characterized as a set of machine-based systems that make predictions, suggestions, or decisions affecting real or virtual environments in alignment with goals set by humans. AI systems develop through algorithms that produce content by interacting with users in response to direct or indirect demands. Typically, while these systems may appear to operate autonomously, they adapt their systems, feedback mechanisms, and behaviors by learning from the context (UNICEF, 2021, p. 16). In this sense, AI techniques and applications have become topics of discussion, particularly regarding their potential advantages and disadvantages and their positive and negative implications. While some studies express the view that generative AI programs accessible to users are beneficial in terms of information acquisition, learning, and time-saving, researchers from various disciplines highlight concerns about these technological systems as potential threats in areas such as security, authenticity, and privacy. In this context, it is emphasized that generative AI's limited reasoning capabilities could reinforce negative aspects concerning scientific production, ethics, in-depth research, and source reliability, potentially impacting the academic ethos (Chomsky, Roberts & Watumull, 2023, March 8).

AI technologies, as transformative forces that redefine human-machine relations, are central to discussions in the digital era, fundamentally altering modes of interpretation, communication, and interaction. These technologies have become essential tools frequently used in various domains of daily life in the 21st century, especially on digital platforms. By reshaping the interactive structures of disciplines such as education, healthcare, economics, politics, and communication, these technologies establish new boundaries for the digital world, representing a reconfiguration of human-machine interactions. These developments, especially within the realm of higher education, bring both "opportunities" and "challenges" to universities, educational systems, and academic processes (Michel-Villarreal, Vilalta-Perdomo, Salinas-Navarro, Thierry-Aguilera & Gerardou, 2023; Saaida, 2023; Zawacki-Richter, Marín, Bond & Gouverneur, 2019)

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necessitating the discussion of diverse conditions and implications.

Numerous studies in the literature focus on the use of AI, particularly within the fields of education and health sciences, addressing the alignment of these intelligent systems with educational processes in higher education institutions, their contributions to student-faculty interaction, and how they shape this interaction. Moreover, AI is explored as both a tool and a new practice of thought and production, accelerating transformations in higher education (Luckin, 2018; HolonIQ, 2020, September 30). Observed transformations in recent studies have a significant impact on revisiting approaches to course content in higher education and discussing new educational models. Reviewing the current research reveals various studies on how AI is utilized in educational and research processes across different disciplines. This review also raises questions about whether digitalization is creating a profound transformation in educational practices at universities, particularly in shaping learning, discussion, interpretation, and written expression skills (Perrotta & Selwyn, 2020). However, limited studies are focusing on the field experiences of university students in communication studies and undergraduate teaching-research applications. Thus, this research aims to contribute to the literature by evaluating the use of AI in universities' communication fields and undergraduate education processes along three key dimensions, namely, "technical", "practical", and "ethical". The focus on communication faculties is expected to yield insights into how AI and digitalization have transformed communication technologies within higher education institutions, providing a fresh perspective on this transformation. While studies on the relationship between AI and educational processes typically focus on education and health sciences, this study takes a critical approach through theoretical and field research findings in communication sciences to address the limitations identified in the literature.

This field study examines how university students use AI-based systems and applications in their learning, research, and application activities within communication faculties at the undergraduate level. It also explores how these usage practices shape their learning experiences, academic performance, and ethical approaches. The study focuses on the routine use of AI tools in universities and how this usage is reflected in students' experiences. In this context, the current state of practices such as the purpose, process, resources, and paid use of AI are examined; opinions on AI and its ethical connection are discussed through such issues as curriculum, educational processes and practices, academic success, original value and future curriculum arrangements in the field. Specifically, the research examines how AI-based digital platforms and tools used in educational processes have transformed students' projects, presentations, exams, and research processes and how students perceive the role of AI in university education, research, and learning expectations for future terms.

The findings of the research reveal that the routine use of AI in education is becoming increasingly widespread; however, awareness of originality, creativity, the structuring of research processes, source reliability, and ethical responsibility remains quite limited. While students benefit from the practical advantages provided by AI, they hold mixed

views about whether these tools encourage creative and critical thinking. Furthermore, experiences with AI vary according to demographic factors, highlighting the unique nature of technological systems in individual experiences as well as common tendencies with varying explanations. However, it is revealed that demographic variables, especially department and class differences, and factors such as courses taken, internship and project experience differentiate the experiences on the use of AI and include common forms of use; as well as alternative uses and opinions. Students in communication faculties are particularly well-suited to assess the interactive reproduction of AI at the interface of communication, technology, and education.

The transformations in AI applications are not only confined to technological innovations but also reshape relationships between students, faculty, and institutions. This research, which examines the integration of AI into higher education processes with a critical perspective, offers a unique contribution to the literature through an analysis based on communication faculties. In addition, structured fieldwork on AI usage practices, ethical responsibility, potential risks, and criticisms is expected to provide a valuable contribution to the field.

In the first section of the study, a general evaluation of the concept and scope of AI is provided; the relationship between AI and education, as well as studies focusing on discussions of AI in higher education, are examined. The role of AI applications in higher education, the adaptation processes of educational institutions towards these technologies, and the interaction between instructors and students in the use of AI are outlined within a broader framework. By addressing the unique relationship between the field of communication and AI technologies, the study highlights a discussion on the limited research in this area. Furthermore, an evaluation is made regarding how AI technologies are positioned in universities as an alternative model for thinking, producing, and teaching-learning processes in the field of education, and what kind of concrete outcomes they could produce in the future in three dimensions: "technical", "practical", and "ethical".

In the second section, drawing on the theoretical discussions presented in the first section about AI, universities, and communication education, the study conducts qualitative research through interviews with twelve undergraduate students enrolled in different classes within three departments of a foundation university's communication faculty in Ankara. The field research explains how students define and use AI technologies within communication faculties and how these technologies are evaluated concerning academic skills, competencies, and the planning of education processes for future terms. Research design and data are presented in detail in the methods and findings sections. The findings are organized under three main headings. The first section outlines students' demographic characteristics (age, gender, class, scholarship status, academic performance, etc.). The second section discusses students' reasons for using AI, including the tools they prefer, the duration of usage, choices between paid and free applications, and tendencies regarding course applications. Lastly, students' responses and suggestions concerning course content, ethical responsibility, faculty-

student interaction, and the production of original value are presented based on their responses to structured questions.

The final section of the research presents a discussion and conclusion based on the findings. Here, it is observed that the experiences with AI use are shaped by participants' demographic characteristics, differences in perspectives related to their fields, and personal experiences. While the use of AI tools has become increasingly widespread during undergraduate education, the study concludes that students in communication faculties lack sufficient levels of AI literacy and awareness concerning originality, ethical responsibility, data security, and creativity, based on their evaluations and experiences with these tools.

This study, which aims to contribute significantly to the literature on the use of AI in higher education, focuses on university students' AI usage tendencies. The research is limited to students in different departments (communication and design, radio, television and cinema, public relations and publicity) within the communication faculty of a foundation university in Ankara. Accordingly, the study is structured around semi-structured interviews with question themes focusing on "demographic questions", "AI usage habits" and "the use and ethical value of AI in academic educational processes".

Current discussions in artificial intelligence research

Studies addressing the transformative impact of AI applications across diverse fields commonly highlight themes such as "usage habits", "integration into institutional processes" and "future trends in human-machine interaction" (Marr & Ward, 2019; Chiu, 2024). When examining the global and Turkish literature on the use of AI in academic education processes, the primary research focus tends to center on the fields of education (Holmes, Bialik & Fadel, 2021; Holmes, Persson, Chounta, Wasson & Dimitrova, 2022; Crompton & Burke, 2023; Güzey, Çakır, Athar & Yurdaöz, 2023; Coşkun & Gülleroğlu, 2021) and health sciences (Sousa et al., 2021; Yılmaz, Uzelli-Yılmaz, Yıldırım, Akın-Korhan & Özer-Kaya, 2021). In these fields, studies primarily address AI's role in educational and healthcare application processes and/or organizational structures. International studies increasingly emphasize perspectives on the use and experience of AI in higher education and academic production processes (Hannan & Liu, 2023; Neumann, Rauschenberger & Schön, 2023; Eager & Brunton, 2023; Wang et. al., 2023); however, this focus remains relatively limited in scope and depth within Turkish research. This highlights the need for a comprehensive evaluation in the literature of AI discussions related to communication sciences, higher education, and AI.

Recent studies conducted both nationally and internationally offer a broad framework for approaches focused on educational and health sciences. One such study in the field of educational sciences in Turkey, Kürşat Arslan (2017) addresses the topic of AI from a broad perspective, seeking answers to three main questions regarding its contributions to educational processes. The first question is "what is AI?" (the concept and definition of intelligence), the second is "how does AI improve education?" (AI's contribution to

education), and the third is "what are AI applications in education?" (AI applications currently used or potentially applicable in teaching and learning). Findings from this study indicate that the debate on AI in educational sciences is primarily discussed under two categories: "improving educational processes" and "developing AI skills and competencies", within the frameworks of "educational management" and "educational applications" (Arslan, 2017). A similar emphasis is found in the study "AI in Education Today and in the Future" (2021), which explores how AI applications might be evaluated in terms of future projections and potential conditions in education, as well as the benefits and disadvantages of current AI applications. In addition to educational activities for students, this research assesses the use of AI for developing skills and competencies among educators, as well as for planning administrative tasks and management processes (Uzun, Tümtürk & Öztürk, 2021).

Another study in the field of educational sciences, Buket İşler and Mehmet Kılıç (2021), addresses the question "what are the impacts of AI technologies on the education sector?" Throughout the research, examples of AI applications used worldwide and in Turkey are examined to evaluate their contributions to the education sector. Based on a review of the literature, findings emphasize that while AI has introduced many advancements, particularly to improve global education, its implementation is still in the early stages. It is noted that further experimentation and research are needed to enable the effective use of AI tools in educational institutions (İşler & Kılıç, 2021). Considering the benefits discussed in the literature, it is anticipated that implementing AI-based education could be more beneficial. The importance of interaction between students, educators, and administrative mechanisms in technology-focused AI usage is also emphasized. In this context, focusing on AI discussions within communication sciences and exploring the purposes and practices of AI usage in higher education teaching processes—particularly by examining student experiences and perspectives within the example of a communication faculty—aims to provide a perspective and proposal for studies identified as limited in this field.

In another academic study, Gülşah Taşçı and Mustafa Çelebi (2020) presents a conceptual category that can be applied when examining the challenges and opportunities of AI applications in higher education institutions. The study aims to develop a perspective on the potential benefits of these technologies in higher education and the difficulties they may pose in the process. It includes an evaluation of the preparations necessary for the future use of AI in educational processes. A key finding of this study is that AI, when applied correctly in higher education institutions, can contribute in various ways. As a critical point, it emphasizes that AI awareness plays a decisive role in the interaction between students and faculty members, as well as in planning and communicating strategic administrative processes to stakeholders in higher education (Taşçı & Çelebi, 2020). Another significant point concerns the limitations of studies on the impact of AI on higher education policy and management (Gulson & Webb, 2017). Despite the numerous debates on AI's use in education and healthcare, the literature reveals a limited relationship between AI usage and integration in education and health services (Bughin, LaBerge & Mellbye, 2017, February 9).

Another AI-focused study conducted in Turkey within the field of educational sciences, İbrahim Yaşar Kazu and Oğuzhan Özdemir (2009), aims to assess students' talents and differences in terms of intelligence types and learning styles using AI algorithms in educational processes. This study involves a survey to test the validity and reliability of learning styles among students. The survey explores how students' awareness of their optimal learning methods influences their participation in class and the extent to which they can benefit from various teaching and learning activities, from classroom engagement to individual study techniques. Rather than concluding that students only have one fixed learning style, the study suggests that Fuzzy Logic allows for multiple learning styles in varying degrees (Kazu & Özdemir, 2009).

In the field of health sciences, another study examines the perspectives of health sciences faculty students regarding the use of AI in health. Among the applications suggested by students for the use of AI in healthcare are applications aimed at preventing medical errors, facilitating clinical decision-making, reducing the workload of health professionals, and robotic applications. The study concludes that while health sciences students are aware of AI's use in healthcare, their curriculum should include content on AI to address concerns, anxieties, and knowledge gaps they experience regarding this subject (Yılmaz et al., 2021).

The study conducted at Eskişehir Osmangazi University Medical School evaluates the views and suggestions of medical students on the use of AI tools. This quantitative study utilized a survey as a data collection method. The findings indicate that less than half of the students have sufficient knowledge about AI tools, while 87% express a desire for training and skill acquisition in these applications. The study emphasizes the importance of including this concept in the medical school curriculum and suggests that further comprehensive studies are needed in this area (Öcal et al., 2020).

To contextualize the literature discussions presented within the research problem, the following section includes a theoretical discussion and example studies specifically addressing higher education studies, universities, communication education, and AI debates.

Universities, artificial intelligence, and communication education in communication studies

AI is utilized as a communication tool across numerous disciplines. Fields such as public relations, visual design, radio, television, cinema, and media represent areas where AI is applied (Foldes, 2018, March 2). Additionally, foundational theoretical discussions within communication studies provide essential insights into the technology-human-machine interaction and new communication possibilities that AI introduces.

Since the 1940s, early theoretical predictions on communication and technology concepts have been presented through Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver's Mathematical Communication Model (1948), Marshall McLuhan's concepts of the "global

village" (1962), and "the medium is the message" (1994); with Quentin Fiore (1967), and George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and education-communication-focused studies (1959). From this perspective, AI can be viewed as a modern adaptation of the technical effort found in the Mathematical Communication Model, which seeks to use various communication channels more efficiently and productively. It addresses technical issues in digital communication environments and aims to ensure quality communication within these settings. Technical features such as speed and information access offered by AI can be evaluated within the scope of these theoretical discussions (Yıldırım & Kıray, 2016).

For McLuhan, a technological determinist theorist who argued that communication technologies are the primary agents of cultural change and transformation, technology represents a phenomenon that transforms and repositions societies. McLuhan described innovative technologies as "extensions of human senses". Interpreting communication theories through a technology-focused lens, McLuhan (1994) and McLuhan and Fiore (1967) argued that technological advancements significantly influence how individuals perceive the world, shape their thought processes, and interact. From this perspective, AI technologies require us to reconsider the concept of the "global village" in the digital space, and how society's technological orientation and messages are redefined by these new mediums (Sui & Goodchild, 2003, p. 9).

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, an original contribution to communication sciences (1959; 1994), argues that machines have become new "cultivation" tools, continually shaping individuals' perceptions of the world. The development, change, and transformation of technology alongside AI algorithms have brought about the idea of AI as a social entity capable of reasoning and logic. In this sense, AI, like communication, is increasingly accepted as a product of intelligence. Similarly, the question posed in Turing's academic work, "can machines think?" suggests that AI is not only a thinking tool but also one that requires communication to transmit its messages. Therefore, AI technology can be viewed as fundamentally grounded in a communicative endeavor (Gunkel, 2012, p. 5).

In a recent compilation by Simone Natale (2021), the relationship between AI, human-machine interaction, and communication and media studies is evaluated based on two conclusions: the role of the "human" factor and the transformation of the "medium" concept. The study emphasizes the continued central role of humans in the process, while also pointing to the increasing technical resources and capabilities of AI. It is argued that as AI technologies become both a channel and a source of messages, they challenge the traditional "medium" concept dominant in communication studies. Natale proposes moving beyond discussions that conceptualize the medium solely as a channel in media history and theory (2021).

When examining current trends based on research in communication studies, evaluations of research profiles and AI's academic representation in the literature are noteworthy. In a study by Hikmet Tosyalı (2021), which analyzes four hundred fifty nine scientific studies in communication studies published between 1982 and 2021 using bibliometric data, the United States is identified as the country with the most

publications (25.1%), while Turkey ranks 28th among fifty four countries with four publications in the relevant period. The subjects covered in these studies focus on journalism, natural language processing, human-robot interaction, social media bots, public relations, and advertising. The most frequently used terms in abstracts and keywords include "automated journalism", "computational journalism", "robot journalism", "ethics", and "fake news" (Tosyalı, 2021).

When examining research trends within communication studies in terms of higher education studies, universities, and communication education, it becomes evident that communication faculties hold the potential to assess the interactive reproduction of AI applications at the communication-technology-education interface. The limited number of studies directly focused on communication studies and education, as well as university and higher education trends, suggests the need to evaluate the impact of AI-driven transformations, especially those accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Connor & Cali, 2024). In this context, the authors propose investigating how AI, from a "media ecology" perspective, shapes culture, consciousness, and communication, along with designing a graduate course within the field of communication to address these issues (Connor & Cali, 2024).

In the study by Ege Simge Demirel (2023), a content analysis was conducted to examine how extensively AI technologies are incorporated into the curriculum of communication faculties in Turkey. Through keywords such as "AI", "data science", "data engineering", "metaverse" and "virtual reality" in course titles and/or content descriptions, the study provides a descriptive evaluation of the prevalence and scope of AI in communication education curricula across departments such as new media, visual communication, journalism, public relations, and radio television cinema. Findings indicate that fifty-eight courses across communication faculties in Turkey include AI-related keywords in their titles or content (Demirel, 2023).

In conclusion, it appears that research within the AI literature at universities is primarily concentrated in education and health sciences. Academic studies are abundant on the recognition of AI applications, the examination of usage habits, and the distribution of AI within curricula, all of which have led to discussions about their advantages and disadvantages. A similar trend, albeit with limitations in the Turkish literature, can be observed in discussions of AI within communication studies, communication faculties, and communication education. Therefore, increasing data and findings through comparative studies on the technical, practical, and ethical capabilities and limitations of AI for students, faculty, and administrators is critical. These evaluations point to two fundamental paradigms and research orientations. The first focuses on the positive aspects of AI, suggesting that emphasizing its existing and potential contributions and increasing awareness could improve education processes by reducing concerns and anxieties among students and faculty. The proper and quality use of AI tools can enhance creative thinking, support theoretical and practical knowledge acquisition, foster problem-solving abilities, and develop technology skills in communication settings. These technological advancements, particularly when integrated into communication

education, contribute not only to students' learning processes but also prepare them for the professional requirements of the technological age.

The second research orientation addresses the critical aspects of AI technologies, emphasizing that while AI offers significant advantages in communication education, it is also essential to consider issues such as the weakening of the human element, deficiencies in deep media analysis, inequalities in education, data privacy, ethical issues, and restrictions on creativity. A more equitable, inclusive, and human-centered approach to the possibilities provided by AI in this field is necessary to ensure sustainable contributions to communication education in the future. Alongside the advantages AI provides in communication education, critical investigations through field studies and applied research are needed to examine issues such as data privacy, ethical concerns, the limitation of creative thought, and the concern that the use of AI tools may shift education away from a human-centered system by reducing student-faculty interaction.

Purpose and method

This study aims to examine the AI usage tendencies of university students and faculty and to provide a critical assessment of the "technical", "practical" and "ethical" role of these technologies in planning, implementing, and improving educational processes. By focusing on the experiences and perspectives of students within communication faculties, this research seeks to offer perspectives and suggestions to address the gap in the literature regarding the use and practices of AI in the context of communication studies and higher education teaching processes.

Within the framework of qualitative research methodology, this study conducted structured, in-depth interviews with twelve undergraduate students from three different departments—radio, television, and cinema; public relations and publicity; and communication and design—at the communication faculty of a foundation university in Ankara. The study was ethically approved by Başkent University Social Sciences and Humanities and Arts Area Research Board on April 22, 2024, with the decision numbered 171622298.600-122. The voluntary participants signed informed consent forms. Participant names are anonymous. Confidentiality of research data is the responsibility of the authors.

Communication faculties are considered institutions that necessitate the interactive reproduction and monitoring of the communication-technology-education interface, developing their expertise within this framework. Therefore, these faculties require examination through various comparative examples. While the literature on educational sciences provides examples from around the world and Turkey regarding AI discussions and technology usage, perspectives and evaluations from undergraduate and postgraduate students, particularly within university education and the communication-technology interface, remain limited.

This study seeks to answer how the holistic discussion framework is evaluated by students, how AI is defined, and how it is positioned as part of daily life and academic

processes. It aims to identify unique approaches, alternative explanations, best practices, and problem areas through findings obtained from the field. The qualitative research method and in-depth interview technique were chosen to present a more detailed and segmented discussion comprehensively. After the interviews, transcripts were prepared, and a content and thematic analysis was conducted to create the findings and discussion sections, focusing on prominent topics and alternative evaluations.

Before the interviews, the study received ethical approval from the relevant university committee which reviewed the research proposal and interview questions. Preliminary meetings were held with participants to schedule interview times and provide information on the research and interview process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the research began. Interview durations ranged from forty to sixty minutes, with each participant completing a single session. All twelve students responded to the questions, although responses to specific AI-related questions varied in depth depending on individual interests and knowledge.

In the first section of the research, questions are asked regarding students' demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic year, scholarship status, academic performance, etc.); in the second section, students' AI usage practices (preferred platforms, duration of use, paid or free platform preference, integration with course applications, examples, etc.) are examined. The final section presents students' views and suggestions regarding AI integration within their departments and educational processes, including course content, ethical compliance, original production, student-faculty interaction, and curriculum planning. Appendix 1 contains the original interview form prepared by the authors for this study.

Findings and discussion

The findings of the research can be evaluated under three main headings. The first section presents a framework based on students' demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic year, scholarship status, academic performance, etc.). The second section examines students' AI usage practices through preferred tools, usage duration, paid or free usage preference, and integration with course applications. The final section includes findings related to students' opinions on course content, ethical compliance, original production, student-faculty interaction, and curriculum planning.

Demographic information of participants

Of the twelve participants interviewed, five were female and seven were male. All participants are enrolled in different undergraduate programs within the communication faculty at the university. Four students are in the Public Relations and Publicity Department, four in communication design, and four in radio, television, and cinema. An equal distribution was ensured in terms of department selection and

numbers, allowing for observation of similarities and differences in experiences, uses, needs, and expectations of AI applications among departments.

In addition to departmental differences, similar attention was given to the distribution of academic years. It was considered that students' awareness of and experience with AI might differ based on whether they were new to the university or in later years, where exposure to current curricula, faculty professional development opportunities, and other resources could shape their opinions and use of AI. Of the participants, three are first-year students, two are second-year, three are third-year, and four are fourth-year students.

Six students are on full scholarships, two on 75% scholarships, and four on 50% scholarships. Six students have a GPA of 2.50–3.00, while the remaining six have a GPA of 3.01–3.50 or above, indicating a minimum level of academic success. The students' ages range from 19 to 27, with the 23–25 age category being the most prevalent (seven students).

Four of the twelve participants have work experience in their field, and six have completed internships. Notably, students with work experience have further developed their knowledge of AI applications and usage skills and have been supported by their workplaces (e.g., access to paid applications, training, and demand for AI usage in work practices).

These demographic data are significant in interpreting and explaining the students' AI consumption practices, perspectives, and experiences, highlighting main trends and alternative discussions. Findings obtained from the interviews are addressed within these two subheadings.

AI usage practices of communication faculty students

All students interviewed in this study use at least one AI program. Regardless of department, academic year, gender, or age, each student has active access to at least one AI tool. The most commonly used programs were ChatGPT, Midjourney, Bing, and Bard (Gemini). It was observed that students choose between text-based and visual-based AI programs. Additionally, tools like DALL-E, Adobe Firefly, DeepL, and Quillbot were also mentioned. Notably, students in design-focused departments or those with a strong interest in design, particularly in upper years, use AI programs with more proficiency for applications specific to their fields. In contrast, public relations and publicity and radio, television, and cinema students tended to use AI mainly for general academic tasks, such as writing articles and preparing presentations.

The students' experience with AI programs varies, but it was found that the majority began integrating AI applications into their routines around 2023, approximately one to one and a half years ago. Students frequently reported that AI usage increased during online education following the earthquake. Responses from students indicate that initial encounters with AI were motivated by factors such as "curiosity about a chatbot that

pulls data from the internet", "its ability to answer questions in classes and exams", "trying an alternative search tool to Google", "using it to support educational or internship tasks" and "experimenting with a tool frequently mentioned in the news, social media, and conversations with friends".

Students primarily use AI programs to facilitate their academic processes (e.g., literature review, assignment preparation, presentation creation, design, writing, and exam question analysis). Moreover, ChatGPT is increasingly popular as a search engine alternative among students, especially for its ability to provide quick, clear answers on specific topics. Internship students indicated that they also use AI for searching and preparing content relevant to their work by entering commands aligned with task requirements (e.g., writing articles, producing designs, or translating). Other purposes include translating academic texts and concepts, generating images, producing character illustrations for tabletop games, preparing community announcement texts, obtaining ideas for assignment planning, shortening lengthy research processes, engaging in casual conversations with an AI, and quickly acquiring bite-sized information on specific terms or concepts.

> I usually use ChatGPT when I prepare an academic presentation or for internships. For example, I usually used ChatGPT when I was trying to check something or looking for an alternative. Or, for example, I did copywrite during my internship, I used it to get samples of a text in a more organized, shorter version (2K, PRP, class-4, %75 scholarship).

> AI is a useful subject in our department. I'm studying in a department where we stand out with our creativity. I use it both in my designs and academic assignments. I've found it very helpful. Academically, there is only ChatGPT. It is beneficial especially when you are preparing an article or when you want to find answers to your questions. I am interested in more than one program in design. I cannot give a specific example for them. I use whatever works for me at that moment (7E, CD, class-3, %50 scholarship).

Most students (six students) reported using AI programs for 1-2 hours per week; however, during academic periods, internships, or exams, usage can increase to several hours daily. Students who incorporate AI into their research, entertainment, and learning routines also tend to increase their usage time. Conversely, for those using AI only periodically, average weekly usage dropped to around half an hour.

Only four students reported using or having used a paid AI program (two used ChatGPT and two used Midjourney) (2 PRP, 1 RTC, 1CD), with two of them mentioning that the fees were covered by friends or internship companies (both using Midjourney). Thus, only two students have personally paid for and used at least one AI program (both using ChatGPT).

> I do. Midjourney is paid. The free entitlement is free up to 15 uses. There is a $20 monthly fee. The place where I work provides it. Actually, when ChatGPT first released it, they said they would be free. They opened their interface for everyone to benefit. Then it became paid. This happened because it attracted a lot of attention. After they became paid, the programs improved themselves more (6E, CD, class-3 %100 scholarship).

> The Midjourney program I use is paid, but I use my friend's account (3E, RTC, class-2, %100 scholarship).

Regarding paid programs, students generally found the $10–20 monthly cost expensive and indicated that the features in free trial versions were often sufficient for their needs. However, some noted limitations of free versions, such as restricted access to the latest information, repetitive outputs, and reduced functionality.

When asked where they learned about AI programs, most students reported using YouTube, X, Instagram, and various social media platforms and websites as their primary sources for information and experiences with these tools. Information on the introduction of new applications, explanations of interfaces, and examples of different prompt inputs are commonly acquired from these channels and content creators such as YouTubers and influencers. Students also mentioned friend networks as a resource for shared knowledge and experiences.

Two design students reported learning about Bing and ChatGPT through a designer they worked with. Another source of learning came from family members who were older and knowledgeable about the topic (e.g., older siblings), with two participants stating that they received support from family members with a professional interest in AI. Course content or modules added by the university related to AI were also cited as sources. Almost all the students interviewed noted that they had completed a project using AI tools as part of a mandatory methods course in their programs.

To provide a comprehensive discussion based on the findings summarized above, examining student interactions within their universities and communication faculties, their general views on AI, positive and negative evaluations, areas of concern, and future directions of AI in educational and research processes is essential. The third section of the research presents a structured discussion of these themes.

Views and suggestions on AI ethics in universities and communication faculties

While students expressed differing views on the growing prevalence of AI, there was a consensus that the trend is inevitable. AI's ability to provide quick and easy access to information, compile and summarize data from various sources, process large volumes of information in a short time, and integrate with other digital platforms are all features that support its widespread use today. Most participants emphasized the positive aspects of AI applications and experiences. Three students, however, noted concerns that AI could eventually take over tasks from humans, stifling creativity and producing unoriginal, repetitive content, with a risk of misuse.

The positive aspects of AI include easy access to information, the ability to gather ideas, select from various suggestions on a topic, support creativity, receive clear and concise answers to questions, and provide correct answers to mathematical or statistical questions. On the negative side, concerns included the spread of disinformation, decreased productivity, loss of research skills, uncontrolled use of deepfake applications, loss of creativity, dependency on AI, repetitive and unoriginal content, limitation to

information provided by AI, increased screen dependency, and reduced socialization. One student humorously remarked, "Soon, we'll see a generation marrying AIs", referring to the potential for reduced human connection.

> It's a positive thing in terms of accessing information more easily, but I think it's a bad thing in terms of reducing productivity. It is good in terms of getting ideas, it can make us more creative in that regard. So it can be both positive and negative. It can be positive in the right use (1K, PRP, class-4, %75 scholarship).

> I think the positive aspects are the translations, but there are problems with that too. I follow too many translators. There is a conflict of interest between publishers and translators. Since they pay very little, they ignore the translators and let AI do some things. I realize how soulless literary texts are for this reason. I sense something artificial in the texts that is far from originality, as the title suggests. I get a negative look. I tried it when I was doing my own homework. Then, even in a funny way, I had homework that I finished very quickly with AI. When combined with human creativity, if a good prompt is given, it may make sense to create something with AI (4K, RTC, class-4, %100 scholarship).

Students frequently use AI applications in academic settings to generate responses for weekly assignments, search topics or concepts for a lesson, and seek guidance on how to structure a presentation or assignment. They often use AI tools in preparing class presentations. For presentation backgrounds, Bing and Midjourney are used, with text support from ChatGPT. In article and report preparation, students enter keywords and titles, prompting AI to generate content that fits a research template. Another common use is having AI analyze and summarize one or more uploaded articles. Students reported that AI applications helped them understand abstract concepts or ideas that they could not always ask instructors about, describing AI as a time- and location-independent resource readily available to them. One student from the radio, television, and cinema department, however, criticized AI's reliability, citing limited information and inadequate responses for a social sciences theory assignment, which led them to complete the assignment using their research.

Although there is no dedicated AI course in their departments, various required and elective courses (e.g., research methods, digital media, international communication) include segments introducing AI applications and reinforcing their use in project development. All participants expressed a desire for such a course and stated that they would enroll if offered. One student emphasized that understanding AI use and acquiring skills in this area would be essential for professional development and an advantage in a competitive environment. Students noted that learning to use program interfaces, understanding how AI algorithms work, familiarizing themselves with programs relevant to their field (e.g., design, slogan creation, news writing), learning prompt engineering, and gaining proficiency in software and coding would enhance their technical production abilities, supporting the view that universities should offer an AI-focused course.

Most students support the idea of using AI applications in project assignments with

"proper usage". Participants who used AI in their assignments acknowledged that copy-pasting information produced by AI was neither beneficial nor unique and added that instructors often recognize such work. Thus, students view AI as a useful, accepted tool in academic processes.

Students believe that using AI in academic settings can have both positive and negative effects on their academic success. One student noted, "I wouldn't have passed my research methods assignment without ChatGPT". Another stated that a friend using AI for assignments improved their GPA. One student described how some students scored high in online exams during the pandemic and post-earthquake education periods by directly using ChatGPT. While these cases demonstrate positive "impacts on scores", some students also highlighted potential drawbacks, such as detachment from the assignment and not fully internalizing the content produced by AI, thus impacting true academic success.

Students were also asked whether their instructors used AI tools and had any relevant knowledge or experience. Most indicated that instructors either did not use AI actively, were not inclined to do so, or lacked sufficient knowledge. Only one student noted that some faculty members were proficient in using AI tools. Students often gauge an instructor's proficiency with AI by their ability to discern whether students have used AI in assignments. Courses were also classified as "AI-friendly" or "non-AI-friendly" by students.

Regarding ethical issues, students highlighted potential challenges, such as AI generating similar content for all students in a class, leading to uniform assignments; lack of clarity on content ownership and attribution; and unresolved copyright concerns for images or other AI-produced content.

> I feel an ethical responsibility. I try not to use the programs when I prepare my presentations. It doesn't make me feel good conscientiously. I try not to get too involved with AI (3K, RTC, class-4, %50 scholarship).

> So this is very controversial. I'm actually not sure exactly what I should think. Because maybe things produced with AI may fall under the scope of common property. For example, Abode firefly pulls an image from adobe stock. In other words, it installs its entire database there and makes a certain payment to the artists and owners of the images used by AI. In this way, it actually offers a solution. I think, if we think in the context of intertextuality, nothing is actually our own, we take things from other places and compile them. You know, I agree with this point of view a little bit, you know, we don't create things out of nothing. We also take things from the outside world. That's why things produced with AI have very creative dimensions. I see things that I like very much, I see things that have a very deep meaning and philosophy produced with AI. So this needs to be discussed (2E, PRP, class-3, %100 scholarship).

While students expressed a sense of responsibility to produce original work, this did not lead them to avoid using AI for academic tasks. Only one student stated that they refrained from using AI in academic settings due to personal ethical concerns. Other students found AI valuable and essential for academic work despite potential ethical

issues. Only three students believed that an academic assignment or project created with AI could be considered original. Most participants acknowledged that content generated with AI was not fully "their own" work due to its automated nature, lack of personal research, and absence of contextual understanding or connections they would typically make.

When asked whether universities and departments should implement regulations on AI usage, students expressed a preference for instructors allowing AI use under certain conditions. Their suggestions included integrating AI more into courses, offering a mandatory course in each department, teaching the practical applications of AI, promoting "AI literacy", developing separate courses for visual and text-based AI applications, learning about emerging sectors such as prompt engineering, establishing student groups focused on AI, and increasing seminars and conferences on AI. One student from the radio, television, and cinema department suggested offering alternative courses and readings that explore the philosophical aspects of AI, emphasizing how AI challenges traditional notions of human thought.

The prominent discussion topics related to the above findings can be summarized as follows. AI, as expressed in alternative data analysis and literacy, has become a subject of communication studies today in terms of its usage in various fields such as finance, health, and engineering, driven by the opportunities presented by new technologies. This has led to the emergence of new forms of knowledge production and new types of work and project development integrated with this digital extension, ranging from daily life routines to institutional communication practices. Within the context of higher education studies, the necessity for an examination of the widespread use of AI in academic studies and education processes is emphasized, particularly framed within the approach and application of a "smart university" (Al-Shoqran & Shorman, 2021). It is essential to address the transformation related to the objectives and functions of universities. Today, universities are expected not only to maintain their traditional identity of education and research but also to adapt and integrate with the tools, environments, and content of the technological age, producing capital, profit, and economic collaborations in this market through global, fast, and accessible resources (Aldosari, 2020; Bali, Kumalasani & Yunalasari, 2022). In this context, in terms of its use in universities, AI is not only a production tool such as writing, photography, moving video and design; it has brought many issues that need to be discussed in higher education such as course curriculum, research, administrative processes, new resources, collaborations and legal regulations.

Within the stated scope and limitations of the study, it is particularly observed that AI was preferred in the planning and implementation of distance education during the pandemic and the subsequent earthquake process. Students interpret AI applications primarily as a "facilitating element" in academic education processes. They evaluate it as an "independent opportunity from time and space" especially for repeating lessons and obtaining answers to unclear questions. On the other hand, the very limited expression of "information reliability" and the "issues of producing texts containing comprehensive

theoretical discussions related to social sciences" indicate a context that needs to be revisited with different studies. In this context, it is found that communication faculty students are aware of AI, and all interviewed students from various departments, ages, genders, classes, success averages, and consumption practices have used at least one AI program. This supports the view that studies in education are increasing in contact with AI (UNESCO, 2024). Additionally, it is observed that a "personalized" consumption process of AI is at play, guided by individual curiosity, needs, and preferences. Notably, the programs that stand out in the research include ChatGPT, Midjourney, Bing, and Bard (Gemini); while student integration into less known or discovered programs like Dall-E, Adobe Firefly, DeepL, and Quillbot, specific to the relevant departments of the faculty of communication, is also starting to occur. Mohammed Jaboob, Manar Hazaimeh and Abdullah M. Al-Ansi (2024) present quantitative research findings that support the contribution of personalization experiences in terms of speed, participation, feedback, and guidance in a similar study that investigates the relationship between AI, student behavior, and cognitive success.

Students' consumption experiences of AI applications in their academic education processes are shaped by three main contributions it offers in terms of meeting the needs of "speed", "text generated in a regular and contextualized manner by the command entered", and "free-online-quota trial access". At the interface of university undergraduate education and the faculty of communication, "AI consumption habits" are developing at the point of meeting the requirements demanded from students in theoretical and practical studies, from abstract, homework, and report preparation processes for theoretical discussions in basic field and professional field courses to producing the content requested during internship periods. In terms of usage times, which are predominant in the interviews and determined as 1-2 hours per week, students use AI for purposes such as making natural translations of academic texts and concepts, producing visuals, creating character pictures while playing desktop games, preparing community announcement texts, getting ideas about homework planning, shortening a research process that may take a long time, chatting with a learning robot on different topics for entertainment purposes, and obtaining summary information about a concept-period-name can be expressed as experienced examples of these habits.

The observed main tendency regarding the increasing prevalence of AI among students in both general usage and in the interviews is based on the notion of "inevitability". Its attributes, such as providing easy and quick access to information, summarizing or interpreting information gathered from different sources, offering suggestions and alternatives regarding thought patterns on a subject, processing large volumes of information in a short time, and its innovative aspect that allows integration with other digital platforms/applications are defined as characteristics that inevitably promote the widespread use of AI today. It is noted that most participants shared positive opinions regarding current usage practices; however, there were very limited evaluations concerning potential negative aspects and issues such as "creativity", "originality", "ethics" and "new job practices/unemployment". Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of AI consumption should not only be based on the descriptive identification of

demographics and usage habits but should critically assess AI consumption, professional usage, and future conditions, especially from the perspective of students as the subjects of experience, in terms of universities, undergraduate education, and communication studies. It is important to address this context with a holistic understanding of ethics that can be defined as critical thinking and internalized moral and professional values. Ali Özgür Gürsoy and Serkan Şavk (2024), who emphasize the relationship between ethical responsibility in the creative production process and the development of students' critical skills, point to the whole of political and social structures, conditions and relations such as "organization", "limitation", "control" and "regulation" as well as normative issues related to AI debates. Therefore, with all its positive aspects and contributions, AI simultaneously reflects and constructs social prejudices, problems, uncertainties and contradictions. For this reason, an understanding of "critical awareness" that needs to be internalized in order to review the possibilities of creative and constructive interaction in the partnership of AI and the user subject is emphasized.

At this point, it is important to examine the concrete reflections of the criticisms that come to the fore in the AI debates in detail through research. Here, particularly critical research questions emerge that await evaluation through field examples at different scales in the literature, such as the loss of research ability from the perspective of universities, the decrease of creativity and productivity, the emergence of repetitive and non-original texts, remaining confined within the information limits provided by AI, increased and unmanageable disinformation, uncontrolled use of deep-fake applications, the emergence of AI dependency, increased screen addiction, and the transformation of socialization practices. In this context, Michalinos Zembylas (2021), highlighting the concept of "digital neo-colonialism", offers an alternative evaluation focusing on the effects of global exploitation relations brought about by structural conditions in terms of education and its ethical dimensions. Indeed, in the "Guidelines for Productive Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research" published by UNESCO in 2024, issues such as "digital inequality", "intellectual property rights violations", "privacy" and "information pollution" are discussed; recommendations for a framework arrangement, sector-institution collaborations, the promotion of innovation and applied skills-competencies, and the measurement and monitoring of the effects of AI usage in education and research are proposed. Undoubtedly, there is also a need for a comprehensive evaluation of the structural conditions in which these concepts exist.

Responses from students regarding the inclusion of an AI course in the curriculum within the faculty of communication indicate the necessity of addressing the use of AI in higher education studies and communication sciences and intensifying research in this area. Although it was emphasized by students that there is currently no direct AI course in the faculty and departments, it has been noted that AI applications are introduced in various compulsory and elective courses such as research methods, digital media, and international communication, and they are used in project preparation processes and discussed in events such as conferences and seminars. AI, which is integrated into universities through multi-faceted communication and relationship networks, is understood by students as a means of acquiring knowledge in this new field, self-

development, gaining competence, and standing out in a competitive environment. Therefore, there is a significant demand for a course on AI connected to communication education that addresses how the AI algorithm works, which applications are used for what purposes, learning program interfaces well, mastering proper prompt entry, acquiring advanced competencies in software and coding, making designs, finding slogans, and knowing AI programs related to specific applications such as writing newsletters or news, thus improving technical production. Given the need for professional competency and awareness of future trends, it is noteworthy that all students expressed the necessity of having such a course in their university, faculty, and departments.

Similarly, students who expressed that regulations should be made concerning AI in communication education also highlighted the need for encouraging the use of AI in lessons, integrating visual and text-based application-intensive studies into existing curricula and course contents, conducting seminars and conferences that support "AI literacy", increasing interdisciplinary studies with potential outcomes regarding new job fields such as prompt engineering, sector trends, and academic and reflective dimensions, and facilitating the creation of student communities focused on AI and ensuring their interaction. These recommendations provide a roadmap that could guide future trends and research related to the topic.

On the other hand, this assessment also emphasizes the need to deepen the discussions on "reliable information" and "ethical usage" of AI applications, which are evaluated descriptively through their technical and practical aspects. In a similar discussion by Nick Bostrom and Eliezer Yudowsky (2018), it is emphasized that the thinking and productivity skills of machines have critical consequences in terms of security, reliability and ethical debate. In the interviews, the use of AI in academic education and training processes is accepted and found useful by students. At the same time, it is seen that a distinction is made verbally by the students between getting support from AI in course preparation, project, homework, presentation studies that stand out in this process and using the content produced through AI one-to-one, and there is an emphasis on "correct use" in terms of reliability and ethics. Simultaneously with this reasoning, it is seen that the positive and negative effects on academic achievement should be included in this discussion. Especially in terms of research, writing, developing an original project and presenting it with a holistic approach, the "copy-paste" technique in AI applications is not instructive, it is not found to be original and useful in terms of their own academic development, there is an alienation, an internalization and assimilation of the text obtained ready-made cannot be realized, the research is not done by themselves, it is noticed by the instructors of the course, although self-reflexive statements such as; It can be said that there are also opinions and tendencies that it contributes positively to the grade point average in a way that can be considered as "score effect", that the completion of the assignments is considered as a sufficient success criterion for the students, and that the discussion of ethics and reliability is not always accepted as a primary responsibility in the academic production process. This positive and negative impact discussion is also meaningful in terms of showing how university students studying

undergraduate education in communication sciences interpret the discussion of "success", "common value" and "ethical responsibility" simultaneously in academic education and training processes.

In terms of information and source reliability, students raised concerns about AI generating similar responses for all users, the challenges of proper attribution and citations, and ambiguities around intellectual property for AI-produced content. The distinction between "AI rhetoric" and "AI actions" is noteworthy here. While students voiced values like originality and ethical responsibility, these sentiments only minimally affected their actual behavior in academic settings. Most participants acknowledged that AI-generated content could not be considered truly original due to its automated nature, lack of personal research, and absence of context and coherence, indicating a continued reliance on AI for academic content despite awareness of its limitations. This observed trend, along with other elements highlighted in the discussion section, could be explored in future research to examine how universities can better integrate the principles of academic responsibility into educational planning.

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This study aims to examine university students' practices of using AI, investigate the experience of consuming AI platforms in the operation and/or re-planning of academic education processes, and discuss expectations and views on the role of AI applications in universities in the present and future context through the lens of unique production, education, and ethical responsibility. The findings obtained from field research conducted with twelve undergraduate students studying in three different departments within the faculty of communication at a foundation university, using qualitative research methods and structured in-depth interview techniques, reveal several key conclusions.

As a result of the study, it was seen that the experience of using AI among the students of the faculty of communication can be diversified with demographic variables and evaluations that address these variables can be presented in the AI integration processes of students regarding academic activities. In particular, issues such as the department of study, grade levels, and course and internship experience point to similarities and differences that stand out when examining the ways of using AI and opinions. As pointed out in the research findings, a CD student's preferred AI program, competence in its use, and the applications they perform here may differ from RTC and PRP students. Similarly, the use and opinions of a student with an internship experience may differ from those of a student who has not yet had an internship experience in the field. Whether students from different departments have taken an AI course in the field also stands out as a factor that may make a difference in this context. Therefore, such variables, which are emphasized descriptively in a general framework here, should be examined in more comprehensive studies and in detail through the usage experience and opinions of students, even academics and administrative management in future studies.

On the other hand, it has been observed that the students of the faculty of communication continue to experience a process that is still developing in terms of AI programs and usage experiences and that their use of AI is increasing at the point of meeting their needs for fast, easy and concise information access that can support them in their daily lives as well as in their academic education and training processes. Students have a positive view of the integration of universities, course contents and academic education and training processes in their departments in terms of gaining AI competence; they think that the use of AI is an inevitable stage for them. However, despite this, it is observed that the participants have limited knowledge and skills in the comprehensive use of program types and program interfaces for their needs. In this context, a striking result is that students who support their undergraduate education with internship programs and/or work experience are much more instructively and positively evaluated by the students when they benefit from AI applications by the institutions where they work to gain practical skills and professional competence. This finding coincides with the students' views that the use of AI technologies should be included in both theoretical and practical course curricula in higher education institutions; and that these applications should be used to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in their professional fields.

By categorically examining students' usage habits based on platforms, programs, time spent, free vs. paid versions, and specific course suggestions, this study provides a descriptive evaluation of AI usage within communication faculties. This analysis brings into focus broader issues of ethics and reliable information in AI and higher education. Findings reveal that many participants have limited awareness of originality and ethical responsibility in course assignments, projects, and presentations, and even this awareness does not consistently translate into ethical actions. This study provides insights for researchers on potential pathways for monitoring AI usage in educational processes shortly.

In conclusion, as a shared area within higher education and communication studies, AI represents a transformative process affecting teaching and academic practices from course content and department meetings to exam implementations and grading. This highlights the need to explore different dimensions and boundaries of AI usage in faculties through future studies. Research on AI courses, curriculum adjustments, and creating common ground to support faculty-student communication indicates that such comprehensive studies in this area will be beneficial. Future research considering these trends will be instrumental in advancing the field.

Extended abstract

Adults' encounters and associations with picture books in adulthood are more limited than those of children. Although the shared reading experience, which usually occurs when a child is involved in the reading experience of a book, contributes to the intergenerational interaction of individuals gathered around a picture book, it does not directly offer an experience for adults unless the book experience is a crossover or an adult picture book. When it comes to books for adult and child readers, which are characterized as crossover, these books differ from picture books for adults in that they do not contain themes that exclude child readers, although they invite adult readers to experience their narratives.

Adult picture books are a new phenomenon that pushes the boundaries of literature and art, offering readers a layered reading experience. There is a growing demand for these books in a global publishing environment. New research is needed to increase the prevalence of these books in our society and in the global publishing environment and to analyze their structure. Within the scope of this study, five picture books with hopeful, guiding, and positive themes that deal with the realities of adult life and are predicted to contribute to the emotional well-being of readers were analyzed through descriptive analysis. The books were analyzed with a descriptive approach based on their text-image relations, illustrative approaches, and themes. All five picture books selected through purposive sampling have qualities that can contribute to the emotional well-being of readers. *You're only old once!* provides a different perspective on the problems of old age by using humorous language. By addressing the challenges of the aging process in a fun format, the book helps readers to develop a positive outlook while accepting these processes. *Things to look forward to 52 large and small joys for today and every day* encourage readers to recognize the often unnoticed moments and small joys in everyday life. *It's never too late* reminds readers that no matter what age they are, it is never too late to change their lives. *Looking after my heart* guides readers with health problems to change their daily living habits. *Am I there yet?: The loop-de-loop, zigzagging journey to adulthood* maps the ups and downs of adulthood, illustrating the paths, choices, and emotions that can be taken. In the rest of the study, the role of picture books in enhancing emotional well-being is discussed. This inquiry was carried out in order to reveal the benefits of adult picture books to individuals' daily lives and subjective experiences.

Adult picture books contribute to readers' plot comprehension, analysis, and interpretation skills through visual literacy and facilitate identification with the character in bibliotherapy processes. In this context, the study provides a direction for creating an adult picture book or including picture books in studies that can be carried out to increase emotional well-being. Adult picture books are a category that has not gained widespread recognition, especially in our country. Awareness of the therapeutic effects of picture books can be increased through the cooperation of literary professionals, psychologists, social workers, librarians, illustrators, publishers, and bibliotherapy specialists. The basic principle in bibliotherapy processes is to bring the individual together with the right book at the right time. For this reason, experts in the

field have an important role in creating picture books that address the problems of adult readers and the realities of their lives. By making room for these books in the publishing environment of our country, awareness, and demand for these books can be created in society. This study aims to draw attention to the potential benefits of these books on emotional well-being and their use in areas such as bibliotherapy and to raise awareness about the widespread use of these books.

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