

# TRT ARAPÇA'NIN FASLI İZLEYİCİLER ÜZERİNDE TÜRKİYE'NİN ÜLKE İMAJINI ŞEKİLLENDİRMEDEKİ ROLÜ

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## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin Arapça yayın yapan uluslararası yayıncısı TRT Arapça'nın Faslı izleyicilerin Türkiye algısını şekillendirmedeki rolünü incelemektedir. Buhmann'ın Dört Boyutlu Ülke İmajı Modeli'nden yola çıkarak, araştırma TRT Arapça'ya maruz kalmanın Türkiye'nin duygusal, işlevsel, normatif ve estetik değerlendirmelerini nasıl etkilediğini araştırmaktadır. Yedi büyük Fas şehrinde 1.002 katılımcı ile nicel kesitsel bir anket gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler tanımlayıcı istatistikler, korelasyon analizi ve tek yönlü ANOVA kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, TRT Arapça'ya maruz kalmanın, ülke imajının dört boyutu genelinde Türkiye algısını önemli ölçüde olumlu yönde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Özellikle, izleme sıklığının artması, duygusal yakınlığın güçlenmesi, kültürel çekicilik algısının artması ve Türkiye'nin işlevsel ve normatif özelliklerinin daha olumlu değerlendirilmesi ile ilişkilidir. Çalışma, uluslararası yayıncılığın bir medya diplomasisi aracı olarak önemini vurgulamakta ve Kuzey Afrika bağlamında yumuşak güç literatürüne ampirik kanıt sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** TRT Arapça, Fas, Ülke İmajı, Medya Diplomasisi, Yumuşak Güç, Uluslararası Yayıncılık.

## **THE ROLE OF TRT ARABIC IN SHAPING MOROCCO'S PERCEPTION OF TURKEY'S COUNTRY IMAGE**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the role of TRT Arabic, Turkey's Arabic-language international broadcaster, in shaping Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey's country image. Drawing on Buhmann's Four-Dimensional Country Image Model, the research investigates how exposure to TRT Arabic influences emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic evaluations of Turkey. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 1,002 respondents from seven major Moroccan cities. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate that exposure to TRT Arabic is significantly associated with more positive perceptions of Turkey across all four dimensions of country image. In particular, increased viewing frequency is linked to stronger emotional affinity, enhanced perceptions of cultural attractiveness, and more favorable evaluations of Turkey's functional and normative attributes. The study highlights the importance of international broadcasting as an instrument of media diplomacy and contributes to the literature on soft power by providing empirical evidence from the North African context.

**Keywords:** *TRT Arabic, Morocco, Country Image, Media Diplomacy, Soft Power.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary global communication environment, public diplomacy has increasingly shifted from traditional state-to-state interactions toward direct engagement with foreign publics through media, culture, and strategic communication. Advances in satellite broadcasting, digital media, and transnational information flows have enabled states to reach international audiences more effectively, transforming media into a central instrument of soft power. Within this context, international broadcasting has emerged as one of the most visible and influential tools through which states seek to shape foreign public opinion, enhance national visibility, and construct favorable country images.

Public diplomacy scholars emphasize that international media are no longer confined to the role of information transmission; rather, they function as strategic actors that frame national narratives, project cultural values, and influence how countries are cognitively and emotionally perceived abroad (Nye, 2005; Melissen, 2005). Through sustained exposure to news, documentaries, and cultural programming, international broadcasters contribute to the formation of country image by shaping perceptions of a country's competence, values, culture, and attractiveness. As a result, media diplomacy has become an integral component of contemporary international relations, particularly for states seeking to expand their influence beyond traditional diplomatic channels.

Turkey represents a compelling case in this regard. Over the past two decades, Turkey has invested significantly in public diplomacy and international communication as part of its broader foreign policy strategy. Through institutions such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Yunus Emre Institute, and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), Turkey has sought to enhance its international visibility and soft power appeal. Among these instruments, TRT's international broadcasting services occupy a particularly strategic position. TRT Arabic, launched in 2010, serves as Turkey's primary Arabic-language international television channel, targeting audiences across the Middle East and North Africa through news coverage, political analysis, documentaries, and cultural programming.

Beyond its informational function, TRT Arabic aims to communicate Turkey's perspectives, values, and cultural identity to Arabic-speaking audiences. By employing native Arabic-speaking journalists and producing culturally resonant content, the channel seeks to build credibility and emotional connection with its viewers. Scholars argue that such linguistic and cultural adaptation enhances the effectiveness of international broadcasting by increasing audience trust and receptivity (Gilboa, 2008; Hayden, 2011). Consequently, TRT Arabic can be understood not merely as a media outlet, but as an active agent of Turkey's public

diplomacy and soft power strategy. Morocco constitutes a particularly relevant context for examining the impact of TRT Arabic on country image formation. Despite geographical distance, Morocco and Turkey share historical, religious, and cultural affinities, alongside growing contemporary interactions through tourism, trade, education, and media consumption. Moroccan audiences have demonstrated considerable interest in Turkish cultural products, especially television series, which have contributed to increasing familiarity with Turkish society and culture. However, while the role of popular culture in Turkey's soft power has received scholarly attention, empirical research on the influence of Turkish international broadcasting—specifically TRT Arabic—on Moroccan public perceptions remains limited.

Existing literature on international broadcasting and country image has largely focused on Western or Gulf-based media outlets, such as the BBC World Service, Al Jazeera, and Al Arabiya. As a result, the impact of emerging non-Western broadcasters in North Africa remains underexplored. This gap is particularly evident in quantitative studies that systematically examine how exposure to international media relates to multidimensional evaluations of a country's image. Addressing this limitation, the present study investigates the role of TRT Arabic in shaping Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey's country image.

Drawing on Buhmann's Four-Dimensional Country Image Model, the study examines how exposure to TRT Arabic is associated with emotional, aesthetic, functional, and normative evaluations of Turkey. Using data from a large-scale survey conducted with 1,002 respondents across seven major Moroccan cities, the research provides empirical evidence on the relationship between international broadcasting and country image formation in a North African context. By doing so, the article contributes to the literature on media diplomacy and soft power and offers insights into the effectiveness of international broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy. The article proceeds by outlining the theoretical and conceptual framework, reviewing relevant literature, describing the methodology, presenting the empirical findings, and discussing their implications for international communication and public diplomacy research.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The relationship between media, public diplomacy, and country image has been extensively examined within the fields of international communication and political communication. Public diplomacy refers to the strategies and practices through which states seek to influence foreign publics by communicating values, policies, and cultural narratives beyond formal diplomatic channels (Melissen, 2005). In the contemporary media environment, international broadcasting con-

stitutes one of the most visible and institutionalized forms of mediated public diplomacy, enabling states to project narratives directly to global audiences.

### **INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING AS A TOOL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

International broadcasting has historically played a strategic role in shaping international public opinion, particularly during periods of geopolitical competition. Scholars such as Gilboa (2008) conceptualize international broadcasters as diplomatic actors that operate at the intersection of journalism, strategic communication, and foreign policy. Unlike domestic media, international broadcasters are designed to address foreign audiences and therefore adopt editorial strategies that combine credibility, cultural proximity, and strategic framing.

From a public diplomacy perspective, international broadcasting contributes to agenda-setting and framing processes that influence how foreign publics perceive a country's political stance, social values, and cultural identity. Sustained exposure to international media content allows audiences to form cognitive associations and emotional evaluations related to the broadcasting country. As Nye (2005) argues, such attraction-based influence constitutes the essence of soft power, whereby persuasion is achieved not through coercion but through credibility and appeal.

In this context, TRT Arabic represents Turkey's strategic investment in Arabic-language international communication. By producing news and cultural content tailored to Arabic-speaking audiences, the channel seeks to enhance Turkey's visibility and legitimacy in the Middle East and North Africa. Linguistic proximity and cultural familiarity are considered critical factors in increasing audience trust and media effectiveness, as they reduce perceived distance between the broadcaster and its audience (Hayden, 2011). Consequently, TRT Arabic operates not merely as a news outlet but as a platform through which Turkey's national narratives and values are communicated.

### **COUNTRY IMAGE AND MEDIA INFLUENCE**

Country image is commonly defined as the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that individuals hold about a given country. These perceptions are shaped through direct experiences as well as mediated representations disseminated through news, entertainment, and cultural products. Media exposure plays a particularly significant role in contexts where direct contact with a country is limited, making international broadcasting a key source of information and interpretation.

Research on country image formation highlights the multidimensional nature of national perceptions. Rather than being limited to political or economic evalua-

tions, country image encompasses emotional responses, cultural attractiveness, normative judgments, and assessments of functional competence. This multidimensionality underscores the need for analytical models that capture the complexity of audience perceptions.

### **BUHMANN'S FOUR-DIMENSIONAL COUNTRY IMAGE MODEL**

To address this complexity, Buhmann (2016) proposes a four-dimensional model of country image that integrates cognitive, affective, and normative components. The model conceptualizes country image as consisting of emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. The emotional dimension refers to affective responses such as sympathy, admiration, or trust toward a country. The functional dimension encompasses evaluations of a country's economic performance, technological advancement, and institutional effectiveness. The normative dimension relates to perceptions of a country's values, ethical standards, and adherence to international norms. Finally, the aesthetic dimension captures evaluations of cultural attractiveness, heritage, and lifestyle appeal.

This model is particularly suitable for analyzing the impact of international broadcasting, as media content simultaneously conveys information, values, and cultural representations. News coverage may influence functional and normative evaluations, while documentaries and cultural programs can enhance aesthetic appreciation and emotional attachment. Consequently, exposure to international broadcasting is expected to be associated with variations across all four dimensions of country image.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

Building on the literature on public diplomacy, international broadcasting, and country image, this study adopts Buhmann's four-dimensional model as its conceptual framework. The framework assumes that exposure to TRT Arabic content is associated with Moroccan audiences' evaluations of Turkey across emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. Rather than asserting causal mediation effects, the study focuses on examining associative relationships between media exposure and country image perceptions.

By situating TRT Arabic within the broader context of media diplomacy and soft power, the conceptual framework allows for a systematic examination of how international broadcasting contributes to country image formation in a North African context. This approach not only aligns with existing theoretical perspectives but also addresses empirical gaps in the literature concerning non-Western international broadcasters and their influence on audience perceptions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section reviews the scholarly literature relevant to international broadcasting, public diplomacy, and country image formation, with a particular focus on media exposure and audience perceptions. Rather than providing an exhaustive overview, the review synthesizes key findings that directly inform the research questions and conceptual framework of the present study.

Despite the growing body of literature on international broadcasting and country image formation, several gaps remain evident. Existing studies have predominantly focused on Western or regional broadcasters, while state-sponsored media from non-Western actors—particularly in Arab-language contexts—remain underexplored. Moreover, much of the literature examines country image either as a unidimensional construct or emphasizes political and strategic dimensions, often neglecting its multidimensional nature as conceptualized in contemporary public diplomacy frameworks.

In addition, empirical research addressing audience perceptions in North African contexts is limited, with Morocco receiving comparatively little scholarly attention despite its strategic media openness and historical ties with Turkey. Studies that do engage with Turkey’s international communication efforts tend to prioritize elite discourse, diplomatic narratives, or foreign policy analysis, rather than audience-level perception formation.

Responding to these gaps, the present study examines the role of TRT Arabic in shaping Moroccan audiences’ perceptions of Turkey’s country image through a multidimensional analytical framework. By empirically assessing associative relationships between media exposure and emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions of country image, the study contributes to public diplomacy scholarship by foregrounding audience reception and contextual specificity. In doing so, it advances understanding of how international broadcasting operates as a soft power instrument beyond Western-centric and state-centric analytical lenses.

## **INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

International broadcasting has long been recognized as a strategic component of public diplomacy, particularly in contexts where states seek to engage foreign publics beyond official diplomatic channels. Early studies emphasized the role of broadcasters such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America in shaping international public opinion during the Cold War. More recent scholarship extends this perspective by examining how contemporary international broadcasters operate in a highly competitive and fragmented global media environment (Gilboa, 2008).

Researchers argue that the effectiveness of international broadcasting depends on credibility, perceived independence, and cultural proximity. Credibility enhances audience trust, which in turn increases the likelihood that media messages will influence perceptions and attitudes (Seib, 2012). Cultural and linguistic adaptation further strengthen this influence by reducing symbolic distance between the broadcaster and the audience. In this regard, Arabic-language international broadcasters occupy a unique position, as they operate within a shared linguistic and cultural sphere while advancing distinct national narratives.

### **MEDIA EXPOSURE AND COUNTRY IMAGE FORMATION**

A substantial body of research demonstrates that media exposure plays a central role in shaping country image, particularly among audiences with limited direct experience of the country in question. News media contribute to cognitive evaluations of political stability, economic performance, and international behavior, while entertainment and cultural programming influence emotional and aesthetic perceptions (Anholt, 2007).

Empirical studies consistently show that repeated media exposure is associated with more structured and multidimensional country images. Positive media portrayals tend to enhance affective evaluations and perceptions of attractiveness, whereas negative coverage may reinforce stereotypes or generate distrust. Importantly, scholars emphasize that media effects on country image are rarely linear or uniform; instead, they are contingent on audience characteristics, prior attitudes, and the perceived credibility of the media source (Kunczik, 1997).

### **TURKISH SOFT POWER AND MEDIA INFLUENCE**

In recent years, Turkey's soft power strategy has attracted growing academic attention, particularly in relation to cultural products such as television series and films. Several studies highlight the popularity of Turkish dramas in the Middle East and North Africa and their role in increasing cultural familiarity and interest in Turkish society. These cultural flows are often associated with favorable emotional and aesthetic perceptions of Turkey.

However, research on Turkey's international news broadcasting remains relatively limited. Existing studies suggest that TRT's international channels aim to present alternative narratives to dominant Western media and to frame Turkey as a regional and global actor with distinct political and cultural values. While qualitative analyses have examined content strategies and discursive patterns, there is a notable lack of quantitative research assessing how exposure to TRT Arabic relates to audience perceptions in specific national contexts, particularly in North Africa.

## **SUMMARY AND RESEARCH GAP**

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of international broadcasting as a mechanism of public diplomacy and country image construction. At the same time, it reveals a gap in empirical research concerning the audience-level effects of non-Western international broadcasters, especially in relation to Arabic-language media and North African audiences. Addressing this gap, the present study provides a quantitative examination of the association between exposure to TRT Arabic and Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey's country image across multiple dimensions

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employs a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between exposure to TRT Arabic and Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey's country image. A survey-based approach is appropriate for capturing audience perceptions and media consumption patterns across a large sample, enabling systematic analysis of associations between media exposure and multidimensional country image evaluations at a single point in time.

### **SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION**

Data were collected from 1,002 respondents residing in seven major Moroccan cities, representing diverse geographic regions and urban contexts. The sample was designed to reflect variation in age, gender, education, and media consumption habits. Participants were recruited through a structured questionnaire administered using standardized data collection procedures. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the academic purpose of the study. Focusing on urban centers ensured access to audiences most likely to be exposed to international broadcasting content.

### **MEASUREMENT**

The survey measured two primary constructs: exposure to TRT Arabic and perceptions of Turkey's country image. Exposure was operationalized through self-reported frequency of viewing TRT Arabic's news, political, and cultural programming, using ordinal-scale items. Country image perceptions were measured based on Buhmann's four-dimensional model, encompassing emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. Each dimension was assessed through multiple Likert-type items reflecting its core attributes, allowing for a nuanced evaluation of audience perceptions.

### **RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Internal consistency analyses indicated satisfactory reliability across all country image dimensions, with coefficient values exceeding commonly accepted thresh-

olds in social science research. Construct validity was supported through the use of measurement items grounded in established theoretical models and prior empirical studies, ensuring alignment between conceptual definitions and operational indicators.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and media exposure patterns, followed by inferential analyses examining associations between TRT Arabic exposure and the four country image dimensions. Comparative analyses were conducted across different exposure levels. Given the cross-sectional design, the analytical strategy focused on identifying associative rather than causal relationships.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study adhered to standard ethical principles for social science research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study prior to completing the questionnaire. No personal identifying information was collected, and all responses were treated anonymously and analyzed in aggregate form. The research posed no foreseeable risks to participants.

### **FINDINGS**

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, focusing on the relationship between exposure to TRT Arabic and Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey's country image. The results are reported in an analytical and interpretive manner, highlighting statistically meaningful patterns and trends across the four dimensions of country image.

### **DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF MEDIA EXPOSURE**

Analysis of respondents' media consumption patterns indicates varying levels of exposure to TRT Arabic content. While a segment of the sample reported regular engagement with the channel's news and political programs, others indicated occasional or limited exposure, primarily through specific programs or shared content. This variation provides an appropriate basis for examining differences in country image perceptions across exposure levels.

Overall, respondents demonstrated a general familiarity with Turkey, reflecting the broader presence of Turkish media and cultural products in the Moroccan media landscape. However, familiarity levels were higher among individuals reporting more frequent exposure to TRT Arabic, suggesting a potential association between international broadcasting and audience awareness.

### **EXPOSURE TO TRT ARABIC AND EMOTIONAL IMAGE**

The findings reveal a positive association between exposure to TRT Arabic and

the emotional dimension of Turkey's country image. Respondents with higher levels of exposure tended to express more favorable affective responses toward Turkey, including feelings of sympathy, trust, and admiration. Statistical comparisons indicate that these differences were meaningful, suggesting that regular engagement with TRT Arabic content is associated with enhanced emotional evaluations of Turkey.

This pattern may be attributed to the channel's use of culturally resonant narratives and Arabic-language presentation, which can foster emotional proximity and audience identification. By presenting Turkey through familiar linguistic and cultural frames, TRT Arabic appears to contribute to the development of more positive affective orientations among Moroccan viewers.

### **EXPOSURE TO TRT ARABIC AND FUNCTIONAL IMAGE**

Results related to the functional dimension demonstrate that higher exposure to TRT Arabic is associated with more positive assessments of Turkey's functional attributes. Respondents frequently exposed to the channel were more likely to evaluate Turkey favorably in terms of economic development, technological capacity, and institutional effectiveness. These differences were statistically significant, indicating a consistent relationship between media exposure and functional perceptions.

News coverage emphasizing infrastructure projects, technological advancement, and regional engagement may play a role in shaping these evaluations. Through repeated exposure to such content, audiences may develop more structured and informed assessments of Turkey's functional capabilities.

### **EXPOSURE TO TRT ARABIC AND NORMATIVE IMAGE**

The analysis also reveals a meaningful association between TRT Arabic exposure and the normative dimension of country image. Respondents with higher exposure levels tended to perceive Turkey as a country that adheres to ethical standards, respects cultural values, and engages responsibly in international affairs. Although normative evaluations are often influenced by broader political discourses, the findings suggest that international broadcasting can contribute to shaping value-based perceptions.

By framing political events and international issues from a perspective aligned with Turkey's foreign policy narratives, TRT Arabic may influence how audiences interpret Turkey's normative positioning. These results highlight the role of media framing in shaping moral and value-oriented judgments.

## **EXPOSURE TO TRT ARABIC AND AESTHETIC IMAGE**

Finally, exposure to TRT Arabic was found to be positively associated with the aesthetic dimension of Turkey's country image. Respondents with frequent exposure reported stronger appreciation of Turkey's culture, heritage, and lifestyle. This association was particularly evident among viewers who engaged with cultural programs and documentaries broadcast by the channel.

The aesthetic dimension appears especially responsive to mediated cultural representations. By showcasing historical sites, traditions, and everyday life, TRT Arabic contributes to enhancing Turkey's cultural attractiveness and symbolic appeal among Moroccan audiences.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Taken together, the results indicate that exposure to TRT Arabic is consistently associated with more positive evaluations of Turkey across emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. While the study does not claim causal relationships, the observed patterns suggest that international broadcasting plays a meaningful role in shaping multidimensional country image perceptions. These findings provide empirical support for theoretical perspectives that emphasize the significance of media diplomacy and soft power in contemporary international communication.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reinforce contemporary public diplomacy theory by demonstrating that international broadcasting functions as a multidimensional instrument of soft power rather than a mere channel of information dissemination. The consistent positive associations between exposure to TRT Arabic and all four dimensions of Turkey's country image provide empirical support for the argument that mediated communication can shape emotional, cultural, functional, and normative perceptions of a country among foreign publics. In this regard, TRT Arabic operates as a strategic site where national narratives are translated into affective and cognitive evaluations, particularly in contexts characterized by limited direct contact with the broadcasting country.

The results validate the analytical relevance of Buhmann's Four-Dimensional Country Image Model for studying international media effects. The strong associations observed in the emotional and aesthetic dimensions suggest that international broadcasting is especially effective in influencing affective orientations and symbolic attractiveness. This finding aligns with soft power theory, which emphasizes attraction and identification as central mechanisms of influence. Cultural programs, documentaries, and human-centered narratives broadcast by TRT Arabic appear to foster emotional proximity and cultural affinity, thereby enhanc-

ing Turkey's symbolic appeal among Moroccan audiences. Such effects highlight the importance of cultural storytelling and shared symbolic references in contemporary media diplomacy.

At the same time, the positive relationships identified in the functional and normative dimensions indicate that international broadcasting also contributes to more cognitive and value-based evaluations of a country. Through sustained exposure to news framing and political analysis, audiences develop more favorable assessments of Turkey's economic capacity, institutional effectiveness, and ethical positioning. These findings resonate with agenda-setting and framing perspectives, suggesting that international broadcasters can shape not only what audiences know about a country but also how they evaluate its competence and normative orientation. The ability of TRT Arabic to influence these dimensions underscores the strategic significance of credibility, professionalism, and perceived journalistic legitimacy in public diplomacy practice.

A key implication of the study concerns the role of linguistic and cultural proximity in enhancing media diplomacy effectiveness. Broadcasting in Arabic and employing culturally resonant frames appears to reduce symbolic distance and increase audience receptivity, reinforcing the notion that successful public diplomacy requires adaptation to the cultural and communicative codes of target audiences. In the Moroccan context, shared historical, religious, and cultural references may amplify the impact of TRT Arabic's content, enabling the channel to function as a mediated bridge between Turkey and Moroccan society. This suggests that international broadcasting is most effective when embedded within broader structures of cultural familiarity and symbolic alignment.

Beyond the Turkish case, the findings contribute to the growing literature on non-Western public diplomacy by providing quantitative evidence from a North African setting. They challenge the Western-centric focus of much existing research and demonstrate that emerging international broadcasters can exert meaningful influence on foreign public opinion through strategically designed media engagement. The Moroccan case illustrates how international broadcasting can extend a country's soft power reach beyond immediate geopolitical regions, particularly when cultural affinity and sustained exposure converge.

From a practical public diplomacy perspective, the results indicate that international broadcasting strategies should prioritize continuity, cultural depth, and narrative credibility over short-term messaging. The strong association between viewing frequency and positive country image evaluations suggests that long-term audience engagement is essential for durable soft power outcomes. Moreover, the multidimensional effects observed in this study imply that effective

media diplomacy requires a balanced integration of informational, cultural, and normative content rather than a narrow focus on political communication.

Overall, this study demonstrates that TRT Arabic plays a meaningful role in shaping Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey across emotional, functional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. While causal claims remain beyond the scope of the research design, the findings provide robust empirical evidence that international broadcasting constitutes a significant mechanism of contemporary public diplomacy. By empirically linking media exposure to multidimensional country image formation in a non-Western context, the study advances theoretical debates on soft power and offers practical insights for states seeking to enhance their international visibility and influence through mediated communication. Despite these important contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged in order to provide a more balanced interpretation of the findings.

While the findings consistently indicate a positive association between exposure to TRT Arabic and favorable perceptions of Turkey across all four dimensions, it is important to interpret these results within a broader and more critical media context. Media effects are rarely unidirectional, and audience perceptions are shaped by multiple and sometimes competing information sources. Moroccan audiences are simultaneously exposed to a diverse media environment that includes local media, transnational Arab broadcasters, Western news outlets, and digital platforms. These alternative sources may present differing or even contradictory narratives about Turkey, potentially moderating or reshaping the influence of TRT Arabic. Furthermore, the positive associations observed in this study may also reflect selective exposure, whereby individuals with pre-existing favorable attitudes toward Turkey are more likely to engage with TRT Arabic content. In this sense, media influence should be understood as part of a dynamic and reciprocal process rather than a linear effect. Additionally, international broadcasting, as an instrument of public diplomacy, may inherently carry strategic framing that emphasizes positive representations while downplaying critical perspectives.

Therefore, while TRT Arabic appears to contribute to enhancing Turkey's country image among Moroccan audiences, these findings should be interpreted with caution, acknowledging the complexity of media ecosystems and the potential role of alternative influences. Future research could further explore these dynamics by incorporating comparative media analysis and examining how different media sources interact in shaping audience perceptions.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study provides empirical evidence that TRT Arabic plays a significant role in shaping Moroccan audiences' perceptions of Turkey across emotional, func-

tional, normative, and aesthetic dimensions. The findings highlight that frequent exposure to culturally resonant, Arabic-language content enhances emotional affinity, reinforces appreciation of Turkey's cultural heritage, and fosters more favorable evaluations of its functional and normative attributes. While causal inferences cannot be drawn due to the cross-sectional design, the observed associations underscore the strategic importance of international broadcasting as a tool of media diplomacy and soft power.

The results also emphasize the value of linguistic and cultural proximity in enhancing audience receptivity and the effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts. For policymakers and practitioners, the study suggests that sustained, culturally adapted media engagement is essential for cultivating positive country images abroad. Beyond the Turkish context, these findings contribute to the broader understanding of how non-Western international broadcasters can influence foreign publics, particularly in regions with shared cultural and historical ties. Future research could explore longitudinal effects and comparative analyses across different audiences to further illuminate the mechanisms through which international broadcasting shapes country image.

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