

**THE TURKISH JOURNALISTS TRAINEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS
THE JOURNALISM PROFESSION**

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the journalist trainees' attitude levels towards the journalism and to determine whether or not their attitude levels towards journalism differ according to their gender, age, grade, type of graduated high school, manner of preference journalism profession, satisfaction in journalism program, and having a relative journalist or not. The research was carried out with 291 journalist trainees attending journalism program at Faculty of Communication Sciences, in Anadolu University, at Communication Faculty in Istanbul University and Selçuk University, Turkey, in the 2007. Data were collected through 'Attitude Scale towards the Journalism Profession' (ASTJP). The findings of the research revealed that the journalist trainees' attitude levels towards journalism were at high level and their attitude levels towards journalism were significantly associated with their age, grade, manner of preference journalism profession and satisfaction in journalism program.

Key Words: *Journalist, Journalist trainees, Journalism, Attitude, Attitude Scale.*

Introduction

The different attitude definitions exist in the literature. According to Turgut (1978), attitude is the tendency of an individual to show positive or negative reaction against a specific object. According to Tezbaşaran (1996), attitude is the tendency to give positive or negative learned reaction against certain objects, events, societies, concepts or other people. According to Tavşancıl (2002), attitude is the emotional and mental preparation state, formed as a result of lifestyle and experiences, having the power of orienting or dynamically affecting the individual's behavior against all objects and situations that he/she are connected with. According to Demirel (1993), attitude is the learned tendency that pushes the individual to show certain behaviors against people, objects and situations. According to Oğuzkan (1974), attitude is the behavior type of the individual against people, events and lifeless entities. According to Kağıtçıbaşı (1983), attitude is tendency that cannot be observed but creates some behaviors that can be observed.

According to definitions given in the literature, the individuals' reactions against various objects, ideas and events are shaped largely by their attitudes. Knowing an individual's attitude creates the possibility to guess about future behaviors. For this reason, the measurement of journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism profession has great importance (Bilgin, 1985).

The studies about attitude state expressly that the individuals' attitudes towards a profession can determine their approach to the profession, their profession qualifications, their performances, their will to obtain information and their interest. Also many studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between individuals'

attitude towards a profession and success in that profession (Baykul, 2003). For this reason, knowing the affective properties like interests, expectations, attitudes of journalist trainees and journalists towards journalism is very important in terms of obtaining professional qualifications of journalist trainees and journalists and increasing professional achievements of journalists.

It is obvious that journalist trainees and journalists having positive attitudes towards journalism will be willing in obtaining professional qualifications, increasing their professional achievements and attaining journalistic knowledge and journalist trainees and journalists having negative attitudes towards journalism will be reluctant in obtaining professional qualifications, increasing their professional achievements and attaining journalistic knowledge. It is necessary to know the journalist trainees and journalists' attitudes towards journalism in order to determine the factors forming and developing negative attitudes for the journalist trainees and journalists having negative attitude and to present the facilities producing the environment for the formation of positive attitudes (Erden, 1995).

The attitude studies towards journalism profession in the literature are quite new. In a study conducted by Dodd and Others (1990) to determine high school journalism students' attitudes toward journalism as a career, they indicated that high school students who choose journalism as a career continue to do so with an awareness of economic realities; they base their decision on journalism as an interesting and useful career. They also determined the high school journalism students having positive attitude towards journalism as a career.

The attitude studies towards journalism profession do not exist in Turkey. In this research, an attitude scale is developed to determine the journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism by making use of the method that finds inferences from the reactions given to a series of sentences or adjectives and inferences made in the subject of attitude measuring. It is hoped that it will contribute to the existing literature on this subject. In regard to its purpose, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the journalist trainees' attitudes towards the journalism as a profession?

- Do the journalist trainees' attitudes towards the journalism as a profession differ according to their gender, age, grade, type of graduated high school, manner of preference journalism profession, satisfaction in journalism program, and having a relative journalist or not?

Method

Participants

Participants were 291 journalist trainees attending journalism program at the Faculty of Communication Sciences of Anadolu University, at the Communication Faculty of Istanbul University and Selçuk University, Turkey, in 2007. 88 of them were from Anadolu University (30.24%), 136 of them were from Selçuk University (46.74%) and 67 of them were from Istanbul University (23.02%). One hundred and twenty of participants (41.20%) were female and the remaining 171 (58.80%) were male; 20 of them were first grade (6.87%), 109 of them were second grade (37.46%), 101 of them were third grade (34.71%), and 61 of them were fourth grade (20.96%) university students. The mean age of the participants was 22.53 years ranging from 18 to 42. Two

hundred and seventy-nine of the participants (95.90%) graduated from public high schools and the remaining 12 (4.10%) graduated from private high schools; 209 of them preferred journalism program voluntarily (71.82), 43 of them preferred journalism program randomly (14.78), 20 of them preferred journalism program with suggestions of friends and acquaintances (6.87) and 19 of them preferred journalism program compulsory (6.53). Two hundred and thirty-eight of participants (81.80) were satisfied to be in journalism program and the remaining 53 (18.20%) were unsatisfied to be in journalism program. Twenty-six of participants (8.90%) have a relative journalist and two hundred and sixty-five of participants (91.10%) do not have a relative journalist. All the university students in the sample are native to Turkey and participated in the study voluntarily.

Data Collection

The objective of the research necessitates the usage of a measuring instrument to determine the journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism. For this reason, in this research, an attitude scale was developed to determine the journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism by making use of the method that finding inferences from the reactions given to a series of sentences or adjectives and inferences made in the subject of attitude measuring. While forming the items of the scale, it was requested from 55 prospected journalists attending the journalism program as students at Faculty of Communication Sciences of Anadolu University to write a composition including their feelings, thoughts and behaviors about journalism profession. 29 attitude items were written after searching the literature and analyzing the contents of the compositions. It has been paid attention for the items that half of them are covering

negative sides of the attitude extent and the other half covering the positive ones to include cognitive, affective and behavioral statements (Tezbaşaran, 1996). 18 of the items state enjoyment about journalism profession and 11 of them state the denial of journalism profession.

Attitude scale prepared in that way was sent to a specialist and a group of journalists in order to be examined on account of its language and the content validity. Depending on the opinions of the journalists, the scale was reviewed. After required corrections were made and five items were extracted from the scale, the scale was applied on 36 journalists attending in service-training seminar for journalists by Turkish Journalists Association in Konya as a pilot study group.

As a result of the pilot study, it has been understood that the items are clear enough except a few items requiring a change in the wording. The data collection instrument has been finalized by performing the required changes in the wording of some of the items.

The final form of the scale consists of two sections. The first part is the form related to the demographic and personal information. The second part includes 24 expressions related to the attitudes towards journalism profession on a 5-point Likert type scale consisting of 5 choices, from 1 representing 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 representing 'Strongly Agree' (Turgut, 1977).

The final form of the scale, ASTJP was applied on 295 journalist trainees in the study group. However, 4 questionnaires were kept out of the analysis due to the fact that they had not been filled out according to the instructions. The factor analysis was done in order to check the construct validity of the scale. A scale having 16 items consisting of two factors was developed as a result of the factor analysis. Factor analysis is a

statistical data reduction technique used to find latent variables or factors among observed variables. In other words, if research data contain many variables, it can be used factor analysis to reduce the number of variables. With factor analysis, it can be produced a small number of factors from a large number of variables which are capable of explaining the observed variance in the larger number of variables. The reduced factors can also be used for further analysis (Baykul, 2000; Büyüköztürk, 2002).

24 items on which Principal Components Analysis is applied are collected under 2 factors that eigenvalue is higher than 1.00. Therefore, ASTJP can be accepted with maximum 2-factored. Cumulative variance explained by two factors is 58.02 %. According to Principal Components Analysis, eigenvalue of the first factor is 9.26 and variance it explains is 48.72 %, and for the second factor 1.77 and 9.30 %, respectively. This finding shows that two factors determined as important factors explain the majority of cumulative variance in the items and the variance related to the scale.

Having higher variance rates after the factor analysis, results in stronger factor structure of the scale (Gorsuch, 1974; Lee & Comrey, 1979). The variance of items in the scale is between .43-.75. In social sciences, the variance rates changing in the range of 40 % and 60 % are accepted as sufficient (Scherer, Wiebe, Luther & Adams, 1988). According to this criterion, items 4, 6, 11, 21 and 24, having low variance were extracted from the scale and 19 items remained.

In the factor analysis, the items with factor load value higher than .40 are taken. It is observed that the 19 items take place in first factor and first factor load values are changing between .45 and .83.

In principal components analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is found as .94. KMO test is carried out to inspect the sufficiency of distribution for factor analysis

and tests whether partial correlations are small or not. A value of KMO higher than .80 is evaluated as “excellent”. In this research KMO value is very good. Also Barlett test result 2905.47 ($p < .000$) states that factor analysis is suitable for variables.

After principal components analysis, rotation process is done with varimax technique to find the items having high relations with the factors and to interpret the items easily (Büyüköztürk, 2002). After rotation, items 10, 12 and 17, having high factor load but collected under two factors were extracted from the scale and 16 items remained. The results of varimax rotation applied to investigate the factor structures of ASTJP are given in Table 1.

Table 1: The Results of Varimax Rotation

Order No	Item No	Common Factor Variance	Factor 1-Load	Factor-1	Factor-2
1	1	.684	.793	.803	.199
2	2	.753	.841	.833	.243
3	3	.593	.742	.744	.199
4	5	.630	.731	.787	.103
5	7	.599	.728	.760	.143
6	8	.731	.831	.818	.248
7	9	.591	.752	.730	.242
8	13	.519	.720	.618	.369
9	14	.526	.710	.687	.234
10	16	.573	.744	.711	.260
11	15	.451	.619	.402	.537
12	18	.560	.660	.390	.639
13	19	.635	.749	.507	.615
14	20	.569	.584	.260	.708
15	22	.630	.441	.045	.793
16	23	.560	.436	.067	.745
Variance Explained					
Total = 60.02%					
Factor-1 = 39.35%					
Factor-2 = 20.67%					
Cronbach α = .93					

Factors are attempted to be named considering the meanings items include. In the first factor there were 10 items and this factor was named as '*Enjoying Journalism Profession*'. The second factor named as '*Denial of Journalism Profession*' consisted 6 items.

After application, distribution of scale total scores was investigated initially. Because of the fact that there are 16 items in the ASTJP, the lowest expected score is 16.00, and the highest expected score is 80.00 and the range is 64.00. The lowest score obtained from the scale scores is 20.00, the highest score is 82.00 and the range is 62.00. It has been found out that the scale contains a significant part of the range expected. It has been calculated that the arithmetical mean of scale is 56.50, the median is 57.00 and the standard deviation is 12.35, the Skewness coefficient is -.147, and the kurtosis coefficient is -.229. The total average score related to the attitude level of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession consisting of 16 items is 3.41. These values point out that the distribution of the scale scores is very similar to the normal distribution.

The arithmetical mean is between 2.90 and 3.81 and the standard deviation is between .98-1.18. When the findings of the item analysis performed in order to evaluate the discerning efficiency of the items in the scale is examined, it can be seen that the item-total correlation is at a high level, changing between .41-.79. This finding shows that each of 16 items has the discerning efficiency. The internal consistencies of the two subscales, '*The Attitudes about the Enjoying Journalism Profession*' and '*The Attitudes About the Denial of Journalism Profession*' are relatively .93 and .83. The overall reliability coefficient is .93. These values prove that the scale is reliable.

Procedure

ASTJP was applied to the journalist trainees in the study group within one week period in the autumn term of the 2006–2007 academic years. The purpose of the research was explained to the journalist trainees and it was expressed that they should read the instructions. The journalist trainees completed the questionnaires independently approximately in 25 minutes.

Results

To determine the attitude levels of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession, One-Sample t-test was applied and it tested the difference between the expected total mean and the mean obtained from the ASTJP.

It was determined that there was a significant difference between the expected total mean and the mean obtained from the ASTJP ($N=291$, the expected total mean from ASTJP=48, the mean obtained from the ASTJP=56.50, $SD=12.35$). The result showed that the journalist trainees obtained significantly higher point than the expected point from ASTJP ($t_{(290)}= 11.748$, $p<.000$). According to this finding, the mean obtained from the ASTJP is higher than the expected total mean ($M=8.50$, $p<.000$). This finding shows that the mean of the attitude points of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession is high level.

To determine whether the attitude levels of journalist trainees towards journalism profession vary according to according to their gender, age, grade, type of graduated high school, manner of preference journalism profession, satisfaction in journalism program, and having a relative journalist or not, t-test and analysis of variance for independent groups were applied. Subsequently, a Tukey's HSD test was used to

determine the source of differences between/among the different groups. The findings were presented as follows, respectively.

It was determined that there was no significant difference between the attitude levels of the male and female journalist trainees towards journalism profession ($N=171$, $M=55.78$, $SD=12.97$ for male journalist trainees and $N=120$, $M=57.53$, $SD=11.37$ for female journalist trainees). The results showed that there was no significant difference between the attitude levels of the male and female journalist trainees towards journalism profession ($df=289$, $t=1.195$, $p>.233$).

It was also examined whether or not the attitude levels of journalist trainees towards journalism profession varied according to their ages ($N=106$, $M=60.08$, $SD=11.85$ for the journalist trainees who were 20 years old and younger, $N=153$, $M=54.22$, $SD=12.34$ for the journalist trainees who were between 21-25 years old, $N=29$, $M=55.55$, $SD=10.94$ for the journalist trainees who were between 26-29 years old, and $N=3$, $M=55.33$, $SD=19.50$ for the journalist trainees who were 30 years old and older). The variance analysis revealed a significant difference among the groups ($df=290$, $F=4.978$, $p<.002$). According to the findings related to these comparisons, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who were 20 years old and younger were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who were between 21-25 years old ($M=5.86$, $p<.001$). However, none of the other comparisons among groups showed statistically significant differences.

It was also examined whether or not the attitude levels of journalist trainees towards journalism profession varied according to their grades ($N=20$, $M=57.70$, $SD=16.17$ for the journalist trainees attending 1st grade, $N=109$, $M=60.83$, $SD=10.85$ for the journalist trainees attending 2nd grade, $N=101$, $M=55.80$, $SD=12.36$ for the

journalist trainees attending 3rd grade, and $N=61$, $M=49.52$, $SD=10.11$ for the journalist trainees attending 4th grade). The variance analysis revealed a significant difference among the groups ($df=290$, $F=12.463$, $p<.000$). According to the findings related to these comparisons, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 1st grade were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 4th grade ($M=8.18$, $p<.035$); the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 2nd grade were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 3rd ($M=5.03$, $p<.011$) and 4th grade ($M=11.31$, $p<.000$); the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 3rd grade were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 4th grade ($M=6.28$, $p<.006$).

It was also identified that the attitude levels of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession did not differ in terms of their type of graduated high school ($N=279$, $M=56.35$, $SD=12.45$ for the journalist trainees who graduated from public high schools, $N=12$, $M=60.00$, $SD=9.27$ for the journalist trainees who graduated from private high schools). The results showed that there was no significant difference between the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who graduated from public high schools and those who graduated from private high schools towards journalism profession ($df=289$, $t=-1.003$, $p>.317$).

It was also determined that the attitude levels of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession differed in terms of their manner of preference journalism profession ($N=209$, $M=58.80$, $SD=12.73$ for the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program voluntarily, $N=43$, $M=49.51$, $SD=12.13$ for the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program randomly, $N=20$, $M=55.95$, $SD=10.24$ for the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program with suggestions of friends and

acquaintances, and $N=19$, $M=47.58$, $SD=12.25$ for the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program compulsory). The variance analysis revealed a significant difference among the groups ($df=290$, $F=11.459$, $p<.000$). According to the findings related to these comparisons, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program voluntarily were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program randomly ($M=9.29$, $p<.000$) and the journalist trainees who preferred journalism program compulsory ($M=11.22$, $p<.000$).

It was also identified that the attitude levels of the journalist trainees towards journalism profession differed in terms of their satisfaction in journalism program ($N=238$, $M=58.74$, $SD=11.02$ for the journalist trainees who were satisfied to be in journalism program, $N=53$, $M=46.47$, $SD=13.07$ for the journalist trainees who were unsatisfied to be in journalism program). The results showed that there was a significant difference between the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who were satisfied to be in journalism program and journalist trainees who were unsatisfied to be in journalism program towards journalism profession ($df=289$, $t=7.071$, $p<.000$). According to the results, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who were satisfied to be in journalism program were significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who were unsatisfied to be in journalism program ($M=12.26$, $p<.000$).

Finally, it was also examined whether or not the attitude levels of journalist trainees towards journalism profession varied according to their having a relative journalist or not ($N=26$, $M=59.92$, $SD=11.53$ for the journalist trainees who have a relative journalist, $N=265$, $M=56.17$, $SD=12.39$ for the journalist trainees who have no relative journalist). The results showed that there was no significant difference between

the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who have a relative journalist and journalist trainees who have no relative journalist towards journalism profession ($df=289$, $t=1.484$, $p>.139$).

Conclusion and Discussion

Knowing the journalist trainees and journalists' attitudes towards journalism profession is very important in terms of obtaining professional qualifications of journalist trainees and journalists and increasing professional achievements of journalists. Besides, knowing the journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism profession would contribute to studies to provide more meaningful and attractive journalism programs. For this reason, it is necessary to determine the factors forming and developing negative attitudes for the journalist trainees having negative attitude and to present the facilities producing the environment for the formation of positive attitudes.

In this research, a scale (ASTJP) having 16 items was developed to measure the journalist trainees' attitudes towards journalism profession. The findings obtained from this research show that the scale is valid and reliable for the data obtained from the study group. Repeating the reliability and validity studies in different groups having similar features in a form including all journalism programs not covered in this research and comparing the analysis realized is also important for determining the construct validity.

In this research, it is seen that the journalist trainees' attitude levels towards journalism profession are at high level and the age, grade, manner of preference journalism profession and satisfaction in journalism program are important variables to

determine their attitudes levels. It is not only sufficient that program being suitable for expectations and needs of journalist trainees to develop positive attitude towards journalism profession. At the same time it is required that journalist trainees should be willing to be journalist and should be satisfied to be in journalism program. Admittedly, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who have preferred journalism program voluntarily and have been satisfied to be in journalism program are expected to have higher than attitude levels of the ones who preferred journalism program randomly and compulsory, and were unsatisfied to be in journalism program. The results of research show that the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who have preferred journalism program voluntarily and have been satisfied to be in journalism program are significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who have preferred journalism program randomly and compulsory, and those who have been unsatisfied to be in journalism program.

Furthermore, unemployment is an important problem for journalists in Turkey. The most important reason of this problem is overmuch number of journalism schools. Moreover, to be a journalist does not require graduating from a journalism school legally in Turkey. Thus, many of graduated students can not find the job. These conditions affect negatively especially 4th grade students' attitudes towards journalism profession. For this reason, the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 4th grade and journalist trainees whose age is older are expected to have lower attitude levels than the ones attending grade, 2nd grade and 3rd grade and the journalist trainees whose age is younger. The results of research show that the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 1st, 2nd grade and 3rd grade are significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees attending 4th grade. The attitude levels of the

journalist trainees who are 20 years old and younger are significantly higher than the attitude levels of the journalist trainees who are between 21-25 years old.

When the significant statistical differences between the means of the attitude points of the groups compared in the analysis, it is necessary to conduct group comparison analysis in different groups with the other variables related to the attitudes towards journalism profession when the practical significance is taken into account. According to research findings, ASTJP can be also used to measure the journalists' attitude levels towards journalism profession and determine on which variables that negative and positive attitudes of journalist trainees are dependent. Therefore, a number of studies should be conducted in all journalism programs, by using ASTJP and the findings obtained should be compared with the findings of this research.

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