



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT/MASTER'S THESIS

“Audience Perceptions of Journalists’ Twitter Performances in Turkey”

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad /
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science (MSc)

Wien, 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

066 550

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Communication Science

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Abstract

Perceptions of journalistic roles have been discussed by journalism scholars for decades. However, audience evaluations of how journalists perform these roles are still an understudied aspect of journalism scholarship. New technologies have allowed journalists to extend their work to social media and perform these roles on mediums such as Twitter. This research aims to capture how audiences evaluate the role performance of journalists in a non-Western context with limited press freedom: Turkey. This research employs a quantitative approach to explore audience evaluations in depth and to reveal insights from an understudied media environment.

Keywords: Journalism, role perceptions, Twitter, Turkey journalism, audience research, survey

Abstract

Die Wahrnehmung der Rolle der Journalisten wurde über Jahrzehnte von Journalismuswissenschaftlern diskutiert. Trotzdem wurde zu wenig erforscht, wie das Publikum die Rolle der Journalisten wahrnimmt. Die neuen Technologien erlauben den Journalisten, ihre Arbeit auf Social Media auszuweiten und diese Rolle über Medien, wie Twitter, auszuüben. Diese Studie möchte erfassen, wie das Publikum die Rolle und Funktion von Journalisten, in nicht westlichen Kulturkreisen mit eingeschränkter Pressefreiheit einschätzt: Türkei. Diese Forschung beinhaltet einen quantitativen Ansatz, um die Einschätzung des Publikums in der Tiefe zu erfassen und Einsichten in eine zu wenig erforschte Medienlandschaft zu gewähren.

Schlagwörter: Journalismus, Rollenwahrnehmung, Twitter, Journalismus in der Türkei, Publikumsforschung, Umfrage

Audience Perceptions of Journalists' Twitter Performances in Turkey

Introduction

Journalists have normalized the practice of using Twitter, a microblogging site which allows users to post up-to 280 character messages. Nowadays, it is common for journalists to incorporate the medium into their daily routine (Molyneux, 2019). In fact, failing to do so can negatively impact journalists (Barnard, 2016). Twitter has become a critical part of journalism, creating a hybrid (Hermida, 2010) medium where journalists combine journalistic ideals such as objectivity (Deuze, 2005) with Twitter's affordances, such as interactivity.

Social media is prompting academics to reconsider traditional journalistic role perceptions (Hanitzsch, 2011). This research aims to evaluate how different portrayals of journalistic performances on Twitter align to traditional journalistic archetypes, as well as how audiences perceive journalists in terms of objectivity, interpretive news dissemination and interactivity on Twitter. While this hybrid form of journalism which takes place on social media has been studied by scholars, research has not fully explored the audience perspective.

Audiences are still an understudied aspect of journalism (Rauch, 2015). This project aims to fill the gap in the literature by using a quantitative survey which incorporates qualitative, open-ended items to have a fuller picture of audience expectations from journalists on Twitter.

Journalistic Identity Ideals

Scholars have attempted to identify the forms (Donsbach, 2012) and rules (Deuze, 2005) of 'good' journalism (Zúñiga & Hinsley, 2013). For example, based on academic consensus, Deuze (2005) found five classic characteristics which define the identity of a professional journalist. These norms are pursuing objectivity, providing a public service as a watchdog, functioning autonomously while carrying out journalistic work, informing the public as quickly as possible, and having a rigid, international ethics code. These ideas are intended form a skeleton of a definition rather than iron-clad norms representing a single, ideal way of performing journalism. In reality, the ideals of journalism are still being explored by scholars and compared in terms of their validity and relevancy, especially through the lens of social media logic (Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2019, Vos et al. 2019).

In addition to these normative ideals regarding a journalist's identity, it is relevant to inquire how news media professionals perceive their own roles and ideals. On top of the set of expectations that come with the normative set of principles, the role perceptions reflect on journalists' ideals of their professional performance (Donsbach, 2012). However, the roles which journalists assume are not the only concern: audiences also have certain expectations from journalists. Journalism is a precarious field (Vos et al., 2019) in that it is dependent on endogenous and exogenous factors, one of them being audiences. When referring to the normative roles of journalists, it is increasingly difficult to separate audiences from the equation, regardless of how journalists perceive their own function and role.

However, before moving on to audience expectations, it is necessary to first review normative journalistic roles from a professional perspective. Based on how journalists perceive their role and identity, we can build on Deuze's (2005) ideals to expand the definition of the journalistic identity more concretely. The ideal of objectivity contradicts with advocacy and opinionated journalism; detached watchdog journalism is challenged by participatory forms of journalism; and the ideal of autonomy runs in contrast to the commercial realities of the profession (Donsbach, 2012).

The collective ideals of journalism are flexible, as they are easily affected by culture (Donsbach, 2012; Hanusch & Hanitzsch 2017, Vos & Hanitzsch, 2018), media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2011), and the reality of journalistic practices on social media (Zuniga & Hinsley 2013, Barnard, 2016). Hanitzsch (2011) defined the normative ideals of a journalist's identity, while also considering the massive effects of cultures and systems on the journalistic identity. In his seminal work, he identified three core dimensions for building upon journalistic ideals: interventionism, which refers to a journalist's tendency to promote a certain set of values, rather than pursue pure objectivity; detachment, which refers to the classic role of a watchdog journalist; power distance, which refers to a journalist's relationship to centres of power in society and their tendency to challenge the elites or government officials; and finally, market orientation, which measures a journalist's relationship to their work in the current commercialized state of today's fragmented journalism landscape (Hermida, 2010).

Based on the results of a multicultural survey of journalists in 18 countries ($N = 1,800$), these four dimensions translate into four main archetypes of journalists (Hanitzsch, 2011). Firstly, there are detached watchdogs, who are critical of power structures; this is the most common archetype in Western democracies. Secondly, there are critical change agents, who tend

to push for meaningful societal change; this is the least audience-oriented archetype. Thirdly, there are opportunist facilitators, who tend to align themselves to power structures in society; unlike detached watchdogs and critical change agents, they are the least likely group to criticize government policies openly. Finally, there are populist disseminators, whose priority is to attract an audience and provide the most interesting information possible; they are the most audience-oriented group.

The normative roles for journalism have not remained static. In 2018, Vos and Hanitzsch revisited the normative framework of journalistic role conceptions using discourse analysis and presented 18 roles spreading across six functions. Some of these role conceptions were traditional, including the function of watchdog. However, others emerged as the result of technological advancements. For example, the curator role is a direct result of the Twitterization of journalism. When multiple sources share breaking news simultaneously, some journalists choose to get ahead of the curve by compiling information and editing it together in special ways, such as in infographics, recaps, long-form journalism, and curated Twitter threads. These roles change over time: they exist because scholarship is discussing them (Vos & Hanitzsch, 2018), but they are heavily dependent on context, culture, political dimensions, and audiences.

Now that I have presented the various normative characteristics of the journalistic identity, I will explore how these normative ideals, as well as journalists' perceptions of their own profession, translate to an audience that is heavily fragmented due to the current interconnection between journalism and social media (Barnard, 2016; Gulyas, 2017; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017; Molyneux & Mourao, 2019).

Affordances of the 'New' Media

The emergence of social media has brought about a cultural shift which has redefined the norms and practices of journalism (Gulyas, 2017). In an environment where 51% of news consumers use social media (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018), ignoring social media is not an option for journalists. They must quickly and rigorously integrate social media applications into their daily routine and normalize their role in producing news (Hermida, 2010; Barnard, 2016, Strömback, 2018; Molyneux, 2019).

While journalists are aided by several social media applications, this research will focus on how journalists use Twitter and, specifically, its unique benefits and hybrid structure as a journalistic medium (Gulyas, 2017; Hermida, 2013; Ottovordemgentschenfelde, 2017). On Twitter, journalists can immediately share information (Hermida, 2013), brand their journalistic identity (Hanusch & Bruns 2016; Brems, Temmerman, Graham, & Broersma, 2017), network (Gulyas, 2017), and, most importantly, interact with their audience in real time (Kim, 2015).

As a platform, Twitter allows journalists to complete several tasks simultaneously. From the audience perspective, Twitter provides a mix of entertainment, a source for breaking news, and a personal networking space (Vis, 2013). This hybrid structure offered by Twitter has resulted in a unique brand of journalistic practices. The classic gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), which attributes power to journalists when it comes to controlling the dissemination of information, has now evolved. In the post-Twitter era, the journalist is an information curator (Molyneux & Mourao, 2019). Socially networked journalism allows for the immediate dissemination of information. Any user can check a hashtag on their trending tab and instantly access breaking news from both official and unofficial sources. Since journalists no longer have a monopoly over information dissemination, they can utilize Twitter to act as information

curators rather than gatekeepers (Singer, 2005, Vos & Hanitzsch, 2018). While any Twitter user can learn about breaking news in real time, journalists still have the power to distinguish their presentation of the news by enriching the news value.

Gatekeeping theory is not the only quintessential theory which has been reshaped due to social media. Twitter is creating a new balance between media logic and social media logic (Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2019). As defined by Strömback (2008), media logic theory refers to specific narrative techniques adopted by the media to take the advantage of the medium and compete for the audience's attention. These competition strategies must take into consideration social media realities such as virality (Houston et al., 2018). Using popular hashtags, incorporating personal opinions into tweets, using click-bait shocking statements, and retweeting viral content are examples of how social media is inserting itself into the equation of media logic (Barnard, 2016; Houston et al., 2018; Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2019).

Twitter offers new options to journalists in three key areas: content variety, audience participation, and space for opinions. Although tweets are limited to 280 characters, journalists can attach multimedia to their tweets (Molyneux & Mourão, 2019) and achieve variety in their content, which ultimately leads to increased engagement with audiences; this is perhaps the biggest affordance of Twitter. From source verification to user-generated journalism (Barnard, 2016), the constant interactivity on Twitter allows journalists to shape their identities. User interaction also allows journalists to get instant feedback on their work.

The endless customization options on Twitter not only pave the way for utilitarian uses, such as fact-checking and networking with possible sources, but also allow journalists to use Twitter to brand themselves as unique characters (Brems et al., 2017), by using cover photos, expressing humour, and by sharing opinions along with their stories. Referring back to Deuze's

(2005) norms of journalistic profession, Twitter has not only changed the immediacy aspect by allowing the instant dissemination of breaking news, but also shifted the notion of objectivity and detachment by allowing journalists to display wider aspects of their personality. Twitter is therefore a stage upon which journalists can perform (Brems et al., 2017).

‘Old’ Identities Versus ‘New’ Media

The activity on Twitter goes beyond breaking the latest news, and journalists have adopted certain patterns of behaviour when it comes to incorporating microblogging into their daily routines. Several scholars have investigated journalists' Twitter content (Mourão, 2015; Molyneux, 2015, Bernard, 2016; Kim, 2016, Brems, 2017, Ottovordemgentschenfelde 2017). Journalists are mainly using their Twitter accounts to collect information, disseminate news, take notes, discuss journalism with their peers, engage with the public, and interact for personal reasons. Using Twitter has become such an indispensable part of the profession that abstinence from Twitter has potentially damaging effects for journalistic careers (Barnard, 2016).

The way that journalists are using Twitter's affordances is challenging the norm of objectivity. Because of increased interactivity on Twitter, combined with medium's tendency to favour short, concise, and briefly edited texts (Houston et al., 2018), along with an algorithm that favours either the newest or the most popular tweets, journalists are increasingly resorting to personal posts (Barnard, 2016; Brems et al., 2017). A content analysis of journalists' Twitter activity reveals that using humour, sharing opinions, and engaging personally with their audience are common practices (Gulyas, 2017; Mourão, 2015; Singer, 2005).

Based on the content of journalists' tweets, several scholars have defined journalistic behaviour on Twitter as 'hybrid' (Houston et al., 2018; Vis, 2013): while journalists do not entirely abandon their traditional roles as disseminators and news producers with an altruistic

public duty ideal (Zúñiga & Hinsley, 2013), the established norms and journalists' performances are changing and evolving.

In an attempt to describe this hybrid journalistic behaviour on Twitter in the context of existing journalist archetypes (Hanitzsch, 2011), the literature suggests that journalists are becoming not-so-detached watchdogs with a tendency towards interventionist behaviour and not-so-detached audience-oriented populist disseminators.

While journalists' Twitter accounts have been subjected to thorough investigation through content analyses, Twitter is ultimately not only a medium for journalists to express their views or to disseminate their work in a one-directional way (Deuze, 2005). Audience is a part of the equation, and regardless of how journalists perceive their job or what they think of their work on Twitter, reception of their work by their audience holds definitive power. While several experimental studies have examined how audiences perceive journalists' Twitter accounts, many aspects still need to be explored, especially when it comes to testing the effects of Twitter in countries with different media systems and with different cultural values.

Audience Perceptions of Journalists' Twitter Use

Audience perceptions are an important (Loosen & Schmidt, 2012) yet understudied aspect (Rauch, 2015; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009) of journalism studies. Journalistic work transforms into a public product only when it is accepted and consumed by an audience (Loosen & Schmidt, 2012). It is a crucial, external part of journalistic work.

The rise of Twitter has led journalists to interact with their audiences on a daily basis, and their performances on the platform has become a part of the journalist–audience equation. The relationship is described as a mutual circular interaction (Loosen & Schmidt, 2012), rather than

the one-way asymmetrical relationship which characterises gatekeeping theory (Thier, Abdenour, Walth, & Dahmen, 2019; Shoemaker, 2014).

A journalist's performance is associated with their perceived credibility (Thier et al., 2019), and Twitter offers a new stage with slightly different rules for building that trust. While journalists may value their traditional roles as detached, objective players, audiences are asking more from them: A two-wave U.S. survey suggests that audiences value journalists who adopt interpretive, active roles more than they value those who adopt detached, observer roles, although older members tend to prefer traditional observer roles in journalism (Vos, Eichholz, & Karaliova, 2019). The gap between journalists' view of their own profession and their audience's expectations of them has been explored in several other studies. A large, two-wave survey study found that, despite how journalists view their own work, the public values immediacy and news dissemination over detached watchdog duties and altruism (Zúñiga & Hinsley, 2013).

Carr and Bard (2018) studied millennials and post-millennials and found that given three choices of sources (i.e. a celebrity, a journalist with an objective-detached image, and a commentator), younger generations rated the objective journalist higher despite not recognizing the individual. Another striking finding in the study was the effect of media scepticism: the interpretive journalist was given high ratings only by participants with high trust of the media. Additionally, Jayeon-Lee (2015) found that participants provided higher ratings for the social media profiles of media professionals who disclosed more information. However, the self-disclosure had a negative effect on their professional evaluation of the journalist. The contradictory findings of the studies point back to the hybrid aspect of current journalism, which is driven by social media: While journalists are heavily involved in branding themselves and tend to disclose personal, subjective aspects of their personality, neither they nor their audiences have

entirely abandoned the traditional journalistic ideals of professionalism and objectivity (Loosen & Schmidt, 2012).

To explore this phenomenon, the first research question explores, in a quantitative way, how audiences perceive journalists' Twitter activity:

RQ1: What do audiences expect from journalists on Twitter?

Due to the hybrid nature of Twitter, it is difficult for journalists to embrace a pure form of objectivity with minimal detachment (Lasorsa et al. 2012). Moreover, objective and detached formats of journalism have been criticized for ignoring journalists' background. In their quantitative research based on interviews with reporters, Robinson and Culver (2019) concluded that when white reporters report from a purely objective point of view, they cover race in the United States from a less-comprehensive perspective. Additionally, Thier et al. (2019) found qualitative support for narratives which offer a solution over purely critical journalistic articles, although they emphasized the importance of 'active objectivity' when a journalist not only reports, but also interprets.

RQ2: How does the audience evaluate interpretive news dissemination by journalists on Twitter?

Due to Twitter's affordances, journalists can constantly engage with their audience. Journalists not only interact with their audiences, but also send social messages about their political views, thereby breaking the spiral of silence through their own interpretive community (Kim, 2015). Thus, the next set of research questions explores how audiences perceive the way journalists disclose information on Twitter.

RQ3: How do audiences evaluate the disclosure of personal information by journalists (such as political views)?

RQ3b: How do audiences evaluate the use of humour by journalists on Twitter?**Research Field**

This research was conducted in Turkey, as a goal was to explore audience perceptions in an environment with limited press freedom and a mainstream media which is almost entirely controlled by pro-government corporate structures (Tunç, 2018).

Most of the studies presented in the literature review have been conducted in Western contexts. Journalism is heavily influenced by the relevant political, economic, and cultural context, and the studies conducted in Western Europe assume a functional democracy and a free press (Vos & Hanitzsch, 2018). This hegemonic view does not reflect the reality for all culture and media systems, as journalism exists even when press freedom is limited and democracy is under threat. This study explores journalism in a semi-authoritarian hybrid context.

In the past, Turkey's media system resembled the polarized pluralist model defined in Hallin and Mancini's 2004 typology of the media system (Panayırıcı et al. 2016). However, because of increased pressure on the media following the 2016 coup attempt, Turkey's current mainstream media now lacks pluralism and remains polarized. The pluralism lacking in the mainstream media has since blossomed through online media, especially on Twitter. From journalists who were unable to keep their traditional media jobs to citizen journalists and increasingly online outlets are trying to fill the gap in reporting left by the mainstream media (Tunç, 2018). This project aims to explore the perceptions of an audience who lack the option of objective, impartial reporting in the mainstream media. Tsfatı (2010) argued that when people mistrust mainstream media outlets, they will inevitably seek an alternative. This research field presents an opportunity to explore the perceptions of an audience that is potentially distrustful of the media. The research context also encourages exploration of the relationship between

audience expectations and their perceived media trust. Hence, it is viable to pose a fourth research question.

RQ4: What are the effects of media trust and scepticism on journalist's roles on Twitter?

Methodology

The study employed a survey comprising quantitative questions borrowed from Vos et al. (2017), in addition to questions developed specifically for the research field of Turkey. The respondents were asked to rate 45 statements about journalists' Twitter activity, each of which corresponded to different dimensions on a 5-point Likert scale. The survey also included open-ended questions and several yes/no questions to generate descriptive insights related to the perceptions of an understudied audience.

The survey was distributed via the online survey platform SoSci between 18 August 2020 and 29 August 2020. For the entire survey, please see **Appendix 1**. Prior to the data collection, a pre-test was conducted, and the wording of several test questions was altered for clarity based on the feedback. The entire survey was first designed in English and then later translated to Turkish by the researcher, who is a native speaker with professional translation experience.

To secure the right audience for the survey, participants were required to have used Twitter. The first question of the survey filtered out respondents who stated that they were not Twitter users. A total of 587 respondents passed the filtering questions. Of them, 314 respondents successfully completed the survey, resulting response rate was 54%. Of the 314 participants who completed the survey, 14 did not answer the open-ended questions; hence, the analysis of the open-ended responses is based on 300 survey responses.

Sampling

The sample was recruited through convenience and snowball sampling methods ($N = 314$). A raffle was conducted, and the potential respondents could receive one of five Amazon.com.tr gift cards, which were purchased in advance. The online survey links were distributed through WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit. Specifically, I distributed the survey through my contacts in three big cities in Turkey (i.e., Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir) to capture a snapshot of the average Twitter user in the country. Most of the respondents (57%) lived in Istanbul. Another 23% of respondents lived in Ankara, and the rest lived in southern cities such as İzmir (18%), Muğla, and Mersin.

The sample age ($M = 32.8$, median = 32.5, $SD = 8.9$, min. = 18, max. = 62) was close to average age of the Turkish population, which is 31. Additionally, 57% were women, while 43% were men. The sample participants were highly educated: 41% of respondents reported graduating from a four-year university, 19% reported graduating from two-year university, and 0.06% reported completing a master's degree or higher. Similarly, 47% of the sample participants stated that they are full-time employees; an additional 12% reported being students, and 14% reported being unemployed, a reflection of current economic turmoil in the country.

When it came to their political views, the classical left-right spectrum was used. Respondents were asked to rate their political views from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). The mean ($M = 5.07$) reflects a centrist political view, which is promising for generalization purposes. To adapt the survey to the local context, the conservatism–secularism scale borrowed from electoral and academic studies in Turkey (Konda, 2010; Aydın et al. 2015) was also used. The mean ($M = 6.64$) for the Secular- Conservative scale shows that the sample leans towards secular/centrist views, which is a good starting point for safe insights from the sample. The

answers to the open-ended statement 'Please type your favourite top three journalists to follow on Twitter' further confirms the sample's affinity for a central ideology, which resulted in mainstream names being mentioned several times.

Social Media Use and News Sources

The sample participants were familiar with social media apps. In fact, 41% of the respondents reported 2–4 hours of social media use per day, and 32% reported 4–7 hours of social media use per day. When it came to using social media as a news source, 48% of the respondents reported using social media apps for 2–4 hours every day solely to learn about the news, and 21% reported using social media apps for 4–7 hours every day for news.

While the study mainly utilized quantitative questions, when it came to specific news sources, an open-ended and flexible approach was taken. The motivation behind this decision was to capture the unique Twitter-sphere of Turkey by not limiting respondents to only a handful of options representing mainstream media channels. An environment with limited media freedom, Turkey's social media scene, and Twitter in particular, features alternative news channels, including opposition media sources facing pressure on their traditional mediums, such as frequent government and regulatory fines on their TV channels; opposition politicians and activists who regularly tweet about current events; mainstream journalists who held top anchor positions in the country until they disclosed critical views; and journalists who have been exiled due to lawsuits. To obtain as much information as possible, a list of possible news sources featuring choices from traditional news channels to family and friends to email bulletins and Telegram groups, as well as an 'Other' option, which was utilized by more than 20 respondents, was implemented. Respondents could click as many sources as they wanted from the list. If they

clicked 'Websites of Media Organizations' or 'YouTube channels', then they were also asked to specify the organizations in a popup text field.

A total of 261 respondents listed Twitter as one of their news sources, which shows that the sample was right for the survey and that filtering out the respondents who do not use Twitter at the beginning of the survey potentially helped. Following Twitter, the most common responses to the question about respondents' top three news sources were friends (139), close relatives and family (121). Moreover, several people listed close connections such as their neighbours and significant others in the 'Other' section. A total of 263 respondents mentioned close personal connections as a news source, while 229 mentioned Instagram, and 208 mentioned television, which was the most-cited conventional medium for news. Facebook and WhatsApp, among the most popular apps in Turkey, also made the top three news sources for the sample, mentioned by 176 and 146 respondents, respectively.

Additionally, respondents were asked to submit their top three favourite journalists to follow on Twitter. A total of 290 respondents answered this open-ended question, while the remaining 24 either did not list any names or stated that they did not have anyone in mind. Beyond that, several respondents mentioned that they only check trending topics on Twitter and do not follow any specific handles on Twitter.

An analysis of the 290 responses was conducted: While some respondents noted media organizations, newspapers, celebrities, and politicians, they also named 151 individual journalists with Twitter accounts. The diversity of the sources suggests that despite the limited options which come with convenience and snowball sampling, the survey had managed to reach a group of people with different media consuming habits and different preferences of journalists to follow on Twitter. The mentions included mainstream journalists, journalists who are critical of

the government, journalists with close ties to government, alternative journalists, journalists in exile due to their work and/or expressed views, lifestyle journalists, citizen journalists, and sports journalists.

The most commonly cited names included the following: Fatih Portakal (110), Ahmet Hakan (51), Yılmaz Özdil (51), Uğur Dündar (50), Cüneyt Özdemir (43), İsmail Küçükkaya (42), Fatih Altaylı (27), İsmail Saymaz(27), Ece Üner (14), and Can Dündar (10). With the exception of Ahmet Hakan, who was recently promoted to editor-in-chief of *Hurriyet*, one of the largest newspapers in the country, which has been run since 2018 by a business person who has close ties to government, all the other individuals on the top ten list of most-followed journalists are critical of the government in varying styles and degrees. For example, Yılmaz Özdil is a columnist for *Sözcü*, the most circulated newspaper in the country, known for its opposition/centre, left/nationalist stance, while Uğur Dündar, a journalist with over 50 years of experience, also has a column in *Sözcü*, in addition to a TV programme on *Halk Tv*, a television channel with ties to the main opposition party, CHP. Additionally, Fatih Altaylı, who has been a mainstream name for over a decade, is currently a columnist and commentator. Cüneyt Özdemir was the anchor of *CNN Türk*, and currently he is carrying out his journalistic work via YouTube. İsmail Küçükkaya, Fatih Portakal, and Ece Üner –the only female journalist on the top ten list – are anchors for television news segments, and all three have distinct interpretive styles as presenters. Meanwhile, İsmail Saymaz is a reporter and investigative journalist most prominently known for his work on abuse cases in religious cults. Can Dündar is currently living in Germany after being prosecuted for his investigative journalistic work and serving prison time in Turkey.

It should also be noted that Fatih Portakal, who was the anchor of *Fox TV*, one of the most prominent mainstream television news channel in Turkey – which, unlike its U.S.

counterpart, is known for its critical stance against government – recently left his position, stating ‘his need to focus on himself’, which resulted in public speculation over whether he was pressured to leave.

All the names on the list, regardless of their chosen medium for reaching their audience or their political views, have one factor in common: They are known for their work through conventional mediums such as television or print newspapers, and they can be described as mainstream journalists. Of the 10 journalists on the list, only Ece Üner has a Twitter following of less than 1 million (362.6K). The rest have amassed between 1.1 million (Fatih Altaylı) and 7.7 million (Fatih Portakal) followers. Although they have amassed millions of followers on Twitter, the journalists on the list have or have had a mainstream media presence. None of them became prominent solely through Twitter, which indicates that the respondents found mainstream media presence to be an important aspect regarding following journalists on Twitter.

Results

Factor Analysis

A principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted for the 45 items with orthogonal rotation (varimax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to verify the sampling adequacy for the analysis. KMO score was .95, and all the KMO values for individual items were $> .89$, which is well above the acceptable limit of .5. Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(314) = 10,252; p < .001$, indicated that correlations between the items were sufficiently large for the PCA. An initial analysis of all 45 items was run to get a good grasp of the data. The scree plot showed that a factor extraction between 5 and 20 was sufficient. Based on the eigen values above one, a factor analysis with nine items using varimax rotation was conducted. Five factors had

factor loadings that passed the Kaiser's criterion and formed individual factors. Composite variables were then created from the valid factors to calculate the mean and for use in further regression calculations.

The items that clustered around the same factors suggest the following identities, which are shown in **Appendix 2** due to limited space, individual mean and SD scores for the items are provided in **Appendix 3**. Factor 1 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$, $M = 3.7$, $SD = 0.97$) represents an **interpretive educator** role for journalists on Twitter. The items in this cluster (e.g., 'I like it when journalists interpret the news when retweeting them', 'There journalists I follow solely for their interpretations of the current events', 'I learn a lot from certain journalists', 'Journalists should inform their followers about the current events') represent an interpretive role played by journalists, which comes with an additional expectation to learn from the journalist.

Factor 2 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$, $M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.86$) consisted of **interactive** activities performed by journalists on Twitter, such as replying to tweets, embedding images and videos into news stories, using Twitter threads as a form of reporting, opening live streams, and using infographics.

Factor 3 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$, $M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.91$) consisted of items that related to being critical of government policies, with items including but not limited to 'Journalists should criticize government policies' and 'Journalists should advocate for the causes they believe in'. This factor also included items such as 'There are journalists I follow because I find their political views similar to mine', 'I follow journalists whose house lifestyle is similar to mine', and 'I like to follow journalists who have a similar personality to mine'. In sum, this factor points to a model of a journalist who is critical of government, is not afraid to voice their views,

and advocates for the causes, while allowing their followers to empathize with them, which can be loosely defined as a **dissenter friend**.

Factor 4 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .8$, $M = 2.9$, $SD = 0.9$) represents a more classically defined journalist: a **distant expert** who refrains from disclosing any personal information and remains neutral when sharing news. In this cluster, items that featured dismay against personal posts (e.g., 'I don't like it when journalists share personal updates about themselves on Twitter' and 'Journalists should not disclose their political views on Twitter') were combined with items that emphasized the expertise of a journalist (e.g., 'I check a journalist's alma mater before I follow them on Twitter' and 'Journalists shouldn't talk about the issues on which they have no expertise on').

Factor 5 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$, $M = 3.3$, $SD = 1.06$) consisted of two items which emphasized a journalist's career highlights: 'I have to know the educational credentials of a journalist before I can trust them as a news source' and 'I have to know the previous experience of a journalist before I can trust them as a news source'.

The results of the factor analysis provided answers for RQ2, RQ3, and RQ3b and partial answers for RQ1. When it comes to the roles that emerged from the factor analysis, Factor 1 revealed that audiences favour journalists who embody an interpretive and informative role; this was the highest-rated factor, with a mean of 3.7. As for **RQ2**, audiences favour journalists who embody an interpretive role compared to those who embody other characteristics, such as being detached, interactive, or advocates. This is evidenced by Factor 2, which emphasized interactivity separately from interpretive news dissemination and had a mean of 3.4. The answer to **RQ3** can be found in Factor 3, which reveals that audiences favour advocacy journalism items as well as items associated with relatability. The factor had a mean of 2.9 and trailed behind other roles. Moreover, three yes/no questions were included in the survey to provide more insight into the interactive activities of journalists on Twitter. These questions were 'Have you ever unfollowed a journalist because they

shared personal information you were not interested in?', 'Have you ever unfollowed a journalist because they shared views that were not compatible with your views?', and 'Have you ever interacted (replied to a tweet, DM, etc.) with a journalist on Twitter?'

In response, 79% of the respondents stated that they have never unfollowed a journalist for disclosing personal information. Only 27% of the respondents have admitted to ever interacting with a journalist on Twitter. When it comes to unfollowing a journalist after finding out about their political views, 68% of the respondents said that they had never unfollowed a journalist for incompatible political views, while 32% of the respondents had done so. The items that favoured journalists who disclose more – for example, 'I find journalists who share personal updates more relatable compared to the ones who only share their work' ($M = 3.4$) – were rated higher than items with negative connotations against personal disclosure – for example, 'I don't like seeing personal updates from journalists on Twitter' ($M = 2.9$)

Regression Analysis

For **RQ4**, the models has been fitted for four different factors using *R*. Based on the results of the factor analysis, composite variables were constructed, and the reliability of the items were checked using Cronbach's alpha. Factor 5 was not included in the analysis, as it only contained two items, and the factor did not point towards a prominent role for journalists. The dependent variables are named based on the items they contain therein. Factor 1 is called 'Interpretive Educator', Factor 2 is called 'Interactive Reporter', Factor 3 is called 'Dissenter Friend', and Factor 4 is called 'Distant Expert'.

Media Trust (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$, $M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.04$) measure has been incorporated to the model as an Independent Variable. This item has been created as a composite variable from four different questions. Respondents were asked to respond the question "In general how much

do you trust the news you see on mainstream media?” on a 5-point Likert scale. Additional three questions asked the respondents to rate their trust in three sub-categories of news: Politics, Economy and Covid-19 related news. A composite variable including all the questions have been created. **Alternative Media Trust** measured through one question asking the respondents how much they trust the news on alternative media. **Social Media Use** is a categorical variable in which respondents were asked to rate their daily social media usage in hours in 5 point Likert scale (1: Less than an hour, 5: Over seven hours). **Social Media New Use** asked the respondents how much time they spend on social media for news. Additionally Age, Gender and two Ideology variables; Left-Right scale and Conservative-Secular scale has been added to model as controls. The results are displayed in **Table 1**.

The explanatory power of the models was on the lower side: Model 2, which used ‘Interactivity’ as the dependent variable explained only 25% of the variance. Additionally, Model 1 explained 18% of the variance, while Model 3 and Model 4 explained 23% and 20% of the variance, respectively.

Mainstream media trust had no significant effect on the evaluation of the interpretive role of journalists on Twitter, but the effect of alternative media trust was highly significant ($b = .21$, $p < .001$). Education had highly significant positive effect on the interpretive role ($b = .22$, $p < .001$), meaning that the more educated respondents rated this journalistic role higher. Age also had a significant effect on the interpretive role ($b = .01$, $p < .005$), meaning the older the respondent was, the more likely they were to rate the interpretive role higher.

Table 1*Results of Regression Analysis*

	DV: Interpretive	DV:Interactivity	DV: Critical	DV:Distant Expert
(Intercept)	1.502 (0.500)**	0.558 (0.429)	0.929 (0.458)*	0.369 (0.462)
Social Media Use	0.148 (0.079) [#]	0.145 (0.068)*	0.079 (0.073)	0.040 (0.073)
SM News Use	-0.063 (0.074)	0.001 (0.064)	0.013 (0.068)	0.090 (0.069)
Mainstream Media Trust	-0.005 (0.058)	0.133 (0.050)**	0.123 (0.053)*	0.328 (0.054)***
Education	0.217 (0.045)***	0.233 (0.039)***	0.231 (0.041)***	0.164 (0.041)***
Age	0.012 (0.006)*	0.010 (0.005) [#]	0.012 (0.005)*	0.005 (0.005)
Gender (1:F, 2:M)	-0.263 (0.104)*	-0.085 (0.089)	-0.148 (0.095)	0.183 (0.096) [#]
Ideology (Left:1, Right:10)	-0.005 (0.026)	0.009 (0.022)	-0.027 (0.023)	0.017 (0.024)
Conservatism (Ext. Cons: 1, Ext. Sec:10)	0.041 (0.022) [#]	0.035 (0.019) [#]	0.058 (0.020)**	0.015 (0.021)
Alt. Media Trust	0.215 (0.054)***	0.179 (0.046)***	0.161 (0.049)**	-0.020 (0.050)
R ²	0.186	0.245	0.232	0.204
Adj. R ²	0.162	0.223	0.210	0.180
Num. obs.	314	314	314	314
RMSE	0.883	0.757	0.807	0.815

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, [#]p < 0.1

Statistical models

Female respondents were more likely to rate this role higher ($b = -.2$, $p < .05$), although the effect of the significance was not high. Ideology and conservatism had no significant effects on the interpretive role, but the negative value for the ideology variable suggests that respondents on the left side of the spectrum were more likely to rate the items from this cluster higher compared to respondents with right-wing views. Similarly, the negative value of the coefficient for conservatism shows that an interpretive role is more likely to be favoured among the respondents when the said respondent has more secular views.

Mainstream media trust had no significant effect on “**Interactivity**” variable, but the effect of alternative media trust was highly significant ($b = .18, p < .001$). Education also had highly significant positive effect on the interactive role ($b = .23, p < .001$), meaning that similar to interpretive role, more educated respondents tended to rate this role higher. Social media use had a positive and significant effect on this variable ($b = .14, p < .05$). Ideology had no significant effect on this the interactive role, but the positive value for this variable suggests that respondents on the right side of the political spectrum are more likely to rate the items related to interactivity higher. Secular views had a very weak significance on interactivity ($b = .03, p < 0.1$), suggesting that those with more secular views were more likely to give interactive components a higher rating.

Model 4 used the ‘**Dissenter Friend**’ role as a dependent variable, and it the highest explanatory power among its counterparts. Mainstream media trust had a significant positive effect on the evaluation of critical role of journalists on Twitter ($b = .12, p < .5$). The effect of alternative media trust was also significant ($b = .16, p < .01$). Education had highly significant positive effect ($b = .23, p < .001$), as did age ($b = .01, p < .05$), meaning that older and more educated respondents were more likely to approve of journalists playing the role of a “Critical Friend” on Twitter. Ideology had no significant effect on this role, but the positive value of the ideology variable suggests that respondents on the right side of the political spectrum were more likely to favour this role for journalists. The conservatism variable had a positive significant effect on the reception of the critical role of journalists ($b = .05, p < .01$), indicating that the more secular an individual is, the more likely they are to favour this role, which makes sense sociologically, given that this variable is constructed as a composite of several items about journalists criticizing the current government of Turkey, which is notorious for their conservative agenda.

Mainstream media trust had a highly significant positive effect ($b = .33, p < .001$) on **Factor 4**, which included objectivity items along with expertise cues, while alternative media trust had no significant effect, and the value of the coefficient was negative. The only other control variable which had a significant effect on the 'Distant Expert' persona was education ($b = .17, p < .001$), which is a logical conclusion, given how the composite dependent variable included expertise cues.

Given the results of the four models, fitted with composite variables created based on the results of the factor analysis, perhaps the most striking finding was the duality and juxtaposition between the 'Interpretive Educator' and 'Distant Expert' roles and their relationship with media trust. More precisely, respondents with high mainstream media scepticism and high trust towards alternative media were more likely to give preference to the 'Interpretive Educator' persona, suggesting a need to obtain the analysis they crave, yet fail to obtain from mainstream media, leading them to look elsewhere for this information. This is supported by the relationship between alternative media trust and reception of the 'Interpretive Educator' persona. Journalists who can no longer secure a position in the mainstream media due to their views and the nature of their work are using Turkey's alternative media scene via livestreams, YouTube channels, Twitter threads, and more. On the other side of the spectrum, there are the 'Distant Experts'. This group is based on a composite variable consisting of items such as 'no personal disclosure from journalists' end', including but not limited to political views. The respondents who favoured this style of reporting were more trusting of the mainstream media, and as a result, they showed preference for the mainstream persona which they were familiar with.

Defining an ideal journalist on Twitter

The survey contained additional questions on audience's expectations from journalists. One of the questions included a list of adjectives and the respondents were asked to rate the adjectives based on their idea on how to best complete the sentence "I think journalists should be more...on Twitter" on a Likert scale. Mean scores for this item are given in Table 2. Additionally, there were two open-ended questions. One of the questions was a follow-up from the previous question which contained the list of adjectives. Respondents were asked to add their own adjectives to the open-ended section.

Table 2

Ratings of different expectations from journalists: "Journalists should be more ... on Twitter"

	Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Objective	4.2	1.06	Active	4.06	1.07
Informative	4.14	1.07	Available	3.97	1.05
Professional	4.13	1.02	Down to Earth	3.92	1.04
Brave	4.12	1.03	Interactive	3.8	1.06
Sincere	4.1	1.03	Humorous	3.8	1.14
Critical	4.07	1.03	Activist	3.7	1.13

There weren't any drastic differences between the ratings of the adjectives. The highest rated definition was "Objective", while the lowest rated was "Activist". This is particularly interesting when combined with the information about respondents' list of "Top 3 journalists to follow on Twitter". As mentioned earlier, the respondents mentioned names with distinct interpretive styles. Moreover, the "Interpretive Educator" role was the highest rated persona as explained in the results for the Factor Analysis. These insights suggest that, the objectivity in respondents' mind is closer to Their's (2015) active objectivity rather than Deuze's (2005) detached objectivity.

Responds to the open-ended question have been analysed. Out of 314, 14 respondents left the open-ended questions empty. Out of the remaining 300 responses, 40% of them included the words in the original list or repeated them. “Brave”, “Active” and “Objective” were most repeated words by the respondents on the open-ended section. The question has still resulted in unique responses: Several respondents stated that they demanded more “Clarity” from the journalists on Twitter. Some defined clarity as *“using a good, clear Turkish and expressing their views clearly”* while some interpreted it as *“being consistent with presented views and (their) actions”*.

“Trustworthiness” was another addition to the list. One respondent (33,F, Accountant from Istanbul) mentioned that journalists *“need to avoid speculative stories on Twitter just to get more cheap clicks and always provide evidence when they post stories”*

Moreover “Brave” was contextualized by even more respondents as the word is understood and used by the respondents as “Having no fear while expressing views”. This sentiment has been repeated in the next open-ended question (*“How would you describe your favourite journalist?”*).

Answers from the respondents also helped contextualize the expectation of “being more active”. While a lot of respondents have simply repeated the word “Active” in the open-ended response box, some respondents have given context. As one respondent (28, F, Homemaker from Istanbul) put it *“They need to be more active and talk about the important issues in this society”*. Several respondents not only demanded “more activity” from journalists who are already on Twitter also stated that *“they wished more journalists were on Twitter”*.

Another open-ended question resulted in relatively more open and richer results comparatively. The respondents were asked to think about their favourite journalist and to describe them in a few sentences. Majority of the respondents opted for one- or two-word answers but there were still insightful and longer answers. The responses were analysed using axial coding method as described by Weerakkody(2009). As majority of the responses were short, coding was done

manually. The respondents' descriptions of their favourite journalists created six different patterns which overlapped with the results of the qualitative factor analysis in certain cases.

The "interpretive journalist" description recurred in the open-ended descriptions of the respondents' favourite journalists. Some respondents took the time to describe the specific kind of interpretive style of their favourite journalists. One respondent stated that they liked the historical references in journalists' content, while another prefers their favourite journalist because "they ask us questions during their broadcasts and make us think.". Respondents listed several qualities along with interpretivism such as "humorous style", "ability to empathize with their viewers", "down-to-earth personality" and "using an everyday language". Some comments also listed "educative" qualities of their favourite journalists. As summarized by a respondent (29,F, Teacher from Istanbul): *"(They are) sincere, trustworthy and more importantly informative. A journalist has more impact on Twitter than a teacher. My favourite journalist is very factual on Twitter"*

Individual personality traits that made journalists endearing in the eyes of their followers extended their professional work. Respondents stated that their favourite journalist is "an animal-lover, just like me", "very maternal and always educating", "(they) are like one of us, always with the common people", "very sympathetic person".

One trend that became more visible with qualitative descriptions was how journalists who display activist or advocacy journalism qualities were depicted as a "hero". Many people described their favourite journalists as "brave" and "tells the truth despite all the political pressure". Respondents also praised their favourite journalist for their political views whether it is "nationalism", "feminism" or "Kemalism". One respondent (23, F, Student from Ankara) described their favourite journalists as follows: *"(They) always side with the oppressed and never scared of the pressure"*. A similar sentiment was the following: *"(They) keep telling the truth without worrying what would happen to them. (They) are fearless"* (26, M, Worker from İzmir)

There were a few comments describing a journalist who is detached but they were not as prominent as “Interpretive” and “Advocacy” qualities. “My favourite journalist never get (himself) involved with politics” says a respondent (21,M, Worker from Istanbul) while another respondent (21, F, Student from Istanbul) praised their her favourite journalists for “not expressing dissenting opinions for the sake of it, even when (they) criticize, they are objective and their criticisms are not hurtful”

Discussion

This research project aimed to explore journalistic role perceptions from the point of view of an understudied audience. While Twitter users in Turkey, appreciated universally acknowledged roles such as a watchdog, the results also showed differences. These differences stemmed from both the research context and the medium-Twitter, which updates the classic archetypes due to its fast and interactive structure that re-shaped the journalism practices.

The results offered an amalgamation of the definitions of journalistic role perceptions by Deuze(2005) and Hanitzsch& Vos(2018). The classic watchdog archetype emerged as an interpretive and educative archetype. The “Interpretive Educator” archetype emerged as the highest rated factor from the factor analysis, which combines both political and everyday Hanitzsch&Vos(2018) dimensions of journalistic work. The respondents rated the interventionist and active dimensions higher compared to the passive dimensions however “Objectivity” was the highest rated quality for a journalist. Moreover, several respondents mentioned “Objectivity” as a quality they admire in journalists, despite listing journalists with highly interpretive styles among their favourite journalists. The results show that the line between neutrality and interventionism has gotten blurrier but this blurry outlook can still lead to new and hybrid archetypes. The “new” objective journalist for Turkey’s Twitter users is reminiscent of Thier’s(2015) active yet objective journalist. The results suggest a model of a journalist who is active, interpretive, informative yet still approaches to their

reports with an objective approach. This archetype can be thought of the result of conducting the study in a field without a functioning free media. Journalism scholarship has long assumed that democracy and free press “has to go” hand in hand, but the studies in understudied contexts such as Southeast Asia has shown that the journalists in countries with democracy struggles form new roles and archetypes (Hanitzsch&Vos, 2018). Re-thinking objectivity in environments with press freedom issues will help to recontextualize classical archetypes. If a journalist is reporting on the economic indicators and the government is hostile towards news about fragility of the country’s economy, in that case would stating the foreign currency exchange rates are at an all-time high with an upward trajectory be subjective? The environment with limited press freedom might have pushed the audiences to seek more interpretive needs however this study doesn’t have enough qualitative data to investigate the phenomena in depth.

The hybrid archetypes are a result of both research field and the medium. Twitter as a medium, pushes journalists to be more active and interactive. The less they Tweet, the faster they risk being forgotten. As Barnard (2016) put it, being detached is not an option anymore for many journalists. The results show that Twitter users in Turkey crave more activity from the journalists as well. “Interactivity” factor was second highest rated factor. Moreover, many respondents stated that “journalists should be more active on Twitter” when responding to open-ended question. When Twitter added to the equation the ideal journalist becomes a recipe with a dash of personality. Journalists’ whole personality and their political views as well as cases they personally advocate for come in full display on Twitter. The Dissenter-Friend role emerged as a hybrid factor combining critical views with a journalists’ relatability. Respondents rated journalists’ relatable personality traits together with their critical views. This archetype which was rated as the third most popular factor is almost like a friend with critical, sharp views for the audiences. The sentiment for a “friendly” journalist was echoed on open-ended questions as well. Several respondents described their favourite

journalist as “humorous”, “fun”, “charismatic” as if they were describing their favourite TV character: A relatable, humorous journalist with their own unique interpretive style with particular political views.

The aspect of Twitter being a performance stage for journalists can be universal but the way advocacy role is perceived suggests that the audience of Turkey attributes a special importance towards journalists who are critical. While the “Activist” was the least desired quality for a journalist, “Brave” and “Critical” were rated higher compared to activist. Moreover, in open-ended responses respondents have discussed their favourite journalist’ criticisms against the government using the word “fearless”. Critical journalist has an almost hero-like reception among Turkish audiences, a figure who has no fear of prosecution and always after the truth.

One of the main characteristics of Turkey as a research field was low Media Trust. Previous research had found that high mainstream media trust had a positive effect on audience’s tendency to favour interpretive journalists (Carr & Bard, 2018). Regression analysis on this project showed that, for Turkey’s audience this effect was only present for “Detached Expert” role. The main positive effect of media trust on Interpretive journalist role came from alternative media trust. As Tsfaty (2010) stated, when mainstream media trust decreases people seek an alternative. It seems alternative media and interpretive journalists who found a spot for themselves in the alternative media realm is up to fill the possible void.

This study aimed to present insights of a Twitter audience using multiple analysis methods such as factor analysis and regression, as well as several open-ended questions. Results point to hybrid roles for journalists which seems to be evolving depending on cultural context and the changes on the journalism as a profession itself, however one generalizable insight from the study was that a classic “watchdog” role is always regarded highly for journalists. The role has only evolved to include more active, interactive and interpretive dimensions in its definitions.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was originally designed as a qualitative study to obtain rich, complex insights from the audience. This exploratory approach was dropped and redesigned due to hardship that came with Covid-19 Pandemic. Majority of the potential participants for a focus group study were on a more flexible home-office working schedule, at the time of research design process. As a result, the study has been re-designed as a quantitative survey with only a few open-ended questions. Despite the evident problems that come with snowball and convenience sampling, the insightful yet short answers given to the open-ended questions show a potential for a qualitative study in the future. A series of interviews or focus groups which would incite a vivid discussion on “why the audiences like journalists’ certain activities” and “what does the roles of journalists represent” for the broader definition of a journalists’ identity can make for a more insightful study in the future.

Another limitation as mentioned came with snowball and convenience sampling. Despite the high number of respondents and the sample’s diversity in media consuming habits, a focus group approach in the future or professional quota sampling representative of Turkey’s demographics can generate more insights. Results of the quantitative data showed that Age, Education and Gender had different effects on the reception different roles for journalists. A multi-method approach with special attention to different demographics has the potential to make for a more insightful study for a research field that needs more attention from international journalism scholarship with its unique qualities.

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Appendix

1-Survey Questions

1-On a typical day how much do you use social media?

(1 to 5 scale, 1: Never 2: Less than an hour 3: 2-4 Hours 4: 4-7 hours 5: More than 7 hours 2-

On a typical day, how much do you use the following apps to get your news from?

(Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Telegram Groups, News apps such as Google News, E-mail Bulletins) (1 to 5 scale, 1: Never 2: Less than an hour 3: 2-4 Hours 4: 4-7 hours 5: More than 7 hours

3- Please type the top 3 sources you get your news from below:

*Printed Newspapers

*TV

*Radio

*Twitter

*Whatsapp Groups

*Facebook

*Telegram Groups

*E-mail Services

*Websites of the newspapers (Please state: ...)

*Youtube Channels of news organizations

* Youtube channels of journalists

*Instagram

*Through social connections such as friends

Other: Please state:

4- Please type top 3 journalists you follow regularly on Twitter

5 A- In the next section, you will be asked to rate certain statements about activities of journalists on Twitter. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement 1 to 5 Scale (1-I completely disagree, 3-neither agree-nor disagree, 5-I completely agree) I like it when journalists interpret the news when retweeting them

There are journalists I seek for their interpretation of the current events on Twitter

There are journalists I follow solely for their commentary on Twitter

There are journalists I follow solely for their analysis on Twitter

Journalists should share their predictions on important issues such as Politics, Economy etc.

There are journalists I learn a lot from

Journalists should be informative on their Twitter posts

Journalists should provide background information when sharing news on Twitter Journalists should not interpret the news, they should simply share them

I don't like seeing retweets of the journalists with comments

When I can't find the journalists I like on mainstream media channels, I follow them on Twitter

5-B

I like it when journalists disclose their political views on Twitter

A journalist is in "opposition" by the nature of their job

There are journalists I follow because we have similar political views

Journalists should disclose their political views on Twitter

There are journalists I follow because they criticize the same aspects as I dislike about the government

Journalists should not disclose their personal views on Twitter

Journalists should advocate for the causes they believe in

Journalists should be critical of the policies they don't like on Twitter

Journalists should have integrity on Twitter

Journalists should exemplify the values they promote through their lifestyle

I prefer following journalists whose lifestyle is similar to me

Social media is a place for all journalists to be more comfortable when sharing their views

I don't like seeing personal updates from journalists on Twitter such as (new baby, marriage announcements, pictures of their pets, partners, holiday pictures etc.)

I always look for journalists' educational credentials in their Twitter bio before following them

It is important for me to see a journalists' education credentials on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source'

It is important for me to see a journalists' previous work experience on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source'

Journalists should not interpret the topics out of their expertise area

Only journalists who are experienced in economy news should interpret economic indicators

I like it when journalists share funny memes or comments on Twitter

I find journalists who share personal updates more relatable compared to the ones who only share their work

I regularly watch journalists' YouTube/Instagram/Periscope streams via Twitter

The more I know about a journalists' lifestyle the less I like their work

I am more likely to follow journalists who are like me

5-C

I like interacting with journalists on Twitter

Journalists on Twitter should take time to reply to comments from their followers

I am more likely to click on news stories with audiovisuals on Twitter

Journalists should use infographics more often on Twitter

I like it when journalists talk about the current events on livestreams

I like it when journalists present their stories in well-edited videos on Twitter instead of conventional methods such as articles

I like it when journalists share their thoughts on certain issue through Twitter threads

I like it when journalists post about popular hashtags on Twitter

5D- Yes/ No Questions

Have you ever unfollowed a journalist because they shared personal information you were not interested in (Y/N)

Have you ever unfollowed a journalist because they shared views that were not compatible with your views?

Have you ever interacted (reply to Tweet, DM etc.) with a journalist on Twitter (Y/N)

5E- Following adjectives complete the sentence below:

I think journalists should try to be moreon Twitter.

Please rate the adjectives depending on to what extent you agree with the statement (1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

Objective

Active

Activist

Informative

Available

Professional

Humorous

Down-to-Earth

Brave

Sincere

Interactive

Critical

Demographics

Please state your age

Please choose the last degree you have completed (Primary school/middle school/high school/2 year diploma programme/graduate degree/post graduate-degree

Please state your gender: M/F/Non-Binary

Please choose your employment status (Student, Unemployed, Retired, Part-Time working, Full-time workin, Other: Please type)

What is your occupation?

On a scale from 1 to 10 please state where you stand on Conservative-Secular Scale

On a scale from 1 to 10 please state where you stand on Left Right scale

Please choose the state you currently reside

Please choose the state you were born in

Appendix 2- Factor Loadings (Varimax Rotation)

Item	Factor					Dimensions
	1	2	3	4	5	
I follow journalists on Twitter to support Free Media	.80	.1	.16	-.01	.09	Interpretive Educator
I learn a lot from journalists	.78	.18	.26	.06	.19	
When I can't find journalists I like on mainstream media channels, I follow them on Twitter	.77	.06	.1	.2	.14	
I like it when journalists interpret the news when retweeting	.76	.27	.16	.23	-.05	
Journalists should inform their readers about the current events	.74	.24	.23	-.03	.13	
I follow my favourite journalists on Twitter to support them	.73	.08	.23	.05	.14	
Journalists should share their predictions on important issues such as Politics, Economy etc.	.73	.19	.22	.06	.00	
There are journalists I seek for their interpretation of the current events on Twitter	.72	.30	.09	.07	.07	
There are journalists I solely follow for their commentary on Twitter	.72	.30	.15	.09	.03	
Journalists should always share informative posts on Twitter	.69	.13	.10	.02	.03	
I like it when journalists post about popular hashtags on Twitter	.48	.35	.39	.06	.09	Interactivity
Journalists should use infographics more often on Twitter	.31	.65	.24	.22	.16	
I am more likely to click on news stories with audiovisuals on Twitter	.34	.62	.15	.25	.07	
Journalists should use Twitter threads more often when sharing their work	.35	.62	.16	.20	.32	

I like it when journalists share their thoughts on certain issues through Twitter threads	.41	.60	.31	.17	.08
Journalists on Twitter should take time to reply to comments from their followers	.30	.59	.19	.09	.17
I like interacting with journalists on Twitter	.41	.50	.18	.05	.11
I like it when journalists talk about the current events on livestreams	.32	.48	.21	.04	.09
I like it when journalists present their stories in well-edited videos on Twitter instead of conventional methods such as articles	.18	.48	.06	.40	-.02
					"Dissenter/ Friend"
There are journalists I follow because we have similar political views	.25	.12	.74	.25	.10
Journalists should disclose their political views on Twitter	.27	.33	.70	.07	-.08
I prefer following the journalists whose lifestyle is similar to mine	.20	.03	.54	.27	.32
I prefer following the journalists whose personality is similar to mine	.22	.18	.54	.22	.32
Journalists should advocate for the causes they believe in from Twitter	.48	.17	.52	.15	.08
There are journalists I follow because they criticize the same aspects as me about the government	.38	.28	.51	.06	.13
A journalist is in "opposition" by the nature of their job	.19	.15	.45	.24	.2
Journalists should criticize government policies on Twitter	.28	.34	.42	.05	.32

I check a journalists' alma mater before following them on Twitter	.03	.12	.11	.74	.23	"Distant Expert"
The more I know about a journalists' life the less I like their work	.08	.08	.21	.72	.06	
I don't like seeing personal updates from journalists on Twitter	.05	.19	.14	.72	.09	
Journalists shouldn't disclose their personal views on Twitter	-.05	.12	.10	.59	.08	
Journalists should not interpret the topics out of their expertise area	.21	.18	.01	.44	.01	
It is important for me to see a journalists' education credentials on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source	.14	.21	.27	.41	.65	Background Cues
It is important for me to see a journalists' previous work experience on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source	.23	.33	.31	.26	.57	

Appendix 3

Descriptive Statistics for individual items

Item	Mean	SD
Journalists should inform their readers about the current events	3.99	1.24
I prefer following the journalists whose personality is similar to mine	3.94	1.23
I learn a lot from journalists	3.8	1.18
Journalists should advocate for the causes they believe in from Twitter	3.76	1.48
Journalists should always share informative posts on Twitter	3.71	1.25
Journalists should share their predictions on important issues such as Politics, Economy etc.	3.7	1.21
Journalists should criticize government policies on Twitter	3.69	1.89
I follow journalists on Twitter to support Free Media	3.62	1.28
There are journalists I seek for their interpretation of the current events on Twitter	3.61	1.20
I follow my favourite journalists on Twitter to support them	3.6	1.23
I am more likely to click on news stories with audiovisuals on Twitter	3.59	1.11
I like it when journalists post about popular hashtags on Twitter	3.58	1.26
I like it when journalists talk about the current events on livestreams	3.57	1.23
There are journalists I follow because they criticize the same aspects as me about the government	3.54	1.20
I like it when journalists interpret the news when retweeting	3.52	1.23
When I can't find journalists I like on mainstream media channels, I follow them on Twitter	3.5	1.22

Journalists on Twitter should take time to reply to comments from their followers	3.5	1.11
There are journalists I solely follow for their commentary on Twitter	3.48	1.17
I like it when journalists share their thoughts on certain issues through Twitter threads	3.45	1.08
Journalists should use Twitter threads more often when sharing their work	3.44	1.07
I like interacting with journalists on Twitter	3.4	1.13
It is important for me to see a journalists' previous work experience on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source	3.4	1.15
There are journalists I follow because we have similar political views	3.38	1.3
Journalists should use infographics more often on Twitter	3.34	1.02
I prefer following the journalists whose lifestyle is similar to mine	3.34	1.89
It is important for me to see a journalists' education credentials on their Twitter bio before I can trust them as a news source	3.34	1.18
Journalists should not interpret the topics out of their expertise area	3.32	1.21
Journalists should disclose their political views on Twitter	3.28	1.21
A journalist is in "opposition" by the nature of their job	3.2	1.21
I like it when journalists present their stories in well-edited videos on Twitter instead of conventional methods such as articles	3.11	1.17
I don't like seeing personal updates from journalists on Twitter	2.89	1.23
The more I know about a journalists' life the less I like their work	2.88	1.2
Journalists shouldn't disclose their personal views on Twitter	2.84	1.23
I check a journalists' alma mater before following them on Twitter	2.61	1.15

