

Japan and Japanese Image in Turkish Newspapers

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Abstract

Country image can be defined as the total of beliefs and impressions that one has about a particular country. Country image is created by different kinds of knowledge which are gained directly or indirectly over long periods of time. Today, having positive image in the eyes of foreign countries are very important for all the countries. Because, a positive image can provide many benefits to a country. There might be a lot of different elements effecting the formation of country image. One of the most important elements is the news about the country on the media. Country image may be created, gained, and changed through media representation. On Turkish Media Japan and Japanese are in the different news. To analyse these news will come in useful to understand the image of Japan and Japanese on Turkish Media. It is also important to analyse the national image of a foreign country to develop mutually beneficial relationships among those countries. Analysing media news will benefit to investigate the representation of national image of Japan. This study aims to analyse the media coverage of Japan news 1-31 March 2013, looking at the news used by three selected Turkish newspapers, Zaman, Posta and Hurriyet. The number of the academic studies concerning the image of Japan in Turkish media is very limited. The study has real importance in this respect. In the study, content analysis method has been used. The news about Japan and Japanese was mostly neutral. But positive news was more than negative news. The top three news topics about Japan and Japanese people are economy, culture and art and natural and nuclear disasters.

Keywords: Country image, Japan, Japanese, news, newspaper

Introduction

Country image can be described as thoughts, beliefs or impressions of people about a particular country. A country's image may differ in the eyes of its own citizens and foreigners. Country image may change by time.

Nowadays having a good image is important for all countries. Because thanks to the created positive image, it will be easy to publicise and to be acceptable for this country among the world. Thus, the way for sharing its own values will be opened. And this situation will provide important opportunities to be a strong brand for the countries which have positive images. For this reason, it can be said that countries can be evaluated as a brand (Gültekin, 2005: 128). Country image can affect the global competition position of a country (Zeng et al., 2011: 320).

There are some kinds of affects to gain an international positive image for a certain country. The real aim is to gain a positive reputation in the eyes of target groups. Today, meanwhile people and organizations can be evaluated with their images, countries are evaluated with their own international image. For this reason lots of important policies are produced to have positive images in the mind when the country's name is called. To have a good international image should be seen as a governmental policy. Today a country's international image is one of the most important ways which provide effectiveness in the eyes of international public opinion (Gültekin, 2005: 128).

There are different kinds of ways to be able to determine the image of a country in the eyes of the other countries. One of them is to examine the news on the press of another country about the country and its citizens. When it is examined that how and how much the country and its citizens are taken place in the news contents, it is possible to gain information about the image of that country. In Turkey there are few scientific studies to determine the images of foreign countries by using the news in printed media. The studies about the representation of Japan in Turkish newspapers are rarely met. The aim of this study is to determine the image of Japan in Turkish daily newspapers. To determine the representation of Japan and Japanese people in Turkish press is important to understand the image of Japan and Japanese people in Turkey. To determine the image of Japan in Turkish daily newspapers is thought to provide support to international public relations area.

Theoretical Background

A country's image is formed according to its history (Boulding 1959: 122), geography, touristic attractions, products, famous people, political speech, and some social problems such as rebellions, citizenship rights, attacks to environment, racism, economical problems, poverty, violence and other infringements of law (Kotler ve Gertner 2002: 251). In addition to these, it can be said that there are lots of other factors for the formation of a country's image. According to Dowling political attitude, cultural reflections, brand images, political and cultural leaders, tourists, tourism potential, export, sports activities and sports stars, scientific successes and

media news are taken place among these other factors (Peltekoğlu 2007: 577). As we understand from the context, media news are one of the factors that effects the formation of a country image.

In literature there are some studies that examine country image by using media representations. One of them is to define the image of Turkey in South Korea Press. In this study The Korea Times and The Korea Herald newspapers were examined. In the study five categories which was named as “politics”, “economy”, “sports”, “history/culture” and “others” were formed. As a result of this study, it was determined that Turkey was represented mostly with political news (Çolakoğlu and Çolakoğlu, 2005: 147).

In Turkey, the number of the studies to determine the image of Japan are limited. In a study that aims to compare Japan and Chinese images, it was determined that general country images of these countries were differentiated. Finally, in the study, it was found that the image of Japan is more positive than the image of China (Kurtuluş and Bozbay, 2011: 274).

It was determined that the images of well-developed and developing countries are differentiated. Japan and China are mostly differentiated according to their specific product image. According to the respondents, the image of digital photograph machines produced in Japan have more positive than the image of digital photograph machines produced in China (Kurtuluş and Bozbay, 2011: 274).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan commissioned a Turkish research company to conduct a survey about the image of Japan in Turkey from February 14 to March 14, 2012. The opinion poll was carried out face to face in 10 major cities in Turkey and featured the participation of 1,012 people between the ages of 18-65 (http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2012/5/0522_03.html).

When asked how much interest they had in Japan, 61.6% of respondents answered "very interested" or "rather interested". Moreover, 83.2% of the respondents reported that Japan-Turkey relations were "friendly relations" or "almost friendly relations". Regarding aspects of interest in Japan, 60.3% of the respondents replied "science/technology", far more than the 29.7% that answered "culture/arts". On the topic of areas in which the two countries should strengthen their cooperative relations, 56.4% of the respondents replied "science/technology". With regard to impression of the Japanese, the most given two answers were "careful/diligent/honest (70.8%)" and "respect traditional values (31.6%)". When asked which country is an important partner of Turkey, Japan was in second place with 13.7% of the responses, behind "Islamic nations" at 29.9% (following Japan was the "United States" (8.4%), "Middle Eastern countries" (7.5%), the "EU" (6.9%), and "South Korea" (6.5%)). With regard to which country is an important partner of Turkey in East Asia, 45.4% of the respondents said "Japan", followed by "South Korea" at 27.6% and "China" at 4.9% (http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2012/5/0522_03.html).

When asked the respondents about their awareness of matters relating to the earthquakes that struck both Turkey and Japan in 2011, many Turkish people answered that they were aware of activities, with 55.7% answering that they were aware of the sending of a rescue team to Japan by Turkey's Government for the Great East Japan Earthquake, 65.2% saying they were aware of the sending of emergency aid to Turkey by Japanese Government for the October 2011 earthquake, and 63.0% saying they were aware that Japanese NGO members that had visited Turkey to assist with disaster relief had fallen victim to an earthquake in Van. In addition, 60.5% said that their impression of Japan had become better in the wake of the passing of the member as a result of the earthquake in Van

(http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2012/5/0522_03.html).

As for visits to Japan, 2.8% of respondents answered that they have visited Japan. When asked the reason why they had not visited, the order of answers was such that 39.4% said, "Japan is geographically far away", 21.7% said "expensive country", and 15.1% said "lack of information on Japan". In addition, about tourism to Japan, Turkish people expressed interests in different aspects in the order of "ancient cities/history (temples and shrines and so on; 39.4%)", "shopping (29.8%)", and "watching traditional culture (Kabuki and so on; 29.0%)" (http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2012/5/0522_03.html).

Methodology

In this study, content analysis method was used. In the study web sites of the most read daily newspapers in Turkey were examined between the dates 1-31 March 2013. Their web sites addresses are www.hurriyet.com.tr, www.posta.com.tr, www.zaman.com.tr. In a monthly period, 459 news which include "Japan" and "Japanese" words in three newspapers were analyzed. After coding process, all data were transformed to computer and evaluated. In the analysis of data, frequency distribution and Chi-square Tests were applied.

In the study, only the news which include the words "Japan" and "Japanese" were examined. Although these words were used by some columnists in their columns, they were not used in the study.

Research questions are:

- 1-What are the numbers and distributions of the news which include the words "Japan" or "Japanese" according to the newspapers?
- 2-What are the distributions of the news which include the words "Japan" or "Japanese" in the title and content?
- 3- What are the distributions of the news which include the words "Japan" or "Japanese" according to their topics?

4-What are the quantities of using photographs in the news?

5-What kind of approaches to Japan or Japanese are there in the news contents?

In the study, firstly the numbers of the news included the terms Japan and Japanese and their distributions according to the newspapers were determined. Then, the distribution of the news according to topics and which the top topics were determined. Finally the approaches of the representers of these news towards Japan and Japanese were examined. Because these approaches may form various impressions on the readers of the news.

The effect of each news on the readers about the country and its citizens was evaluated by using Çolakoğlu and Çolakoğlu's (2005: 142-143) criterion as "positive", "negative" and "neutral". During this evaluation, if we foresee a prejudice towards Japan and Japanese in the news, this news was evaluated as a negative news. Even if the news did not have bias, if it is presented with unpleasant and negative style for the readers about Japan and Japanese, this kind of news was taken place in negative category. On the other hand, the news which praise Japan and Japanese or give a positive impression about Japan and its citizens was taken place in positive category. Neutral news can be identified as the news which doesn't create neither positive nor negative impressions about Japan and Japanese for the readers or the news which sometimes include both positive and negative properties together.

Findings

In this part; the distribution of the news according to the newspapers about Japan and Japanese, the percentage of photograph usage in the news, news' topics and approaches in the news are studied.

1- Distribution of the News Which Include the Term "Japan" or "Japanese" according to the Newspapers

Between the dates 1-31 March 2013, 459 news which include "Japan" or "Japanese" words in the newspapers in Turkey were analyzed.

Table 1: Distribution of the News in the Newspapers Which Include the Term “Japan” or “Japanese” in Their Contents

Newspapers	n	%
Hürriyet	155	33.8
Posta	39	8.5
Zaman	265	57.7
Total	459	100

As seen on the distribution of the news in the newspapers which include the term “Japan” or “Japanese”, the most news with 57.7 % were taken place in Zaman Newspaper (Table 1).

2- The Distributions of the News Which Include the Words “Japan” or “Japanese” in the Title and in the Content

The tables 2 and 3 show the distributions of the news which include the words “Japan” or “Japanese” in the title and in the content.

Table 2: Distributions of The News of Which Titles Include the Words “Japan” or “Japanese”

Newspapers	n	%
Japan	67	14.6
Japanese	45	9.8
None	347	75.6
Total	459	100

Although the titles of the news include “Japan” word with 14.6 % and “Japanese” word with 9.8%, 75.6 of the titles of the news don’t include none of these words.

Table 3: Distributions of The News Which Include the Words “Japan” or “Japanese” in Their Contents

Newspapers	n	%
Japan	264	57.5
Japanese	64	13.9
Both Japan and Japanese	131	28.5
Total	459	100

As seen on the Table 3; 57.5 % of the news include the word “Japan” , 13.9 % of the news include the word “Japanese” and 28.5 % of the news include both of the words “Japan” and “Japanese” in their contents.

3- The Distributions of the News which Include the Words “Japan” or “Japanese” According to Their Topics

The table 4 shows the distributions of the news which include the words “Japan” or “Japanese” according to their topics.

Table 4: Distributions of the News which Include the Words “Japan” or “Japanese” according to Their Topics

News Topics	n	%
Economy	129	28.1
Culture and art	68	14.8
Natural and nuclear disasters	66	14.4
Science and technology	54	11.8
International politics	49	10.7
Sports	35	7.6
Others	58	12.6
Total	459	100

According to their topics, economy with 28.1 % , culture and art with 14.8 % and natural and nuclear disasters with 14.4 % are taken place in the news which include the words “Japan” or “Japanese” (Table 4).

Table 5: The Distribution of the Topics of the News According to the Newspapers

News topics	Economy	Technology	Natural and nuclear disasters	Culture and art	Sports	International politics	Others	Total
Newspapers	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Hürriyet	24.5	11.6	10.3	20.6	16.1	3.2	13.5	100.0
Posta	10.3	35.9	17.9	12.8	0.0	7.7	15.4	100.0
Zaman	32.8	8.3	16.2	11.7	3.8	15.5	11.7	100.0
$\chi^2=28.97, df=4, p< 0.01$								

The distribution of the topics of the news according to the newspapers show a significant difference ($\chi^2=74.83, df=12, p< 0.01$). Although Zaman Newspaper has got more news about the topics of economy, science and technology, natural and nuclear disasters and international politics, Hürriyet Newspaper has got more news about the topics of culture and art and sports (Table 5).

Some of the news which include the words Japan and Japanese were about train crash, atomic bomb, nuclear power plant, snow storm, car brands, Japan stock Exchange, Japan-China islands dispute, anti-nuclear protests, dust clouds leaving mainland China affect Japan, Turkish people who live in Japan from Ordu city, Formula 1 Japan Grand Prix, Independence Day Celebration in Japan, world's smallest printed book, Japan gives Canada 1 million dollars to help for shore clean up of Tsunami.

4- The Quantities of Using Photographs in the News

The Table 6 shows the quantities of the photographs in the news with the words “Japan” or “Japanese”.

Table 6: The Quantities of the Photographs in the News

Photographs Usage	n	%
Yes	246	53.6
No	213	46.4
Total	459	100

Eventhough photographs were used with 53.6 % of the news which include the words “Japan” or “Japanese”, 46.4 of the news which include the words “Japan” or “Japanese” was not used with the photographs (Table 6).

5- Kinds of Approaches to Japan and Japanese in the News’ ContentsThe Table 7 and 8 show the kinds of approaches to Japan and Japanese in the news contents.

Table 7: Approaches to Japan in the News Which Include the Word “Japan”

Approaches to Japan	n	%
Positive	23	8.7
Negative	10	3.8
Neutral	231	87.5
Total	264	100

8.7 % of the news which include the word “Japan” is positive, 3.8 % of the news is negative and 87.5 % of the news is neutral.

Table 8: Approaches to Japanese People in the News Which Include the Word “Japanese”

Approaches to Japanese People	n	%
Positive	5	7.8
Negative	1	1.6
Neutral	58	90.6
Total	64	100

7.8 % of the news which include the word “Japanese” is positive, 1.6 % of the news is negative and 90.6 % of the news is neutral.

Among the newspapers there is no significant difference according to the approaches to Japan and Japanese in the news contents.

According to the results of chi-square test, there is no significant relationship between the news topics and approaches to Japan and Japanese people. In each news topics, the approaches to Japan and Japanese are mostly neutral. But positive approaches are more than negative approaches.

Science and technology news about Japan and Japanese people are positive and neutral news. There isn't any negative approach towards Japan and Japanese in these news.

Some examples about the positive news in the newspapers are the supports of Japan to Turkish government for the preparation of earthquake, strength of Japan buildings, smart walking stick for old people, glasses for lazy people, long life period of people, the number of patents per person, quality of Japan universities and decrease of unemployment percentage.

According to some positive news about Japanese people; they have very high reading book level, useful inventions for human being such as transplantation, long life period and they are the most reliable people according to Turkish people.

Another positive news is that a Japanese voluntary, Atsushi Miyazaki's name was given a public school in Turkey. He is an important person who died getting trapped under debris while he was helping Turkish people during Van Earthquake.

There wasn't any negative news about Japanese people. But there is some negative news about Japan. Health scandal, abuse to Korea during the period Korea was a colony of Japan, decreasing the level of export and very small houses with high rent costs are negative news.

While the categorization; health, education and domestic politics were evaluated in the "Others" category. In some health news negative approaches to Japan were determined. There are also negative approaches to Japan in some economy, international politics, culture and art news.

Results

Between the dates 1-31 March 2013, 459 news which include "Japan" and "Japanese" words in three mostly read newspapers in Turkey were analyzed. The most news with 57.7 % in the newspapers which include the term "Japan" or "Japanese" were taken place in Zaman Newspaper.

It was determined that in 53.6 % of this news photographs were used. But some of the photographs used in the news were not dealt with Japan and Japanese people.

The top three news topics about Japan and Japanese people are economy, culture and art and natural and nuclear disasters.

The news about Japan and Japanese was mostly neutral. But positive news was more than negative news. In the positive news Japan was mentioned with its success and new inventions in science and technology, strong economy, crisis management during natural disasters, educational quality.

The negative news about Japan was determined under the topic of economy, international politics and health. But there was not any negative news about Japanese people.

Finally it can be said that the image of Japan and Japanese people in daily Turkish newspapers is positive.

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