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The Effect of Work Experience and Educational Level on Official Translators' Familiarity with Ethics in Translation and their Commitment to the Principles; an Iranian survey

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ABSTRACT

Although ethics in translation is not a new realm of study, it is almost intact for official translators in Iran. This study aims to evaluate translators' familiarity and commitment to universally accepted ethical issues. Moreover the present study attempts to shed light on the relationship between translators' educational levels and work experience and their familiarity and commitment to universally accepted translation ethical issues. The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) has published a code of ethics for the members and obliges them to observe the principles. The first five principles are related to "Professional Conduct", "Confidentiality", "Competence", "Impartiality" and "Accuracy", which were obtained to conduct the present research. The instrument utilized in this study was a questionnaire containing 35 items presented to official translators in three populated cities in Iran, Tehran, Mashhad and Kerman. The multiple-choice researcher-made questionnaire was constructed in Persian to reduce any possible ambiguity. The present study conducted in 2016 on certified official translators and interpreters, either male or female, aged between 25 to about 52. However, it does not take age and gender into account. The study findings reveal that work experience and level of education have significant relationship with commitment and familiarity. SPSS and One-Way ANOVA were utilized to analyze the data.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethics in translation is such a new subject in Iran that most of the official translators cannot avoid expressing their shock as they hear the term ethics in translation. Although ethics has been already introduced in many translation centers in many countries such as Australia and the USA, It is still new in Iran and degree of official translators' familiarity with the principles and their commitment to them is unknown. Not observing the principles equals maximizing ethical challenges faced by translators and interpreters since they have a crucial role in many different situations related to human interactions (Baker, 2016). A study seemed necessary to evaluate their performance that can lead to an improvement per se since observing ethics is so important that philosophy believes it is a main source of making decisions arbitrarily unless the actions would be "aimless", (Rupani, 2015). Such a study can introduce the necessity of ethics to translators, if it is then determined unknown and required. Afterwards, a comprehensive and culturally appropriate code of ethics will be proposed to Iranian Association of Certified Translators and Interpreters.

AUSIT (Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators) published one of the most accredited codes of ethics in translation which many other institutes related to translation are applying it to their workplace, for instance ATA, ATIA, NZSTI and NAATI. AUSIT (2012) names nine principles which translators and interpreters must observe: "Professional Conduct", "Confidentiality", "Competence", "Impartiality", "Accuracy", "Clarity of Role Boundaries", "Maintaining Professional Relationships", "Professional Development" and "Professional Solidarity". AUSIT explains the required standards in detail. Since there was limitation of time and data volume, the first five principles were chosen to do the survey. In order to examine to what extent official translators in Iran are familiar and committed to universally accepted ethics, the principles were considered to make a questionnaire of 35 questions on how the participants, i.e. randomly chosen official translators, may decide in each challenging situation. Their answers were studied according to AUSIT's universally accepted guideline. Focus of the present study is to show the relationship, if any, of level of education and work experience with the degree of familiarity and commitment.

The present study is a part of a large study on ethics in official translation in Iran.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) is a national association engaging translation and interpretation whose most important publication is its code of ethics, which is universally confirmed. AUSIT obliges the members who are mostly translators and interpreters to consider nine general standards in their actions. The first five principles are "Professional Conduct", observing standards in their conduct, "Confidentiality", avoiding any disclosure of information about the work assigned to them, "Competence", accepting work which they are fully qualified for, "Impartiality", not having any partiality and bias during translation and interpretation, "Accuracy", conveying messages accurately (AUSIT, 2012).

Nikoomaram, Rahnamay Roodposhti, Toloie Ashlagh, Hoseinzadeh Lotfi and Taghipourian did a research to evaluate effect of age, gender, educational level and work experience on ethical decision-making by accountants and financial managers in Iran. Contrary to past studies in that area, they found out no relationship between them (Nikoomaram et al., 2013).

In a South African study, Haidee Kruger and Elizabeth Crots examined translators by some ethical materials in textual level, contexts and translation situations. They asked the translators to express the proper translation strategies to manage ethical situations. They studied impact of experience, in addition to some other factors like age, text type and type of ethical problem. It showed experience has a significant relationship with faithfulness in translation (Kruger and Crots, 2014).

Dehghani, Mosalanejad and Dehghan-Nayeri (2015) surveyed "factors affecting professional ethics in nursing practice in Iran". They chose nurses with having at least five years on work experience in that field. They collected data by "semi-structured interviews" and analyzed it by thematic analysis. While finding the results, they identified educational improvement as one of the positive influencing factors on observing ethics.

Carlos Rodríguez (2017) in a study on different groups of work experienced graduate students in the US explored a significant relationship between work experience and attitudes toward ethics in business. It showed that students with less experience are less concerned about ethics in the business.

Adam Simonson, April Bender, Olivia Fetherolf, Stephanie Hancock, Kendall Krodel, Kyle Reistad, Vicki Michels and Andy Bertsch (2017) conducted a survey on employees' work ethics and their organizational commitments in five banks in Dakota and analyzed influential factors. They investigated education as a factor and divided the data to two sets of associate degree and lower, and bachelor degree and higher. They found that associate degree and bachelor degree have a significant relationship with affective commitment and ethics.

3. METHODOLOGY

Since ethics in translation was a new area in Iran, in order to fulfill the aim of this study a questionnaire was required. Finding a culturally proper, reliable and valid questionnaire was difficult to achieve. Therefore, a new questionnaire with cooperating some official translators using examples mentioned in AUSIT's code of ethics was designed. The researcher-made questionnaire was analyzed to determine the validity, reliability and factor analysis. The final version of the instrument comprised thirty-five multiple-choice questions each having three alternatives and a blank, the subjective alternative. The items' themes were hypothetical ethically challenging situation. Additionally, the participants were asked to mention degree of their familiarity with the recommended ethical standard on three scales; 1= not familiar at all, 2= almost familiar, and 3= familiar. If they were familiar with the ethical principle in the situation presented in the question they got 2 points, if almost familiar, 1 point was added, and they got no points when they checked not familiar at all. Therefore the range of their familiarity was between 0 to 70, since the number of questions in the questionnaire was 35. Clearly, the participants' commitment score was calculated according to the answers to the multiple-choice questions and was between 0 to 35. The questionnaire was in their native language, Persian, to reduce any possible ambiguity or misunderstanding. Forty-five properly filled questionnaires were received. The responses were analyzed according to AUSIT's recommendation.

At first, two general sets of data were gathered related to participant familiarity and commitment. They were analyzed using SPSS. Without mentioning their names, the participant had written down their work experience and educational level. First descriptive statistics was done on all variables to show their scores on each one. Then, a Pearson Correlation was conducted to evaluate Commitment in terms of Work experience and One-Way ANOVA analysis was utilized to measure Commitment and familiarity in relation with Educational levels. In addition, another Pearson Correlation was run to depict the official translators' Familiarity in relation with Work experience. Also, a One-Way ANOVA analysis was used to find out the relation between Familiarity and Educational Levels.

At the next stage, five ANOVA analyses were used to evaluate Educational Level in terms of each principle i.e. Professional Conduct, Confidentiality, Competence, Impartiality, and Accuracy. Furthermore, five Pearson Correlation analyses were applied to check Work experience in relation with each principle mentioned earlier.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After receiving filled questionnaires, the results were investigated carefully. In addition to the information getting from each variable, relations between the variables were considered.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables.

The frequency distribution and the descriptive statistics of Commitment, Familiarity and Work experience have been presented in the following figures 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1. The descriptive statistics of the variables

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
Commitment	45	15.00	16.00	31.00	22.8444	3.78367	14.316
Familiarity	45	35.00	14.00	49.00	32.0667	8.76823	76.882
Professional conduct	45	5.00	2.00	7.00	5.0889	1.08339	1.174
Confidentiality	45	8.00	2.00	10.00	5.9556	2.23562	4.998
Competence	45	4.00	2.00	6.00	4.0222	1.19637	1.431
Impartiality	45	3.00	3.00	6.00	4.7556	0.95716	0.916
Accuracy	45	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.0222	1.01105	1.022
Work experience	45	17.00	1.00	18.00	5.6222	3.90390	15.240
Valid N (listwise)	45						

Table 2. The frequency distribution of the participants' educational level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
B.A	4	8.9	8.9	8.9
M.A.	31	68.9	68.9	77.8
PhD	10	22.2	22.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

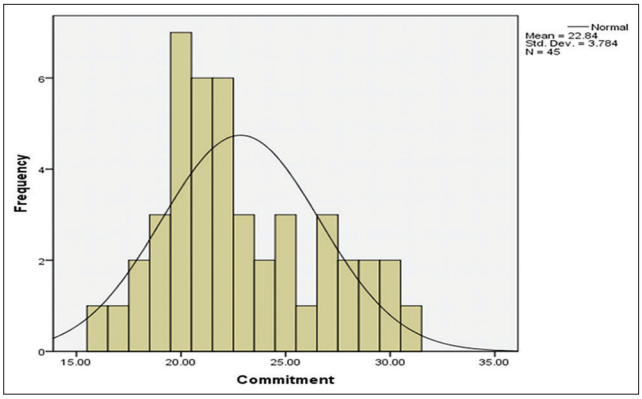

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics of commitment

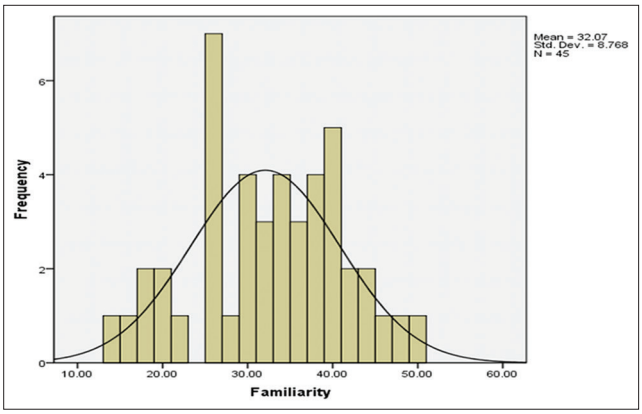

Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of familiarity

The official translators who participated in the study belonged to three groups of Educational Level, namely B.A. (8.9 %), M.A. (68.9 %), and PhD (22.2 %). Table 2 and figure 4 show the descriptive statistics.

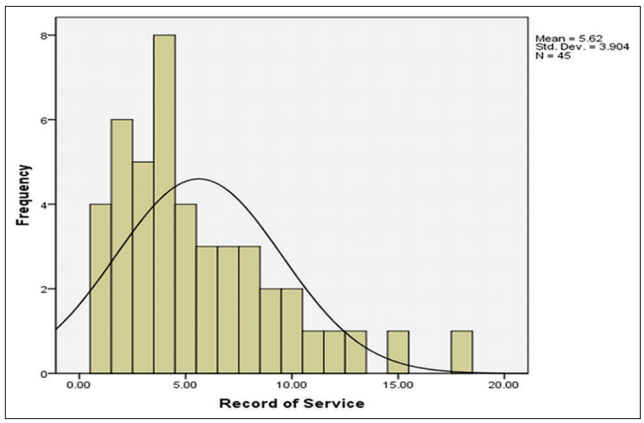

Figure 3. Descriptive statistics of work experience

In Iran official translators and interpreters consider pursuing education as an influential factor in their profession. In the present study least of them have B.A. and the number of higher educated practitioners was more. Translators and interpreters who have Ph.D. are so engaged to other related professions such as teaching in universities. As a result most of them were not present in their translation centers and enjoyed assistants always working there.

4.2 Commitment in Relation with Work experience

In order to find Commitment in relation with Work experience, a Pearson Correlation was run. The results depicted Pearson Correlation coefficients between Commitment and Work experience was r=.64 and P-values equaled 0.000 which was less than the significant alpha level of.05. As a result, there is a significant relationship between Commitment and Work experience at the level of 0.01. In other words,

increasing the score of Work experience leads to higher commitment (Table 3). The result conforms to Kruger and Crot (2014) and Rodríguez's (2017) studies, which explored experience as an affective factor in observing ethics in the profession. However, it does not agree with Nikoomaram et al.'s study (2013) that found no significant relationship between ethical behavior and experience.

4.3 Commitment in relation with Educational Level

In order to investigate Commitment in terms of different educational levels a One-Way ANOVA analysis was run. Since p-value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, there is a significant difference among different levels of education regarding Commitment. Comparing the means (B.A.M = 20.00, M.A.M = 21.41, PhDM = 28.40), it is concluded that PhD participants had higher Commitment scores compared with B.A. and M.A. ones. There was not a significant difference between B.A and M.A. participants regarding Commitment scores (Table 4). Contrary to the survey conducted by Nikoomaram et al. (2013), it agrees with what Simonson et al. (2017) and Dehghani et al. (2015) verified in their studies.

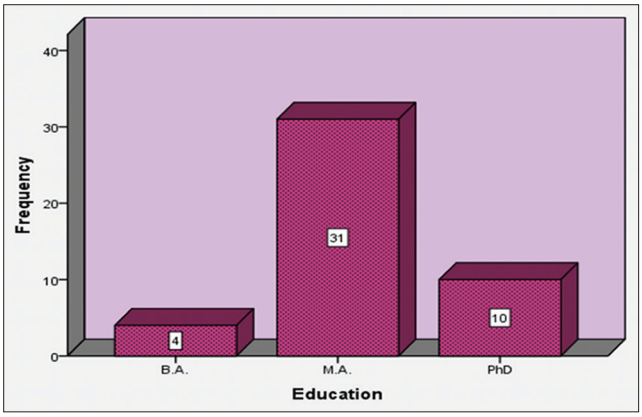

Figure 4. The Frequency of the participants' educational level

Table 3. Correlation between commitment and work experience

	Commitment	Work experience
Commitment	1	0.584**
Pearson Correlation	45	0.000
Sig. (2-tailed)		45
N		

4.4 Familiarity in Relation with Work experience

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to investigate participants' familiarity in relation with Work experience. The analysis shows a significant relationship between Familiarity and Work experience (r =.622, p =.000). Therefore, increasing in this variable equals increasing in Familiarity (Table 5).

4.5 Familiarity in Relation with Educational Level

Conducting a One-Way ANOVA analysis showed effect of Educational Level on participants' Familiarity. There is a significant difference among different levels of education regarding Familiarity since p-value (.000) is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. According to the means (MB.A. = 27.25, MM.A.= 29.64, MPhD = 41.50), PhD participants had higher Familiarity scores compared with B.A. and M.A. ones. There was not a significant difference between B.A and M.A. participants regarding Familiarity scores (Table 6).

Educational Level in Relation with Professional Conduct, Confidentiality, Competence, Impartiality, and Accuracy

As shown in Table 7, since p-value in all five analyses is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, therefore there is a significant difference among different levels of education regarding Professional Conduct, Confidentiality, Competence, Impartiality, and Accuracy. Comparing the means in all cases, it is concluded that PhD participants had higher scores compared with B.A. and M.A. ones. Furthermore, in all five factors except Confidentiality, M.A. participants had higher means than B.A. participants did.

Table 4. Commitment and educational level

	N	Mean	S D	F	df	P
B.A.	4	20.00	3.55		B=2	
M.A.	31	21.41	2.33	37.545	W=42	0.000
PhD	10	28.40	1.64		T=44	
Total	45	22.84	3.78			

Table 5. Correlations for familiarity and work experience

	Familiarity	Work experience
Familiarity		
Pearson Correlation	1	0.622**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Work experience in Relation with Professional Conduct, Confidentiality, Competence, Impartiality, and Accuracy

All the five factors had significant positive relationships with Work experience. Professional Conduct (r =.331, p =.027), Confidentiality (r =.441, p =.002), Competence (r =.425, p =.004), Impartiality (r =.413, p =.005), and Accuracy (r =.457, p =.002). Therefore, as the scores of Work experience increase, the scores on Professional Conduct, Confidentiality, Competence, Impartiality, and Accuracy increase too and vice versa (Table 8).

Table 6. ANOVA for familiarity and educational level

	N	Mean	S D	F	df	P
B.A.	4	27.25	2.21		B=2	
M.A.	31	29.64	8.15	11.023	W=42	0.000
PhD	10	41.50	4.83		T=44	
Total	45	32.06	8.76			

5. CONCLUSION

Study on forty-five official translators' familiarity with universally confirmed code of ethics and their commitment to the principles led to evaluation the effect of their educational level and experience on their familiarity and commitment. The survey was done by a questionnaire using thirty-five multiple-choice Persian questions to estimate their decision-making according to AUSIT's code of ethics.

Table 8 Correlation between work experience and five factors

	Professional Conduct	Confidentiality	Competence	Impartiality	Accuracy
Work experience	0.331*	0.441**	0.425**	0.413**	0.457**
Pearson correlation	0.027	0.002	0.004	0.005	0.002
Sig. (2-tailed)	45	45	45	45	45
N					

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. ANOVA for educational level and five factors

	N	Mean	SD	F	df	P
Professional conduct					B=2	
B.A.	4	3.50	1.91	6.323	W=42	0.004
M.A.	31	5.16	0.860			
PhD	10	5.50	0.849		T=44	
Total	45	5.08	1.08			
Confidentiality						
B.A.	4	5.50	1.29		B=2	
M.A.	31	4.83	1.15	76.033	W=42	0.000
PhD	10	9.60	0.516		T=44	
Total	45	5.95	2.23			
Competence						
B.A.	4	3.00	1.41		B=2	
M.A.	31	3.83	1.06	6.442	W=42	0.004
PhD	10	5.00	0.942		T=44	
Total	45	4.02	1.19			
Impartiality						
B.A.	4	4.00	0.816		B=2	
M.A.	31	4.58	0.922	7.266	W=42	0.002
PhD	10	5.60	0.516		T=44	
Total	45	4.75	.957			
Accuracy						
B.A.	4	2.25	1.25		B=2	
M.A.	31	2.83	0.969	6.909	W=42	0.003
PhD	10	3.90	0.316		T=44	
Total	45	3.02	1.01			

The study shows a significant relationship between their commitment to the principles and experience at work as a result of their work experience. In addition, Ph.D. translators enjoy high commitment although no significant difference is found between B.A. and M.A. participants.

Almost the same overcomes the official translators' familiarity. The higher work experience, the more familiar translators. Although Ph.D. participants are the most familiar, M.A. and B.A. one have no significant difference.

Ph.D. translators are the most familiar and committed to each variable in ethical standards, i.e. professional conduct, confidentiality, competence, impartiality, accuracy. M.A. translators are more familiar and committed than B.A. ones trivially except in confidentiality.

More experience in the profession makes official translators more aware of ethics and more concerned to observe the standards. The present study shows it has significant relationship with each principle in the code of ethics.

As a whole, experiencing more issues during years of practising the profession, studying more about different aspects of the field through education or reading foreign journals on new developments in addition to translators' personal characteristics can affect their awareness about impact of ethics at profession and their endeavor to make the profession improved by observing ethical principles.

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