

THE EVER-EVOLVING REPORTER: EXAMINING AN
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INSPIRED EFFECT
ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF TELEVISION REPORTERS
IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Master of Arts

by
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

THE EVER-EVOLVING REPORTER: EXAMINING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INSPIRED PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE EFFECTS ON TELEVISION REPORTERS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

presented by Angela S. Jacobs, a candidate for the degree of Masters of Journalism,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, faith and dearest friends whose encouragement has never waned in my unique journey through the career that inspires this work. Their support was so appreciated throughout this endeavor.

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ABSTRACT

Now that multi-platform products are fully in use in a constant integration of new media technologies in television newsrooms, it is important to discover how television reporters are relating to the changing workplace culture and subsequent psychological climate that corresponds with an evolving digital landscape of their daily duties. We ask if and how these changes shape attitude, outlook, and product. This research sheds light on how the perspective of the television reporter's job may be influenced in light of technological, operational and vocational changes.

This research involved interviews with reporters from three local news television stations within top twenty markets in the southeast. The first station sampled has somewhat integrated the use of new media technologies in everyday duties of reporters. This integration includes the requirement of being a Multi-Media Journalist (MMJ). The second station studied has fully incorporated the use of MMJs, while the third station has not incorporated regular use of MMJs in its news product. Examining these differing uses among stations in similar market sizes shows similar and contrasting challenges between the three environments while also highlighting suggested areas for further study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is 5:30pm. A television reporter runs to the station live truck having just acquired a last-minute, exclusive interview. Texting word of her success to her 6pm producer while she hustles into the vehicle, she hurriedly flips open her laptop. There is less than thirty minutes to air. But instead of immediately filing the broadcast edition of her story into her computerized show rundown, she opens the Twitter App on her phone. After tweeting her breaking news headline, she is back on the laptop to quickly post an online tease of her breaking news. When this rushed rendition is complete, she begins editing the sound bites she will use for what is now the “A” block lead while her photographer scurries to set up the live shot. She is lucky to be assigned a photographer today as she is usually expected to shoot her own video on assignments. There is now fifteen minutes left to air and she has exactly five minutes to be in position and camera ready. She has had no time to write what she is about to say for the one minute and thirty second spot and hurriedly tries to organize her thoughts and the facts at the same time. She is sweating profusely in the eight-six degree summer heat and has not combed her hair, let alone glanced in the mirror. There is not time. She will probably get an email from her news director regarding her disheveled appearance but she is just happy her initial online content is in. She sometimes thinks her managers do not care what she writes as long as it posts before the competition with an attention grabbing headline. It almost seems like the actual facts are secondary. A text comes in from her Executive Producer wondering why the sound bites are not yet uploaded to the web. When was there time? Do they realize what we are doing out here? She sighs, knowing she still has at least an hour or more of online work to complete but takes a deep breath. Her heart racing, she hears the show producer’s “Stand by” command. Seconds later, the news anchor’s voice is in her ear. Exhausted but running on adrenaline, she begins to speak; already sure this will not be one for the resume reel. Ten years ago, her nine hour day typically ended after that live shot. Today, it ends only after embellishing the text content of her exclusive, uploading added video to her web story, and engaging in conversation with and gauging response from viewers on Twitter and Facebook...

This hypothetical scenario is merely a sample of how the many platforms of digital news dissemination have transformed traditional television news operations and infiltrated a reporter’s work day routine. The myriad of technological advances in communication stimulate a phenomenon most

commonly referred to as media convergence (Jenkins, 2006, p.2) bringing a digital world of webcasts, blogs/vlogs, online articles, mobile sites, text alerts, tweets, Facebook posts, and more into the daily journalistic grind. These multi-platform changes not only increase a television newsroom's variety of product output, but also the organizational behavior and structure needed to achieve what is perceived to be the heightened, necessary level of production Wallace, 2013, p. 102). The consequences of this changing organizational and cultural landscape have a direct effect, whether positive or negative, on the psychological climate of newsroom personnel, particularly for those whose job description is most directly impacted: News reporters.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

An ever-changing set of priorities continues to redesign the newsroom of the digital age. As they reshape the newsroom, do they also reshape a reporters' perceived performance of his or her job? What are the consequences of a changing workplace culture on television reporters? A great deal of research can be found on the mode-blending effects of a newsroom's integrated broadcasting environment (p. 51), yet, there has been little contextual research addressing the relationship new technology has to institutional changes, the production process, and subsequent texts (Erdal, 2007). This study draws attention to those contexts. It is pertinent to ask if reporters think the quality of their work is affected by the workload introduced by new cross-media technologies and if they believe management understands their daily challenges. Specifically, it addresses the direct effect on the television news reporter dealing with "multiskilling" (p.221) requirements in addition to their traditional role, the demands of which remain

the same (Garcia Aviles et al, 2008) (Wallace, 2013, p. 101). Multiskilling can be understood in this context as the adoption of new skills enabling journalists to work across multiple platforms in addition to their traditional role (Wallace, p. 99). Could any of these new demands lead to greater stress and worker burnout? The concept of burnout is a well-studied connection to job change (Cordes, et al, 1993) (Fedler, 2010). Faced with too much to do and not enough time in which to do it, workers can negatively experience “role overload (Kahn, et al, 1964) (Garcia Aviles et al, p.232).” It is important to understand if this is also true for reporters and how they are relating to this multi-dimensional newsroom revolution: personally, culturally, operationally, and technologically. As this study ultimately hopes to introduce further study into journalists’ perception of their role and its evolving description, the answers may serve as indicators for both the future of an occupation and its industry.

This purpose of this research is to explore the psychological climate reporters experience amid an array of organizational and operational changes over the past decade. It will further ask what they believe continued change may mean for the definition of their vocation in the next decade. In years of study of psychological climate, the interest in employee climate perceptions in the workplace is well documented. The interest in these studies also continues to increase (Parker, C., et al, 2003, p.407) (Wallace, 2013, p.99). Among the parallels: a study from *The Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (2002) that measured employees’ readiness for organizational change when an institution’s new occupational processes place enormous demands on workers. The study found that in times of extensive change, work

processes that facilitate change lessen the impact and support the emotional well-being of the employees, was important to both the success of the workplace and employee (Cunningham et al, p. 2). Active job sites that prepare workers to initiate or contribute to organizational change, especially those in most challenging jobs, increased their readiness toward it. This support can also spur employee contributions toward workplace innovation (Cunningham et al, 2007, p. 10).

The congruence of the *Journal* study to this proposed research sets the stage for a theoretical framework inspired by critical theory with regard to the organizational culture aspect of this study. In times of organizational change, this particular line of thinking asserts that an ongoing emphasis must be put on the structure of workplace culture for such change to truly succeed (Deetz et al, 2000, p. 198). Thus, examining organizational culture opens the door to asking how a reporter's output and outlook has changed as they cope with an evolved job description and workplace climate in the digital newsroom. The emphasis on the corresponding psychological climate takes the analysis one step further. *Does this new environment affect worker stress levels and whether or not they enjoy their jobs? Can their work process be improved with help from management? In that, what is being handled well? What is not? In addressing output, do reporters find the parameters of what defines their profession shifting?* Certain on-the-job circumstances surrounding the multiskilling in newsrooms has already shown to add stress to journalists and affect quality of input and output (Wallace, 2013, p. 100). There is also opinion that social (whether supervisory or peer) support at work is received positively whether or not stressors are even

present (Cohen, 1992). In the race to win for the media conglomerate, we aim to discover if the runner's take on the terrain is being overlooked.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Several key terms require further clarification in this research, the first of which is digitization. Digitization, as interpreted in the television news industry and therefore in this research, refers to the use of digital audio and video files for online dissemination as well as for traditional broadcast dissemination.

Additionally, and very importantly, digitization in this research also refers to digitized text providing content for multi-platform news dissemination (using internet venues including social media, text, and mobile).

The next term to be clarified in this research is the multi-faceted concept of convergence. In the world of journalism, there is not one set definition. Some researchers have used convergence to apply primarily to print-broadcast collaborations, while others conclude that any print or broadcast news organization with a web site is practicing convergence (Thornton et al, 2008). Convergence on any level continues to affect newsroom roles by constantly reshaping the landscape of a workplace where structures, practices and news content keep evolving (Pavlik, 2004, p.28). Naturally, such multi-dimensional transitions are likely to affect the journalist in this dynamic workplace.

While the description of a news reporter can also refer to vocations in the fields of print and radio, this study is limited to television news. Therefore, the word "reporter" in this study will encompass reporters and anchors who work in television news operations incorporating both broadcast and internet

dissemination technologies. This classification may include news, sports, and weather on-air talent.

This study will refer to the use of the MMJ, or multimedia journalist, in television newsrooms. The specific multimedia designation has emerged as new media technologies surged through the news dissemination scene at the start of this decade (Siapera et al, 2012, p.5). “Multimediality” portrays a news output using more than two media, or sending news across multiple media platforms (Siapera et al, 2012, p. 6). For these reasons, television stations have come to denote an MMJ as a one-man band or backpack journalist who works independently shooting video, and writing and editing content for broadcast. MMJs are asked to master multi-platform dissemination by posting news to online and mobile sites as well.

When referring to television news operations, this study will concentrate on local news outfits as opposed to national and regional news disseminators. Hence, the term of “news reporter” in this research will signify that of a local news station, and one within a top twenty market in the United States. Finally, the concept of an area’s market size is equal to referencing its designated market area, or DMA (Nielsen, 2012). It is important to note these terms may be used interchangeably in this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

LINKING QUESTIONS TO THEORY

Several communication theories may apply to the study of the changing technologies affecting the job of the television reporter in today's newsroom. While these theories lay foundations for this study; the actual research questions posed here reach further, and advance the quest to understand the actual effects of shifting newsroom culture. Therefore, the normative descriptive theory used for this specific research is inspired by similarities in social science and psychology research; it lays a foundation through organizational culture and concentrates on the psychological climate that accompanies that culture. The significance of this concept of culture for organizational analysis also incorporates studies in anthropology (Smircich, 1983, p. 339) opening up an investigation further informing this research into newsroom culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

For television newsrooms, survival in the new millennium appeared to be contingent on the adoption of new media technologies and the convergence of those technologies throughout organizational operations (Killebrew, 2005). In this research, I highlight the direct effect that the diffusion of new media-inspired behavior (Siapera et al, 2012, p. 30) has had on changing newsroom roles in an emerging convergence paradigm (Jenkins, 2006, p.6). As digital communication demanded an expanded skill set for jobs across many businesses, this transition

makes the television newsroom's evolution to a multi-platform publishing entity similar to any organization undergoing sweeping and fundamental technological change. Studies suggest that the ongoing and profound shift, or sea-change, in news delivery, continues to set an evolving stage with far reaching implications for the nature and function of the journalist (Pavlik, 2004, p.28). A study on organizational changes at CNN Headline News (2002) confirms this observation, suggesting a need for future research on consequences of added job responsibilities in convergent newsrooms. Researchers in the CNN study found the staff responded negatively to organizational changes and concluded that the degree to which change affects morale and drives talent professionals from news organizations and the industry should be a question of serious concern to media scholars and professionals (Daniels et al, 2002, p. 676).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Every business, or organization, has a unique culture (Coomer, 2007, p. 28). This culture can depict the way an organization operates, treats employees, defines specific goals and expectations, and much more. As socialization in this work community consists of shared expectations for consensually approved behavior (Glaser et al, 1987, p. 173), culture research focuses on these symbolic aspects of organizational life (p. 174). While one culture is very easy to perceive, another may be puzzling or complex. Whether weak or strong, the belief that culture has a powerful influence on an organization (Coomer, 2007, p. 28) is the underlying dictum of its theoretical study. Patterns of belief, symbols, rituals and myths that evolve over time can function as the glue that holds an organization

together or the storm that tears it apart (Glaser et al, 1987, p. 174). Borrowing from anthropology, these uniting (or shared) elements of culture need to be interpreted in order to be described or understood (Smircich, 1983, p. 342). While traditional organizational research is geared to understand how organizations work so that managers can work better (Pacanowsky et al, 1982, p. 119), the approach of organizational culture for this study focuses on the employee's perspective of this study's primary theoretical framework: workplace psychological climate. This aspect of research shows that communication satisfaction is an instrumental part of job satisfaction (Pacanowsky et al, 1982, p. 119). The process of communication is multi-dimensional and entails working back and forth between parts and wholes to unravel the "webs of significance" that give particular meaning to organizational life (Pacanowsky et al, 1982, p. 126).

The theory and research methodology selected for this study endeavors to better understand the way people communicate for better or for worse in today's television newsroom (Salwen et al, p. 12). Beginning with the lens of organizational culture, and further focusing on the subsequent psychological climate, this study concentrates on the reporter's perspective of the nature of the relationship between management and themselves (Deetz, 1996, p. 46).

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE

As television newsrooms work to attract new audiences while trying not to lose the old one, and at the same time, attract a new medium of ad revenue, they reveal the growing stressors inherent in today's digital newsroom (Scott, 2005, p.

96). The comparative time an audience allots to different media is a never-ending concern for disseminators trying to produce news that will be “noticed” in the internet’s provision of more information choices than ever before (Loosen et al, 2012, p. 870). In New York Times writer Jeremy Peters’ 2010 look at Politico news service, he discovers this particular disseminators’ dictum: “There is no detail too small to report, as long as it was reported there first (Peters, 2010).” Peters paints the picture of how organizational culture shifts when Politico news managers pressure subordinate reporters by requiring them to continuously cover all the cyber bases and communication avenues of the internet.

In this progression, Peters reveals a new psychological climate is created in this organizational change affecting reporter roles. It is a vital component to this study to determine, as similar studies have, how this psychological climate variable impacts the extent to which the reporter engages or disengages in their workplace (Kahn, 1990). The goal is to corroborate that the “on-the-job” support an employee feels (or does not feel) may affect the personal perceptions that employee has of that job. Decades of “stress-buffering” research analyzes the role supervisory support plays in influencing people’s employment health and well-being by protecting them from the development of stressors (Cohen et al, 1982). The social climate of the work setting has frequently been identified as a powerful environmental relation of burnout as evident in a study of newspaper reporters and copy editors before (Cook et al, 1993, p. 133) and after the arrival of the internet (Reinardy, 2011, p. 37). Among its research, the study asked how well re-training was handled in regard to changing technologies, and found many

employees affected by not being consulted or made a part of decisions that directly affect their jobs (Cook, p. 123). In Peter's article, a former reporter who left Politico describes the relentless pressure from managers to break stories: "I think that some people felt like they were sinking. It was like boot camp (Peters, 2010)."

Naturally, as jobs change, the corresponding work culture changes (Hammond, 2000). However, what is often overlooked: Building a successful organization demands careful attention to workplace culture that must be seen as an ongoing process (Deetz et al, 2000, p. 198). As contemporary studies ask whether the modern multiskilling of reporters in newsrooms are actually "en-skilling or de-skilling" journalists (Wallace, 2013, p. 101), I believe it is also significant to understand how reporters perceive the way an organization handles them during periods of great change.

Therefore, **RQ1:** *How are television reporters relating to the workplace culture that corresponds with the evolving digital landscape of their daily duties?* **RQ1a:** *Has their culture changed as well as their duties?* **RQ1b:** *Has any of this affected their stress level?*

A Management Communication Quarterly study (1987) of the organizational culture of government employees found those experiencing low morale were also dissatisfied with their organization's level of teamwork, information flow, supervision, and involvement. Five themes emerged from the process:

- (1) Top management and supervisors do not listen to or value the ideas and opinions of their employees
- (2) Limited interaction between department and divisions causes misunderstanding and confusion
- (3) Meetings are too often only informational and do not involve enough interaction and decision making
- (4) Employees are often unclear about what they should be doing and where the organization itself is headed
- (5) Supervisors are deficient in providing feedback to their employees and giving recognition for good work and suggestions (Glaser et al, p. 186)

As earlier referenced, *The Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* study confirms the importance of employee voice in times of extensive change (Cunningham et al, 2002, p.10). This is when managers can further a company's health and democratic values by coordinating stakeholder participation in corporate decisions (Griffin, 1997, p. 495). Another critical question this investigation hopes to answer is how and if employees are being heard in the process and what, if any, is the extent of that voice.

Therefore, **RQ2:** *Do they feel management is listening to their concerns?*

Regardless of the scope of media convergence, or lack thereof, an organization experiences, the humanistic premise this research employs supposes an organization's success is built on the contribution of willing employees. But what circumstance helps breed this "willingness" among employees? A strong culture that uses positive communication to create a bond between company and

employees is one answer (Deal, et al, 1982, p.12). This theory believes when people feel better about their role, and what they do, they are more likely to work harder. Communication research finds management's inclination to develop a firsthand understanding of the perspectives and concerns of employees a proven benefit (Alvesson, 2003, 1435).

A CRITICAL INFLUENCE

In this particular look at changing culture in television newsrooms, we find theorist Stanley Deetz's (1982) offers insights. Built on critical theory, it is important to present how his thinking relates to this study's look at vocational organizational culture. More than three decades old, Deetz's ideas of Consent and Participation, are still used in communication research as they aptly define roles in the organization in which one works. Most pertinent to this phenomenological study, his outlook is essentially, an every man's theory, taking a look at organizations from the perspective of the individual (Deetz, 1982). Using the perspective of reporters, this research will expose their view toward the organizational culture of television newsrooms. These precepts take a critical eye to dominance and struggle, addressing differences between "potentiality and actuality" for a particular institution in society. Analysis includes theories and processes of "knowledge construction" accompanied by a moral commitment of shared decision making (Deetz, 1992). It asks to "identify and challenge" assumptions behind conventional ways of processing and acting on events while recognizing the influence of culture, history, and social positioning on perceptions, meanings, and actions (May et al, 2005). The further tie-in of

Deetz's theory is in its fundamental basis of exploring alternative communication practices in the workplace. By facilitating the creative and productive cooperation of employees, these practices ultimately lead to greater organizational success (May et al, 2005). It accomplishes this goal by rethinking organizational decision making processes and working to improve them with employees' input. This research works to uncover how reporters perceive and relate to a transitioning workplace that may or may not incorporate this process.

THE LOOK AT LABOR

An integral component to the genesis of critical theory study is in its historical connection to the processes of labor. While this research will not delve deeply into this inherently politicized and multi-faceted angle, it is important to address how it shapes this study's analysis of workplace culture. This research closely identifies and aligns itself with those who recognize labor as both an instrumental and communicative practice (King, 2011, p. 870). This workplace understanding also correlates to the work of Friesen (2008) who offers further steps of analysis in adopting a critical approach to organizational research.

Among those which can apply to this specific research of television newsrooms:

- Ask questions of things/situations otherwise considered to be common sense, obvious, or matter-of-fact.
- Examine these claims in context
- Reveal through this study that behind prevailing ideas lay (and often contradictory) ways of understanding the issue in question.

- Use the exposed conflict as the basis for developing alternative forms of understanding
- Point to concrete, common-sense possibilities for action (Friesen, 2008).

Both organizational and psychological climate researchers discuss the concept of teamwork. Teamwork, in this sense, is not only about employees working together, but also includes management itself working with employees to achieve success. In a 2011 study in *Business Information Review*, Goodman and Loh find multi-leveled team support imperative to keeping every member motivated and aligned to an organization's goals in times of change (p. 243). Even expressions of resistance should be valued as a path to open up dialogue (p. 242). This practice is seen as a critical component for the people within organizations (and very much like television news reporters) who must continue to deliver today while mastering ongoing changes to their own roles for tomorrow (Goodman et al, 2011, p. 249). Like the aforementioned *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* study on workplace behavior (Cunningham et al, 2002), a 2012 study in *Criminal Justice Policy Review* also uncovers a distinct correlation between stakeholder relationships, employee morale and subsequent job performance (Paoline et al, 2012). Conducted ten years apart, these studies reinforce the thought that when dealing with human psychology, more often than not, core needs at the heart of human experience are the same. Like the *Journal's* measurements on health care workers' readiness toward change, this analysis of surveyed jail staff revealed that job involvement was negatively related to job stress and positively related to both job satisfaction and organizational

commitment (Paoline et al, 2012, p.241). Staff members with a high degree of identification and involvement with their jobs put forth the most effort (Paoline et al, p.244).

Themes in both studies are important to note because similar results are expected in this research. Health care employees' readiness for organizational change can be affected by three main issues:

- 1) Organizational restructuring often fosters the threat of job change or loss. Workers may be stressed they can't handle their "new" job or may lose the one they have
- 2) Logistical burdens of shift/duty changes can damage a worker's attitude toward accepting sweeping change. In other words, even a perception of conflict between domestic and occupational responsibilities lowers a worker's readiness toward change
- 3) From psychological stress incurred, emotional exhaustion can impede a worker's readiness toward organizational change (Cunningham et al, 2002, p. 278).

This research investigates the way in which employees perceive management's action to hear and consider their concerns before issuing job-affecting mandates. From this, it intends to show if employees' perception of this process, or lack thereof, influences how they relate to extensive changes in the workplace.

Giving employees more of a voice to uncover how they are relating to sweeping occupational change falls in line with the study of other sociological and psychological deficiencies in the workplace. As described by the *Harvard Business Review* article, "The Human Moment at Work," Edward Hallowell

(1999) depicts how the expansive use of communication technologies keep employees from experiencing needed human interaction in the workplace. Consequences of the lack of interpersonal exchange can lead to miscommunication, mistakes, and an overall sense of detachment, frustration, and feeling unappreciated for workers.

“High tech,” he has learned, requires “high touch” (Hallowell, p.7). There may be times when a reporter is sent on a story but newsroom managers assume its outcome without first consulting the field reporter who has the best vantage point. Decisions regarding coverage are made yet the reporter has received no communication outside of a hasty one-way text or email. This research agrees with Hallowell’s claim that technology has created a “wonderful” new world by unchaining people from their desks, but this world cannot move forward successfully without preserving the human moment (Hallowell, p.8). The absence of it, he says, can “wreak havoc. Good people leave and those that remain are unhappy” (Hallowell, p. 2). This supposition that the more involved (and less ignored) a worker is made to feel in decision-making aspects at work, the more receptive that worker is to participating in and helping steer organizational change is further supported by a 2010 *Journal of Business and Technology* study on employees at a Ready Made Garments (RMG) supplier in Bangladesh. Results reveal a significant correlation between decision making, motivation, and performance: Participation in decision making empowers the employee to better achieve organizational goals (Bhuiyan, 2010, p. 122). One study conclusion in the *Wake Forest Law Review’s* (2011), “Strategies for an Employee Role in Corporate Governance,” suggests giving employees voice within corporations (McDonnell,

p.108). Benefitting from employee engagement, the practice proves conducive to an organization's sustainability (McDonnell, p. 109).

Given the before-mentioned "top-down" approach (Gray et al, 2012, p. 124) in most television newsrooms, what might the newsroom look like with a more democratic atmosphere in the way it conducts daily operations? We find another workplace example thanks to communication and organizational scholar and author George Cheney (1999), who dedicates one of his studies to the "radical notion that work ought to dignify rather than diminish the human experience" (Cheney, p. 1). In his critical qualitative study of a worker-owned, employee-managed corporation in Mondragón, Spain trying to simultaneously compete in a global market yet revitalize long-held democratic values within customer-centered restructuring, his attention is drawn to the patterns of discourse that reveal fundamental aspects of the organization, its character, its mission, and its direction. Cheney's holds this multi-national firm up for example, admitting it no utopia, but calling it an "organization of organizations" (Cheney, 1999, p. xii). He echoes Sociologist Peter Leigh Taylor's criticism of the powerful influence of other organizations' production-and-profit-oriented concerns. This "rhetoric of efficiency" has come to overshadow the more people oriented concerns for job satisfaction, participation, equality, and solidarity (Cheney, p.36). Cheney says in trying to conduct its operation with both democratic and productive processes makes this example in Spain one of the most economically successful cases of a truly democratic workplace in the world. Its highest daily priority: the customer. But in serving clients, it operates by involving all employees in the development of the firm. This, the firm believes, is the best way to best respond to the client.

As in any changing work environment, there are many mitigating factors to potential unrest. The pressure on newsroom management is immense in a digital chase of a migrating audience (Pavlik, 2004, p. 28). That pressure is transferred to the news disseminating employees. No longer is the audience, whether viewers or online consumers, made up of “medium loyalists” (Hammond, et al 2000, p.17). In the convergence-based flow of information across multimedia platforms audiences increasingly choose their own news and will go anywhere to find it (Jenkins, 2006, p.2). A consumer will see a story on one medium and follow the story, based on their interests, to another medium to obtain other views or greater depth (Hammond, et al 2000). These habits have only multiplied the past decade, as depicted by a *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* study (2012) on audience use of new media technologies for NPR.org. After five hundred and fourteen members from NPR fan groups on Facebook were surveyed, the study concluded that users are most interested in new media features that enable them to control their media experience as well as technologies they view as useful (Johnson, p. 30). Following the audience’s lead (Kiouisis, 2002), and in addition to mastering a host of new technological skills, today’s journalists must also adapt to this role reversal of sorts with its audience (Pavlik, 2004, p. 26). A now neutral media is longer the gatekeeper, but entrenched in a perpetual race to be the best facilitator (Boczkowski, 2004, p.200). Internet-based communication with sources is now a staple in the reporter’s “food chain (Pavlik, 2004, p.28).” The dynamic further shifts as segments of the audience blog, tweet, and post online on their own, becoming “producers” of their own news, and yet another source that reporters must investigate (Meyers, 2012, p. 1023). This development

further blurs the lines of distinction “between the role of producer and consumer of media” (Meyers, p.1022).

Therefore, **RQ3**: *Has perspective/perception of the television reporter’s job been affected in light of cultural and operational changes in their digital workplace?*

Led by corporate television news executives and management, there is a constant and fierce battle in newsrooms to take control in attracting an audience, in hopes of reversing the trend of audience domination. News management is intent on finding the magic potion to make the audience follow their operation and reverse the tide (Bakhurst, 2011). One of the most prevalent ways news managers hope to reach and continue to connect to audiences is through interactivity and engagement. News managers have embraced and immersed their newsrooms in social media in an attempt to keep engagement at a constant stream (Bakhurst, 2011). In *The Future of News*, journalist Andrew Haeg (2010) shares six social media “engagement” criteria for journalists:

Journalist talks **TO** the audience

Journalist talks **WITH** the audience

Journalist **ASKS** the audience

Journalist **LISTENS** to the audience

Journalist **MEETS** the audience face-to-face

Journalist helps the audience **MEET ITSELF** (Haeg, 2010)

Journalists are now talking with the audience instead of simply talking to the audience. This enhanced engagement may be relationally positive for audience and journalist but is also more time consuming. The added duty brings the reporter's ever-developing job description to the forefront.

In her December 2011 thesis, "A Culture of Audience Engagement in the News Industry," researcher Joy Mayer reiterates this point, finding news managers who embrace how engagement redefines this journalist-audience relationship in a national survey (Mayer, p.4). In these interviews, Mayer found news editors who believe more interaction with readers will help them be more responsive to readers' interests and needs." Others added, "It's (engagement) a way to empower the people who love us and listen to those who don't" (Mayer, p.29). Again, this criterion revamps the traditional role many reporters are used to employing with their audiences in a number of ways. Social media's continuous cycle of news forces reporters to change the way they report, as to not repeat information an audience already knows, but to reproduce it in a way that further advances the story through artful narratives and story updates (Brenner, 2012). In this, journalism educator R.B. Brenner blogs that journalists, after seeing the Who, What, Where, and When already reported, must next ask, "What goes where, and when?" to give the online reader something new to advance the storyline (Brenner, 2012).

By connecting to the audience so instantly and directly, the potentiality of the benefits of internet communication for news dissemination seem almost limitless (Bakhurst, 2011). Engagement hits a new level in the work of Steffen

Konrath, whose ongoing “Liquid News Room,” or LNR, Web 3.0 project introduces yet another new player. In this reshaped web news portal, an original content stream from news curators is featured along with one from an editor, and a third selected from readers (Konrath, 2012). Readers can vote for news they would choose and select streams to follow which are distributed via web and mobile. In this on-demand news process, comes three scenarios:

- a curator selects a news item but not a reader
- a reader selects a news item but not a curator
- both choices match: reader & curator identify a news item of importance (Konrath, 2012)

The BBC News Channel’s Kevin Bakhurst also notes three key roles social media serves for the British Broadcasting Channel newsroom:

- 1) *Newsgathering – helps us gather more, sometimes better material from a wider range of voices; find ideas and eye witnesses quickly*
- 2) *Audience engagement - how we listen to and talk to our audiences, and allowing us to speak to different audiences*
- 3) *As platform for our content - it's a way of us getting our journalism out there, in short form or as a tool to take people to our journalism on the website, TV or radio. It allows us to engage different and younger audiences. (Bakhurst, 2011).*

As much as the potential of social media and engagement is championed, this research would be remiss if it did not mention some negative outcomes which affect journalists. Bakhurst admits there are drawbacks that can get reporters in trouble: a lack of anonymity (something users often have but journalists do not), rule of law (avoiding libel) and ethical situations such as with crime victims (in many instances, journalists must not reveal names, but the rest

of the social media do). Social media do not play by the same rules journalists must play by to retain their credibility and ethic (Bakhurst, 2011). It will be interesting in this research to discover the reporter's perspective on this curious relationship. Haeg asks some thought provoking questions, and while also advocating social media's offerings, wonders if the concept of engagement is ultimately and merely an illusion of inclusion (Haeg, 2010). This research will ask reporters if they feel they are connecting and engaging with significant voices in the audience through social media? Do they perceive the social media effort to be an added pressure in their jobs or is it perhaps under-utilized? Haeg questions what online "audience" is actually gained by this push and rush to engage and if engagement will lead to better or worse journalism (Haeg, 2010).

Therefore, **RQ4:** *How do reporters assess if the quality of the work they produce is affected by changes culturally, operationally, and technologically?*

As this research looks to ask television reporters this question, a similar study on newspaper reporters can be referenced for anticipated parallels. In *Journalism Studies* 2009 article, "Taking Paper Out of News," Neil Thurman and Merja Myllylahti analyzed changes at a Finnish financial daily newspaper after it decided to focus exclusively on digital delivery (the first in Europe to do so). Researchers found significant reductions to newspaper profitability and staff morale after massive cuts increased workloads. One reporter shared feeling like a "stripped down journalist" with barely enough time to concentrate on one story before moving onto another (Thurman, et al 2009). Journalists struggled to adapt to "rolling" stories, which first require filing of incomplete stories and supplementation as more information is available. Forward-thinking in its full-

throttle move to online, the paper was still well behind the curve in learning how to achieve and replace advertising revenue, which in turn overly taxed its small staff in a number of ways (Thurman, et al 2009).

The psychological climate that accompanies change can be strongly related to employee work attitudes and psychological well-being, even when this climate is only a matter of perception (Parker, et al, 2003, p. 406). In addition, the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (2002) study correctly hypothesized that health care workers' perceptions of opportunities for improvement in their own competence, service quality, program improvement or organizational relationships contributed to the study's level of "readiness for change" scores (p.378). Staff members who are confident in their ability to cope with job change and adopted an active approach to problem-solving are less likely to feel the stress of a worker who has not (p. 379). Workers under strain for work related reasons (and disappointed in their product) experience a shifting perspective of themselves in the job they perform.

With the influx of non-journalist information sources on the web, such as independent bloggers, forums, website posts, and social media, the graying area of defining a "journalist" darkens. In some aspects, the professional definition is changing in a literal sense. Creation of the role of "hybrid-journalist" combines the work of a computer programmer with that of a story-teller. The immediacy of this role's dissemination capabilities has increased the view of its value in a newsroom. However, industry experts question the approaches of a programmer-turned-journalist compared to a journalist-turned-programmer which have the

potential to be very different from each other (Betancourt, 2009). Still, proponents prod journalists to not think as much about what they have traditionally done and how to survive, but to simply ask what people want and what information needs aren't being filled in the status quo (Betancourt, 2009).

Perhaps, it can be argued, more journalists would embrace this hybrid-programmer suggestion if they did not already have a full list of multi-platform duties. Journalists may believe they are already "hybrid" enough. This research investigates whether this belief holds and to discover how the everyday writer-editor-online producer-social media host role is affecting their perspective of what defines of their job and, ultimately, that which defines a journalist.

Another role revision creeps in for reporters as social and online media introduces a multitude of new voices over the addition of numerous digital distributions channels. Frequently, reporters and anchors are asked to blog, launch their own websites or add an "editorial" element to their reporting to be heard alongside the non-journalists who are doing the same. To many in the industry, this is not a positive development; they see the once objective goal of reporting shifting gears toward opinion reporting. Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen J. Berry (2005) surmises the culture of the news profession is trending toward a "journalistic Woodstock, where everything except disciplined reporting is considered cool." But Berry admits objectivity is a touchy subject for an industry where one finds plenty of peer-support for an opposing view (Berry, 2005). In Harvard's online *Nieman Reports*, Berry notes the Society of Professional Journalists actually dropped the term from its code of ethics in 1996. To Berry, objectivity is a standard that requires journalists to actively look past emotions

and prejudices in reporting (Berry, 2005). This research will ask reporters if they embrace Berry's premise in the modern newsroom.

In the midst of continual change, as has been described here, newsrooms, like any occupational institution, need a clear mission from its management (Lehman-Wilzig et al, 2004). But to accomplish that mission, one must first be communicated (Deal et al, 1982, p. 15). Communication is a centrally important issue in any vocation, though many times, occupational issues and problems boil down to a simple lack of it. Corresponding study concludes well informed employees are usually satisfied employees, who get more out of their work and do a better job for their organization (Lattimore et al, 2009, p. 200). As shown here, this conclusion has been consistent through decades of research across many sciences. In a 1971 study of registered nurses, unclear roles could not only be related to increased job tension but were also found to lead to turnover and propensity to leave (Lyons, p. 108). Conversely, a clear understanding of one's role led to greater work satisfaction (Lyons. P. 107). In a weak culture, employees can waste a great deal of time figuring out what they are supposed to do and how to do it (Deal et al, 1982, p. 15). Later, in Leading Organizations through Transition: Communication and Cultural Change, Deetz (2000) relays similar questions employees he studied asked when experiencing a lack of management direction and communication. Answering the questions, he contends, makes an enormous difference in employee morale, commitment, and output.

What did they want? When will they tell us what do to? When will they do their job so we can do ours? They know what they want, why won't they tell us? (Deetz, 2000, p.212)

This research intends to reveal if, in the eyes of its reporters, the television workplaces studied indeed have a mission its employees/reporters understand. If they understand it, do they support it? Did they have a say in it? To be fair, managers will also be asked to define the mission they intend to communicate. The interesting conclusion that is sought asks if the intended mission is the same as the one being interpreted.

ASPECTS OF THEORY NOT EXPLAINED

While the research questions here fall in line with the humanistic, value-subjective aspects of organizational culture, another aspect may manifest itself as a more latent revelation in this study. For instance, Deetz's belief that we mutually shape our work-life reality is a possible finding from the qualitative nature of this research. From the outside looking in, management's reactions to technological advances (and subsequent shifts in workplace culture) seem to be the catalysts shaping a reporter's literal reality. Most reporters face a "top-down" approach where management mandates and influence overrides the view and/or needs of the subordinate (Gray et al, 2012, p. 124). Deetz's theoretical stance elevates the employee's view of the work place. It holds that given a chance to be involved in everyday decisions affecting their work life; all employees have the ability to be influential. Whether or not the structure of the organizational culture in place allows this element to unfold serves as further motivation for this study.

BACKGROUND THEORY

There are numerous applicable theories to the study of communication, organizational culture, workplace psychology, and social science. While the

specific theoretical framework used in this research was not chosen lightly, it is also appropriate to explain why two other popular communication theories do not apply to this study.

The theory selected for this specific research will not explain why an audience may gravitate to online news over broadcast television news. These reasons, as well as those that explain why viewers/consumers may see Facebook or Twitter as an information source, are elements the theory of Uses and Gratifications addresses in principle (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 3). This Uses and Gratifications theory helps tell the “back-story” of this research but does not specifically explain the newsroom dynamic the goals of this study set out to investigate.

Additionally, the theory of Diffusion of Innovations helps explain the media’s role in providing information through communicative innovations. Despite the fact that decisions about which media to use for disseminating, for how long, and anticipated effects are difficult to assess (Salwen, et al, p. 74), such analysis still falls short for the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

FIELD OF STUDY

This research will analyze the perceptions and experience of news reporters whose added job responsibilities are reflected in the changing culture of television newsrooms implementing digital news dissemination. This area of analysis will address three television stations located in the south-eastern region of the United States and ranked among the top twenty stations in market size (DMA). This area offers a selection of stations that have integrated new media and digital technologies in broadcast operations on a variety of differentiating levels. For example, I will address how at least one station has not incorporated reporters into the mix of multi-platform publishing to the extent that the two other stations have. I will look at these stations, their operations, and the contemporary experience of reporters in these varied work environments.

Attitudes and beliefs of both the news manager and reporter are abstract qualities and difficult to quantify, thus qualitative interviews, offering a holistic and humanistic approach, are the applicable observational method to provide and compile phenomenological data (as in first person accounts) for this study. Additional strategies of inquiry for data collection: participant observation and the subsequent comparative case studies that present themselves. Ultimately, we will find if this question-asking process in theory and research may uncover

questions of policy or even questions of value (Salwen et al, 1996, p. 10) in the newsroom.

SELECTED METHOD

As qualitative research methodology is used to foster a deeper understanding of organizational change, this study will employ this analytical approach to uncover the perspectives of reporters toward changing newsroom roles (Gray et al, 2012). The decision to select a qualitative methodology is also supported by a well-documented interest in qualitative studies of organizational change (cf. Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001; Weick & Quinn, 1999). In applying qualitative study to organizational change, some sociologists (Parker, M., 1992) believe the knowledge gained by the researcher can even equate to having a sense of power over the organization; the researcher then becomes an expert on the organization (p.5). By qualitatively examining the range of experience of reporters in a digital newsroom workflow, it is expected that holistic results from this contemporary study can be used to shed new light on industry practices as a whole. In such an examination, organizational culture and subsequent psychological climate is revealed.

Qualitative study can also reflect a temporal perspective which ties into this research. Conceptions of time studied historically can have the ability to reveal particular issues noticed, addressed, and the time frame to determine success (Gray et al, 2012). Time periods that apply in this particular study are in looking at the reporter's perspective at a newsroom before-and-after change event, and to revamp the future (Gray et al, 2012).

Some change events have ramifications, as shown in a study on healthcare mergers (Langley et al, 2006) examining identity struggles posed for organizational members. The study finds that in the process of renegotiating their “identities” (whether by management or members), members struggle with stress, tension, finding common ground with new colleagues, and preserving differences that kept their original groups intact (Langley et al, 2006). An evident battle for control between management and workers reinforces how a lack of constructive interpersonal communications can pit the sides against each other (Huy, 2001, p. 69). The before-and-after perspectives, as well as future perspectives of the members are worth noting. Similarly in this study, reporters will be asked about their perspective of their job now as opposed to “X” years ago and what they believe is in store for the future.

From organizational literature, we find there are certain conceptualizations of time qualitative researchers endeavor to study. In that, the conceptualization sought from interview subjects in this study (as in the healthcare merger study) will not just address clock time, but also the psychological (present perceptions of past and future), and socialized time (patterns connected with processes and events) that has passed in the same span of organizational change (Gray et al, 2012).

WHY THIS METHOD WORKS

Providing rich and powerful insights into how and why change unfolds in organizations and its impacts at various levels of analysis, the whole view benefit of a qualitative research methodology is most suited for this specific research. It

is longitudinal, complex, and has a dynamic disintegrative and situated in nature (Langley & Denis, 2006). Therefore, this research methodology should be most effective in uncovering characteristics specific to the ongoing changes in the workplace for reporters. Working inductively, this study expects to answer the how and why questions that answer what kind of dynamic may be transpiring in a reporter's digital workplace environment.

In addition to the temporal perspective of qualitative inquiry, elements of voice and context are also essential in qualitative research (Gray, p. 128). Establishing the degree to which context plays a role in the daily dynamic of reporters enhances this research by determining how it fosters or impedes the change process. Change strategies that work in one organization may not in another. For example, sometimes a top-down approach is effective for an established group of trusting employees in times of change. In other contexts, another of many options, collaborative negotiations, may be the best route (Gray et al, 2012, p. 124) (Huy, 2002). Observing newsroom culture in participant observation and listening to reporters in personal interviews will yield rich insight to put this study's particular context in perspective. This research believes it can bring a "heightened awareness of the textural character" of the observed (Atkinson et al, 1994, p.258). Doing so can help put a greater portion of the acquired data in proper context. It also possibly enhances (or limits) theorizing (Gray et al, p. 125).

As important as context, is the "change" voice being heard. In this case, it is the reporter, or, change "recipient" (Gray et al, 2012). Critical theorists often

emphasize (Parker, 1992) the importance of being attentive to the voices that are not being heard and address when and why those voices are not being heard. (Gray et al, 2012) How are reporters are responding to change? What characteristics of organizational culture can be described? What from management is happening (or still needs to happen) for reporters to embrace, participate, or become innovators of future change? How might an employee's perception of supervisor support affect the quality of their job experience and stress level? Social support in the workplaces of other professions has been tied to being able to regulate organizational stressors (Kirkmeyer, et al, p.125). In a *Personnel Psychology, Inc.* (1988) study of police officers and civilian radio dispatchers, researchers found such a correlation (p. 135). When supervisor support was low, worker tension was high, and vice versa (Kirmeyer, et al, p.136). The effects of psychological climate perceptions on performance are facilitated by work attitudes and employee motivation (Parker, C., et al, 2003, p. 406).

Finally, this methodology is a good fit for this research because of its flexibility once the research process has commenced. Qualitative research processes are often “emergent” (Creswell, 2009) and open to the probability that phases of the process may change or shift after entering the field (p. 176). Upon the start of data collection, it will be categorized by shared themes. However, in letting the subjects tell the story, those themes may require modification and direction during the process depending on what the facts discovered indicate. This qualitative element steers the research to focus on learning the meaning participants hold regarding the problem at hand, not on any possible

preconceived meaning the researcher bring (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). This research will be mindful of whose story it is telling (Gray et al, 126).

PLAN OF ACTION

A useful way to reach an accurate understanding of television reporters' multimedia and occupational "multiskilling" (Garcia Aviles, 2008) requirements is to ask those reporters who fit that specification about their experiences (p.221). Semi-structured depth interviews to pursue their accounts will be the mode of investigation. This type of interview can reveal hidden feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about which a respondent may not have been aware (Berger, 1998, p. 55). Because of time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis, these interviews will be limited to five to ten, but no more than ten subjects from the "big four" affiliate-only news stations in the research areas. This means a station with a local FOX, ABC, CBS, or NBC network affiliation. Identities of all interview subjects, television market, and the specific stations visited will be confidential in the report of this research. The only personal information requested from reporters will be gender and years of experience.

For the purpose of comparison, more than one top twenty market may be included in selecting these three stations. This protocol serves the purpose of identifying any similar tendencies across the markets. An initial line of structured questioning will be prepared (see appendices). Other unstructured questions may develop and cannot be foreseen at this time. To generate the most candid and quality responses, it is important to let the interviewee talk through

open-ended questions (Morrissey, 1998, p. 108). Therefore, this emergent nature of this study makes room for impromptu follow-up queries posed when the interviewer senses the interviewee may elaborate with material helpful to this research. When appropriate, the interviewer must make a point to ask “why, why, why” as continual follow-ups to the interviewee’s answers (Pacanowsky, p. 128).

The crux of this study is in maintaining a natural flow and setting; interviews will be informal and carried out in conversational style. To aid in the accuracy of subsequent analysis of interview content, interviews may be tape recorded and expected to vary in length from twenty (20) minutes to forty-five (45) minutes maximum. They may be executed in segments depending on interviewee availability. If any information needs clarification, follow up interviews may be conducted by phone, email, or in person after initial data analysis has obtained a preliminary understanding of the findings. Additional data will also be documented while the researcher listens to taped interviews, transcribes those interviews, and reflects upon any particulars of those interviews. This research is expected to obtain additional data throughout the study, such as comments and perspective from managerial personnel with regard to daily operations, protocol, and dissemination goals of each particular newsroom.

As all taped interviews and field notes will be transcribed for ongoing data analysis throughout the duration of this study, any potential coding of pervading and comparable themes that present themselves will be directly documented for interpretation toward the results section of this study. Similarities and dissimilarities will be sought and coded in areas such as shared working

experience, working conditions, and outlook. These themes will be used to further portray the new media world and culture surrounding this sample. Grouping results station by station and then by categories of similarities and differences will be the most effective way to differentiate what qualities all reporters shared and at what junctures in the questioning that they differed. After assigning categories, the researcher can expound further on incidents or events reporters shared within those categories.

Before depth interviews are executed, this research will first evaluate the perceived work environment of reporters from more than one newsroom. This participant observation is designed to help gain insight into the newsroom subculture as well as into news operations itself (Berger, 1998, p. 105). It will also help design and construct applicable questions for the subsequent personal interviews.

An ethnographic visit will be conducted in two different newsrooms. Elements such as newsroom leadership, new media goals, product output, workflow, and communication are priorities in this observation. Due to the fast pace and time constraints that the researcher understands are natural and necessary processes in daily newsroom function, and as to not disturb the organic nature of the field of study, observation periods must be maximized by the researcher. This means that during participant observations, encounters with subjects may be utilized as additional interview opportunities in instances when advance consent is obtained. Two visits will be preferred but are not as essential to this research as the person to person interviews which provide the preferred

narrower focus of reporter experience. Field notes will be written during visits, interviews, and follow-up interviews. From these notes, this research offers a subsequent case study to compare and contrast the range of responsibilities required in using dissemination technologies and varying cultures between stations.

While conducting fieldwork, observations of the researcher will be recorded as written notes as to not upset the newsroom's natural dynamic. In this case, and as with the personal interview phase of this project, the orientation of the researcher, as a fellow broadcast journalist, is critical to this study. The researcher worked at Station 1 for eight years and (at the time of this study) has been working at Station 3 for less than a year. This shared commonality is seen as strength to this research, as the sense of individual obligation in research and a journalist's desire to keep a reputation for integrity (de Vries, 2006) are indispensable here. This project is confident that relationships or human connections with the interview subjects and researcher are a beneficial "buffer" against the degradation of ethical standards (de Vries et al, 2006, p. 667).

In that, this researcher is aware of the enduring theoretical arguments regarding the ability of native anthropologists to produce non-prejudicial conclusions in research. However, in this particular examination, it is believed the researcher avoids the strongest criticisms of "going native" (Berger, 1998) by exhibiting an unobtrusive presence, ethical obligations, and knowledge of when to and when not to generalize or over-analyze observations (p. 106).

Familiar with much of what will be seen in newsroom operations, the researcher will not need to try and interpret areas to which an outside and

alternative researcher may be foreign. This already-established ability to relate to individualities of the environment brings a “gifted second-sight” to the study (Jackson, 2008, p. 37). With experience as a reporter within two stations and DMA studied, the researcher “knows her stuff” (Morrissey, 1998), can anticipate what may unfold (p.113), yet still relate to the “pure television viewing” a welcomed observer around a family dinner table has (Jensen et al, 1991, p. 150). Understanding what anthropologist Clifford Geertz called the “twitches and winks” (1973) of a culture is imperative to achieve an accurate interpretation of idiosyncratic events and interview content in this study. This “thick description” of the local television news culture’s effect on reporters will be the backbone of this research (Geertz, 1973, p. 6).

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Limitations of this study first lie in its confidential nature; the responsibility of the researcher to self-edit details of certain observations to protect identities is paramount but may at times restrict verbatim portrayals. Furthermore, this project cannot control what news unfolds during days of observation; a “slow” news day will undoubtedly reveal a different tone of operation than one surrounded with breaking news events. This study can also not control what types of stories to which reporters are assigned which may also dictate the nature of observation or even the reporter’s state of mind at the selected time of interview. There are also limitations to the personal interview process. By nature, reporters have unpredictable schedules so this research cannot mandate the length of time designated for each interview, or that all

questions will be asked of each interviewee at that time. Partial interviews may be conducted, and if so, follow-up interviews will be used to complete the process.

Regardless of the limitations, the goal remains to achieve a comparison between reporters' assessments of their work amid a mutating psychological climate in television newsrooms rife with ongoing cultural, operational, and technological job changes. The big picture discovers what culture will be revealed in these digital environments and, ultimately, what reporters believe this perspective suggests for the future of their profession. That answer, as well as that changing culture that fuels it, introduces a broadened industry study into this ongoing evolution in television journalism. Results of this psychological climate analysis may also provide insight and lay a foundation to further study of newsroom procedure and its effects on employees.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

STATION 1

Station 1 is a top twenty market with a staff of thirty on-air news, weather, and sports reporters. Station 1 requires some reporters to be MMJs but there are at least seven to ten reporters on staff who are not required to tackle MMJ duties. Additionally, some MMJs are only required to shoot periodically because a healthy staff of photographers (17) allows manpower to team up more than one MMJ with a photographer on a daily basis. This research learned that, at times, two weeks may pass before some MMJs go “solo” on a story.

Interviews with seven Station 1 newsroom employees were utilized for this research. Reporters at Station 1 are very prolific on Facebook and Twitter. Using both platforms and writing web articles are daily requirements. The rule here is “on-air, on the web.”

Personal Communication

In the view of these reporters, newsroom communication is not a problem with regard to its existence. Unanimous opinion of reporters interviewed deemed it a constant throughout the day. However, this is not always seen as a positive; as the some see expectations are not always realistic. Reporters are often made to feel they are not doing enough fast enough when it comes to social media and the online product. In addition, many address the fact that through text, tweets, and

station email, they are contacted all throughout the day including before and after work. Communication often begins and is expected hours before a shift.

Newsroom communication

While personal communication is a constant, overall newsroom communication does not receive high marks at Station 1. This element is expressed as a source of stress for reporters. Reporters offer multiple instances when newsroom producers and managers are sitting next to each other or in close proximity, yet, instead of first communicating with each other, both contact the reporter in the field with the same question. “(They’re) both texting me for a pic of the scene or subject just because they see the competition has one two minutes before me.” One reporter recalled being admonished for tweeting new information on a story before first alerting the newsroom. This might seem plausible if the tweet had not already been retweeted by producers in house. The reporter felt betrayed by producers who were not held accountable for failing to speak up. Breaking news adds pressure to any newsroom climate but the requirements and emphasis on using social media do not limit stressors to fieldwork. It can also interfere with communication Station 1 reporters experience within the newsroom.

Even the conversation in the newsroom has moved to, ‘hey did you see my tweet?’ And I’m like, ‘I’m right here, you can talk to me and tell me what’s going on.’ It’s so crazy. ‘Here you are, having a conversation with me. Do you want me to sign on (to Twitter) now and read it while you’re standing here or you can just tell me?’

Social Media

Social media has restructured the entire dissemination process for many newsrooms including Station 1 where reporters are required to tweet constantly during the day. Reporters in this sample say that requirement has also put “huge” pressure on them because deadlines are now instantaneous. Gone are the days, one reporter shares, when the station snags an exclusive story and holds back for a strategic release. At Station 1, there is no more waiting. In that, the reporters say they feel an unspoken message: the concern is not the actual quality of the content, but in just being first with the information. Another anchor adds, “They just want you to get something – anything- no one else has and just tweet it.”

So what does the station want? The answer is “murky,” says a ten year traffic reporter who tweets every 30-45 seconds during morning drive. “You don’t know where your loyalty is, if your loyalty is to social media or the on-air product, so sometimes it’s difficult to derive. It’s still a balance we’re trying to figure out.” In that, some reporters see the station as playing catch up when it comes to social media, but in that quest, “doing a good job.” Many of these reporters say true engagement depends on the story. “The interaction is as strong as you want it to be,” says a twenty year reporter, “We are still paid to tell good stories and find the news. So you have to find a balance between what the audience wants and what your boss wants. That’s an interesting line in the sand sometimes.”

Still with the issues brought to light, this group of reporters overwhelming note the effectiveness in using social media as part of their job and say they feel

engaged with viewers from their social media interaction. Some say they prefer the interactive and visual capabilities of Facebook over Twitter, while others like the simplicity and directness of Twitter. The heavy tweeters agree they like the appreciation they feel from the audience on Twitter: “When I don’t tweet, my followers are like, ‘what’s going on, what’s happening?’” Another reporter says, “I know I’ve made great viewer connections from it so that’s why I feel obligated to continue it.”

As Station 1 reporters see the value in social media use many feel it is still mismanaged and highly disorganized by those who oversee it. “In a field where we’re trying to dictate what is important to people, we have benefitted from listening to them,” says the traffic reporter. “I don’t know if we’re reacting to them appropriately. I think there needs to be a better balance there.” Fragmented and unclear directives from management in handling social media are concerns. Reporters express being told to “just do it” in reference to Twitter. To them, a directionless oversaturation might be avoided with an in house “social media general” of sorts. Says a seventeen year anchor: “I wish we had someone in charge who could manage it better so we’re not all separately tweeting out there in our own way. People are following me, other anchors, other reporters; we’re all under the same brand. There has to be a smarter way to do it that the brand is getting more followers... they need to organize it.”

Accuracy

From the high pressure emphasis on social media interaction, multiple reporters express concerns over accuracy: “Perception is reality. If we perceive to

be breaking news, then we're breaking news." Another reporter shared the many times reporters may want wait a moment longer to tweet information in a desire to supplement or perfect it, but are harangued by managers to go ahead and tweet whatever is known immediately. Along these lines, a Station 1 photojournalist commented from his observations, that it is not so much the station is looking for coverage, as they are "the impression of coverage." An anchor says sometimes what is uncovered on a story is not always what was initially promised and often leads to a struggle between reporter and manager (or producer). "They (managers) don't understand why you aren't comfortable or putting out more information to let people know what you have coming up on a certain story," says an anchor. "But to me, if you have to retract it, that's more damaging than having it second or being the first person in the market to get it." In the rush to be first, reporters also express frustration that much of what is covered is "neither interesting nor groundbreaking." A story may not be germane to viewers but "we need to have it because there's sexy video and cop cars."

Ethics are another issue that rattles the veteran reporters in this study who remember the days (within the last decade) of being required to confirm two sources before reporting the information. They say the ethic has shifted to striving for personal bests. What matters now: "how did YOU confirm that?" or "we have not confirmed this, but there are reports..." "Everyone wants to win," says another anchor. "But at what cost?"

Demands of the job

Almost every reporter in this study expressed that Station 1 management does not seem to understand the time it takes to fit everything in that reporters are required to do in a day. Several reporters also note a lack of support and impatience from producers when the reporter is only trying to do the job correctly. Before going on-air, reporters say they want make sure what they are reporting is accurate, clear and concise. “You’re still expected to (first) let people know online what you have that coming up and sometimes you don’t know until the last minute that everything you’re saying is correct.”

Some believe although management may recognize what reporters are doing, it does not show an awareness of the constants necessary to accomplish it or the entities employees are so quickly expected to master.

Reporters’ impressions of some of this over or under sight by management has a direct effect on morale: “I think they just assume whatever their employees are doing is not enough so you need to be doing more.” One reporter talks of being called in and admonished for a lack of activity on Twitter. “Essentially, they were saying ‘you’re not doing enough. This is what we expect.’ So I said, ‘let’s pull up my account.’ They had no idea that I had thousands of Twitter followers and I had been tweeting thousands of times, more than the anchors for the flagship station for our company. They had no idea, yet, were calling me in to essentially motivate and reprimand.”

Station 1’s MMJs interviewed express the same sentiment. Management gets involved when they want and has “great ideas, according to them,” says a ten

year MMJ. “The reality is that most of them have not gone out and gathered news since the influence of social media, so the expectation level is skewed.”

Management understanding of the actual logistics of achieving what is expected for both MMJs and non-MMJs is another area that gets low marks from reporters at Station 1. The station makes a point to crack down on overtime but often puts reporter/photographer teams in precarious positions of “Go, get it,” (as in the story) ignoring necessary travel time. Reporters say they are then questioned for the accrued overtime. Work preparation is another area reporters included in this category. One reporter talks of being expected to dissect fifty-five pages of a motion, tweet about it, post on Facebook, write an online article, and email the producers to see if they wanted to follow up the next day – all without accruing overtime or being given time in her shift to do so. “I got home at 7. I finally walked out of my home office at midnight. And I never charge them for any of that. If I really put down all the time I spent, they couldn’t afford me.”

The opinion of this reporter pool was slightly varied with regard to management understanding. One reporter says while he does not particularly care to do the extra online or social media work, he does not worry if those demands are understood. “That’s the business that we’re in, that’s the time we live in, and I either have to do it, or I have to leave, so I just do it.”

MISSION

Reporters were asked to describe the station’s overall mission. While nearly all agreed that a social media agenda is clear: reporters must constantly do “everything you can as far as posting web stories, tweeting and face-booking.”

But beyond that, the majority of reporters in this research do not feel management understands exactly what they want beyond that command. The actual communication process in how to execute this mission was described as “muddy.” Reporters say they feel a mixed message: Be on top of information as quickly as possible yet preserve the integrity of the exclusive, which is nearly impossible in social media. It is a two-fold mission often “competing with itself.”

Reporters also note that management’s propensity to change course on any given day is disconcerting and destructive to the creativity process. Says a reporter: “We are so reactive and so haphazard in our way of doing things.” Reporters recount being told their high pressure workload is a result of being “trusted” to tackle big jobs. “I like they will trust you do it. But if you aren’t doing it in the way they envision, they’ll revisit that. So it’s a two-edged sword.”

Handled Well

While some planning is perceived as haphazard, reporters do say that some preparations, when timely, are handled well. The most prevalent answer was in the station’s coverage of big-stage breaking news events. A recent local breaking news event that also garnered national attention saw seven nearly round the clock crews sent from this station. Reporters say this was a tremendous help in doing their jobs. Each reporter handled a separate angle emerging from this multi-layered story. This lifted the burden off one or two reporters swamped with trying to depict all of the various angles.

Newsroom Culture

Newsroom culture did not get high remarks as almost all interviewees saw it as disjointed and split between an “old school” and “new school” contingents within the newsroom: “On one side you have the ‘old schools’ who are saying ‘I’m trying to maintain the integrity of what I have for my entire career,’ and then you have other dynamic of ‘new schools’ coming in saying, ‘If you can’t get your story out on all these avenues, you’re not keeping up with the times.’” Words Station 1 reporters used to portray this culture: frenetic, confusing, tough to describe, toxic, and oppressive.

Personal observations of the morning and three o’clock news meetings are referenced for this research. Reporters, producers, assignment editors sit around a round table in the wide open designed newsroom. Producers first run down the breaking news stories of the day. Going around the table, reporters expound on the two story ideas they are required to email into the station before their shift. Many reporters note the dominating attitude of one manager has directly affected their perspective of their job. The morning meeting is described by one reporter as “a bad comedy routine. A soliloquy meets comedy dissertation-professor-yelling-at-students-type thing.” Reporters say their ideas are routinely shot down in a “this way or the highway” forum. “I don’t know why they want me to send in stuff because they’re never interested in it anyway. They want to do their own stuff.” Though that same reporter is not as rattled by the manager’s approach, adding he understands “he wants to win. So do I.” Still other reporters say this atmosphere makes them feel beaten down. It also causes them to refrain from

setting up stories in advance (a usual expectation) because if the story is rejected at the meeting, the reporter feels personally cast in a bad light with story contacts. These reporters believe it poor form to “beg” for interviews and continually cancel.

Reporters point out that this atmosphere of fear effects other newsroom jobs as well. Producers, who would usually take more of a leadership position in these meetings, have also altered their behavior in favor of the path to least resistance. Ultimately, a lack of respect sat at the crux of many reporter comments regarding this newsroom culture. “Nobody says thank you, nobody says please,” says a reporter. “If you polled the majority in there, it would say it’s unhappy.” But even in that, several reporters noted the newsroom is full of good people who are very talented. They believe their station’s flawed management style through the changing local news landscape is why many fear losing their jobs.

Input

From the interviewees’ answers regarding newsroom culture, Station 1 appears to have a personality-driven newsroom. While some reporters do not feel comfortable speaking up, another said he had no qualms, “You need to pick your battles, and if there’s something I really feel strongly about it, I will say something.” This long time male reporter feels respected; many of his colleagues do not. Many feel direct managers listens to their ideas, but often times upper management (the News Director) is “hit and miss.” Reporters say they are asked for input but often feel it is a disingenuous request as some suggestions are well

received, other times they fall flat. Another reporter says it all depends where the burden of change is suggested.

“If I can work more do more, contribute more, they’ll take that suggestion. (But) If I have a suggestion that I think will be a smarter way to reach the public instead of having twenty-five people tweeting the exact story- maybe there’s a smarter way to do it and manage all of our time better. No, they wouldn’t listen to that. The burden is on you, solely as an individual, trying to get you to do more.”

Frustration

Frustrations at Station 1 stem from the constant multi-tasking multi-platform environment that while some days is described as electric, can also be seen as “agitating.” In that, the large majority of reporters expressed frustration at the fact they are often working as hard as they possibly can and the effort often goes unnoticed. They feel people are contributing at a pace greater than anyone is able to see. Even so, there are times when reporters will be beaten on a story. Says an anchor: “You’ll get an email from the boss, saying, ‘Wow, wish WE had that.’ And it’s like; ‘didn’t you see that work we just did?’ Everything you just poured your heart into and worked your whole day on, to have it ripped out...”

Station 1 reporters say it is often overlooked that those stations that beat them did so with better resources. Reporters say they are sometimes expected to compete with national correspondents who have crews working around them. Reporters are also expected to cultivate a list of high profile contacts but feel they are not given the time or offered the overtime needed to do so.

Along the list of lacking resources, other reporters state an overly thin work force and insufficient equipment. Reporters say they are not provided the

adequate technology with which to work and do their job more efficiently. Field reporters do not have tablets or iPads. At least one reporter in this study must use a slow six year old laptop with which to file online stories and compete with social media. This twenty year reporter who has experience in a bigger market says it is frustrating to see the product “cut” by not replacing equipment in disrepair. It continues to operate with “duct tape and string. I think you need to have the most cutting edge software to do your job. You don’t cut corners.”

Another frustration overwhelmingly expressed by Station 1 reporters: the unspoken expectation employees feel to seemingly work or be available 24/7. Reporters describe the need to check non-stop email, tweets and Facebook posts on their phones whenever there is a sitting moment. “It’s (not) just when my work day starts at 2:30. There’s no way I could catch up and get all of these things answered before the newscasts begin.”

A final frustration pointed out by a reporter circles back to newsroom climate and the perception of how “rude” management is to employees. Some reporters recall doing a great job and beating the competition on a story but say it is still commonplace to get call from management with a complaint.

Reward

In the midst of this psychological climate battle these reporters depict, they also overwhelmingly express the reward they receive from their work. Impacting someone’s life by telling a story, providing information, righting a wrong or encouraging change is just a sample of the reasons reporters list when describing

the motivation to continue in this field. “No one can do this if they don’t love what they’re doing. You just have to really love it and want to help people first and foremost.” Another reporter shared that being part of the group dynamic when something goes well and sharing in that pride and encouragement on a purely participant level is the most rewarding feature.

Making a difference in the community through their work has become the ultimate encourager in a newsroom that many describe as a discourager. Feedback from viewers, not management is what reporters say fuels them to keep going. They want to feel they are contributing as consumer advocates. Reporters say one phone call or email from a viewer is all it takes to reaffirm that quest. They add that being able to contribute an element of substance to a sometimes rumor-monger-like age of social media is rewarding. They say that ability enables them to provide credible information to move the conversation forward.

Stress

The push to make their main newscasts relevant to viewers has local television news operations enhancing online and mobile output to compete in today’s instant age of information. Station 1 reporters say that new emphasis transfers a new level of stressors onto them, as they are expected to author the constant updates. Similar to the aforementioned Politico reporters who relay feeling as if they were “sinking” in a boot camp-like arena, a sixteen year Station 1 morning anchor says, “every second is a deadline.”

Another area of stress is comes from not being heard by management particularly in social media induced concerns over ethics and accuracy. Reporters

talk of feeling like they are “beating their head against the wall, saying the same things and not seeing any action.” One reporter says it does not affect job performance as much as it affects the mood toward the job. She says she must remind herself she does the job because she loves what she does, not for praise from management. “I’m still 100 percent in...but at the same time, when you hear other people doing things you wouldn’t consider ethical and they’re being praised for it, it kind of makes you a little cynical about what you do.” By using the term unethical this reporter says that, to her, this means reporting (or repeating) information without first confirming it.

Other reporters say the sometimes seemingly toxic newsroom is at the center of daily stress. One reporter says paying for gas, driving and working alone on stories would be preferable to having to go in the building, “The days I don’t have to go in, are the happiest calmest, quietest days where I literally feel like a boulder has been lifted off my shoulders.” Many reporters share they feel helpless in voicing any concern over this negative newsroom culture. One reporter says it is not believed among reporters that any formal complaint about lower management would be taken seriously by upper management. They expect they would “get lip service but nothing would be done.” There is no union or steward to address.

Reporters at Station 1 were divided on if they were happier or unhappier five years ago to now. The answer seems to depend on the area addressed. Many note making more money and having earned a higher job level than five years ago as things to be happy about. But while the majority said they were happier, others

struggled to answer, “I don’t know if I’m happy or not... I can’t even definitely tell you. I’m tired.” Another added, “Happy comes and goes.”

Stressors intensify as some reporters feel their own drives to succeed are manipulated by management. They disclose the culture makes them feel obligated to be contributing if something happens outside of their normal shift. “They know we’re all Type A’s, they know we don’t like to lose, they know we want to be first. And then they also manipulate with your job. Well, you’re one of our best reporters, you should know that. You should have that.”

The overall consensus of Station 1 reporters is that the majority of newsroom workers on the whole are overwhelmed and overworked at times. One reporter adds it would be nice if managers could walk in reporters’ shoes, see what is being contributed, and also see how their sometimes unrealistic mandates make the job more difficult at times. With pressure constantly looming, several reporters do not feel Station 1 provides a healthy psychological climate and every respondent notes a more stressful atmosphere than five years ago. Interestingly answers did not differ according to MMJ or non-MMJ. It seems station management style is the entity perceived to be hampering the experience of both MMJ and non-MMJ at Station 1 regardless of job duties.

STATION 2

Station 2 is a top twenty market with a staff of 30-35 on air news, weather and sports reporters. During this analysis Station 2 is in the midst of a major in-house technological transition, launching a new automated newscast. Fully

robotic and fixed cameras will soon televise the newscast with no production staff needed in studio. Only a director, technical director, graphics, audio and teleprompter operator remain to man a new state of the art control room.

Almost two years earlier, Station 2 also launched a companywide initiative of moving to nearly all-MMJ news staff. This was a focal point during the observational visit for this study. Interviews with six Station 2 newsroom employees were utilized for this research. What does hiring a nearly all MMJ staff entail at Station 2? It means a photographer with thirty years' experience is now also working as an on-air reporter, learning a completely new skill set. And vice versa, a news anchor/reporter with comparable experience is now shooting video and learning a completely new skill set.

Demands

There are two types of MMJs at Station 2. MMJ Reporters whose experience is primarily as a reporter and have recently taken on videography duties, and MMJ Photographers whose experience is primarily in shooting video and have just recently taken on reporting duties. MMJs of either category do not mince words that much is asked of them: "I feel like I have ten jobs that I do," says an MMJ who also anchors. Many say they understand their company's "all-MMJ" initiative, calling the idea of multimedia great in a "boardroom conversation and in theory." But realistically, reporters do not believe management understands how labor intensive and time consuming it is. "Going out and shooting your own stuff, and writing a web article and tweeting and facebooking, and everything that entails, not to mention all the other

requirements you have to do... You've just sweat through your shirt and now they want a standup. I don't think they get all that's required to get it all done."

According to several MMJs here, the pervasiveness of desktop journalism has created a misconception in how difficult it is to make broadcast pictures and sound come together. One reporter says he thinks there's a huge disconnect when it comes to jobs associated with the newsroom and jobs associated with the field. "They understand them in a vacuum," says the MMJ. "They understand without challenge of the elements." This MMJ adds that seldom do the hurdles that arise in the field influence whether producers will agree to change or adapt the assigned storyline. Reporters say so much is required; it makes it very difficult to turn out quality work on a timely schedule.

One MMJ photographer describes working alone almost every day, emailing web scripts, pictures, posting online video, contributing to the station App, and producing his story for broadcast. He says a great deal of assumptions are made by the newsroom," that you have time to update all this stuff (online) while when you're trying to navigate traffic, get in touch with a county commissioner about your interview where you're already fifteen minutes late 'cause you got stuck shooting b-roll somewhere else. It's just difficult."

Newsroom communication

At Station 2, there's a 9:30am news meeting every morning led by the dayside Executive Producer (EP) and Assistant News Director. The Assistant News Director essentially works as the assignment desk "czar" monitoring incoming activity of breaking news and sharing in the responsibility with the EP of communicating back and forth with crews in the field. Producers, EPs, and

MMJs gather around the assignment desk area which is a two-step up platform central to the fishbowl type newsroom. The meeting lasts about 25 minutes but reporters say it can be easily longer depending on the news day. Reporters pitch two story ideas which are all put up on two white boards where a flow of discussion ensues between reporters and management on which stories will be done. For some newer MMJ photographers, this process can be daunting if story ideas are often rejected. One says it's hard to want to set up stories when it's going to "get up-ended anyway."

The reporter crews and resources are listed on one board as stories are then stacked according to priority on the second board with the top story as the days' lead. "We're light today," the Assistant News Director tells the Dayside Executive Producer (EP) as he walks into the newsroom. "That means we only have four MMJ's. We usually like a minimum of five." There is usually only one or two photographers available to work with a reporter on a given day so much of the day crew are on its own as MMJs. In the end, with two reporters paired with photographers for lead story live shots (live shots require a two person team), and a pre-produced story already on the board, there are a total of seven stories sources for this day. "We have to be creative (staffing-wise)," says the EP as eight is the norm for Station 2. At least one reporter in this sample cited having a photographer for roughly fifty percent of stories, while others say they are required to almost always work alone. Night side reporters are sometimes pulled into dayside action to supplement coverage when needed. The EP tells this study

that night side reporters are always teamed with photographers because of the “down and dirty” nature of after dark work creates safety concerns.

In a newsroom so busy, reporters say sometimes communication can sometimes get lost as people can forget to communicate. The assignment editor forgets to consult a producer or MMJ or some else in the loop drops the ball on getting a message through and “things get mixed up.” MMJs say this does not happen too often but more often than it should. Some of the so-called “street guys” describe “decent” and “average” communication where “some days are better than others.” These MMJs say sometimes there is more dispensing of what management wants done instead of “this is how we can do it.” They also say that sometimes assignment managers do not want to address issues that arise until they are “on the doorstep.” They would like to see more pre-planning in this area.

The length of the morning meeting creates stress for some MMJs. When leaving the meeting, many report feeling already behind, rushed and “like there is a huge amount of work in front of me.” Sometimes MMJs say they walk out with a “theory” of a story from managers, instead of a concrete direction. Another MMJ says when he feels like that he makes a point to sit down for a minute with a manager to clarify what is expected.

Personal communication

Most MMJs at Station 2 say they are in constant communication throughout the day with the newsroom. They touch base before returning to the station and once the story is written. Methods of contact are text or email on station cell phones. Some MMJs report they call the assignment desk to check in. In turn, they say the desk does a good job passing along information. One MMJ

says the key is to things running smoothly is to pick one person to check in with and keep your communication consistent with that same person throughout the shift. Another MMJ who works in sports says his contact is not with newsroom brass but with his direct supervisor, a system he appreciates, and says helps him do his job better.

Similar to reporters at Station 1, MMJs express frustration that newsroom personnel do not always communicate with each other before trying to contact the MMJ in the field. This can happen when one producer wants a tease and story for one show at the same time another producer wants the same one for theirs. MMJs would prefer one message instead of being inundated with texts trying to drive, edit, or fill other responsibilities. While this MMJ says the information is good to have, sometimes the volume is too much to digest. On one end, the people sending the messages do not understand everything the MMJ is juggling just to be able to respond. A quick phone call is preferred over an email with files attached or being forced to play “Ring around the Rosie” on the phone with the newsroom.

Newsroom Culture

Newsroom culture is defined as pressure-packed at Station 2. Expectations are high. MMJs describe each other as “more under the gun because it’s all on them.” An MMJ who came to the station as the MMJ transition was unfolding says he detects people are more frustrated now as they get used to added duties they had not been required to do before. “There are a lot of talented people but sometimes not enough to overcome the sheer volume of what’s going on.”

However, it is because of this shared experience, other MMJs paint a picture of a supportive atmosphere. They say co-workers understand they are all in the “same boat.” In that, MMJs say a pervasive teamwork mentality feeds a culture battling the barrage of new duties: “Can they do it? Yes. But can they do everything? No. Everyone is a foot soldier and I think on the reporters-producers level they understand that if we all don’t work together, (we lose) our biggest strength.” In addition, another MMJ says, the culture does not “kick you when you are down.” When a problem arises on a story, management is there to help work it out and offer up other ideas. One MMJ says management will help find another angle or set up other contacts. He perceives an “attitude where they want us to succeed.” In the view of another MMJ, the corporate MMJ mandate had an accidental and perhaps unintended effect to push some egos out of the newsroom. The people who remain seem committed to helping each other get through the day.

It should be noted that some MMJs portray that the management-directed newsroom mentality that everyone can do everything is tolerated rather than accepted. Many are fearful of their jobs or frustrated by their pay scale. MMJs say their hybrid position pays less than the average reporter job in the market. MMJs report some Station 2 co-workers are getting two percent increases or no raises at all. “People aren’t looking for mansions or fancy cars, just looking for, ‘Geez, when’s it going to get a little better financially?’ They see all these young people coming up... so there’s a lot of conformity because they feel lucky to have jobs.”

MMJs describe a mix of two kinds of managers within the newsroom: ones that empower versus those who just tell you what to do. Unfortunately, MMJs

say, the ones that get promoted are the ones that are “more hard-core and do not have that (empowerment/encouragement) quality.”

It should be noted that the management style and personality of Station 2’s News Director received high remarks from all respondents in communicating the station mission and helping counter the high pressure culture with a teamwork-like approach. MMJs described this manager as a person with the “it” factor, “the best I’ve had,” “genuine,” a communicator, and someone who “cares about us.” The News Director’s “fresh ideas” are seen as bringing a new dimension, lifting morale and in step “with what we have going.” Similar to the 2011 Goodman and Loh *Business Information Review* study, Station 2’s dynamic falls in line with the belief that multi-leveled team support is essential to keeping workers motivated in challenging times of change.

Mission

Station 2 works with what is called a “3 Screen Strategy: On-line, On-air, On-mobile. Their philosophy is to keep news fast-paced, attractive, and engaging. The EP tells this research that the emphasis is not on speed and volume as it is in having a good balance of meaningful, quality stories.

When asked what the station mission was, reporters had a variety of interpretations. One MMJ says he understands telling stories with the most impact is the priority. This MMJ adds that management communicates an attitude, “that if you succeed, then the station succeeds.” To another, the mission is relatively clear, but does not apply to everything. This MMJ notes much of the goings on for a bare bones weekend crew is unnoticed. An “agenda-driven”

mission is most noticed by other MMJs to take daily assignments and set them into that mold of “how we do things.” This is not always believed by the most experienced MMJs to be the best or most accurate route: “In the past, there was a greater evaluation on scene and you do story from that. Now it’s here’s what we think the story is and you go and try to formulate it to that approach.”

Input

The topic of input also received varied responses from MMJs at Station 2. One MMJ says when he feels listened to when he expresses logistical concerns about his assignment such as help setting up a story so he can concentrate on driving. Another says it is understood that management likes for MMJs to be involved in the creative/story process. Ideas are considered and discussed within the newsroom meetings to decide what stories are best for Station 2 viewers. “Everyone’s opinion is respected.”

Outside of the newsroom editorial meeting, the majority of MMJs describe a different scenario saying, “If they ask I give it, but there aren’t a lot of opportunities where I’m asked.” Another says input is not asked for but if so, it would not be heard. This MMJ would not feel comfortable speaking up over a workplace problem: “(I think) it would be glossed over and I would be marked for speaking up. You have to pick and choose your battles.”

MMJs say push back ideas are encouraged on a corporate level but, again, they feel a proverbial fine line between being considered a “malcontent or as someone speaking from reason and experience.” Therefore the conclusion of many MMJs is that there is a lot of surface consideration for what employees

think. One veteran shares a former co-worker's observation: "I've noticed that they don't rely heavily on their most experienced people." Some experienced reporters feel an unsaid message from management: "Thanks for knowing what you know, but we think you should do it this way." The MMJ says pushback is less on this level because people know it is not what (managers) want to hear.

Handled well

There are several things MMJs feel are handled well at Station 2. The overall climate is called a "well-oiled machine" and a "well-functioning newsroom." One MMJ photographer says with everyone helping each other, he has more resources than ever before. Another cited the experience of the assignment desk and managers as a valuable resource. Reporters say they have learned to speak up when it comes to the growing pains of everyone understanding just how much can be tackled. "I've been getting better at delegating. Just because my laptop editor can make graphics doesn't mean I can do it." Even though they know in many ways the MMJ system is flawed, a universal understanding is helpful in arena where everyone is asked to do more.

MMJs say they do perceive management tries to help them but changes seem short-lived. Employees are given surveys asking their suggestions of what can be done to help them in their jobs: "Things change for a couple of months but then they just swing back to normal. So I think they try, but... it just gets lost in the shuffle."

Reporters and photographers are also sent to what is called "MMJ University" at one of the corporation's affiliates. Attendees receive tips on getting

the most out of the equipment and how to be as creative as possible as a solo “artist.”

Social media

Social media use is not described as a hard and fast requirement with Station 2 but was also called something that is “strongly encouraged.” This research finds it varied greatly among reporters. MMJ reporters say they are required to write corresponding online articles for their broadcast stories with some also sending web pictures and posting online video. However, at least one sports talent reports that online articles are not an everyday part of his job because of a myriad of responsibilities for that position. Some say they tweet and post to Facebook on their own because they like to - not because they feel obligated: “I like putting my messages out there but I really use it as news source. I like what I get out of it.” The majority of MMJs at Station 2 say they experience more interaction through Facebook than on Twitter. Another says feedback from viewers make him a better reporter. Many agree they feel very engaged when viewers respond either positively or negatively. One five year reporter says, “I don’t think you can overdo it on social media.”

It should also be included here that Station 2’s main meteorologist often conducts a nearly hour long video weather web chat with a vast online audience that attracts attendees well beyond the viewership area. It also boasts members from around the nation and internationally and, to date, 1.5 million live stream viewer minutes. After the evening six o’clock newscast, the meteorologist logs onto to talk about a variety of weather related topics, emphasizing big events such

as hurricanes, tornadoes, and winter weather. The meteorologist skypes in experts as guests, explains the catalysts for weather events, and answers chat room questions. Engagement is high as the meteorologist greets and incorporates feedback from every person joining the forum as well as the pictures they share on his Facebook page.

Frustrations

Some frustrations expressed at Station 2 were tertiary; there are those who would rather not chase police scanners for a story and those who feel an imposed story styling takes away from actual storytelling: “We brand things now. Everything has to have a catchy name and phrase.”

As expected the bulk of frustrations at Station 2 center around the increased workload: “(It’s) tough to see more and more expected from one person. Sometimes what’s expected is more than what can be done.” Effort that goes unappreciated often compounds the MMJ’s frustration: “I just feel sometimes our hard work and dedication is overlooked just because of the pace of the newsroom and the stress of the newsroom.” Another byproduct of this frustration that MMJs express is the disappointment in the quality of a constantly rushed product: “I don’t like mentality of quantity over quality pervading newsrooms across country.” Another MMJ shares what a former co-worker told him: “Sometimes you have to feed the beast. They don’t so much care sometimes about your quality, as long as you can fill that time slot and you have the correct facts and information, feed the beast.”

Several MMJs expressed not being sold on the mentality of doing more with less: “Saying you have all these bodies to create content... has been a little bit of a fallacy because you end up with a core amount of people that know how to do it and are out doing it, while others aren’t. Since it hasn’t been effectively implemented with all personnel, you’re left with a piece-meal situation where every day there’s a house of cards if anyone calls in sick or there’s too many people on vacation.”

The designation between “reporter MMJ” and “photographer MMJ” (depending on what skill the individual aligns their training and background) is not always appreciated. It is a line many MMJs would rather not exist or be more distinct: “If there’s a line, just be more realistic... Be upfront instead of issuing a blanket of expectations.” There are also a handful of newsroom talent who are not required to become MMJs but the reasons why are unclear: “There are people in the newsroom who don’t do it. I honestly don’t know how they work that out.” Another MMJ senses an existent disconnect between “those that ask and those that do.”

MMJs in this study are also not sure the News Director, who came from a bigger market that did not use MMJ’s, has the best handle on what should be an “MMJ story” and what should not be (meaning a story with expectations that clearly require a two person crew). The manager is new to the station, so they say they believe that will improve as the manager learns the market.

Reward

The most rewarding aspect of the job for MMJs at Station 2 is described as creating responsible journalism and telling people's stories. MMJs like having the daily vehicle to reach out and bring attention to news that might help the community: "(I love) when my story does something for someone and I'm not doing anything but my job." MMJs repeatedly cite helping people as daily motivation. Another MMJ says, it is not about "saving the world" or solving people's problems but simply bringing to light things people care about or letting them know what impacts them."

Another MMJ perspective shares being profoundly affected by crossing paths with the people themselves over an almost thirty year career. "(They) have made me who I am today. I've seen the highs, the lows, the famous, not so famous, the ones you want to cry with, and the ones you want to walk away from. (It's) experiencing a part of life most people can never imagine."

The ability to find avenues of creativity in their work is the reward for other MMJs. "I like to do things that make people laugh or raise their eyebrows or make them think." Positive feedback from colleagues is also rewarding: "Because I know that, in all likelihood, people have enjoyed it elsewhere."

Changing role

The changing role for journalists with an online audience did not establish itself as a concern for MMJs at Station 2. The majority express no matter what those online voices say, many do not have "legitimacy or credibility." One MMJ says he takes his online work and posting as a responsibility and thinks through

everything. “I want it to be intriguing, something that sets me apart. I want to make sure I’m very accurate, making sure what I’m reporting is one hundred percent right.” Being a consistent source of accurate reporting is what the majority of MMJs feel separates their work from the burgeoning online sources of news.

Most MMJs do not look at social media as a vehicle to attract viewers to the station. They see it as a helpful resource in keeping people engaged who are parts of a different audience that does not watch the televised product. Several MMJs with less than ten years of experience believe the televised product does not translate with younger generations. One five year MMJ expressed disdain over what he perceives as a changed reputation for local news. He said it is hard to feel respected for his career choice among his circle of friends who see local news a “side show” and “spectacle of events.”

Stress

Crediting a supportive newsroom environment, eighty percent of respondents at Station 2 say they are happier in their jobs than in the past five years. All but one stated feeling more stressed now than in the past five years. The interesting dichotomy is explained by one MMJ: “I guess I’m willing to do it because I like my job.” Still, the fast pace and range of newsroom demands takes a toll: “It’s virtually impossible to not feel a certain level of stress every day when we’re asked to do what we do.” Here is how another MMJ sums it up:

A multimedia journalist's role can best be described by the old "I Love Lucy" episode when she is working in a candy factory trying to wrap little pieces of chocolate on a conveyor belt. The industry wants you to do more and more all while getting it on faster and faster. It's a talent you

have to learn to juggle... and realize there is always room for improvement.

Stress for many Station 2 MMJs centers around the quality of work they perceive that they are doing. Many know they are doing the work of two people that consumes a great deal of time: “No matter how fast I am, it will always take me most of the day.” For MMJ reporters, driven to take pride in the on air presentation, often find themselves settling for less: “In one day, there is no way I can turn the quality of a story that a reporter and photographer working on my story can do. I think the quality of your product suffers.” The station’s money-saving, “two for one” aspect of the MMJ initiative is taxing: “I don’t agree with it, but (from a business standpoint) I get it.”

Other stressors come from assignments some MMJs feel would be better turned by a two person crew instead of a one person crew. “You’re either doing a story that’s suited for a multimedia journalist or you’re not. I speak up, I say, ‘that’s going to be a little hard to pull off. Can you help me? How do you want me to go about this?’” Other MMJs are still struggling with mastering the brand new skill set they have been assigned whether it be shooting or being an on-air talent. For some, it is a radical change. One reporter used the analogy: “You wouldn’t put a defensive lineman in a tailback position and vice versa?” Both are very talented but not suited for each other’s roles. There is a perceived hope that management tweaks the MMJ initiative to reflect how people are better matched for certain positions, though to these MMJs, it does not seem imminent: “They’re not worried about how challenging it is. (You have to) Just move forward and be what they want you to be.”

What can the station do better? “Get me a photographer,” says one MMJ. The quality of work concern repeatedly comes up with MMJs who feel a level of stress because their work is not on the same level of reporters who are teamed with photographers. In that frustration, there is also an acceptance of the everyday stress required to keep their jobs. “I’ve dedicated half my life to this,” says a more than ten year MMJ, “You look at people in other jobs who come home from work happy and not stressed. There are seldom days I come home and say, ‘Wow that was a fantastic day.’ But those are the sacrifices. It’s understood going into the business.”

STATION 3

Station 3 is in a top twenty market with a staff of thirty seven on air news, weather, and sports reporters. Station 3 is a number one station that does not require on- air news talent to be MMJ’s. It is a perennial ratings winner. News meetings observed are extremely interactive and conducted around a large table in a conference room adjoining the newsroom. Reporters pitch story ideas to managers and producers who dissect them in a running dialogue and ultimately decide which story will be assigned to each reporter/photographer team.

Interviews with five Station 3 newsroom employees were utilized in this research. On one day of observation producers and reporters were required to attend an in-house seminar taught by a visiting news content consultant on script writing. As keeping viewers’ attention is always a major focus, the consultant encouraged quick writing tactics to pull the viewer in and “hook them” with the broadcast. An emphasis at Station 3 is put on what its consultants call “process”

story-telling. Its goal is to find the most conversational way to word scripts that most make the viewer feel “part” of the story.

Personal communication

Reporters at Station 3 portray varying levels of communication throughout the day with management. Avenues for communication are by phone, text, email or “top line” (similar to an IM, component in script software) from the newsroom to field reporters. After the morning meeting, nearly all reporters are in daily contact at some point with the newsroom for script approval. Outside of this exchange, communication is worded as “once or twice” a day; others define it as “good,” “just right,” “pretty smooth” and “helpful.” Another reporter said she was rarely in contact unless there is a problem. Still another calls communication the “nastiest part of the job.” This reporter says there are times when communication between reporter and managers is very “stressful.” Reporters express that is because much is expected in this newsroom.

Sometimes interaction depends on if there is an ongoing ratings period. If there is not, some reporters say the only interaction with management is updates with the Executive Producer (EP) or Managing Editor (ME) throughout the shift. Communication during ratings takes on a new personality: “They want so much; they demand so much, and sometimes, you’re like, ‘this is really all we have.’”

Since communication essentially goes two ways, there is a popular thought at Station 3 that newsroom communication on a whole has improved throughout the past five years simply because reporters have taken action on their end. One reporter reflected many responses when he explained he was inexperienced when

he arrived, and has since learned the system. Now he understands what is expected and what he needs to do to communicate to achieve a better product.

Mission

The mission at Station 3 seems to be interpreted by reporters as a conceptual rather than literal command. Across the board, the majority of reporters said they knew the mission is “to win.” A two decade reporter adds a clear message reporters understand is to, “expect excellence. (We) have history of that. If you work for this shop, they expect that.” Another reporter says, “Excel at good storytelling. Enterprise. Beat the competition. Get the facts straight. Do it again the next day.” Others describe the mission as having the most “complete coverage” of the big stories of the day.

Another reporter describes the current “buzz phrase” depicting the scope with which story ideas are judged in the morning meeting: “*How can we make it bigger?*” Many reporters see value in this measurement, as the process can uncover how a story can be shown to uncover greater angles or tell a story more thoroughly. Reporters say this element improves the broadcast. “That’s when you understand that’s what that morning meeting is for.” A trigger of frustration is ignited when the reporter perceives those in house do not have a true understanding of the facts in the field: “They have this rosy lens that they peer through. And you’re out there and you’re seeing what’s really going on (and they’re not.) So they want X, Y and Z. And you’re like, ‘we can only give you Z.’ X and Y isn’t the story. And then it seems they scoff as if to say, ‘You’re not working hard enough.’ So (the implied inference in) communication in that sense is

annoying because they don't know really what they're looking for. Or they know what they're looking for, but don't know what's really there."

Newsroom communication

Mixed reviews also resulted from asking reporters to judge overall newsroom communication. While some deemed it as "pretty good," saying the assignment desk works well letting crews know where they need to be and the system is "well-functioning" and "well-organized." One night shift reporter says sometimes it feels like "we get a lot of phone calls from people back at work."

Communication can fall through the cracks. One reporter told a story of not being told of clear results for a suspect's background history which was information needed to accurately report the story. Someone in the newsroom looked it up but failed to tell the reporter in the field. "We're working on so many things gathering content in the field, and they're already doing it (but not telling me). It took up time for me to call them, to think about (trying to work around it). So that's incredibly frustrating when all it takes is a simple email, phone call, or top line..." At Station 3, "a top line" is an instant message via newsroom software.

Social media

Reporters at Station 3 are required to tweet once an hour, or at least eight times a shift. A reporter with 11-15 years' experience says the directive is clear that management "expects us to connect with viewers throughout the day and not just during newscasts." For the most part though this particular social media vehicle does not make reporters here feel more engaged with viewers. That is disappointing to one seven year reporter who says he wishes he had more Twitter followers. In mixed response, some reporters call Twitter "important," and a

“vital tool,” but for others it is a “lower priority” and sometimes a “pain, hands down.” The reporter who called it a pain says this is because the time one needs to be tweeting is during breaking news: “And tweeting is the last thing on your mind when you’re having to talk to all the people in the newsroom, trying to make sure your photographer is getting the shots you need, and trying to get the facts straight,” says a five year reporter. Depending on the time of day that the necessity to tweet arises; these reporters say it adds an element of stress.

Among reporters who minimize Twitter’s impact on their job is the five year reporter who does not think it beneficial for reporters on a local level. As far as feeling competition from other online voices (non-journalist and journalist), this reporter says, “I think nationally things are more kooky in that sense.” However, several reporters counter this opinion in saying social media has increased competition between stations with its ability to build momentum for newscasts. One reporter with seven years’ experience says he wishes Station 3’s social media audience was as big as its broadcast audience.

Facebook is not a requirement though many reporters say they do it on their own because they feel much more engaged on Facebook than on Twitter. They say Facebook is something they can do at end of day to post topical information, video of their stories, and engage with those who respond. They like the fact they can link Facebook and Twitter to duplicate posts. One reporter says he often gets story ideas from local police and sheriff’s office Facebook pages. More than one reporter expressed that they wish the , which does employ a “web desk editor,” find more avenues to promote their use of social media. Among those reporters is one who says she feels the way a competing station in the

market handles its Facebook page shows its viewers are much more connected than those who use her station's page.

Demands

While many reporters feel the demands of their job are what are expected in a top twenty market, there was an almost overall consensus that some managers understand demands better than others, "Some do on certain days and some don't." This opinion more so includes producers and the assignment desk, whose understanding of demands can be related to the length of job experience. Reporters say the less experienced do not always understand simple things like travel and production time. Planning that reflects this inefficiency is frustrating to reporters.

Reporters say other variables affect managements' understanding of demands. They say it also depends on ratings and stressors of that day. Reporters recount that feedback directly from manager is usually "not bad", but that is because it is the producers feeling stress from managers who pass it on to reporters. "Even after you tell them what you have, they ask, well, 'can we get this, can we get this?' And, I'm like, 'I already told you, no.'"

One of the biggest demands of a reporter's job at Station 3 is to enterprise story ideas and pitch ideas. Says one seven year reporter: "We have extremely tight deadlines and very little time to accomplish daily goals." Dayside reporters (M-F, working 9am-5pm) in particular are said to be under tremendous pressure.

They'll go into their 'situation meeting' there and they'll (management) just shoot 'em down, (asking) 'What else you got? Is that it?' It's really tough. They've got tallies of all kinds of things; it's not only the enterprise stories but "process" story telling too. They keep tallies of everything.

Reporters describe it as a contest with no reward in a challenge of pride and initiative. Reporters say they feel really good if they achieve a high number of stories. But it can be a tough crowd. “Our ratings have kind of been fluctuating so now they get really, really picky with the story ideas.” Reporters say something that might have flown two months ago may not be good enough now.

Handled well

Managers at Station 3 do get high remarks for trusting reporters and for cultivating an atmosphere of teamwork. Reporters say people know their roles in a “clockwork type” system. Because everyone (overall) knows what they do and how to do it, when it is all working, the sense of structure makes it easier on reporters because they know what is expected of them at any given time.

While the newsroom meeting is infamous with reporters for its pressure cooker atmosphere, reporters do say they appreciate its brainstorming aspects. People can bounce ideas off of each other and a discussion can illuminate and expand story angles. Some reporters say this overrides the sometimes testy element of the meeting: “It’s only when they’re just trying to justify their jobs, the story is already good enough and they’re just trying to bounce things around (for no reason). That’s when it gets stressful.” It is those times when reporters say they wish they could have that extra time to get out on the street and get started instead of having to sit in a meeting and defend an already good story. Outside of this occasionally hitch; reporters see the benefit when constructive: “It does turn into an element that makes us look better and look like we dug a little bit deeper. So, that’s really rewarding when it works.”

Newsroom culture

The overall theme in reporters' description of Station 3's culture: a competitive environment. The consensus is that this is because everyone wants to do well. "In the end, we do want the best broadcast, the best content. That adds a pressure cooker to the newsroom, but it turns out the best stuff. "Another reporter says sometimes he does not think it is necessary to have all that stress, but "it tends to work for us."

Along those lines, reporters describe the newsroom as "professional." There is deadline pressure, they say, but "controlled pressure." Another reporter called the tone of the newsroom pressure-packed but "realistic." She says she was intimidated when she first got hired because of the station's reputation as being a tough station but feels expectations are justified. There seems to be an underlying current of respect toward fellow reporters that everyone is fighting to do a good job. Says a reporter with 11-15 years' experience says "we are extremely supportive of each other."

Input

Reporters at Station 3 do not describe having a significant level of input with management during their daily routine outside of the morning meeting when they are asked to defend their story ideas and required to counter the devil's advocate line of questioning from managers and producers. Overall, reporters like when the meeting feels like a "healthy exchange" of ideas rather than a "beat down." More than one reporter with more than sixteen and twenty years on the job says they feel their experience is recognized at certain times and feel respected when they speak up. There seems to be a concerted effort though

for all reporters to “pick their battles” when speaking up and keep those times to a minimum. This “put your nose down and plow ahead” adapting is an aspect of reporters’ effort at Station 3 to help cultivate the perceived professional culture of the newsroom.

Frustrations

The time when communication falls through the cracks is a repetitive theme with Station 3 reporters. When communication is working, reporters say it is much better than they experienced in previous jobs but when it is not, it becomes a very stressful element. Many reporters say the Station 3 assignment desk operates “a little differently” than other stations. This was described as meaning that the desk often puts the onus on field reporters for peripheral research (such as background information, making calls, etc.) around a story. Many times, just because of the inequity of time and resources desk managers have in-house as opposed to reporters in the field, reporters feel the desk could be working to help them more on the research end or communicating better with them when they do. Reporters say it would be nice to have a better or smoother system instead of sometimes haggling with the desk over who is finding out what.

Another recurring theme leading to reporter frustrations at Station 3: when a producer’s take on a story does not reflect the reality of the story. “I do not like to make something out of nothing,” says one six year reporter. “Or make a story seem a way that it is not.” Other reporters note tight deadlines and equipment failures as an often frustration. Often compounding this is when management/producers know about the technical issues but are still expecting

the same level of production from reporters in the field. Reporters feel faulty equipment greatly impedes the ability to get or send information “fast or first or in just doing a good job.”

Reward

Focused on getting a story on “fast and first” Station 3 reporters feel reward in that accomplishment. Like Stations 1 and 2, Station 3 reporters also express satisfaction in “helping those who need it, and exposing those who do wrong.” Another reporter likes the ability “to tell stories of people who may otherwise not be heard.”

For other Station 3 reporters, what fuels their reward system is a well done story where all the elements fit together: “Even if it’s a really stressful day, if you watch it when you go home, and (everything) just clicked and blew all the competition away, it’s really rewarding. That can kind of melt your stress level.” Another reporter says her reward is in knowing when she has put her personal best on the air every day, regardless of the story or content.

Stress

The subject of the morning meeting arises again when asking Station 3 reporters about the level of stress they experience on a daily basis. The meeting is called the biggest “pressure point” of the day and pitching stories is said to be the hardest part of the job. Like Station 1 reporters experience, story pitches also demand a great deal of prep work during off hours. Reporters say they are usually starting their day at home making calls and looking through arrest logs before technically being on the clock. Some say this process can take hours. Echoing earlier responses, Station 3 reporters say the intense pressure of the meeting can

grueling. Despite what a reporter may see a rock solid pitch, reporters say producers/managers spend some much time on the details reporters do not always think are necessary. Every angle must be prepared to rebut. One reporter says he understands this is “their job” but says sometimes it feels like “they are just looking for that one thing that you didn’t find just to justify their position.”

The competition element Station 3 employs adds a level of stress for reporters. Reporters are scored in a monthly contest for how many stories they enterprise and how well they incorporate process story-telling. It is not always easy to keep finding stories that pass the morning meeting mustard test: “Some months, they just flow, you get all these good stories, you’re working hard but you’re not overworking. Other months, you’re just fighting, fighting for just 3.”

It is also stressful for reporters when producers are not on the same page in how to cover the story. But once agreement/compromise is reached or directive accepted and the morning meeting is “out of the way,” reporters describe feeling anywhere from “relieved” and “discouraged” to “surprise.”

Station 3 reporters note they enjoy working with the more experienced producers who during the show exhibit an even keel approach in the heat of breaking news. However, the Station does employ a few less experienced producers whose frenetic and indecisive approach “tend to stress you out.”

For some Station 3 reporters, overall communication did re-emerge as an instigator of stress. In this many reporters portrayed the stressor as, “dealing with people.” This includes working with photographers. “No matter how talented they are, and so many are, only you are writing this story, so only you

know, 'I really need this shot' and they might not have that shot." While keeping eye on the photographer, reporters say they must juggle "a thousand channels." This includes updating the producer, talking with associate producers (AP) about supers, checking in with the assignment desk, talking with public information officers, and even talking with promotions to let them know what you have that they can promote online and on-air.

As a follow up question, reporters were asked what their stress level usually is on a given day. Many said it depends on a story, but stress levels are 5-10. Several reporters picked 7-8. Another said, "It's never 1-5. Even if it's a simple story, you're supposed to dig deeper and find something else." On the night shift one reporter says there's tremendous pressure to "get us out the door and get something."

Not surprisingly all reporters at Station 3 assessed their stress levels as higher than five years ago. But interestingly, they all graded themselves as happier than five years ago. Many attribute this to making more money than in the past and the pride of working for such a competitive station where standards are very high. Says one reporter: "I am generally pretty happy with my work, and I know a lot of people can't say that. I feel very lucky."

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Four common themes emerge from the analysis depicting three different examples of how the balance and the management oversight of duties affect the psychological climates of Stations 1, 2, and 3. Those areas are: Demand, Stress, Support, and Payoff. From this, we address and compare the subsequent outlook Stations 1, 2, and 3 reporters express toward their jobs as well as for the future of the industry.

DEMAND

Standards in demands at Station 1 are high for online productivity as well as for those who are also required to shoot their own video. At Station 2, online work is required but reporters depict much less policing in this area; the heavy demand comes from the actual physical and technical skills required in MMJ work. Frustrations arise as some MMJ reporters who are not strong photographers (and vice versa) sometimes feel “deskilling” effects as the workload detracts from doing their best work (Wallace, 2013). Station 3 reporters describe the demands of their jobs lay in continually enterprising the meatiest stories, winning management approval of them, and finding the most effective and creative ways to co-produce them with photojournalists. Unlike Stations 1 and 2, Station 3 reporters say the fact they do not have to be MMJs in any capacity, and also have a web staff to handle online stories and the station’s mobile app makes a big difference in their ability to do their jobs, “It’s a big help,”

says a reporter. Instead of being hounded in the field for online scripts as Station 1 reporters cite, Station 3 reporters need only to text newsroom that their script is in and the web staff then posts it online.

STRESS

With the immediacy of online deadlines compounding their daily responsibilities, this study finds television reporters experiencing immense stress from perceived pressures within the newsroom. Ninety percent of reporters in this study expressed being more stressed now than in the past five years. This stress is instigated from different catalysts at each station and varying circumstances often surround the stressors. The majority of Station 1 reporters express stress from an over-bearing management style regardless of MMJ duties. Station 2 reporters say they experience stress simply from an overload of expectations attached to being an MMJ. This is not to say Station 3 reporters escape stress even though they neither experience MMJ mandates or as many online requirements. "It's a different stress," says one five year reporter, "but very intense." Station 3 reporters make no bones about the fact that having to be an MMJ would make the way they do their jobs much more difficult. Station 3 reporters say they feel "really fortunate" this is not a requirement. Some speak from experience in both worlds: "At my old station, I had to do it myself and at the end of day, I just want to get out the door. It's a lot easier without that." There is some thought workers who understand the existence of stress in their jobs are less likely to become disillusioned by it (p.77). That thinking does not seem to reflect Station 1 and 2 in this study but does seem to be the case with many Station 3 reporters. Station 3 reporters expect stress comes with the territory but

at the same times overwhelmingly speak of feeling grateful to be working at their station. For Stations 1 and 2 results of this study rather mirror those in a newspaper study by Fred Endres, who found that more than ninety percent of the reporters and other newsroom personnel he surveyed experienced stress and that, after about six years in the business, it began to affect their professional and personal lives (Fedler, 2004, p.79). Responses from the majority of reporters at both Stations 1 and 2 show their work psyche would be greatly improved with better mid-level management, improvements to newsroom infrastructure and an easing of expectations in an overload of MMJ duties.

SUPPORT

One pervading theme arising from interview answers was how the presence or lack of on the job support affects personal perceptions reporters have toward their work. At Station 1, an “every man for himself” mentality is often present. Parallels can be made to the aforesaid *Personal Psychology* study on police, where low support from supervisors was seen to breed high tension (Kirmeyer et al, 1988). People are independently surviving, but on the whole, do not feel others (or management) is there for them in their task. Interestingly, many do hold this against each other on the “worker bee” level, as they express belief they work with “good and talented” people, and also voice empathy that everyone must accept the status quo. At Station 2, where supervisor support is higher, interpersonal tension is lower. Full-time MMJs describe a tough and exhausting job but do perceive support from colleagues and a teamwork mentality from management. Reporters say it is not as much as they would like,

but from interview responses in this study it seems enough to encourage an attitude of perseverance. Station 2 reporters say they do not always believe management understands the enormity of what it is asking them to do. But what seems to make a difference to Station 2 reporters is that they believe management tries to help them. That effort seems to have a positive effect on reporters' attitudes.

At Station 3, reporters express positive attitudes of feeling fortunate for the opportunity to work at a number one station. Reporters say despite their high pressure culture, an air of teamwork and support from management makes a positive difference in their work and approach. Overall, Station 3 reporters like their newsroom management who they say challenges them to push themselves on every story.

Every station had communication challenges within the newsroom. Reporters from each station expressed frustration of managers, producers, or assignment desk personnel sitting in the same vicinity and all contacting the reporter in the field before first communicating with each other. Station 3 reporters are less taxed in online and technical duties, but express frustration for the inexperience of some producers who they feel many not be quite ready for this particular market. Working around this hurdle can be daunting for those on weekend shifts. Constant digital communication capabilities of email, text, IM and more is seen by reporters as providing newsrooms with better communication avenues from a technical and vocational standpoint. From a

personnel standpoint, many reporters see it as growing more and more intrusive and feel bogged down even on days off.

TRADEOFF/PAYOFF

The question arises, in all of the varying levels of stress for television reporters, why do reporters stay in this business? To that, many answer that they have spent years acquiring this specialized skill set and are not ready to start over. “It’s tough. But I’ve made a commitment to this business and it’s something I think I’m good at. It’s what I know.” This reporter speaks for many in saying the reward of giving the community a voice outweighs the stress. Reporters and MMJs from all stations express a sense of this social responsibility in their jobs. A Station 1 reporter verbalizes this by saying one appreciative email from a viewer can make the stress worth it. In an almost unanimous chorus, Station 1 and 2 reporters agree they initially chose and stay in this business to make a difference in people’s lives with the stories they tell. Station 3 reporters say they like “exposing wrongs” though a great deal of their payoff was described as in competing to be first rather than “changing people’s lives.” While Station’s 3’s approach to coverage holds an emphasis the investigative, many stories are based around uncovering injustices which many may argue has the ability to change people’s lives. So while more Station 3 reporters spoke about “winning the story” as a reward than in “helping people,” it can be argued that the latter is the consequence of the former.

The difficulties overlooked as a tradeoff for each payoff vary station to station. Station 1 reporters express being dedicated to deal with frustrations over

management style and product content because of the belief they are helping others or benefitting the community in some way. Several Station 1 reporters say the perceived payoff stems from their own perspective of their work, not from management. At Station 2, where MMJ responsibilities are described as leading to frustrations over product quality, not so much content, reporters divulge another reason acceptance is the norm: because many want to stay employed. Both Stations 1 and 2 reporters say they do not like the individual circumstances of their jobs and know ultimately they will decide how long it will continue to be worth it to stay. One Station 2 reporter adds it is “tough to look forward. The payoff is worth a lot more than the work.” Overall, Station 3 reporters do not express frustration over product quality or content nor do they express the belief that they may be compelled to leave their careers.

OTHER SIMILARITIES

A similarity surfacing from this research was a reporters’ difficulty in defining or executing the station’s mission. Station 3 reporters did not seem to feel management was communicating a mission per se in specifics but agree that there is a general understanding that a certain level of performance is expected. Reporters from Stations 1 and 2 express they are aware of what management emphasizes as a mission as each station has specific modus operandi often repeated as directives. However, reporters did not feel managers were communicating how to accomplish this mission or that they understand what it takes to do what is being asked of employees. In this disconnect, many of these reporters wonder if managers have a real or informed strategy. Many at Station 1

describe a knee jerk attempt to quickly mimic the competition in an all-important rush to be first. Station 1 reporters describe seemingly random approaches to content strategies in hopes of getting positive consumer responses. Reporters from all stations depict that being asked to complete tasks with inadequate resources (be it a lack of time or faulty equipment) was, and continues to be, an acute area of frustration.

OUTLOOK

Reporters were asked if and how their outlook of local news has changed in the past ten years, in the past five years, and now. One sixteen year reporter said that ten years ago one would not recognize journalists we see now. She explains this is because some of the things journalists are doing and saying would not be allowed by managements. This applies to picking a side which reporters at Station 1 are encouraged to do. Depending on the stance taken, this reporter says that can be “good and bad.” In the past five years, reporters say the language and habits have changed, “We are not only focused on saying, ‘do we have this on-air?’ But almost in the same breath, ‘do we have this online, did we tweet it out?’”

The intensity and scale of competition have increased throughout the years. Gone are the days of seeing everyone tune to the local NBC, CBS, ABC or FOX affiliates. People can get what they need in thirty seconds online. Reporters say their bosses need them to be that voice. “We now have to work harder because there’s more news out there to beat.”

It has also been noticed by reporters that working harder is not always enough. One reporter says that is what has changed in her mentality from five

years ago. As we mentioned Brenner's online model of "What goes where and when?" she finds today's reporting incorporates much more strategy with the recognizing and seizing of opportunities. "It's more capitalizing first (online) rather than just barging forward (on-air)."

So what do reporters think this ongoing and fierce competition with numerous online voices means for the future of local news? It means a push toward making online reporting as important as "the newscast we work all day to build," says one reporter. To some in this study, it also means that local news is not taken seriously by viewers. A five year MMJ calls local news is a "spectacle of events" that "would have Edward Murrow rolling in his grave." This mindset believes a death for televised local news is near and the only way to survive is in an online streaming venue. One reporter says because of this view, he personally – not his bosses- pushes himself to focus acutely on keeping up the changing online story throughout the day: "I tell myself I'm a TV reporter who dreams of being on the internet someday." Despite the challenges depicted throughout this study, these reporters still believe in the importance of their jobs. Many agree they still have a good and valuable role. Sifting through gossip and finding the facts, they feel they can add depth to the online conversation. The consensus among reporters is that local communities cannot rely solely on the internet or national news to keep them in the know about what's going on in the communities. Reporters say without the news media; sometimes there is no way to advance an issue factually with an online audience. The value lies in providing the short cuts and tips to navigating life peculiar to that community, "You're also building a relationship where people feel they know you personally; in essence

you are their local, free advocate.” Reporters feel new media is not trouncing that relationship, but enhancing it by offering an opportunity to engage even more. They also know they must be ready for the new forms and evolving online venues they must master to do it. In that, both training and experience are seen as important in upholding skill levels in Station 2, as well as the need to avoid the ‘decay curve’ reporters depict in the old school versus new school dynamic at Station 1 (Wallace, 2013).

In an additional development, males and females with varying lifestyles related somewhat differently. While both admitted an increased load, unmarried males were more matter of fact about handling it and did not mention work related effects in their personal lives. One married male says after ten years in the business he realizes it is a “young person’s job especially with current expectations.” This was echoed by a married male who definitely sees stations hiring younger, “more versatile” people. Another married male put it this way, “It’s just a matter of how long someone will find the happy balance between (work and fun) before they seek a new career path.” Several married females in this study say because of their workloads they felt compelled to wait to have children. They do not see Station 1 as family friendly or a place to try and have a healthy pregnancy. “You need sleep, you’re supposed to lower stress, and that’s not part of the job.” These reporters say they believe this conclusion to be a microcosm of the local television news business.

As much as reporters from Station 1 and 2 say the varying trade-off for pay-off is why they continue in this business, ninety five percent of reporters

interviewed for this research said they would not have gotten into this business if they had it to do over again, “Because fifteen years from now, it will again be too different than what you thought you’d be doing (or trained to do).”

Another says looking back he sees “so many other opportunities I would have taken to make more income and have more personal time.”

THE MOBILE FUTURE

Regardless of the local news reporters’ perceived role in the future, there is a simple fact of 2013: People want news on their phones (Chan-Olmsted et al, 2013). Reporters in this study understand mobile technologies are now where stations are putting their resources. However, reporters’ opinions on how this trend may emerge are diverse. Says a thirty-year veteran: “It might be 7 years or 27 years, but the grind is only going to accelerate with smaller devices and more demand in different ways.” A reporter with ten years’ experience agrees, “More with less will continue to be the trend” as he expects mobile to take over the nightly news setup. Many agree TV will figure out there is going to be something new and that managements just have to keep up with technological trends and “whatever is next.” All reporters regardless of years of experience say they believe delivering local news on mobile Apps will vastly increase. Some reporters believe that very soon “everyone’s just going to have their own personal little laptop phone.” A reporter with five years’ experience who adds, even now, he never watches the stations’ broadcasts. He watches everything on this station App.

Most reporters with sixteen to twenty years’ experience agree the local news product will continue to be down-sized as mobile technologies continue to

grow yet do not feel local news is “going away.” As one twenty-one year reporter posits, local news will survive because other forms of media “do not bring the humanity we bring” to each story. It’s not going to be TV stations sending out video the way they are now. “With technology,” another says, “everybody gets freaked out, but I don’t think it’s really going to change (need for journalists).” Ultimately, a reporter with five years’ experience believes everyone is still going to want the well-told story: “The majority of people who do that are journalists.”

On the other end of the spectrum, a reporter with six years’ experience says his colleagues and corporate minds need to be ready for how fast change is coming. He expressed he does not know anyone his age (27) who watches local news and thinks most in his generation sees it as a joke or “sideshow.” He says if you offered people “free TV or **6G**, TV news is gone.”

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research supports the contention that the jobs of television reporters of 2013 are loaded with new responsibilities. It also supports studies that show the psychological climate in which employees work affects how they approach their jobs, the way they embrace change and feel they are perceived, and their views of the future (Martin et al, 2005, p. 263). Areas of demand, stress, support and payoff explain the specifics of reporters' perspectives which support a multi-faceted conclusion. As reporters perceive demand to be an increasing entity, we present this area here as a final point.

STRESS

While the majority of reporters said they experience the most stress from the demands of an increased workload, some felt more stress from a lack of management direction. Still others felt stress from both sources. However, one twenty year Station 2 reporter from this sample said he was not stressed; he thrives on the pace and takes his new media requirements in stride, accepting those duties as just part of the job. "I know I have to do it, and that's it," He says. It should also be noted this Station 2 reporter is from the sample that is not required to shoot his own material. He also does not process management style as adversely as some of his colleagues from the same sample. His reaction reinforces how people can react to the same stressors on varying levels.

Even before new media's diffusion of message transmission avenues into the newsroom, veteran reporters cite past communication issues that have managed to survive. At some shops, this element can be seen as connected to the personality or culture cultivated in the newsroom. At Station 3 where a seeming lower demand (no MMJ, little online work) brings reporters lower stress, communication issues are still contributed to stress. This study suggests taking a look at how improvements to the organizational communication infrastructure could benefit overall efficiency. Each reporter in this study agrees better organization of the communication flow would lessen their stress and ultimately improve the on-air product.

While some reporters also mention equipment issues as a stressor, another one is bred from a perceived oversight by newsroom managements in supervising their social media product. Station 3 employs a "web desk editor," but the lack of a social media "general" seems a pervasive theme in reporter interviews at Stations 1 and 2. Station 1 and 2 reporters think that managers do not have enough knowledge about social media themselves, and incorrectly think they can simply continue to pile on these "multi-multi" platform tasks. "What about Pinterest? I'm not using Pinterest," says a fifteen year Station 1 anchor. "I'm not on Instagram. It would be nice to have someone who's savvy to link all that, pushing us forward with the new technologies within the newsroom."

Throughout the on-site visits, it was observed that the jobs of local news producers and executive producers at both Station 2 and 3 have changed significantly as well. This practice reflects a nation-wide push across media

companies to “speed it up and spread it thin” (Siapera et al, 2012, p. 124). Producers on all levels post web stories, monitor Twitter, peruse Facebook, generate graphics and create ways to engage the audience online and on-air throughout every show. A decade ago, many top 20 markets had a staff of graphic artists, three to four full-time editors in addition to photojournalists who edited material for the show. Now, graphics and editor positions are almost gone as many associate producers and show producers have desktop editing capabilities. At Station 2, Associate Producers (AP) must write, edit, and build graphics. How do these duties change the experience and even hierarchy of these positions? This observation introduces another potential line of study for this industry.

SUPPORT

The information shared in this study offers suggestions for further research of reporters’ role and relationship with management moving forward in the digital age. In some, though not all situations studied here, reporters said that even small changes could create a much healthier climate. The varying degrees of managerial support (and varying consequences to reporters) emerged as a major theme among the three stations. The majority of these qualitative interviews convey that poor management communication can adversely affect a reporter’s stress levels more than a heightened workload with good management. Therefore, the research finds a relationship between the level of experience and support of managers to the level of stress that reporters experience. Although Station 2 presents its less experienced (overall in comparison to Station 1 and 3) reporters with the highest workload, the perception among reporters is that they

are supported in their jobs. An EP's statement that "there are enough people to lend direction," rings true with reporters interviewed in this research for this particular station. While admitting there is no substitute for experience, this manager at Station 2 says he has yet "to see us hiccup." At the same time, a Station 3 reporter points to the inexperience of producers as often being a hurdle and makes a point to say how smoothly things run when more seasoned producers are calling the shots. Thus, on-air product notwithstanding, an inexperienced reporting staff led by seasoned mid-level managers (producers) may sometimes be a less stressful combination than seasoned reporters who deal with lesser qualified middle managers (producers). New media has introduced a menu of "pick your poison" into newsroom hierarchy.

Employers offer benefits that include employee assistance counseling services that would include stress management but it is not known if employees consider taking advantage of this option. In various forms, Station 1, 2, and 3 reporters infer a seeming newsroom ethos in choosing a "safe route of silence" over outwardly expressing concerns (Morrison et al, 2003). Therefore, another point rising from this study: they fear doing so would be further detrimental to their work lives or jobs themselves. "I've seen people speak up, even with the best intentions," says one reporter. "And it does not work out for them."

PAYOFF

There is a reward/payoff reporters receive from their work. However, their address of ongoing changes in the local news climate and product seem to paint a picture that it is dwindling. This is especially true at Station 1 where issues with

content quality, stress and lack of support emerged. Some expressed, “It’s just a matter of how long,” before finding oneself in a position to leave the business. Station 2 reporters expressed work stress and financial struggles.

In years past, most reporters hired in a top twenty market at a network affiliate had a prerequisite of five years of experience before applying for a job. Now job openings advertise for reporters with less than five years of experience. The lower pay scale (Rosenstiel et al, 2011) and lack of raises that MMJs report they feel forced to accept has many contemplating what is next, “When they ask more of you but are not willing to pay more for that, it just kind of leaves you feeling like a piece of the puzzle and not that valuable.” MMJs express a cynicism that although the model has good intentions, its attachment to media’s tightened economy (Deuze et al, 2010, p. 228) and constant push to do more with less staff (Siapera et al, 2012, p.193) impedes success by downgrading the product (Rosenstiel et al, 2011). The majority of reporters in this study believe the next step is to lose viewers: “(I) saw it happen in a previous market,” says a thirteen year Station 2 MMJ. “They can keep trying but ultimately it will bite them so hard the business isn’t going to work anymore.” A Station 3 reporter says while he is familiar with other shops that ask much more from their reporters, it is unfortunate “they might forget (how) the on-air product might suffer.” As supportive as Station 2’s environment is, the dollars and sense side seems to ultimately encourage turnover and the hiring of younger workers. Some of the veteran reporters in this study believe those with families are being weeded out as a reporter-perceived factory-like emphasis is forced on the local news product. A

Station 1 anchor says a person who will succeed in the future is someone “who most likely is not going to have family expectations, who can just be married to their job.” Reporters hope local television news will fight to find its balance with established journalists who own homes, and have families and tenure in a community. This Station 1 anchor believes these connections bring credibility to content. “(Otherwise) You lose all of the depth and it’s just flash and trash media. You don’t need that at the local level. You can get that anywhere.”

DEMAND

Each reporter was asked what they see for the future. While many said they believe social media and new media technologies will continue to enhance the speed and volume of communication and news dissemination on a technical level, others also express concerns about the effects of those demands on personal and psychological levels. Many reporters believe advances in technology mean even more will be expected of reporters in all platforms.

One of the most pervasive conclusions in this research is how it overwhelmingly opens the door to further study in other tangential areas of a reporter’s new media integrated work responsibilities in television broadcast journalism. While the previous point takes into account how work demands affect a reporters’ personal life choices, there is also the perceived work-related contributions expected when a reporter is not “on the clock.” This point refers to the number of hours reporters spend using social media and reading and responding to emails for work related business. One reporter said, “It’s exhausting. It wears on you,” as many overwhelmingly express feeling compelled

to tweet and use Facebook on off days to continue to give the station the presentation of non-stop coverage on a story. “You can’t possibly know everything that’s going on (when you’re off) and if you do, you don’t have a life outside of work.” With that, many reporters cite hypocrisy in management expectations: “They want you to be well rounded citizens and human beings. The only way to do that is to be engaged in something other than being online.” These reporters only see the situation escalating with technology: “They know what neighborhood you live in...So wherever you are, you’re expected to cover what’s right there even if it’s not your assignment. You won’t be able to unplug.”

Female reporters in this research were particularly dissatisfied with the demands of their work environment. A Station 2 reporter says stress became a health issue for more than one pregnant reporter. Yet, she says management never backed off demands placed on them. Women also revealed being assigned long hours of field work up to the week they gave birth and programming due dates around employer pressure. At one station, a reporter who suffered a miscarriage was reprimanded for taking time off. New fathers could also be included in this research as they are not exempt from a similar range of demands.

Even though most reporters are eligible for overtime, this study learned Station 1 reporters, in particular, often do not submit the extra time or request “comp time” for the hours that compound for work-related activity. Many legal experts say when an employer gives a smartphone to an employee and then allows them to perform work duties outside the office during regular hours; it is equivalent to asking for overtime work (CBC News, 2012). However, the majority

of reporters interviewed express pressure to refrain from doing so; in most cases, overtime would not be approved by managers. Though they feel off hours work is unfairly expected by managers, this is another area where reporters say they avoid speaking up. They fear doing so would hold them in a bad light with management and subsequently hurt their career in some way. It is a “pick your battles” attitude of surrender. But the fact is that in the past year of this research, legal action cases continue to crop up in various other fields in the United States and Canada regarding this dicey issue and the results of this research indicate it will continue to present itself as a conflict to be addressed (Davidson, 2012).

If, as CNN’s Jim Walton believes, good journalism equals good business, then there may be even more questions to ask in this digital age when it comes to its effect on the overall journalism product. Shekhar Gupta, editor-in-chief of *The Indian Express*, goes one step further. He says Walton’s statement is true, “provided you get both right.”

On that note, a final word from one veteran reporter in this study concerned not just about the evolving face of journalism but also that management understands what most motivates reporters to select this field and daily strive to do their best work - regardless of what technological stream is used to broadcast it: “I just really hope we always remember why we’re doing what we’re doing. It’s not about face time, and it’s not about being first to get something. It’s helping people. And that helps people remember why journalists exist.”

APPENDIX A

Reporter Interview

1. Gender Male or Female

2. Years of reporting experience. Round up to nearest year. ___5-10 ___11-15 ___16-20 ___21+

3. Identify all platforms of multi and social media for which you produce daily content. ___Broadcast ___Online ___Article/Blog ___Facebook ___Twitter ___Text Alerts ___Shoot Video ___Other

4. Let's run through a typical day reporting. Describe the communication you receive from newsroom management. In what ways throughout the day are you in contact with management?

5. How well does management understands your job & the multimedia demands of your job? Has this changed in the last five years? In the last two years?

6. Describe your newsroom dynamic, atmosphere or "culture." Compare to 5 years ago? 2 years ago?

7. Describe your use of social media. Do you feel engaged with your audience?

8. What mission does management communicate to you? What is handled well? Would you have suggestions if asked? Does management ask for your input? How does this affect your approach to your job?

9. Describe the most rewarding & frustrating elements of your job.

10. Has your job outlook changed from two years ago? How about five years ago? How?

11. Select which best describes your feeling for your daily job. Check all that apply.
___ I am more happy than unhappy in my job than 5 years ago
___ I am more unhappy than happy in my job than 5 years ago

- My job is more stressful now than it was 5 years ago
- My job was more stressful 5 years ago than it is now
- Newsroom communication is better than it was 5 years ago
- Newsroom communication is worse than it was 5 years ago
- None of the above apply

12. Among the competing online voices offering news, how do you see your role?

13. Describe what you foresee in the next decade for local news operations as it further incorporates, and competes with and against new media technologies.

14. Any other comments regarding your workload, overall job or subjects we've discussed here?

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