

**THERE'S NO CRYING IN SPORTS JOURNALISM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON
REPORTER BURNOUT**

A Project
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

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Master of Arts

by
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Introduction

I have been working in the field of journalism for about eight years now, including my time as an undergraduate student, the two years I worked after graduating, and now as a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I started in high school when I spent two summers as an intern at a television station in Puerto Rico. I then worked for the student newspaper at Loyola University New Orleans. In New Orleans I also interned for a sports news website and for an arena football team.

Throughout my time in journalism I have seen reporters and other news professionals quit their jobs and pursue something else. I have done extensive reading on the topic of burnout and have talked to journalists about why they decided to leave journalism behind. These experiences have interested me in finding out why some journalists fall victim to burnout and what can be done to prevent it or deal with it.

Society has always craved an escape from the reality one lives in. For many people, sports offer that escape. People, however, react differently to the outcomes of games, which could mean that depending on their level of interest or how attached they feel to a team, will affect how they react to what they are watching.

The way people feel affects how they conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis. If the person is happy, they are more likely to have a positive outlook on life and the tasks they have to complete. On the other hand, someone who is upset or sad will struggle to focus on what they have to do, their emotions will get in the way and impede their progress, which will in turn, have a negative effect on the results.

This qualitative study examined burnout in sports journalism and tried to find the causes for it. Results were used to gain a better understanding of sports journalism and

how it affects journalists' emotions, to the point that some quit. Semi-structured interviews guided the development of my thesis.

Each person, however, is different. Not everyone reacts the same way. Therefore, it was necessary to examine a wide sample that included both genders, different backgrounds and different ages. Interestingly, culture also had an impact. Experience has shown me that some countries are more prideful than others when it comes to sporting events. Also, some cities, like New Orleans, have seen the powerful impact sports can have when rebuilding after a major natural disaster. Fans' emotions also have an effect. Highly identified fans are more likely to reach out to journalists who do not mention a specific team or player in a positive way that would please fans. This could lead to mean tweets and other forms of attacks from fans directed at journalists (Hillman, et. al, 20).

The questions remain: How does the 24-hour news cycle affect television sports journalists' mental and professional stamina at work? What factors lead to television sports journalists leaving the job and what can newsrooms do change this?

There have been numerous studies that look at the psychological and emotional effects of fans who attend sporting events or watch them on television. There have also been studies focused on the athletes, but very little research exists on why some sports journalists struggle to stick with the sports beat for a long time.

Sports have always been an important part of society. They provide entertainment and distractions from some of the negative news of the world. If sports journalists, however, are struggling to stay on the beat for a long period of time, then something is going on. Readers and viewers rely on sports journalists to bring them their sports news

on a daily basis, so it is necessary to see why sports journalists experience this burnout and see if there are any solutions, or remedies to improve the situation.

I want to pursue a career in sports journalism. Therefore, I want to learn about the causes and effects of burnout. More importantly, I want to find ways to deal with burnout so the industry does not lose any talent because of it. This research will hopefully assist newsrooms in dealing with burnout and help keep their newsrooms fully staffed and upbeat.

Professional Skills Component

I completed my professional project at a major-market television station in the Midwest. There, I reported to the assistant news director. I started June 1 and worked for 14 weeks. During my time there, I worked 30 hours a week performing various tasks necessary to put the show together before the deadlines. The tasks included logging baseball games, writing scripts, shadowing reporters, and conducting research for reporters and anchors, among other tasks. I provided the committee with transcripts of interviews that attempted to answer questions related to reporter burnout in sports journalism. I coded those transcripts to identify themes that came up and identified the trends that existed.

The work at the television station provided details to my research, as I was working with professionals involved with sports reporting. It provided me a wealth of knowledge and experience that complemented what I have already learned in school, at KOMU and internships I have completed in the past. It was one thing to learn about journalism in a classroom or in an NBC affiliate owned and operated by the University of Missouri, but working in a professional newsroom in a major city in the United States

provided a network of professional reporters, additional experience in the daily grind of a newsroom without classes in the way and the opportunity to ask questions to professionals who have been in the profession for years.

The final product of my research includes an array of interviews that attempt to answer the questions: Why do sports journalists experience burnout? What can sports journalists do to avoid falling victim to burnout?

Dr. Earnest Perry served as the Chair of my master's project. I submitted weekly field reports to my committee members.

Chronological Field Notes

WEEK 1

Week one is in the books and it was a good one.

A meeting with all the interns kicked off the first day. From there we took a tour of the television station and met some of the employees. At the end of the day, we met with the station's general manager who talked to us about the station's mission, where it is trying to go and what it is trying to achieve. He also asked us about ourselves and what we were hoping to get out of the experience of working there for the summer.

Throughout the week I spoke with some of the people at the station about my project and asked them if they would like to participate in my research. They gave me a preliminary OK and I told them I would email them in the future, once I was settled in.

For the first two weeks I will be rotating through different departments. I figured it would allow me to meet everyone and get an idea of what each department's goals are how those goals fit into what the station is trying to achieve.

The web department hopes to achieve 1.25 million page views a week. They said a good way to reach a big audience and bring in new people to the website is to promote stories on Facebook and hope they get shared.

They expressed a little frustration that the website seems to be an afterthought for reporters. The web team believes they could be getting more views if reporters attempted to bring fresh content to the website. They also said their web software is slower than the competition's, which could be why the competition has a better web presence.

I also spent a day with the sports department. That day we went out to a baseball game. Before the game, however, they covered an event where two football players were

raising money for homeless shelters. The reporter asked me to take pictures while he and his photographer shot video and got interviews. When we got back to the station, the reporter asked me to do some research for his story, which he said needed some statistics to make it stronger.

On Thursday I shadowed the 10pm producer. The producer said management has changed made changes to the show in order to cater more to women to increase viewership with that demographic. He said management has also told him to still include some general national news, but to not include so much of it in the newscast.

On Friday, I spent most of the morning on the desk, until I got sent out with an editor to shoot video of a story about a restaurant that was destroyed by a fire. The station was low on staff that day and the managers asked me if I was familiar with their cameras. When they saw that I was, they sent us out. While at the scene I also took pictures. When we got back to the station I wrote up a quick story for the website and gave a producer a list of facts so she could write a VO for her show. I then went over to the web producer who got the pictures and made a slideshow.

Week 2

Hey team, week 2 is in the books and I have already started the research portion of my project. I interviewed someone at the station and I am almost done transcribing it. I have talked to a couple of others from the station and we are in the planning stages to see what days work best for them.

This week I worked with sports on Monday and Tuesday. They had me log two college baseball games so that they would be able to speed up the editing process. I also brainstormed with the producer to come up with fresh content for the website to get

viewers engaged. I also kept track of local players in the MLB draft. Once they were drafted, I wrote short profiles on them to put on the website and share on social media. I also assisted the sports anchor by looking up stats he wanted to include in the sportscast.

Wednesday, I went out with a reporter and photographer to do a story on a person who needed the city to fix a sewage problem that was causing flooding in his front yard. As protest, he set up his boat and put up signs and inflatable animals to draw attention to the issue. At the scene, I took pictures so the web department could set up a slide show. We went to city officials, but they refused to talk. On the ride back to the station, the reporter gave me information he wanted me to tweet out from his phone as he started planning out his story.

On Thursday, I started working with a producer, but was then asked to help the web department create slideshows and other content for the website that needed to be done. I used Friday to conduct my first research interview with a news reporter who used to cover sports. I then spent the rest of the day transcribing the interview.

I had the day off Friday, but I conducted an interview for my research and then transcribed it.

Saturday was a long day because of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. I had to be in a booth with some of the anchors by 6:30 a.m. There I helped set up the booth and then hand out promotional items for the station and take pictures of people with the talent. That ran until 10:30 a.m. Those involved then took the booth down and headed back to the station. I then went home, took a break and then went back to the station at 3 p.m. I spent the rest of the day with the sports department. I logged a baseball game so the anchor could easily get some highlights together. I then went with the anchor to a

semi-pro women's basketball game and a professional men's soccer match to shoot video. When we got back to the station, I had a list of facts the anchor wanted to include in his show, so I looked them up and added them to the script.

Week 3

It was a wet week, for the most part, so it was interesting to see the news operation during storms, and in some cases, severe weather. This week also allowed me to set up a couple of interviews for my research.

I was supposed to go out with a two-person crew on Monday, but due to the severe weather, I ended up going with a multi-media journalist, who shot his own stuff, while the photographer went out on a separate assignment, allowing the station to cover more news and provide more content to viewers. The reporter I went out with was somewhat upset with the assignment. Producers asked the reporter to go and find "flood damage" from the storms that were going on and make two packages out of it. We drove around for a couple of hours to a couple of neighborhoods close to rivers to see if they had damaged or were concerned about the threat of floods. The reporter and I split up and each of us started knocking on doors to maximize our time and effort. We were able to find a person so the reporter conducted the interview and shot b-roll. He then remembered there is supposed to be a national cricket tournament for kids. He called the organizers, which he knew from a previous story, and conducted the interview. The reporter's assignment was eventually changed to three VO/SOTs, which positively changed the reporter's. The day ended after the reporter successfully completed his two live shots for the evening shows.

Wednesday I helped field produce a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the hosts to shoot a story for the next show. Once we got to the location, I started taking pictures while the host conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

Thursday I started out helping the news desk, which was extremely busy due to storms passing through. Then, once the sports anchor/reporter showed up, I left with him to go shoot about four standups for weekly sports show. Then, we went to the local NFL team's minicamp. There, the anchor/reporter conducted a couple of interviews. When we got back, I researched some statistics so that the anchor could include them in the sportscast.

Saturday was full of multitasking. I logged the local MLB team's baseball game and US Open golf tournament at the same time. This would make it easier for the anchor to go back and find plays and moments to include in the sportscast. While I was doing that, the anchor would also give me statistics and other information to look up so that it could also be included in the show. The evening ended with the anchor sitting down with me and watching a couple of packages and giving me advice on how to shoot, ask questions, what to look for, how to find stories and how to put a compelling story together.

Week 4

Hey team,

The research is starting to move along. This week I conducted another interview and transcribed it. This coming week I have another interview scheduled.

On Monday I went out with a reporter to cover the rain moving through the area and the effects that come with it. I helped the reporter look for places to go for the story. Then I sat back and watched the reporter and photographer put the story together and then present them live during the newscasts. I also took pictures while out on the story so the reporter could use them for his web story. When we got back to the station, I looked up some quick facts so the reporter could include them and sent my pictures to the web department so they could make a gallery.

I was off Tuesday, but used the day to conduct an interview for my research and transcribed it.

On Wednesday, I helped a sports reporter on a story by doing some research. I printed out a number of stories about the person the reporter was doing a story on. On our way to the interview, I would quickly read the stories and told him interesting facts that would help him guide his questions. When we got back to the station, I did more research for his story, as well as logged a baseball game and golf tournament.

On Thursday, I worked with the web and social media department. I created a couple of photo galleries and wrote a story on road construction. I also monitored the competitions' web sites to make sure we were not missing out on any news.

On Sunday, I went with a reporter to a baseball game and helped him with pre-game interviews. When we got back to the station, I logged the game and kept up with interesting statistics the anchor could include in the show.

WEEK 5

Hey team,

The research is continues to move along. This week I conducted two interviews and transcribed them. I spoke with someone who used to be a sports reporter and anchor, but is now on the news side and a woman who used to be a sports reporter and anchor, but now works for a public relations agency. It was very interesting to hear what they had to say, especially the woman who is no longer in a newsroom.

On Monday, I went out with a reporter who worked on a weather related story. I helped the reporter find areas affected by the severe weather. Once we got to the neighborhood, the reporter conducted a few interviews and the photographer shot video for the story. We then went back to the station, the reporter wrote the scripts. I helped her gather a number of statistics for the live shot.

On Tuesday, I worked with the web and social media department. I helped them monitor the competition's web sites to make sure we did not miss anything. I also created a number of photo galleries to also link to the different social media web sites. I also showed some of the other interns how to create photo galleries and use some of the software the department uses to create and disseminate content.

Wednesday I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer

conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

On Thursday I helped a reporter with a sweeps story. The reporter is working on an investigative story involving someone who is not very fluent in English. The reporter asked me to translate a couple of things and to assist throughout the interview. I also gathered facts for the story.

WEEK 6

Hey team,

On Monday I worked on transcribing some of my interviews, since I was off.

Tuesday was a pretty active day in the sports department. I started off doing research on a player the local hockey team signed to an extension. I then went out with the reporter covering it and gave him the information I researched so he could use for interviews and his story. Then we went to the hockey team's scrimmage it had for some of its prospects and shot video and did a couple of interviews. After that, we went to interview a former MLB manager. When we got back to the station, I logged the baseball game.

Wednesday I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

On Thursday I worked with the sports department and logged a baseball game. I also researched some statistics on a local high school basketball player who is listed as one of the top recruits in the country. I then contacted a station affiliate to get video and sound of him during an event where he was playing.

Friday was a short day at the station. I worked with the web and social media department and created two photo galleries. I also monitored the competitions' websites and social media activity.

Week 7

Hey team,

Week seven flew by. I had to readjust my schedule due to unexpected long days.

On Monday I went out with a reporter to do a story that came up from social media. A sheriff made post on social media about youths committing crimes and the need for parents to step up and “be parents.” I did some research before going out with the reporter to find crime statistics in the area. Once we went out, the reporter interviewed the sheriff. After that, we went out to a neighborhood that had been hit by crime that the sheriff told us about. We started knocking on doors to see if any residents would talk on camera about the recent crime in the area. We eventually found a person and the reporter was able to interview him. After that, I tweeted for the talent and then the reporter prepared the television story and wrote the web story from the car.

Tuesday, I went out with a reporter to do a story about a drowning. Before going out, the reporter had me research statistics about drowning deaths in the area. Once we went out and got to the location, we split up and started knocking on doors to try and find possible witnesses or people who had heard something or knew something about the

drowning. After getting a couple of interviews, the reporter put together a package and a couple of VO/SOTS together to be prepared for whatever the producer asked for.

On Wednesday, I worked my usual shift. I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

Friday, I conducted an interview for my research and transcribed it. I now have five interviews for my research.

On a side note, I am starting to think I do not want to pursue a career in television, or sports broadcasting, for that matter.

Week 8

Hey team,

I reached out to someone for a research interview, but they did not reply. I will try to reach them again this week.

I spent Monday with the sports crew. I spent most of the day logging The Open Championship. Once it was over, I worked with an editor to find the best moments for him to put the highlights together. Once that was done, I put together a list of some of the best athletes in the state. The list included statistics and social media information.

I went back to sports Tuesday and started searching around the internet and social media for any updates on the situation with the local NFL team. I gathered some clips

and made notes for the sports guys to have. I then went out with a reporter to an food drive the local NHL team was hosting. I took pictures for a photo gallery while the reporter and photographer were getting interviews and shooting video. I also continued working on the list of high school athletes and their stats.

On Wednesday, I worked my usual shift. I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

I spent Thursday with the web team. I created a couple of photo galleries and found ways to socialize content in an engaging manner. I also searched around for interesting stories that could do well on the station's web site.

Week 9

Hey team,

Week 9 is done and it was an active one, where I was able to get another interview done for my research.

I started out Monday by doing some quick research on the local NFL team. Once I had some information on the current situation, I wrote down some notes and gave them to the producer. Then I went with a reporter to get pregame interviews for local MLB team. When we got back to the station, I logged the game so the producer could easily find the plays that will be included in the highlights during the sportscasts. I also went to lunch

with the producer, who also manages all the online content for the sports department. He told me to tag along to lunch with him so that I could finally interview him, because he is constantly running around doing something for the sports department.

On Tuesday, I transcribed the interview I conducted Monday. Once at the station, I went to the pregame media availability for the local MLB team with a sports reporter again. When we got back to the station, I was multitasking the rest of the night. I logged the baseball game throughout the night, while at the same time monitoring the MLB trade deadline on social media and compiled a number of statistics of top high school athletes in the state to prepare for the upcoming seasons.

The show I normally work on Wednesdays was on reruns all week because most of the staff was on vacation. I worked with the web department instead. I spent the day creating photo galleries for the site and to be shared on social media. I also monitored the websites of the competition and affiliates to make sure we weren't missing anything and to check if they had any compelling content we could include on the website.

I spent Thursday with the web team again. I started by creating photo galleries. I was then given a press release from the local MLB team and wrote a story for the website. Once that was done, the assistant news director assigned me to compile a list of police departments in the viewing area and research if they use body cameras. If a police department uses body cameras, I had to find their policy and put it in a file. The reason for this is because a reporter is working on a comprehensive story on body cameras and their effectiveness.

Week 10

Hey team,

Week 10 is over and that means that from now on, I will be the only intern in the newsroom.

I spent Monday and Tuesday with the web and social media team. I spent the day creating photo galleries and monitoring the competition. I also monitored the websites of affiliates for content that we could add to the web site. I also continued working on putting a list together of the police departments in the state and their body camera policies.

On Wednesday, I went back to my usual shift. I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

I was originally scheduled to work Thursday, but the sports department asked me to take the day off so that I could go in Friday instead, since they could use the help. That day, I went out with one of the sports anchors to cover the local NFL team's training camp. I helped by compiling information for interviews and brainstorm story ideas for the reporter. I also helped by taking notes of what was going on, so the reporter could use it later on his show.

Week 11

Hey team,

Week 11 is over and I'm kind of glad it is because it was heavy on data entry.

On Monday I worked with the social media/ web department. I wrote a story on a fatal car accident using a press release from the police department. I also created several photo galleries and searched for stories on affiliate web sites that could do well on the station's web site and social media platforms. At the end of the day, the executive producer of the Wednesday entertainment show asked me to help her organize the show's archives.

I started helping her out on Tuesday. It consisted of going back to the beginning of the year and reading through the package scripts of stories that have aired. I had to make notes to inform the producer if the story could air again. I had to find if there was information that was dated or if there were facts that were no longer accurate. Since it is not a news show, it airs reruns during the holidays, which is why they want to know which ones to show in order to not mislead the public.

On Wednesday, I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story. I also continued to evaluate the stories to see which ones could air again.

Thursday was more of the same. I continued to evaluate the stories to see which ones could air again. I also helped the web department gather viewer pictures that were emailed to the station and put together a back-to-school photo gallery.

On Saturday I conducted another interview and transcribed it. I now have seven interviews.

Week 12

Hey team,

Week 12 is over, which means two more weeks to go.

I spent Monday in the sports department. I had to contact and coordinate with a station affiliate to get video and sound of the local NFL team. The team was having joint practices and played a scrimmage with another team. We wanted the video and sound to include it in the sportscast. Then I went with one of the sports anchors to get pregame interviews of the local MLB team. When we got back, I logged the game so they could put highlights together for the show that night.

I went back to the sports department on Tuesday. I got there a little early, so I went and helped the web department out until the sports producers and anchors got there. I created a couple of photo galleries and shared stories on social media. When the sports guys got there I researched financial figures of cities building new NFL stadiums to help one of the sports reporters with a story. I put together a document with financial figures he asked for and then went with the reporter to conduct an interview and a standup for the story.

On Wednesday, I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the

photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story. I also continued to evaluate the stories to see which ones could air again.

I was supposed to go back on Thursday to help with that show again, but the executive producer told me to go Friday instead since she was going to be out. She said she wanted me there to coordinate things during the show, since I was familiar with the way it runs, having worked it for a number of weeks. After the show, I went out with one of the reporters for the show and took pictures while she shot video and conducted interviews. When we got back, I created a photo gallery to go along with the reporter's web story.

Week 13

Hey team,

Week 13 was great. I can't believe I only have one more week left.

I did not work Monday, in order to be able to work Friday and help out with the high school football coverage.

On Tuesday, I worked with the web and social media team. I wrote a web story on a fatal car accident from a press release that the police department sent us. I also wrote a web story about a store that was burglarized. I spent the rest of the day I created photo galleries and I monitored social media, the competition and affiliates for possible stories for our website.

On Wednesday, I helped the producer with a studio show they hold outside with many guests and live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with

the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story. I also continued to evaluate the stories to see which ones could air again.

On Thursday, I went out with one of the sports reporters to do a story on a person with a mental disability who is a student manager for the high school football team. I did research on the medical condition before going out with the reporter so he had some background information before the interview. The reporter then had a phone interview with the mother. I took notes for the reporter, since he was driving. When we got back to the station, I emailed the notes to the reporter and he was able to put the story together.

Friday was a fun day. I got to the station and attended the sports meeting in which they discussed the plan to cover the high school football games. I then went with a reporter to two football games. I shot still photos, while the reporter shot video to then put together some highlights for the high school football show that night. When we got back to the station, I put together four photo galleries and then helped update scores on the website.

Thank you,

Eduardo Gonzalez

Week 14

Hey team,

The last 14 weeks were great!

I did not work Monday, in order to be able to work Friday and help out with the high school football coverage.

On Tuesday, I worked with the web and social media team. One of the sports anchors asked me to go to the baseball stadium and get sound from the pregame media availability since he had to go work on another story and the other sports anchor was off that day. When I got back, I put the video in the system, cut sound bites and labeled them so the anchor could find the ones he wanted to include in the show. I spent the rest of the day I created photo galleries and I monitored social media, the competition and affiliates for possible stories for our website.

On Wednesday, I helped the producer with a studio show they normally hold outside with many guests and live music. On Friday, however, the show was inside and it did not have live music. I made sure the guests knew where they needed to be and when. I also go their information so the producer could put it on the website, along with the story. Once the show was over, I went out with one of the photographers to shoot a story for the next show. When got to the location, I started taking pictures while the photographer conducted the interviews and shot video. When we got back to the station, I created a slide show to go along with the story.

On Thursday I went out with one of the sports anchors to put the finishing touches on a weekend sports show. When we got back to the station I did a little bit of research for that show and then started preparing for the high school football coverage. I also conducted the eighth interview for my research.

On Friday, I got to the station and attended the sports meeting in which they discussed the plan to cover the high school football games. I then went with a reporter to

two football games. I shot still photos, while the reporter shot video to then put together some highlights for the high school football show that night. When we got back to the station, I put together four photo galleries and then helped update scores on the website.

Thank you,

Eduardo Gonzalez

Personal Evaluation

My internship in a mid-sized Midwestern television station was both, an incredible experience, and an eye-opening one, as well. I honed my writing and research skills, and was able to learn new performance techniques and practice them. I got to contribute story ideas, participate in meetings reaching a wider audience, and contribute to the daily production of sportscasts. I learned about audience engagement, compelling story-telling, field production, and story selection.

I not only learned from the television station, but also was able to contribute something valuable to the team. I was able to help a reporter who needed someone who spoke Spanish fluently conduct an interview for an investigative story, as well as give the reporter insight into a culture she was not familiar with to get a better grip on the story. My time at the station also made me realize that I do not want to pursue a career in sports broadcasting, but web and social media instead.

On-site Supervisor Evaluation

To Whom It May Concern,

I can sum up Eduardo Gonzalez's experience at KSDK in one sentence: I want to hire him!

Eduardo's energy and excitement for the business impressed me during his interview and he did not disappoint. Everyone in the newsroom enjoyed working with him during his internship. He's smart, competent and has a great sense of humor.

The internship program at KSDK is extremely flexible and allows interns to pick what they want to do and when they want to work. Eduardo spent time working with photographers, reporters, producers, the sports team, web team and Show Me St. Louis.

Eduardo strengthened his skills by writing for kSDK.com. He took pictures and created photo galleries for the website. He also helped the web team monitor social media, which can be a full-time job! While working with the sports department, Eduardo logged Cardinals baseball games and assisted in our High School football coverage by going to games and taking pictures and creating photo galleries and updating scores. I know his coverage was invaluable to the sports team.

During Eduardo's time with reporters and photographers, he helped them research facts for their stories and saw the entire process - from the editorial meeting to the report on the newscast at the end of the day. While in the field, he learned tips about what questions to ask and how to balance his time since many are shooting, writing and editing their stories every day. He also practiced his stand-ups and got critiques on his KOMU stories.

While working with "Show Me St. Louis," Eduardo worked as a field producer, welcoming show guests and making sure everyone was where they were supposed to be at the right time. It's a job the Show Me St. Louis team specifically requested Eduardo to do. A sign of their confidence in his abilities to get the job done without a lot of oversight.

Eduardo was with us during a very important time, the Anniversary of the Michael Brown shooting. He helped prepare us for our coverage by researching which police departments in our area are using body cameras.

I cannot stress enough how great it was to have Eduardo intern with us at KSDK. I know he will be a quality employee for anyone who hires him, just like he was for us.

Sincerely,

Missy Glassmaker
Assistant News Director, KSDK


Evidence of Professional Work

I had a great time working at KSDK-TV last summer. I was able to rotate through different departments, which gave me a better understanding for the television station as a whole, as well as their brand.

On days when I worked with the sports department, if there was a baseball game on television, I would log the games. It consisted of me writing down what happened during the game and I would put a time stamp next to each item so the editor could quickly find the play, which made it easier for them to put together the highlights for the show. This would allow the anchors to focus on writing their scripts. I would hand them my game log about 20 minutes before each show to make sure the viewers got the latest information possible. Here is an example of a game I logged:

Kansas City at St. Louis

Top of the 1st

Cain double to left
Escobar grounds to third
15:15:15- Cain steals third
15:17:06- Rios strikeout
15:18:25- Morales strikeout

Bottom of the 1st

15:21:55 – Wong infield single
15:23:00- Wong steals 2nd base
15:24:01- Carpenter grounder to pitcher out at 1st, Wong to third
15:26:10 Peralta strikeout
15:28:50 Reynolds strikeout

Top of the 2nd

15:32:20- Perez strikeout
15:33:55 Gordon solo HR to RF
15:36:12 Colon walk
15:37:33 Infante safe at first on error by second baseman Wong, Colón to second.
15:39:00- Guthrie sacrificed to first, Colón to third, Infante to second.
15:41:10- Escobar grounded out to first

Bottom of the 2nd

15:43:44- Molina single up the middle
15:46:25- Heyward grounded into fielder's choice to third, Molina out at second, Heyward to second on throwing error by third baseman Colón.

15:48:52- Grichuk grounded out to pitcher.
15:49:55- Cather goes to mound to talk to pitcher
15:50:43- Jay intentional walk
15:51:45- Lyons struck out swinging.

Top of the 3rd

15:55:50- Cain strikeout swinging
15:56:45- Rios strikeout looking
15:58:07- K. Morales flied out to right.

Bottom of the 3rd

16:01:59- Wong triple right
16:03:54- Carpenter singled to deep right, Wong scored, Carpenter out stretching at second. Game tied 1-1.
16:06:59- Peralta lined out to center.
16:08:24- Reynolds reached on infield single to second. Nice defensive play at second, bad throw to first, missed tag.
16:09:52- Molina singled to right, Reynolds to second
16:11:40- Heyward singled to right center, Reynolds scored, Molina to third. 2-1 Cardinals
16:13:17- Grichuk lined out to left.

Top of the 4th

16:15:45- guy and his dog
16:16:40- Molina talking to HP ump
16:17:2- Perez HR to left. Score tied at 2
16:19:49- Gordon grounded out to first, Reynolds slides to tag bag for the out
16:21:1- Colón grounded out to pitcher.
16:21:50- Cards fan sitting next to Royals fan
16:22:00- Infante grounded out to third.

Bottom of the 4th

16:24:30- Jay grounds to second
16:25:53- Lyons singled to right.
16:26:49- Wong lined out to right.
16:28:54- Carpenter fouled out to third.

Top of the 5th

Guthrie popped out to second.
16:34:32- Dog in Cardinals gear again at 4:34: 52
16:35:00- Escobar struck out swinging
16:36:13- Cain flied out to right.

Bottom of the 5th

16:39:08- Peralta flied out to center.
16:40:45- sky
16:41:45- Reynolds homered to left. (3-2 Cardinals)
16:42:53- Molina grounded out to third.
16:43:57- Heyward singled to right, Heyward to second on error by right fielder Rios. Grichuk struck out swinging.

Top of the 6th

Tarp 16:48:53

17:10:54- Belisle now pitching
17:12:06- Rios safe at second on throwing error by third baseman Carpenter.
17:15:33- K. Morales grounded out to first, Rios to third.
17:14:35- broken bat, Pérez grounded out to third.
17:15:47- Gordon intentionally walked.
17:17:17- Colón struck out swinging.

Bottom of the 6th

17:21:44- Jay walked.
17:24:03- Bourjos sacrificed to pitcher, Jay to second.
17:26:08- Wong flied out to center.
17:28:10- Carpenter grounded out to second.

Top of the 7th

17:31:33- Infante struck out swinging.
17:31:35- pitching change (Randy Choate)
17:34:46- Moustakas grounded out to third.
17:35:19- pitching change (Seth Maness)
17:38:02- Escobar fouled out to right.

Bottom of the 7th

17:41:11- Herrera relieved F. Morales.
17:41:20- Peralta flied out to center.
17:43:15- Reynolds struck out swinging (REPLAY)
17:45:05- Molina popped out to first.

Top of the 8th

17:49:15- Cain singled to center.
17:51:48- Rios flied out to right.
17:54:20- Siegrist relieved Maness.
17:57:14- Molina to the mound
17:59:26- K. Morales lined out to right. (Heyward couldn't see)
18:00:10- Pitching change
18:03:38- Pérez singled to right, Cain to second (Dyson pinch running for Perez)
18:06:46- Gordon popped out to second.

Bottom of the 8th

18:09:30- Pitching change (Davis)
18:09:45- Heyward grounded out to pitcher.
18:12:58- Kozma struck out swinging.
18:14:25- Jay struck out swinging.

Top of the 9th

18:17:25- Hosmer grounded out to first. (in for Davis)
18:19:03- Infante struck out swinging.

Another way I helped out the sports department was by going to high school football games and taking pictures of fans. This helped bring traffic to the web site and provided a different angle from what was shown on television. I would go around the

crowd, while the reporter shot the game, and I would find interesting fans and take pictures of them. Then, once we got back to the station, I would edit the pictures and created a photo gallery to go on the website. Here are a few examples:

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/sports/high-school/2015/09/04/prep-rally-st-charles-high-school/71740234/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/sports/high-school/football/2015/08/28/high-school-football-jeff-city-at-cbc/71350958/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/sports/high-school/football/2015/08/28/high-school-football-lutheran-north-at-sluh/71353906/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/sports/high-school/football/2015/08/28/fort-zumwalt-north-cheerleaders-and-dance-team/71350234/>

There were also times when I would work with the Web/ Social Media Department. There, I would see if any of the station's affiliates had any interesting stories that would work well in our website and add it. I would also write stories from press releases we received. Here are some examples of stories I wrote that came from press releases emailed to the station:

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/news/local/2015/08/25/teen-dead-after-struck--car/32355313/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/news/local/2015/08/10/fatal-accident-in-pike-county/31421057/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/news/traffic/2015/08/10/highway-n-improvements-ribbon-cutting-held-monday/31419675/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/sports/mlb/cardinals/2015/07/30/matt-holliday-placed-on-15-day-disabled-list/30894409/>

On Wednesdays, I would always work on a show called "Show Me St. Louis." The first thing I would do is write the shot sheet. This would let the director know who the crew would be for a specific day, what reporter would be doing each segment, how many microphones would be needed, how many guests there would be and when each

guest would be on television. I would help field produce the show, since half of it was done inside in the studio and the other half was done outside, in an area they call “Television Plaza.” I would welcome guests and tell them where to go. I would also give them cues of when they should wave, scream, etc.

Once the show ended, we would have a post show meeting. After that, I would go out with one of the show’s reporters and take pictures while she shot video for the story. Here are a few examples of photo galleries I created for this show:

<http://www.ksdk.com/media/cinematic/gallery/32123781/mango/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/television/show-me-st-louis/2015/08/26/bee-naturals/32415327/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/news/local/2015/06/17/billy-gs/28879351/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/media/cinematic/gallery/31998027/customized-cake-toppers/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/television/show-me-st-louis/2015/08/05/missouri-meerschaum-company/31180039/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/2015/08/12/fairies-have-taken-over-the-missouri-botanical-garden/31543079/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/television/show-me-st-louis/2015/07/22/st-louis-art-museum/30528729/>

<http://www.ksdk.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/television/show-me-st-louis/2015/07/08/olympia/29878229/>

Here is link to provide a better idea of what the show is like:

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/entertainment/2015/12/02/websterholidayhousetour/76665650/>

My time at KSDK-TV was a valuable learning experience. I strongly believe their decision to have me rotate through different departments helped me grow as a person and

as a journalist. It helped me see the big picture and it gave me experience in areas I previously did not have any or not as much as before.

Analysis

Theory

I used S.E. Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory as a basis for my qualitative research. The theory focuses on people's "resources" and how they work in people and how those resources affect people socially (Hobfoll & Lilly, 129). "Hobfoll's COR theory contends that individuals build up resources to assist in dealing with stressful situations" (Reinardy, 90). This theory has been used many times by many researchers. One of those researchers states people store "resources" to help them get through high-stress moments" (Reinardy, 90). The "resources" are anything the person values. People use their "resources" to help them work through tough situations. For this reason, people try to save these resources and use them sparingly, in order to have resources available when they are truly needed (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 108). Journalists say the stress usually comes from job demands and job resources (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 107). The theory plays on a strong relationship between burnout and engagement (Alarcon et al., 213).

There is one resource that may be valuable in minimizing burnout: optimism (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 107). By having a positive mind and attitude, people can offset the negative emotions that could lead to burnout (115). The theory states people are forced to either adapt to a situation or cope with it to the best of the person's ability (Alarcon et al., 213). The researchers defined coping as the act of minimizing that which causes stress (215). The Conservation of Resources theory's foundation lies in saving and protecting the resources each person has at his or her disposal (Hobfoll & Lilly, 130). It is

up to the individual how he or she will adapt or behave in order to maintain a healthy balance and continue working in journalism.

Literature Review

What are these emotions?

Emotions are very powerful. People, events, and things one encounters every day affect them. However, people react differently to different things, therefore, their emotional responses to them will be different. In this study, I will focus on the effects of burnout in sports broadcast journalists. While sports journalists are people, they are a different breed. The emotions most fans experience during a game, do not necessarily apply to working journalists, since they have to remain impartial to produce fair and balanced work. A journalist, by definition has to remain impartial and fair, therefore the emotions fans experience throughout the game, mostly driven by outcomes, do not necessarily affect journalists. Still, other factors affect journalists emotions, to the point that some end up leaving the profession, as a result of burnout (Reinardy, 95).

Emotions are affected by the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) (Kehoe, et al., 863). The researchers found that a wide range of factors triggered the OFC (Kehoe, et al., 867). This understanding of how emotions are triggered and where they come from will help understand how sports can trigger specific emotions in viewers by knowing and understanding the process the mind goes through when people experience different emotions.

Men are from Mars and... Other differences when experiencing emotions.

Men and women, for example, react differently to sports. Men tend to be more emotionally attached according to a study by Walter Gantz and Lawrence A. Wenner.

They wrote, “Consistent with initial differences in interest, men more frequently reported feeling happy when their team fared well and angry when their team performed poorly” (Gantz & Wenner, 236).

As with emotions, the effects and causes of burnout depend on gender experienced more burnout than men. Research shows that when talking about married couples, women experience more burnout than men (Pamuk & Durmus, 171). This shows there are differences in experiences that could lead to similar experiences regarding burnout when looking at it in different areas.

When emotions take over.

Mark Dechesne, Jeff Greenberg, Jamie Arndt, and Jeff Schimel focused their study on a theory known as “terror management theory.” It states that some people get really attached to their sports teams and act according to the team’s performance (Dechesne et. al., 814). For example, if the team is winning, the fan feels a sense of pride and glory. On the other hand, if the team is performing poorly, people fall into slumps and become sad or even fall into depression (Dechesne, et. al, 832).

Gender plays a big role in this (Ganz & Wenner, 234). Men and women differ greatly in how they view sports (Ganz & Wenner, 234). They also differ in their reasons for watching them (Ganz et al., 236). Men would watch sports to, among other things; enjoy the excitement it provides (Ganz & Wenner, 236). Women, however, would watch because they saw it as an opportunity to spend time with those who enjoyed watching them (Ganz & Wenner, 236). It was more of a thrill-seeking experience for men, while for women it was more about having an opportunity to interact and mingle with others during the viewing experience. However, most of the time, women were doing more than

one thing while they watched games, like cleaning around the house (Ganz & Wenner, 236). When working as journalists, however, they have to be focused throughout the entire game, with no emotional breaks when the game is close.

Sports journalists can also feel the emotional toll of covering sports (Serazio, 158). They are, however, supposed to keep their emotions in check in order to remain impartial. However, journalists are human beings with emotions, as well, so this is not always easy. The daily grind of covering the emotional roller coaster that sports are can have its effect on them, especially since they have to be constantly checking themselves to remain emotionless and objective. This results in many sports journalists burning out eventually.

Herbert J. Freudenberger was the first to define burnout. He described burnout as a state in which people are physically and emotionally tired and are not motivated (1974). A study by Scott Reinardy found, “The results of burnout can lead to employee turnover, reduction in quality and quantity of work, and conflict in the home and work environment” (398).

Many journalists look for support to help combat negative emotions and avoid falling victim to burnout. One avenue some choose to attain balance and support is marriage. For some couples, marriage provides happiness, children, satisfaction of sexual desires, among other things (Pamuk & Durmus, 163).

Social scientists have found how powerful emotions are that now some journalists are adding emotional elements to their stories in an effort gain more readers. This practice, however, is not popular across the board:

The traditional ideal of dispassionate factual reporting is not congruent with the view of journalism as emotional-laden storytelling. The conflict between

subjective emotions and objective reporting on emotions was resolved, on the one hand, by the rejection of ‘authorial’ emotions (journalists’ own emotions) and ‘artificial’ emotions, as discussed earlier, and, on the other hand, by rejecting journalists’ influence on the emotional effects of reporting” (Pantti, 178).

This was the case in New Orleans, when the professional football team, the Saints, won the Super Bowl in 2009. The city was just four years removed from one of the biggest natural disasters in the country, Hurricane Katrina. Many people, including fans, reporters, and athletes, had lost everything because of it. Morale around the city was low.

More than just sports.

Due to the storm, the Saints had to play their home games in a Baton Rouge and San Antonio because the Superdome, which is where the team played, was being used as a shelter for people, and had been damaged by the storm. Michael Serazio discusses how the mind deals with bad memories and traumatic situations. These memories can also be looked at collectively, as the article notes is the case of New Orleans residents with Hurricane Katrina (170).

Serazio explains that the success of the New Orleans Saints in the years following the storm helped fans move past those negative memories by creating positive new ones. To many, the Superdome served as a temporary home as they worked to rebuild their own houses. With the recent success the Saints have enjoyed, even winning the Super Bowl in 2010, the Superdome has now become a “positive” place, rather than a negative one (160).

Method

This case study examined how sports reporters handle their workload and the stress that comes with it. I visited the sports department of a television station in a mid-sized market in the Midwest and conducted field semi-structured interviews. I interviewed 8 reporters. The interview participants include reporters currently in the industry, as well some who have left due to burnout. The interviews allowed me to better understand how journalists feel in the newsroom and how each journalist handles the stress that comes with the job (Davies, 3). I conducted my research as I was completing my professional project. I stayed at the location conducting interviews until I had reached saturation in the answers provided, which resulted in data. Once I noticed no new data or themes were emerging, I stopped interviewing people and began analyzing the data more in depth.

The interviews with reporters who work for traditional media outlets were semi-structured, since I had a set of questions I asked them, but it also allowed room for additional questions came up during the actual interview (Tracy, 140).

The semi-structured interviews facilitated the data collection process by allowing me to effectively paint a clear picture of what the newsroom environment was like. This will also help me better understand the newsroom, the reporters and the stress they experience (Everbach, 482).

The interviews took place either in any available room in the newsroom or in the place the participant suggested. I took notes during the interviews in order to be able to preserve the rich detail of the answers provided, which later assisted me when writing the results and analysis.

In order to respect and ensure the participants' confidentiality, I kept the field notes, transcripts, recordings, and any other data collected during the process in a safe, locked location. The transcripts were redacted to not include details that could lead to a journalist being identified. This resulted in trust from the participants, who likely felt more comfortable with the process and more at ease to answer as truthful as possible when answering questions during the interviews. I also assigned codes for each participant. Those involved in the study were assigned letters so that their identities remain confidential to any who read the final report.

While conducting the interviews, came across some information about the participants' mental or emotional state. In order to ensure the employees job security, I did not publish any names, nor did I force anyone to talk about anything they did not wish to share. I did not limit my interviews to those at the station I did be doing my professional project in. I expanded my pool by requesting access and permission to interview other sports journalists in the area. I also informed the participants that they were in control of the interview and were not obligated to answer all of my questions, especially those they were uncomfortable with.

If there were any questionable actions observed or answers during the interview, I addressed them with the participant in order to clarify any misunderstandings. This helped achieve the overall goal of the research, which was to help present the truth, make a contribution to knowledge, and address the problem of burnout in sports broadcast journalism. As far as the data goes, everything remains anonymous, and no names were used. Reporters were assigned a "code" pertaining to a letter in the alphabet, known only

to the researcher, in order to ensure their privacy. This code was used during the interviews. No one was ever in danger during this investigation.

Once I gathered my data, I coded it. I went through the transcripts to find themes that came up. I then divided the themes into groups. This allowed for fairness when evaluating and analyzing the data. Only data of the same theme was compared, which allowed for fairness, since they were judged and evaluated using the same criteria. This also helped paint a better picture that was essential for the “results” section. In an effort to be fair, I also grouped the interviews. To help answer my research questions, I will base the coding on specific words sports broadcast journalists’ say during the interviews.

During the data collection process, interview responses were be coded accordingly. I used green ink to circle positive comments from the participants and red ink to circle negative comments. I used blue ink when the comments were neither positive nor negative. I mainly used blue ink when the participants were explaining something. This allowed for a more effective approach when I wrote the results and analysis. I paid attention to key words in responses like “excited,” “anxious,” “sad,” among other similar words that pointed to emotional effects that could lead to burnout (Gantz, W et al., 111).

The interpretation of the data was based on my prior experience in the field of sports journalism and my education in the field. I have a bachelors degree in journalism and worked two years in a television station in the south, which have provided a wealth of experiences and understanding of different situations. They were also based on the interviews conducted with the participants. The data was grouped into common themes that come up in the research. All of the conclusions and analysis were based on the

fieldwork conducted and the literature read during the process. This data helped answer the key questions posed in the introduction. The research and results aimed to answer why sports reporters are affected emotionally by their jobs and why some experience burnout and ultimately leave the field. The data was also determined by constant repetition of results. Once there was saturation, I knew the data was more reliable, since it had been repeated throughout the research. I looked for trends and similarities in the research in order to effectively and efficiently answer the research questions. The themes observed or identified in the interviews helped paint a better and clearer picture of what led to emotional and psychological effects on sports broadcast journalists.

This study obviously did not look into everything that affects sports broadcast journalists' emotions. Since this study was conducted over the summer, I had considerably less time to gather data and analyze it. The lack of time also hindered my opportunities to dig deeper into some of the findings. This obligated me to focus on the main issues that came up during the investigation, and not so much on the ones that are not as common in the participants.

The method I used, semi-structured interviews, also presented limitations to the study. I was subject to the words spoken only when I was present. Also, people behave differently when they know they are being observed and interviewed. I had to be extremely patient and careful not to rush to judgment when I found something of value using this method. I had to take time to explore it and see if there was a pattern, if it was an anomaly or if the person truly thought in a way the data suggests. This can be especially tricky since the subject matter was something people may have a hard time or concerns talking about.

Granting anonymity.

This research relied solely on semi-structured interviews with reporters of traditional media in a major-market city in the Midwest. To ensure the privacy of those people who were interviewed as part of the research, I assigned a letter to each reporter. I also redacted parts of the interview transcripts that could lead to a reporter being identified.

Results

Factors Leading to Burnout.

After interviewing eight sports journalists whose fields include radio, television and print, there were trends and similarities that suggest the previous point. There were five themes that showed up during the interviews, which shed light on why burnout happens in journalism:

- low salaries;
- quality of the product is down; the schedule, which includes working holidays, leads to people in the industry to miss events with friends and/or family;
- schedule, working holidays, time away from family;
- the feeling of always being ‘on,’ due to recognition and social media, which could lead to “mean tweets;” and finally,
- a lack of understanding and/or support from management.

All of the participants provided answers during the interviews that fit into a number of the themes, which shows the participants were not experiencing just one factor that could lead to burnout. Some participants were more passionate about their answers,

as demonstrated by the language used and the tone. It is important to note that of the eight journalists interviewed for this research, three are no longer sports journalists.

Low Salary.

One of the factors that came up during multiple interviews is the salary reporters and/or anchors are making today. One of the questions I asked all eight participants was if there was anything he or she would change about the industry. Five out of the eight journalists interviewed said low salaries could play a role in a journalist burning out.

Reporter D said,

Well, I think, you know, when you get into it and you're young, you know that you have to operate almost like a starving artist and when I started out in (REDACTED) I made \$13,5000 a year and I really pushed hard for that extra \$500 and it wasn't even until I got my second job in (REDACTED) that I was able to pay all of my bills. So, you know, from the standpoint of getting started and the grind of it, even back then, you know, still shooting your own stuff, you know when you go in, you're working to climb that industry ladder, in a sense, to get to a point where you're working with a team, on a day-to-day basis, to collaborate to tell the best story possible.

One of the journalists interviewed said that while the amount of work asked of journalists has increased, the pay has not. He said the pay is not commensurate to the amount of work being done by journalists.

"And that's the big thing that— I wouldn't say the grind. The lack of reward for the grind. That's what I would say is the issue," Reporter E said.

Reporter E went on to say,

The juice has to be worth the squeeze, man and the juice is not even close to be worth the squeeze. And, so the unfortunate thing is usually— it's probably better to find out the first time you stand in front of a camera at (REDACTED) that you can't do it, as opposed to actually being able to do it, because inevitably, it's like a pyramid, and as time goes on, only so many people get to play the game and even if you're one of the top people you're still, when it's all said and done, replaceable unless you tangibly drive revenue to the entity. That's the only thing that matters.

One participant, Reporter F, said the low salary has caused him to lose motivation to do his job. The participant said he was in the process of making a video to get viewers ready for high school football and for the coverage the station offers. However, the participant said he was lacking motivation because of all the added duties he now has and is not getting paid more to do his job.

When asked about things he would change about the industry, the first thing the participant mentioned was the salary.

Reporter G compared journalism to acting when it came to the salaries.

It's a really challenging industry. I mean it's— It's like acting. There's a lot of people that want to do it and there are very few jobs and so the leverage is on the side of the employer, which is why most of the wages are very low, particularly for entry-level jobs, which is why they can ask you to do so much. It's because it's supply and demand. They have all the leverage because they know they can just replace you with someone who is cheaper and probably, maybe not quite as good, but close. There's a steady supply of labor that's cheap and that's good. There's a lot of cheap, good people out there who are willing to do it for not a lot of money and so they know that. It's not that they're bad— It's not that the people in the industry are bad people, it's just that they know that that's the way the industry works. They have the leverage.

Reporter E went on to elaborate on the leverage and offered advice to aspiring journalists.

That's the thing that I would want to say to anyone who's out at (REDACTED) right now. You know, not to fucking humble them, that's not what my goal would be, but to make them aware that unless you drive a tangible amount of dollars to the bottom line of the entity for whom you work, you are replaceable. And then, therefore, when the time comes and your contract's up, you have no leverage, and that's the biggest issue I have with television.

Reporter E went a step further and offered some thoughts on the journalism industry when asked how to avoid burnout as a journalist.

"I don't want to give you a happy ending because I don't believe there's a happy ending. It's a bad industry. That's, that's— The way to avoid burnout is to justify

your paycheck and then some by driving revenue to your employer because I assure you your employer is not sitting there going, ‘Gosh, you know, that was a really nice nat sound pop right in between the nat sound and the b-roll. That’s not the way it works.’”

Reporter F said the low salary causes him to lose motivation when doing the job, as was the case when he said he was not motivated to create a video to get viewers ready for the coverage the station will provide.

Reporter A had a different outlook when asked what he would change about the industry.

“Well, I mean, other than tripling my salary, no, not really, you know, because, I mean, first of all you don’t really have the ability to change anything anyway, you know, so we’re talking hypotheticals.”

Reporter E said journalists today are replaceable with cheaper and younger talent applying for jobs. When he was a journalist, he noticed a trend in his paycheck, especially after being at a certain company for a while.

“I don’t know if I realized the replaceability so much as when time came for raises, the raises were so minuscule,” Reporter E said.

All of the journalists interviewed said their job responsibilities have changed throughout the years, mainly to respond to the digital revolution. Reporter F said the importance of having a presence on the web and social media sites has seen his duties increase and change, but one factor has not: his salary. He said he now works longer hours, produces more shows each week, makes his own graphics, and has to continue managing the high school football website. He also manages all the social media accounts for the sports department.

Quality of the Product is Down.

As Reporter F said, sports journalists now have more job responsibilities than before. The main reason for the added tasks is the need to fill the website with content. Another reason is to feed the social media outlets news organizations now have, like Facebook, Twitter, among others. The participants interviewed said journalists now have to do more than just put a package together or write a story. Reporter B said that with all the added tasks, what used to be the original task of writing a story or producing a package, is taking a hit in terms of quality.

I think it gets frustrating because you spend so much time doing that stuff that you don't get to do the real job as much anymore and we're so tied into the immediacy of it all that I think your work can suffer long-term, the quality of your work, because you just don't have time.

Reporter C echoed those sentiments.

The most frustrating part for me now is seeing what the product is. That's what's frustrating to me because I want it to be better. I think it should be better. I think a station that would invest in a way— I think they should invest into putting a good newscast on the air and really, you know, you have to have enough people to really do it. I think they'd blow the doors off any other station because— It would take time. People aren't just going to switch over right away, but I think they would, because everybody, all the stations are doing the same thing, which is not enough people and a mediocre product.

Some of the participants said they are now devoting some of their time to new social media outlets, which reporters say companies are interested in since they engage with the audience. Reporter B said:

"There's no expertise on my end, but if I spend a lot of time doing that, I'm taking away time from what my real responsibility is and I'm spending less time on the writing part of it and more time fussing around with my camera or my phone and at the end of the day I've just got a very average video and a less-than-average story, where it should be more time and commitment spent to what I'm really there to do, so I wrestle with that a little bit during the season or whenever I'm doing that kind of stuff."

Another issue brought up by a participant was the gradual evolution into reporters doing more on the job in an effort by stations to save money on salaries. Most reporters now serve as what is known as “one-man bands,” meaning they shoot, write and, edit their stories. The participant said splitting a reporter’s focus in all the added tasks results in the quality of the overall product taking a hit, hurting the audience in the end.

“(…) due to salary reductions and the fact of the matter is, is that they’re asking, you know, people to be, in my mind, less collaborative with their story-telling because the expectation is— Is that someone does it all and I think in some instances, you know, that may be fine, but I don’t think that that should be the overall model because I think you lose the ability, as a reporter, to truly focus on the story-telling when you’re shooting and to, you know, think that we can be an expert in all things. I think it just waters down what the potential product is because there— There are— There are photographers out there with, with an eye for telling a story through video and you know, those are the guys that you want to work with because they make you better. They make the story better. They make the experience better for the viewer.”

One-man bands seem to be the trend in news at the moment. Stations seem to accept a drop in quality in exchange for more manpower to cover stories. An added factor is the need for speed when cranking out news and content to the audience. Social media and the Internet have changed the dynamics of the news industry to the point where the audience is actively seeking out information by going online and social media outlets instead of waiting for the news to come on at the scheduled times each day. Reporter A said it’s just the nature of the business today and it can only get worse.

So, you know, I don’t think the business is going to change. I think, you know, if anything, it’s— Technology is going to cause it to speed up even more. The downside of that is that I think that it’s at the expense of thoughtful reporting. You know, you’ve got to feed the beast every day. So, if you have a story idea, but it might take two or three days to pull it all together, you know, sometimes the news managers aren’t as interested in that, because, well, we’ve got the four, five, and six today, you know, so that’s a challenge, and it’s frustrating for reporters, sometimes. You know, I would rather, instead of cranking out a story a day, I would rather have time to work on more thoughtful pieces, you know, but, you know, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t.

The individual roles are now blurred in journalism. People don't just have one task to focus on, as previously discussed. One participant said the consequences of this are clear.

"I think that the issue right now is, I just don't think the product that we're putting on today is where it needs to be," Reporter C said.

The common sentiment among those interviewed suggests having clear, defined roles for each person will result in a better quality product, which will not then lead to frustration on the part of journalists. One reporter showed understanding in why the industry has changed to, but still offered his thoughts on how the quality of the overall product could be improved.

(...) it probably would be better if, in an ideal world, to have on-air people focus mostly on the on-air product. But, I understand why— I mean, it's money. It all comes down to money. I understand why, financially, that's difficult to do. But, yeah, ideally, you would want to have your on-air people, to get the best out of them, to get the best on-air product, you would want to have them focus strictly on producing the on-air—the best on-air product they can.

Schedules/ Holidays/ Time away from Friends and Family.

In today's world there are more newscasts on TV than there were in the past. Local television stations now have newscasts starting as early as 4:30 a.m. to go along with the more traditional times, not to mention, the always present website and social media accounts. Print publications don't have scheduled hours, but with a presence on the web and social media sites, they are always on as well. News professionals no longer have set hours. It is a 24/7 world where news is always breaking and the audience wants to receive it as it happens.

Sports is an interesting case, since some of the events happen during nights, weekends, and even holidays. This results in news professionals spending a lot of time

away from family, friends, and loved ones, which as many participants said, can take a toll on those involved. Reporter B said,

It takes a toll. You feel like you're constantly on-call, which you are, but it, it's taxing, I mean, when you feel like you need to have your phone on all the time and it's stressful. When you have a family, it's stressful. I mean, when your kids literally tell you, ask if you can put the phone down or your wife does, it's– It becomes a grind that's, that seems unnecessary. I mean I think that you can do the job without having to have your iPhone in your hand 24 hours a day. So that's another thing, where you just have to, sometimes, check yourself, and just have a little perspective.

Reporter C, who used to work in sports, but now works in the news department said it is very clear to him why sports reporters burn out. He said the problem is that sports never stop, since they happen on weekends and holidays, too. He added that he worked six days a week for 10 years when he was a sports reporter and anchor.

One participant said there is a big difference between being single and having a family for people working as sports journalists. Reporter A said that at one point in his career he was working the early morning shift. He said his schedule was opposite to that of his wife's. He said this resulted in him and his wife were not able to share a lot of time together.

"I might go three, four, five days without seeing my wife awake, you know, so that, I mean, but we'd make up for it on the weekends and stuff," Reporter A said.

Reporter B echoed Reporter A's sentiments and added that news professionals have to be OK with missing out on certain events. Reporter B said the schedule is not only physically grueling, but mentally, as well.

I think a lot of it is family related. Your spouse can't, you know, can't take it anymore. Kids– The challenges, I think a lot of people that quit or scale back or go to a different job get tired of missing out on big moments or big events like kids birthdays or things like that or they've had to reschedule so many different things. I mean, I have to schedule, my kids, my kids, I have twin boys and they

were born in November, not this November, they're five, we always have to schedule when we're having their birthday party around when I'm going to be in town for football. You miss weddings. You miss things like that and it takes its toll eventually on a family. Now, if you're single, great. No big deal. But, I think that's probably the number one contributing thing is having to rearrange your life so you can go to (REDACTED) for the weekend or go to (REDACTED) or whatever.

Reporter C, who no longer covers sports, said the schedule takes a toll on people, no matter who the person is and that the reporter just has to learn to accept it as a reality of the business.

"And again, there's no such thing in television as a holiday. So Christmas, Thanksgiving, I mean, I went 25 years of never being home for Christmas or Thanksgiving. I mean, that's part of– That's part of the deal," Reporter C said.

Reporter B said there is one ingredient that is key to make it work.

You've got to find some balance. I mean, first you have to find someone who buys in to what you're doing and gets it before it starts, before you really start a family. My wife was well aware of what I was doing because I was doing it for a while before we met, so that helped and she's amazing, as far as putting up with it, because the hours, the travel is hard. So you just, you just have to kind of suck it up and, and, and deal with it, but you have to. But, you get, you have to find balance, you just, you can't be fixated on (REDACTED) sports 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

News is not entertainment. There is no such thing as a rerun in news, which means that the news is on every day, no matter what, as reporter C said. The participant added it is important to keep things in perspective and stressed the importance of having one's priorities in order.

That is the hardest part and– And quite honestly, you know, it's a– It's a sacrifice and– And some people would choose not to make the sacrifice because they think that's not– That the most important thing is not the job. It's– It's the kids and the family. We made a choice in our family, before we even had children, that we knew what it was going to be like and so we made that choice. You know, you pay the prices for it. You know, I mean, I love my children, just as much as any father loves their kids, but I missed a lot of stuff. I'd try to make up for it. We'd

try to take, you know, when I would get a week off, we took family vacations. We— We'd spend time together.

Reporter E believes that it is precisely then when some news professionals begin to question whether or not they want to continue in the business, and burnout kicks in. The participant restated something previously mentioned, which is that the compensation for the job is not worth missing out on time with family and friends.

"I think that's when it happens, usually, whatever age that is that people have their kids or their husbands or wives and they go, 'God, I would love to go on vacation or I would like to go see my son play, but I've got to go anchor the ten or I've got to go cover the (REDACTED) game or work wherever and I can't spend time with them and that's why, usually around that time, people start to bail. But, I do think, before you or I were around doing this stuff, I do think people made a good amount of money and so it was worth it and they were getting paid, I don't want to say appropriately, but they were getting paid more and so it was worth putting up with it all."

All of the participants stressed the importance of having a good support system at home. Sports reporters, as already mentioned, work around the clock, including nights, weekends, and holidays. They all said having a partner who understands the demands of the job will help a great deal. Still, Reporter C said, it is only a matter of time until frustration kicks in.

But, you know, when you miss Christmas after Christmas after Christmas or Thanksgiving after Thanksgiving, then, you know, 'Why can't you be here for one Thanksgiving, (REDACTED)?' And the answer is because they won't let me. I mean, I—I ask for it off. Now, I'm at—I'm at the point of seniority, where I can get it off, but for many, many years, I wasn't. So, yeah, those things come up and, you know, maybe in another family, when that would happen, you would say 'OK, well then I need to find something else to do because—' And believe me, I've known people that have gotten out of this business and have been much happier for it because they, they, they get their life back.

Still, Reporter C said even though he had a good support system at home, it still pains him to think about missing out on spending time with family and friends.

My wife has been extremely supportive and, and has made it work for us, but I'm not sure I would ever win the father of the year award. I do the best that I can, but I, you know, I missed a ton of stuff and I still— I mean, I only have one at home, still, but I still miss a ton of stuff and you know. There's a sadness about that, but quite honestly, I don't know, I've been doing this now (REDACTED), (REDACTED) years, so this is my life and so there's not a lot I can do for now.

Always being “On”/ Hateful tweets.

One of the biggest changes journalism has seen in recent years has been the incorporation of social media. It is a different ball game now. Social media has revolutionized the industry giving the audience the latest information; meaning that reporters can send news out to the public at times that traditional media does not. Reporter C said it puts pressure on the reporters to serve their audience as best as they can.

It's not good for the person who's having to do it. That's for sure. I think the expectations are extremely high and as a reporter you don't want to leave your viewers down, so you do the best job that you can.

Social media and the Internet have contributed to the 24-hour news cycle that exists today. Reporter D said now people are always expecting the latest information on their phones, so, in turn, reporters need to work around the clock to bring the latest information to the audience.

You're asking people to do a lot. You're asking them to be on at all times and I think that's where, that's where the grind, you know, comes from. Sometimes, I call it being on a hamster wheel, you know, where you're always kind of always on.

That feeling of always being on relates to being where the news happens, whenever it does. Reporter E said he “hated” that part of the job.

If there's a press conference they've got to leave, like their daughter's game or something. For me, from my standpoint, especially knowing what the pay was like, it's just no way to live and therefor I cannot advocate it to anybody to go

through it. I think the issues is, I think everybody thinks they'll be the exception to it (...)

Reporter D, who no longer works in sports journalism, said she felt different when she worked as a sports reporter. She said that at first, when she no longer worked in the field, she had to undergo, what she called “urgency detox.” She said that now that she’s in the corporate world she does not have to rush the way she did when she was a reporter. Now, Reporter D said, she has a couple of weeks to work on projects and does not have to finish a project the same day she starts it.

Social media also allows news professionals to reach a wider audience, since it is very easy to “share” the news with others. Out of all the social media sites that exists the participants in this study seemed to only focus on Twitter.

News professionals are now more accessible than ever, since the public can now reach them directly. There is no longer a “barrier” dividing the audience from the news professionals. Social media could be used as a tool for journalists to get tips on stories, but it also opens the door for interaction with the audience, as Reporter B said. He said it would be boring if everyone always agreed with everything he writes. He said it does bother him when people tell him he has fact errors when he knows he does not. He also said it is impossible to make all the readers happy. Now, he said, he just worries about making sure his editors are happy.

But, as Reporter E said, the tweets are not always pleasant, but he said you have to find a way to deal with the situation if it comes up.

I’ve been dealing with it ever since I’ve been in (REDACTED) in (REDACTED) and it’s never pleasant, no matter what. But, it’s also— It’s also, in a way, in one ear out the other and the way I’ve decided to handle it. It’s almost like a Zen-like type thing, but it’s like I handle it. I just immediately just block the person,

because I have— I'm not getting paid to tweet. I'm not getting paid to post on Facebook. If that person wants to troll me, I'm just like, 'OK,' you know.

Reporter E said he is not completely sold on social media as a tool for journalists, especially Twitter. Reporter E said people are at times too quick to judge a tweet, which might not have much context due to the 140-character limit. He said the lack of context could lead to negative consequences for the news professional and could unleash hate from the audience. Reporter E said he even has a name for those who send hateful messages on social media.

I call them Twitter pitchfork mafias where they just go from one target to the next target. I'm sure we can think of examples in the sporting world where somebody tweets something and they're like, 'Oh, we need to have that person fired or suspended' or you know, like the thought police. A self-appointed cultural police and I don't like that stuff. I think— And it's something that I've learned over the last few years, that for me as a business owner, as opposed to a talent, that if I were to say something on Twitter that could lead to a controversy that could then lead to advertising dollars lost, I have to be careful, which I think sucks, but I'm aware of it. I also think there is a lack of context when you only have 140 characters and I think context is so important and I also think due process is so important, as opposed to an automatic conviction over Twitter or Facebook or Instagram or whatever the case might be and I think that has transpired quite a bit over the last couple of years.

But, one participant, Reporter F, had a different take on an angry audience tweeting at news professionals. He said he gets angry tweets from viewers every day. Reporter F, however, said it does not bother him because people are valuing what he said or puts on the sportscast to some degree. Reporter F said he sees why some people are bothered by some tweets from viewers, but he said it just shows they are consuming the content.

One participant gave an interesting take on the notion of "always being on." Reporter H said that because he is a public figure, he needs to be aware of how he acts in public, no matter the circumstances.

The worst part is the commitment to it. You know, you always are there, no matter if you're at work or off work because you always represent that person. So, I can't be in the grocery store pissed off about something because you're always going to be who you are and they'll go, 'Oh, that guy from (REDACTED) is a dick.' So, you always want to come across like everything is happy-go-lucky and it's great.

Lack of Understanding/ Support From Management.

Sports reporters can be as self-driven as possible, still their efforts sometimes fall short due to a lack of support from management. In addition to a support from management, a lack of understanding of what it takes to produce the content can lead to frustration from those creating it, as one participant said.

"I think the frustration comes from management not understanding sports or the importance of sports and try to constantly figure out what it is they want to do and not necessarily what you believe should be done," Reporter H said.

Another participant said it sometimes feels as if management forgets about the sports department and it's up to the sports reporters to make sure they serve their audience to the best of their abilities. Reporter F said management is not engaged enough with the sports department to know what is going on or if something needs more coverage. He said it sometimes feels like he could just not show up to work and management would not notice because they are not supervising the sports department like they do the news department. Reporter F said he is frustrated because management acts as if what the sports department is doing on a daily basis is not important.

One participant said management does need to be more realistic when it comes to expectations from reporters. Reporter D said management sometimes expects too much from reporters, due to being short-staffed.

What I think becomes the issue is balancing how much an individual can give, versus what you're properly staffed to be able to do. You know, we can only do so much and you could be working all the time and I think that's where the burnout comes.

Reporter F said management does not understand how much time it takes to produce the content they put on the air. Reporter F said that even though a highlight for a game might be short in time, the process to put it together took much longer, which he says is something he always reminds his managers.

Analysis

This research study was intended to examine the causes of burnout in sports journalists in a city in the Midwest. At the end of the research, one cannot conclusively say what causes sports journalists in general to burn out. In the market I studied, one can say there are at least five factors that can cause sports journalists to burnout and leave the business: low salary; quality of the product is down; a tough schedule which includes long hours and working on holidays and weekends leads to time away from family and friends; always feeling like they are “on” and receiving hateful messages on social media; and lack of understanding and support from management.

People are different, so the way they react and face these factors differs greatly. The eight journalists interviewed for this research each had different ways of describing these factors. The one common factor in all the journalists interviewed what they said is a way to reduce the effects of burnout: balance. They all agreed burnout is assured if all a journalist focuses on is his or her work and does not leave time to do something other than the job.

An interesting finding that came out of the interviews was the role a reporter’s relationship status plays when it comes to burnout. All the journalists explained that the

hours and requirements to work nights, weekends, and/or holidays could take a toll on the partner and kids. The journalists all said it is important to have a good support system at home to make it as “painless” as possible when missing out on family time or big moments. They all agreed, however, there is nothing that can be done in terms of changing the industry. Reporters will continue to work long hours, including early morning, nights, weekends, and holidays.

Journalists today have to live with the fact that coverage is needed around the clock, which is known as the 24-hour news cycle. All the participants interviewed said it is crucial to have a positive attitude while doing the job. The participants all said they knew what they were getting into before taking a job in media. The participants further expanded on their answer and said they would not change what they are doing. The answers point to the many opportunities the participants experienced while serving as reporters. They all said, however, having a good attitude toward the job is crucial in the sports media business and will help journalists avoid falling victim to burnout.

All the participants said social media was something they had to learn and adapt to in order to use the tools in a way that truly serves the audience. While the participants accept social media as part of the constant evolution of the industry, they do not like that social media sites like Twitter, Periscope, among others, are becoming a key part of the job. Most participants agreed that they can no longer devote the amount of time and effort to what they all consider is the most important part of their job: writing. The participants said the added tasks and importance stressed on social media has led to frustration due to a drop in the quality of the overall product of the news organization. As for “mean tweets,” the participants mostly agreed that are not enjoyable, but that journalists need to

have thick skin and deal with it because negative criticism and personal attacks to journalists from the public have always been there, it is just that the way they launch those attacks is different. The participants, did acknowledge, however, that they are not pleasant and could take a toll on a person, depending on that person's personality. Some participants even said they just block the person on social media.

Participants also said some of the attitudes of those in management lead to frustration. Some of the participants, especially those in television, said sports are not as valued when compared to news. This could be due to having fewer reporters doing sports than doing news or just a lack of interest in sports from management.

Limitations.

This research is limited for a number of reasons. First, the research was conducted in one city. The issues discussed in this research study only reflect those of the people interviewed, which means there could be more that were not brought up by the participants. The participants could have decided to not share some of their thoughts. Also, since there was not a lot of diversity in the participants, the answers could be limited. People of different backgrounds and genders have different experiences and ways of looking at situations. The lack of diversity in this study's participants could reflect that in the answers provided. It is also important to note that the research was based on open-ended questions and the answers are merely the opinions of those who participated in the research. This means that the data is subjective and not objective. It is also important to note the gender and age of the participants interviewed were not taken into account to accurately represent the current ratio in the field of sports journalism.

Future Research.

This research was limited by a number of factors, mainly time and location. Future research could focus on burnout on a bigger scale. It would be interesting to conduct the same study, but focus on Spanish-language media and journalists. This would shed light on whether background and culture play a role in the attitudes of those covering the news or sports.

Conclusion.

Given the wide-range of personalities people can have, there is no absolute way to prevent burnout. Each person is unique and has a way of handling situations, so what might affect one person, might not affect the other. The key ingredient to help avoid falling victim to burnout, however, seems to be balance. The data collected supports what the Conservation of Resources Theory states, meaning that it is important for people make sure they have a healthy combination of positive “resources” to supplement the challenges that arise while working in sports journalism.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been a sports broadcast journalist?
2. What is the best thing about your job?
3. Is there anything you would change about it? What?
4. Do you ever feel frustrated or like you lack the motivation to do your job? When?
Why?
5. How does the city you work in affect your job?
6. How does one go from being a fan of sports to have it be a job?
7. Have you seen any changes in your work responsibilities during your time as a sports broadcast journalist?
8. How do you balance social media with the visual storytelling aspect of your job?
9. How do your emotions behave with the daily grind that comes with your role of being a sports journalist in the workplace?
10. How do your emotions behave when you go out in the streets and people stop to ask you about a team, player or something you wrote or said during a broadcast?

Appendix B: Original Project Proposal

There's no crying in sports journalism: A qualitative study on burnout

Eduardo Gonzalez

University of Missouri

Introduction

I have been working in the field of journalism for about eight years now, including my time as an undergraduate student, the two years I worked after graduating, and now as a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I started in high school when I spent two summers as an intern at a television station in Puerto Rico. I then worked for the student newspaper at Loyola University New Orleans. In New Orleans I also interned for a sports news website and for an arena football team.

Throughout my time in journalism I have seen reporters and other news professionals quit their jobs and pursue something else. I have done extensive reading on the topic of burnout and have talked to journalists about why they decided to leave journalism behind. These experiences have interested me in finding out why some journalists fall victim to burnout and what can be done to prevent it or deal with it.

Society has always craved an escape from the reality one lives in. For many people, sports offer that escape. People, however, react differently to the outcomes of games, which could mean that depending on their level of interest or how attached they feel to a team, will affect how they react to what they are watching.

The way people feel affects how they conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis. If the person is happy, they are more likely to have a positive outlook on life and the tasks they have to complete. On the other hand, someone who is upset or sad will struggle to focus on what they have to do, their emotions will get in the way and impede their progress, which will in turn, have a negative effect on the results.

This qualitative study will examine burnout in sports broadcast journalism and try to find the causes for it. Results will be used to gain a better understanding of sports journalism and how

it affects journalists' emotions, to the point that some quit. Semi-structured interviews will guide the development of my thesis.

Each person, however, is different. Not everyone reacts the same way. Therefore, it is necessary to examine [a wide sample that includes](#) both genders, different backgrounds and different ages. Interestingly, culture also has an impact. Experience has shown me that some countries are more prideful than others when it comes to sporting events. Also, some cities, like New Orleans, have seen the powerful impact sports can have when rebuilding after a major natural disaster. Fans' emotions also have an effect. Highly identified fans are more likely to reach out to [journalists who do](#) not mention a specific team or player in a positive way that would please fans. This could lead to mean tweets and other forms of attacks from fans directed at journalists (Hillman, et. al, 20).

The questions remain: **How does the 24-hour news cycle affect television sports journalist' mental and professional stamina at work? What factors lead to television sports journalists leaving the job and what can newsrooms do change this?**

There have been numerous studies that look at the psychological and emotional effects of fans who attend sporting events or watch them on television. There have also been studies focused on the athletes, but very little research exists on why some television journalists struggle to stick with the sports beat for a long time.

Sports have always been an important part of society. They provide entertainment and distractions from some of the negative news of the world. If sports television journalists, however, are struggling to stay on the beat for a long period of time, then something is going on. Readers and viewers rely on sports television journalists to bring them their sports news on a

daily basis, so it is necessary to see why sports journalists experience this burnout and see if there are any solutions, or remedies to improve the situation.

I want to pursue a career in sports journalism. Therefore, I want to learn about the causes and effects of burnout. More importantly, I want to find ways to deal with burnout so the industry does not lose any talent because of it. This research will hopefully assist newsrooms in dealing with burnout and help keep their newsrooms fully staffed and upbeat.

Professional Skills Component

I will be complete my professional project at a major-market television station in the Midwest. There I will report to the managing editor at the station. I will start June 1 and will work for 14 weeks. During my time there, I will work 30 hours a week performing various tasks necessary to put the show together before the deadlines. The tasks will include editing video, writing scripts, shadowing reporters, among other tasks. I will also attempt to add multimedia components for the website that will target the Hispanic audience. I will provide the committee with transcripts of interviews that will attempt to answer questions related to reporter burnout in sports broadcast journalism. I will code those transcripts to see what themes come up and identify if there are any trends.

The work at the television station will provide details to my research, as I will be working with professionals involved with sports reporting. It will provide me a wealth of knowledge and experience that will complement what I have already learned in school, at KOMU and internships I have completed in the past. It is one thing to learn about journalism in a classroom or in an NBC affiliate owned and operated by the University of Missouri, but working in a professional newsroom in a major city in the United States will provide a network of professional reporters, additional experience in the daily grind of a newsroom without classes in

the way and the opportunity to ask questions to professionals who have been in the profession for years.

The final product of my research will include an array of interviews that will attempt to answer the questions: Why do sports journalists experience burnout? What can sports journalists do to avoid falling victim to burnout?

Dr. Earnest Perry will serve as the Chair of my master's project. I will submit weekly field reports to my committee members.

Theory

I will use S.E. Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory as a basis for my qualitative research. The theory focuses on people's "resources" and how they work in people and how those resources affect people socially (Hobfoll & Lilly, 129). "Hobfoll's COR theory contends that individuals build up resources to assist in dealing with stressful situations (Reinardy, 90).

This theory has been used many times by many researchers. One of those researchers states people store "resources" to help them get through high-stress moments" (Reinardy, 90). The "resources" are anything the person values. People use their "resources" to help them work through tough situations. For this reason, people try to save these resources and use them sparingly, in order to have resources available when they are truly needed (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 108). Journalists say the stress usually comes from job demands and job resources (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 107). The theory plays on a strong relationship between burnout and engagement (Alarcon et al., 213).

There is one resource that may be valuable in minimizing burnout: optimism (Ojedokun, O & Idemudia, ES, 107). By having a positive mind and attitude, people can offset the negative emotions that could lead to burnout. (115). The theory states people are forced to either adapt to

a situation or cope with it to the best of the person's ability (Alarcon et al., 213). The researchers defined coping as the act of minimizing that which causes stress (215). The Conservation of Resources theory's foundation lies in saving and protecting the resources each person has at his or her disposal (Hobfoll & Lilly, 130). It is up to the individual how he or she will adapt or behave in order to maintain a healthy balance and continue working in journalism.

Literature Review

What are these emotions?

Emotions are very powerful. People, events, and things one encounters every day affect them. However, people react differently to different things, therefore, their emotional responses to them will be different. In this study, I will focus on the effects of burnout in sports broadcast journalists. While sports journalists are people, they are a different breed. The emotions most fans experience during a game, do not necessarily apply to working journalists, since they have to remain impartial to produce fair and balanced work. A journalist, by definition has to remain impartial and fair, therefore the emotions fans experience throughout the game, mostly driven by outcomes, do not necessarily affect journalists. Still, other factors affect journalists emotions, to the point that some end up leaving the profession, as a result of burnout (Reinardy, 95).

Emotions are affected by the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) (Kehoe, et al., 863). The researchers found that a wide range of factors triggered the OFC (Kehoe, et al., 867). This understanding of how emotions are triggered and where they come from will help understand how sports can trigger specific emotions in viewers by knowing and understanding the process the mind goes through when people experience different emotions.

Men are from Mars and... Other differences when experiencing emotions

Men and women, for example, react differently to sports. Men tend to be more emotionally attached according to a study by Walter Gantz and Lawrence A. Wenner. They wrote, “Consistent with initial differences in interest, men more frequently reported feeling happy when their team fared well and angry when their team performed poorly” (Gantz & Wenner, 236).

As [with emotions, the effects and causes of burnout depend on gender experienced more burnout than men. Research shows that when talking about married couples, women](#) experience more burnout than men ([Pamuk & Durmus, 171](#)). This shows there are differences in experiences that could lead to similar experiences regarding burnout when looking at it in different areas.

When emotions take over

Mark Dechesne, Jeff Greenberg, Jamie Arndt, and Jeff Schimel focused their study on a theory known as “terror management theory.” It states that some people get really attached to their sports teams and act according to the team’s performance (Dechesne et. al., 814). For example, if the team is winning, the fan feels a sense of pride and glory. On the other hand, if the team is performing poorly, people fall into slumps and become sad or even fall into depression (Dechesne, et. al, 832).

Gender plays a big role in this (Ganz & Wenner, 234). Men and women differ greatly in how they view sports (Ganz & Wenner, 234). They also differ in their reasons for watching them (Ganz et al., 236). Men would watch sports to, among other things; enjoy the excitement it provides (Ganz & Wenner, 236). Women, however, would watch because they saw it as an opportunity to spend time with those who enjoyed watching them (Ganz & Wenner, 236). It was more of a thrill-seeking experience for men, while for women it was more about having an opportunity to interact and mingle with others during the viewing experience. However, most of

the time, women were doing more than one thing while they watched games, like cleaning around the house (Ganz & Wenner, 236). When working as journalists, however, they have to be focused throughout the entire game, with no emotional breaks when the game is close.

Sports journalists can also feel the emotional toll of covering sports (Serazio, 158). They are, however, supposed to keep their emotions in check in order to remain impartial. However, journalists are human beings with emotions, as well, so this is not always easy. The daily grind of covering the emotional roller coaster that sports are can have its effect on them, especially since they have to be constantly checking themselves to remain emotionless and objective. This results in many sports journalists burning out eventually.

Freudenberger was the first to define burnout. He described burnout as a state in which people are physically and emotionally tired and are not motivated (1974). A study by Scott Reinardy found, “The results of burnout can lead to employee turnover, reduction in quality and quantity of work, and conflict in the home and work environment” (398).

Many journalists look for support to help combat negative emotions and avoid falling victim to burnout. One avenue some choose to attain balance and support is marriage. For some couples, marriage provides happiness, children, satisfaction of sexual desires, among other things (Pamuk & Durmus, 163).

Social scientists have found how powerful emotions are that now some journalists are adding emotional elements to their stories in an effort gain more readers. This practice, however, is not popular across the board:

“The traditional ideal of dispassionate factual reporting is not congruent with the view of journalism as emotional-laden storytelling. The conflict between subjective emotions and objective reporting on emotions was resolved, on the one hand, by the rejection of ‘authorial’ emotions (journalists’ own emotions) and ‘artificial’ emotions, as discussed earlier, and, on the other hand, by rejecting journalists’ influence on the emotional effects of reporting” (Pantti, 178).

This was the case in New Orleans, when the professional football team, the Saints, won the Super Bowl in 2009. The city was just four years removed from one of the biggest natural disasters in the country, Hurricane Katrina. Many people, including fans, reporters, and athletes, had lost everything because of it. Morale around the city was low.

More than just sports

Due to the storm, the Saints had to play their home games in a Baton Rouge and San Antonio because the Superdome, which is where the team played, was being used as a shelter for people, and had been damaged by the storm. Michael Serazio discusses how the mind deals with bad memories and traumatic situations. These memories can also be looked at collectively, as the article notes is the case of New Orleans residents with Hurricane Katrina (170).

Serazio explains that the success of the New Orleans Saints in the years following the storm helped fans move past those negative memories by creating positive new ones. To many, the Superdome served as a temporary home as they worked to rebuild their own houses. With the recent success the Saints have enjoyed, even winning the Super Bowl in 2010, the Superdome has now become a “positive” place, rather than a negative one (160).

Method

This [case](#) study will examine how sports reporters handle their workload and the stress that comes with it. I will visit the sports department of a television station in a mid-sized market in the Midwest to conduct field semi-structured interviews. I will attempt to interview between five to 10 reporters. The interview participants will include reporters currently in the industry, as well as those who have left due to burnout. [The interviews will allow me to better understand how journalists feel in the newsroom and how each journalist handles the stress that comes with the job \(Davies, 3\).](#) I will conduct my research as I am completing [my professional project](#). I will

stay at the location observing and conducting interviews until I have reached saturation in the answers provided, which result in data. Once I notice no new data or categories are emerging, I will stop interviewing people and begin analyzing the data more in depth.

The interviews with reporters who work for traditional media outlets will be semi-structured, as I will have a set of questions I want to ask, but will allow room for additional questions that may come up during the actual interview (Tracy, 140).

The semi-structured interviews will facilitate the data collection process by allowing me to effectively paint a clear picture of what the newsroom environment is like. The interviews will then build on that data by digging a little deeper and providing some context to some of the observations made. This will also help me better understand the newsroom, the reporters and the stress they experience (Everbach, 482).

I will attempt to have the interviews take place at two locations: the newsroom and anywhere outside the newsroom. The newsroom will provide a comfortable setting for the reporter and will also allow me to observe how they react the deadline-pressure taking place around them. This will also allow me to pay attention to some of the non-verbal communication emitted by the reporters in the newsroom. I will take notes during the interviews in order to be able to preserve the rich detail of the answers provided, which will later assist me when writing the results and analysis. The interviews outside the newsroom will provide a different atmosphere for the interviewee, away from the deadline-pressured atmosphere of the newsroom. This will allow me to compare behaviors and answers to the questions. The idea is to see if their surrounding atmosphere influences their answers. One setting, the newsroom, will be a high-stress environment, while the other location will be one of low stress, where the person can sit and just talk (Johansson, 404).

In order to respect and ensure the participants' confidentiality, I will keep the field notes, transcripts, recordings, and any other data collected during the process in a safe, locked location. The transcripts will be redacted to not include details that could lead to a journalist being identified. This will lead to trust from the participants, who will feel more comfortable with the process and more at ease to act as naturally as possible when someone is observing them and as truthful as possible when answering question during interviews. I will also assign codes for each participant. Those involved in the study will be assigned letters so that their identities remain confidential to any who read the final report.

While conducting the interviews, I may come across information that could affect the person's work status. Some information about their mental or emotional state may come up. In order to ensure the employees job security I will not publish any names, nor will I force anyone to talk about anything they do not wish to share. I will not limit my interviews to those at the station I will be doing my professional project in. I will expand my pool by requesting access and permission to interview other sports journalists in the area. I will also inform the participants that they are in control of the interview and are not obligated to answer all of my questions, especially those they are uncomfortable with.

If there are any questionable actions observed or answers during the interview, I will address them with the participant in order to clarify any misunderstandings. This will also help achieve the overall goal of the research, which is to help present the truth and make a contribution to knowledge and address the problem of burnout in sports broadcast journalism. As far as the data goes, everything will be anonymous, and no names will be used. Reporters will be assigned a "code" pertaining to a letter in the alphabet, known only to the researcher, in order to

ensure their privacy. This code will be used during the observations and interviews. No one should ever be in danger throughout this investigation.

Once I have gathered my data, I will proceed to code it. I will go through the field notes of the observations and find themes that come up. I will then divide the themes into groups. This will allow for fairness when evaluating and analyzing the data. Only data of the same theme will be compared, allowing for fairness, since they will be judged and evaluated using the same criteria. This will also help paint a better picture that will be essential for the “results” section. In an effort to be fair, I will also group the interviews and observations based on the time of day they were performed. Since reporters work at different times during the day, these time frames will not be based on actual time, in other words, the one a clock reads, but will be based on the person’s shift. I will instead make statements in relation to the time when compare to their shift, such as, one hour into his or her shift, or after the person had lunch, etc. This will even the playing field and make it more accurate when talking about reporters who work the morning or evening shifts. To help answer my research questions I will base the coding on specific words sports broadcast journalists’ say during the interviews.

During the data collection process, interview responses will be coded accordingly in a way that will be clear and effective. One copy of the transcribed interviews will include highlighted portions. I will use pink to signal words that deal with positive emotions and yellow to signal words that deal with negative emotions. This will allow for a more effective approach when writing the findings and analysis. I will pay attention to key words in responses like “excited,” “anxious,” “sad,” among other similar words that point to emotional effects that could lead to burnout (Gantz, W et al., 111).

The interpretation of the data will be based on my prior experience in the field of sports journalism and my education in the field. I have a bachelors degree in journalism and worked two years in a television station in the south, which have provided a wealth of experiences and understanding of different situations. They will also be based on the interviews conducted with the participants. The data will be grouped into common themes that come up in the research. All of the conclusions and analysis will be based on the fieldwork conducted and the literature read during the process. This data will help answer the key questions posed in the introduction. The research and results will aim to answer why sports reporters are affected emotionally by their jobs and why some experience burnout and ultimately leave the field. The data will also be determined by constant repetition of results. Once there has been saturation, I will know the data is more reliable, since it has been repeated throughout the research. I will be looking for trends and similarities in the research in order to effectively and efficiently answer the research questions. The themes observed or identified in the interviews will help paint a better and clearer picture of what leads to those emotional and psychological effects on sports broadcast journalists.

This study will obviously not look into everything that affects sports broadcast journalists' emotions. Since this study will be conducted over the summer, I will have considerably less time to gather data and analyze it. The lack of time will also hinder my opportunities to dig deeper into some of the findings. This will obligate me to focus on the main issues that come up during the investigation, and not so much on the ones that are not as common in the participants.

The method I will use, semi-structured interviews, will also present limitations to the study. I will be subject only to the words spoken only when I am present. Also, people behave

differently when they know they are being observed and interviewed. I will have to be extremely patient and careful not to rush to judgment when I find something of value using this method. I will have to take time to explore it and see if there is a pattern, if it is an anomaly or if the person truly thinks in a way the data suggests. This can be especially tricky since the subject matter is something people may have a hard time or concerns talking about.

Granting anonymity

This research will rely solely on semi-structured interviews with reporters of traditional media in a major-market city in the Midwest. To ensure the privacy of those people who are interviewed as part of the research, I will assign a letter to the reporter. I will also redact parts of the interview transcripts that could lead to a reporter being identified.

Appendix

Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been a sports broadcast journalist?
2. What is the best thing about your job?
3. Is there anything you would change about it? What?
4. Do you ever feel frustrated or like you lack the motivation to do your job? When? Why?
5. How does the city you work in affect your job?
6. How does one go from being a fan of sports to have it be a job?
7. Have you seen any changes in your work responsibilities during your time as a sports broadcast journalist?
8. How do you balance social media with the visual storytelling aspect of your job?
9. How do your emotions behave with the daily grind that comes with your role of being a sports journalist in the workplace?
10. How do your emotions behave when you go out in the streets and people stop to ask you about a team, player or something you wrote or said during a broadcast?

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