

Public Abstract

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Title:Moving Up or Moving Out: New Job Demands, Ability to Cope and Burnout Among Television News Producers and Executive Producers

The television news industry is going through significant economic and technological changes. Diminishing advertising revenue in a recessed economy is causing media companies to reduce the workforce through layoffs or attrition. At the same time, new technological advances are making it possible for media companies to consolidate jobs, thereby increasing the work performed by individuals. These changes are affecting the ways in which television journalists work and their relationships with their work. This study examines the effects of work stressors and perception of job satisfaction among local television news producers and executive producers. Television journalists from five television markets (cities) were interviewed for the study. A comparison of the symptoms of burnout to the responses of study participants reveals the struggle against burnout. Further an examination of job demand and control over work yields an eye opening view of the high-demand nature of television news. The journalists struggle, in many cases, with the demands of long hours, heavy workload and a fast-paced work environment. Many of the journalists are buoyed by a positive attitude toward their work and a genuine love of news work. The study also looked at whether veteran journalists coped better with stress. In this case, there was no discernible link between longevity and effectiveness of coping mechanisms. The results of this study point to a developing problem in the television news industry, potential economic gains at the expense of the working lives of producers and executive producers. Decreased resources and increased workload may become a formula for job stress in which burnout is the end result.