

TO QUIT OR NOT TO QUIT:
VOLUNTARY TURNOVER AMONG MILLENNIAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE
JOURNALISTS IN INDONESIA

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ENGLISH-LANGUAGE JOURNALISTS IN INDONESIA

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Indah Setiawati

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia in order to understand why young journalists leave their news organization or journalism altogether. It also examines the motivation to stay and the intention to leave among the current journalists.

Using grounded theory, this study used semi-structured interviews with 18 participants from three Jakarta-based news organizations. The journalists left because of a combination of complaints such as burnout, declining journalism standards, management, mentorship, pay and transparency, personal growth, fit, problem with supervisor, and training. Meanwhile, the stayers still maintained their job because they felt that they were still on track with their career and personal goals. However, seven out of eight millennial journalists plan to quit, with three contemplating on leaving the profession. This means that news organizations will possibly lose institutional memory and may have to frequently make new hires. Elements of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were layers that could increase or decrease depending on what the participants felt about their experience and expectation in the news organization, as well as their career and personal goals. The findings indicate that news organizations need to listen to the feedback from their employees to make transformation in managing their personnel, especially in retaining talented millennials.

Chapter One: Introduction

Young journalists and their practical and technological knowledge are valuable human resources at a time when legacy media platforms like newspapers need to cater to the insatiable appetite of online readers. However, this researcher, a deputy editor taking unpaid leave from *The Jakarta Post* during the time of this study, observed that her newspaper, the only English-language newspaper in Indonesia, lost around 20 “millennial” journalists and editors since 2016. Over this period, the newsroom management was mulling over how to apply a digital-first policy to adapt to the changing reading habits of readers. The *Post*’s situation prompted the researcher to reflect on the voluntary turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Nezar Patria, Chief Editor of the *Post*, said voluntary turnover among young journalists also happened to other legacy media companies such as *Tempo* group and *Kompas* daily. The *Post*’s journalists who resigned and moved to other media companies or non-media companies generally were offered twice their old salary, he said. According to Patria, “the new generation who resigned during the past couple of years – they generally went to start-ups – might no longer believe that the mainstream media industry could prosper them” (N. Patria, personal communication, April 24, 2019). Previous research indicates that pay is a major factor in determining job satisfaction among Indonesian journalists (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012).

As the largest member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in terms of population and geographical size, Indonesia is often considered to be the leader of the regional organization (Emmers, 2014). Local prominent news companies such as

Kompas, Tempo, Republika, The Jakarta Post and *Jakarta Globe* have been offering English-language news services to attract foreign and domestic readers and to present Indonesians' perspective in the country's "mediation of its global image" (Carpenter & Ekdale, 2019, p. 140). English-language journalists in Indonesia have three public service functions: "promoting regional unity within ASEAN, providing a two-way window between Indonesia and the globe, and giving Indonesian readers tools they can use to integrate themselves into global and regional imaginaries" (Carpenter & Ekdale, 2019, p. 148). However, despite the importance of the English-language journalists' public service function, there is a deficiency of studies focusing on voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among this population of journalists. A chapter about Indonesian journalists in Weaver and Wilnat's (2012) *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century* discussed their characteristics and some facets of job satisfaction but did not specifically focus on English-language journalists, a much smaller community compared to Indonesian journalists working in Indonesian-language press.

Studying voluntary turnover among millennial English-language journalists is important for four reasons. First, the voluntary turnover in an English-language publication in Indonesia shows a challenge faced by local companies that compete with international organizations and foreign news agencies for talent. Second, the researcher has observed the negative effects of newsroom turnover, which vary from losing key journalists covering complex issues such as national politics, business, and international affairs to spending a great deal of time training newcomers. Empirical research to substantiate these observations is warranted. Third, turnover can be epidemic as leavers share their complaints, which can influence the stayers (Roseman, 1981). In addition,

“there’s the cost of losing institutional memory for an organization that aims to be a type of community historian” (Klepper, 2006, p. 53). With a tight talent market, voluntary turnover among English-language journalists can develop into a problem that can affect the productivity and morale of employees who remain in the newsroom.

Employees who quit tend to state that they have received a better opportunity or higher pay rather than taking a risk of burning a bridge with former managers, a tendency suggesting that pay complaints may occur in tandem with other concerns (Branham, 2012; Roseman, 1981). This study will not only be useful for the management of English-language news companies in this study, but also to other news organizations having problems with retention that are looking for a way to improve employees’ working environment and motivation.

Studies of journalists’ job satisfaction have tried to answer a growing concern among newsroom management about the departure of news people to other jobs (see, e.g., Johnstone et al., 1976; Reinardy, 2009, 2017; Samuelson, 1962; Willnat et al., 2013, 2017). Though it may be tempting to attribute newsroom attrition to journalism’s much-documented recent financial woes (Waisbord, 2019), older research has found that between one-fifth and one-quarter of all journalists between twenty-five and thirty-four either decide to leave or question their commitment to remain (Johnstone et al., 1976). A more recent longitudinal study on occupational change in journalism in the U.S. indicates how the industry is losing young talent supposed to be on the front line of the digital growth. According to this study, American journalists increasingly felt dissatisfied with their pay (Willnat et al., 2017). Despite having a long-standing resentment against public relations practitioners, many journalists switch to public relations because it offers a

higher income and provides an escape from the infamous poor working conditions in their newsrooms, which include long working hours and lack of job security (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003; Viererbl & Koch, 2019).

However, most of the previous literature focused on U.S. newspaper journalists, not journalists in Indonesia, the largest economy in Southeast Asia and fourth most populous country in the world. Unlike U.S. journalists, whose freedoms of speech and press are protected by the First Amendment (Dyk, 1992), Indonesian journalists have to navigate the intricacy of reporting under various authorities and laws that repeatedly try to limit their freedom of expression while maintaining a western ideology of journalistic values (Garcia, 2006; Manzella, 2000). During the New Order period, which marked the 32 years ruling of second president Soeharto from 1966 to 1998, print journalists often used unique strategies such as employing indirectness and politeness in their writing, a typical Javanese means of negotiation (Manzella, 2000). Until 1998, “the act of being a journalist in Indonesia often has been an act of social adventurism and courage” (Manzella, 2000, p. 325).

After being suppressed with heavy censorship by the government, Indonesian media began to flourish after the fall of Soeharto, a former military general (Tapsell, 2015). The country eventually enjoyed press freedom after its third president, B. J. Habibie, signed the 1999 Press Law, which eliminated state control of print media by getting rid of the “Permit to Publish” and the “Permit to Print” previously issued by the Ministry of Information (Steele, 2012). This withdrawal of political restrictions triggered an expansive demand for young and qualified journalists as the number of news outlets sharply increased (Hanitzsch, 2005). However, the burgeoning number of journalists,

which tripled from 5,000 in 1997 to 15,000 in 2003, created an oversupply that weakened wages and inspire corruption as a source of income among journalists (Garcia, 2014). By 2016, smaller, independent media companies started to suffer from the rise of the digital penetration and had been forced to sell to a larger media conglomerate (Tapsell, 2017).

Today, journalism in Indonesia still lacks protection as law enforcement keeps using the Criminal Code to prosecute journalistic publishers instead of using the 1999 Press Law in civil libel or even pornography cases (Garcia, 2006; Pausacker, 2012). The Indonesian government still tries to control freedom of expression online through the 2008 Electronic Transactions and Information Law, which makes online comments deemed as defamatory punishable with a maximum sentence of six years in prison and fines of up to Rp 1 billion (USD 67,957) (Tapsell, 2017). The changing environment and existing challenges in the industry makes it important to understand how journalists in Indonesia make decisions on whether to stay or to quit their organization or profession.

This study will contribute to a growing body of scholarship on job satisfaction in journalism and provide more insight into young English-language journalists in Indonesia, a country of nearly 270 million people. Using qualitative methods, this study will also contribute to the breadth of knowledge about the topic as the researcher will provide an in-depth look at the voluntary turnover. One of the strengths of qualitative methods is the ability to help researchers capture the authenticity of human experience (Silverman, 2010). This study will not only provide a meaningful discussion that will broaden our understanding about voluntary turnover among English-language journalists in Indonesia, but also present a scientific report that will rely on “concepts and theories to analyze and interpret key findings” (Brennen, 2017, p. 23).

The two-factor theory of job satisfaction – popularly known as *motivation-hygiene theory* (Herzberg et al., 1959) – helps to explain aspects of voluntary turnover among the millennial journalists, but this study is not entirely reliant on this theory. Rather, the researcher aims to develop a grounded theory that can explain voluntary turnover among millennial English-language journalists. Since the millennial generation may have different preferences to their predecessors in terms of workplace expectations, such as team-based workstyle, flexible work locations, and work-life balance (Martin, 2005), there is a need to incorporate new theories such as the unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994) and job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Herzberg (1968) explained that his hygiene concept was “an analogue to the principles of medical hygiene” (p. 113), in which people need to take some preventive actions to avoid illness. The theory identifies 10 *hygiene factors* key to job satisfaction: *administration and company policy, personal life, relationships with peers, relationship with supervisor, relationships with subordinates, salary, security, status, supervision, and work conditions*. When these factors fall below the employees’ acceptable standard, job dissatisfaction and low morale will follow. Meanwhile, six *motivation factors* make people stay in the organization: *achievement, advancement, growth, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself*. Both hygiene and motivation serve the need of employees, with hygiene serving as the basic biological needs and motivation serving as psychological growth that foster job satisfaction.

This research will also combine some predictors of job satisfaction found in other research (see, e.g., Samuelson, 1962; Spector, 1997; Reinardy, 2009; Willnat et al., 2017)

to construct a list of interview questions that investigates job satisfaction among millennial journalists in an Indonesian newsroom setting. The researcher will also design interview questions that expands the possibility of finding new factors that influence job satisfaction and cause voluntary turnover among the millennial journalists, reflecting the emergent characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Grounded theory will be used in analyzing relationships between concepts that emerge from the interviews with the millennial journalists. This method – and its constant comparative analytical tools – allow the researcher to develop theory grounded in the data that has been systematically gathered and analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

In selecting participants, “millennial” journalists will be defined as those who were born between 1982 and 2000 (Howe & Strauss, 2000), so the oldest journalists interviewed for this study will be around 38 years old in 2020, the year of data collection. I do not claim that this cutoff point is definitive as there is much disagreement among scholars on how generations are defined (see, e.g., Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Dimock, 2019; Howe & Strauss, 2000). Rather, it serves as a tool to differentiate the characteristics and preferences of millennials, which are different from the previous generations in the workplace (Ng, 2010). Growing up with digital interaction, research suggests that millennials prefer job environments that are fun, embrace flexible working locations, informal use of space, non-hierarchical teamwork, digital environment, social learning, and frequent feedback (Bennett et al., 2012; Trees, 2015).

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study is to learn about newsroom turnover among millennial journalists who work or worked for *The Jakarta Post*, *Jakarta Globe*, and

Tempo English in Indonesia in order to learn why millennial English-language journalists tend to leave their organization (or leave journalism altogether). While some of the leavers still work as journalists and editors, others have embarked on new careers as public relation practitioners, business consultants, and freelancers. Another purpose of this study is to learn the stayers' motivation to stay and whether they have the intention to leave the organization or journalism altogether. Using grounded theory, this research can develop a new construct that can explain turnover among English-language journalists in Indonesia.

Preview of Chapters

The literature review (Chapter Two) will also discuss how voluntary turnover would negatively affect organizations and how the changes in the industry and the news companies affect journalists' perceptions on the quality of their daily work. The method section (Chapter Three) will further discuss the grounded theory, which will help formulating a new theory about voluntary turnover among English-language journalists in Indonesia. The findings section (Chapter Four) will show how the combination of complaints such as mentorship, pay, and personal growth contribute to the leavers' decision to quit the news organizations and journalism. It will also present other key findings such as high intention to leave among the stayers. Finally, the discussion section (Chapter Five) will talk about how news organizations need to regularly check whether the institution still match their journalists' expectations and goals. It will also discuss how this study contributes to the literature of voluntary turnover among journalists.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter defines the key concepts guiding the study and discusses prior scholarly findings that will inform the study's research questions. First, it reviews literature on voluntary turnover, the definition and two types of turnover, and why this phenomenon matters for organizations. Second, it will discuss relevant theories and definitions of job satisfaction, one of the most frequently studied psychological variables related to voluntary turnover and in organizational behavior research (Mobley et al., 1979; Spector, 1997). It will also explain the contribution of Herzberg's two-factor theory in explaining voluntary turnover. Third, it will discuss job satisfaction in journalism by reviewing the literature on job satisfaction of journalists in the United States and later focusing on the literature about journalists in Indonesia.

Voluntary Turnover

Considered to be one of the most studied behaviors in management research (Griffeth et al., 2000), turnover has been a topic of interest among scholars and practitioners for almost a century since the founding of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* in 1917 (Hom et al., 2017). In the United States, turnover has been succinctly defined as termination of an employment in an institution (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). We can also describe it as "the degree of individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system" (Price, 1977, p. 4). The literature generally describes two types of turnover based on the part of the organization that decides to terminate the job. It is called *voluntary turnover* when the separation or the movement is initiated by the individual and *involuntary turnover* when the separation or movement is

initiated by the organization (Price, 1977). Terms used to express voluntary turnover include “quitting” and “resigning,” while terms used to express turnover initiated by organizations include “dismissals,” “layoffs,” and “early retirements” (Price, 1977).

Media and entertainment (including journalism), ranked third in the list of industries with the highest employee turnover rate worldwide, reaching 11 percent in 2018 (LinkedIn, 2018). This study is concerned with voluntary turnover for three reasons. First, it can be expensive to the organization, especially when losing skillful and knowledgeable key employees (Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Among those who leave may be “informal leaders,” of which departure can negatively affect working groups (Roseman, 1981). The direct costs to the organization can be traced to the processes of selecting, recruiting, background checking, testing, interviewing and training new employees, while the indirect costs include the cost of loss of productivity during the adjustment period of the new recruits (Dessler, 2015). Second, some employees may truthfully reveal their reasons to quit, but some may not because they may still need to maintain a good relationship with the former management to get references or perhaps to make future collaborations (Brenham, 2012). Third, dissatisfied employees who are leaving may share their complaints, which may inspire others to quit too (Roseman, 1981).

There have been various approaches to understand employee turnover. In sum, psychologically-oriented researchers tend to approach this phenomenon from the internal factors within the employee or problems within the organization, while scholars of organizational behavior have tried to explain the links among job-related perceptions, job attitudes, intention to quit, and actual turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Voluntary turnover remains a popular topic in the fields of human resource management, sociology,

organizational behavior, leadership, and psychology (Clegg, 1983; Hom et al., 2017; Sun & Wang, 2017), generating over 1,500 published articles on the subject for over 50 years (Holtom et al., 2008). Scholars have been investigating voluntary turnover in various groups of employment, from low-skill service workers (Ellingson et al., 2016) to executives (Andrus et al., 2019).

A theory of voluntary turnover focused on *job satisfaction* to explain the desirability of movement and *job alternatives* to understand the ease of movement (March & Simon, 1958). This is similar to popular “push and pull” factors in voluntary turnover with job satisfaction as the push factor that comes from the company, and job alternatives as the pull factor that come from outside the company. Mobley (1977) theorized a linear model consisting of 10 steps to explain the resignation decision process:

evaluation of existing job → job dissatisfaction → thinking of quitting →
evaluation of expected utility of search and cost of quitting → intention to search
→ search for alternatives → evaluation of alternatives → comparison of
alternative versus current job → intention to quit or stay → quit or stay.

In explaining the fourth process, how individuals measure the future potential of their current job in comparison to the job alternative, Mobley et al. (1979) presented a concept called *attraction expected utility*. An example of this would be an employee who is satisfied with the job he or she does for now but does not foresee career growth in the job. Later, scholars started to further explore the relationship between job attitudes or job satisfaction and turnover, and tested theories of work motivation (Hom et al., 2017). A

theory that got much attention was the motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), which will be discussed in more detail later.

The next important contribution to the voluntary turnover theory is the birth of two modern constructs called the unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994) and job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). These two latest approaches will also be used in this study to help understand the voluntary turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia. The unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover tries to explain why people leave their job by highlighting the interaction between individual variables, such as personal values, and situational variables, such as shocks and the circumstances in which they occur (Lee, 1999; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Meanwhile, job embeddedness, a similar construct to job satisfaction, is like “a net or a web” that creates attachments, such as links to other people, perceptions of their fit with job, organization, and community, and what sacrifices they will make if they quit (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1104).

Building on the unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover, Maertz & Campion (2004) suggested four types of decision processes an individual could make in quitting a job: Impulsive quitters (individuals who quit with no job alternatives), comparison quitters (individuals attracted by alternative jobs), preplanned quitters (individuals who plan to quit in advance), and conditional quitters (individuals who do not see a future in the current organization and plan to quit if certain conditions happen). The study concluded that impulsive quitters would most negatively affect the organization because of its sudden nature (Maertz & Campion, 2004).

From the previous literature, we can see how scholars tried to explicate individual and situational factors that led to voluntary turnover and how job satisfaction sat within this inquiry. Next, we will discuss the link between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory that is used as one of the approaches to guide this study.

Job Satisfaction and Motivation-hygiene Theory

Studies show that job satisfaction and employee turnover have a causal link and are negatively correlated (Mobley, 1977; Mobley et al., 1979; Reukauf, 2018; Spector 1997; Ward, 1988). When job satisfaction among employees is high, voluntary turnover tends to be low. Therefore, management needs to retain key employees by paying attention to their job satisfaction because doing so “creates confidence, loyalty and ultimately improved quality in the output of the employed” (Tietjen & Myers, 1998, p. 226).

Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are “a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing” (Locke, 1968, p. 10). They are “complex emotional reactions to the job” (p. 7). We can also consider job satisfaction as “a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various facets of the job” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). A pioneering study of emotional relationships in the workplace derived the “Hawthorne Effect” (Mayo, 1933). During the experiment, a team of researchers adjusted some environmental condition such as the lighting and measured the impact on workers’ productivity in Western Electric telephone manufacturing factory at Hawthorne, Illinois. The workers responded positively every time the lighting was adjusted, but when the

lighting was returned to the original condition, the workers' output still increased, which showed that changing the lighting did not influence productivity. This study concluded that workers would respond positively when they were being observed and when thinking that managers were showing attention by asking for their feedback. In other words, organizations should have a genuine motive to improve the working condition when conducting a job satisfaction survey in the company because it could build some expectations among the employees (Spector, 1997).

A popular and foundational theory used to understand job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the two-factor theory, also called motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). This theory debunked a traditional belief that pay would increase job satisfaction. Herzberg and his associates asked 203 engineers and accountants to describe a time when they felt exceptionally good or when they felt exceptionally bad about their job (Herzberg et al., 1959). They found that factors contributing to job dissatisfaction, later called the hygiene factors, were not the same as factors contributing to satisfaction, later called the motivation factors. The 10 hygiene factors are *administration and company policy, personal life, relationships with peers, relationship with supervisor, relationships with subordinates, salary, security, status, supervision, and work conditions*. When these factors were not fulfilled, job dissatisfaction, poor job attitudes, and low morale would follow. However, if the hygiene factors were well executed, it did not necessarily mean that the employees would display job satisfaction, positive attitudes, or advancement because "all we can expect from satisfying the needs for hygiene is the prevention of dissatisfaction and poor job performance" (Herzberg et al., 1959, p. 115). This means that even if a manager raises everybody's income, he or she is just taking a

short-term action to prevent the employees from having job dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, motivation identified intrinsic factors. The six motivation factors are *achievement, advancement, growth, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself*. Both hygiene and motivation serve the need of employees, with hygiene serving as the basic biological needs and motivation serving as the psychological growth that fosters job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). The theory also underlined that hygiene factors fed the need for fair treatment, while motivation factors fed the need for creativity (Herzberg et al., 1959).

This theory received criticism from psychologists who argued that both hygiene and motivation factors could serve as the source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction depending on the individuals (Locke, 1979), that motivation factors were the most important sources of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Ewen, Smith, & Hulin, 1966), and that the theory was difficult to test (King, 1970). A study of engineers and foremen in Thailand also calls into question the theory's applicability to certain work settings such as a construction company (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003).

Despite these criticisms, motivation-hygiene theory remains a popular framework to understand that pay is employees' fundamental need, and that employees need psychological growth to stay in the job. Building on motivation-hygiene theory, Spector (1997) designed a "Job Satisfaction Survey" that consisted of 36 questions to diagnose problems in the job or employees that requires attention. Motivation-hygiene theory has been applied to studies of turnover intention and job satisfaction with various work settings and demographics, such as in small businesses in western New York (Reukauf, 2018), motivation factors among Ghanaian workers (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011), a Korean army foodservice operation (Hyun & Oh, 2011), business students in higher

education (DeShields et al., 2005), public and private companies (Maidani, 1991), and, of particular concern to this study, U.S. newspaper journalists (Reinardy, 2009) and U.S. Latino journalists (Flores & Subervi, 2014).

Besides being used in various studies and countries, this theory is also quoted in university textbooks such as *Human Resource Management* (Dessler, 2018) and *Introduction to Business* (Gitman et al., 2018). It helps identify the sources of long-term happiness, which are the aspects that lead to psychological growth (Sachau, 2007). A survey suggested that in fostering employees to contribute ideas, the desire to solve problems and to become a part of organizational success are more effective than financial reward and recognition (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). The motivation-hygiene theory remains applicable in a sense that employees cannot find satisfaction by denying their basic needs (Sachau, 2007). This theory needs to be revisited and extended to English-speaking journalists in Indonesia because although it gives an idea on why people are satisfied or dissatisfied in the workplace, it is not an absolute conclusion.

Job Satisfaction in Journalism

Studies of job satisfaction among journalists have been conducted in many nations with various variables, mostly using survey methods (see, e.g., Barret, 1984; Ileri, 2016; Klepper, 2006; Pollard, 1995; Reinardy, 2009, 2012, 2017; Willnat et al., 2013, 2017). Such studies examine how various predictors, such as job autonomy, job security, organizational structure, and organizational support, can influence journalists' job satisfaction. Some findings from these studies include the tendency of younger journalists to have a career change within five years, journalists being dissatisfied with pay,

complaints regarding the incompatibility between journalistic ideals and daily practices, poor relationship with management, and lack of training opportunities.

Job satisfaction among U.S. journalists

There have been extensive studies of job satisfaction among U.S. journalists (see, e.g., Johnstone et al., 1976; Reinardy, 2009, 2012, 2017; Samuelson, 1962; Willnat et al., 2017). The earliest inquiries on the newsroom turnover in the U.S. can be dated to 1958 when Stanford University researchers initiated a series of questionnaires to measure job satisfaction in the newsroom as a response to the migration of editorial workers into other jobs (Samuelson, 1962). A questionnaire on 14 aspects of editorial work was developed, which included 13 attitudinal areas of job satisfaction and one on salary. The questionnaires were organized around five attitude clusters, namely faith in the future of newspaper journalism, satisfaction inherent in personal duties, formal relations with management, the congeniality of the employing newspaper, and the quality of leadership. The survey involved 223 respondents, 72 of whom had left the journalism profession for other jobs. Samuelson (1962) found that those who had left the profession significantly rated themselves as underpaid. Respondents in Samuelson's study also saw newspaper work as ranked low by outsiders and they were also dissatisfied with the quality of leadership of their supervisors. This study primarily focused on the sources of discontent to suggest what action could be taken to improve retention. However, Samuelson did not study the sources of happiness among employees, which is another important area related to employee retention.

In a more recent study, journalists believe that they are departing away from their normative functions because they have to adjust themselves with various forces that are

happening in their newsrooms and the industry, such as layoffs, increasing demands to produce more clickbait stories over in-depth reporting, and economic pressure (Siegelbaum & Thomas, 2016). The gap between what journalists believe to be their professional calling and what they actually practice in their daily work has a negative impact on their organizational commitment (Pihl-Thingvad, 2014). Those who are contemplating to leave complained about diminished journalistic standards and the practice of sacrificing journalistic integrity for increased profit and higher readership (Reinardy, 2009). In a subsequent study, Reinardy (2011) found that a majority of journalists aged 34 and younger who intended to leave cited salary, schedule, burnout, and family life as reasons why they may leave journalism.

A tendency for younger journalists to change careers also showed up in a national survey involving 1,100 U.S. journalists in 2013, which is a continuation of a series of studies conducted in 1982, 1992, and 2002 by researchers from Indiana University (Willnat et al., 2017). In 2013 survey, around 29 percent of journalists with four years of experience intended to leave the field within five years, increasing from 24 percent reported in the previous national survey in 2002 and 19 percent reported in 1992 survey (Willnat et al., 2017). Journalists with less than 10 years of experience expressed similar complaints to their seniors, citing pay, inadequate staffing, staff layoffs, and inadequate resources. Pay becomes a larger predictor of dissatisfaction in this study, cited by 44 percent of the leavers. Previously, in the 1982 survey, the salary level did not appear to be a predictor of job satisfaction for those under the age of 40, but by 1992, it became a significant predictor (Willnat et al., 2017).

It should be noted that during the 2013 survey across the U.S. (Willnat et al., 2017), the economics of journalism had to evolve to survive the slumping advertising model and the force of the third industrial revolution, a new paradigm that explains how the Internet technology and renewable energies merge to create a new infrastructure that will replace the fossil-fuel driven industrial revolution (Rifkin, 2011). Online advertising funding is dominated by Google and Facebook as well as other platforms outside journalism, and without strong financial backbone, it will be harder to produce high-quality stories (Waisbord, 2019). Although some Indonesian news companies have used paywalls to generate income, young people in the country and around the world have been used to reading news for free, hence their presence in social media is only aimed at getting more clicks that can attract advertisement (Tapsell, 2017). Since experiments with new business models could not yet yield significant results, “journalism became more vulnerable today to corporate whims and the structural disruptions of capitalist economies” (Waisbord, 2019, p. 210). As a result, many news organizations closed or consolidated, resulting in job layoffs and job insecurities among journalists.

Job satisfaction among journalists in Indonesia

The previous studies on job satisfaction among journalists focused on the United States, but a few studies have investigated other countries. For example, among a handful of cross-national studies related to this topic is a 2012 study in 31 countries that assesses the journalists’ demographics, education, socialization, professional attitudes and working conditions (Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Of particular relevance are those studies focusing on Indonesia. One of the studies found that Indonesian journalists’ commitment to their profession remains high despite

having low salaries and difficult working conditions (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012). This finding was similar to the findings of a study of the job satisfaction of Kenyan journalists who were proud of their job but unhappy with their salary (Ireru, 2016). Despite the poor working conditions, the majority of respondents or 81.7 percent did not intend to leave the profession in the near future and only a handful of planned to move to public relations (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012). In terms of demography, Indonesian journalists were an average age of 35 years old and had a higher education compared to other citizens. The study also examined respondents' job satisfaction as an important factor of the perceived quality of working conditions. It found that 77 percent of the respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their working conditions while only 23 percent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. The biggest predictors of job satisfaction were pay and job security, considered to be very important by more than 80 percent of respondents. The moderate predictors were job freedom, career opportunities, and having the opportunity to specialize. The study found that editorial policy, the opportunity to help people, and a chance to influence public opinion were not priority predictors.

The high level of job satisfaction among the Indonesian journalists leaves some questions about whether the majority of the respondents were Javanese since the majority of news organizations are located on Java island, occupied by more than 60 percent of the country's 270 million citizens. According to this researcher's experience, Javanese people generally live by a philosophical concept called "*nrima ing pandum*," which can be translated as gratitude for one's fortune. In relation to pay, people practicing this concept generally do not question what they have although they know that others may receive a better salary because *nrima ing pandum* means accepting the result of our hard

work without grumbling (Ferdiawan & Putra, 2013). It can also be interpreted as giving our best and leaving the rest to God's hands (Widayanti, 2011).

Such a life philosophy may influence how journalists answer questions related to job satisfaction, so it will be interesting to involve journalists from a more diverse background of ethnicities. Or, drawing from the similarity to the study on Kenyan journalists (Ireru, 2016), perhaps there are other significant reasons that make the journalists stay in the profession despite low pay and difficult working conditions. Furthermore, Hanitzsch and Hidayat (2012) conducted a nationwide study in Indonesia and did not focus on young journalists working for English-language publications that served local and international audiences.

For Indonesians, who have around 300 local languages and speak Indonesian as the national language, English was the first foreign language recognized in the public school curriculum. In this study, English-language journalists are Indonesian journalists who work in the English-language press. They use English as “a communicative tool for connecting with global and regional imaginaries, a resource that can be leveraged into educational and economic opportunities abroad, and a status symbol among Indonesia's growing middle class” (Carpenter & Ekdale, 2017, p. 139). With some recent developments in the country, which saw the number of newspapers declining by eight percent to 383 in 2015 (Zuhra, 2019), young English-language journalists in Indonesia may have different answers towards questions concerning job satisfaction factors compared to the 2001 nationwide survey. The researcher would use grounded theory to analyze insights provided by these journalists. This theory will be shortly explained as follows.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a methodology that centralizes on building codes from data to find relationship between concepts, which can be used to build a theory (Urquhart, 2013). Glaser (2002), a proponent of traditional grounded theory, believes that people's perspectives can vary and a researcher using grounded theory "raises these perspectives to the abstract level of conceptualization hoping to see the underlying or latent pattern, another perspective" (p. 2). Emerging from sociology, grounded theory is popular across various fields because it enables a researcher to build a theory in an under-studied area (Byrne, 2001; Chun Tie et al., 2019). In nursing, for example, this theory is widely used because researchers can apply what they learn from their informants to a wider population (De Chesnay, 2014). Voluntary turnover among English-language journalists in Indonesia was still an underexplored area of research, so this study would benefit from the strengths of the grounded theory. Next, the researcher formulated five research questions to address the purpose of this study.

Research Questions

The past literature gives insights on the common causes of job dissatisfaction and the sources of job satisfaction among journalists in the U.S. and Indonesia, but an emic approach towards this voluntary turnover issue with a qualitative method will provide patterned information that may form a new concept as guided by grounded theory. By focusing on English-language journalists, this research will also enrich previous studies that have explored Indonesian journalists' demographics, education, socialization, professional attitudes and working conditions (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012). It will also

expand on a study on job satisfaction among American journalists that is also built on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Reinardy, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to learn about newsroom turnover among millennial journalists with English-language skills in three organizations in Jakarta, Indonesia: *The Jakarta Post*, the only English newspaper in the country; *Jakarta Globe*, an English news portal that closed its print edition in 2015; and *Tempo English*, an English news portal that is part of Tempo Media group. The researcher wants to learn why millennial journalists tend to leave these companies as an organization and journalism as an institution. Another purpose of this study is to find the motivation to stay and whether the stayers intend to leave their jobs and the institution in the near future. Therefore, this study poses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the patterns of voluntary employee turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia?

RQ2: What are the factors that influence leavers' decision to quit the job?

RQ3a: What elements are important for leavers to experience job satisfaction?

RQ3b: What elements are important for stayers to experience job satisfaction?

RQ4: What is the voluntary turnover intention among the stayers?

The answers to these research questions will improve our understanding of what makes young journalists in Indonesia quit the job or journalism as an institution. We can also compare how their experiences or decisions may differ from their colleagues who choose to stay and whether the stayers intend to leave the organization or the institution in the near future. While an individual can simply tell the management that the reason to quit the job is simply because it is underpaid, he or she may have other reasons that have built

on the resignation decision. Drawing from informants' working experiences, we can also further learn various facets of job satisfaction and understand how they decide to quit or to stay in the job. This kind of narrative will contribute to the field of media sociology and to help news companies improve their retention strategy. The next chapter discusses the method section, grounded theory, the researcher's role, and the research design of this study.

Chapter Three: Method

This chapter describes the approach used in this study to address why young English-language journalists in Indonesia quit their organization or journalism institution, why they still stay and whether they intend to quit the job in the near future.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative research opens a pathway to theory development, which is a primary activity in organizational research (Eisenhardt, 1989). As a dynamic research area, voluntary turnover had inspired the development of primary theories and this study attempted to contribute to the grounding of a new construct that could further help scholars understand this phenomenon.

Using the constant comparative procedure common to grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994), the researcher observed ideas and patterns that emerged during the qualitative interview to develop a new concept. Grounded theory is an inductive approach to study a concept that explains patterns through the constant comparative method and theoretical sampling procedures (Glaser, 2002). Since its introduction by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967, grounded theory has become a prominent method to analyze qualitative data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). This study followed four stages of constant comparative method in grounded theory – comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

This study is among a handful of qualitative studies focusing on voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among English-language journalists in Indonesia. Most

studies on voluntary turnover in various industries and settings used to favor a quantitative or mixed-method research design as they seek to find generalization or to test the validity of the theories, but during the past 20 years, qualitative research has contributed to the field in both number of studies and development of new theories (Gehman et al., 2018). Lee (1999) encourages the application of qualitative methods in organizational studies for two reasons. First, organizational researchers can make use of this tool to answer increasingly challenging questions in their study. Second, in his observation, there was “minimal knowledge” and “less tradition” about this area among organizational researchers (Lee, 1999, p. 4). Since research questions in management research have become more complex in reflection to real problems faced by organizations, organizational researchers need to “expand their thinking and research by learning about and possibly adopting qualitative methods” as they have been proven to be able to well address some of their research questions (Lee et al., 1999, p. 162).

Qualitative research has been used to test complex models, such as the unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Hom et al., 2017). This model, which seeks to explain why employees quit the job by scrutinizing shocks to the system that can influence their decision-making process, used a qualitative design as an initial empirical test (Lee et al., 1996). A qualitative approach is also used in a recent study that explored how English, as a foreign language, shapes the ways English-language journalists conceive public service (Carpenter & Ekdale, 2019). Furthermore, qualitative research can strongly capture interest in subjectivity and the authenticity of human experience (Silverman, 2010). This does not mean that the choice to use a qualitative method assumes that it is the best method. In fact, the quantitative and mixed-method approaches used in the previous

studies have allowed the researcher to have a general view that helps narrow down the scope of the study to focus on millennial journalists who work for Indonesian-based English-language publications.

This study used an interview method, utilizing nine types of interview questions listed by Kvale (1996) to create a conversational interview that accounts for situational dynamics. The nine types of questions – introductory questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structured questions, interpretative questions, and silence – demand “substantial interviewer’s skill, sensitivity, and insight” (Lee, 1999, p. 84). For example, in following up a question, the researcher asked about unusual word choices, body language, and changes in intonation (Lee, 2009) that might help describe the nuance of the interview. The researcher used language “to understand concepts based on people's experiences” in the efforts to create “a sense of the larger realm of human relationships” (Brennen, 2013, p. 4). Used properly, this method adds depth to the data (Silverman, 2010). For example, previous research suggested that inadequate staffing was one of the major complaints in the digital age (Willnat et al., 2017). The researcher would first ask about the effects of inadequate staffing to see if the informants connect this issue to burnout. As a probing question, the researcher could also ask what factors lead to burnout to see if inadequate staffing serves as a primary reason to this condition.

Researcher’s Role

During the study, the researcher was taking an unpaid leave from *The Jakarta Post*, one of the three news organizations of which some of the journalists and editors participated in this study. The topic for this research was stemmed from the researcher's

observation on the voluntary turnover situation in her newsroom where she has been working for 11 years as a reporter and later as a deputy editor.

While this study had two groups of leavers and stayers, it gave more attention to the leavers as this study is more concerned with voluntary turnover than, for example, employee engagement. The researcher believed that her working experience as a journalist and deputy editor provided her with knowledge and sensitivity to the job satisfaction factors, such as pay and employee relationship, and helped her in working with informants in this study. However, the researcher's background, experiences, and position in the *Post* could also pose biases to the way the data is analyzed and interpreted.

Although the researcher was taking an unpaid leave during the time of the study, there was a possibility that her status as an employee may cause some stayers and leavers of the *Post* to be less open during the interviews. The researcher was cautious about being seen as taking sides within the organizations since a delicate issue in organizational research often appears to imply a particular stance (Bryman, 1988). In order to minimize these two issues, the researcher thoroughly guided the informants in reading the consent letter by clarifying each point in Indonesian language, especially the sections on confidentiality and the contribution that this research would bring to the field of media sociology and retention in news organizations. The researcher also tried to ensure that she was not taking sides since the interview exclusively serves an academic purpose.

Research Design

Sampling

A total of 18 participants were interviewed. Participants consisted of two groups: the "leavers" and the "stayers." The leavers group consisted of 10 former journalists and

editors from three English news companies: *The Jakarta Post*, *Jakarta Globe*, and *Tempo English*. Meanwhile, the stayers group consisted of eight journalists who were still working at the three news companies during the 2015-2020 period. Interviews were conducted until the researcher reached code and meaning saturation, finding repetition in the data and, achieving understanding about the issues (Hennink et al., 2016). The interview process therefore stopped after 18 participants since at that point “new data no longer add much of significance to the concepts that have been developed” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 117).

The youngest participant was 23 years old and the oldest was 38 years old at the time of the interview. The median age was 30. Only one leaver and one stayer had a formal education in journalism. The remaining participants came from various fields of education such as English Language and Literature, International Relations, Law, and Management. The leavers group consisted of six females and four males, while the stayers group consisted of six females and two males. The participants are from various ethnicities: Batak, Betawi, Indonesian of Arab descent, Indonesian of Chinese descent, Javanese, Minangkabau, mixed ethnicity, Sulawesi, and Sundanese. The participants’ attributes are described as follows:

Participant	Group	Age	Years in journalism	Gender
1	Leaver	26	3 years	F
2	Leaver	38	7 years	F
3	Leaver	33	4 years	M
4	Leaver	29	2 years 5 months	M
5	Leaver	27	2 years 7 months	M
6	Stayer	27	4 years 3 months	F
7	Stayer	31	3 years 5 months	F
8	Stayer	28	3 years 4 months	M
9	Leaver	37	4 years	F
10	Leaver	26	2 years 6 months	F

11	Leaver	32	2 years 5 months	M
12	Stayer	23	1 year	F
13	Stayer	25	7 months	F
14	Stayer	27	1 month	F
15	Leaver	31	4 years 3 months	F
16	Leaver	33	5 years	F
17	Stayer	30	3 years 7 months	M
18	Stayer	33	8 years 8 months	F

This study used a combination of three sampling strategies: *purposive*, *maximum comparison*, and *snowball*. Using purposive sampling, the researcher identified and select journalists and editors “who will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions” (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). The researcher also tried to have diversity in informants’ ethnicities and gender by employing a maximum variation sampling strategy. Ethnicities are included as a factor in the sampling strategy because among 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia, Javanese make up 40.2 percent of the total population, followed by Sundanese with 15.5 percent. Other ethnicities only account for less than 5 percent of the population; for example, Batak make up 3.5 percent, Sulawesi 3.2 percent, Minangkabau 2.73 percent, and Indonesian of Chinese descent 1.2 percent (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). As a majority, Javanese’s aforementioned life philosophy of acceptance may influence the way informants respond to the interview questions, so recruiting informants from various ethnicities is expected to draw more variety of answers and openness.

Gender was also included in the sampling selection because studies examining the relationship between gender and job satisfaction yielded in various results and even contradictory depending on the geographical locations and occupations (Kim, 2015). Meanwhile, other research suggests that although there is no outstanding difference

between men and women in their perception of fairness and job satisfaction, fairness in pay and promotion is a crucial factor of job satisfaction (Witt & Nye, 1992). Simply put, an employee who believes that his or her pay is not fair will likely to feel dissatisfied with the job.

The researcher already had existing contacts of journalists especially the stayers and leavers of the *Post*, but since she had a fewer number of contacts in the two other news organizations, she used a snowball sampling strategy, which allowed the researcher to locate an individual willing to be interviewed and to help recruit other individuals in his or her circle (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

In this study, the phrase “millennial English-language news people” refers to both journalists and editors under the age of 38 who either have fulfilled a probation period or are not obligated to any financially binding employment contract. Passing a probation period means the management believes that the employees display a job-fit and organization-fit to the degree that they deserve to get permanent employment. It means the employees have started contributing to the news company. According to the researcher's experience, it is common for companies in Indonesia to impose a financially binding employment contract ranging from one year to three years to seal a working commitment since the company has invested in training and mentoring during the period. An employee who is not obliged by any financially binding employment contract will have more freedom to look for job alternatives compared to those who will have to pay a compensation fee for breaking the contract. Thus, young journalists who did not fulfill these one of the two criteria could not participate in this study.

Since the three English news companies were built on the foundation of print business, this study used a time frame between 2015 and 2020 to select the leavers and the stayers to signify the start of the newspaper downturn in Indonesia. Legacy media such as newspapers in the country started to either close or completely migrate to online in 2015, when the number of newspapers declined by 8 percent to 383 (Zuhra, 2019). For example, the *Jakarta Globe*, an English daily newspaper, bid farewell to their print readers in December 2015 and migrated to an online platform, while *Sinar Harapan*, a legendary Indonesian language newspaper that first published in 1961, closed for good. Of the three companies used for this study, only the *Post* that still has a daily newspaper that is circulating from Monday to Saturday besides offering an online platform. *Tempo English* provides a weekly magazine and an online platform.

Data collection and management

This study used semi-structured, in-depth interviews with English-language journalists and former journalists in three news organizations in Jakarta, Indonesia. The researcher interviewed a minimum of two stayers and two leavers in each news organization. The researcher followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) suggestion in becoming an active sampler by following data and informants until no additional information can be found. The informants were assured of confidentiality and provided with a consent letter. Each interview lasted for about one hour. This estimation was made possible after the researcher made three pretest interviews with three non-participants before conducting the actual interviews.

The interviews were built on questions related to job satisfaction in Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory, Spector's (1997) Job Satisfaction Survey, and

previous literature on job satisfaction among journalists (Reinardy, 2009; Samuelson, 1962; Willnat et al., 2017). For example, the informants were asked to describe their working experience related to the key of job satisfaction factors such as job autonomy, their relationships with managers and coworkers, salary, and personal growth. Since the study attempted to learn from the informants' experiences, the researcher was open to new reasons for leaving that were not available in the literature, such as their relationship with their audience, sexual harassment, discrimination, and office bullying. The researcher was open for new reasons for staying, such as pride in doing a noble job, the absence of job alternatives, pre-existing health conditions, family reasons, and financial commitments. The researcher began the interview with open-ended questions, followed by probing questions and interpreting questions. Open-ended questions may generate meaningful response (De Chesnay, 2015) since informants can speak from their own experience. The indirective element of the open-ended questions will give subjects a chance to be candid and to tell "the truth as they know it" (Lindlof & Tylor, 2011, p. 202). Meanwhile, probing questions and interpreting questions can provide details and clarifications (Kvale, 1996). The interview was conducted in the informant's language of choice. If the informant was more comfortable with Indonesian language, the researcher would transcribe the interview and translate it in English. An interview question protocol is provided in Appendix A.

In conducting the interviews, the researcher followed recommendations from Whyte (1982) on the importance of being a *polite listener*, by not interrupting the informants, and being an *active listener*, by reflecting upon what is being said and how to best encourage the participants to clarify a certain point or give detail on an item only

hinted at. The researcher followed the ethical guidelines of conducting research, such as providing an informed consent letter to the informants and explaining the use of a recording device during the interviews. Participants were assured of their anonymity in the research process.

Since there was a limitation in distance and budget for the study, the researcher used video calls with the Zoom video conferencing app and a note-taking technique. The researcher took some notes during the interview to track down when there was a point in the participants' answers that would need a follow-up question. The longest interview was 78 minutes and 22 seconds, while the shortest was 16 minutes and 25 seconds. The average length for the interview was 47 minutes. Interviews were conducted between February 7 and March 6, 2020.

Following each interview, the researcher wrote memos that compare the content of the most recent interview and the previous interviews, which later were used as a narrative in the final report, a process called "data collection and write-up of findings" (Creswell, 2014, p. 245). Later, the researcher transcribed the interview into a Microsoft Word document that was kept in a laptop protected with a high-security password and a separate flash drive specifically obtained for this study. The researcher manually transcribed 13 interviews that were done in Indonesian and used the otter.ai transcription software to transcribe five interviews that were conducted in English. A list of participants was created, coded with numerical numbers to protect the identity of the informants. The notes and the flash drive, which contained the memos, interview transcripts, and Zoom videos, were kept in a box with a lock in a secret place that only the researcher knows.

Ethical considerations

Each participant of this study received Rp 100,000 (\$7) after completing the interview to compensate for his or her time and the hassle to be in a comfortable and quiet place with a reliable Internet connection during the interview. The researcher would keep the informants' confidentiality. Confidentiality means that the researcher will protect the identity of the informants and will not reveal what they said during research without their consent and only in ways agreed (Surmiak, 2018). The informants were notified about precautions taken to protect their confidentiality. Their names and place of employment, for example, did not appear in the transcript and report. Before the interview begins, individuals were notified that there will be questions related to their satisfaction on pay and employee relationship. If they considered those questions to be sensitive, they might opt not to participate in the study. Participants could also choose to discontinue their participation in the study at any time without any penalty. The researcher had completed the CITI training and obtained the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval on January 16, 2020.

Coding procedures

The researcher followed the four stages of grounded theory outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967): Comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory. After transcribing the interviews (i.e., the raw data), the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, read through all the data, and analyzed it through a coding process that started with identifying words, phrases, or quotes related to themes in job satisfaction (Creswell, 2014). Then, the researcher started interrelating themes and descriptions and

interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions (Creswell, 2014), using NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

Use of NVivo in the Coding Process. First, the researcher imported all raw data in the form of 18 interview transcripts to her NVivo project in the Files folder. Second, the researcher organized the data by making a node structure in the Codes Folder for two separate groups: leavers and stayers. After that, the researcher opened the Files Folder and began manual coding by dragging and dropping selected content that had certain themes to the set of nodes. During this “early concept identification” process, every time a new code emerged, the researcher would make a new node to store the selected content (Hutchison et al., 2010, p. 289). Creating the new nodes were done either by using a bulb symbol at the top of the page or by right clicking and choosing Quick Code Selection option. Third, after coding the entire data, the researcher checked each node and reorganized them when necessary. This process included merging some similar nodes and removing some texts to a more suitable category. Fourth, the researcher looked for relationships between categories, comparing the categories, and interpreting the meaning of the themes (Creswell, 2014) until each category reached saturation relevant to the research questions (Saunders et al., 2018). In doing so, she made a research memo in a word document every time new concepts or possible limitations appeared during the analysis.

Two visualization tools in NVivo that the researcher found especially useful for this last stage of data analysis were the Hierarchy Chart and Diagrams because they enabled users to compare all codes and to find prominent themes that had more coding references. The Queries tool in NVivo might be useful for other research that would need

to explore word frequency, text search, or patterns in the attributes, but it was not too useful for this study.

The researcher found that when she ran NVivo, Zotero, and Microsoft Word together for some hours, sometimes the Word would freeze for unknown reasons. Therefore, the researcher frequently saved the data in Word during the writing process to prevent data loss.

Trustworthiness

The researcher enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of her work by doing a combination of these following strategies as suggested by Creswell (2014). First, the researcher triangulated the data by examining evidence from the informants to build justification for themes. Second, the researcher also used member checking strategy by rechecking parts of the major findings or specific descriptions or themes with some of the informants to check the accuracy. The researcher also gave access to the informants to edit their own transcript to increase data reliability and correct errors (Surmiak, 2018). Third, the researcher explained her role in this research and how her interpretation of the findings was shaped by her background and experiences.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to learn about newsroom turnover among millennial journalists at *The Jakarta Post*, *Jakarta Globe*, and *Tempo English* in Jakarta, Indonesia. The researcher wanted to learn why millennial English-language journalists tend to leave their organization or journalism as an institution and to compare their experiences with their colleagues who choose to keep the job. To understand this phenomenon, the researcher employed a theoretical framework rooted in grounded theory

and informed by prior literature on management research, particularly job satisfaction as a predictor of turnover, and earlier studies on job satisfaction in journalism. The researcher created a set of semi-structured interview questions using a combination of findings from the previous literature and new factors germane to the current situation.

Using a combination of purposive, maximum comparison, and snowball sampling strategies, the researcher recruited a minimum of two stayers and two leavers of English-language journalists from each of the three newsrooms. The informants were given an informed consent form and their identities were kept confidential. Interviews were administered via Zoom video conferencing app. The researcher transcribed the interview and categorized the raw data with themes and descriptions. The researcher also demonstrated the rigor of this research through data triangulation, member checking strategy and a self-reflection on the researcher's role in this study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study was to learn about newsroom turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia in order to find why they tend to leave their organization or leave journalism altogether. This study also investigated the motivation to stay and the intention to leave among the current journalists. To answer the research questions, the researcher asked a similar set of questions to the leavers and stayers. The researcher asked participants from both groups to recount their hopes and expectation as a new employee and what they discovered at the workplace. The researcher asked the leavers to explain their reasons to quit and where they worked after leaving their news organizations. Meanwhile, the stayers were asked to talk about their opinions about their workplace and whether they intend to stay in the next five years.

Nearly all leavers mentioned a combination of complaints such as burnout, declining journalism standards, management, mentorship, pay and transparency, fit, problem with supervisor, and training. Only one cited pay as the sole reason to quit. Despite having some dissatisfactions, the stayers group chose to stick with their news organizations. Among other reasons, they still wanted to build more experience, satisfy their desire to learn, and enjoy the friendly company culture and friendship among their coworkers. They also felt that what they were doing in their current news organization could help achieve their career aspirations and personal goals. However, most stayers could not picture themselves staying for a long time. Seven out of eight millennial journalists planned to leave the news organization within five years and two of which

considered leaving journalism. The following sections identify the specific answers to the research questions posed earlier.

RQ1: Patterns of Voluntary Employee Turnover

The first research question asked about the patterns of voluntary employee turnover among both leavers and stayers. After verifying the content of the *LinkedIn* profiles of each participant, the researcher asked the participants to tell about what expectations that they had before accepting job offers from the three news organizations in this study and what they found in the workplace. The researcher later asked the participants to describe the criteria of their ideal job and where they went after quitting the job.

The researcher found that at the beginning of the employment, most participants only had a few simple expectations that would grow along the way as they acclimated themselves to the new job and workplace. However, when some of their expectations were not met along the way, their dissatisfaction would tend to pile up, forming a turnover intention. They began to evaluate their job by comparing their current state to what they believed to be their ideal job and what they planned for their future. After that, they would decide to stay or to leave. The researcher found patterns of voluntary turnover among the participants as follows:

Stage 1: Newcomers' Expectations

Stayers and leavers explained four principal expectations they had when they joined the news organization. They generally wanted to improve their English writing skill, practice journalism, have workplace flexibility, and gain experience to achieve their long-term goals.

Improving English Writing Skill. As new employees, both stayers and leavers were passionate about using English as a second language in their job, particularly because they had been exposed to the language during their study. Three leavers and six stayers said they wanted to do a job that was aligned with their passion for writing in English. Participant 6 said she studied English language and joined a magazine club for two years during her undergraduate study, so she “wanted to stay in that path”. Likewise, Participant 3 said that since he was a fresh graduate, he was only concerned about getting an experience as a political reporter and honing his English writing skill. He said, “I didn’t have any concern about salary. I liked issues related to politics... I would be trained to write in English. Those were what made me interested [in the job].” Two participants left their first jobs to pursue a new career in journalism because they were passionate about writing and they wanted to use their productive years honing the skill. Participant 13, for example, realized that she was unhappy in her corporate job, so she turned to journalism because she wanted “to channel her writing talent.”

Practicing Journalism. Some participants, including Participant 10 and Participant 15, had a glimpse of journalism through an internship. They said although they did not have a formal education in journalism, they were interested in the field and wanted to expand their knowledge through the mentorship of experienced journalists in the newsrooms.

When I started in [name of organization], I wasn't really sure if that's what I really wanted to do. But I know that I can learn, and I think that's been a consistent aspect that I consider when I look at a new opportunity. (Participant 10)

Workplace Flexibility. Journalists and editors generally could work remotely without the restriction of regular business hours and working days. A leaver and a stayer

mentioned that since the beginning of their job search, they expected to have flexibility in terms of time and place to work. Participant 15 said she would only need to come to the office two or three times a week and there would be no questions raised about her time allocation if she met deadlines. She said, “It was still long hours, but the flexibility was such a great trait for a job.” Participant 6 also echoed her preference to work outside formal business hours. She said: “I want a flexible job. I can’t do a nine-to-five job. I can’t imagine working in an office like a civil servant.”

A Stepping Stone. Many participants mentioned that they wanted to work in English-language news organization to achieve their ambition to have an international career or to study abroad. They believed that in order to have the qualification to work in foreign news organizations or to become a strong candidate for a scholarship, they would need to build a strong resume and portfolio that demonstrated their expertise. A former journalist for an Indonesian-language news organization, Participant 4 said he joined the English-language press to boost his career:

I think since the beginning, I’ve always wanted to have an international career. So, I joined [name of news organization] because I wanted to learn about English journalism. I wanted to learn about English writing to have a global exposure.
(Participant 4)

Similarly, Participant 2 left her former Indonesian-language news organization to get a better opportunity to continue her education. The management in her former Indonesian-language news organization would not allow their employees to study abroad, so those who chose to pursue their education had to quit their job. For her, moving to an English-language press that had a more favorable policy would be “a step forward to get a higher career achievement” as it opened the door to more opportunities.

Stage 2: Recognizing Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

After working for some time, participants started to recognize what worked for them and what did not. Their experience with the news organization helped them shape a clearer idea about what they wanted in a job and whether they still liked their job. For example, although they enjoyed some benefits such as workplace flexibility and networking opportunities, they might also start to feel that they were not compensated enough for their work. This realization could either come very early in their career or later after they gained more experience and built more expectations. For example, Participant 3 said he was fine with his salary when he first started to work because he was only concerned with getting an experience and sharpening his English writing skill. He enjoyed the family-like work environment in his newsroom, but after working for four years, he decided to quit because he felt that he was underpaid. Unlike his old fresh graduate self, his current ideal job was one that offered “higher income and a career track.”

Stage 3: Turnover Intention

Nearly all participants had thoughts about quitting at some points during their employment for various reasons. The reasons could be related to their disappointment or personal future plans. It was apparent that the intention could either develop into a serious job hunting or merely stay as a thought. Participant 4 said he had thoughts about resigning but never really considered it. He said, “The situation was good at the time, so I thought it was still an ideal environment for me to grow and to learn more and to be a better reporter.” Most participants from the leavers group did not execute their plan at

once because they had some considerations such as waiting to get the right job offers or because they could not sacrifice things that they enjoyed in their workplace.

Stage 4: Evaluating Workplace

Although having some thoughts about quitting could either lead to a job search or nothing at all, interviews with the participants showed that they evaluated their job by comparing what their current situation about the workplace to their ideas about the ideal job and future personal and career plans. The result of the evaluation could be the deciding part of the voluntary turnover as participants would choose either to stay or leave.

Stage 5a: Stay

Opinions gathered from the interviews with stayers showed that most of them still had some reasons to stay. For example, Participant 17 had been thinking about quitting because he wanted to get a higher income. However, he did not try to apply for another job because he still enjoyed his learning experience and the friendly, open working environment in his newsroom that allowed everyone to give and get feedback. This situation was common among his coworkers who still stayed in the company. He said, “Every time we complain about something, we always reconsider because there is a sense of freedom that we get here. Is it worth it to move to other places?”

Stage 5b: Leave

Meanwhile, interviews with the leavers indicated that their final decision to leave were mostly influenced by a combination of some factors. Oftentimes, the decision to leave came in a good timing of getting a job offer that matched their desire although it was not always the case. After working for some years, Participant 15 said she wanted to

have a career with international news organizations because she wanted to reach out wider audience. She also wanted to have a higher pay, greater workplace flexibility, and greater coverage of topics. She enjoyed having a supportive supervisor and coworkers, but there were a couple of times when she felt overwhelmed by the amount of workload since her team was very small. She considered quitting and started to look for other opportunities. She got a job offer but decided not to take it and stayed in the news organization for another year because she felt that she had a strong attachment with her newsroom. She finally decided to leave when she got a job offer that fit her career aspiration. She said, “When I got an opportunity to be able to work for an international media, that’s when I decided that it was time for me to leave.”

Stage 6: Where They Go

After resigning from their news organizations, six leavers continued their career in journalism in some foreign news organizations in Indonesia, while the other four went to work as a research consultant, a start-up founder, a research editor, and a public relations practitioner.

RQ2: Factors Influencing Leavers’ Decision to Quit the Job

RQ2 asked about the factors that influenced leavers’ decision to quit the job, so the researcher asked the leavers to chronicle the process in which they came to a decision to quit their job. The researcher collected information about why they left, what their former coworkers say when they resigned from the job, and if they revealed the real reasons to leave to their bosses. Nearly all participants mentioned multiple reasons for leaving the job except for one who said that his sole reason was only pay. The other nine

leavers consistently mentioned a combination of complaints on burnout, losing mentorship, management, pay, personal growth, problems with supervisors, and fit.

Burnout

Two participants complained about not having a work-life balance because they put too much focus on keeping up with their workload. Participant 1 said her main reason to resign from the job was because she suffered from burnout. At the beginning, she was so proud of her job especially when her stories made it to the headlines. However, after a two-year mark, she started questioning whether she still wanted to do the job. Shortly after that, she realized that her job had affected her emotional and physical wellbeing. She was frustrated with the long-working hours that kept her occupied and felt that she could not handle well even the smallest disruptions in her life. The lack of guidance and communication from her editor also became another stressor in her job. Participant 1 resigned after getting an offer from a head-hunter to work as an editor for a research center, which allowed her to “be home by 5:30”. She said:

About three years into my career at [name of news organization], I started to realize that I wasn't loving the same things that I used to love. Like, I couldn't enjoy having a timeout. I couldn't enjoy going to the movies, reading books or [doing other] simple things because my mind would always come back to what I would be doing at my job. (Participant 1)

Participant 15 said the exhaustion also became one of her considerations to quit and take a freelancing reporting job in an international news organization. She found her freelancing work to be less stressful because she could manage her own time. Since she did not work on a time-sensitive story, she could also ask for a deadline extension when necessary. She described her burnout situation as follows:

There were times when I wanted to go on holiday, and I had to bring my laptop with me because I was just so scared that I would miss something. And then other

times I just had to finish a story on weekends when I wanted to go somewhere else. That did influence my decision to leave. (Participant 15)

Declining Journalism Standards

Participant 16 said her newsroom used to be very picky about their cover stories, but they had seen “topics that were not worth a cover story being published as one and the same sources being used over and over again.” Meanwhile, Participant 9 said a new boss in her news organization demanded each online editor to publish 20 articles per day, a target that did not make sense to her. She said, “Probably he thinks editors just [use] Google Translate.” She said once it required several clicks to see the bylines and datelines of their online articles and when the editors raised the issue, the new boss thought these two parts were not important.

Loss of Mentorship

Four leavers said they were longing for mentorship from their supervisors or senior coworkers. Participant 4 said he really enjoyed having work-related discussions with his previous supervisors. Not only did they help him learn the rope when he was still new, they also challenged him to do a better reporting and writing. He described his working environment as very ideal until he saw his supervisors resigning from their jobs. After they left, he could not find a similar mentorship that he used to have.

I lost, I think, my best mentors ... I was challenged to write about new issues, about how to dig deeper into the issues, to write a good story with human touch in it. But after they resigned, there was no “challenge”. Everything I pitched about a [name of subject] story, anything... It got accepted. There were almost no discussions. (Participant 4)

Participant 5 also began to question his own commitment to the organization after seeing his seniors and coworkers leaving the newsroom. He also felt that the working

environment would never be the same since the talented people were leaving. He described his feeling as follows:

I felt like I lost guidance from those leaving seniors. From that moment, I assumed that the working environment in [name of organization] did not support their expectation any longer ... I felt that people didn't enjoy working at [name of news organization]. (Participant 5)

Meanwhile, Participant 10 said that as a young reporter she did not receive enough recognition, communication, and guidance from her supervisors. As a newcomer, she tried to be productive and independent, but she felt that her supervisors did not really care about her hard work or her professional development. She felt that they lacked a sense of leadership:

I feel like a little bit of recognition would've been nice and would've been more motivating. But it didn't exist ... My colleagues ... they would tell me my editor or that editor was a really good writer and stuff. In my experience, it's not just about being good writers. It's like, how you can be a good leader and how you can build out your juniors, and I didn't really see that. (Participant 10)

Management

Three leavers said that management seemed to lose a sense of direction when they made certain decisions related to their work in the newsroom, resulting in a lack of trust on the future of their workplace. Participant 4 said he heard that the situation had improved, but during his time, it seemed that the higher-ups in the news organization "didn't know what they were doing in terms of the digital migration from newspaper to online." He said they never revealed their strategies or any clear plans that would provide the newswriters with a better picture about the future of their digital content. As the result, although he was asked to send stories for their online content, there was no urgency among editors to publish them as they still prioritized the print edition:

I felt that some editors still glorify newspaper, so it seems like some people were reluctant to change. It's crucial for me because it seems that the bosses didn't know what they were doing. (Participant 4)

When he resigned from the job, Participant 4 said he just told his bosses that he was accepted in a foreign news organization that offered a higher salary. He did not tell them about complaints related to the newsroom because he just wanted to have "a proper goodbye". Besides, he thought that his exit interview would not contribute to solving the problem, which was too complexed especially with the high voluntary turnover.

Participant 10 also noticed an absence of clear vision in the newsroom as management did not lay out a clear strategy for their news format. She said in the beginning, she was excited to be involved in a team project that produced a long-form investigative reporting, only to find that the project was short-lived. She said she was confused with the sudden decision to scrap the in-depth reporting format because she felt that her team succeeded in carrying out the project and received positive responses from readers:

There's a sense in which I felt like the management decisions were made by people who don't necessarily know what we do on the field ... They stopped doing [long-form reporting] and they wanted to go a different direction without really evaluating what was wrong with that strategy. (Participant 10)

Participant 9 said that at first she tried to stay in the company despite having complaints over pay, workload, and declining journalism standards because she liked the workplace flexibility that allowed her to pursue her passion in science writing, enabling her to get global exposure through reporting invitations and prestigious fellowships. However, she eventually decided to quit a month after a new boss joined the top management. She said the new boss imposed controversial regulations regarding how they ran the newsroom that eliminated some perks that affected workplace flexibility.

Based on her description, the new regulations created uncomfortable working conditions as all employees had to report their attendance through a fingerprint-based attendance system and reporters had to follow regular business hours. Editors also had to send notification letters to Human Resources when their reporters went to the field. Participant 9 said she quit although she did not have a job offer yet:

The situation was not comfortable, but there were some things that made me stay. But those things were gone. There was no more flexibility and they made ridiculous demands ... Everyone described the situation as a sinking ship, and everyone was trying to escape that ship. (Participant 9)

Problems with Supervisors

Two participants said some of their coworkers resigned because they could not stand working with their supervisors. Participant 11 said it was hard for him to stay because he could no longer work with a difficult supervisor who often got angry and made him emotionally drained at work. He had been trying to cope up with this supervisor for quite a long time, but his dissatisfaction piled up until he reached a point when he had enough. At that time, he felt disappointed because he was assigned to cover an event during his day off, and only got notified a few hours before the event started. He resigned shortly after that.

To be honest, there was a supervisor that I couldn't stand working with. I had been trying to hold myself for over a year. To me, this supervisor was toxic. There were a lot of inconsistencies and outbursts. (Participant 11)

Participant 11 said the management kept asking about the reason behind his resignation, but he did not tell them about the supervisor because he believed that as a Muslim, he "should not talk behind people's back." He also did not want to stir up arguments. However, he hoped that they would eventually figure it out because he was not the only one who resigned because of the supervisor.

Pay

Five leavers mentioned salary as a part of their decision to leave the news organization. They said it was also a common complaint among other coworkers who resigned earlier. The leavers mentioned complaints over fairness and transparency of salary structure, which left them in the dark over how the management decided their pay grades, low reimbursement for phone bills, and pay competitiveness in the industry. Participant 3 and Participant 15 felt undervalued. They believed that they deserved to get a higher pay because they could offer their bilingual skills:

I know journalists' standard for salary is very low as it is, but I felt that because I could speak two different languages and I could write in both languages pretty well, I was kind of thinking that I should be able to earn a lot more than I did at that time when I was working in [name of news organization]. (Participant 15)

Participant 3 said he was thinking of leaving because he did not see a raise after working for four years with upgraded skills. He thought about moving to foreign news organizations since the standard salary in the local ones was not competitive. That was why he did not waste time when a fellow journalist told him about a job vacancy in a foreign news organization. He resigned on the day when he received the job offer. He said the salary in local English-language press should have been more competitive:

I believe the salary should've been higher, at least a little bit under foreign news organizations because we used the same English skills and were even required to write more news. (Participant 3)

Family Pressures

Two participants said salary started to become a problem for them when their parents brought up the topic and even compared their income to their cousins'.

Participant 5 said salary became a main problem after his parents "asked about the amount of my savings after working at [name of organization] for almost three years."

Participant 3 said his parents started to ask about the amount of his salary when he passed the probation period and was promoted as a permanent employee. He said his extended family would talk about financial achievement of their children in their conversations, prompting his mother to throw him questions like “why do you not get [a] bonus” as she compared him to cousins who worked in corporates.

Unfair Promotion

Participant 16 was dismayed by how the management used her education level as an excuse to cancel her promotion to become a reporting coordinator, a position she had been coveting. Back then, she only had a diploma and the management said that the job required a bachelor’s degree. She was angry that a competitor who was promoted for the job did not perform as expected. She decided to quit the company and journalism altogether, fearing that she would experience the same unfair treatment if she remained:

They reasoned that the problem was because I had not finished my Bachelor’s degree yet. *But in terms of experience, I have more...* I was terribly disappointed at that time, and I was thinking that other media companies would just be the same. (Participant 16)

Need for Personal Growth

After working between two to four years, three participants felt that they had passed their learning curve and did not have anything new to learn that would contribute to their personal growth. Participant 10 said her daily routines became mundane and repetitive. In her observation, the news organization did not have a clear vision about strategies that they would use in the newsroom, so she could not envision herself progressing in the company:

I know that if I want to grow in my own, like personal career and individual growth, I would have to look for it elsewhere because this company was not

gonna give it to me ... So, for me, it was an easy decision because I know that I have to make use of my time well. (Participant 10)

Meanwhile, Participant 5 said he had enough writing experience and wanted to master other storytelling mediums. He believed that print journalism was no longer enough to convey a message, so he wanted “to turn to visual and audio like films and photos.”

Fit

Three leavers said their job descriptions did not match their passions any longer. When he joined the news organization, Participant 11 had a clear goal of specializing in a field that he studied for his Master’s degree. However, after working for a couple of years, the management decided to reduce the staff and restructure the desks, resulting in the removal of his favorite desk. He said, “At first, I covered [name of reporting field], but after that I was assigned to cover various stuffs. They eventually removed the [name of reporting field] desk. It made me feel trapped.”

Meanwhile, Participant 2 returned to her news organization and resumed her work as an editor after taking a leave of absence to continue her education. Soon, she realized that she was not into the job anymore. She said she picked up a new passion in public relations during her study and wanted to pursue her childhood dream to work in an intergovernmental organization that focused on humanitarian missions:

I am more interested now in public information, external relations, event organizing, [and] social media. That’s why I decided to move from journalism to public relations. I think the office gave me a raise, but it's not always about the money. (Participant 2)

RQ3a: Important Elements for Leavers to Experience Job Satisfaction

RQ3a asked about elements that contribute to leavers’ job satisfaction. The researcher asked participants from the leavers group to compare their expectations about

the workplace to the reality that they found after working there. The researcher also asked the participants to talk about what they liked about their job and their company, and what could be improved in the company.

Alignment with Expectations

Despite the presence of some dissatisfaction, most participants felt that they could achieve their expectations to expand their professional networks, have workplace flexibility, improve their English, learn various issues, polish their writing skill, and practice journalism. Participant 2 said in her previous job, she only covered limited issues about women and health, but during her tenure in the English-language news organization, she had a chance to cover different kinds of issues from politics to environment, which helped expand her knowledge:

I got to hone my writing skill, I got to meet new people ... It's been beyond my expectation. And yes, thanks to [name of news organization], I wouldn't be in this position right now if I didn't work for it [name of news organization]. It's not just the writing skill, I [also] got to learn to work hard, to be persistent, [and] to be more resilient. (Participant 2)

Likewise, Participant 5 also achieved his early expectations.

My expectations were to learn English better, practice journalism, and meet with people from various sectors. Those expectations were met during the two-year of period working there. (Participant 5)

Apparently, some participants did not anticipate that they would experience some unexpected developments in their workplace and the downside of the journalistic profession. Participant 1 said she overlooked the negative expectation until she realized that she was exhausted from working long hours. Participant 9 said the number of staff in the newsroom was shrinking because there was a layoff every year. Her workload was

manageable in the beginning, but it got bigger to the point where she was assigned to handle five topics including sports, a subject that she was not familiar at all.

I felt annoyed for having to handle things that were outside my beat. I knew nothing about sports. Although it was just selecting [news from wires], I didn't really know which one was good. *I was really tortured with the quality of the newspaper.* (Participant 9)

Supportive Working Environments

Leavers shared some aspects of working environment that they valued when they worked at the three news organizations. Specifically, they discussed their appreciation for friendly company culture, autonomy, and mentorship.

Friendly Company Culture. Three leavers said they enjoyed the friendships they made in the news organization. Participant 10 said the hardest thing about leaving her news organization was that she “will have to leave the friends” that she made there. Likewise, Participant 16 said her former coworkers were “fun and cool.” Participant 3 said he enjoyed the family-like atmosphere in the workplace where he could have fun talking to people as there was no “hierarchy and office politics”. Participant 5 said he had the opportunity to work with people who had integrity and quality during his time in the news organization. He called it “a wonderful chance that was irreplaceable.”

Autonomy. Participant 16 said as a reporter, she could use various facilities and get support to cover various events across the country. Participant 3 said the strength of a local news organization was its ability to give “in-depth coverage to local politics.” He said the locality factor was something that could not really be accommodated in foreign news organization, which would tend to be focusing on general issues. Participant 9 said the news organization gave her the freedom to cover subjects of her interests regardless on which desks she was assigned to.

Mentorship. Participant 15 said the mentorship in the news organization allowed her to grow as a journalist. She said everyone “was very helpful and willing to share their knowledge and experience”. She remembered that when she was very new, her seniors would invite her to join interview appointments with high-level sources like the ministries to show her how to conduct an interview. Likewise, Participant 16 said two parts that showed the excellence of the mentorship system in the news organization were the requirement for reporters to read three books per week and their chance to get a weekly evaluation. She said, “We were trained hard, but I like it.”

What to Improve

Leavers discussed areas that would need to be addressed to improve job satisfaction. Specifically, they suggested that management improve their processes regarding communication; direction on digital migration; pay and transparency; recruitment and retention; and training.

Communication. Participant 2 suggested that the management regularly make communication efforts to make sure that they were aware of any problem or concern that might rise among the journalists. She said, “I think it will be good just to make sure that things go smoothly and then what works and what doesn't work, something like that.”

Direction on Digital Migration. Leavers suggested that the management communicate and involve their journalists in the newsroom’s direction and future development in their digital content. Participant 5 said such involvement would give a chance for the journalists “to share and execute their ideas.”

Pay and Transparency. Opinions gathered from the interviews indicated that improving pay and transparency on performance issues would be an important step in

retaining the talented journalists. Participant 5 said the management should have a merit system that could tell how much raise an employee deserve to get based on their performance. Participant 3 said the management was responsible to look for a new business model that could generate income because many online readers expected to read news for free. He said failure of the advertisement model should not become an excuse for giving low pay. He said, “People use their skills when they work, and they expect to see a raise as time goes by.”

Recruitment and Retention. Participant 15 said the news organization had such a great product that targeted influential and highly educated Indonesians. She said her former news organization would need to hire more people and retain them because “it’s not easy to find English-speaking reporters in Indonesia.” Leavers also suggested that the management prioritize efforts to keep their journalists. Participant 5 said although it would not be possible to fulfill every expectation, the management should at least show that they made some efforts.

Training. Proper trainings that cover basic reporting skills and advance skills such as data journalism would become a source of satisfaction as most journalists were always in pursuit of learning. Participant 1 said practical trainings in covering disasters, for example, would be useful for new journalists as they might not have an experience in interviewing victims. Participant 10 said advanced training in investigative and data-driven journalism would be a great advantage. She said, “I always feel I lack sophisticated training in journalism. I think I would’ve been really appreciative of a company that could make us better journalists.” Likewise, Participant 2 said training and

a chance to take fellowships or trainings could also become strategy to show the management's appreciation for the hard work of their staff.

RQ3b: Important Elements for Stayers to Experience Job Satisfaction

RQ3b asked important elements that make stayers satisfied in their job. The researcher asked similar questions to stayers, such as whether what they found at work matched their expectation, what they liked about their job and the company, how they described their ideal workplace, what their coworkers said about the working conditions, and what they think could be improved in the company.

Autonomy and Roles

Two stayers said they were passionate about executing their journalistic roles such as informing the public, contributing to the public goods, and holding the authorities responsible. Participant 6, for example, said her news organization gave her an autonomy to pitch story ideas about underexposed stories related to the human rights, which was an area of her interest. She felt that her job was a powerful occupation and she was proud to work in a prominent news organization. She recounted that when she introduced herself, her sources would recognize her news organization and give her access to the information. That was aligned with her aspiration to become an influential journalist who could voice issues that matter for the public:

I am excited to realize that many people are still unaware of certain important issues, so I hope that my articles, although it may not make a huge difference, can at least open their eyes ... If I want to stay in the path where I can inform the public by getting the information easily, I have to stay here. I won't take it for granted. (Participant 6)

Participant 7 said she liked her job because it allowed her to "touch people's hearts" and become a government watchdog. She said her news organization was home to

fearless and independent journalists, so she never received any unethical intervention during her reporting job unlike some of her fellow reporters from other news organizations who would be ordered by their supervisors to refrain from being critical about certain things. She described the rewarding part of her job as follows:

I often wrote about Coronavirus nowadays, so one of the things that I like [about my job] is having an opportunity to push the policymakers to do the right thing. When they tried to deny something, I could present them with facts, so they could do the right thing. I am grateful to be in this position. (Participant 7)

Learning Opportunities

Interviews with the stayers showed that nearly all of them found their learning experience in the job as worthwhile. Participant 18 said she often joined various workshops on writing or economics from the experts in the fields. She said such learning opportunity might not be widely available for many people, and as a journalist, she could get access to it. Likewise, Participant 13 said she enjoyed her learning experience because the reporting job required her to learn something new each day. She said, “Having the knowledge for many things is very fulfilling to me.” Participant 6 said there were still a lot of things that she wanted to learn in the news organization. When she first joined the organization, she only had a few expectations. However, after working for some years, she was impressed with several inspiring supervisors and put another target of achievement in her career:

At first, I only expected to improve my English by working here, but later I added my goal. I want to be like them, to be able to see the real problem of an issue. It’s been beyond my expectation to work with people who are open minded and knowledgeable. (Participant 6)

Open and Casual Working Culture

Four stayers said they had supportive supervisors and coworkers who were friendly and open for discussions. Participant 8 said his news organization was open to people from various backgrounds and there was always a room for discussion, so reporters could present their opinions and “did not merely follow what editors’ want”. Similarly, Participant 17 said his working environment was also ideal because there was no rigid and formal culture. He gave an example that it was common for everyone in the office to hang out with the company’s directors over a coffee. Since people were open for critiques, the newsroom became an ideal place for him to grow as a journalist. He said, “The editorial room is especially very open in discussing things. There is a two-way of communication and people have the freedom to speak up.”

Pay

Five stayers complained about pay, while the remaining three said they were fine with their pay for the time being. The five stayers mostly complained about how their pay did not suit their workload or how it was not competitive among English-language press. Participant 8 said pay often become a conversation topic among his coworkers because they believed that their standard of salary should be higher than local Indonesian-language press. However, he found that the salary of journalists from *Kompas*, the biggest Indonesian-language newspaper, was higher. He said, “We write in English, so we deliver a different product. Everyone felt that we can get better than this.” Participant 18 said pay was also a common complaint among their coworkers. It was also difficult to get a raise because employees would need to climb a job level. She said even if they managed to get promoted, “the raise is also not much.” Similarly, Participant 17 said the

low salary in his news organization could drive away middle-career employees who would have a higher need for income. He said, “Many people that I know here agree that this place is perfect for either someone who just has graduated and needed to learn or for those that want to age here.”

On the other hand, pay and workload were not really an issue for three other stayers. Participant 13 felt that her salary was slightly higher than other journalists who worked in Indonesian-language news organizations. She said her workload was currently still manageable since she was only required to send one or two stories per day. She said, “I don’t feel the need to have a greater reward.” Meanwhile, Participant 6 said she was “not too obsessed with money” because she still enjoyed the learning experience, the chance to explore her ideas, and the ability to voice important issues in the news organization. Furthermore, she said she did not have child yet, so pay was not her main concern. She considered herself as “an idealistic millennial who is more concerned about how much a job can help you improve yourself.” She believed that if she kept on building a strong portfolio, she would be able to earn more by the time she needed it.

Perks of the Job

Stayers acknowledged that their reporting jobs came with some benefits, specifically identifying workplace flexibility, networking, and travel as the best perks of their job.

Workplace Flexibility. Participant 12 said the flexibility that she had in the profession made the job “unique and addictive.” Participant 13 also echoed this benefit, saying that she would be free once she finished her article, so she could catch up with

friends more often compared to the time when she worked in a corporate that had regular business hours.

Networking. Participant 8 said his job allowed him to meet people from various walks of life. He remembered interviewing a street vendor who was very knowledgeable about the city regulation. He said, “She knew which regulations that she would breach if she sold her stuffs there [name of street]. It’s very memorable to me.” Participant 13 said she got a chance to meet people that she would not otherwise brush shoulders with such as high-ranking government officials and businesspeople working in unique fields.

Travel. Perks such as traveling opportunities, however, had some limitations such as when a newsroom operated on a skeleton staff or when the news organization could not afford to cover the expenses. Participant 7 said she hoped to travel more to get an experience covering areas outside the capital city and the country, but oftentimes, she had to decline such invitations. She said, “I understand that maybe the office doesn’t have the budget to send me there, but still, that’s what they promised in the job vacancy.”

Relationship with Supervisors

More than half of the stayers wanted to receive closer guidance and frequent feedback about their work, but they felt that not all supervisors were aware of these needs. Participant 12 said her ideal workplace would be one that had a family-like environment where reporters and supervisors had a good relationship. She said such environment was important for her because she wanted to improve her reporting and writing skills and would need the guidance from her supervisors. However, most of her supervisors barely gave constructive feedback or guidance about her work. She said,

“Regardless of whether we work remotely or in the office, we would notice if they cared about us or if they felt that the relationship with their subordinates was important.”

Meanwhile, Participant 7 said her coworkers had been complaining about the lack of leadership among some editors who were not as good at mentoring as some others. In her observation, her fellow reporters would be much more excited when they worked with a supportive editor who would guide them in shaping their stories. She said she expected to have some discussions about her stories, but she felt that her supervisors only cared about collecting her stories:

I miss nourishing discussions with editors. I want to learn if there are other angles that I can take ... I don't want a relationship between a reporter and an editor only revolves around what to cover, where's the article, and what to edit. It's supposed to be more intimate because reporters like me need to learn a lot and get nurtured by the editors. (Participant 7)

Similarly, Participant 14 said she was not satisfied with her relationship with a supervisor. She described her daily interaction with her supervisor as very minimal, limited to text messages that the supervisor would send if there was missing information in her stories. She said she expected more guidance since she used to work as an Indonesian-language journalist and did not have a prior experience in writing for an English news organization. Since she did not receive any mentorship, she could only try to figure things out on her own:

I want to get some feedback about my piece, detail feedback on which part is not right and what should be done ... Nowadays, I would check the company's website to learn about the writing style. This is like an autodidact learning. (Participant 14)

What to Improve

Stayers expressed their hope that the management would undertake some actions to improve specific areas, namely: communication; facilities; digital focus; retention; pay and transparency; and training. This section details their suggestions.

Communication. Five stayers hoped that they would have closer communication with their editors because they believed that it would improve the quality of their works as well. Participant 7 said she hoped editors would receive “guidelines” from their supervisors about how to guide their reporters through discussions. Meanwhile, Participant 13 said she hoped to get a one-on-one mentorship by sitting together with the editor during the editing process, so she would get specific feedback on which parts that would need improvement.

Facilities. Two stayers said it was important for the management to improve the facilities in the office to make it a more comfortable and appealing place to work. Participant 6 said it would be better to extend the WIFI in a smoking area in the office since many coworkers often work while chatting in that area. She said although many journalists often worked remotely, they sometimes would come to the office, so small things such as a missing chair could create dissatisfaction. She said, “The atmosphere of the office will make it easy for people to be pulled out [from the job] because there is no sense of belonging.”

Focus on Digital. Three stayers said they wanted to see their news organization succeeding in their digital products and become a part of the progress. Participant 8 said young reporters should be “involved and assisted in the development of the multimedia program.” He said a lack of human resources might become a limitation to the digital

migration, so the management would need to address it. Likewise, Participant 12 said she wanted to be involved in the development of the online audience, but her supervisors did not seem to be interested in following up her ideas about using news stream platforms like Line Today. She said, “Maybe they have a different way of thinking because they are more experienced while I am still young. I just feel that young people read news in different platforms now.”

Retention. Two stayers said the management should address the retention issue seriously because running the newsroom with a small number of people would affect the quality of their journalistic work. Participant 6 said the Human Resources would need to be open to communication and listen to the employees’ aspirations. She regretted that talented journalists with great networks who were supposed to do in-depth reporting had to leave because they felt undervalued. She said, “How can it [name of news organization] advance if we are struggling to recruit new people and train them the same stuffs again.”

Pay and Transparency. Participant 8 said that management should improve the salaries the news organization offered to increase its bargaining power, so the talented journalists would “have a lot of things to consider and won’t just make an instant decision to leave. Meanwhile, Participant 7 suggested that the management be more transparent about the pay system to ensure fairness. She said, “We have lost many brilliant journalists. Many left because they were not satisfied with it [pay system]. That’s too bad and needs to be changed.”

Training. Two stayers considered a basic training in journalism as a very important element in their development as a young journalist. Participant 13 said she was

disappointed to learn that her news organization did not provide a basic training on journalism and writing although she was promised to receive one during her job interview. Participant 12 said she would appreciate any training that she could take to improve herself. She said, “Even if it’s only a week, it will be useful for us for a lifetime.”

RQ4: The Voluntary Turnover Intention Among the Stayers

RQ4 asked if stayers have the intention to leave the news organization or journalism altogether. The researcher asked whether the stayers can envision themselves working in the company and the industry in the next five years and provided the reasons. The researcher also asked them to recount what their friends and family said about their job.

Intention to Stay in News Organization

Only one journalist interviewed intended to stay in her news organization in the next five years. Participant 6 could picture herself climbing the career ladder in the news organization and she also believed that she was on the right track to achieve her long-term goal. She planned to apply for a scholarship to study abroad and get her master’s degree within five years. She was sure that working in the current news organization would open the path to that goal because she had a supportive working environment and workplace flexibility that would make it possible to take care of necessary requirements for the scholarships. She would use her degree to become a professor. The teaching profession would fulfill her criteria of an ideal job where she would keep learning, have workplace flexibility, and practice her English. She said, “I’ve seen some editors keeping their editing job while teaching. I hope that in the next five years, I will not stay in the

reporting position. I will be in [name of news organization] as an editor.” Participant 6 said her mother still had a conventional view about a job and often compared her to a rich cousin who worked as a civil servant. However, that did not deter her from staying in journalism. She said, “My mom feels sorry that I go home late at night. She should not just see it from how late I am when arriving home, but how free I am in the morning.”

Intention to Leave News Organization

Nearly all journalists in the stayers group intend to leave the organization at some point before the five-year mark mostly because they were dissatisfied with their pay or having a goal to work in an international publication. Participant 17 said although the working environment was great, he considered leaving so that he could earn more “to maintain his hobby and take care of his parents.” He also wanted to prove himself that he could get a better job in another news organization. Participant 8 said he planned to continue his education and come back to work in the news organization for a couple of years. After that, he wanted to work for international news organizations.

I really want to write for international news organizations such as *The Guardian* or *The New York Times*. It’s more about personal growth and satisfaction. It has been my goal after I worked for a year at [name of current news organization]. It will be a personal satisfaction for me if I can cover international events [name of events].

Meanwhile, Participant 12 said she would consider staying for another year if the management raised her salary in the upcoming contract signing. She said her current pay was low and the working environment was no longer comfortable because one of her favorite supervisors was dismissed. She said she would also consider staying to build a portfolio that she could use to apply for a scholarship. “The chance for journalists to

receive a scholarship is big. I plan to apply for it next year or the year after. Otherwise, I will look for a job in another English-language organization.”

Intention to Leave Journalism

Three journalists said they will leave the company and journalism altogether because they were concerned with the financial state of their news organizations. Participant 13 and Participant 14 said they were concerned with their job security because they had witnessed layoffs before and feared that it would happen to them. Participant 14 said in her previous job, her magazine was closed with short notice when they were still in the middle of preparing stories for the next edition. She said, “It was shocking. I think in the future, such a thing can possibly happen again, so I am seriously considering looking for other places to work.” She considered looking for a job as a media analyst in a corporation that had regular business hours. She said although it was not a journalistic job, it would enable her to see journalism from another perspective. Meanwhile, Participant 18 said she would not stay long if her pay in the news organization remained the same. She said, “Right now, print media is struggling, so I think I’m gonna go.” She planned to apply for a scholarship to study abroad next year to study early learning education to continue her family’s business. She said she might return to the news organization for a couple of years only to fulfill her paid leave obligation.

Friends and Family’s Pressure

Based on the interviews, nearly all female participants receive greater pressure from their parents to move to a better-paid and more convenient job. They either clearly expressed their disapproval of the salary or tried to inspire the participants to look for other jobs outside journalism.

Participant 12 said her parents did not like her job, but they could not do anything since it was her choice. She said her mother wanted her “to receive a higher salary and work as an office worker.” Her mom believed that an office job would be a safer choice because she did not need to be so mobile like a journalist. Meanwhile, her friends did not seem to be interested at her job. She said, “They just imagine that it must be a tiring job with a small pay.”

My parents don't like [my job], but I like it. My mom wants me to receive a higher salary and work as an office worker. She wants me to play safe instead of going here and there ... My friends think that my job is tiring and although I've shared my exciting experience, they don't seem to be interested. They just imagine that it's a tiring job with a small pay. (Participant 12)

Similarly, Participant 7 said her parents knew that her salary was not big, so they continuously encouraged her to leave the news organization. On the contrary, her friends often thought that she was rich because she worked in English-language news organization, which made her annoyed. However, she was proud to know that her friends considered journalists from her news organization to be “critical, knowledgeable, and impartial – free from political bias.” Meanwhile, Participant 14 said her parents never frankly gave their opinions about her job, but they would gently send some signals by asking, “There's a job vacancy in that company. Won't you be interested to apply?” or “Are you not interested to try working outside journalism?”

On the contrary, two male participants said their friends and parents are supportive of their career path and never asked them to move to another profession. Participant 17 said his friends were very supportive of his career choice, while his family were proud of him. Meanwhile, Participant 8 said his parents knew that he had “an opportunity to go to places that they never imagined.” He said they never told him to look

for other jobs outside journalism. His parents were obviously proud of him. He said, “Once my sister told me that my parents bragged in front of our relatives, saying “my son works in an English-language organization.”

Summary

These findings showed that while each individual may vary in their specific reasons to leave the news organizations, they might share similar complaints. The leavers group mentioned a combination of complaints such as burnout, declining journalism standards, management, mentorship, pay and transparency, fit, problem with supervisor, and training. There was also a minor finding on how pressure from parents played a role in the journalists’ decision to leave their job. These participants eventually quit after thinking that there was no way out of their situation or when they got a job offer that fits them.

Meanwhile, the stayers group still enjoyed their job, having autonomy, friendly company culture, friendship among their coworkers, learning opportunities, mentorship from their supervisors, networking chance, and workplace flexibility. Most of them still stayed in their organization because it still catered their career aspirations and personal goals. However, nearly all of them did not plan to stay long in the news organizations and three planned to leave journalism.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Journalism has seen tremendous challenges as news organizations struggle to survive the economic hardship caused by the everchanging digital landscape and the failure of traditional advertising model (Waisbord, 2019). This situation and its rippling effect, coupled with other factors, may have put newswriters at a career crossroads where they must choose whether to stay or leave the news organization and perhaps even the profession altogether. The purpose of this study was to understand the employee turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia, based on the principles of grounded theory. Furthermore, this study also explored the motivation to stay and the intention to leave among the existing journalists.

Summary of Major Findings

Working in an English-language publication can be a source of pride for many journalists in Indonesia. It serves a niche market of highly-educated Indonesians and expatriates or foreigners who want to know about what is happening in the country. Participants of this study, both fresh out of college and those with some years of experience, entered news organizations in this tight market with some simple expectations such as channeling their passion in writing, improving their English skills, practicing journalism, and boosting their journalistic career. Being young and idealistic, they did not just choose a random news organization as they sent out their resume. They chose news companies that had built a good reputation. Unlike four participants who had a solid journalistic experience either in Indonesian or English-language press, most participants were fresh graduates who immediately jumped into the opportunity. These

fresh graduates generally could make terms with their starting salary as they felt that they still needed to learn the rope. While for those who had a prior experience as a journalist in some Indonesian-language news organizations, moving to an English-language press became a way to expand their career opportunities. Furthermore, most of the participants aspired to pursue a career in international news organizations, receive prestigious fellowships, or continue their education abroad, so they felt that they were on the right track to achieve their dreams.

It did not take long for the journalists to develop clearer ideas of what constituted an ideal job after they had accumulated some experience working in the newsroom. Among the top criteria of their ideal jobs are the ones that can provide a decent salary, a comfortable working environment, work-life balance, and workplace flexibility. At the same time, they also developed some perceptions and feelings about their experiences. Participants in the leavers group quit their job on average after having worked for 4.5 years. Nearly all of them embarked on a job-searching activity while they were working in the news organizations, except for three participants who resigned without already having a job offer. Six participants stayed in journalism by moving to international news organizations, while the other four left the profession by making a business venture, taking an editing job in an international research center, starting a public relations career, and manning a policy and management research institute.

Interviews with the leavers group found that they resigned for a combination of reasons such as burnout, management, mentorship, pay and transparency, fit, problem with supervisor, and, training. Their former coworkers also cited similar reasons in

addition to the declining journalism standards and the looking for a chance to prove themselves.

It was only expected that pay became a part of the reasons to quit among half of the leavers group because they believed they deserved a higher pay for their English skills. However, I was surprised to learn that family pressure became a major consideration for two leavers who felt obligated to fulfill their parents' expectation over their pay. I had only designed a question about what family and friends thought about the profession for the stayers, but answers related to family pressure candidly came up when I interviewed the two leavers. This indicates that further research may be needed to learn how parental expectation plays a role in journalists' occupational decision-making. Meanwhile, in the stayers group, nearly all female journalists said their parents were unhappy with their salary and profession. From the interviews, it was apparent that most parents had a negative perception on the profession because their daughters were mobile a lot, went home late at night, and received low pay. They expressed their disapproval by encouraging them to look for an office job that offers a higher salary.

Pay, however, was not an important element for the other half of the leavers group who cited burnout, having different passion, problems with supervisors, personal growth, and unfair promotion as their reasons to quit. These participants said that they were fine with their pay until they face those situations.

Participants from both groups also mentioned that how their works were affected by the smaller number of people who worked in the newsroom. The reduced staff members and voluntary turnover left them with a skeleton crew to man the newsrooms, reducing the number of original reporting, and creating news deserts in poorly-covered

areas. A participant from the leavers group said that she only had an opportunity to do in-depth reporting for a couple of months before the management changed the direction and abandoned longer articles. This showed that the journalists' ability to offer in-depth information was limited by the smaller number of human resources in the newsroom.

The four participants who left their profession had reasons that were unique for each of them. Participant 1, for example, said although she was proud of her works as a journalist, as time went by, she constantly felt drained and irritated because her works took most of her energy and consumed her personal life. For this participant, the only way to get out of her situation was by leaving the profession, demonstrating a relationship between burnout and career change as shown in a previous study on burnout among young newspaper journalists in the United States (Reinardy, 2011). Meanwhile, Participant 11 decided that he could not stand his boss' bad temperament. He also could not find joy in the job anymore because he could no longer cover his topic of interest after the management removed the beat or the subject area. Again, this newsroom restructuring was a common result of reduced staff size and voluntary turnover.

Another surprising finding that emerged from the interviews with both leavers and stayers was mentorship. This appeared in the interviews with journalists from both groups who worked for less than three years. Having no proper mentorship became a source of dissatisfaction among half of the stayers, who felt that they often did not get the much-needed guidance in their early career. These journalists expected to have a discussion over their story ideas and reporting, so they would get a better idea on what to pursue and which angle that would be more interesting to write. They also wanted to get regular and thorough feedback on their writing, for example by being more involved in

the editing process. Mentorship was so important for the young journalists that some of them began to question their own commitment to work after seeing their talented seniors and supervisors leaving the company. They felt that they lost their role models and were dissatisfied with the communication style of the incoming supervisors.

Likewise, mentorship also became an important element for the journalists to enjoy and even stay in their job. Participant 6 said that although she realized that the pay was not much, she could still tolerate it and wanted to stay to learn from senior journalists that she admired in news organization, which provided her with a platform and a reputable name to channel her journalistic passion. She was the only participant among the stayers who could also envision herself climbing up the career ladder in the news organization and considering staying for more than five years.

Another important note was that some participants from the leavers group considered leaving when the benefits that they enjoyed most was eliminated. For example, Participant 9 of the leavers group said she was dissatisfied with her stagnant pay and heavier workload, but she liked the workplace flexibility and how the news organization accommodated her passion in science writing by allowing her work remotely when needed. That arrangement supported her ambition to apply for prestigious reporting fellowships and got invitations overseas. However, when the news organization eliminated the workplace flexibility, limited the traveling opportunities, and started to apply policies that compromised the news qualities, the participant's motivations to work just disappeared.

When I asked the participants from the leavers group to recount what they liked from their former news organization, they mentioned autonomy, friendly company

culture, friendship among their coworkers, learning opportunities, mentorship from their supervisors, networking chance, and workplace flexibility. This was similar to what the stayers liked about their jobs and what made them stay. Participants from the stayers group also complained about lack of family-like working environment, mentorship, salary, and training. However, as an individual, each participant had a different emphasize on elements that made him or her satisfied or dissatisfied.

Furthermore, it was apparent that the long-term plans or career goals of the participants played an important role in determining the needs of the participants to stay in the job and organization. Like their counterparts who left the news organizations, many of the participants in the stayers group also had the same ambition to study overseas or work in international news organizations. However, they felt that their current news organization was still a good place to learn or that they still needed to build more experience. Another explanation for the reasons to stay was that the participants were still waiting for a job offer that matched their criteria of an ideal job.

The important finding about the stayers is that seven out of eight millennial journalists plan to leave the news organization and three of them consider leaving the profession within five years. The three journalists who plan to leave the profession said their main reason was job insecurity because they had witnessed layoffs either in their close professional circle or in the industry and they were concerned that they would experience that.

Variations Across Gender and Ethnicity

The researcher did not find any significant variations across gender among participants from both groups. For example, some male and female participants shared

similar complaints in the areas of pay and mentorship. Those who had complaints about pay felt that they were not compensated enough for their bilingual skill regardless of their gender. This finding supported previous research that suggested there was no stark difference between men and women in their perception of fairness and job satisfaction (Witt & Nye, 1992). This study found that female stayers faced greater family pressures to look for a job outside journalism. Since no male stayers reported any pressure from their family to look for another job, this finding might indicate that female journalists receive less support from their families to stay in the profession.

The researcher also found that ethnicities did not pose significant differences in the participants' opinions about their job and work conditions. What shaped their perceptions over what made them happy or unhappy in the job were their experiences with the company, personal expectations, and career goals.

Theoretical Implications

This study fills a geographical gap in the existing literature of job satisfaction and employee turnover among journalists by focusing on millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia. The theoretical significance of this study is that it brings together theories and studies of voluntary turnover and job satisfaction in general and particularly among journalists in the United States and Indonesia. This study also attempted to draw a grounded theory that can expand the previous literature on newsroom voluntary turnover among young journalists.

While some of the findings also confirmed Herzberg's two-factor theory that employees cannot find satisfaction by denying their basic needs to get decent pay (Sachau, 2007), interviews with both groups also showed that low pay does not always

become a strong enough reason to leave this profession. In fact, only one participant from the leavers group was adamant about leaving the job for better pay. Some other participants mentioned a combination of some reasons, including pay, while the remaining others said their reasons to leave were unrelated to pay.

Some findings of this study show that the theory of job embeddedness was suitable to explain why people leave or stay in the organization. For example, Participant 6 said she was not too obsessed with pay because she wanted to “open people’s eyes” through her articles, so that they would become more aware of important issues related to human rights. This participant’s motivation in the job shows the humanistic side of journalism and is aligned with the purpose of journalism “to be helpful” (Thomas, 2019, p. 364). Furthermore, her ambition to study abroad and to become an editor at her news organization fit with the company policy and the company’s need to groom future editors. This participant also developed strong bonds with her supervisors and enjoyed the flexible time that became the perks of the news organization. Although her family did not like her job, she displayed nearly all three critical aspects of job embeddedness, in which she was stuck in a web of *fit*, *links*, and *sacrifice* (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The findings of this study diverge from Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory since mentorship, which falls under the *relationship with supervisors* in the hygiene theory, and the *work itself*, which is a part of the motivation theory, could both serve as a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction depending on each individual (Locke, 1979). Elements of job satisfaction can also be very interrelated. For example, a lack of mentorship and communication can become a stressor for new journalists as they had to figure out their own assignments, news angles, and writing style. These stressors, coupled

with the demanding nature of the job itself, can create burnout as seen in a participant who eventually left the profession.

This study showed that millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia shared similar dissatisfactions in pay and job security, just like their Indonesian-language journalist counterparts (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012). However, the young English-language journalists' complaints about pay mostly stemmed in pay system and transparency, the small difference in pay compared to Indonesian-language journalists, and a big gap of pay with fellow English-language journalists who work in foreign news organizations. Findings of this study might be able to give us a glimpse of the voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among English-language journalists in countries where English is not the first language, but we should be careful in generalizing the results.

This study found that millennial journalists looked for a friendly and casual working atmosphere that made them feel valuable to the organization. Unlike their older fellow journalists, the millennial journalists in Indonesia preferred to work outside the office. They did not like to come into an office since they did not want to have a formal interaction that showcased the hierarchy in the workplace. However, they sought close mentorship and constant feedback from their direct supervisors. These findings are similar to the characteristics of U.S. millennial workers who, influenced by digital advancement and desire for work-life balance, expected to have casual workplace that allowed them to work remotely and received rich feedback (Ng, 2010; Thompson & Gregory, 2012). This study also confirms the findings of previous literature about millennials, specifically, how they embrace a working environment that is fun and offers

flexible workplace, informal use of space, non-hierarchical teamwork, digital environment, social learning, and frequent feedback (Bennett et al., 2012; Trees, 2015).

This study found that elements of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were layers that could increase or decrease depending on what the participants felt about their experience and expectation in the news organization, as well as their career and personal goals. One journalist might not be able to tolerate the long working hours and low pay, while the other journalist might not really consider them as a problem because he or she could use the workplace flexibility to pursue some career goals.

When one or more of the important elements of satisfaction went away, the journalist started evaluating if they still had enough reasons to stay and comparing them to other opportunities out there (Mobley, 1977). By understanding the relationship between newswriters' perception about what they want and what they think they actually get from the job (Locke, 1968), I concluded that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not only "complex emotional reactions to the job" (p. 7), but also involve a personal calculation of give and take. This is similar to reciprocity theory, defined as "the equality of one's perceived investments in and benefits from an exchange relationship, relative to the person's own internal standards regarding this relationship" (Schaufeli, 2006, p. 81). Although these journalists had little expectations of their first job and salary, they were looking for career advancement and were eager to learn new skills, which resonated with a previous study about millennials in Canada (Ng, 2010).

Findings of this study showed positive and negative aspects of voluntary turnover at *individual, organizational, professional, and societal* levels. At the individual level, voluntary turnover could be positive because the millennial journalists wanted to advance

their career by moving to prominent international news organizations. In this study, nearly all stayers who planned to stay in journalism wanted to work for foreign news organizations in the future, and six leavers ended up doing so. On the other hand, the journalists might lose the opportunity to build their leadership and decision-making skill as an editor that they might otherwise get in the former organization since they would have to start over in the new workplace. Journalists like Participant 3 might also need to conform the desire to cover local news as international news organizations usually have more general news preferences for their global audience.

At the organizational level, voluntary turnover can be healthy for organizations when they hire experienced journalists who offer fresh skills, ideas, and perspectives, or letting go of journalists who no longer had passion in the profession. It will remain positive so long as the newsroom still possesses an adequate number of human resources. However, voluntary turnover would affect journalistic standards if the newsrooms are forced to run with skeleton crew as seen in the experience described by Participant 9. It may further hurt the organizational function if the newsrooms are losing talented journalists who happen to become informal leaders admired by their juniors. This can trigger more resignations that can affect the daily routines of the newsrooms.

At the professional level, voluntary turnover showed the presence of a global career advancement since journalists from a small publication have a chance to move to a national and international news organizations. The downside of voluntary turnover is that journalists who are leaving carry with them an amount of institutional knowledge that may take time to rebuild by new people who replaced them. Newsrooms with high voluntary turnover rate are getting younger and younger, and audience might miss a

chance to read advanced reporting that requires more journalistic experiences and wider networking.

At the societal level, voluntary turnover in journalism also showed the competition to get the best talents among local and international news organizations. However, the economics of journalism have given greater pressure for smaller publications, so winning the competition can be hard. Elite news organizations such as *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Bloomberg* have bureaus around the globe and have stronger financial power, and therefore, have access to the best technology and human resources. They also have the privilege to earn the trust of readers from “globalized elites” (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016, p. 405). Local readers who cannot afford to subscribe to the elite groups and those who want to read more local content also deserve good journalism. Furthermore, we have seen talented journalists leaving their profession because it lacks job security. If not well addressed, voluntary turnover can weaken the function of journalism within a larger social system level as the institution is losing people who upholds journalistic ideology and professional roles.

Practical Implications

This study documents the sources of satisfactions and dissatisfactions experienced by millennial journalists of English-language press in Indonesia. It provides specific ideas on the occupational challenges faced by the young journalists, which also reflect some of the major problems in the industry.

This study also shows that journalists can have a different set of expectations during the various stages of their career. They might not expect much when they first joined the news organization, but their expectations, dreams, and goals can evolve as time

goes by. That is why it would be important for the management to know the journalists' individual development plans, so they would be able to know how the news organization could help them achieve the plans and get an idea on how long the journalists will stay. This study shows that there is a need for the management to create an anonymous job satisfaction survey to get specific and honest feedback to improve the newsroom since not all journalists are being truthful about their reasons to quit the job. The survey and a real follow-up action will not only help the news organization to design and develop a retention plan for the young journalists, but also show that management actually care about them.

This study has found that some elements such as mentorship and communication are an important factor that can make the young journalists either happy or unhappy in their work. The findings showed that journalists expected an intimate discussion with their editors and frequent feedback that can help them improve their reporting and writing quality. Since an editor's job is also about managing people, it will be important for the management to invest to their editors by offering some workshops that can equip them with communication, leadership, mentorship, and management skills.

While previous literature emphasized the need of training for older journalists to catch up with the changing technology in the newsroom (Willnat et al., 2013), this study found that young journalists were eager to take various kinds of trainings. Depending on their education background and prior working experience, the journalists expected a basic training on practical skills, such as interviewing and writing, and an advanced training such as data, investigative, and multimedia journalism. This study suggests that news organization include training as a part of the benefits in their employment package

because eliminating training will create dissatisfaction early on for fresh graduates who are not majored in journalism or have no background in writing for English-language press.

Poor pay is a chief complaint among journalists in addition to stress and long hours (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003), so news organizations need to come up with ideas that are made based on the best practices in employment. One of the problems related to pay that can be addressed is transparency since unfair pay structure or promotion can result in dissatisfaction and even impulsive quitting. Management should also try to be open with an idea of negotiating pay since this will create a more democratic workplace. Journalists in this study also mentioned that their pay was below the standard of a reporting job that requires English skill, so the management should address this issue by assessing their salary competitiveness among news organizations that requires the same qualifications. Since pay is a part of a job security issue, it is essential for news organization to evaluate their business model and find a way to finance journalism for many more years to come.

If pay is not their competitive edge, perhaps they should evaluate the company's policy and culture to find creative ways that can compensate the journalists for their hard work, such as better traveling opportunities, advanced trainings in journalism, more workplace flexibility, a four-day workweek, family-friendly policies such as longer paid maternal and paternal leave, and facilities such as a children corner, a lactation room, and a napping spot. I had an opportunity to visit *BuzzFeed* in New York City in 2018 and noticed that they had a hammock in the newsroom. Similarly, the *Washington Post* extended its paternal leave from four paid weeks to 20 for new parents regardless of whether they give birth starting January 2020 (Owen, 2019).

Limitations

There were some possible limitations to this study. First, doing interviews at a distance between the United States and Indonesia was itself a limitation, but online interviewing offers practicalities and affordability to the researcher, who was still completing her study in the United States. Although the researcher and the participants had tried their best to be in a place that had a good access to the Internet, there were a couple of times when two of the 18 interviews were disturbed by unstable Internet connections. In addressing this limitation, the researcher provided the participants with the interview transcripts as a part of the member checking strategy to ensure accuracy.

Another concern to this study was whether participants – particularly the stayers and the leavers of the *Post* – would be willing to speak candidly with the researcher as a potential future supervisor or reference. In order to mitigate this, the researcher designed some indirect questions that used a third-person perspective such as what their colleagues think about particular job issues or general questions that ask the informants to describe some characteristics of their ideal workplace. Indirect questions “may also be an indirect statement of the pupil’s own attitude, which he or she does not state directly” (Kvale, 1996, p. 134).

This study focused on journalists and editors, thus showing one side of the occupation. Although the financial crisis in journalism has become a common knowledge, this study does not provide the perspective of the management part of news organizations by interviewing the higher-ups, Human Resources, and the owners of the news organizations. It remains unknown to what extent the news organization is

struggling financially and what direction they are taking to address the voluntary turnover issue.

A surprising challenge that the researcher encountered was the rapid change that happened to two of the three news organizations in the study. The researcher thought she would be able to find stayers with at least a couple of years of experience in each news organization. It turned out that in one news organization, the researcher could only find three stayers – all of whom possessing less than one year of experience. They still fit in the sampling criteria because they were not obliged to pay any financial fine for resigning from the job. This underlined the reality that newsrooms were getting not only smaller, but younger. Meanwhile, in another newsroom, the researcher could only talk to two stayers because one potential participant refused to participate in the interview. If the researcher had the luxury of time and budget, she would consider using a larger population of newswriters within an organization or across platforms that included TV journalists.

Directions for Future Research

This study is among a few studies focusing on voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among millennial journalists in English-language press in Indonesia. Future research can expand this study to interview the management, owners, and Human Resource of the news organizations. Scholars can also expand the sampling by including various newswriters such as photojournalists and copy editors in local English-language press in Indonesia. Future studies can also investigate the journalists' job satisfaction and voluntary turnover across the platforms to learn what similarities and differences that they may have.

This study shows that many of the journalists want to have a global career. Building on this finding, future scholars can investigate job satisfaction and voluntary turnover among English-language journalists working in foreign news organizations operating in the country. Scholars can also build on this study to investigate English-language journalists' voluntary turnover in Southeast Asian countries to provide a bigger geographical context since journalists' challenges can be different across countries. The findings of this study can also be revisited through a longitudinal study to see if there are any changes in the voluntary turnover phenomenon among young journalists.

Conclusion

This study explored the voluntary turnover and job satisfaction among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia to understand why they quit their organization or profession altogether. This study also investigated the motivation to stay and the intention to leave among the current journalists.

Journalism is a calling and is certainly not a job for everybody. It might give peace of mind learning when a journalist left the profession because he or she wanted to pursue another passion. However, many of the reasons to leave stemmed from a combination of complaints such as burnout, declining journalism standards, management, mentorship, pay and transparency, fit, problem with supervisor, and training. They eventually made the decision to leave after thinking that there was no way out of their situation or when they got a job offer that served their unfulfilled wishes and matched their career and personal goals.

The stayers also had similar complaints in some areas such as a lack of mentorship, pay and transparency, and training. They stayed because of various reasons,

such as they enjoyed doing their job, having autonomy, friendly company culture, learning opportunities, networking chance, and workplace flexibility. More importantly, they felt that they were still on track with their career aspirations and personal goals by staying in the news organization.

These stayers might still be around for the time being, but most had expressed an intention to leave. One of the highlights of this study was that seven out of eight millennial journalists plan to leave the news organization and three of them consider leaving the profession within five years. This finding should raise a concern among journalism institutions because they might lose the institutionalized memory of their organization. Furthermore, since English-language press has become a window of information between the country and the rest of the world (Carpenter & Ekdale, 2019), Indonesians should also be concerned with how they would be represented in the global conversation if journalists who become their voice are not staying long.

The voluntary turnover problem indicates that news organizations need to make transformation in managing their personnel, especially in retaining their talented millennials. The first step that the management can do is listening to the voice of their journalists. The management should also keep trying to address the crisis in the economics of journalism, which obviously has affected journalists as the frontline workers. These efforts, when combined with a troop of passionate journalists, should make a better workplace where good journalism thrives.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The researcher will use public information obtained from social media LinkedIn and later verify it with the informants to answer RQ1. RQ2 refers to the leavers' last job in journalism. RQ3 refers to the leavers' last job and current job. RQ1 and RQ3 are designed for both the leavers and stayers. RQ2 is designed for the leavers, while RQ4 is designed for the stayers.

RQ1: What are the patterns of voluntary employee turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia?

1. Could you tell me about your job experiences since graduation?
2. How did you make each decision in applying for a job(s)?
 - a. What are your considerations in accepting a job offer?
 - b. Have you ever declined a job offer? Why?
3. What are the characteristics of an ideal job for you?
4. What did you do after quitting your job/journalism?
 - a. Why did you choose to work there?
 - b. How do you compare your previous and current job?

RQ2: What are the factors that influence leavers' decision to quit the job?

5. Please tell me about why you left.
6. Had you thought about quitting before?
7. What factors did you consider?
 - a. Please tell me about your work-life balance.
 - b. Did you have any experience of feeling burnt out?

c. Do you recall having a bad experience while working there?

d. Did it play a role in your decision to leave?

8. How did you make the decision to quit?

9. What did your former coworkers say when they quit their job?

10. When people leave their jobs, they sometimes provide feedback to management and sometimes they don't. Sometimes they share the real reason(s) they are leaving, and sometimes they provide reasons that the manager will find acceptable. Could you share with me how you handled telling your supervisor you were leaving, and whether you provided your real reasons for leaving?

11. Is there anything you would like to add regarding your decision to resign from your job?

RQ3a: What elements are important for leavers to experience job satisfaction?

12. Please tell me about your expectations when you applied for your previous job.

a. What reality did you find after starting to work?

b. How did you feel about that?

13. What did you like about your previous job? Why?

14. What did you like about your previous company?

15. What do you think can be improved in your previous company?

16. Is there anything you would like to add regarding your past working experience?

RQ3b: What elements are important for stayers to experience job satisfaction?

17. Please tell me about your expectations when you applied for this job.

- a. What reality do you find after starting to work?
- b. What do you feel about that?

18. What do you like about your job? Why?

- a. What do you like about your company? Why?
- b. Does that what make you stay in the company?

19. How do you describe your ideal workplace?

20. What do your coworkers say about the working condition in your office?

- a. What do they say about their relationship with their direct supervisors?
- b. Please tell me about your relationship with your coworkers.

21. What do you think can be improved in your company?

- a. What changes do you wish to see in your company?

22. Is there anything you would like to add regarding your current working experience?

R4: What is the voluntary turnover intention among the stayers?

23. What do your close friends or family say about your profession?

24. Do you still see yourself working in the organization in the next five years?

- a. Why/why not?

25. Do you still see yourself working in journalism in the next five years?

Why/why not?

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Name: Indah Setiawati

Project Title: To quit or not to quit: Newsroom turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research is being conducted to help understand newsroom turnover among millennial English-language journalists in Indonesia. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time without penalty. This research is funded by the Duffy Fund.

WHAT AM I BEING ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured, in-depth video or audio interview.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

This interview will last for approximately one hour. The study will start from January 2020 to March 2020. The total duration of the interviewees' participation during the entire period will be a maximum of 3 hours (from consent to the accuracy check).

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THE STUDY?

At least 18 people will take part in this study.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

There is no more than minimal risk for participants in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information contained in your records will not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study in a form that could identify you without your written consent.

WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

You will be compensated Rp 100,000 (\$7) upon completion of the study.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Please contact the researcher, Indah Setiawati, a master student, at istk8@mail.missouri.edu or her thesis advisor, Dr. Ryan Thomas at thomasrj@missouri.edu if you have questions about the research.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

You may contact the Campus Institutional Review Board if you have questions about your rights, concerns, complaints or comments as a research participant at (573) 882- 9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

A copy of this Informed Consent form will be given to you before you participate in the research.

SIGNATURES

I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

Your Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear [*insert name*],

My name is Indah Setiawati and I am a master's student from the Missouri School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about newsroom turnover among millennial English-language journalists. You're eligible to be in this study because you are included in the millennial generation of under or around 38 years old and work or previously worked in a local English language press in Indonesia. I obtained your contact information from my former coworkers, your company profiles, and/or previous participants that I have recruited.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to join a semi-structured, in-depth interview that will last approximately an hour. The interview protocol will include questions about pay and relationship with coworkers/supervisors. After the interviews are transcribed, the researcher will need to get in touch with you to do an accuracy check. The study will start from January 2020 to March 2020. The total duration of your participation during the entire period will be a maximum of 3 hours (from consent to the accuracy check). You will be compensated Rp 100,000 (\$7) after the completion of the study. I would like to audio/video record the interview with Zoom video conferencing app and then I will use the information to explain the participants' job satisfaction and the cause of voluntary turnover in this profession.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can stop participating at any time during the study without penalty. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at istk8@mail.missouri.edu.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Indah Setiawati