

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD? A COMPARISON
OF JOB SATISFACTION AND
MALE AND FEMALE
SPORTSWRITERS

by

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A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Journalism
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2010

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ABSTRACT

This study examined male and female sports journalists at the 100 largest U.S. newspapers to see if they differed in their job satisfaction, feelings of empowerment, and outlook toward the profession. It also examined if they differed in personal demographics and career paths. Finally, all of these factors were examined in relation to plans to leave the profession before retirement. This is one of the first studies to compare men and women working in sports departments. Data was collected for 193 sports journalists through an Internet survey.

The results suggest that sportswriters are satisfied with many aspects of their jobs and fairly satisfied overall. Men and women did not differ on any aspect of job satisfaction. Male and female sportswriters also scored similarly in feelings of empowerment and outlook toward the profession. For personal characteristics, women were significantly younger, more likely to be single, and were less likely to have children. The women also reported less time in the profession, not surprising given their age. Men and women were similar on all other personal and career variables studied, including positions held, income, education and preparation for their jobs.

The only demographic or career variable related to decision to leave sports journalism before retirement was gender. Women were significantly more likely to say they planned to leave the field. Women were more than twice as likely as men to say they would leave the field within the next two years. Age, race, income, marital status and other career variables did not statistically emerge as significant predictor variables in why a sportswriter would choose to leave the industry. When attitudinal measures were added,

only outlook toward the profession and goal internalization emerged with gender as related to decision to leave the profession. Those with more positive outlooks and higher internalization of their newspaper's goals said they would stay longer, but gender was still the dominant factor in variability within the decision to leave. Future research should examine reasons, beyond those investigated in this study, related to why women are more likely to leave sports journalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of graduate school and completing my thesis was one I could not have undertaken alone. There are many, many people who deserve my thanks.

I am most indebted to Dr. Jennifer Greer, whose encouragement and patience helped guide me through the research process. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Wilson Lowrey and Dr. Lance Kinney for their invaluable guidance and input along the way.

Finally, many thanks are in order to my wonderful family. I could not have finished this without your support.

And last but not least, to my wonderful husband Brett. You have been my rock throughout this process. Thanks for understanding all the nights I spent curled up clutching papers and my computer, and for encouraging me each step of the way. My name may be on this paper, but without you it never would have seen completion.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
3. METHOD.....	27
4. RESULTS.....	40
5. DISCUSSION.....	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	71
APPENDIX A.....	75
APPENDIX B.....	78
APPENDIX C.....	83

LIST OF TABLES

1. Career characteristics, compared by gender.....	49
2. Mean satisfaction scores for 11 aspects of the job, compared by gender.....	50
3. Mean scores for aspects of goal internalization, perceived control, and perceived competence, compared by gender.....	52
4. Mean scores for professional outlook items, compared by gender.....	53
5. Regression model for length of time journalists plan to remain in the field, as related to attitudinal measures, personal demographics, and career characteristics.....	56

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After 18 years, numerous awards and countless stories, veteran sportswriter Joanne Gerstner walked away from *The Detroit News* on June 14, 2009. Gerstner began her newspaper career in 1993 on what she called a routine path, starting out at small newspapers. Gerstner, who has both bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from Oakland University and Northwestern University respectively, worked her way up the newspaper ladder with stops at *The Cincinnati Inquirer* and *USA Today* before spending the last decade of her career at *The Detroit News*.

Her departure from her traditional sports journalism career was spurred on by numerous events, she said in a telephone conversation on Oct. 9, 2009. Gerstner, who covered the NBA's Detroit Pistons franchise for eight years, said she saw a lot in the male-dominated profession over two decades. Gerstner was frequently the only woman at practice who was not a secretary distributing phone messages. Gerstner also faced challenging situations. She was once physically threatened by a minor league baseball player wielding a bat after she wrote about his poor performance on the field. She was called a token female hire by colleagues (Personal communication, Oct. 9, 2009).

"Sports writing is the last profession on earth that I know for certainty 80 years from now when I walk into an NBA practice, it will be run by men with men on the floor," Gerstner said. "There is no possibility that I will walk into an NBA practice and see half women there. That's not the way things work. I was the thing that did not fit" (Personal communication, Oct. 9, 2009).

Gerstner's views on being the "outsider" despite 18 years experience are not uncommon among female sportswriters. According to the 2006 Racial and Gender Report Card of the Associated Press Sports Editors, women made up just 12.6 percent of the total staffs of APSE member newspapers. Of the 320 sports editors included in the survey, 16 were women and they accounted for 5 just percent.¹ In addition to being in the minority, female sportswriters have faced discrimination from the athletes they cover, their editors, their colleagues and their readers. Renee Loth entered journalism after a high school guidance counselor told her that newsrooms were no place for a "lady" to work. "She was right, though," Loth wrote in *The American Editor*. "In the early 1970s newsrooms were no place for a lady. Or a woman."² Mary Schmitt Boyer, a reporter covering the Cleveland Cavaliers, was highlighted in a "60 Minutes" segment by Andy Rooney as a woman working in a job that women shouldn't do.³ "Female sports reporters have been underdogs since they began in the field. They face many obstacles that their male counterparts do not, but perhaps their biggest hurdles to leap are stereotypes – both those formed in the heads of athletes and those held by media users."⁴

The job satisfaction and career plans of both male and female sportswriters may have been affected by recent changes in the newspaper business. The industry has been

¹ R. Lapchick, J. Brenden, and B. Wright, *The 2006 Racial and Gender Report Card of the Associated Press Sports Editors*, University of Central Florida, DeVos Sport Business Management Program, (2006).

² Renee Loth, "Being the Only Woman in the Room," *The American Editor* (March 2005): 9.

³ Tracey Dodds, "Opening Minds Harder than Opening Doors," *The American Editor* (January-February 2000): 10-11.

⁴ Ada Diaconu-Muresan, Christopher Murray, Joshua Padilla, Jennifer Greer and Marie Hardin, "Gender's Role in Perceptions of Persuasiveness and Quality of Sports Columns," Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C., August 2007: 3.

challenged by layoffs, cutbacks and lack of opportunity for advancement following a nationwide downturn in economic conditions. More than 15,000 employees at U.S. newspapers were laid off or offered buyouts in 2008.⁵ The layoffs and buyouts continued at the same pace in 2009, when 14,845 people were affected.⁶ In January 2010 alone, the tally stood at 798 jobs lost.⁷

While many studies have been done about the experiences, careers and job satisfaction of female sportswriters, few have compared the experiences and attitudes of male and female sportswriters to determine if satisfaction levels and differences in career plans are gender-based or a product of more general newspaper industry challenges.

This research will examine the attitudes of both male and female sportswriters toward their jobs and will compare career plans by gender. The objective of this study is to examine differences in male and female sportswriters on demographics, job satisfaction, empowerment, career plans and patterns, and to examine the relationship among these variables. While studies have examined the demographics of newspaper sports departments and looked at the attitudes and experiences of women in sportswriting careers,⁸ the same questions have not been asked of both male and female sportswriters in regard to job satisfaction, empowerment and career plans. While this paper uses the term sportswriter and sports journalist throughout this paper, the study also examines

⁵ Robert Hodiern, "Is There Life After Newspapers?" *American Journalism Review* February/March (2009): 20.

⁶ Paper Cuts, "2009: Layoffs and Buyouts at U.S. Newspapers," <http://graphicdesignr.net/papercuts/2009-layoffs/>.

⁷ Paper Cuts, "2010: Layoffs and Buyouts at U.S. Newspapers," <http://graphicdesignr.net/papercuts/>

⁸ Lapchick, Brenden, and Wright, (2005): 804-805.

attitudes and career plans of anyone working in an editorial capacity in sports departments including editors, copy editors, freelancers, bloggers and columnists.

Theoretical assumptions

Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, in examining influences on media content, list five levels that impact media content: the individual level, the media routines level, the organization level, the extramedia level and the ideological level.⁹ This study will focus mainly on the individual level. The individual journalist is the most basic of influences on media content, but individuals are influenced by numerous other factors surrounding them, which leads to the media content that is produced and disseminated to media consumers. Shoemaker and Reese argue communication workers' characteristics, backgrounds in both personal and professional arenas, personal attitudes and professional roles can influence media content.¹⁰ Shoemaker and Reese said they believe that there is no direct influence of journalists' characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences on media content. However, they also said that those factors do influence both personal and professional attitudes and roles.¹¹ "Of these two sets of attitudinal variables, we believe that communicators' professional roles and ethics have more of an influence on content than do their personal attitudes, values, and beliefs," Shoemaker and Reese wrote.¹² Because the individual, who is influenced by varying factors, has an impact on media

⁹ Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishing Group, 1991), 84.

¹⁰ Shoemaker & Reese (1991): 80.

¹¹ Shoemaker & Reese (1991): 80-81.

¹² Shoemaker & Reese (1991): 80-81.

content, it is important to understand who members of the media are and what they believe their professional roles are in the newsroom.

One other area that the individual journalist has arguably impacted is the coverage of women in sports. The lack of improvement in the quality and amount of coverage of women in sports has led some to question the correlation between the coverage of women's sports and women in sports journalism.¹³ Some researchers have suggested that for women to receive equal treatment in sports media, they must first make inroads into the sports journalism profession, as writers, editors and in management positions.¹⁴ Theberge and Crook argue that under-representation of women's sports in media coverage is due to male dominance in journalism and especially sports journalism.¹⁵ In 2006, researchers looked at the reinforcement of male hegemony in sports journalism textbooks, and after examining the status of women in eight sports journalism textbooks, found that overall the books do not encourage future journalists to address gender inequities found in sports journalism.¹⁶ An increase in sports participation by women has not drastically altered coverage of women in the sports pages either. "Despite the recent rise in the number of females participating in sport, and the perhaps less dramatic rise in the social acceptance and appreciation of women's sports, there has been little

¹³ Nancy Theberge and Alan Crook, "Work Routines in Newspaper Sports Departments and the Coverage of Women's Sports," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 3 (1984): 196.

¹³ Theberge and Crook (1984): 195.

¹⁴ Pamela J. Creedon, "Training Women as Sportswriters: Coverage of Women in Athletics," *Journalism Educator* 48 (1994): 46-47.

¹⁵ Theberge and Crook (1984): 196.

¹⁶ Marie Hardin, Julie Dodd, and Kimberly Lauffer, "Passing It On: The Reinforcement of Male Hegemony in Sports Journalism Textbooks," *Mass Communication & Society* 9 (2006): 492.

improvement in the quality and amount of coverage of women in the North American sports media,” Theberge and Crook wrote.¹⁷

In an investigation of interscholastic equity on sports pages, Pederson concluded that marginalization of women’s sports coverage occurs in large part because of the composition of the newsroom.¹⁸ Pederson theorizes that an increase in female sports reporters should increase the coverage of women’s sports, which would shift the landscape of sports media.¹⁹ Some researchers argue that the low level of women’s sports coverage could be a direct reflection of the lack of women working in sports departments.²⁰ “The low percentage of women working in sports media seems to mirror the low percentage of women in mediated sports coverage. Women’s sports have consistently received paltry coverage in relation to men’s sports. Some scholars and industry insiders believe the marginalization of women in sports departments is the reason for the scant coverage. As women get ‘equal opportunity’ in sports departments, they believe, female athletes will get more play on sports pages and in broadcasts because women sports writers, editors and producers will ensure it.”²¹

Research also points out that sports journalists bring a value system to the newsroom that impacts their coverage and leads to lopsided, stereotypical coverage of

¹⁷ Theberge and Crook (1984): 195.

¹⁸ Paul M. Pederson, “Investigating Interscholastic Equity on the Sports Page: A Content Analysis of High School Athletics Newspaper Articles,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 19 (2002): 419-421.

¹⁹ Pederson (2002): 419-421.

²⁰ Marie Hardin and Stacy Shain, “Strength in Numbers? The Experiences and Attitudes of Women in Sports Media Careers,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82 (2005): 804-805.

²¹ Hardin and Shain (2005): 804-805.

women's sports.²² These attitudes include the belief that compared to men, women are naturally less interested in competitive sports and less athletic.²³ "The role and representation of women in mass media always have been of concern to American feminists, especially those aligned with liberal feminism."²⁴ One of the objectives of the feminist movement has been to change the pecking order of professional women in media outlets, and, also, their under-representation in the media.²⁵

To best cover the community a newspaper represents and fulfill its role in a democracy, some argue that it is vital for that paper to reflect the racial diversity of society.²⁶ "Some scholars argue that a diversified newsroom will improve coverage of minority communities and issues; others think that the power of journalistic norms will constrain minority journalists so that they will be unable or unwilling to enhance the news coverage of minorities."²⁷ The issue of equal representation on the sports pages — and newspaper pages in general — is an issue because the media make up a strong and powerful institution that both reflects and shapes both perceptions and behaviors. Because of this, it can be argued that newspapers' treatment of women is vital to the struggle for women's advancements.²⁸

²² Hardin and Shain (2005): 804-805.

²³ Hardin and Shain (2005): 804-819.

²⁴ Marie Hardin and Stacy Shain, "Feeling Much Smaller Than You Know You Are: The Fragmented Professional Identity of Female Sports Journalists," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23 (2006): 322-323.

²⁵ Marjorie Ferguson, "Images of Power and the Feminist Fallacy," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7 (1990): 215.

²⁶ Terri Towner, Katsuo Nishikawa, Rosalee Clawson and Eric Waltenburg. "Interviewing the Interviewers: Journalistic Norms and Racial Diversity in the Newsroom," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, Illinois, 20 April 2006: 1.

²⁷ Towner, Nishikawa, Clawson and Waltenburg, (2006): 1.

²⁸ Theberge and Crook (1984): 196.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to examine (1) sportswriters' demographics, (2) their job satisfaction, (3) their feelings of empowerment and (4) their career plans and patterns.

A review of the existing literature was conducted for this study of sportswriters and their careers, and the literature comprises of four sections. The first section examines the demographics of journalists in general, as well as sportswriters. The next section examines sportswriters' feelings of empowerment in their jobs. The third section examines the career plans and patterns of sportswriters. The final section examines sportswriters' levels of job satisfaction.

Demographics

A good deal of research has been conducted over the years on the demographics of newspaper employees and sports departments in particular. Studies have been done repeatedly that show the disproportionate numbers of women who are employed by sports departments in newspapers. Much of this research in the field can be traced back to the steps the American Newspaper Editors took in 1978 when they outlined a mission to up diversity levels in the newsrooms across the country by the year 2000.²⁹

In 1978, the American Society of Newspaper Editors created an annual newsroom employment census in order to measure the industry's success in pursuing diversity in newsrooms. This inaugural survey found roughly 43,000 full-time journalists working as

²⁹ Marie Hardin and Erin Whiteside, "Fewer Women, Minorities Work in Sports Departments." *Newspaper Research Journal* 27 (2006): 38-51.

editors, reporters, copy editors or photographers. Of these, 3.95 percent were minorities.³⁰ This study is cited often in both professional and research-driven journalism publications as a benchmark for the growth that has occurred.

A report from the Media Management Center at Northwestern University said that after the boost in numbers in the late 1980s, progress for women in newspapers has slowed. The study, published in 2001, found that there were slightly more women working at papers than in the U.S. work force in general, but that women hold just 35 percent of newspaper management jobs, compared to the 44 percent they hold in the general work force.³¹

One study examined the numbers of women working at newspapers. In 2008, the American Society of Newspaper Editors marked the 30th anniversary of their 1978 survey with another to provide a more current industry benchmark. The study found that the number of full-time journalists working at daily newspapers decreased, but that the percent of minority journalists employed at these newspapers grew slightly to 13.52 percent.³² The American Society of Newspaper Editors' 1978 study can be used as a benchmark, especially when compared to the 30th anniversary edition of the survey that was conducted in 2008. In 1978, the initial newsroom employment census measured the industry's success in pursuing diversity in newsrooms. The survey found roughly 43,000 full-time journalists working as editors, reporters, copy editors or photographers. Of

³⁰ "Newsrooms Shrink; Minority Percentages Increase Slightly." American Society of Newspaper Editors. April 13, 2008.

³¹ "Progress Stalled for Newspaper Women; Greater numbers but Not Greater Advancement." *Media Report to Women* 30, 1 (2002): 3-4.

³² "Newsrooms Shrink; Minority Percentages Increase Slightly."

these, 3.95 percent were minorities.³³ This number translated to just 170 minorities working as journalists at the time. Fast-forward to 2008, and 30 years later, the percentage of journalists had jumped to 13.52 percent.³⁴

Studies have included or focused specifically on the gender composition of newspaper sports departments as well as that of the total newsroom.

“The sports department has historically been the most male-dominated space in U.S. newsrooms. In the early 1970s, the Associated Press estimated that only twenty-five women worked in newspaper sports departments, and just five worked in broadcasting. Although the number has grown exponentially since then, the percentage of women working in sports remains relatively low.”³⁵

Research regarding women and sports journalism careers is numerous and varied. While many different areas have been examined, the most prevalent studies focus on either the numbers of women in the profession or the attitudes surrounding them. “The ‘body count’ is only one way to measure the progress of women and racial minorities in newspaper sports departments, however, it is the most basic of indicators and should be periodically assessed.”³⁶

The first comprehensive survey to explore employment in U.S. newspaper sports departments was conducted by Marie Hardin and Erin Whiteside, and provided information regarding the employment of women and minorities.³⁷ This survey was

³³ “Newsrooms Shrink; Minority Percentages Increase Slightly.”

³⁴ “Newsrooms Shrink; Minority Percentages Increase Slightly.”

³⁵ Hardin and Shain (2005): 804.

³⁶ Hardin and Whiteside (2006): 41.

³⁷ Hardin and Whiteside (2006): 41.

completed in order to be used as a benchmark for future studies.³⁸ Another study conducted in 2008, determined that women made up 11.5 percent of total Associated Press Sports Editor member newspaper staffs. This number decreased from 2006, when women made up 12.6 percent of staffs.³⁹

According to the 2006 Racial and Gender Report Card of the Associated Press Sports Editors, women made up just 12.6 percent of the total staffs of APSE member newspapers. In addition, women made up less than 7 percent of columnists. Of the 320 sports editors included in the survey, 16 were women and they accounted for just 5 percent of respondents.⁴⁰

In another report published in the *Newspaper Research Journal* in 2006, researchers found similar numbers. Hardin and Shain found that for newspapers in the top 200 in circulation, the estimated percentage of women working in U.S. newspaper sports departments to be around 11 percent compared with 30 percent of those working in the entire newsroom. The number of women in sports departments was “far lower” than in the entire newsroom.⁴¹

Job satisfaction

In this study, job satisfaction is defined as a person’s feelings or affective responses to a particular job.⁴² It is, in many ways, a measurement of an overall level of

³⁸ Hardin and Whiteside (2006): 41.

³⁹ “AP Sports Editors Make Virtually No Progress Advancing Women.” *Media Report to Women* 36, 3 (2008): 3-4.

⁴⁰ R. Lapchick, J. Brenden, and B. Wright, (2005): 804-819.

⁴¹ Hardin and Shain, (2006): 325.

⁴² Michael K. Smucker, Warren A. Whisenant, and Paul M. Pederson, “An Investigation of Job Satisfaction and Female Sports Journalists,” *Sex Roles* 49 (2003): 402.

contentment with a job, but it is also a measure of contentment with different aspects of a job. Studies examine job satisfaction on numerous levels and with various populations. Researchers examined the general job satisfaction of journalists, the job satisfaction of sports editors and the job satisfaction of female sports journalists. Overall job satisfaction can be influenced by contentment in several areas, including work-personal life balance, the daily tasks of the job, compensation issues, career longevity, feelings of being valued and opportunity for advancement.

Job satisfaction in journalists

The general job satisfaction of all journalists has shifted over the years. In 1993, Pease and Smith found that the majority of 1,317 journalists were satisfied with their career choice.⁴³ However, in the survey, 60 percent of respondents said that they did not think they would be working for their current employer in five years.⁴⁴ One year later, Weaver and Wilhoit's survey of 1,156 journalists found that only 25 percent of those surveyed were satisfied with their jobs. This figure reflected a decrease in satisfaction from the mid 1970s.⁴⁵ The results of a 1999 study that examined journalists' job dissatisfaction indicated "satisfaction with employment (which includes such issues as opportunity to hold a steady job, the relationship between the amount of work and the amount of pay, the opportunity for advancement, and the opportunity for

⁴³ Ted Pease and J. Frazier Smith, "The Newsroom Barometer: Job Satisfaction and the Impact of Racial Diversity at U.S. Daily Newspapers," *Ohio Journalism Monograph 1*, Athens: E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University, 1993.

⁴⁴ Pease and Smith (1993).

⁴⁵ David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "Daily Newspaper Journalists in the 1990s," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Summer (1994): 2.

accomplishment) increased with length of current employment.”⁴⁶ More recent years have shown increases in job satisfaction. A survey conducted by the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation indicated that job satisfaction of journalists increased from recent years in 2007 for those with full-time work. More than 42 percent of employed journalists surveyed said that they were “very satisfied” with their current jobs in 2007, compared to 29 percent in 2001, and 31 percent in 2004.⁴⁷

Doug Underwood and Dana Bagwell surveyed more than 900 journalists to examine the relationship between journalists’ job satisfaction in the newsroom and their literary ambitions.⁴⁸ Over half of the respondents had written some form of literature and half reported that they had plans to write a form of literature.⁴⁹ Researchers found that literary ambition may be a factor in encouraging unhappy journalists to consider leaving the industry and that it may serve as an additional catalyst in actually leaving the newsroom.⁵⁰

Studies have also examined smaller subsets of journalists, including copy editors and city editors. Susan Keith conducted a national study of copy editors at 100 daily papers and found that 70 percent of respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with their jobs.⁵¹ However, only 23 percent of respondents said that they strongly agreed with

⁴⁶ Fiona McQuarrie, "Professional Mystique and Journalists' Dissatisfaction," *Newspaper Research Journal* 20, 3 (1999): 20.

⁴⁷ "Survey: Sunny News Amid Industry Turmoil," *Quill* 7, 9 (2008): 4.

⁴⁸ Doug Underwood and Dana Bagwell, "Journalists with Literary Ambitions No Less Satisfied with Their Jobs," *Newspaper Research Journal* 27, 2 (2006): 77.

⁴⁹ Underwood and Bagwell (2006): 77.

⁵⁰ Underwood and Bagwell (2006): 77.

⁵¹ Susan Keith, "Copy Editor Job Satisfaction Lowest at Small Newspapers," *Newspaper Research Journal* 26 (2005): 6.

the statement that they were satisfied with their jobs.⁵² One research question asked if satisfaction with supervisors predicted job satisfaction, and Keith found that there was a moderate relationship between how copy desk workers felt about their immediate supervisors and the level of job satisfaction they reported.⁵³ Andrew Zahler conducted a survey of members of the American Copy Editors Society in 2007 and found that copy editors' workload negatively affects how satisfied they are with their jobs.⁵⁴ Cutbacks in the industry leaves many copy desks relying on fewer workers to process content, which has in turn affected those workers' levels of job satisfaction. Zahler found that workload was negatively correlated with both job and performance satisfaction. Overall, the data collected in the survey suggested that copy editors were somewhat satisfied with their jobs and working conditions.⁵⁵ Zahler compared his findings to Keith's, and found that when compared, responses seemed to suggest lower job satisfaction among copy editors.⁵⁶

Examining a different group of journalists, Charles St. Cyr found that 88 percent of city editors were "less than highly satisfied with their jobs."⁵⁷ St. Cyr found that almost all respondents reported being less than very satisfied with news reporters' performances.⁵⁸ "Negative perception of how well reporters do their jobs was found to be

⁵² Keith (2005): 6.

⁵³ Keith (2005): 15.

⁵⁴ Andrew Zahler, "One-Third of Copy Editors Dissatisfied with Their Jobs," *Newspaper Research Journal* 28, 3 (2007): 20.

⁵⁵ Zahler (2007): 28.

⁵⁶ Zahler (2007): 29.

⁵⁷ Charles St. Cyr, "Study of City Editors Raises Concerns for Job Satisfaction," *Newspaper Research Journal* 29, 1 (2008): 21.

⁵⁸ St. Cyr (2008): 26.

the strongest predictor of low city editor job satisfaction.”⁵⁹ The strongest predictor of moderate to high city editor job satisfaction was found to be self-satisfaction.⁶⁰

Job satisfaction in sportswriters

Researchers have gathered a good deal of information regarding job satisfaction and sportswriters. Scott Reinardy conducted a survey of 236 newspaper sports journalists in 2006 to examine the burnout levels of sports editors, sportswriters, sports copy editors and sports page designers.⁶¹ Reinardy utilized the Maslach burnout inventory to examine burnout because it “represented an instrument to establish a better understanding of the personal, social, and institutional variables that promote or reduce burnout.”⁶² Reinardy found that overall, sports journalists suffered from moderate rates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.⁶³ Respondents reported a high rate of personal accomplishment, which Reinardy interpreted as a degree of job satisfaction.⁶⁴ Sportswriters at smaller newspapers who were younger and less experienced were found to suffer a higher rate of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than sportswriters with more experience at larger newspapers.⁶⁵

Many of the studies that have been conducted on the job satisfaction of sportswriters have focused specifically on the job satisfaction of sports editors. One study, also conducted by Reinardy, examined the job satisfaction of 184 sports editors

⁵⁹ St. Cyr (2008): 26.

⁶⁰ St. Cyr (2008): 26

⁶¹ Scott Reinardy, “It’s Gametime: The Maslach Burnout Inventory Measures Burnout of Sports Journalists,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 83, 2 (2006): 397.

⁶² Reinardy (2006): 398-399.

⁶³ Reinardy (2006): 397.

⁶⁴ Reinardy (2006): 397.

⁶⁵ Reinardy (2006): 397.

working at small, medium and large circulation papers in the United States.⁶⁶ The survey examined the role that burnout and possible stressors played in overall job satisfaction. Sports editors reported that they suffered from moderate rates of exhaustion and cynicism while demonstrating high rates of professional efficacy.⁶⁷ “Despite the excessive hours, the public criticism and the infringement on their personal lives, sports editors love their work. In fact, they enjoy it so much that they sacrifice a great deal of their personal lives in order to do it,” Reinardy wrote in his conclusion. “So while there could be more burnout occurring among sports editors than this study reveals, the satisfaction in doing the job overshadows it.”⁶⁸ Reinardy wrote that sports editors reported that they loved their jobs despite working excessive hours, receiving public criticism and having their personal lives infringed upon. “So while there could be more burnout occurring among sports editors than this study reveals, the satisfaction in doing the job overshadows it.”⁶⁹

Job satisfaction in women and female sportswriters

Other studies that have specifically examined the job satisfaction of female sports journalists. They found that women in sports journalism were satisfied with their jobs over all. Smucker, Whisenant and Pederson found that women in sports journalism who work at daily newspapers are satisfied with their employment on the whole. They measured job satisfaction in six areas: satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with people, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with the work itself,

⁶⁶ Scott Reinardy, “Survey Measures Burnout in Newspaper Sports Editors,” *Newspaper Research Journal* 29, 2 (2008): 40-42.

⁶⁷ Reinardy (2008): 49.

⁶⁸ Reinardy (2008): 50.

⁶⁹ Reinardy (2008): 50.

and total satisfaction.⁷⁰ In a measure of these areas of job satisfaction, women were found to be satisfied with their level of pay, supervision and the work they do. Dissatisfaction was found in opportunities for promotions.⁷¹ A 2003 study on job satisfaction and female sports journalists asserted that women in sports journalism have made great strides in the 1990s.⁷² The obstacles women in sports journalism face, such as being banned from locker rooms and dealing with sexual harassment, have been greatly reduced.⁷³ Still researchers contend a great deal of work needs to take place to increase the numbers of women in sports departments and in press boxes. “The addition of more women to sports beats and editorial positions has been a positive first step in the expansion of opportunities for women in sports journalism.”⁷⁴

Marie Hardin and Stacie Shain took research a step further than the traditional job satisfaction survey of female sportswriters, and instead examined factors that may drive women to leave sports media careers.⁷⁵ Hardin and Shain found that 73 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I am satisfied with my current job.”⁷⁶ Sixty-six percent of respondents said they were satisfied with the organization they worked for, while 62 percent said they thought their employers were “female friendly.”⁷⁷ “However, more than half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, ‘I have never felt discrimination’ in job duties or at the

⁷⁰ Smucker, Whisenant, and Pederson (2003): 402.

⁷¹ Smucker, Whisenant, and Pederson (2003): 401.

⁷² Smucker, Whisenant and Pederson (2003): 401.

⁷³ Smucker, Whisenant and Pederson (2003): 401.

⁷⁴ Smucker, Whisenant and Pederson (2003): 401.

⁷⁵ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809.

⁷⁶ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809.

⁷⁷ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809.

workplace.”⁷⁸ Hardin and Shain found that 72 percent of respondents had considered leaving their careers, and that there was a negative correlation between job satisfaction and whether female sportswriters had considered leaving their careers. Respondents listed hours (31 percent), lack of advancement (15 percent) and pay (11 percent) as their reasons for considering leaving their career.

Empowerment

This study also aims to measure the empowerment sportswriters feel toward their job, and if there are differences in the empowerment levels male and female sportswriters feel.

In one of the groundbreaking studies on empowerment, Spreitzer defined psychological empowerment as “the increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in cognitions that reflect an individual’s active orientation to his or her work role.”⁷⁹ It can also be defined as a cognitive state characterized by a sense of perceived control. Perceptions of competence and internalization of goals also are encompassed in empowerment. As one researcher wrote, “The psychologically empowered state was considered to be a cognitive state characterized by a sense of perceived control, perceptions of competence, and internalization of the goals and objectives of the organization.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809.

⁷⁹ G. M. Spreitzer “Psychological Empowerment at the Workplace: Dimensions, Measurements, and Validation.” *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (1995): 1443.

⁸⁰ Sanjay T. Menon, “Psychological Empowerment: Definition, Measurement, and Validation,” *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* (1999): 1.

Studies have examined empowerment in the workplace in many different ways. Often, empowerment is examined in relation to the job satisfaction of employees. Empowerment was directly linked to job satisfaction in two of these surveys. Hechanova, Alampay and Franco argued that empowerment can be viewed two ways. It can be seen as actions taken by an organization to share power and decision making, or it can be viewed as the perception or attitudes of the individuals towards their work and their role in the company.⁸¹ Fuller, Morrison, Jones, Bridger and Brown found the effects of psychological empowerment on transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The researchers “investigated whether the degree to which transformational leadership affects job satisfaction depends on the level of employees’ intrinsic task motivation.”⁸²

Sanjay Menon aimed to present an integrative definition of psychological empowerment from the perspective of the employee. He also reported the results of a study in which the goal was to come up with a psychometrically sound measure of psychological empowerment.⁸³ Menon’s study concluded that empowerment was “significantly and negatively correlated with centralization while being significantly and positively correlated with delegating and consulting behaviours on the part of the immediate supervisor, the individual’s global self-esteem and three outcome variables (organizational commitment, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behaviour).”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Hechanova, Alampay and Franco (2006): 72-78.

⁸² J. Bryan Fuller, Ruby Morrison, Ladon Jones, Donna Bridger and Valerie Brown, “The Effects of Psychological Empowerment on Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction,” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 139, 3 (1999): 390.

⁸³ Menon (1999).

⁸⁴ Menon (1999).

Women and empowerment

Gender issues have been studied because of the impact they can have on empowerment in the workplace, which includes the glass ceiling issue. “Gender discrimination remains a reality in our society,” researcher Mark D. Agars wrote.⁸⁵ These issues remain in newspaper sports departments as well, according to Renee Loth, who also said that the hundreds of women in sports writing have not made steady progress into positions of influence.⁸⁶ Reviewing the literature surrounding gender issues in the workplace led Agars to state that the literature reveals limited investigation of the impact of gender stereotypes on personnel decisions along with the demographic differences that present themselves in upper management.⁸⁷ Agars’ research aimed to illustrate that gender stereotypes haven’t been examined enough as a causal factor, and that they actually do play a powerful role in maintaining the glass ceiling. Agars’ study concluded that gender stereotypes cannot be dismissed as inconsequential, and that instead, there should be more examination of their roles in the workplace. “Considering stereotypes in the proper context, one in which their potential impact is not on one decision but on every decision, necessitates identifying the cumulative impact,” Agars wrote. “When one does, it is clear that substantial discrepancies in gender distributions at high levels of organizations are attributable, at least in part, to gender stereotypes.”⁸⁸

The glass ceiling has also been a focus of research in respect to other industries.

⁸⁵ Mark D. Agars, “Reconsidering the Impact of Gender Stereotypes on the Advancement of Women in Organizations,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28 (2004): 103-111.

⁸⁶ Loth (2005): 9.

⁸⁷ Agars (2004): 9.

⁸⁸ Agars (2004): 9.

James Guyot examined women's advancement in government and found that women advance more quickly in the appointive executive and judicial branches than they do in the elected legislative branch at both national levels.⁸⁹ "'Glass ceiling' seems an apt metaphor for the political architecture where 53 percent of the population are eligible but only 16 women join the one-hundred-member elite club that is the Senate of the United States," Guyot wrote. "The metaphor is deceptive, however, in describing reality, in explaining how we got to where we are, and in guiding speculation about where things may go in the future."⁹⁰

Erin Demaiter and Tracey Adams found that respondents from information technology organizations had a tendency to downplay the significance of gender, even while providing evidence that gender shaped their careers.⁹¹ Demaiter and Adams said that the gendered nature of organizations can limit women's opportunities for advancement and that while women have made inroads in some male-dominated jobs, studies show that women can be marginalized in masculine workplaces.⁹² Demaiter and Adams argue that the respondents' reluctance to see how gender conditions women's careers, along with the technical nature of their field, may have facilitated their success, even though these factors serve as barriers for other women.⁹³

⁸⁹ James F. Guyot, "Is the Ceiling Truly Glass or Something More Variable?" *Society* 45, 8 (2008): 529-533.

⁹⁰ Guyot, (2008): 529-533.

⁹¹ Demaiter and Adams (2009): 31-53.

⁹² Demaiter and Adams, (2009): 31-53.

⁹³ Demaiter and Tracey L. Adams, (2009): 31-53.

Journalists and empowerment

Empowerment issues and journalists have been examined in different ways. Some studies have examined the links between empowerment and job satisfaction, while others have examined journalists and the way they view empowerment as part of their job at a newspaper.

When examining links between empowerment and job satisfaction, autonomy was found to be one of the most important factors in levels of empowerment journalists felt toward their jobs.⁹⁴ The descriptive statistics from one survey found that journalists rated autonomy as the most satisfying work factor, while the lowest satisfaction level was found to be with the supervisor.⁹⁵ Both of these factors can play a part in journalists' feelings of empowerment at work. Reinardy's study also found that feelings of autonomy in the workplace was a predictor of job satisfaction.⁹⁶

Tom Brislin examined empowerment as a universal ethic in global journalism and how it affected journalists. Brislin found connections between journalists' feelings of empowerment and autonomy. "Autonomy is a critical defining difference between a propagandist and a journalist," Brislin wrote. "Although truth telling is certainly regarded as the prime imperative of Western journalists and even heralded as a universal imperative by international journalist organizations, it is autonomy that in direct proportion makes the reporting and disclosure of truths possible."⁹⁷ Brislin found a connection between journalists' autonomy and empowerment and the community they

⁹⁴ Reinardy (2008): 49.

⁹⁵ McQuarrie (1999): 25.

⁹⁶ Reinardy (2008): 49.

⁹⁷ Tom Brislin, "Empowerment as a Universal Ethic in Global Journalism," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 19, 2 (2004): 134-135.

serve, stating that “Autonomy empowers journalists to practice their professionalism, which in turn offers the potential to empower the citizenry. Professionalism itself, is, of course, empowering, as it allows the journalism to hold to values that are not subsumed by the prevailing system.”⁹⁸

Career plans

Examining the career plans of journalists, and sports writers in particular, has led to a good deal of historical research, as well as empirical studies to determine what affects the career plans and choices of these journalists.

To understand the career plans and patterns of journalists, it seems important to first understand what the norm is and what it used to be, in order to see how it changed. In the 1970s, women and racial minorities had limited opportunities for promotions to management positions in the news industry.⁹⁹ Before that time, women had typically only worked for the so-called “soft” news departments such as the society, features or food sections. According to Robert H. Giles in his book *Newsroom Management*, “these content areas were considered second-class by the men in charge of the newspapers, so there were fewer obstacles in the way of women’s attaining leadership of these departments as opposed to sports or local news.” The 1970s did see the advent of women breaking through some barriers and into editing jobs. This was due in large part to several major discrimination suits against companies like *The New York Times*, *The Washington*

⁹⁸ Brislin (2004): 134-135.

⁹⁹ Robert H. Giles, *Newsroom Management* (Detroit: Media Management Books, 1991), 591.

Post, *Newsday* and *Newsweek*.¹⁰⁰ In 2008, the Associated Press Sports Editors received a grade of “F” for their gender hiring practices from the University of Central Florida’s Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports.¹⁰¹ The grade was based on the fact that 90 percent of sports editors were men and 93 percent of columnists were men. Ninety-one percent of reporters were men. Women had made the most inroads as copy editors and designers. Men occupy 84 percent of copy editing and designing jobs.¹⁰²

In 2002, *Media Report to Women* published the findings of another national survey conducted by Selzer & Co. for the American Press Institute and the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. The survey included 273 top editors, who made up 40 percent of the newsroom leaders in daily papers with circulations of 50,000 or more.¹⁰³ The survey found that there were definite differences in the attitudes of men and women in the newsroom. Just one in five of the nation’s top female editors say they definitely want to move up in the newspaper industry and almost one in two anticipate a fresh start, saying they expect to leave their company or the news business entirely.”¹⁰⁴

The overall attitudes of women in sports journalism toward their careers are often examined. One survey of women who work in sports media examined and explored their everyday work experiences, as well as the factors that might discourage them from staying in the profession.¹⁰⁵ The study found that sports departments may have become

¹⁰⁰ Giles (1991), 591.

¹⁰¹ “AP Sports Editors Make Virtually No Progress Advancing Women,” *Media Report to Women* 36, 3 (2008): 3-4.

¹⁰² “AP Sports Editors Make Virtually No Progress Advancing Women,” (2008): 3-4.

¹⁰³ “Women Pessimistic About Moving Up at Newspaper, Plan Fresh Starts,” *Media Report to Women* 30, 4 (2002): 1.

¹⁰⁴ “Women Pessimistic About Moving Up at Newspaper, Plan Fresh Starts,” (2002): 1.

¹⁰⁵ Hardin & Shain (2005): 804.

more tolerant in the past decade, but that “women who enter sports media careers still face a patriarchal environment that discourages them from pursuing long-term tenure.”¹⁰⁶ Amber Willard conducted a study that examined women in the newspaper industry. In an article summarizing her findings, Willard wrote that women are leaving the newspaper industry at a higher rate than other media.¹⁰⁷ Willard’s study found that “women left their last newspaper position primarily because of frustration with management, which included feeling their workload was too heavy, believing they had little opportunity to advance, and wanting more personal time. The need for a higher salary was also a strong influence.”¹⁰⁸

Research questions

The literature above suggests that sportswriting is a male-dominated profession and that female sportswriters can face many obstacles when pursuing careers in the profession. Sportswriting is also shown to be a demanding profession that requires long and odd hours. The literature also suggests that job satisfaction and empowerment are linked, but this study wants to connect the two issues and examine them, especially with regards to gender issues. Therefore, the following research questions are posed:

RQ 1a: Do the men and women working in large newspaper sports departments differ in personal demographics

RQ 1b: Do the men and women working in large newspaper sports departments differ in career characteristics?

¹⁰⁶ Hardin and Shain (2005): 804.

¹⁰⁷ Amber Willard, “Why Do Women Leave Newspaper Jobs?” *Quill*, May (2007): 23.

¹⁰⁸ Amber Willard (2007): 23.

RQ2: Do male and female sportswriters differ on levels of job satisfaction?

RQ 3: Do male and female sportswriters differ in feelings of empowerment?

RQ 4: Do male and female sportswriters differ on their outlooks toward the
profession?

RQ 5a: Do male and female sportswriters differ on career plans in sports
journalism?

RQ 6a: How does job satisfaction/empowerment relate to career plans?

RQ 6b: Does this vary for male and female sportswriters?

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The method used to examine job satisfaction, feelings of empowerment at work, outlook toward the profession and career plans of male and female sportswriters was a survey delivered through a Web-based system. While the questions posed in this study could have been answered through depth interviews, field observation or focus groups, an online survey was chosen because it allowed the researcher to reach a wider number of respondents. A large number of respondents, especially if representative of sportswriters, can allow for the results to be generalized to a larger population of newspaper sportswriters. “The mass appeal of the Internet and its relatively low cost of use provide a method for quick and inexpensive transmission of web surveys to many potential participants.”¹⁰⁹ An online survey was also selected because the time required for data collection can be drastically reduced.¹¹⁰

Surveys, especially online surveys, allow researchers to draw a large and often diverse sample across broad geographic areas. “E-mail and web surveys seem ideal technologies for reaching rapidly across boundaries and great distances, with the result that their use can be expected to increase as computer capabilities and literacy continues to expand worldwide.”¹¹¹ The strong ability of the Internet to produce results with high

¹⁰⁹ Angela Dominelli, “Web Surveys – Benefits and Considerations,” *Clinical Research and Regulatory Affairs* 20 (2003): 409.

¹¹⁰ Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 352.

¹¹¹ Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Other Self-Administered Surveys in the 21st Century: The Beginning of a New Era*, (1998): 18.

external validity can be attributed to the extensive reach of the Internet, especially among populations of interest who work in wired, computer-based settings.¹¹²

Also, an online survey was chosen as the method of data collection because it can be more efficient and cost effective than a telephone or mail survey. A telephone survey was considered but was discarded because of the sensitive issues this topic covers, such as compensation and job satisfaction, and the method wouldn't allow responses to be anonymous. The ease of Internet surveys provides advantages over the traditional mail survey method.¹¹³ Web surveys provide survey capabilities beyond those available for other types of self-administered questionnaires, including interactivity.¹¹⁴ In addition, the continued increase in Internet use across many demographic sectors enables researchers to target large populations with special interests.¹¹⁵

There are limitations with Web surveys, however. "The enormous potential for e-mail and Web surveys must be balanced against an equally large weakness."¹¹⁶ The large number of possibilities for survey construction on the Web presents risks of increased survey error.¹¹⁷ Two of the most important issues with Web surveys are abandonment and response rate. Abandonment is a significant issue, because it is currently difficult to figure out how many participants actually begin a survey before abandonment compared to those who decide not to take part in the survey before answering a single question. "The rate of abandonment is influenced by the participants' perceived burden of survey

¹¹² Dominelli (2003): 410.

¹¹³ Dominelli (2003): 409.

¹¹⁴ Dillman (2000): 354

¹¹⁵ Dominelli (2003): 413.

¹¹⁶ Dillman (2000): 354-355.

¹¹⁷ Dillman (2000): 354.

participation.”¹¹⁸ Because of the technologies used in this study, however, the rate of abandonment can be tracked at least for respondents who answer at least one question. These cases will be noted in the results section.

Response rates are another big issue with Web surveys. Wimmer and Dominick cite the average response rate as from 1 to 30 percent.¹¹⁹ One experiment of university faculty, however, achieved 58 percent,¹²⁰ but this is rare outside of a very specialized population. Burke used a four contact strategy in an e-mail survey for members of a nationwide voluntary organization and achieved a 60 percent response rate.¹²¹ After examining these response rates from e-mail and Web surveys, the researcher set the response rate goal for this survey at 20 percent.

Population and sample

The theoretical population of interest is any person writing, editing, or designing sports content at any large daily newspaper in the United States. To draw a truly representative sample of all sportswriters, the researcher would need a comprehensive list of everyone working at newspapers involved in sports journalism. Once again, this study refers to sportswriters, but all editorial sports department staff members are included in this term. Only then could a truly representative sample be reached, providing full

¹¹⁸ Dominelli, (2003): 413.

¹¹⁹ Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 205.

¹²⁰ David A. Schaefer and Don A. Dillman, “E-mail Methodology: Results of an Experiment,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62(3) 1998: 388.

¹²¹ B.E. Burke, American Civil Liberties Union member survey, unpublished data (1999) in Dillman (2000): 366.

generalizability to the entire population of sports journalists. However, this list does not currently exist.

Previous studies have used membership lists of organizations of journalists and sportswriters,¹²² but these groups do not count all sportswriters as members and do not provide a large group of both men and women to survey. Previous studies have generally focused on sportswriters who work at Associated Press Sports Editors' member newspapers or on female sportswriters who are members of the Association for Women in Sports Media.¹²³

For this study, the researcher chose to conduct the study using a list compiled to overcome these drawbacks. Because there is no comprehensive list of individuals working in the industry, the researcher used the next best thing: a comprehensive list of the newspapers at which those individuals work. The researcher chose to use a list of the top 100 American newspapers based on circulation because these newspapers are large enough to have separate sports staffs. Sports staffs from these papers should also provide a large sample, because sports staffs are larger for the most part at newspapers with higher circulation.

The Audit Bureau of Circulations' list of the top 100 newspapers in the United States according to circulation details the name, city, state, daily circulation figures and owner of these newspapers. This list can be found www.accessabc.com. The newspapers range from the largest newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal*, with a daily circulation of

¹²² Qingmiao Hu and Jennifer Greer, "Are U.S. Business Journalists Happy? A Survey of Business Journalists' Job Satisfaction and Related Demographic and Career Factors," (Master's thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 2005), Appendix B; Hardin & Shain (2005): 804; Hardin & Whiteside (2006): 39.

¹²³ Hardin & Shain (2005): 804; Hardin & Whiteside (2006): 39.

2,024,269, to the 100th largest, *The Times of Northwest Indiana* with a daily circulation of 83,680.

From this list of newspapers, a two-fold sampling scheme was used. First, 50 newspapers were selected at random with the goal of e-mailing the survey to all sportswriters at those papers. These 50 papers were chosen using a random number generator (www.random.org) from 1 to 100. The numbers were linked to each newspaper's place on the list. However, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Investor's Business Daily*, the 62nd largest paper, were both removed from the list because neither paper has a sports department. The advantage of selecting newspapers from the list of the 100 largest newspapers, compiled by the Audit Bureau of Circulations in 2009, is that it provides a recent list of the largest and most widely circulated newspapers in the country. This, in turn, provides the researcher with newspapers that should have fairly large and diverse sports staffs. Using a sample of individual sportswriters from the largest newspapers and randomly selecting 50 percent of the newspapers listed was designed to provide high external validity. This technique should allow the findings to be generalized to sportswriters at the 100 largest-circulation U.S. newspapers.

The second sampling method was designed to try to reach as many female sportswriters as possible so that the results could be generalized. As the literature suggested, women make up a minority – and in some cases a tiny minority – of sportswriters at U.S. newspapers. For example, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* had no women on its sports staff at the time of the study. Therefore, a purposive sample of all women working at any of the top 100 papers was drawn. The men represented in the study work at 50 randomly selected papers of the top 100, whereas the women

sportswriters could be at any paper in the top 100. This technique was designed to ensure enough statistical power to do analyses in the next chapter.

All of the top 100 newspapers had a working Web site, allowing the researcher to identify staff members' names and e-mail addresses. For the first 50 randomly selected newspapers, any listed reporter or editor on the sports staff page was contacted. If there was no staff page located, the researcher contacted the newspaper to request such a list. If this request was unsuccessful, the researcher attempted to contact as many staff members as possible based on e-mails provided with bylines on the Web site. The researcher checked bylines on the sports page of the Web site every day for three days to try and locate as many staff members as possible. For the remaining 50 newspapers, the researcher contacted the newspaper to obtain e-mail addresses for any women working in the sports department.

After using all the techniques compiled above, the researcher was able to locate e-mails for sports department staff at all but three papers. In total e-mails were sent to 1,010 sportswriters at 97 papers. A list of the top 100 newspapers and the number of people contacted from each paper is provided in Appendix B. To ensure anonymity of responses, the researcher did not track the number of people who responded from each paper.

Instrument

To measure the four constructs of interest discussed in the research questions above, the Web survey was divided into four parts – questions on demographics, questions on job satisfaction, questions on feelings of empowerment, and questions on career plans. Each of these sections was loaded in a separate page of the survey, which

followed an introductory page outlining the informed consent procedures and instructions on taking the survey. That page informed respondents their participation was completely voluntary and they could stop taking the survey at any time. Respondents were informed that by submitting their responses at the end of each page, they were submitting their answers as well as consenting to participate in the survey.

Because the majority of the respondents' e-mails were their work addresses, the respondents likely completed the survey through a high-speed Internet connection. Still, to ensure quick loading times, the researcher chose a simple Web survey design that eliminated complex programming.

Procedure

The researcher used Dillman's Tailored Design Method in conducting this study. In Dillman's Tailored Design Method, it is suggested that participants in an e-mail survey be sent an initial, brief, pre-notice e-mail, letting them know that they will get a link to a Web survey through their e-mail in the next few days.¹²⁴ It is unclear if Dillman also recommends this for Web surveys. However, the researcher chose not to send a pre-notification e-mail because people in general, and sportswriters in particular, are bombarded with e-mails and they might find this annoying and lead to higher non-response rates.

The first contact with potential respondents was through a brief recruitment sent on June 7, 2010, (See Appendix A). This e-mail explained the reasons for the Web survey and requested that the sportswriters fill out the survey, which would take about 10

¹²⁴ Dillman (2000): 363.

minutes to complete. Participants were assured that no identifying information would be collected. Information for the researcher and The University of Alabama's Research Compliance Office was included. This e-mail included a link to the survey. The invitation was sent three times to all identified sportswriters at the 50 randomly selected newspapers. The invitation was also sent three times to all women identified at the remaining 50 newspapers. After the first e-mail, the researcher waited two weeks and then sent a follow-up e-mail on June 21, 2010, to thank those who completed the survey and to remind those who have not done so to consider taking the survey. This follow-up is advised by Dillman.¹²⁵ Another two weeks later, on July 5, 2010, a second follow-up e-mail was sent. All three e-mails can be found in Appendix A. Because there were fewer female respondents, a final e-mail was sent to all on the list on Sept. 1, 2010. The survey was open and collecting data for for exactly three months, from June 7 to Sept. 7, 2010.

Operationalzation of variables

The survey was composed of 52 closed-ended questions, and three open-ended questions to allow respondents discuss their experiences in sportswriting, job satisfaction, feelings of empowerment as related to their jobs, feelings regarding the future of sports journalism, their demographic characteristics, and their career paths and plans. Many of the variables and scales were borrowed from previous studies, which are noted below. This was done to build on existing research and to come close to the idea of testing what the researcher thinks she is trying to test.

¹²⁵ Dillman (2000): 365.

Variables for the first research question were related personal and career characteristics. These included age, gender, job title, ethnicity, salary, marital status, number of children and the number of hours worked each week. Each of these questions has been examined in studies before¹²⁶, with the exception of the number of children a sportswriter has. While this was not found in any study the researcher examined, it was deemed a relevant question when trying to evaluate exactly who sportswriters are today, and could factor into sportswriters' job satisfaction levels and why they might choose to leave the profession. Respondents were given six options for age: 19-25, 26-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65-plus. Respondents were given the option of male or female for the gender question. They were then asked which title best describes their current position (section editor, assistant editor, copy editor/page designer, reporter/staff writer, freelancer/stringer, or blogger with no other staff duties). Respondents were asked how many hours they worked each week ranging from 0 to 10 hours all the way to 61 or more hours. The ethnicity questions stated for respondents to check all that apply, including: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/ Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White or other. In the career characteristics portion of the survey, only one question pertained to compensation. Respondents were asked to select their salary range and given choices in increments of \$10,000 from less than \$10,000 to \$150,000 or more. Respondents were also asked about their relationship status (single and never married, divorced or separated, married or living with partner and widowed). Other variables for this research question were related to the career paths and plans of respondents. There were seven questions total relating to this research question.

¹²⁶ Hardin & Shain (2005): 809; Hu & Greer (2005): Appendix B;

Three questions asked respondents about their length of time in journalism, their length of time as a sportswriter, and their length of time at their current newspaper. Respondents were given six options to choose from when answering: 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-15 years and more than 15 years. Two questions ask about respondents' level of education. First, respondents were asked about their level of education and given six response options (no high school degree, high school degree/no college, some college, college degree/no graduate work, graduate work/no graduate degree, graduate degree). Respondents also were asked what their main field of study was in college, if they attended college. Again, six response options were given: journalism/public relations/mass communication/broadcast, English, sports-related major such as kinesiology, sport management, etc., health/human environmental science, other liberal art and other. All five of these questions were adapted from Hu and Greer's 2005 study, which asked similar questions of business journalists.¹²⁷

Variables for the second research question were related to job satisfaction. This portion of the survey was created for this study but was based on work in job satisfaction done by previous researchers.¹²⁸ Hardin and Shain used a four-question job satisfaction questionnaire that included questions about discrimination, and a 5-point Likert-type response scale.¹²⁹ Hu and Greer used a 23-question job satisfaction questionnaire, and a 7-point Likert-type scale.¹³⁰ Variables in this study were measured using a 7-point Likert-type response format where one equals strongly disagree and seven equals strongly agree. There were 11 questions regarding respondent feelings about five areas, including (1)

¹²⁷ Hu and Greer (2005): Appendix B.

¹²⁸ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809; Hu & Greer (2005): Appendix B.

¹²⁹ Hardin and Shain (2005): 809.

¹³⁰ Hu and Greer (2005): Appendix B.

value in the workplace, (2) work schedule and hours, (3) future at the company, (4) compensation, and (5) task satisfaction. After examining similar research, it does not appear that anyone has broken up job satisfaction into these five categories. These five categories were selected to measure the main categories the researcher thought would impact job satisfaction. Questions in this portion of the survey were phrased as follows: “How satisfied are you with your balance with work hours and personal life?” The full set of questions is included in the survey, found in Appendix A. After the data was collected, reliability analyses were run on these 11 items to ensure that they represented one construct of job satisfaction. These questions were found to constitute a highly reliable scale ($\alpha = .86$) and loaded as one coherent factor in a factor analysis.

Variables for the third research question were related to empowerment. The empowerment portion of the survey was taken from Menon’s 1999 study on psychological empowerment, which included sections on goal internalization, perceived control and perceived competence.¹³¹ All sections were used in this study, measured on a seven-point response format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.¹³² Each of the sections contained five questions, meaning a total of 15 questions were asked on this scale. Questions were phrased positively, so higher scores indicate stronger agreement with the items. For example, one question was written as follows: “I am inspired by what we are trying to achieve as an organization.” All three sections resulted in reliable measures of the concepts (goal internalization $\alpha = .88$; perceived control $\alpha = .88$; and perceived competence $\alpha = .92$). All three loaded as coherent factors and therefore were retained as three separate indicators of empowerment in the job.

¹³¹ Menon (1999).

¹³² Menon (1999).

Variables for the fourth research question were related to respondents' outlook towards their profession. This portion of the survey was created for this study due to the relative newness of the economic downturn in journalism. The newspaper industry in particular has been challenged by layoffs, cutbacks and lack of opportunity for advancement following a nationwide downturn in economic conditions. More than 15,000 employees at U.S. newspapers were laid off or offered buyouts in 2008.¹³³ The layoffs and buyouts continued at the same pace in 2009, when 14,845 people were affected.¹³⁴ Questions written for this research question were phrased positively, so higher scores indicate stronger agreement with the items. The five questions included statements such as "The future of journalism looks bright" and "I feel good about my future in this profession."

For the fifth research question, two questions asked about respondents' future career plans in journalism. One was a closed-ended question regarding the length of time they plan to remain in the field. The final question was an open-ended question asking them to elaborate on their responses regarding their future career plans. These final two questions were derived from questions used in Hardin and Shain's 2005 survey of female sportswriters. In that survey, female sportswriters were asked closed-ended questions about if they had considered leaving their careers and if they had, why.¹³⁵

¹³³ Robert Hodieme, "Is There Life After Newspapers?" *American Journalism Review* February/March (2009): 20.

¹³⁴ Paper Cuts, "2009: Layoffs and Buyouts at U.S. Newspapers," <http://graphicdesignr.net/papercuts/2009-layoffs/>.

¹³⁵ Hardin and Shain (2005): 810.

One final open-ended question was placed at the conclusion of the survey, which asked respondents if there was anything else they would like to tell the researcher about their experiences in sports journalism and their job satisfaction.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Of the 1,010 sports department staffers contacted at the 97 newspapers, 41 bounced back, indicating bad e-mail addresses. These people could not be contacted after three attempts. Therefore, it is assumed that the survey reached 969 sportswriters or editors. Overall, there were 200 responses collected, a response rate of 20.6 percent. Of those, 193 respondents completed most of the survey. If at least one page of the survey was completed, the researcher retained the responses for descriptive purposes. Seven respondents completed the first page of the survey on job satisfaction, but then quit the survey. They are only represented in descriptive data on that variable, but dropped from the relational analyses.

Demographics of the sample

The demographics included in this study are based only on sportswriters who answered those survey questions. Of the 185 respondents who gave their ethnicity, 83 percent were identified as white. Eight respondents were black, while another eight were Hispanic or Latino. Two respondents were Asian-American, and one was a native Hawaiian. Of the 181 respondents who gave their gender, 80.1 percent (145 respondents) were male. Thirty-six respondents, or 19.9 percent, were female. The 184 respondents who gave their age were on average 45.6 years old (median = 48, standard deviation = 11.36). Three respondents reported being 65 or older. The three youngest sports journalists in the sample were 23. The respondents were older on average, with 68.5 percent of the sample age 40 or older.

Of the 176 respondents that gave their salary range, 34.5 percent (61 respondents) said they made between \$50,001 and \$70,000 a year. Five respondents (2.9 percent) said they made less than \$30,000 a year, and another 14.2 percent stated they made more than \$100,001 annually.

For their career variables about length of time in the profession, the 192 respondents who answered the question about years in journalism had worked on average 19.58 years (median = 25, sd = 7.48). Exactly 100 had worked more than 25 years in journalism. The least experienced sports journalist had worked for just one year, with one respondent falling in that category. Cumulatively, 8.9 percent of respondents had worked five years or fewer in journalism. Of the 191 respondents the question on years in sports journalism said they had worked an average of 18.17 years (median = 22, sd = 7.94). Three respondents had worked in sports journalism for only one year. Eighty-two (42.9 percent of the sample) respondents had worked for 25 years or more. Therefore, the journalists in the sample were highly experienced in the field. For years at the current newspaper, the 183 respondents who answered had worked an average of 14.49 years (median = 14, sd = 8.42). Nine respondents had worked at his or her current newspaper for 1 year, while 40 respondents answered 25 or more years. Cumulatively, 22.4 percent of respondents had worked at their current newspaper for 5 or less years.

Of the 188 respondents who gave their education level, 77.1 percent (145 respondents) had an undergraduate college degree, 11.7 percent (22) had a graduate degree. On the lower end of education, one respondent (0.5 percent) had a high school degree and no college experience, while nine (4.8 percent) had college experience, but no degree. Also, 11 respondents (5.9 percent) had completed some graduate work, but had

not received a graduate degree. Of the 188 respondents who gave their major, 69.5 percent (139 respondents) listed journalism or mass communication as their major, 7.4 percent (14) listed English, 14.9 percent (28) listed “other liberal art,” and 3.7 percent (7) listed another major.

Personal items included marital status and the number of children. Of the 188 respondents who listed their marital status, 133 (66.5 percent) were married, 42 (21 percent) were single, and 13 (6.5 percent) were divorced. The 185 respondents who disclosed information about children had an average of 1.28 children ($sd = 1.30$). Seventy-four respondents, or 40 percent, had no children. Eighty-two respondents (44.3 percent) had 1 or 2 children; 22 (11.9 percent) had three children, six (3.2 percent) had four children, and one respondent (0.5 percent) had five children. Of the 183 respondents who gave the number of children living with them, the average was 0.87. Of these respondents, 99 (54.1 percent) had no child living with them, 69 (37.7 percent) had one or two living with them, 13 (7.1 percent) had three or four children living with them, two respondents (1.0 percent) had five or six children living with them.

Tests of the research questions

Research question 1

The first research question asked how male and female sportswriters at the nation’s largest newspapers compared in terms of personal demographics and career characteristics. To answer this research question, those who identified themselves as women were compared with those who identified as men on several variables.

Independent samples t-tests were run on the data collected with items using interval-level

measurement or measures that approximated that level of measurement. For the purely categorical data, Chi Square analyses were used to analyze cross tabulated data.

Personal characteristics examined were age, ethnicity, marital status, and number of children (both the total number of children and the number of children living at home). Quite a few statistically significant differences were found based on the sample in this study. First, men were significantly older than women ($m = 46.55$ to $m = 39.74$, $t(175) = 3.23$, $p < .001$.) The women also were more likely to be minorities than the men. Whereas 92.2 percent (130) of the men identified as white, only 77.8 percent (28) of the women said they were white. While there was roughly an equal percentage for men and women who were African-American, women were significantly more likely to report being either Asian-American or Hispanic/Latina than their male counterparts ($X^2(4) = 13.21$, $p < .01$).

As for marital status and number of children, women were significantly more likely than men to be single ($X^2(2) = 6.05$, $p < .048$), Whereas 18.6 percent (27) of men identified themselves as single, 37.1 percent (13) of women said they were single. Men had significantly more children than women ($t(175) = 4.60$, $p < .001$). Whereas male respondents had an average of 1.50 children, women had an average of 0.43 children. Men also were significantly more likely to have more children living at home with them ($t(174) = 2.77$, $p < .006$). Male respondents had an average of 1.01 children living with them, while female respondents had an average of 0.38 children living with them.

Three levels of career characteristics were examined: (1) education and preparation, (2) career paths, and (3) current job characteristics. For education and preparation in college, Chi-Square analyses were run on four variables: education level, major, covering sports in high school or college or playing sports in high school or

college. No significant differences were found by gender on any of these variables. Most had gone to college and majored in journalism, liberal arts or English, regardless of major. For preparation, 76.7 percent (138) said they played sports in high school or college (75 percent of women and 77.1 percent of men). Also, 79.6 percent (144) of respondents reported having covered sports in high school or college (72.2 percent for women and 81.4 percent of men).

For career paths of respondents, three variables were examined: number of years in journalism, number of years in sports journalism, and number of years at current newspaper. Independent samples t-tests were run on the three items, and a significant difference was found for all three. Men were found to have significantly more years experience in all three categories than women (See Table 1).

For current job characteristics of respondents, six variables were considered: what respondents cover, job titles, hours worked, circulation size of newspaper, income and sports department size. Chi-Square analyses for what level of sports covered showed no differences by gender. Men and women covered prep, high school, college, minor league, major league sports at nearly identical rates. Similarly, no differences were found in Chi-Square analysis on job titles. Women were slightly but not significantly more likely to be section editors (which may be related to income, see below). Of female respondents, 8.3 percent (3) were section editors and 13.9 percent (5) were copy editors. Of male respondents, 4.2 percent (6) were section editors and 6.3 percent (9) were copy editors. Also, there were no differences found in average income between men and women, and there were no differences were found on paper circulation size or sports department size,

which indicates that any differences found by gender were not a function of the types of papers the respondents worked at.

The only difference in current career characteristics was in hours worked each week (See Table 1). Men reported they worked significantly more hours per week with an average of 5.15 (which corresponded to category 5 on the survey, 41 to 50 hours a week) compared with women with an average of 4.78 (which was closer to category 4 on the survey, 31 and 40 a week). For income, there was no significant difference, with men reporting an average of 7.28 and women reporting 7.58, both of which fell in category 7 on the survey, corresponding to an annual salary of \$60,001 to \$70,000.

*Table 1
Career characteristics, compared by gender*

Career characteristic	Men N = 145	Women N = 36	t =
Years in journalism	20.08	16.28	2.74**
Years in sports journalism	18.88	14.58	2.92**
Years at newspaper	15.17	10.56	3.00**
Hours worked each week	5.15	4.78	2.28*
Income	7.28	7.58	0.56
Paper circulation size	3.97	4.35	1.41
Sports department size	23.91	25.47	0.84

*p < .05; **p < .01; *** p < .001

Research question 2

The second research question examined levels of job satisfaction among sportswriters and compared whether the women in the sample differed from the men. To compare reported feelings of satisfaction with different parts of their jobs, independent samples t-tests were run on the 11 job satisfaction items. As noted above, these were scored from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with that aspect of their job as a sportswriter or editor. As Table 2 shows, overall, respondents expressed

highest satisfaction with the degree of independence they are afforded at work and lowest with job security. Independent samples t-tests were run to compare the means for men and women, but no significant differences were found on any of the 11 items by gender. Therefore, men and women did not differ in their reported job satisfaction on any one aspect of their jobs. The rankings of what respondents were most satisfied with also did not differ by gender, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2
Mean satisfaction scores for 11 aspects of the job, compared by gender

Satisfaction with:	Men, N = 145	Women N = 36	Total N = 200
Degree of independence at work?	5.83	5.94	5.82
Variety of work activities?	5.23	5.17	5.18
Flexibility in scheduling your work hours?	5.12	4.86	5.06
Opportunity to showcase your talents at your job?	5.03	4.69	4.92
Organization's respect for your skills and abilities?	4.81	4.89	4.79
Balance with work hours and personal life?	4.06	4.08	4.08
Amount of praise you receive in the work place?	4.05	4.08	4.03
Benefits package?	3.84	4.31	3.98
Salary?	3.80	3.97	3.84
Opportunities for advancement in your organization?	3.56	3.69	3.62
Job security?	3.61	3.42	3.61

**Note: No t-tests were significant, so the values are not included in this table.*

Next, an average score was created for the 11 items to provide an overall measure of job satisfaction. In total, the 200 sports staffers reported an average score of 4.59 (sd = 1.00). Again, men and women did not differ on this overall score. The overall job satisfaction average rating for men was 4.59 compared with 4.62 for women. So although the male and female sportswriters differed by demographics and some career characteristics, this was not related to differences in satisfaction toward different aspects of their jobs or overall job satisfaction.

Research question 3

The third research question examined levels of empowerment among sportswriters and compared whether the women in the sample differed from the men. To compare reported feelings of empowerment respondents answered five questions each on goal internalization, perceived control and perceived competence with numbers closest to seven indicating more agreement with each statement. Independent sample t-tests were run on the 15 items but no differences were found by gender.

As Table 3 shows, overall, respondents expressed higher agreement with their perceived competence than with goal internalization or perceived control. The statement “I have the competence to work effectively” was the statement with the highest agreement with an average score of 6.51 out of a possible 7. The statement the respondents least agreed with was “I can influence major decisions made in my department,” which had an average score of 3.85. Below, the statements are listed by category and in order from highest to lowest satisfaction.

After running independent samples t-tests to compare the means for men and women in the sample, no significant differences by gender were found on any of the 15 items in Table 3. Next, an average score was created for the each of the three empowerment subscales (goal internalization, perceived control, and perceived competence). As shown in Table 3, men and women did not differ on these overall averages either. Therefore, male and female sportswriters did not significantly differ at all in their reported levels of empowerment as related to their jobs.

Table 3

Mean scores for aspects of goal internalization, perceived control, and perceived competence, compared by gender

	Male N = 145	Female N = 36	Total N = 193
I want us to do well as an organization.	6.38	6.14	6.35
I am enthusiastic about the contribution	5.53	5.61	5.51
I am enthusiastic about ...the newspaper's objectives.	4.30	4.36	4.34
I am inspired by what we are trying to achieve....	4.03	3.92	4.03
I am inspired by the goals of the newspaper.	3.88	3.83	3.89
Total goal internalization	4.81	4.77	4.82
I have the authority to work effectively.	5.51	5.50	5.45
Important responsibilities are part of my job.	5.48	5.75	5.43
I have the authority to make decisions at work.	4.85	5.00	4.82
I can influence the way work is done in the department.	4.48	4.83	4.50
I can influence major decisions made in my department.	3.87	3.97	3.85
Total perceived control	4.84	5.01	4.81
I have the competence to work effectively.	6.50	6.61	6.51
I have the skills and abilities to do my job well.	6.47	6.44	6.46
I can do my work efficiently.	6.26	6.42	6.28
I can handle the challenges I face at work.	6.24	6.33	6.24
I have the capabilities required to do my job well.	6.27	6.28	6.23
Total perceived competence	6.35	6.42	6.35

**Note: No t-tests were significant, so the values are not included in this table.*

Research question 4

The fourth research question examined respondents' outlook toward their profession, both in covering sports and overall, and whether women in the sample differed from the men. Independent samples t-tests were run on five items measuring their professional outlook. These were scored from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater agreement with the statement. As Table 4 shows, overall, respondents expressed most agreement with the statement that qualified journalists will always be needed to

cover sports. The sportswriters were neutral (scoring close to the midpoint of 4) on if they would go into journalism again if they were able to go back and choose any career path possible. The remaining items shown in Table 4 averaged below 4.0, indicating disagreement with these items. The strongest disagreement was with journalism having a bright future. Independent samples t-tests comparing the means for men and women found no significant differences. Therefore, men and women did not differ in their reported outlook as expressed in the five items.

Table 4
Mean scores for professional outlook items, compared by gender

	Male	Female	Total
	N=144	N=36	N=192
There will ... be a need for ... journalists to cover sports.	5.01	5.28	5.09
If I were choosing ... again, I would go into journalism.	3.94	4.25	4.03
I feel good about my future in this profession.	3.70	3.67	3.70
Sportswriting is a good career option.	3.35	3.58	3.37
The future of journalism looks bright.	3.13	3.11	3.09

**Note: No t-tests were significant, so the values are not included in this table.*

Next, average scores were created for both men and women using the five items to provide a comparative measure of respondents' professional outlook. The overall professional outlook average rating for men was 3.82 (sd = 1.23). For women, the average overall professional outlook rating was 3.98 (sd = 1.32). Again, these means on the "professional outlook" scale were not statistically different by gender.

Research question 5

The fifth research question examined respondents' career plans to see if men differed from women. To compare respondents' reported career plans, crosstabulation was run by gender on the possible answers to how long they planned to remain in sports

journalism. Overall, women were significantly more likely to report that they would leave the field before retirement ($X^2(3) = 12.41, p < .006$). Of male respondents, 68.1 percent (98) said they would remain in the field until retirement, compared with just 37.1 percent (13) of female respondents. Women were more than twice as likely as men to say they would leave the field within the next two years. Of the female respondents, 22.9 percent (9) fell into this category, while only 9 percent (13) of male respondents answered the same. Women also were more likely than men to report that they would leave in the next three to five years or in the next six to 10 years.

Research question 6

The final research question was designed to examine the relationship between attitudes about the job and plans to remain in the field. This question also examined this relationship in light of other variables of interest in this study, primarily gender, but also other personal and career characteristics.

To explore these relationships, regression analyses were run to examine how the five attitudinal indicators (job satisfaction, goal internalization, perceived control, perceived competence, and outlook toward the profession) were related to length of time respondents said they would remain in sports journalism. The five attitudinal scores, all measured so that higher values indicated a greater amount of the construct under investigation, were entered as independent variables in a blocked regression model with length of time the respondent planned to stay in the field as the dependent variable. For the dependent variable, the lowest value (1) equaled plans to leave within two years, while the highest value (4) indicated plans to stay in the field until retirement. The other blocks in the model are discussed below.

With the five attitudinal variables loaded in, a significant model emerged for plans to stay in the field ($F(5,154) = 4.01, p < .002$), with goal internalization and outlook on the profession as the significant predictor variables. Sports journalists who had reported higher internalization of their newspaper's goals and more positive outlooks toward the profession reported that they would stay in the field longer. These two predictors in the model explained roughly 11.5% of the variance in plans to remain in sports journalism ($r^2 = .115$, adjusted $r^2 = .016$). None of the other attitudinal variables emerged as significant predictors in the model.

After attitudinal variables were tested in the first block, personal characteristics and career variables were added in separate blocks in the regression model. The block with professional and career related variables did not result in any significant change in the model and no variables in this group emerged as predictor variables. However, the block with demographic variables did produce an increase in the variance explained. Therefore, the final model consisted of three blocks (attitudinal variables, career variables, and personal demographics) and the final, full model is shown in Table 5. With demographics added in, the variance explained increased significantly, from 11.5% to 21.2%.

As Table 5 indicates, the two predictor attitudinal variables that emerged in the first part of the blocked regression held even when other factors were considered, indicating that those with greater goal internalization and more positive outlooks would stay in the profession longer. As mentioned, no career variables emerged as significant predictors. Out of the five demographics, only gender was significantly related to variance in decision to leave sports journalism before retirement. Women were more

likely to say they would leave the field earlier than men. However, what this analysis shows is that even controlling for other factors, including attitude toward the future of the profession, gender is still a significant predictor related to decision to leave the profession before retirement.

Multicollinearity did not pose a problem with the model, as virtually all of the 14 independent variables in the model were not significantly correlated or correlated at less than $r = .60$. Only age and years in sports journalism were correlated higher than this figure and neither emerged when examined in separate blocks as predictor variables. Additional review of the computed collinearity diagnostics indicated no Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values greater than 10 and only one Eigenvalue less than .01 (.005).

Table 5
Regression model for length of time journalists plan to remain in the field, as related to attitudinal measures, personal demographics, and career characteristics

Variable	Standardized Beta	t =	Sig
Attitudinal variables			
Job satisfaction	-.077	-.709	.480
Goal internalization	.217*	2.153	.033*
Perceived control	.072	.624	.534
Perceived competence	.024*	.307	.759
Job outlook	.199	2.051	.042*
Demographic variables			
Age	.012	.072	.943
Gender (0 = M; 1 = W)	-.227*	-2.750	.007**
Marital status	.003	.033	.974
Ethnicity (0 = White)	.027	.319	.750
Number of children	-.071	-.732	.465
Career variables			
Hours worked each week	.043	.521	.603
Income	-.012	-.130	.897
Years in sports journalism	.177	1.126	.262
Title (0 = editor; 1 = staff writer)	.046	.544	.587
Model summary			
	F	2.79**	
	R ² (Adjusted R ²)	.212 (.136)	

*p < .05; **p < .01; *** p < .001

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study investigated how satisfied U.S. sportswriters at the largest newspapers are with their jobs, and if men and women differed in their feelings of job satisfaction, empowerment, and outlook toward the profession. It also examined if men and women differ in personal demographics and career characteristics and how attitudinal measures and individual characteristics relate to career plans and plans to leave the profession. The major question was how male and female sportswriters differed in this regard.

In this chapter, the results are summarized and their implications are discussed. Limitations of this study are presented with areas for future research. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the constructs investigated in this study.

Summary

This study explored six research questions. The major findings are briefly summarized under each research question.

RQ1

This question examined if men and women working in large newspaper sports departments differ in personal demographics and career characteristics. Men working in these sports departments were about seven years older than the women. Women were significantly more likely to be minorities than the men. Women were also significantly more likely to be single and have fewer children overall and at home than their male

counterparts. Therefore, the women were unlike the men they worked with in many areas of their personal lives.

In regard to career characteristics and preparation, no significant differences were found in the percentage of men and women playing sports or covering sports during their high school and college years, nor were differences found for level of education and major. But men were found to have significantly more years experience in journalism, sports journalism and at their current newspaper. This is not surprising because the men were older than the women. Even with more experience, however, men covered the same level of sports, made the same salaries and held similar positions in their departments. Men and women worked at the same size newspapers and similarly sized sports departments. The only other difference found among current job characteristics was in hours worked. Men reported they worked significantly more hours per week than women did. It is unknown if this represents a true difference in actual hours worked, however, or a difference in perception because of the self-reported data collection method used. Overall, men and women in these positions had similar preparation and do similar things on the job. While personal demographics do differ significantly for men and women, professional differences are few.

RQ2

This question examined the job satisfaction levels of sportswriters and if male and female sportswriters differ. Overall, sportswriters are moderately satisfied with their jobs and were most happy with their degree of independence at work, their variety of work activities and flexibility in scheduling their work hours. Scores for the opportunity to

showcase talents on the job, along with value in the organization as reflected in the respect for their skills and abilities, indicated moderate satisfaction levels. Respondents were nearer to the neutral midpoint regarding satisfaction with balance with work hours and personal life and amount of praise received in the workplace, along with their benefits package. They were most unhappy with opportunities for advancement in their organization and job security, both of which scored well below the midpoint of 4.

Overall, the 11 job satisfaction items averaged to a score of 4.59 on the 1 to 7 measure, indicating mild satisfaction with the job. Most important for this study, men and women did not differ on this overall score nor did they differ on any of the 11 sub areas of job satisfaction. This indicates that both genders are equally satisfied and dissatisfied with the same aspects of their jobs.

RQ3

This question examined sportswriters' feelings of three empowerment areas in the workplace. Overall, respondents expressed a higher level of satisfaction with perceived competence than they did with goal internalization or perceived control. "I have the competence to work effectively" was, on average, the highest-rated statement, while the lowest-rated statement was "I can influence major decisions made in my department." Men and women did not differ on scores on the 15 items nor did they differ on the overall measures of perceived competence, goal internalization or perceived control. Feelings of empowerment, like feelings of job satisfaction, did not differ by gender. Again, men and women in the nation's largest newspaper sports departments had similar attitudes.

RQ 4

The fourth research question investigated sportswriters' outlook toward the profession. No significant differences were found between men and women on any of the five items in this scale. Overall, both genders were fairly negative toward the future of journalism and in viewing sports writing as a good career option. Also, they were fairly negative regarding their future in journalism. Respondents were neutral about if they would choose the profession again given the chance. However, they felt positively that there would always been a need for journalists to cover sports.

RQ5

This research question investigated how long sportswriters planned to stay in the profession. Women were significantly more likely to report that they would leave the field before retirement than were their male counterparts. Women were more than twice as likely as men to say they would leave in the next two years. Women also were more likely than men to report that they would leave in the next three to five years or in the next six to 10 years. Although their attitudinal variables (job satisfaction, empowerment, and outlook toward the profession) did not differ, women were still likely to say they would leave. This topic is explored in the discussion below.

RQ6

The final research question examined the factors related to length of time sportswriters plan to stay in the field. Sports journalists who had higher goal internalization and a more positive outlook toward the profession reported that they

would stay in the field longer. Still, controlling for all attitudinal, personal demographic and career variables, gender emerged as the strongest predictor of how long the sportswriters planned to stay in the field. Men were more likely than women to stay until retirement. What this analysis shows is that even controlling for other factors, including goal internalization and attitude toward the future of the profession, gender is still a significant predictor related to decision to leave the profession before retirement.

Discussion

The results of this study found that, overall, sportswriters are satisfied with many aspects of their jobs and that men and women differed in only a few key areas investigated in this study. Several of the findings reinforced what was known about job satisfaction in previous studies but some unexpected findings emerged as well. Each of these expected and unexpected findings are discussed fully in the sections below. What emerges from the data used to answer the six research questions above are two major findings. These relate to: 1) gender's role in decision to leave sports journalism before retirement and 2) overall descriptions of attitudes of job satisfaction, empowerment and outlook toward the profession and the impact – or lack of impact – of these attitudinal issues on decisions to stay in the field. Each area is discussed in turn below.

Gender's impact on leaving the industry

This study found that the only demographic variable that appeared to be related to decision to leave sports journalism before retirement was gender. Age, race, income, marital status or other variables did not statistically emerge as significant predictor

variables in why a sportswriter would choose to leave the industry before retirement. Women were significantly more likely than men to report that they would leave the field before retirement. In fact, women were more than twice as likely as men to say they would leave in the next two years. This finding is in line with previous research that indicated women are leaving the newspaper industry at a higher rate than men.¹³⁶ Hardin and Shain found that 72 percent of female sportswriters surveyed had considered leaving their careers. It appears that gender still has an impact on decisions to leave sports writing and newspaper jobs. However, much of the literature examined for this study suggests that female sportswriters face many obstacles compared to men when pursuing careers in the profession. Several previous studies found high levels of dissatisfaction and frustration among female sportswriters. Most of those studies, however, have been based on surveys or depth interviews with women only. Findings of dissatisfaction for the most part were not noted in the current study.

The current study is important because it is one of the few to compare male and female journalists on career plans and perhaps the only recent survey of both male and female sportswriters. What makes the findings of gender's relationship with decision to leave the profession significant is that this study compared male and female sportswriters on a variety of attitudinal, personal and career variables. This study found that on average, men and women sportswriters have the same preparation for their careers, cover the same level of sports, hold similar jobs in their departments and make the same amount of money. Statistically, men and women have the same attitudes in job satisfaction, empowerment and outlook toward the profession. Controlling for these

¹³⁶ Willard (2007): 23.

factors, gender still emerges as the strongest predictor of length of time the sportswriters plan to remain in the field.

What remains unanswered, however, is why this is – because so many variables were examined. It should be noted that women in the study were unlike the men they worked with in many areas of their personal lives, including marital status and number of children. Women who do choose to leave could be thinking of family life. Personal and family life is one of the most often cited answers as to why women might leave any industry. While marital status and number of children did not emerge as significant predictors in the regression model examining decision to leave the field, women were significantly more likely to be single and to have fewer children than their male counterparts. The female sportswriters at the largest newspapers seem to have sacrificed at least some aspects of their personal lives, including marriage and children, for their careers.

What could be at play is a complex, indirect relationship involving marriage and children and an interaction with gender. Even in modern U.S. society, women are still seen as largely responsible for children and household duties in a dual income relationship. It could be that it is easier for married men with children to work the varied hours and commit to the travel necessary for a successful sports writing career than it is for married women.

It is important to note that the women were significantly younger than their male counterparts and that staying in the field “until retirement” may seem to be a longer commitment for younger staffers. Still, age didn’t emerge as a significant predictor for length of time people plan to remain in the field. What is most likely is that women have

delayed marriage and family to get to this high level in the field and are planning on leaving to start a family.

This was expressed in the qualitative responses to open-ended questions on the survey. One 32-year-old female respondent who described herself as single alluded to the pressures the job puts on a sportswriter's personal life. "Sports journalism is a fast-paced, high-stress, long-hours-on-night-and-weekend-shifts job," she wrote. "It's not for everyone. As one gets older, as one has a family, it is a world that is harder to balance with your personal life. So as my life circumstances change, as my needs change, it may affect how long I want to stay in the field."

The other interesting finding relating to gender in this study is that male and female sportswriters expressed nearly identical levels of job satisfaction with every aspect of their jobs. In an early study, Hardin and Shain found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and whether female sportswriters had considered leaving their careers. Respondents from their study listed hours (31 percent), lack of advancement (15 percent) and pay (11 percent) as their reasons for considering leaving their career.¹³⁷ While female sportswriters may have expressed dissatisfaction in at least some areas in previous studies, this study found that their levels of job satisfaction are equal to their male counterparts. Indeed – men and women had similar scores on every attitudinal measure in this study – each individual item of job satisfaction (11 items), perceived competence (5), perceived control (5), goal internalization (5), and outlook toward the profession (5), as well as all of the composite scores derived from these scales.

¹³⁷ Hardin & Shain (2005): 804.

Previous studies have indicated that women may have been more dissatisfied in sports departments than their male counterparts. Again, this study examined men and women rather than women only. Therefore, it is unknown whether women's feelings have improved in recent years or if problems noted in other studies simply don't exist at the highest levels of newspaper sports journalism. This sample population, culled from the 100 largest newspapers, does in many aspects represent those sports journalists at the top of their game. Perhaps by the time both genders have reached this level in the profession many of the problems are non-issues.

Attitudes of sportswriters and their relationship to career plans

This study examined attitudes of sportswriters in regard to job satisfaction, three areas of empowerment, and outlook toward the profession. Previous studies have indicated that job satisfaction of journalists, including newspaper sports journalists, had increased and that respondents reported a high rate of personal accomplishment.¹³⁸ Another study indicated that women in sports journalism were also satisfied with their employment overall.¹³⁹ The findings of this study are in line with that of previous research.

The current study found that, overall, sportswriters are satisfied with their jobs. The numerical indicators suggesting moderate job satisfaction were reinforced by many sportswriters who answered open-ended questions. One respondent who did not give an age or gender wrote: "I thoroughly enjoy my job. I cover a variety of sports and I love the freedom I have to set my schedule." One 55-year-old male sportswriter wrote: "I love the

¹³⁸ Reinardy (2006): 397.

¹³⁹ Smucker, Whisenant, and Pederson (2003): 402.

newspaper business, and I love sports. There's something new every day. My bosses in sports are proactive at finding ways to keep our readers interested in our content and hopefully attract new readers. Most times, the ideas seem good. Other times, not so much, but that is rare.”

Nevertheless, regardless of gender, the respondents were fairly dissatisfied with certain aspects of their jobs, including opportunities for advancement in their organization, job security and schedules. One 49-year-old male respondent wrote that the number of uncompensated hours worked had left him “sapped of energy” and “not particularly happy with the direction of our sports section or the profession in general.” One respondent did say that the schedule was hard at times, however, the excitement of the field made up for that.

For empowerment, this study again found no differences by gender and found that all respondents expressed varying levels of agreement depending on the subscale. They expressed higher agreement with their perceived competence than with goal internalization or perceived control. In other words, they felt confident that they had the ability and skills to do the job, but didn't entirely buy into the newspapers' paths or their ability to play a major role. “I'm afraid we lost touch with what readers really want somewhere along the road,” one 49-year-old staff writer wrote. He alluded to changes that, he said, will cost the paper. “In doing so, we've lost the younger generation of readers.” Another respondent, a 55-year-old female sportswriter expressed frustration with her lack of control in the office: “I have a department head who values his own views above anyone else's, to the point that most of us feel as if he does not trust us to do

the work, though most of us have many more years of experience in journalism than he does.”

A few, however, were more positive about the direction of their newspaper and their own control over the success of the department. “I work for a newspaper that allows great freedom, from the sports side, in selecting and following up the type of stories we want to cover,” a 57-year-old male reporter wrote. “There is some guidance from above, but it rarely gets to the point where it's obtrusive. Our department is a reporter-driven department in which the people on the beat are responsible for generating the bulk of the stories that appear in the paper or online.”

The final attitudinal scale in this study examined outlook of journalists toward the future of the profession. This study included these questions because of the economic downturn in the late 2000s and recent layoffs and closures in the newspaper industry. While no significant differences were found between men and women and their outlook toward the profession, respondents expressed a negative outlook toward the statement “The future of journalism looks bright.” “The economic downturn has made the profession shaky. I love what I do, but there are times when you wonder about job security,” a 34-year-old, married, male respondent with one child wrote. “Another issue is not having the adequate time to spend with family, but thankfully they are an understanding bunch.” However, respondents agreed that there is a strong need for sportswriters. As one 57-year-old male respondent wrote, “I firmly believe that there will be a need, no matter how much the medium changes, for qualified journalists that know what a story is, who can gather the news and then communicate it in an interesting manner.”

While a few studies have examined the relationship between job satisfaction and plans to leave the field, this study examined other attitudes as well. Interestingly, job satisfaction, a significant variable in past studies, was not found to be related to career plans when other attitudinal, demographic and career variables were controlled for. In addition to gender (discussed above), sports journalists who had higher goal internalization and a more positive outlook toward the profession reported that they would stay in the field longer. None of the other attitudinal variables emerged as significant predictors in the model. Basically, if a sports journalist feels the profession is a solid career choice and feels inspired by the goals of the newspaper he or she will stay in the field longer. Much of this could be attributed to the link Hechanova, Alampay and Franco found between empowerment and job satisfaction, which they said can be seen as actions taken by an organization to share power and decision making.¹⁴⁰ This in turn, could spur employees to be inspired by their company and encourage them to stay in the field longer.

Those who had a grimmer outlook on the profession or were not attuned to the newspaper's goals were less likely to report planning on staying in the field until retirement. For some, they feel the length of time they can work as a sportswriter may be beyond their control. "I just hope to the journalism gods that my job description, my salary and my benefits remain unchanged for the next 5 to 10 years so that I can make it to the retirement finish line intact - body, mind and soul," wrote one 57-year-old male respondent. "I believe, or rather I hope, it'll be a photo finish." This fear may not be

¹⁴⁰ Hechanova, Alampay and Franco (2006): 72-78.

unfounded in an era where many of the most-experienced, highest-paid sportswriters at newspapers are the first to be laid off in cost-cutting measures.

These findings can be viewed as important to the industry because journalism is still – at its core – an industry that strives to be impartial and an instrument of recording history. The people employed by a newspaper color the coverage in every way possible – from writing style to what is covered to how it is portrayed. Experience is a major part of a sportswriter’s life. It colors what they do and how they write. This is why the industry should care about the job satisfaction of sportswriters, as well as who stays in the industry and what their attitudes are.

Limitations and future research

As with all research, this study has limitations. Because no universal list of sportswriters at the 100 largest papers in the United States exists, the researcher relied on staff lists posted on newspaper Websites and searches of online articles to find as many e-mail addresses as possible. Staff listings on Websites could have been out of date or incorrect – and some certainly were as indicated by bounce backs or automated messages from the newspaper that the person was no longer employed there.

Another limitation of this study is that the sample surveyed may not actually be representative of all sportswriters at these papers, which does limit the external validity and generalizability of this study. This means that readers should view this data with some caution. Researchers wishing to expand on this study are encouraged to expand the sample, possibly to all sports journalists working at the 100 largest papers – or even more newspapers.

One of the main limitations is that the total sample is probably between 2,000 and 2,500 sports journalists, and this study only contains a fraction of that sample. Another limitation of this study is that there were only 36 female respondents. That number is small, so it is hard to compare with men on different variables when respondents were overwhelmingly male. This can't really be corrected for, but it might have limited the ability of this study to run powerful statistics and find real differences. When comparing men and women in sportswriting, this could always be an issue for researchers, because of the disproportionately small number of women in the field. Comparing the samples of men and women is also problematic in this study, because of the wide range between the two sample sizes. Because of this, statistical power may have been harmed.

Another limitation to this study was the blurring of job titles on the modern sports desk. Future research might want to give sports journalists the possibility of selecting more than one title, because as one respondent pointed out: "Many people are doing a wider variety of tasks than ever before. Maybe my paper is different, but my guess is that fewer and fewer of the people who remain in this business can be categorized that easily." The job titles used in this survey might not necessarily describe the work each sports journalist is doing accurately, and differences may emerge by gender if title was looked at in a different way.

The timing of this study was also a limitation. The survey was live from July to September, and many respondents' e-mail addresses sent automated replies at least once during the process. Many of them stated that respondents were on extended furloughs or vacations. Others stated that the pre-football season made it impossible for them to

respond. Finding the best time to reach sportswriters is difficult, but future studies might utilize different time periods.

The open-ended questions presented an important limitation. The researcher aimed to ask general, non-gender specific questions in order to not guide the respondent's answers. However, the limitation was that the questions posed were not direct enough to get at the gender issues the researcher hoped they would. Some possible answers that could have come from these questions were not received because the questions were not as pointed as possible. Also, the lack of gender differences that arose in responses also played into the fact that this study did not ask sportswriters where they go when they choose to leave the industry. This question could have shed more light on the gender differences involved.

In addition to adjusting for these limitations, other studies should go more in depth to investigate the reasons behind trends in this study. Why do women leave the industry? When they leave, where do they go? What jobs do they take after leaving the industry? Why do sportswriters have low satisfaction with their job security, and will it change if and when the economy improves? Future researchers could conduct in-depth interviews to find out some of these answers, or use focus groups to learn more. A similar study in five to 10 years could also determine if and how the industry changes over time.

One option for future research would be to present male sportswriters with some of the facts discovered – including the facts that women with fewer credentials earn the same amount as men – and to ascertain their reactions. Do they get mad? How do they feel about this possible reverse discrimination? This could be an interesting research angle.

This study could also be replicated at different levels – smaller newspapers and other media outlets such as wire services or online-only media outlets. Tracking select female sports journalists in a longitudinal panel study to track their careers could also be an interesting study, which might be able to provide answers as to why women are so apt to leave sportswriting. This might provide an avenue for investigating whether it is starting a family that fuels the exodus of female sportswriters, or if it is indeed something else. A study such as this one could also examine why job satisfaction doesn't have an impact on women leaving journalism.

Conclusion

This study examined the differences in male and female sportswriters regarding demographics, job satisfaction, empowerment, career plans and patterns, and to examine the relationship among these variables. While studies have examined the demographics of newspaper sports departments and looked at the attitudes and experiences of women in sportswriting careers, the same questions had not previously been asked of both male and female sportswriters in regard to job satisfaction, empowerment and career plans. This study was possibly the first to do so. It is clear from the research that sports journalists are moderately happy with their job, and that there are very few differences between men and women in this population sample. However, there is room for improvement, as respondents did not report being thrilled with their jobs and they could be happier on average. Overall, the job satisfaction of sportswriters was not the most important finding to come from this study. The most important factor is that job satisfaction is not the driving force in journalists leaving the profession. Men and women are equally satisfied with their jobs, but women choose to leave the profession at a much higher rate than men.

That is the most important factor this study uncovered. No other study has compared men and women in the sportswriting industry before, so it is the author's hope that this information can be put to use.

One area examined in this study that could be significantly improved in is the area of goal internalization within job satisfaction. Respondents were neutral about being inspired by what their organizations' were trying to achieve, along with the goals of the newspaper. The other key finding, that women are more likely to leave sports journalism, should serve as a wake-up call to newsroom management that there is something going on at newspapers and in the industry to drive women away from the profession.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Initial recruitment e-mail

Dear <Name>,

I am conducting a Web survey, sponsored by the University of Alabama, on sportswriters' job satisfaction. You have been chosen to participate because you work at a newspaper randomly selected from a list of the 100 largest U.S. newspapers based on circulation.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. The information you submit will go to a secure server that does not collect any information about the sending computer. The survey also does not ask for any information that could identify you individually.

To begin this survey, please click <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sportswritersurvey>. It will take about 10 minutes for you to complete the survey.

Your responses to this survey will help us understand who sportswriters are, how satisfied they are with their jobs, how empowered they feel at their jobs and if they are likely to stay in the field.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at patte006@crimson.ua.edu or contact my adviser, Dr. Jennifer Greer at 205-348-6304. For questions regarding research participants' rights, please contact The University of Alabama Research Compliance Office at 205-348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study when it is complete, please contact me.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Jessie Patterson Jones
The University of Alabama, Department of Journalism
jppjones@crimson.ua.edu

Follow-up recruitment e-mail

Dear <Name>,

A week ago, I e-mailed you asking for your participation in an online survey, sponsored by The University of Alabama, regarding sportswriters' job satisfaction.

If you have already taken this survey, thank you very much.

If you have not completed the survey, please consider completing the survey at this time. Please click <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sportswritersurvey>.

As I mentioned last week, you have been chosen to participate because you work at a newspaper randomly selected from a list of the 100 largest U.S. newspapers based on circulation.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. The information you submit will go to a secure server that does not collect any information about the sending computer. The survey also does not ask for any information that could identify you individually.

To begin this survey, please click <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sportswritersurvey>. It will take about 10 minutes for you to complete the survey.

Your responses to this survey will help us understand who sportswriters are, how satisfied they are with their jobs, how empowered they feel at their jobs and if they are likely to stay in the field.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at patte006@crimson.ua.edu or contact my adviser, Dr. Jennifer Greer at 205-348-6304. For questions regarding research participants' rights, please contact The University of Alabama Research Compliance Office at 205-348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study when it is complete, please contact me.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Jessie Patterson Jones
The University of Alabama, Department of Journalism
jjones@crimson.ua.edu

Second follow-up recruitment e-mail

Dear <Name>,

Over the last two weeks, I e-mailed you twice asking for your participation in an online survey, sponsored by The University of Alabama, regarding sportswriters' job satisfaction.

If you have already taken this survey, thank you very much. However, to reach a response rate that allows me to generalize to sportswriters at the 100 largest-circulation newspapers, I need more participants.

If you have not completed the survey, please consider completing the survey at this time. Please click <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sportswritersurvey>. This is the final e-mail you will receive about this survey.

As I mentioned before, you have been chosen to participate because you work at a newspaper randomly selected from a list of the 100 largest U.S. newspapers based on circulation.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. The information you submit will go to a secure server that does not collect any information about the sending computer. The survey also does not ask for any information that could identify you individually.

To begin this survey, please click <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sportswritersurvey>. It will take about 10 minutes for you to complete the survey.

Your responses to this survey will help us understand who sportswriters are, how satisfied they are with their jobs, how empowered they feel at their jobs and if they are likely to stay in the field.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at patte006@crimson.ua.edu or contact my adviser, Dr. Jennifer Greer at 205-348-6304. For questions regarding research participants' rights, please contact The University of Alabama Research Compliance Office at 205-348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study when it is complete, please contact me. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Jessie Patterson Jones
The University of Alabama, Department of Journalism
jjones@crimson.ua.edu

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPERS IN THE SAMPLE

Newspaper	Rank by circulation	Number contacted
USA Today	2	8
New York Times	3	6
Los Angeles Times	4	8
Washington Post	5	11
New York Daily News	6	27
New York Post	7	22
Chicago Tribune	8	38
Houston Chronicle	9	11
Philadelphia Inquirer	10	2
Newsday	11	22
The Denver Post	12	17
Arizona Republic	13	1
Star Tribune	14	1
Chicago Sun-Times	15	4
Plain Dealer	16	4
Detroit Free Press	17	23
Boston Globe	18	3
Dallas Morning News	19	44
The Seattle Times	20	15
San Francisco Chronicle	21	1

The Oregonian	22	17
The Star-Ledger	23	11
San Diego Union-Tribune	24	16
St. Petersburg Times	25	6
San Jose Mercury News	26	14
The Sacramento Bee	27	11
Kansas City Star	28	1
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	29	16
Orange County Register	30	2
Atlanta Journal Constitution	31	1
Indianapolis Star	32	2
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	33	23
The (Baltimore) Sun	34	23
St. Paul Pioneer Press	35	15
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	36	18
Columbus Dispatch	37	23
Orlando Sentinel	38	27
The Courier-Journal	39	11
Las Vegas Review Journal	40	19
Contra Costa Times	41	6
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette	42	18
Cincinnati Enquirer	43	2
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review	44	28

Detroit News	45	2
Charlotte Observer	46	1
Fort Worth Star-Telegram	47	3
Buffalo News	48	2
Virginia Pilot	49	12
Miami Herald	50	11
The Times-Picayune	51	12
South Florida Sun-Sentinel	52	15
Omaha World-Herald	53	16
The Record	54	5
Tampa Tribune	55	9
San Antonio Express-News	56	19
The Oklahoman	57	30
Hartford Courant	58	12
Austin American-Statesman	60	4
News & Observer	61	14
Boston Herald	63	29
Richmond Times-Dispatch	64	1
The Tennessean	65	1
Fresno Bee	66	9
Democrat and Chronicle	67	9
Asbury Park Press	68	8
Birmingham News	69	4

The Des Moines Register	70	9
Palm Beach Post	71	1
Honolulu Advertiser	72	3
Press-Enterprise (CA)	73	2
Salt Lake Tribune	74	2
Daily Herald	75	1
Florida Times-Union	76	3
The Providence Journal	77	11
The Blade (OH)	78	15
Dayton Daily News	79	7
Grand Rapids Press	80	13
Tulsa World	81	3
The Morning Call	82	10
Knoxville News-Sentinel	83	12
Lexington Herald-Leader	84	9
Akron Beacon Journal	85	1
Los Angeles Daily News	86	6
Albuquerque Journal	87	10
Arizona Daily Star	88	13
Post-Standard (Sry, NY)	89	10
Mobile Press-Register	90	15
Oakland Tribune	91	1
Wisconsin State Journal	92	1

La Opinion	93	5
News Journal	94	6
News Tribune (WA)	95	12
Advocate (LA)	96	2
Post and Courier	97	9
Journal News (WP, NY)	98	9
State (SC)	99	5
Times of Northwest Indiana	100	4
Total:	97	1,010

APPENDIX C
SURVEY

Sportswriters’ job satisfaction survey

As stated in the e-mail you are being invited to participate in a research study of sportswriters and their careers. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may quit at any time. This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete, and is comprised of four sections — job satisfaction, attitudes about your work, career path and demographics. At the end of this page is a “next” button. By clicking “next”, you are giving your consent to participate. The information you submit will be stored on a secure server that does not collect any information about the sending computer. Also, the survey does not ask for any information that could identify you individually. Your answers will remain confidential and they will only be reported out in aggregate form with answers from other sportswriters.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, nor are there any risks involved in your participation. However, we hope your answers will help the state’s newspapers as they seek to better serve the public in a changing media environment. If you have any questions about the study before you participate or later on, please contact investigator Jennifer Greer at jdgreer@ua.edu or (205) 348-6304. If you have questions or complaints about your rights as a research participant, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of the University at 205-348-8461.

Job satisfaction

Think about your current job. Rate your satisfaction on the following scale with 1 being very dissatisfied and 7 being very satisfied.

How satisfied are you with your	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
balance with work hours and personal life?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
flexibility in scheduling your work hours?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
benefits package?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
salary?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
job security?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
opportunities for advancement in your organization?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
amount of praise you receive in the work place?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
opportunity to showcase your talents at your job?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
variety of work activities?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
value in the organization as reflected in	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	

the respect for your skills and abilities?	
degree of independence at work?	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

Attitudes about your work

Rate your agreement with each of the following statements, where 1 equals strongly disagree and 7 equals strongly agree.

	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am inspired by what we are trying to achieve as a newspaper	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I am inspired by the goals of the newspaper.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I am enthusiastic about working toward the newspaper's objectives.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I want us to do well as an organization.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I am enthusiastic about the contribution my work makes to the newspaper	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I can influence the way work is done in the sports department.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I can influence major decisions made in my department.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I have the authority to make to decisions at work.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I have the authority to work effectively.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
Important responsibilities are part of my job.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I have the capabilities required to do my job well.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I have the skills and abilities to do my job well.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I have the competence to work effectively.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I can do my work efficiently.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I can handle the challenges I face at work.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	

Rate your agreement with each of the following statements, where 1 equals strongly disagree and 7 equals strongly agree.

	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
The future of journalism looks bright.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
There will always been a need for qualified journalists to cover sports.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	
I feel good about my future in this profession.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7	

Sportswriting is a good career option.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7
If I were choosing my career path again, I would go into journalism.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

32. Please explain your career plans in sports journalism to help us understand your response above. (open-ended question)

Career path

33. How many years have you worked professionally in journalism?

- Drop down menu from 1 to 25+

34. How many years have you worked professionally as a sports journalist?

- Drop down menu from 1 to 25+

35. How many years have you worked at your newspaper?

- Drop down menu from 1 to 25+

36. Did you cover sports in high school or college?

- Yes

- No

37. Did you ever play competitive sports at the high school or college level?

- Yes

- No

38. If the decision were entirely up to you, how many years would you plan to remain working professionally in sports journalism?

- I would like to leave sports journalism within the next two years

- I would like to work another 3 to 5 years in sports journalism

- I would like to work another 6 to 10 years in sports journalism

- I would like to continue working in sports journalism until I retire.

39. Please include any thoughts you wish to share about your future in sports journalism. (open-ended question)

Your sports department

40. How many people work in your sports department?

- Drop down menu from 1 to 40+

41. What level sports are covered in your market (check all that apply)?

- recreational

- pre-high school

- high school

- college
 - professional (minor league)
 - professional (major league)
42. What level sports do you cover (check all that apply)?
- recreational
 - pre-high school
 - high school
 - college
 - professional (minor league)
 - professional (major league)
43. What is the circulation of your newspaper?
- under 75,000
 - 75,000 – 99,999
 - 100,000 to 199,999
 - 200,000 to 299,999
 - 300,000 to 399,999
 - 400,000 to 499,999
 - 500,000+

Demographics

44. Age
- Drop down menu from 1 to 65+
45. Gender
- Male
 - Female
46. Which title best describes your current position?
- section editor
 - assistant editor
 - copy editor/page designer
 - reporter/staff writer
 - freelancer/stringer
 - blogger (no other staff duties)
47. How many hours do you work each week?
- 0-10
 - 11-20
 - 21-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60

- 61+

48. What is your highest level of education?

- No high school degree
- High school degree/no college
- Some college
- College degree/no graduate work
- Graduate work/no graduate degree
- Graduate degree

49. If you attended college, what was your **main** field of study/major?

- Journalism/public relations/mass communication/broadcast
- English
- Sports-related major (kinesiology, sport management, etc.)
- Health/human environmental science
- Other liberal art
- Other

50. Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/ Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other _____

51. Salary from your sports journalism position:

- 0-10,000 K
- 10,001 – 20,000 K
- 20,001 – 30,000 K
- 30,001 – 40,000 K
- 40,001 – 50,000 K
- 50,001 – 60,000 K
- 60,001 – 70,000 K
- 70,001 – 80,000 K
- 80,001 – 90,000 K
- 90,001 – 100,000 K
- 100,001 – 110,000 K
- 110,001 – 120,000 K
- 120,001 – 130,000 K
- 130,001 – 140,000 K
- 140,001 – 150,000 K
- 150,001 K +

52. Relationship status

- single, never married
- divorced or separated
- married or living with partner
- widowed

53. Number of children

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6+

54. Number of children currently living with you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6+

55. Open-ended question:

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences in sports journalism and your job satisfaction?