MEET THE NEW PLAYERS: A STUDY OF DIGITAL NATIVE JOURNALISTS AND JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

Lu Wu: Meet the New Players: A Study of Digital Native Journalists and Journalistic Professionalism
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Digital native journalists have brought new blood as well as challenges to contemporary journalistic professionalism. This dissertation employs a national survey of both digital native journalists and legacy journalists and focuses on the cognitive, normative, and evaluative dimensions of their journalistic professionalism. Findings suggest that both the "professionalism" concept and the operational measures are suitable for evaluating the traits and characteristics of digital native journalists, and digital native journalists are currently serving as both preservers and transformers of journalistic professionalism. Findings of this study serve as the groundwork for observing and understanding digital native journalists and their organizations as new entrants to journalism. Journalistic professionalism is undergoing a transformation, and identifying how digital native journalists differentiate from legacy journalists on aspects of professionalism has afforded some clues to how journalistic professional values and practices will develop in the future.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Andrew Kaczynski was a 26-year-old BuzzFeed political reporter. He led an investigative team called the "K-File" unit that specialized in mining the internet for videos and nuggets to be used in political reporting. Just a month before the 2016 general election, he and his three team members were recruited by CNN to join the news organization's political reporting team (Pappu, 2016). Ironically, during an interview with *Variety* magazine just months before this, CNN chief executive Jeff Zucker had implied that BuzzFeed was not a "legitimate news organization" (Setoodeh, 2016).

It seems that leadership at CNN was ambivalent about digital native media outlets such as BuzzFeed. Legacy media appear to have a love-hate relationship with digital native media, at times admiring digital native media outlets for successful uptake among Millennials, while alternately rejecting or criticizing some of the journalistic practices at digital outlets. Kaczynsky's hire may have represented a shift in approach toward digital news at the legacy outlet.[1]

Although journalism trade publications have followed closely as digital native media practices evolve, offering prompt updates on quickly changing trends in the journalism field, the academic literature has paid less attention to systematically studying digital native media and the practices of journalists at those outlets. This dissertation takes the initiative to inquire about the

[1] For instance, among the widely criticized is the "listicle" (i.e., "Five things you should know about the election"). These formats have been repudiated as a lower form of journalism; unsourced and easily written pulp serving merely as click-bait, or at best a sort of dumbed-down news to simplify important issues for audiences with short attention spans (Leonhardt, 2015).

professional aspects of digital native journalism and to identify the commonalities and discrepancies that exist in professionalism compared to those of traditional journalists working for legacy media. The analysis of professionalism has been used as a discourse of occupational change and control: the concept of "professionalism" has an appeal to practitioners, employees and managers in the development and maintenance of work identities, career decisions and an occupation's sense of self (Evetts, 2014). The term "professionalism" provides a key analytical framework to explain and interpret professional knowledge-based work, occupations and practitioners (Evetts, 2014). Thus, there are advantages in adopting professionalism as a concept for understanding digital-native journalists and evaluating levels of professional practices in journalism. Also, the examination of professionalism is proper for this study in that professionalism also encompasses how a profession expands and changes through new entrants who both learn and propagate skills, expertise, and norms within the profession. (Usher, 2016)

This study contributes to journalistic professionalism literature by providing an assessment of the "state of journalism," using a comparative perspective, and the findings will offer an assertion about journalistic forms of the future.

The inquiry about journalistic professionalism is more relevant than ever to industry. Journalists in the digital age remain committed to serving similar democratic goals for the society as before, but they are operating in a much-changed environment. The internet often gives an outsized voice to extremist opinion, false information, and propaganda. Journalists operating on the digital platform are facing significant obstacles in fulfilling liberal journalism's role as a civic enterprise that serves the public good by scrutinizing power, contributing to informed opinion, and fostering critical debate. Amidst such media upheaval, the concept of

professionalism helps sustain journalism and guide journalists in performing such functions as a socially responsible enterprise (Lewis, 2012).

This study also provides insights that may inform future research of digital audience. Digital native media are becoming mainstream news organizations and have gained recognition and popularity among young audiences (Wu, 2016). Thus, it is of value to the public interest to know if digital native journalists are adhering to the standards commonly expected from legacy media journalists. A sense of professionalism helps insulate a journalist from political influences and market interests, and the shared concept of professionalism encompasses a set of desirable virtues and principles that help define the standards of journalism required for a functioning democracy (Waisbord, 2013). The evaluation of traits of professionalism of digital native journalists can reveal to a certain degree that if they too can produce high-quality news, gathered in an ethical fashion and independent from corrupting influences (Lewis, 2012).

This study's conceptual basis is in the cognitive, normative, and evaluative dimensions of the sociological construct of "professionalism" in general (Larson, 1977; Singer, 2003). The cognitive dimension is defined as the body of knowledge, techniques, and necessary training that professionals must use in their work. The normative dimension refers to the service orientation of professionals, and the sense of self-regulation that occurs when individuals apply common ethical beliefs in their daily work. The evaluative dimension can be measured in terms of autonomy and prestige proffered by a group to its members and their work; for example, to what degree professionals are able to function free of influences from external factors, and to what degree are they respected by society. The combination of these three general dimensions has been used by scholars to identify the distinctiveness of a profession and has been used to evaluate journalism professionalism specifically (Singer, 2003; Chung & Nah, 2014).

This study employs a national survey of both digital native journalists and legacy journalists. The study will measure the cognitive, normative, and evaluative dimensions of professionalism of each group. Chapter 2 provides background on how digital native media have evolved as news organizations and further develops the rationale for this study. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on professionalism and journalistic professionalism and introduces this study's theoretical framework. Chapter 4 synthesizes the literature review and poses research questions. Chapter 5 justifies the research methods and measures used for this study. Chapter 6 presents and analyzes the findings, and Chapter 7 discusses the major findings and concludes this study.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

Digital Native Media

The 2008 financial crisis escalated the downturn of the newspaper industry (Meyer, 2009), but for more than two decades prior, many legacy news organizations have struggled with profitability, continuous revenue drops, and newsroom downsizing. The worsening financial performance of traditional news has media scholars uneasy and worried about the future viability and integrity of journalism (Curran, 2010; Lowrey & Woo, 2010).

Nonetheless, some scholars are calling for a more optimistic view of the future of journalism (Zelizer, 2015; Franklin, 2012). For almost a decade, the newspaper industry has been making substantial changes and adapting editorially and financially to accommodate innovations in media technologies and changing market requirements (Franklin, 2012). Newsrooms are taking inevitable steps toward conjoining print and online operations. Despite the fact that numbers of print subscribers continue to decline, newspaper websites are gradually gaining momentum (Lu & Holcomb, 2016).

In the midst of the newspaper downturn, a "new journalism" emerged in the digital space, one that employs the most advanced digital technologies and reinvents how news is written and presented to the audience (Franklin, 2012, p. 667). Examples include the so-called digital native media outlets such as BuzzFeed that came to prominence in the past few years (Wu, 2016).

The term "digital native media" in this study refers to media organizations that are born and grown online, i.e., their first "publications" were entirely online; they are not adapted online

versions of traditional media companies. Digital native media and legacy media organizations differ vastly in content structure and content output (Lowrey, 2012). Digital native media produce and publish content in wide-ranging forms: some are aggregators, some exclusively develop content for mobile devices, and some condense existing news stories without contacting primary sources (Carlson & Usher, 2016). Some of the well-knowns include general-interest sites like the Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, as well as sites focused on niche subjects like politics (fivethirtyeight.com), business (qz.com), and investigative journalism (propublica.org).

Also, many digital native media today are hybrids, companies existing as both technology startup and emerging media outlet (Carlson & Usher, 2016). As Vox Vice President Trei Brundrett clearly put, "we were not just a media company, we were also a technology company" (Vox, 2014).

On top of that, some digital native media are also backed generously by venture capital groups and managed by some of the best business minds. Over the past few years, digital native media companies have begun to show both financial strength and technological sophistication, distinguishing themselves from legacy media by their expanding growth and profits (Wu, 2016).

Nevertheless, digital native media have often been viewed as edgy, eccentric, or unseemly by established media organizations and media critics (Carr, 2012; Carr, 2014; Miller, 2014). The content published on their platforms has been described as sensational, as viral content driven, or simply as "click-bait," designed with the sole purpose to attract online traffic to a particular web page and generate the most clicks possible (Kilgo & Sinta, 2016). Critics point to the dramatic legal battle between Gawker and wrestler Hulk Hogan, which ended with Gawker's court loss and subsequent bankruptcy. In March 2016, Gawker, a digital native website known for celebrity and media industry gossip, was found by a Florida jury to have violated

wrestling professional and TV personality Hulk Hogan's privacy by publishing a sex tape featuring Hogan on Gawker's website. The jury awarded more than $140 million in total damages to be paid by Gawker to Hogan (White, 2016). Gawker has subsequently cleared bankruptcy and was auctioned to Universal.

Based on incidents like the Hogan case, some would say that digital native media have a long way to go before they can gain recognition and trust from the public. Meyer (2009) foresaw a similar challenge for new media forms seeking to replace legacy media: good information quality is the key to success. He argued that media should prioritize producing quality content; profits and financial sustainability will be possible only after the trust of the audience is gained.

In fact, in recent years there has been a significant shift in the editorial ecosystem of some digital native media companies. Many cases of high-profile migration of journalists from legacy media to digital native news media have occurred since the fall of 2013 (Jurkowitz, 2014). For example, Ryan Mac, a Forbes reporter who broke the story about Peter Thiel financing Hulk Hogan's lawsuit against Gawker, was hired in May 2017 to join BuzzFeed's tech team covering Silicon Valley (Mullin, 2017).

This was viewed as a sign of digital native media repositioning and transitioning to a "more serious" news business (Wu, 2016). Such a transition also took place under the pressure of an imminent need for a sustainable model for financial security beyond the support of venture capital funds (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016). Some venture capital groups have begun taking their gains and moving out of media investments, including digital native media. Venture funding to media-tech companies slid to the lowest point since mid-2013 in mid-2016 (Mittelman, 2016). Investment in digital startups followed a similar trend, with the fewest number of deals was made in four years (Mittelman, 2016).

Nevertheless, leading digital native publishers have reported a record number of visitors to their sites in the past year, and with their top priority of maximizing loyalty and increasing audience engagement in mind, they are actively testing new content formats designed to work in a mobile and social context (Newman, 2016). However, even as they seek a higher stake in the news business, digital native media undoubtedly have yet to gain the same levels of respect that legacy media generate in their audiences. Most recently, digital media report by the Reuters Institute (Levy, Newman, Fletcher, & Nielsen, 2016) found that audiences turn to digital native media mostly as a secondary source and for softer news topics. Audiences still favor legacy media with a long news heritage and strong reputations built up over time for factual accuracy (Levy et al., 2016).

Legitimization of Digital Native Media

Media scholars have devoted attention to decoding the strategies and approaches of digital native media. Carlson and Usher (2016) analyzed company "manifestos" of digital native media companies, looking for statements that offer insight into news products and how the companies position themselves as players in the journalism market. They found that digital native media place emphasis on innovation and forward-looking strategies to differentiate themselves from legacy media or existing players; statements in the manifestos focused particularly on the use of computer science and improved data technology.

Wu (2016) conducted a content analysis of seven years' BuzzFeed articles and found that BuzzFeed has moved away from providing aggregated online content toward original journalistic work. Its content and editorial choices show it has begun to emulate traditional news workflow forms, such as reporting on more hard news stories and using more official sources. These new

media, perhaps in an effort to emulate, are beginning to conform to many of the traditional news reporting forms and rules as those used by old-guard journalism (Wu, 2016).

When analyzing how digital native media were perceived by legacy media, Tandoc and Jenkins (2015) argued that digital native media are gradually being accepted by legacy media as sources of "actual journalism" and should "play by the rules" (Tandoc & Jenkins, 2015, p. 8). It is unclear exactly what these "rules" are, but the authors brainstormed a few ideas, ranging from formats, to writing styles, to professional and ethical conduct.

Purpose of Study

The emergence of digital native media offers a constitutive moment to examine the idea of journalistic professionalism. This study extends the focus on digital native media and professionalism, but shifts that focus from organizational level analysis to individual level analysis of journalistic practice and workflow in the digital newsroom. As a relatively new job category, the position of digital native journalist has, in general, received little scholarly analysis compared to legacy journalists. This study seeks to provide a focused and comprehensive examination of digital native journalists as news professionals. Drawing from the theoretical perspective of professionalism, this study will inquire into the professional traits and attributes of digital native journalists to identify similarities and differences with legacy journalists.

Although numerous studies have committed to understanding the values and discourses of "professionalism" (e.g. Beam, 1990; Johnstone, et al., 1972; McLeod & Hawley, 1964; Revers, 2013a), this study addresses a remaining gap for the following reasons:

1. Online media are a vastly capricious environment in which journalists' practices are constantly shaped and reshaped by economic and technological transformations (Preston, 2009). Existing data regarding the professionalism of

journalists, such as those from the national survey conducted in 2002, then published by Weaver et al. (2007), may already be obsolete in certain aspects, requiring that they be updated.

2. Digital native media differ from online media in important ways. For instance, digital native media companies may have emerged and matured without the same bureaucratic structures and newsroom operations that so heavily shape journalists' behavior or online initiatives at legacy media.
3. Digital native journalists play a key role in their organizations, and the future of digital journalism may grow out of their work (Levy et al., 2016). Digital native media may have reached large audiences, but at the same time, many of them are still in the process of building a strong news brand (Levy et al., 2016). Dissecting the elements of professionalism among digital media journalists will provide insight into organizational values at digital native media.
4. Professionalism has been used abstractly to describe good journalism in terms of quality of storytelling and ethical practices, and it describes a more desirable virtue that journalists are expected to have. However, there is no consensus definition of what "journalistic professionalism" is. Comparing digital native journalistic professionalism to legacy media provides a strong starting point because the meaning of professional journalism is always elusive. Using legacy journalists as a reference does not necessarily admit that legacy journalists are the exemplar of professional journalism, but rather offers a comparison point to more easily identify the overlapping/overwriting between traditional journalistic practices and journalistic practices in digital native media.

The purpose of this study is 1) to characterize digital native journalists as an emerging group of professionals who may have an important role in shaping the future of news and journalism; and 2) to explicate the differences and similarities in perceived professionalism between digital native journalists and legacy journalists.

CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Professionalism

Developing a "definitive" definition of what constitutes a profession has been extremely difficult to past researchers. William J. Goode, one of America's foremost sociologists, describes professionals as a homogeneous community whose members share values, identity, and definition of role and interests. The community also shares knowledge that is only partially understood by outsiders. The community has power over its members and imposes social restrictions on members other than physical and geographical ones (Goode, 1957).

Durkheim (1957/2013) argued that a profession forms moral community that is fused by solidarity and collective identity. This system of normative classification is the basis of collective representations; that is, members of the group share a symbolic vocabulary. Social order is conditioned by reinvigorating these representations through rituals; these influences are directed inward on members as well as outward, particularly in struggles with adjacent professions over jurisdiction of professional expertise (Durkheim, 2013).

Lynn (1965) named other characteristics of a profession: a member of a profession is expected to think objectively and inquiringly; a member of a profession expects trust from a layperson because of the member's expertise; a member of a profession can meet various minimum entrance standards for the profession, such as a degree, which serves to a special license to identify member as a professional; a member of a profession participates in a system of rewards, monetary or honorary, and so on.

Larson (1977) interpreted the emergence of modern professions as a consequence of the rising of capitalism: by achieving the status of a profession, practitioners will create an organizational monopoly on a socially useful body of knowledge, thus retaining market control of where and how that knowledge can be utilized. In return, professionals will be awarded economic power and social status (Larson, 1977). In her view, professionals are a distinct occupational group with a monopoly in the market for their service, status, and upward mobility.

Three main theoretical approaches are often used to study professionalism: the structural-functional approach, the phenomenological approach, and the power-relations approach (Allison, 1986). Each approach differs in some way regarding what constitutes professionalism.

The structural-functional approach uses a collection of characteristics that can define and describe the attributes of a profession. Such a taxonomic approach summarizes the set of attributes and conditions that a profession should possess, and argues that these conditions do not exist at all or exist less consistently in *non*-professions (Beam, 1990). For instance, sociologist Harold Wilensky (1964) identified five basic attributes for a profession: (1) the practitioner must pursue an area of work as a full-time occupation; (2) the profession must have an established training school; (3) there must exist professional association(s) unique to that profession; (4) representatives of the occupation must agitate politically to win legal support for the right to control their work; and (5) the profession must have a formal code of ethics (Wilensky, 1964).

The structural-functional approach is considered the dominant paradigm in professionalism research (Allison, 1986). This approach leads itself to quantitative measurement and allows researchers to create and test scales and indexing to operationalize the professional orientation of individuals (Allison, 1986). However, the characteristics that constitute a profession vary from study to study.

The phenomenological approach considers how professionalism is conceived or embodied in the everyday lives of members of an occupational group (Beam, 1990). It rejects a strict, formal definition of a profession and doesn't concern itself with the strict categorization of traits or conditions. What constitutes "professionalism" is essentially a phenomenological concept, which can vary from profession to profession.

A third approach to defining professionalism is the power-relations approach. This approach envisions professionalism not as a characteristic of an individual or an occupational group but as an organizational-level construct (Beam, 1990). It was viewed as inspired by Max Weber's work on status and authority, which shifted the focus from traits of a profession to "circumstances" in which people in an occupation turn into a profession (Hughes, 1963, p.655; Schudson & Anderson, 2009). This approach addresses issues such as the relationship of professionals to other important actors in their environment, and the relationship of the profession to the labor markets (Allison, 1986).

Is Journalism a Profession?

This study limits its discussion of journalism professionalism to American journalists because of the extensive literature on this subject and the fact that the perception of journalism professionalism varies in different countries and is sensitive to social and political systems (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956; Aldridge & Evetts, 2003).

In the US, the question of whether journalism has the conventional structures and social standings associated with being a "profession" has always been open for debate. Two main camps that take opposite sides of the issue include those who argue that journalism is a craft/trade and those who argue that journalism qualifies as a profession (Dennis & Merrill, 1991; Waisbord, 2013).

Proponents of journalism as a craft or trade cite several justifications. First, journalism lacks a formal system of knowledge (Johnstone et al., 1972; Allison, 1986; Merrill, 1991). According to Larson (1977), groups seeking professional status must hold a monopoly on the knowledge required for that job. Journalism knowledge might differ from the codified structures and esoteric vocabulary that define prototypical professions such as medicine or law. In journalism, the knowledge required is skill-centered and method-oriented, such as news gathering, reporting, writing, or editing. These kinds of skills are gained largely from on-the-job training or task-based experience, or as put by Waisbord (2013), the skills of a journalist "are basically technical skills and competencies" (p. 83).

Second, there is to some extent a disconnection between journalistic education and job placement, unlike other professions that require specific training and certification. Traditionally, news workers did not require a four-year college degree in journalism in order to begin to work or carry on a career as a journalist. Journalism or news jobs place a greater hiring emphasis on general higher education than on the possession of communication or journalism degree (Weaver et al., 2007). That being said, more than 90% of surveyed journalists do hold a 4-year degree of some sort (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 37). A recent survey of U.S. newspaper journalists reported a similar result, that more than 90% had a bachelor's or graduate degree (McIntyre et al., 2016).

Third, journalism does not have a system of training and certification that bars amateurs. Many professions enforce mandatory training requirements and registration and authorize credentials after seeing evidence of qualification (Waisbord, 2013). Such processes allow professions to erect barriers to control, close off, and maintain secured "boundaries" as a way to differentiate experts from amateurs and quacks. For the most part, the occupation of journalism does not have control over its labor markets (Abbott, 1983). In fact, journalism has undergone an

identity crisis as large numbers of bloggers, contributors and other third parties enter the same practice and challenge journalists' territory (Deuze, 2005; Lewis & Westlund, 2015).

On the other hand, some scholars argue that journalism in the US has moved from a craft to a profession (Weaver, 1998). This argument proposes that journalism has developed beyond tasks of skill or experiential learning that are the main characteristics of a craft, and that the field now exhibits characteristics such as ethics codes, codified training requirements, and membership in professional organizations (Waisbord, 2013). Schudson (2005) stated that professionalization of journalism is evident simply by the differentiation of journalists as a distinct group with distinctive norms and traditions.

Journalism in the US emerged as a distinct occupation in the mid-nineteenth century (Waisbord, 2013). Just as in many other societies in the West in the early days, the American press outlets were linked to partisan politics, with editors and ownership influenced greatly by state power and political parties. The transition into a commercial enterprise in the late nineteenth century set the basis for the gradual separation of the press from organized politics by providing the financial independence to operate without outside influence. Although commercialization (largely through advertising sales) was viewed as a viable path to developing a more professional journalism, Waisbord (2013) argues that it did not directly lead to the professionalization of the occupation.

Journalistic associations and educational programs began to appear after the Civil War, reflecting a growing interest in journalistic circles toward promoting professional ethics and professionalization. The next critical moment for journalism professionalization arrived with the establishment of journalism programs in universities in the early 1900s. The higher education

programs played a decisive role in the recognition of certain norms and skills that were to become widely "enforced" in journalism practice (Waisbord, 2013).

According to Evetts (2003), an important part of an occupation's path to professionalization is derived from public service, in which specific ethical principles are developed that eventually distinguish it from other occupations. Over the years, journalists developed a unique set of professional ethical rules, often in reaction to the influence of partisan politics in journalism. After a time, American journalism could be said to have detached itself from organized politics, becoming a public-minded civic institution with a general orientation toward a greater good and a mission to provide unbiased information to the electorate to better serve democracy (Waisbord, 2013, p. 20).

This study assumes the term "professional" to be a fitting label for American journalists. Regardless of its "true" status as a profession, depending on the definition employed, the concept of a professional journalist is central to American journalism (Waisbord, 2013). American journalists themselves overwhelmingly accept the label, and there are many examples of journalists exerting professional control and fighting off outsiders from their turf (e.g. Lewis, 2012; Revers, 2014a). The struggle has been amplified in the digital era. For instance, Twitter emerged as a medium that intensifies the tension between journalists and non-professional content producers by blurring the line between content producers and content consumers (Holton, Coddington, Lewis & De Zúniga, 2015).

This study also sets the premise that digital native journalists, like their legacy media counterparts, should be distinguished from non-professional content contributors who are referred as "citizen journalists" or "participatory journalists." As far as this study is concerned, digital native journalists are employees of news organizations who conduct journalistic work on

a daily basis. Discussion of professionalism is unnecessarily complicated if it is expanded to include participatory and citizen journalists. Thus, the examination of professionalism is limited to bona fide journalists who are employees of news organizations and who conduct journalistic work on a daily basis. These premises limit the study scope and ensure that the subjects of this study are not confused with other communicators such as citizen journalists and bloggers.

Journalism Professionalism Studies

Understanding the development of the values and discourse about "professionalism," as well as the professionalism of reporters and editors, has been a central concern to American journalism studies (Waisbord, 2013). A body of scholarship on the professionalization of journalism began to emerge in the 1960s, drawing on studies of professionalism from the field of sociology. Although scholars from the same period refused to call journalism a profession, over time more scholars have softened their tone in commenting on this issue. Some studies identified central aspects of journalism and journalists that are required of a profession: journalists have strong commitment to public service, and workers have relative freedom to exercise their own judgment. In addition, journalists subscribe to occupational norms such as objectivity in reporting, while ethical practices such as protecting sources are central to the identity of journalists who consider themselves professionals (Singer, 2003). Johnstone et al. (1976) wrote that journalism should be considered a profession because of the value it places on worker autonomy, commitment to public service, and strong codes of ethics. Among them, "autonomy" has been seen as central to the idea of professional journalism (Waisbord, 2013), and will be further discussed below.

One major strand of journalism professionalism scholarship adopts the structural-functional approach to identify the major characteristics of a profession and measure the degree

to which journalism has achieved that professional status. McLeod was among the earliest to utilize a method for indexing the professional orientation. He and Hawley (1964) developed and tested two sets of twelve occupational criteria, one of which corresponds with a "professional orientation" while the other corresponds to a "non-professional orientation." Using the index, the researchers identified pros (the editorial groups) from semi-pros (non-editorial employees) who differed greatly on the tendency to desire implementation of professional values. The index was later used in various studies examining the level of professionalism of different occupations, but it has also been criticized for being methodologically imprecise and inconsistent (Allison, 1986) and theoretically unsatisfactory because it downplays the economic aspects of the professionalization process (Beam, 1990).

Since McLeod and Hawley, many other studies have adopted a structural-functional approach to examining journalism professionalism. These studies, which are often in the form of survey research, place emphasis on traits in professions, usually collecting survey data on journalists' employment, education levels, adherence to ethical codes, etc. Among these, perhaps the most influential and widely cited work is the longitudinal surveys of American journalists by Weaver and colleagues (Weaver & Wilhoit ,1991, 1996; Weaver, 1998; Weaver et al., 2009; Willnat & Weaver, 2013). Built on the work of Johnstone et al. (1976), these surveys documented the changing characteristics of American journalists over three decades. The 2013 study found that American journalists were more likely to be college graduates with better compensation but many expressed decreasing job satisfaction.

Weaver's series of studies has been very influential in journalism research, providing data and helping build the theoretical foundation for much of the scholarship about contemporary journalism professionalism. However, the approach has drawn criticism for its imprecision

regarding traits and attributes (Beam et al., 2009). Scholars could not agree on the exact set of attributes that should describe a profession of journalism (Witschge & Nygren, 2009). Beam et al. (2009) conducted a panel study of 400 journalists across the US to assess changes in professionalism between 2002 and 2007. The study was developed specifically using indicators such as journalists' involvement with professional organizations, workplace autonomy, professional roles, and ethical conduct. They found that journalists' professional roles had shifted only slightly, but journalists had become more ethically cautious during the five-year span of the study.

Many studies of journalism professionalism derive from the phenomenological approach and focus on specific journalistic values such as objectivity, accountability, and autonomy with a goal of identifying challenges and obstacles in the media environment. Schiller (1979) argued that objectivity was a key concept in the professionalization of American journalists. Revers (2014b) found that journalists understand the distinction between professionalism and non-professionalism mainly with respect to source relations, because it is in these day-to-day interactions that professionalism materializes most clearly. In his ethnographic analysis of the Albany press corps, Revers (2014b) wrote that journalists draw on representations of impartiality in order to be perceived as professional when interacting with sources; journalists signified that they very much value the role of government watchdogs.

Some qualitative studies and essays have drawn heavily from professional journalism literature but focus on specific norms and values to identify deviations in the context of online journalism (e.g. Singer, 2007; Hayes, Singer, & Ceppos, 2007; Anderson, 2011). For instance, Hayes et al., (2007) focused on analyzing how to use journalistic normative values such as

authenticity and autonomy to distinguish professional journalists from other communicators in the digital media environment.

Although journalism professionalism is a sociological concept and serves an overarching role in the journalistic community, studies have found that the construction and interpretation of professionalism vary among individual journalists. Ferrucci and Vos (2016) found that although journalists working in mainstream organizations identified themselves as professionals and claimed that they value journalism as a profession, they did not hold identical understandings of the elements of professionalism nor identify it using similar criteria (Ferrucci & Vos, 2016). Berkowitz and Limor (2003) found that journalists' ethical decisions depend to some extent on organizational imperatives, and also on the context of the ethical situation. Wulfemeyer (1990) found statistically significant differences between the perceptions of radio and television news directors regarding ethical behavior: radio news directors were more tolerant of freebies and moonlighting but less tolerant of using hidden cameras or microphones to gather news than were TV news directors. Meltzer (2009) studied the levels of legitimacy and professionalism of print and broadcast journalists as perceived by the journalistic community as well as by the public and found that newspaper journalists were given more respect and esteem than TV journalists.

The power-relationship approach in journalistic professionalism can be found in studies that examined the sociology of news organizations (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 2004; Schudson, 1978; Tuchman, 1978). This line of work emphasizes journalism's "cultural authority" and focuses on the character of journalistic knowledge or claims to knowledge (Schudson & Anderson, 2005). For instance, in *Discovering the News*, Schudson (1978) linked the emergence of journalistic objectivity to questions of group cohesion, professional power, social conflict, and the cultural resonance of claims to occupational authority. Critics of the power-relationship

approach took issue with the strong linkage between normative values and professionalism and its failure at discerning the differences in different media systems and specific content of their professional norms (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Schudson & Anderson, 2005).

The structural-functional approach serves as the foundation for the operationalization of professionalism in this study. The use of this approach provides great advantages in identifying the professional orientation of an individual (Allison, 1986). However, as discussed earlier, such a taxonomic approach is limited because it lacks consistency among the traits and attributes chosen to characterize journalism professionalism in various studies. In addition, some journalists who work at digital native media outlets come from a non-journalism background, such as computer science, data science, or film production (Lewis & Usher, 2013; Fink & Anderson, 2105), which further challenges the face validity of existing measures if they are applied to study journalists today.

Nevertheless, this study takes those shortcomings into consideration and seeks to construct a set of measures that is more modern and more suitable for the current media workforce. In this way, it can accurately capture both the taxonomic descriptions of a professional journalist and the unique aspects of workers in the digital journalism environment.

Three Dimensions of Journalism Professionalism

As the review above shows, the traits and attributes that constitute professionalism can vary when it comes to defining professional journalism from the perspective of structural-functionalism, but there is substantial support among researchers for the general dimensions of a profession: the cognitive dimension, normative dimension, and evaluative dimension (Larson, 1977). Thus, this study adopts these three dimensions of professionalism to form a theoretical framework for analyzing the differences between digital native journalists and legacy journalists.

Cognitive Dimension of Professionalism

The cognitive dimension of professionalism is related to the body of formal and complex knowledge and techniques that professionals apply in their work. Professionals possess esoteric knowledge that fits the needs and values of a larger social system (Evetts, 2006). When a profession can link its knowledge claims to its daily work practices, it can, in effect, ask society "to recognize its cognitive structure through exclusive rights" (Schudson & Anderson, 2009).

The cognitive dimension by extension also concerns the necessary education and training that is needed in order to achieve the required expert knowledge. Some professions require years of higher/further education and specified years of training and experience (Evetts, 2006). For instance, to become a doctor in the US, one has to earn a four-year college degree, gain entrance to a specialized medical school, and complete several years of residency training. Therefore, this study analyzes the cognitive dimension of journalism professionalism employing conceptual markers like journalistic skill, journalistic education, and experience perspectives.

As mentioned above, journalism lacks a common core of knowledge or identifiable structures of knowledge (Lewis, 2012), but at the same time, the job requires specialized skills and tactics to perform journalistic tasks (Singer, 2003). To identify the skills that digital native journalists and legacy journalists have and utilize in their daily work, this study consulted sources in journalism education, professional practices, and academic research.

Journalism programs in the US that are recognized by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication commonly offer courses in news writing, reporting, and editing (ACEJMC, 2016). The skills students acquire from those courses include skills such as news writing, information gathering, editing, interviewing, and information verification. Newsroom managers and executives treat these as foundational skills that are highly

valued and often list them as the minimum qualifications required in journalist hiring ads (Wenger & Owens, 2012; Mullin, 2016).

Many journalists also face the challenge of acquiring new skills to meet new job requirements, especially with the rise of the converged newsroom along with technological changes of the digital age. In a recent national survey, a majority of journalists expressed the desire to seek additional training (Willnat & Weaver, 2014). Video shooting and editing were the skills that most journalists wished to seek, followed by skills relating to social media engagement and data journalism (Willnat & Weaver, 2014). Other new skills appearing to be of interest for journalists included social media, audience development/engagement skills, basic computer coding and development skills, big data analysis skills, visual storytelling skills, and podcasting (Fahmy, 2008; Finberg, 2014; Fink & Anderson, 2015).

As for educational background, a four-year bachelor's degree has become the minimum educational requirement for journalists working in the US, but it is not clear how many working journalists possess a degree in journalism (Willnat & Weaver, 2014). It is not uncommon for students who majored in other areas such as English or political science to take an entry-level job as a journalist.

More important than a degree in journalism is on-the-job experience in the journalism field. Through a content analysis of journalism job postings, researchers found that previous professional experience was the top requirement for print and broadcast positions, more important than news writing and reporting skills (Wenger & Owens, 2012). Young professionals often start their careers working for college media outlets or as interns for larger media outlets during their academic training (Tenore, 2013).

Normative Dimension of Professionalism

The normative dimension of professionalism reflects the service orientation of an occupation, which can be seen in that group's distinctive shared ethics (Larson, 1977). Because laypersons must place their trust in a professional because of the exclusive knowledge that profession requires and draws upon, a profession's ethical framework exists to prove its practitioners worthy of that trust. This credo is often codified in terms of putting the interests of the client first and refraining from using specialized knowledge for fraudulent purposes (Evetts, 2006). Therefore, the growth of a profession's public/social power should be balanced by a stronger sense of ethical responsibility (Jennings, Callahan, & Wolf, 1987). It can also be argued that the professional code of ethics also exists for ritualistic reasons; helping to provide internal solidarity and cohesion to a particular group, or allowing one group to distinguish itself from another (Schudson & Anderson, 2009).

Singer (2003) argued that this normative dimension might be journalists' strongest claim to professionalism. As discussed above, an important part of a group's foundation for professionalization is in its commitment to public service, which journalism has codified in specific ethical principles understood, agreed to, and practiced by its members (Evetts, 2006). Journalistic standards are often not a news organization's highest priority (Borden, 2000). Thus, journalistic ethics codes are in place to protect journalists from the dangers that business goals may pose to their professional integrity.

American journalism ethics grew out of theories of democratic liberalism and social responsibility of the press (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Initially, the primary imperative of journalism ethics was concerned with preventing journalists from getting too cozy with partisan politics. Later, it became important to maintain the notion of an independent press,

free from government control and political or economic influence (Waisbord, 2013). Gradually, specific ethical tropes have evolved that dictate the ideal of professionalism of journalists inside the newsroom and out—such as the set of editorial considerations a journalist must balance between a person's right to privacy with the public's right to know; or the tough-minded independence of a reporter who resists bribes, threats, or intrusions from external actors.

While various existing journalistic professional codes of ethics exhibit some differences, most share two common elements that are both "proactive" and "restraining" in nature (Ward, 2009). Proactive principles state that journalists do not simply have freedom to publish, but they also have a duty to publish the truth accurately and comprehensively. They should also report independently and objectively. Restraining principles call on journalists to use this freedom to publish in a responsible manner. Restraining principles include the duty to minimize harm to vulnerable subjects of stories, such as children and victims of sex crimes. They also emphasize the journalistic duty to be accountable to the public for editorial decisions (Ward, 2009).

In general, journalists see themselves as abiding by a shared set of ethical guidelines (Singer, 2003). However, a code of ethics is a set of voluntary rules that journalists choose to follow, and failure to abide by them does not necessarily mean a loss of professional status (Singer, 2003). From time to time, professional journalists must draw their own lines at the boundaries of their behavior, deciding what is ethical and what is not. Ethical decisions vary greatly based on situational contexts (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Ward, 2015).

Undeniably, good journalism exists and is thriving online, but in recent years online journalism researchers have studied a variety of online news sites and recognized drastic differences in quality and content produced among different types of digital journalism (e.g. Agarwal & Barthel, 2015; Hindman, 2017). The internet gave birth to sites that subject their

stories to rigorous journalistic practice and who focus on making a meaningful impact on democracy and social justice, while other news sites have appeared that were created to spread political agendas, profit from celebrity voyeurism, or just plain misinform the public about critical issues and major elections.

Among those digital outlets practicing "serious" journalism, many find that journalistic ethics and professional practices are affected by working realities. As often happens, sometimes the normative values of a larger group may conflict with organizational imperatives (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003). Online journalists, in particular, have a difficult time implementing traditional ethical guidelines in their jobs (Singer, 2003; Ward, 2009, 2016). Traditional professional journalism values accuracy, verification, balance, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability; digital online journalism emphasizes immediacy, transparency, and post-publication correction (Ward, 2009). As Deuze (2005) pointed out, news production on the internet is characterized by constant updates and continuous streaming of news. There exists an obsession with immediacy—it is most important to be the first to break a news story; however, this easily leads to mistakes or shoddy editorial practices. In their study, Deuze and Yeshua (2001) pointed out that speed and immediacy had taken a toll on the perceived need for accuracy. Journalists online seemed more willing to take the pragmatic view that one can simply push a story out first and then correct any mistakes when necessary.

Most notable is the shift from objectivity toward transparency in online journalism (Hellmueller, Vos, & Poepsel, 2012; Ferrucci & Vos, 2016; Tandoc & Thomas, 2017). "Transparency" generally focuses on two aspects, openness to practices of gathering, organizing, and disseminating information; and the notions of social accountability and responsibility (Karlsson, 2010; Singer, 2007). Journalists with longer online work experience show higher

agreement with disclosure, factualness, and neutrality (Hellmueller, Vos, & Poepsel, 2012). A "dispassionate" approach to reporting news apparently was particularly not within the realm of a digital native journalist (Ferrucci & Vos, 2016. p.13). For instance, "objectivity," a set of proper journalistic practices and principles, is entirely missing from the current BuzzFeed news standards and ethics guide (Hilton, 2016).

Could the pursuit of professional ethical norms in the interest of journalistic transparency further weaken the media's gatekeeping role? When BuzzFeed decided to publish a research dossier with some unverifiable claims about Donald Trump in January 2017, the editor-in-chief Ben Smith made it clear that BuzzFeed's vision for journalism in 2017 was simply to be transparent to its audience; describing a set of new journalistic rules that "adhere to the core values of honesty and respect for our audience" (Smith, 2017). It is true that in the age of WikiLeaks and "hacking culture" that has evolved along with a decentralized internet, traditional media outlets no longer retain the absolute power of deciding what the public should know concerning political secrets and sensitive information. However, if the media allow themselves merely to become middlemen rather than gatekeepers, publishing any and all news based on unverified information and anonymous sources, they might fail to fulfill their imperative role of speaking truth to power and relating important facts to their audience. It has become difficult for the audience to discern truth from falsehood when "fake news" or other kinds of false information are openly and widely circulated online.

This study examines journalists' adherence to a code of ethics in their daily work. Because there is not a universal set of codes of ethics for all journalists, this study uses the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) code of conduct as a primary reference. The SPJ's code of ethics attempts to speak to all media and all journalists and is a widely recognized and used

ethics code in the United States (Tompkins, 2014). Its major principles are: seek truth and report it; minimize harm; act independently; and be accountable and transparent.

Evaluative Dimension of Professionalism

Third, the evaluative dimension focuses on a profession's singular characteristics of autonomy and prestige (Larson, 1977). Autonomy is a crucial characteristic of any profession (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011; Singer, 2003; 2007). At the individual level, it entails self-direction in the application of occupational skills and techniques (McDevitt, 2003). Members of a profession also have the autonomy as a group to define, shape, and control their own work processes and to fight off external and internal forces that want to exert influence on professionals' work (Singer, 2007). Professional autonomy also means that laymen outside a given profession cannot legitimately dictate what professionals do or how they do it (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011).

Autonomy is a central premise for American journalists. Journalism requires autonomy in order to serve democracy independently, away from influences of political parties, business, and publishers (Schudson, 2005). By claiming autonomy, journalists vow to speak truth to power and serve the public by providing the information that people need to participate in social and political processes, and they seek to guarantee the quality of the information by strongly adhering to ethical norms (Skovsgaard, 2014). Studies have found that autonomy has become an indispensable condition for journalism to produce quality reporting (Bennett & Livingston, 2003; Plasser, 2005). Plasser (2005) surveyed journalists from different media systems and found that increased autonomy and more professional distance to the political elites had a positive association with higher quality of political news reporting.

The question of journalistic autonomy is closely linked with issues concerning factors that restrict journalistic autonomy. That is, journalistic autonomy is negotiated within an institutional context and can be heavily shaped by institutional and organizational factors in addition to personal influences such as news judgment, experience, and personal belief (Sjøvaag, 2013). This study, in particular, focused on analyzing certain factors and their impact on perceived journalistic autonomy. Altschull (1997) outlined major conditions that work together to detract from journalistic professional autonomy: political structures, commercial interests, informal influences, and interest group pressures.

Unlike in many other societies, journalists in America have staunchly stood by the principle that they should be free from influences of government or political parties in order to fulfill journalism's public service obligation of informing citizens (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). The greatest threat to journalistic autonomy, however, may not necessarily come from government interference (Singer, 2007), but rather from market pressure and other external factors (McManus, 1994; Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013). Studies have found continuing erosion of professional autonomy that journalists perceive they have in the newsroom (Weaver et al., 2007; Willnat & Weaver, 2014). This study focuses on the following major factors' role in undermining autonomy:

Bureaucratic work structure. The newsroom exists as part of a structured institution (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Because as journalism is practiced with interactions among different departments, journalistic autonomy is negotiated within that institutional context. Journalists follow work routines and job functions within a newsroom and other larger organizational structures. Thus, they inevitably act within a hierarchical set of influences, from their publisher's and editor's personal values all the way to the ultimate organizational goal that

is typically emphasized at every level—the making of profits (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Practically speaking, the strongest influence over media content is exercised by editors (Nygren 2012). Journalists have little autonomy in the story selection process, other than in the actual production of news (Sjøvaag, 2013). Mr. Gates' gatekeeping role has been weakened regarding how much control he has over the information reaching the public; he still exerts much influence within the newsroom over rank-and-file employees (Beam, 2006).

Journalists adjust their news judgments to align with the tastes of editors, and this process can reduce a journalist's sense of personal autonomy significantly (Singer, 2007). However, because they have a high degree of operational control in terms of whom they interview and how they write the stories, journalists retain a perception of autonomy by incorporating organizational demands into news judgment (Sjøvaag, 2013).

Timeliness. Kovach and Rosentiel (2014) argued that the 24-hour news cycle forces journalists to keep material fresh and constantly working in a fast-paced environment. This tight schedule affects journalists' latitude in exercising professional judgment and freedom in allocating time slots to assignments.

Competition. The same 24-hour news cycle also creates ferocious competition among news outlets. Hypercompetition has been blamed for subsequent declines in journalism standards, including standards of job autonomy for journalists (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 1999). Journalists are working under constant pressure to draw large amounts of web traffic, to engage audiences, to drive online advertising revenue, and to conform to multiple non-editorial concerns that could very much damage journalists' autonomy in editorial decisions and force them to settle for sensational and frivolous content that may perform well online but lack news value and essence (Tandoc & Vos, 2015).

Business operations. The organizational goal at most media outlets is typically focused on profits (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Media scholars fear that the power wielded by commercial interests can easily breach the ethical boundaries between business and editorial divisions (Coddington, 2015). Others assert that this boundary between business and content is imaginary. For instance, Altschull (1997) asserted that the direct relationship between advertising and the commercial viability of newspapers in the US means that the power of the press inevitably coincides with the interests of media publishers and owners. At best, journalists are employees of a large organization, and their professional autonomy is affected by their working realities (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003). Thus, individual journalists have the potential to exercise autonomy in practice, but their work is influenced and often restrained by larger power structures.

Audiences. News organizations today are seeking audience attention in a highly competitive and relentlessly changing media environment that not only demands journalists to create content that audience like but also pushes organizations to improve design, content presentation and interaction especially on mobile platforms (Chaplin, 2016). The industry is seeing a tectonic shift in mindset from advertiser-first to audience-first (Rossback, 2017).

For legacy media organizations, it has become pivotal to find ways to make money and to convert unique visitors effectively into paying customers. Thus, outlets such as *The Washington Post* have taken the use of audience data to the next level by assigning unique identification numbers to users when they arrive via social media platforms. This way, every time the user visits, each of their footsteps can be tracked so that it is known what kinds of content they access before users turn back to their timelines or newsfeeds. These data can be used not only to learn

about the user's interests but also to figure out what kinds of content may make them want to come back (Powell, 2016).

News outlets are also under pressure to request better ways to measure audience behavior because audience attention has been fragmented across many different social media platforms — Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram. Vice President for International at Vox Media Jonathan Hunt (2017) recently outlined that complexity in a piece he wrote for the Nieman Lab:

> For example, … you might say. That is until you consider our actual U.S. unique visitors, per Google Analytics, was 70 percent larger; international traffic was another 53 million unique across desktop and mobile; factor in unique monthly reach across Facebook video, Google AMP, Twitter, YouTube, and newsletters and now you're at a number that is meteorically larger, sure, but more importantly one that better represents the range of our audience and the gravity of our influence.

Audience attention is central to news organizations. However, current editorial analytics still have limited capacity for telling important information about their audience that news organizations want to know. Depending on their resources and financial flexibility, some organizations are building custom dashboards while others rely on market tools such as Google Analytics or Facebook Insights (Fischer, 2014). Even in organizations with custom-made "editorial analytics" system, crucial information including editorial impact, conversion of users to subscribers, or public service goals such as making citizens more informed is still difficult to apprehend (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016).

Audience research is viewed as part of the economic complex that has effects on journalistic autonomy (Sjøvaag, 2013). Research in the last couple of years has made some progress in exploring exactly what audience metrics can teach journalists about their audience while offering ethical guidance for best practices for producing journalism in response to audience metrics (Kormelink & Meijer, 2017; Tandoc & Ferrucci, 2016). The discussion around audience research in academia centers on how journalists can balance incorporating audience

feedback in their decisions with protecting their editorial autonomy. A long string of research has been conducted to see in detail how the audiences' tastes and preferences are influencing newsroom editorial decision-making (e.g. Anderson, 2011; Domingo et al., 2008; MacGregor, 2007; Tandoc, Hellmueller & Vos, 2013; Tandoc & Ferrucci, 2017). The key findings suggest that newsrooms are more or less actively incorporating data learned from monitored audience behavior into the news product.

More recently, some scholars have called for a further understanding of the limitations of web metrics, especially clicks, that reflect some of the audience's interests and preferences (Kormelink & Meijer, 2017). However, it is worth noting that the journalism industry has gradually moved away from clicks-based audience data, and has developed more accurate and sophisticated measures of audience behavior. This behavior, nevertheless, could be viewed as a disconnection between scholarly research and the journalism industry (e.g. Powell, 2016). It seems that the biggest fear, as researchers have warned, is the potential trivialization of news and the subsequent cost of audience's interest.

Another important evaluative dimension of professionalism is occupational prestige (Larson, 1977). "Prestige" is a way to describe the relative social status professionals have, and it is tied to a fundamental belief in the worthiness of a job role and refers in part to the admiration and respect that a professional holds in society and among peers (Stevens & Featherman, 1981). Prestige is often paired with autonomy in the discussion of professionalism. Waisbord (2013) wrote, "Professionalism is the outcome of the aspirations of occupational groups to seek nonmaterial forms of capital to strengthen social legitimacy" (p.27). Professionals often hope to find a legitimate and respectable position in the society and to hold "symbolic power" (p.27).

Journalists in US history have pushed to secure a respectable place in politics and society (Waisbord, 2013). Often seen as a watchdog of government and public officials, journalists were cheered by the public for their public interest-oriented service and values in objectivity and neutrality (Abbott, 1983). The social prestige journalists gained may not be recognized in the form of financial compensation, but the privilege such as access to legislative debates and judicial proceedings that other professions or the general public lack.

However, as journalists are facing increasing challenges to their ethical standards and professional autonomy, they are also losing their prestigious status in society. Being called "liars" and "biased" by members of the society, media, especially legacy media and their journalists, are seeing vast drops in trust and respect from the public (Reilly, 2013). A Gallup poll revealed that American audiences' trust in the media plunged to the lowest level in Gallup polling history two months before the 2016 US presidential election, with respondents citing perceived unfair coverage of presidential candidates (Swift, 2016).

This study examines the perceived prestige among digital native journalists and legacy journalists, which includes their opinion on the worthiness of their jobs and the amount of respect they receive from the public and peers.

The preceding literature has suggested that individual journalists' level of journalism professionalism can be evaluated through three dimensions: cognitive, normative, and evaluative. The following chapter moves onto constructing research questions based on that theoretical proposition.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of this research was to examine the traits and characteristics of journalistic professionalism in digital native journalists. This chapter synthesizes the concepts from professionalism literature and the theoretical framework of three dimensions to guide the construction of the following research questions.

The first research question serves the descriptive purpose of this study, which is to characterize digital native media journalists as an emerging group of professional journalists:

RQ1: What are the major characteristics of digital native journalists?

The conceptualization of journalistic professionalism using the three dimensions described above offers a useful framework for comparing digital native media journalists with legacy journalists and identifying any distinctions in professionalism. Based on this conceptual framework, the following sets of research questions are proposed:

RQ2. To what extent and in what ways are digital native journalists different from legacy journalists on the cognitive dimension of professionalism?

RQ3: To what extent and in what ways are digital native journalists different from legacy journalists on the normative dimension of professionalism?

RQ4: To what extent and in what ways are digital native journalists different from legacy journalists on evaluative dimension of professionalism?

After examining the individual dimension, this study then asks which variables in which dimension has the best predictive power in distinguishing digital native journalists from legacy journalists.

RQ5: Which variable in what dimension has the greatest overall predictive power in distinguishing digital native journalists from legacy journalists?

This research question will be explored through a binary logistic regression. This type of regression predicts a dichotomous dependent variable or group membership, (e.g. digital native journalists or legacy journalists) on the basis of several independent variables.

CHAPTER 5. METHOD

Web Survey

The survey method has become increasingly popular among mass communication researchers (Moy & Murphy, 2016). This study used a multi-contact survey to identify the major characteristics of digital native journalists and to investigate how they are different from journalists working in legacy media.

Surveys allow researchers to collect data and information from a large population. Web surveys have the advantages over mail and fax surveys of relatively low cost and quick turnaround times (Burkill, Copas, Couper…& Erens, 2016). In addition, Web-based surveys are less likely to induce social desirability bias than face-to-face or telephone surveys (Chang & Krosnick, 2009; Moy & Murphy, 2016).

However, it is sometimes troublesome to use web survey methods to research the general population (Chang & Krosnick, 2009; Israel, 2009). One of the major concerns is a lack of sampling frames for internet surveys. Online surveys often rely on subjects to self-select to opt-in, making it difficult to know whether an online sample represents the population or simply a population of internet users who feel like taking surveys.

Because the researcher is gathering data from a population of respondents who have internet access, respondents tend to be skewed regarding certain demographic characteristics. Studies have found that internet survey respondents tend to be younger, more highly educated, and

technologically sophisticated—these are characteristics that distinguish them from the general population (Israel, 2009).

In addition, web surveys have become increasingly vulnerable to low response rates. Web surveys often exhibit response rates of around 10%–25%. Low response rates, in turn, can reduce sample size and statistical power. Moreover, low response rates may also lead to non-response bias and affect the validity of survey results.

On a positive note, the internet survey method is well suited if the researcher's target survey population requires respondents who have internet access. In such cases, because all members of the survey sampling frame are internet users, the people who do not participate in the survey are less systematically different from those who do (McCabe, Couper, Cranford, & Boyd, 2006). With that in mind, it is reasonable to assume that the targeted population of online journalists in this study has adequate internet skills and convenient internet access.

Sampling Strategy

The first important step of any survey method is to define a research population: in this case, who is a journalist qualified to be surveyed? The erosion of boundaries between non-professional communicators and professional journalists has made it very difficult to clearly define the professional groups this study wishes to examine (Singer, 2007; Lewis, 2012). In the digital age, everybody with internet access could be considered to be a journalist: citizen journalists, bloggers, or content-generating users of existing websites, just to name a few. However, this dissertation defines possible participants using a traditional definition of journalist as a professional employed by an organization that produces news content (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). In their survey, Weaver et al. (2007) used the definition of journalists as "those who had responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other timely information—all

full-time reporters, writers, correspondents, editors, news announcers, columnists, photojournalists and other news people" (p. 256). However, this study further narrowed the scope to rank-and-file journalists in the news force, which include reporters, staff writers, and others who do not supervise other news or editorial employees. Because this study centers on individual-level analysis and examines perceived organizational level influences on rank-and-file employees, the sample is set to eliminate supervisors and managers (Beam, 2006). In addition, columnists, opinion writers, and commentators who are not directly associated with editorial content creation and decision-making were excluded from the survey. Thus, the study population is limited to journalists working for American news organizations, based on the study's premises and theoretical goals.

The next step is to define the sampling frame. To minimize sampling error in a web survey setting, Chen and Goodson (2010) suggested that researchers should consider gathering data from the entire population rather than a sampling frame. The use of digital tools for data gathering and management make this approach more feasible.

A comprehensive list of news organizations and rank-and-file journalists would be ideal. This study drew its sampling frame from CisionPoint, a software company that provides a comprehensive list of working journalists primarily in the US. This database was used by several scholars in their survey research (Tandoc, 2013; Lewis & Zhong, 2013). The list is based on voluntary participation of media organizations, but scholars who have used the database reported that it provides a comprehensive list of media contacts (Tandoc, 2013; Lewis & Zhong, 2013).

The sampling frame was created by searching contacts in the Cision database. Cision allows customized filters for setting the geographic region, media type, outlet topics, and contact topics. For this study, the geographic region was set to the United States. The media type was set

to include daily newspapers, television stations, radio stations, online versions, and digital news websites. Print media such as college newspapers and magazines were not included in the search to ensure that a consistent daily production cycle would be constant for all respondents and organizations. The outlet topics were set to include news, local news, national news, news and current affairs, international news, and community news. The contact topics, which are topics covered by journalists, were set to be news, local news, community news, investigative news, breaking news, county news, national news, and international news. Additional filters were applied to the search to eliminate editors, producers, managers, directors, publishers, and people who hold a management position at the media organization. The search also eliminated people who are contributing writer, freelancers, columnists, or opinion writers to ensure that the sample includes only people who hold jobs as journalists and are *officially* employed by a news organization. The search yielded a total of 4,409 journalist contacts on November 28, 2016. Of these 3,150 contacts are for daily newspapers, television stations, radio stations and their online versions; 1,259 contacts are for digital news websites. Most of the results included the name, job title, organization, email, and phone number of each person.

Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2000) found that, among all examined factors that affect response rate, personalized contact and pre-contact before a survey were the most effective actions in improving response rate in internet surveys. This study did not use a pre-contact approach, reasoning that journalists are busy professionals, and pre-contact was viewed as an inefficient approach for a survey of busy professionals (Dillman et al., 2014). The goal for the researcher is to limit the number of contacts to three, which also corresponded with the highest response rate in other studies (Cook et al., 2000).

Survey links were sent to participants through Qualtrics following IRB approval on January 25, 2017. Two reminders were sent on February 1, 2017, and February 5, 2017. After duplicate email addresses had been removed, the survey was sent to 3,623 recipients. Immediately, 154 emails were bounced undeliverable with 3,469 emails successfully delivered.

This research study used incentives.[2] A donation of $5 was pledged to the Committee to Protect Journalists for each complete survey returned, capped at $3,000. In addition, participants were invited to opt-in for a random draw of one of twenty $50 Amazon Gift Cards sent by email.

The survey was closed on February 12, 2017. A total of 465 complete responses were returned, with the total number of surveys started of 664. The overall response rate is 13.4% (3,469 divided by 465). A priori statistical analysis using G-Power software showed the study required a minimum of 270 respondents to have a sufficient statistical power of .80 to detect small effect sizes of .15 using independent *t*-tests (G-power). Sample size estimation and statistical power analyses are essential in ensuring that sufficient data have been obtained to justify the study and its findings (Batterham & Atkinson, 2005).

Survey Measures

Basic characteristics. This study adapted the indicators in Weaver et al. (2007) that profiled US journalists to characterize digital native media journalists.

- Workforce size: Respondents were asked to estimate the number of full-time news and editorial people employed at their organization.
- Geographic distribution: Respondents were asked to give the city and state of their employment.
- Age and gender.

[2] The funding for the incentives came from the author's doctoral scholarship.

- Ethnic and racial origins.
- Highest education received.
- News habits: Respondents were asked how often they get news from various media sources using a 5-point Likert-scale with 1 being "never" and 5 being "very often." The list of media sources was adapted from a recent news usage survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016).

Cognitive dimension. This dimension is centered on the body of knowledge and techniques which the professionals apply in their work, and on training needed to master such knowledge and skills.

Previous studies have stated that journalism lacks esoteric knowledge, but there are certain skills required and commonly used by journalists (Singer, 2003; Lewis, 2012; Waisbord, 2013). The training a journalist receives usually takes place in education programs and internships and/or work experience in the journalism field. Thus, the cognitive dimension of journalism professionalism was examined through three groups of indicators: journalistic skills, journalistic education, and experience.

Journalistic skills. The questionnaire lists a set of skills and invites respondents to self-evaluate their mastery on each skill. The set of skills was chosen by combining foundational skills that are taught in most college journalism courses along with new media skills that working journalists and newsroom management have put forth as requisite for digital media professionals. Foundational journalistic skills include: news writing, AP or other applied news writing styles, skills with information gathering, editing, communication, interpreting data and reports, interviewing skills, critically evaluating facts and assertions, and verifying information (Wenger & Owens, 2012; Willnat & Weaver, 2014). Requisite new media skills consist of

multimedia production skills, social media skills, audience development/engagement skills, basic computer coding and development skills, big data analysis skills, visual storytelling skills, and podcasting (Fahmy, 2008; Finberg, 2014; Willnat & Weaver, 2014).

Journalistic education. Journalistic education was measured by the following items: whether the respondent has a bachelor or higher degree; whether the respondent has a bachelor or a graduate degree in journalism or a related field.

Journalism experience. Journalism experience was constructed of two items—years of experience working in journalism, and years of experience in current job.

Normative dimension. This dimension covers professionals' ability to self-regulate through their profession's distinctive ethics. The normative dimension of journalism professionalism was examined through the following indicators: *adherence to ethical standards* and *relationship with journalistic codes of conduct*.

Because journalism ethic codes are voluntary in nature, it is helpful to know the actual use of the ethical codes among journalists. Thus, professionals' relationship with journalistic codes of conduct was measured through three responses: How familiar are they with the journalistic codes of conduct? How often have they consulted a journalistic code of conduct? How adequate are ethics codes in guiding them?

The adherence to ethical standards is measured using a set of ethical guidelines adapted from the SPJ Code of Conduct. Respondents were asked to self-evaluate how closely they follow each guideline using a 5-point Likert-scale with 1 being "not closely at all" and 5 being "extremely closely."

The guidelines are:

- Verify information before releasing it

- Use original sources whenever possible
- Never put speed before accuracy
- Make sure the story is accurate and reflects reality
- Identify sources clearly
- Carefully consider sources' motives before promising anonymity
- Avoid pretending to be someone other than a journalist to gather news information unless traditional, open methods will not collect vital information to the public
- Balance the public's need for information and people's right to privacy
- Never pay for information
- Refuse gifts, freebies or favors from sources.
- Resist internal and external pressure to influence coverage
- Take responsibility for one's work
- Be transparent about how you discovered and verified facts
- Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently

Evaluative dimension. This dimension underscores professions' claim of *autonomy* and *prestige*. This study uses three indicators of *amount of autonomy in daily workflow* and seven *influencers on journalistic autonomy* in accordance with the theoretical propositions.

Respondents were first asked to evaluate how much autonomy they have in selecting stories to work on; how much autonomy they have in deciding story emphasis; and how much autonomy they have over what sources to contact. A 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "None" and 5 being "A very great deal" was used. The statements were adapted from items that have

been used in previous surveys of journalists' workplace autonomy (Weaver et al., 2007; Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013).

Second, respondents were asked a set of questions designed to evaluate journalists' independence from influencers that can undermine journalistic autonomy. Several factors that may potentially influence journalistic autonomy were identified and explained in the literature review: bureaucratic work structure (mainly influence from leadership and management), deadlines, competition, business operations (mainly the advertising department) and audiences (audience preferences and audience web metrics). Respondents were asked to rate each factor's influence on three aspects of workplace autonomy (selecting stories, deciding story emphasis, and contacting sources) using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "None" and 5 being "A very great deal."

A definitive measure of prestige could not be located in the relevant literature, but researchers have created their own measures for prestige based on research goals (e.g. Beam et al., 1986). While prestige is difficult to measure with self-report indicators, it is possible to ask respondents of the extent of "general respect" from the public and peers, and the "goodness" of their profession (Hauser & Warren, 1997).

Following this general direction and referencing from existing literature on journalists' working culture (Coulson, Riffe, Lacy & St. Cyr, 2001; Riffe & Abdenour, 2016), this study operationalized journalists' perceived prestige using the following items: "the general public respects my job"; "the general public appreciates the work I do"; "my colleagues in the newsroom think the work I do is important"; "my editor think the work I do is important"; "my job is valuable and essential to our society"; "other journalists think my work is important"; and "my job is worth the time and effort I invest in it." Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale

with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” The average of those items was later used to build a prestige index.

The complete survey instrument can be found in Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this study in relation to the research questions proposed in Chapter 4.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey sample consists of more male journalists (50.4%) than female journalists (47.3 %). About 2.3% of the respondents chose not to report their gender. Respondents were asked to identify the type of media outlet they work for as newspaper, television, radio, digital native, or other. Over half work for newspapers (56%) and 20.6% indicated that they work for a digital native organization. Another 7.7% work for television and 2.6% work for radio. Few (3.4%) of the respondents chose "other." For the purpose of this study, journalists were classified by two *journalists' groups*: digital native journalists and legacy journalists. Digital native journalists are those who work for a digital native organization, and legacy journalists are journalists who work for newspapers, television, and radio (Westlund, 2012). Thus, 78.1% of the sample was legacy media journalists, and 20.6% were digital native journalists. The 3.4% (N=16) respondents who selected "other" were included in the sample but were not analyzed for questions that asked for statistical differences between digital native journalists and legacy journalists.

As presented in Table 1, the sample has an average age of 43 (SD =14.04), ranging from 22 to 80. The sample was primarily white (84.0%). Only 4.9% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 4.1% identified as Asian, and 3.6% identified as African-American. Just 1% identified as Middle Easterner or North African and 0.2% identified as Native American or Alaska Native.

Respondents were also asked about their education histories. More than 93% were college educated, and more than 20% have earned a postgraduate degree.

Research Questions

RQ1 asked what the defining characteristics of digital native journalists are. The question asks for an implicit comparison with legacy journalists. Table 1 presents the descriptive information of all the key variables, including *age, gender, ethnicity and racial origin, workforce size, highest education received, geographic distribution*, and *news habits*.

The average age of digital native journalists was 37 (*SD* = 12.63). Over 52% of digital native journalists identified as female compared to 45.9% of legacy journalists. Three-quarters of digital native journalists respondents identified as white, with 13.7% identified as Asian, which is the second largest racial group. Over 95% of digital native journalists had a bachelor degree, and about 34% reported that they have a graduate degree.

The majority of sampled digital native journalists work in the Northeast (37.9%) and Southeast region (30.5%). The *workforce size* variable of digital native journalists appears to be problematic. The mean is 63.08, while the median is 25, ranging from 1 to 600, which means the data are skewed by the existence of a few large organizations that have hundreds of employees.

News habits were measured using a 1 to 5 frequency scale. Among the media sources, newspaper websites are the most used news source for digital native journalists (*M* = 4.46, *SD* = .78); social media is the second most used news source (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = .90); online radio/satellite radio is the least used news source (*M* = 1.93, *SD* = 1.10).

Although *RQ1* does not explicitly ask for statistical tests on the major characteristics between digital native journalists and legacy journalists, a few observations require further discussion.

Age. On average, digital native journalists (M = 37.55, SD = 12.63) are younger than legacy journalists (M = 44.16, SD = 13.81). In fact, an independent samples t-test found a significant difference in mean age of the two groups, t (431) = -4.09, p < .001. This significant finding warrants further discussion and requires that "age" be treated as a control in subsequent regression analyses.

News habits. Independent samples *t*-tests also revealed that digital native journalists differed significantly from legacy journalists in their news habits. Digital native journalists (*M* = 2.91, *SD* = 1.33) were significantly less likely to get news from print newspapers than legacy journalists (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = 1.15), *t* (442) = -5.44, *p* < .001; digital native journalists (*M* = 2.47, *SD* = 1.21) were also significantly less likely to watch local TV news program than legacy journalists (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = 1.09), *t* (444) = -3.58, *p* < .001. On the other hand, digital native journalists (*M* = 4.14, *SD* = .79) were significantly more likely to get news from digital-only outlets than legacy journalists (*M* = 3.17, *SD* = 1.02), *t* (441) = 8.58, *p* < .001; digital native journalists (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = .90) were significantly more likely to get news from social media than legacy journalists (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = 1.05), *t* (444) = 3.24, *p* = .001.

Education and cultural background. A higher percentage of digital native journalists had a graduate degree than legacy journalists, but not necessarily in the journalism field. Digital native journalists were also more diverse in their cultural background, and the sample had a higher percentage of women than the legacy journalists' sample. The practical implications of those findings will be discussed further in the next chapter.

RQ2 asked to what extent and how digital journalists are different from legacy journalists on the cognitive dimension of professionalism. As detailed in the method chapter, the cognitive dimension has three aspects: journalistic skills, journalistic education, and journalism experience.

Journalistic skills were operationalized with the key variables: *foundational skills* and *new skills,* both measured on a 1 to 5 scale. Journalistic education was operationalized with the key variables: *earned a bachelor or a graduate degree*, *earned a bachelor or a graduate degree in journalism and a related field*; both were measured by a yes/no scale. Journalism experience was operationalized with the key variables*: years working in current position* and *years working in journalism.* Table 2 shows the means, SDs or percentages for all the items used to construct those variables.

Legacy journalists scored higher in six of the seven *foundational skills* items than digital native journalists. The two groups had the same mean score of 4.54 on the *critically evaluating facts and assertions* item. However, legacy journalists scored lower in four of the eight *new skills* items. Surprisingly, legacy journalists were more skilled in *audience development/engagement, big data analysis,* and *data visualization* than digital native journalists. Noticeably, for both legacy journalists and digital native journalists, their mean scores of *new skills* items were lower than their mean scores of foundational skills items, which suggests that by their self-evaluation, both groups considered themselves as having limited mastery of new journalistic skills.

The seven *foundational skills* items of all responses were averaged to form a new *total foundational skills* scale (M = 4.56, SD = .42), *Cronbach's* α = .79. The eight *new skills* items of all responses were also averaged to form a *total new skills* scale (M = 2.79, SD = .67), α = .75.

Two independent samples *t*-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in means for *total foundational skills* and *total new skills* between legacy journalists and digital native journalists. *Total foundational skills* of legacy journalists (M = 4.58, SD = .41) was significantly higher than those of digital native journalists (M = 4.45, SD = .47), *t*

(437) = 2. 74, p = .006. No significant difference was found in the *total new skills* scale between the two groups, t (438) = .91, p = .36.

Two independent samples t-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in means for *years working in current position* and *years working in journalism.* Legacy journalists (M = 8.74, SD = 8.92) had significantly more *years working in their current position* than digital native journalists (M = 3.65, SD = 3.01), t (395) = 5.11, p <.001. Legacy journalists (M = 19.23, SD = 13.28) also had significantly more *years working in journalism* than digital native journalists (M = 12.16, SD = 11.17), t (411) = 4.61, p < .001.

Independence chi-square test was used to investigate whether the distribution of the categorical education variable (*earned a college or above degree*) in legacy journalists and digital native journalists differ from one another. Although a slightly higher percentage of digital native journalists have a college or above degree than legacy journalists, the chi-square result showed that there was not a significant association between the type of journalists and having a college or above degree, χ^2 (2, 444) = .69, p = .40. Statistically, digital native journalists are not more likely to earn a college or above degree than legacy journalists.

Another chi-square test was used to see if there is a significant association between the type of journalists and *earned a bachelor or a graduate degree in journalism and a related field*, χ^2 (2, 433) = 4.31, p = .03. This suggests that there is a significant association between the type of journalists and having a college or above degree in journalism. Legacy journalists are more likely to earn a bachelor or above degree in journalism or a related field than digital native journalists.

RQ3 asked to what extent and how digital journalists are different from legacy journalists on the normative dimension, which was conceptualized as *journalists' adherence to ethical standards*, and *relationship with journalistic codes of conduct*.

Table 3 presents the descriptive data for all the items used to construct the variables. *Adherence to ethics codes* was measured by 14 items on a 5-point scale; *relationship with journalistic codes of conduct* was measured by three items on a 5-point scale.

Among the 14 items, digital native journalists scored higher than legacy journalists on only one: *always refuse to pay for information*. Digital native journalists may not follow most of the ethical standards as closely as legacy journalists; it is worth mentioning that either group's mean scores of the 14 items were above 4 (5=extremely close), suggesting that both digital native journalists and legacy journalists consider themselves loyal to ethical standards.

A Principal Axis exploratory factor analysis with Oblimin rotation was performed to reduce the 14 items of *adherence to ethical standards* to a number of factors that can account for the common variance of the concept. The factor loadings were presented in Table 4. Four factors with eigenvalue above 1 emerged from the analysis, accounting for 40.71% of the variance.

The first factor, *being cautious and transparent*, contains three items: identify sources clearly, balance the need for information and people's right to privacy, be transparent about how you discovered and verified facts (eigenvalue = 4.22, accounting for 24.49% of the variance,). The three items were averaged into a composite *being cautious and transparent* score, (M = 4.67, SD = .45, α = .61).

The second factor, *resisting pressure,* has three items: resist internal pressure, resist external pressure, refuse gifts, freebies or favors from sources (eigenvalue = 1.66, accounting for

7.92% of the variance). The three items were averaged to create a *resisting pressure* variable (M = 4.66, SD = .53, α = .73)

The third factor, *handling mistakes*, also has two items: acknowledge mistakes promptly; correct mistakes promptly (eigenvalue = 1.11, accounting for 3.31% of the variance). The two items were averaged into a composite *accuracy* score (M = 4.82, SD = .39, r = .27, p < .001).

The fourth factor, *securing accuracy*, has two items: put accuracy before speed, verify information, before releasing it (eigenvalue = 1.21, accounting for 4.99% of the variance). The two items were averaged to create a *handling mistakes* score (M = 4.85, SD = .34, r = .38, p < .001).

The three items for *relationship with journalistic codes of conduct*: how familiar with journalism codes of conducts, how often consult the ethics codes, how adequate ethics codes are in guiding you, did not form a strong overall scale for this concept (α = .12); thus, they will be tested individually for mean differences between digital native journalists and legacy journalists.

A total of seven independent *t*-tests were performed to test whether there are significant differences between digital native journalists and legacy journalists on their *adherence to ethics codes* (four tests on four factors) and on their *relationship with journalistic codes of conduct* (three tests on three items). The results are presented in Table 5. Bonferroni correction was used to adjust the p value to prevent inflation and thus higher probability of family-wise error. Since a total of 7 statistical tests were performed, the adjusted p value is .05/7 = .007. Therefore, only p values smaller than .007 will be considered significant.

The tests revealed significant difference on the *handling mistakes* factor, t (442) = 3.14, p = .002, in digital native journalists (M = 4.70, SD =. 48) and legacy journalists (M = 4.85, SD = .35). Legacy journalists (M = 4.88, SD = .27) were significantly higher on the *securing accuracy*

factor than digital native journalists (M = 4.76, SD = .52), t (443) = 2.95, p = .003. Legacy journalists (M = 4.69, SD = .46) were also significantly higher on the *resisting pressure* factor than digital native journalists (M = 4.53, SD = .70), t (435) = 2.76, p =.006. There was no significant difference on the *being cautious and transparent* factor.

No statistical significances were found on t-tests of the three items measuring the relationship with journalistic codes of conduct.

RQ4 asked to what extent and how digital journalists are different from legacy journalists on the evaluative dimension. The evaluative dimension was operationalized using two concepts, *autonomy*, and *prestige*.

The autonomy concept was measured with 1) three items assessing the amount of autonomy in their daily workflow and 2) eighteen items assessing the influences on work autonomy from six different influencers. Table 6 shows the means and SDs of all the items.

The three items of amount on autonomy were measured on a 5-point scale: how much autonomy they have in selecting stories to work on (M = 4.17, SD = .64); how much autonomy they have in deciding story emphasis (M = 3.90, SD = .65); and how much autonomy they have over what sources to contact (M = 4.47, SD = .59). The three items were averaged to create a new variable, *average amount of autonomy* (M = 4.18, SD = .50), α =.73.

The six influences on job autonomy are *editor or supervisor*, *competitors, deadlines, advertising department*, *audience preference*, and *page views/other audience feedback*. Compared to legacy journalists, digital native journalists perceived higher influences on autonomy from four influencers: *editor or supervisor*, *competitors, deadlines, audience preference,* and *page views/other audience feedback*. Legacy journalists perceived higher influences on autonomy from *deadlines* and *advertising* than digital native journalists.

The eighteen items measuring influences on job autonomy were further examined by an exploratory principal axis factoring analysis to reduce the items into the smallest number of factors. Six factors emerged after the Principal Axis exploratory factor analysis with Oblimin rotation, explaining a total of 59.41% of the variance, with the eigenvalues ranging from 1.22 to 5.47 (rotated eigens). The results were reported in Table 7.

The first factor includes six items (eigenvalue = 5.47, accounting for 28.08% of the variance), which measuring the influences from *audience preferences* and *page views or other formats of audience feedback*. The factor was named *audience preferences* and *feedback*, and the six items were average to form a new variable, $M = 2.47$, $SD = .89$, $\alpha = .80$, which explained the audience's influences on perceived autonomy. The fact that these six items loaded together suggests that page views and audience preferences had a similar impact on all journalists' job autonomy despite what type of organizations they work for. This discovery merits further analysis in the discussion chapter.

The second factor includes three items (eigenvalue = 2.52, accounting for 11.78% of the variance). The factor was named *editors and supervisors*, and the three items were averaged to form a new variable, $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.02$, $\alpha = 0.81$, which measured the influences on perceived autonomy from editors and supervisors.

The third factor includes three items (eigenvalue = 2.08, accounting for 9.79% of the variance). The factor was named *advertising department*, and the three items were averaged to form a new variable, $M = 1.22$, $SD = .52$, $\alpha = .87$. It refers to the influences on perceived autonomy from the advertising department.

The fourth factor includes three items (eigenvalue = 1.37, accounting for 5.42% of the variance). This factor was named *deadlines*, and the three items were averaged to form a new

variable, M = 3.14, SD = .99, α = .80. It refers to the influences on perceived autonomy from deadlines.

The fifth factor includes three items (eigenvalue = 1.22, accounting for 4.34% of the variance). This factor was named *competitors*, and the three items were averaged to form a new variable, M = 2.18, SD = .84, α = .79. It refers to the influences on perceived autonomy from competitors.

Prestige was measured by seven items using a 5-point scale (See Table 6 for M and SD). The two items: *the general public respects my job* and *the general public appreciates the work I do* have the lowest average scores among all the *prestige* items. Legacy journalists had higher means than digital native journalists on all seven items. Averaging the seven items, a new variable, prestige, was computed (M = 4.08, SD = .58, α = .77).

Seven independent samples *t*-tests were performed with the corrected p value at .007 (dividing .05 by 7) to find any significant differences on the evaluative dimension of digital native journalists and legacy journalists. The results can be found in Table 8. A significant difference was found between the means of legacy journalists (M = 2.42, SD = .87) and digital native journalists (M = 2.68, SD = .97) on *audience preferences and feedback*, t (439) = - 2.68, p = .006. Another significant difference was between the means of legacy journalists (M = 2.11, SD = .82) and digital native journalists (M = 2.47, SD = .85) on *competitors*, t (441) = - 3.77, $p <$ .001. The findings indicated that digital native journalists perceived more influence on their job autonomy from *audience preferences and feedback* and from *competitors* than legacy journalists.

The prestige score of legacy journalists (M =4.13, SD = .55) was significantly higher than the prestige score of digital native journalists (M =3.91, SD = .67), t (432) = 3.20, $p <$ .001. This suggests that overall, legacy journalists perceive a higher degree of respect and appreciation from

the general public and other journalists than digital native journalists did. However, it is worth mentioning that *both* legacy and digital native journalists have little confidence in how the public perceives their work.

RQ5 asked which variable in which dimension can best explain the differences between legacy journalists and digital native journalists. To answer this question, all variables constituting all dimensions were included in a regression model to examine the predictive power of each variable.

Before moving on to the analysis, two things need to be addressed: 1. Given the fact that there was significant difference in age in general, age was treated as a control variable in the regression model; 2. an overall Pearson correlation matrix is presented to show that there is no issue with multicollinearity (Table 9).

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous (legacy journalists or digital native journalists), a binary logistic regression was conducted to address this question. The type of journalists was dummy coded (digital native journalists = 0, legacy journalists= 1). Table 9 summarizes the results of the logistic regression model.

Before the start of the logistic analysis, Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was conducted to see if missing data were missing at random. If such an assumption is not supported, i.e. if there is a systematic pattern in missing data, it indicates that observed data are biased sample and missing data cannot be ignored (Steck, 2010). MCAR tests the null hypothesis that "missingness" in the dataset does not depend on the values of variables in the data set subject to analysis (Little, 1998). All variables were included in the test. Results of the MCAR test were not significant (χ^2 (5) = 4.72, p = .45). Thus, it failed to reject the null hypothesis and confirmed that missing data are independent of observed data.

Variables included in the logistic regression are:

Cognitive dimension: *total new skills, total foundational skills, college and above degree, degree in journalism, years of experience in current job,* and *years of experience in journalism.*

Normative dimension: being cautious and transparent*, resisting pressure, handling mistakes, accuracy, familiarity with ethics codes, consulting with ethics codes,* and *ethics codes are adequate in guidance.*

Evaluative dimension: *average amount of autonomy*, *audience preferences, editors and supervisors, advertising department, deadlines, competitors,* and *prestige*.

A test of the full model against a constant-only model was statistically significant, indicating that the predictors, as a set, reliably distinguished between legacy journalists and digital native journalists, (χ^2 (20) = 81.84, $p < .001$). The full model included all the 22 predictors in the logistic regression test.

The Hosmer-Lemeshow test, which tests goodness of fit for this model, was not significant, indicating that the model was a good fit (χ^2 (8) = 5.35, $p = .72$). *Nagelkerke's* R^2 was .34, which suggested the model explained 35% of the variance. Prediction success overall was 83.4%, indicating that the model correctly classified 83.3% of the cases.

Significant predictors in the model include *earned a degree in journalism* ($p = .01$), *years in current position* ($p = .02$), *audience preferences and feedback* ($p = .03$), *advertising department* ($p = .04$), *deadlines* ($p < .001$), *competitors* ($p = .004$).

For a variable that has an odds ratio (Exp (B) in Table 10) larger than 1, it means that by raising the value of the variable it increases the likelihood that the respondent will be working as a legacy journalist. For the sample used in this study, all the variables that have larger than 1 odds ratio are *total foundational skills, earned a degree in journalism, years in current position,*

years of working, being cautious and transparent, resisting pressure, handling mistakes, securing accuracy, advertising department, deadlines, and prestige.

Earned a degree in journalism has the highest odds ratio, Exp (B) of 2.41. The Exp (B) presents the extent to which raising the corresponding measures by one unit influences the odds ratio. Hence people who earned a journalism degree are twice as likely to work as a legacy journalist than people who has a degree in another field.

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION

The major purpose of the study, as stated at the beginning of the project was as follows: 1) to fill the knowledge gap about digital native media journalists as an emerging group of professionals; and 2) to explicate the differences and similarities in professionalism between digital native journalists and legacy journalists and to identify the dimensions of professionalism that distinguish one group from the other.

This chapter will discuss in detail some of the main findings reported in the previous chapter. It will also consider the limitations of this dissertation and provide suggestions for future research.

The Characteristics of Digital Native Media Journalists

This study did not find any fundamental differences between digital native journalists and legacy journalists in their demographic characteristics. However, as indicated in the last chapter, a few minor points are worth further discussion regarding age, gender, and racial and ethnic backgrounds of the participants.

Stereotypical conceptions of a digital native journalist might appear as a 20-something college graduate thumbing news posts on a smartphone in a startup newsroom. In fact, an actual digital native journalist, on average, may be a woman in her late 30s with a long work history in media. This study found that digital native journalists were more likely to be female than male, and although digital native journalists tended to have less experience than legacy journalists, they still averaged about 12 years working in journalism jobs.

The imbalance in gender distribution was interesting because previous studies have often found female journalists to be underrepresented in journalism organizations (Weaver et al., 2007; Willnat & Weaver, 2014; McIntyre et al., 2016). Overall, this study partially supports those previous findings, as the sample of professionals showed a greater number of male (50.4%) than female journalists (47.3 %). However, among digital native journalists, the proportion was reversed. Without further investigation, it is premature to conclude that digital native organizations are meaningfully altering gender barriers in their workforces, but it was interesting and even promising to imagine that digital native organizations may shed the bias toward male-dominated workforces for which many technology and startup companies have been criticized of late.

Again, overall only 47.3 % of the survey sample respondents were female. This percentage is higher than the 37.5% found in Willnat and Weaver's (2014) survey of national journalists. In that longitudinal study of American journalists, the researchers observed an increasing percentage of female US journalists. Although this study is consistent with the trend of an increased number of women in journalism, the large difference of nearly 10% could have a few explanations particular to the present study. One possibility is that this study did not survey newsroom management. As observed in previous studies of the news business, managers of media companies tend to be male. In general, females are less likely to be promoted to a management role and tend to leave the profession earlier than men, interrupting their climb to the top (Willnat & Weaver, 2014). This study included only rank-and-file journalists in the sample, which helps to explain the higher percentage of female journalists represented. Also, in a voluntary survey such as this one, there also exists a potential for response bias, but there are no obvious reasons that females would be more motivated to take the survey than male respondents.

Compared to legacy journalists, this study also found that digital native journalists tended to be more diverse in cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Although a majority of digital native journalists reported themselves as white, nearly one-fourth in the sample identified as other races or ethnicities. This proportion did not match that of legacy journalists, of whom fewer than 13% reported they were of non-white race or ethnicity. Also, 13.7% of digital native journalists reported they were Asian, much more than the 2.3% of legacy journalists. The two groups did report similar proportions of African Americans (3% - 4%). The Hispanic or Latino group was the only minority group that represented a larger proportion among legacy journalists than among digital natives.

In terms of geographic locations, a majority of digital native journalists work in the areas in the east of the US, in proximity to political and economic centers such as New York and Washington, D.C. The fact that media jobs are increasing in Washington, but they are decreasing substantially in the rest of the country, especially in the Midwest, may have also contributed to the concentration of digital native journalists.

Digital native journalists reported that they most often use newspaper websites as their primary news sources, just as legacy journalists do. This finding suggests that even though digital native media may have attempted to carve a separate identity from legacy practices, they may still be subject to the same influences and channels of legacy media via Breed's "arterial process"[3] of inter-media influence (Breed, 1955). On the other hand, digital native journalists reported a more heterogeneous approach than legacy journalists in their use of social media and new media for information. There has always been a reciprocal relationship between digital

[3] The "arterial process" refers to the influences of large national media on large regional media, which in turn influences major metro media, and so forth

native journalists and social media. Social media channels allow speedy and immediate delivery of news and are a primary platform for digital native journalists and their organizations for branding and maintaining a presence in the digital sphere while driving traffic to their news websites (Alejandro, 2010).

Similarities and Differences of the Professional Dimensions

This discussion of similarities and differences on professional dimensions starts with the findings of RQ5 for the purpose of efficiency and clarity. RQ5 examined the role of individual variables making up each dimension in distinguishing digital native journalists from legacy journalists.

First of all, it is important to note that the full logistic regression model with all predictors was statistically significant against a constant-only model, which suggests that the full model can more accurately classify digital native journalists and legacy journalists than the constant-only model. The higher the percentage of correctly classified cases, the better the equation predicts and the stronger the relationship between journalistic groups and the professionalism variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The following section details how predictors from each dimension have individually contributed to the full model, and the practical implications.

Cognitive Dimension

The cognitive dimension was made up of a few items that proved to be significant predictors in the full model. *Earned a degree in journalism* was a significant predictor in identifying legacy journalists in the model. This is not surprising. The overall percentage of surveyed digital native journalists with a college degree or higher was similar to the numbers of

surveyed legacy journalists, but fewer than half of the surveyed digital native journalists had a degree in journalism or a related field.

This result corresponded with existing critiques that journalism as a profession has disconnected with formal education in the field (Evetts, 2006; Lewis, 2012; Singer, 2003). But what could explain the fact that fewer digital native journalists have had formal training in journalism than legacy journalists did? One explanation could be that digital native organizations have not required a journalism degree in hiring and have welcomed a workforce with diverse educational backgrounds including political science, computer science, statistics, and so on. When people who graduate with a non-journalism major want to start a career in journalism, they might be more likely to apply for a position in a digital native organization than in a legacy media organization that is more wedded to the idea of requiring journalism graduates.

Another significant predictor in the full model was *years working in current position*. Surveyed legacy journalists had significantly more years of experience working in their current position than the surveyed digital native journalists. This finding also makes sense, as most digital native news organizations were founded within the last decade.

Total foundational skills was a positive but non-significant predictor in the model. Legacy journalists did score significantly higher than digital native journalists on this variable in a test of mean differences. This difference can be partially explained by digital native journalists' lacking the kind of formal journalism education that emphasizes traditional skills such as news judgment, research and interviewing, and news writing. An important follow-up question would be whether a lack of foundational skills in reporting has significant effects on the quality of reporting by digital native journalists? This study does not have sufficient evidence to answer such question, but surveys of their editors or content analyses might provide insights.

Interestingly, neither digital native journalists nor legacy journalists consider themselves thoroughly familiar with *new journalistic skills*. One might expect that digital native journalists would be more sophisticated in computer coding, data visualization, or other skills that are foreign and new to many legacy journalists. However, the two types of journalists share a similar lack of familiarity with new and technology oriented skills.

Usher's book on interactive journalism (2016) offered clues that may help explain this finding. For one thing, journalism programs are only now writing computer science courses into their curriculum, which means it may take a few years until a sizable number of journalism graduates on the job can say comfortably that they are skilled in coding, data visualization, etc. In addition, it is virtually indisputable that mainstream media are the earliest and firmest adopters of computer science and digital innovation into their news products. *The New York Times*, BBC News, *the Washington Post* are among the primary sources that were mentioned as examples in "*Interactive journalism*."

It is also unrealistic to expect journalists to be the experts on an entire laundry list of specialized skills while also mastering good basic journalism. As an alternative, newsrooms, both digital native and legacy, may consider hiring journalists with discrete specialized abilities. For instance, as more newsrooms have adopted data manipulation and visualization in their daily workflow, teaming up strong investigative journalists with data statisticians on assignments might be the best practice for producing high-quality data-driven investigative work.

Normative Dimension

None of the variables in the normative dimension of professionalism served as significant predictors in the model. Digital native journalists did score lower on 13 out of 14 items

measuring adherence to ethical standards, but the differences did not have a decisive, predictive role in separating the two types of journalists.

However, the independent samples *t*-tests revealed that digital native journalists had significantly lower scores than legacy journalists on three major variables: *handling mistakes*, *securing accuracy,* and *resisting pressure*. This suggests that digital native journalists, in general, follow those ethical guidelines less closely than legacy journalists did.

On average, legacy journalists are significantly older than digital native journalists. Previous literature on relationships between age and adherence to ethics found that age differences did indeed explain variance in ethical viewpoints (Serwinek, 1992). Researchers have found that older people tend to be "more ethical" than younger people because older people have had more opportunity to see the consequences of unethical behavior (Sikula & Costa, 1994). One journalist expressed a similar concern in the survey, "I worry that younger journalists do not have the drive and commitment to ethical journalism that old-school journalists have." Therefore, age may partially explain why legacy journalists exceed digital native journalists in their professed adherence to ethical standards.

Perhaps it is more important to discuss the implications regarding the distance between digital native journalists and legacy journalists on their adherence to ethical standards than to try to explain why. Any shift in journalistic ethical standards will cause changes in a variety of journalistic norms and routines and eventually will affect the content of information produced (Ruggiero, 2004). Digital native journalists' departure from traditional journalistic norms has been observed in some studies (Agarwal & Barthel, 2015; García-Avilés, 2014, Tandoc & Thomas, 2017). Interviews with Spanish digital journalists had identified several ethical issues in digital newsrooms, including reluctance to verify information with at least one other source due

to the intensity of news production (García-Avilés, 2014, p.263). Digital journalists have been "crafting a new definition of what it means to make the news while selectively adapting existing journalistic norms and practices" (Agarwal & Barthel, 2015, p. 377).

On the other hand, it is also important to recognize that digital native journalists are not necessarily acting unethically, because they scored relatively high on all the ethical standards items (with means above 4). Journalism ethics is a contested arena in which common use of the labels "ethical" or "unethical" can be simplistic and misleading (Christians, Ferré, & Fackler, 1993). Ethical decisions are often made on a case-by-case basis in response to unique circumstances as well as competing values and interests. Traditional ethical standards are not disappearing among digital native journalists, but they should be adapted to accommodate the challenges and questions that occur in the news production process online.

Evaluative Dimension

Before analyzing the three variables in the evaluative dimension that were significant predictors in the full model, this section starts with the findings on journalistic autonomy. Ideally, journalistic autonomy should establish a normative barrier between journalists and internal or external influences (Ward & Wasserman, 2010). In the real world, however, autonomy is constantly challenged by realities of organizational structure, market goals, and culture. As the findings here suggest, forces such as editors and audience preferences still exert much impact on a journalist's job autonomy, despite what organizations he or she works for.

Editors or supervisors in the newsroom still have an essential role in choosing what news stories deserve to be published over others. Whether it is digital native journalist or legacy journalist respondents, they all agree that editors or supervisors exerted the most influences on

their journalistic autonomy. Those findings are consistent with previous claims that the strongest influence on media content is exercised by editors (Nygren, 2012).

One of the most interesting findings of this study involves journalists' perception of being influenced by the audience. Previous studies have confirmed that the audience has evolved to become a significant actor in journalism creation and production (Anderson, 2011; MacGregor, 2007; Tandoc & Thomas, 2015). All respondents recognized audience influences as a distinctive factor impacting their job autonomy. But the influence varies in degree: digital native journalists perceived a significantly higher degree of influence from *audience preferences and feedback* on their job autonomy than legacy journalists did.

This finding can be viewed through the lens of rational-choice economic responses to the market environment (Lowrey & Woo, 2010). Although dispute remains regarding whether journalism is a profession or craft, there is an implicit agreement that journalism is a social institution and journalistic work is largely carried out within an institutional framework (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017). Cook (2006) and Sparrow (1999) applied the new institutionalism thinking to news production, arguing that the routines and practices that define journalism are the "institutions" that result from macro-level forces such as the need to make money and adapt to uncertainty in an ever-changing media market. Digital native media have learned that audience feedback and preference are central to the survival of their organizations. Therefore, they will monitor their audience more closely, whereas those outlets whose brand identity hinges on quality tended to emphasize the importance of their professional judgment (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016).

However, the mandate to produce only news that audiences want to hear is also undeniably in conflict with journalistic autonomy. As one digital native journalist wrote in the

survey, "Unfortunately, the pressure to meet traffic goals has made it increasingly difficult to pursue bigger stories/stories of substance … I feel limited by the traffic goals of the current website I work for." Can such a relationship between journalistic autonomy and an audience-centric approach be reshaped? That is, the pressure in driving online traffic should not come at the cost of journalists' ability in pursuing more meaningful but possibly less popular stories.

Perceived influences from competitors is another significant, negative predictor in the logistic model. Digital native journalists perceived significantly more impact on their job autonomy from their competitors than legacy journalists did. Only a handful of digital native media have unique content products that can stand the test of the market and remain competitive against other similar content providers. A majority of them are fighting for a small share of online traffic. Such reality inevitably puts pressure on journalists that they have to produce content that has the potential to become "viral."

The last significant predictor in the model is *deadlines.* Deadlines had more impact on legacy journalists on their perceived autonomy than they did for digital native journalists. Previous studies have emphasized the 24-hour online news cycle, constant updates, and a media culture of rushing to publish, but it turns out legacy journalists surveyed said they felt they are under more pressure to meet a deadline than digital native journalists. Could it be that legacy journalists have a "hard deadline" to meet in the next day's newspaper, or in the evening newscast? Or perhaps legacy journalists' credibility is being tested more nowadays, and they want to get things right the first time, by deadline, while digital native media are more often expected to publish first and fix it later.

Also in the evaluative dimension, the predictor of *prestige* bears some interesting findings. Legacy journalists scored higher than digital native journalists on all seven items

constituting this variable. This suggests that legacy journalists are more confident in the value of their work and certain that they are recognized by supervisors and counterparts. Legacy journalists scored highest in *my job is valuable and essential to our society* with a mean score of 4.64, compared to 4.07 for digital native journalists.

What could explain the lower degree of prestige perceived by digital native journalists? Prestige is often connected to the reputation of the organization where people work (Johnston et al., 1972). It is likely that digital native journalists do not consider the organization they work for to be as reputable as those of legacy journalists. Many of them do not have a well-established organization with a recognizable brand to back them up. Most digital native organizations are local-based, niche-targeted, small businesses. Only a few have grown to operate on the scale of BuzzFeed, Vox, and the Huffington Post.

However, a more troubling finding than the above one was the overall weak response by both legacy and digital native journalists on their perception of the public's opinion toward journalists. It must be demoralizing for journalists to feel that the audience whom they serve may not respect or support their work in return.

Limitations

This study has several potential limitations.

First, this study oversampled legacy journalists. During the initial recruitment, 3,150 contacts from legacy media were invited to participate in the survey and 1,259 from digital native media were invited. This is a ratio of 2.5:1. By the end of the study, 353 survey respondents identified themselves as legacy journalists, and 96 were digital native journalists. The ratio is 3.7: 1. The limited sample of digital native journalists may hinder the results' generalizability.

Second, the categorizing of digital native journalists or legacy journalists is arbitrary to some degree. The line between the two groups is fluid and equivocal. One can easily change jobs from one type of news organization to the other, as in the case of Andrew Kaczynski, who was a digital native journalist hired by a legacy media outlet. With that in mind, it is important to acknowledge that the identified differences between digital native journalist and legacy journalist should be viewed only as differences between two *groups* of professional journalists rather than differences among any *individual* journalists.

Third, a survey still relies almost solely on respondents' interpretation of survey instruments and answers are estimates at best. The survey measured journalists' *perceptions* of their professionalism regarding ethical behavior, journalistic autonomy, prestige, and other traits and characteristics, but not their *actual* professionalism.

Forth, the survey had a mediocre response rate and high dropout rate. Low-response rate has always been the main issue that can cause potential survey bias and undermine the quality of survey data (Cook et al., 2000). However, surveying individuals within organizations, such as journalists, often results in a low response rate (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Given the fact that many journalists work under a strict deadline and often take multiple job roles, it is a lot to ask to request a commitment of 20 minutes or longer to complete this survey. This study was "open" for a limited period, which only allowed a few weeks to collect survey data with two reminders sent out, and limited the potential of getting more responses. In addition, over 600 surveys were begun but only 465 were completed. The dropout rate is nearly 30%. This rate warrants re-evaluation of the survey instrument for future research.

Contribution to the Literature and Journalism Practice

Despite these limitations, this study has made a contribution to our understanding of journalistic professionalism in the digital age.

Professionalism is always changing. Based on their expertise, members of a profession are those who decide whether knowledge and norms that constitute the profession are proper (Waisbord, 2013). This study has explicitly discovered differences in professional traits between two groups of journalists: those who work for legacy media and those work for digital native media. Currently, digital native journalists are a minority in the journalist population, but the group is very likely to attract more members and may gradually become mainstream. The future of the journalism industry will undergo more transformation in technical innovation, funding models, and new practices and digital native media will be likely to lead the reform (Carlson & Usher, 2016). Thus, what's being cultivated in the current online journalism environment will likely become the mainstream understanding of journalistic professionalism and may eventually challenge the existing professional standards that are widely accepted by legacy media, journalism schools, and the public. Digital native journalists and their emergent practices will shape news and journalism for years to come.

With that in mind, this study has contributed to the literature and paved the way for further research in multiple ways. First, it advances our knowledge of journalistic professionalism by determining how the concept relates to a more unconventional journalistic workforce---digital native journalist. The results suggest that both the "professionalism" concept and the operational measures are suitable for evaluating the traits and characteristics of digital native journalists, and they help with the understanding of the status of digital native journalists as one major group in the journalism field.

Second, this study has identified a few major differences in each of the three professionalism dimensions. Among them is increasing heterogeneity in the journalistic workforce. Digital native journalists are more likely to have a more inclusive newsroom culture than legacy journalists, which may suggest that digital native media extend better opportunities for advancement to minorities and women, and may give digital native media an advantage in connecting with diverse audiences.

Third, this study discloses the struggle that digital native journalists are still facing to construct a legitimate professional identity. Digital native journalists lack confidence about their position in society as journalistic professionals.

Long before the emergence of digital native journalism, Borden (2000) offered advice to journalists who are ambivalent about their professional status and don't have strong professional organizations in place. She advocated that professionals should act as a group in order to stand up for professional ideals and to resist external pressure from organizations and audience. There may need to be a call for the formation of professional organizations of digital native journalists that can allow them to connect and communicate with each other easily and work as a community to tackle issues.

Going back to the literature, digital native media are facing inevitable tasks of producing high-quality journalism in order to turn the audience into loyal customers (Meyer, 2009). One solution, being championed by a few digital native media veterans, is to expand on local news reporting. For example, the new editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post, Lydia Polgreen, had a vision that digital journalism needs to go back to the roots of local reporting and she is considering partnering with local news outlets (Mullin, 2017).

Last but not least, this study may provide some clues for the development of future professional journalism: digital native journalists and legacy journalists may grow into closer proximity, or they may sever ties and depart into separate ways.

Currently, digital native journalists are serving as both preservers and transformers of journalistic professionalism. This study offers a snapshot of a point in history when the idea of journalistic normative values and principles remain unshakable, and journalistic autonomy is still crucial for journalists to claim their professional identity.

Traditional journalism still holds sway, but changes and transformation are unfolding for the journalism field. The digital platform and changing audience' information needs are pressing for reform in journalism education and practice. It is possible that the new constraints and new influences will alter the discourse about digital native journalism and further distance it from legacy journalism. Digital native journalists and their organizations may advocate for a more inclusive journalistic culture and for experimenting with unfamiliar practices. The long-held journalism ideals and traditional aspirations may also be interrupted. And maybe, legacy news organizations will also change in response.

Nevertheless, journalism as a profession will remain a vital component to the structure of democracy. Ideally, digital native journalism will further journalism' goals and better serve the public with innovative types of content and products, technical sophistication, and a better understanding of audiences. Such demands may seem to be imminent in the "post-truth" era as false information and biased information is cheered and championed by politicians and part of the population to reshape reality in line with their own fantasies or political agenda (Noë, 2016). Digital native journalists and their tech-savvy, audience-centric journalism model may be an important part of the answer to defeating fake news.

In conclusion, the findings of this study serve as the groundwork for observing and understanding digital native journalists and their organizations as new entrants to journalism. Journalistic professionalism is going through a transformation, and identifying how digital native journalists differentiate from legacy journalists on aspects of professionalism has afforded some clues of how journalistic professional values and practices will develop in the future.

Future Research

The area of journalism professionalism is ripe for more research. Further studies should go beyond the survey by using qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and observations of journalists who work in digital native organizations in order to elicit further evidence and support to the findings of this study.

Future research can also include content analyses of digital native media publications and products, comparing news coverage between digital native media and legacy media to explore the practical consequences of the difference between the two "brands" of professionalism.

Journalistic professionalism should also be studied within a broad system of society, institutions, and organizations. Future research may consider examining more complex relationships among political, economic, social and technological conditions and the changing traits of the journalistic profession.

Looking more broadly, this vein of research has promise for comparative studies that span different countries. As the internet shatters geographic barriers, and digital native organizations have accelerated their global expansion, the professional news paradigm that is in accordance with "western" journalism may no longer hold. The "professionalism" discussed in this study derived from the political and social consensus in the Anglo-American world. Journalists worldwide do not adopt the same norms and conventions (Hanitzsch et al., 2010).

Journalists may borrow or imitate tactics and values that are embedded in other countries' professional journalism practices. A cross-national perspective can help sharpen the connections between culture, journalism and digital progression.

APPENDIX 1: TABLES

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)		All respondents (*N*=465[a])	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Age	44.16	13.81	37.55	12.63	43.01	14.04
Workforce size	51.88	68.67	63.08	79.04	57.97	83.13
News habits						
(1-5, where 1 =Never, 5 = Always)						
Print newspapers	3.66	1.15	2.91	1.33	3.48	1.23
Newspaper websites	4.36	.72	4.46	.78	4.39	.74
News magazine	2.98	1.06	3.24	1.07	3.03	1.07
Network TV	2.85	1.51	2.74	1.12	2.83	1.14
Cable TV	2.69	1.19	2.81	1.12	2.72	1.17
Local TV	2.93	1.09	2.47	1.21	2.84	1.14
TV news websites	3.02	1.02	2.78	1.22	2.97	1.07
Digital-only outlets	3.17	1.02	4.14	.79	3.38	1.05
Radio	3.27	1.20	3.04	1.25	3.28	1.21
Online/satellite radio	1.92	1.14	1.93	1.10	1.93	1.14
Social media	3.71	1.05	4.09	.90	3.80	1.03
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Gender						
Female	162	45.9	50	52.6	220	47.3
Male	191	54.1	43	45.3	235	50.4
Race and ethnicity						
White	307	87.0	73	75.8	391	84.0
Asian	8	2.3	13	13.7	21	4.1
African American	12	3.4	4	4.2	17	3.6

Hispanic or Latino	20	5.7	2	2.1	23	4.9
Middle Easterner or North African	3	.8	2	2.1	5	1.1
Native American or Alaska Native	0	0	1	1.1	1	.2
Geographic regions[b]						
Northeast	64	18.1	36	37.9	105	22.5
Midwest	88	24.9	14	14.7	102	21.9
Southeast	98	27.8	29	30.5	137	29.4
Southwest	27	7.6	5	5.3	32	6.9
West	72	20.4	9	9.5	84	18.0
Highest education received						
High School or lower	8	2.3	2	2.1	10	2.3
Trade/technical/ vocational training	2	.6	0	0	2	.5
Associate degree	13	3.7	2	2.1	15	3.4
Bachelor's degree	255	72.2	59	62.1	314	70.7
Master's degree	69	19.5	31	32.6	98	22.1
Doctorate degree	3	.8	2	2.1	5	1.1

[a] 16 Reponses selected "other" in the organization type.
[b] List of states of region:

- Northeast: States included: Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland
- Midwest States included: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota
- Southeast States included: West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Florida
- Southwest States included: Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona.
- West States included: Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, California, Alaska, Hawaii

Table 2. Descriptive Data for Cognitive Dimension

Items	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)	
	M (1-5, where 1 =Unskilled and 5 = Very skilled)	*SD*	*M (1-5, where 1 =Unskilled and 5 = Very skilled)*	*SD*
AP or other writing styles	4.41	.74	4.16	.84
Critically evaluating facts and assertions	4.54	.70	4.54	.65
Editing skills	4.38	.75	4.33	.78
Information gathering	4.70	.53	4.63	.62
Interviewing skills	4.67	.58	4.46	.73
Verifying information	4.65	.62	4.49	.60
Total foundational skills	4.58	.41	4.45	.47
Audience development/engagement skills	3.59	1.01	3.48	.99
Basic computer coding and development skills	2.02	1.05	2.28	1.26
Big data analysis skills	2.64	1.15	2.46	1.27
Data visualization	2.44	1.09	2.30	1.16
Multimedia production skills	2.96	1.10	3.04	1.23
Podcasting	2.00	1.16	2.81	1.21
Social media	3.63	1.01	3.81	1.00
Visual storytelling	3.32	1.16	3.28	1.22
Total new skills	2.77	.68	2.84	.66
Years working in current	8.74	8.92	3.65	3.01

position				
Years working in journalism	19.23	13.28	12.16	11.17
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Earned a college or above degree	330	93.4	92	95.7
Earned a bachelor or a graduate degree in journalism and a related field	216	61.2	46	48.4

Table 3. Mean and SD for Normative Dimension

Ethical standards	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)	
	M (1-5, where 1= Not closely at all, 5 =Extremely closely)	*SD*	*M (1-5, where 1= Not closely at all, 5 =Extremely closely)*	*SD*
Acknowledge mistakes	4.84	.38	4.82	.41
Correct mistakes promptly	4.91	.32	4.88	.32
Always present yourself as a journalist	4.78	.57	4.78	.52
Balance the public's need for information and people's right to privacy	4.58	.65	4.47	.77
Be transparent about how you discovered and verified facts	4.73	.57	4.68	.61
Carefully consider sources' motives before promising anonymity	4.72	.63	4.55	.79
Identify sources clearly	4.78	.49	4.64	.69
Resist external pressure	4.82	.44	4.60	.71
Always refuse to pay for information	4.86	.47	4.87	.53
Always put accuracy before speed	4.63	.57	4.46	.70
Refuse gifts, freebies or favors from sources	4.59	.74	4.36	.91
Resist internal pressure	4.68	.60	4.56	.71
Take responsibility of one's work	4.93	.27	4.91	.32
Use original sources whenever	4.74	.54	4.54	.85

possible				
Verify information before releasing it	4.95	.22	4.83	.54
Relationship with ethics codes				
Familiar with ethics codes	3.49	1.11	3.36	1.14
How often do you consult the ethics codes	3.99	2.36	4.02	2.33
How adequate ethics codes are in guiding you	4.20	1.23	4.06	1.23

Table 4. Principal Axis Factoring Loading of Adherence to Ethical Standards

Items	1 Being cautious and transparent	2 Resisting pressure	3 Handling mistakes	4 Securing accuracy
Carefully consider sources' motives before promising anonymity	.68			
Avoid pretending to be someone other than a journalist to gather news information	.69			
Be transparent about how you discovered and verified facts	.53			
Refuse gifts, freebies from sources		.64		
Resist internal pressure		.69		
Resist external pressure		.80		
Acknowledge mistakes promptly			.85	
Correct mistakes promptly			.55	
Put accuracy before speed				.64
Verify information before releasing				.76
Use original sources				.64
% of variance explained	24.49%	7.92%	4.99%	3.31%
Total % of variance explained	40.71%			

Table 5. Independent Samples T-tests for Evaluative Dimension Variables

	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)		
	M (1-5, where 1= lowest degree, 5 =highest degree)	*SD*	*M (1-5, where 1= lowest degree, 5 =highest degree)*	*SD*	*t*
Being cautious and transparent	4.70	.42	4.60	.53	1.94
Resisting pressure	4.69	.46	4.53	.70	2.76**
Handling mistakes	4.85	.35	4.70	.48	3.14**
Securing accuracy	4.88	.27	4.76	.52	2.95 **
Familiar with ethics codes	3.49	1.11	3.36	1.14	.99
How often do you consult the ethics codes	3.99	2.36	4.02	2.33	.12
How adequate ethics codes are in guiding you	4.20	1.23	4.06	1.23	.93

** $p < .007$ (=.05/7)

Table 6. Mean and SD for Evaluative Dimension

	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)	
	M (1-5, where 1=Very little, 5=A great deal)	*SD*	*M (1-5, where 1=Very little, 5=A great deal)*	*SD*
Autonomy on deciding what story you work on	4.15	.65	4.26	.58
Autonomy on which sources you contact	4.46	.58	4.49	.59
Autonomy on your decision of story emphases	3.86	.65	3.91	.66
Average amount of autonomy	4.17	.51	4.21	.48
Influencers				
Your editor or supervisor				
.. on deciding what story you work on	3.84	1.14	3.86	1.34
.. on which sources you contact	2.96	1.20	2.97	1.31
.. on your decision of story emphases	3.52	1.14	3.76	1.20
Competitors				
.. on deciding what story you work on	2.63	1.10	3.03	.99
.. on which sources you contact	1.83	.91	2.04	1.03
.. on your decision of story emphases	1.83	.93	2.30	1.10
Deadlines				
.. on deciding what story you work on	3.47	1.08	3.30	1.21

.. on which sources you contact	2.96	1.20	2.74	1.20
.. on your decision of story emphases	3.09	1.18	2.96	1.32
The advertising department				
.. on deciding what story you work on	1.31	.71	1.28	.68
.. on which sources you contact	1.24	.58	1.11	.43
.. on your decision of story emphases	1.17	.51	1.13	.43
Audience preferences				
.. on deciding what story you work on	3.19	1.07	3.37	1.17
.. on which sources you contact	2.02	1.14	2.19	1.31
.. on your decision of story emphases	2.46	1.16	2.73	1.31
Page views or other formats of audience feedback				
.. on deciding what story you work on	2.79	1.17	3.22	1.19
.. on which sources you contact	1.80	1.06	2.05	1.22
.. on your decision of story emphases	2.17	1.14	2.58	1.30
Prestige				
The general public respects my job	3.26	1.08	3.21	1.09
The general public appreciates the work I do	3.40	1.06	3.26	1.04
My job is valuable and essential to our society	4.64	.67	4.07	1.05

My job is worth the time and effort I invest in it	4.50	.74	4.21	1.08
My colleagues in the newsroom think the work I do is important	4.40	.77	4.30	.88
My editor think the work I do is important	4.59	.65	4.41	.87
Colleagues at other news organizations think my work is important	4.11	.96	3.99	.90

Table 7. Principle Axis Factoring Loading of Autonomy Influencers

Influencers	1	2	3	4	5
Your editor or supervisor					
.. on deciding what story you work on		.78			
.. on which sources you contact		.68			
.. on your decision of story emphases		.79			
Competitors					
.. on deciding what story you work on					.66
.. on which sources you contact					.67
.. on your decision of story emphases					.76
Deadlines					
.. on deciding what story you work on				-.71	
.. on which sources you contact				-.73	
.. on your decision of story emphases				-.79	
The advertising department					
.. on deciding what story you work on			.84		
.. on which sources you contact			.88		
.. on your decision of story emphases			.79		
Audience preferences					
.. on deciding what story you work on	.64				
.. on which sources you contact	.69				
.. on your decision of story emphases	.76				
Page views or other formats of audience feedback					
.. on deciding what story you work on	.67				
.. on which sources you contact	.73				
.. on your decision of story emphases	.85				
% of variance explained	28.08	11.78	9.79	5.42	4.34
Total % of variance explained	59.41				

Table 8. Independent T-tests for Evaluative Dimension Variables

	Legacy journalists (*N*=353)		Digital native journalists (*N*=96)		
	M (1-5, where 1=Very little, 5=A great deal)	*SD*	*M (1-5, where 1=Very little, 5=A great deal)*	*SD*	*t*
Average amount of autonomy	4.17	.51	4.21	.48	-.57
Audience preferences and feedback	2.42	.87	2.68	.97	-2.68**
Editors and supervisors	3.45	.99	3.53	1.12	-.76
Advertising department	1.24	.54	1.16	.43	1.40
Deadlines	3.19	.99	2.98	1.06	1.59
Competitors	2.11	.82	2.47	.85	-3.77***
Prestige	4.13	.55	3.91	.67	3.20***

** $p < .007$, ***$p < .001$

Handling mistakes	Familiar with codes	Consult with codes	Codes are adequate	Editors	Audience preferences and feedback	Advertising department	Deadlines	Competitors	Prestige
.19**	.02	-.03	.03	-.28**	-.11**	-.03	-.20**	-.30**	.19**
.22**	.27**	-.02	-.02	-.05	-. 17*	-.08	-.08	-. 16**	.29**
.16*	.23**	.15**	-.07	-.04	-.17**	.04	-.10*	-.04	.12*
.20**	.06	.23**	0	-.28**	.17**	-.12*	-.19**	-.28**	.18**
.15**	-.09	-.02	.11*	-.17**	-.11*	.02	-.07	-.16**	.09
.28**	.16**	-.09	.03	-.002	-.02	-.03	-.07	-.14**	.21**
.21**	.27**	.16**	-.08	-.04	-.03	-.21**	-.15**	-.12*	.17**
.24**	.14**	.21**	-.02	-.04	-.16**	-.03	-.08	-.08	.11*
1	.11*	.11*	-.002	-.13**	-.09	.02	-.12*	-.20**	.23**
	1	.11*	-.26**	-.10*	-.05	-.13**	-.11*	-.15**	.14**
		1	-.30**	-.03	-.04	-.05	-.07	-.08	.12*
			1	.002	.05	.04	.05	-.03	.02
				1	-.11*	-.11*	.31**	.39**	-.04
					1	.14**	.29**	.36**	-.07
						1	.14**	.19**	-.01
							1	.43**	-.11*
								1	-.14**
									1

Table 9. Pearson Correlation Matrix for Major Variables

	Age	Total foundational skills	Total new skills	Years in current position	Years of experience in journalism	Being cautious and transparent	Resisting pressure	Securing Accuracy
Age	1	.17**	-.10**	.91**	.58**	.11**	.12*	.09*
TFS		1	.19**	.22**	.12*	.20**	.27**	.22**
TNS			1	-10*	.13*	.12*	-.04	.05
Yrs current				1	.62**	.15**	.17**	.16**
Yrs Journalism					1	.03	.03	.09
Cautious						1	.33**	.42**
Resisting							1	.27**
Securing								1
Handling								
Familiar								
Consult								
Codes adequate								
Editors								
Audience								
Advertising								
Deadlines								
Competitors								
Prestige								

Table 10. Binary Logistic Regression Model

(0=Digital native journalists, 1=Legacy journalists)

Predictors	*β*	Exp(B)	*p*
Age[a]	.02	1.02	.59
Cognitive dimension			
Total foundational skills	.24	1.27	.58
Total new skills	.07	1.07	.81
College and above degree	-1.03	.36	.35
Degree in journalism	.88	2.41	.01*
Years in current position	.10	1.11	.02*
Years of experience in journalism	.004	1.00	.91
Normative dimension			
Being cautious and transparent	.05	1.05	.91
Resisting pressure	.66	1.92	.06
Handling mistakes	.31	1.36	.45
Securing Accuracy	.07	1.07	.45
Familiarity with codes	-.17	.84	.41
Consult with codes	-.01	.99	.90
Codes are adequate	-.17	.85	.28
Evaluative dimension			
Average amount of autonomy	-.13	.88	.72
Editors	-.08	.92	.68
Audience preferences and feedback	-.51	.60	.03*
Advertising department	.76	2.13	.04*
Deadlines	.75	2.15	<.001***
Competitors	-.79	.46	.004**
Prestige	.42	1.53	.13
Constant	-5.40	.005	.15
N	449		

Nagelkerke r-square	.34
% cases correctly classified	83.4%

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$
[a] Age is the control variable.

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Welcome to the survey! First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your current job.

1. What's your job title? _____

2. What kind of media organization do you work for?
- ❍ Digital-only media
- ❍ Newspaper
- ❍ Television
- ❍ Radio
- ❍ Other (please specify) _____

3. Approximately how many full-time news and editorial people are employed at your organization? _____

4. In what city and state do you work? _____

5. How do you rate yourself on the following skills?

	1-Unskilled	2	3	4	5-Very skilled
AP Style or other applied news writing styles	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Audience development/ engagement	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Basic computer coding and development	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Big data analysis	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Data visualization	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Critically evaluating facts and assertions	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Editing skills	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Information gathering	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Interviewing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Multimedia production	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
News writing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Podcasting	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social media	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Verifying information	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Visual storytelling skills	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Now I'd like to ask you about your own personal news reading and viewing.

6. How often do you get news from the following sources?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always
Print newspapers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Newspaper websites	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Network TV	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Cable TV	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Local TV	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
TV news websites	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Digital-only outlet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Radio	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online/satellite radio	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social media	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
News magazine	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Now I would like to ask a few questions about your work as a journalist. Many people have different opinions about what it means to be a journalist and what constitutes appropriate journalistic work and practices.

7. For the following practices or statements, please answer the following questions:
In general, how closely do you follow the guidelines below? (1= Not closely at all, 5= Extremely closely)
In general, how important is each guideline to you personally? (1= Not important at all, 5= Extremely important)

	How closely do you follow the guidelines below?				
	1	2	3	4	5

Verify information before releasing it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use original sources whenever possible	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Always put accuracy before speed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Identify sources clearly	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Carefully consider sources' motives before promising anonymity	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Always present yourself as a journalist unless traditional, open methods will not collect vital information to the public	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Always refuse to pay for information	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Refuse gifts, freebies or favors from sources	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Resist internal pressure to influence coverage	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Resist external pressure to influence coverage	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Balance the public's need for information and people's right to privacy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Take responsibility for one's work	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Be transparent about how facts were discovered and verified	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Acknowledge mistakes promptly and prominently	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Correct mistakes promptly and prominently	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

8. How familiar are you with the journalistic codes of conduct (e.g. SPJ)?

- ❍ Not at all familiar
- ❍ Slightly familiar
- ❍ Moderately familiar
- ❍ Very familiar
- ❍ Extremely familiar

9. How often have you consulted the journalistic codes of conduct?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Rarely
- ❍ Sometimes
- ❍ Often
- ❍ Always

10. When/if you do consult a journalistic code of conduct, is it adequate in guiding your decision-making?

- ❍ Not at all adequate
- ❍ Slightly adequate
- ❍ Moderately adequate
- ❍ Very adequate
- ❍ Extremely adequate
- ❍ Not applicable

11. Now, I want you to please think about your day-to-day work routines when you answer the following questions.

	1-Very little	2	3	4	5-A great deal
How much freedom do you have on deciding what story your work on?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How much freedom do you have on which sources to contact?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How much freedom do you have on how to report a story?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

12. How much influence does _____ have on deciding what story you work on?

	1-Very little	2	3	4	5-Primary influence
Your editor(s) or supervisor(s)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Competitors	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Deadlines	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The advertising department	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Audience preferences	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Page views or other forms of audience feedback	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

13. How much influence does_____ have on what which sources to contact?

	1-Very little	2	3	4	5-Primary influence
Your editor(s) or supervisor(s)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Competitors	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Deadlines	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The advertising department	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Audience preferences	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Page views or other forms of audience feedback	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

14. How much influence does_____ have on your decision of how to report a story?

	1-Very little	2	3	4	5-Primary influence
Your editor(s) or supervisor(s)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Competitors	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Deadlines	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The advertising department	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Audience feedbacks from your previous work	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Page views or other forms of audience feedback	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	1-Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5-Strongly agree
The general public respects my job	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The general public appreciates the work I do	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My job is valuable and essential to our society	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My job is worth the time and effort I invest in it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My colleagues in the newsroom	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

think the work I do is important					
My editor thinks the work I do is important	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Colleagues at other news organizations think my work is important	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

You have reached the last part of the survey!

16. What's your age? _____

17. What's your racial/ethnic background? (Select all that apply)
- ❑ Asian
- ❑ Black or African American
- ❑ Hispanic or Latino
- ❑ Middle Easterner or North African
- ❑ Native American or Alaska Native
- ❑ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ❑ White
- ❑ Prefer not to answer

18. What's your gender?
- ❍ Female
- ❍ Male
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____
- ❍ Prefer not to answer

19. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.

- ❍ High School or lower
- ❍ Trade/technical/vocational training
- ❍ Associate degree
- ❍ Bachelor's degree
- ❍ Master's degree
- ❍ Professional degree
- ❍ Doctorate degree

20. What was your undergraduate major?

- ❍ Journalism and mass communication major
- ❍ Other major (please specify) _____
- ❍ Does not apply

21. What was your undergraduate minor?

- ❍ Journalism and mass communication minor
- ❍ Other major (please specify) _____
- ❍ Does not apply

22. In which field did you study in graduate or professional school?

- ❍ Journalism and mass communication field
- ❍ Other field (please specify) _____
- ❍ Does not apply

23. How long have you worked in your current position (in years)?

24. How long have you worked in the journalism field (in years)?

25. Finally, is there anything you would like to add about being a journalist today?

Thank you for your participation. Now you will be directed to a separate survey to collect some additional information, which will take less than 1 minute to complete.

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