THE CHANGING ROLE OF ON-AIR WOMEN JOURNALISTS: JOURNALISTS

ON LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS AND DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

ON INSTAGRAM

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This thesis looks at how women journalists are now also digital influencers on Instagram. It analyzes the gendered expectations of women journalists that are also included on their professional Instagram accounts.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On September 2019, a woman journalist went on air in Oregon to explain to her viewers why she wore high-waisted pants. A viewer had sent her messages through her social media, telling the anchor that she needed to "look more like a woman" and asked if the station did not pay her enough to wear better clothing. When she shared his comments on her professional Instagram account, other women journalists from different markets gave her support and even shared similar stories from their personal experiences. The pressure of looking feminine for women journalists has been around since the start of broadcast news (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). Viewers, employers, and co-workers have gendered expectations of how women on-air journalists should perform their jobs; these views are often expressed both on-air and via social media.

As part of their changing marketing strategies, local news stations encourage journalists to use social media to connect with followers and potential on-air audiences (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). They have realized that merely pushing content to promote their station is not enough, instead, journalists are expected to build a branded identity to gain a loyal fan base (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the role of women journalists has changed along with changes in the local TV news industry, particularly with the widespread adaption of social media. My research demonstrates that on-air journalists are expected to contribute significant time and labor to create and maintain their professional social media accounts. This study also examines how women journalists negotiate their personal and professional identities on social media accounts. To help identify between personal and professional, personal posts are defined as any posts that describe something about the women

journalists, such as, posts with friends, family, or just self-care posts. Professional posts focus on the work that the on-air journalists do, such as photos of them reporting, on the desk, or promoting the newscast. Before social media, an on-air journalist's primary job was to research, present information to the public, and occasionally work in on-site publicity for the station. As social media has become a primary marketing strategy, journalists continue to do this work but now they must also build a branded identity similar to that of a digital influencer (Greer & Ferguson, 2011).

Alice Marwick defines digital influencer as a state of being famous to a group of people, but it is also a behavior: the presentation of oneself as a celebrity regardless of who is paying attention (Marwick, 2015). Overall, this thesis looks at how the use of Instagram has changed the roles and careers of women journalists. My argument for this thesis is how having to maintain a professional Instagram accounts results in enhanced gendered expectations through their online identity as well as having to manage emotional and physical labor added to their daily lives as a women on-air journalist. The three research questions that structure this analysis include:

RQ1: What kinds of content do on-air women broadcast journalists post on their professional Instagram accounts?

RQ2: How do on-air women broadcast journalists use Instagram to perform their personal and professional identities?

RQ3: How do on-air broadcast journalists navigate labor and gendered expectations on their professional Instagram accounts?

This research helps understand how the role of on-air women broadcast journalists have changed in relation to gendered expectations. Although women journalists had to perform gendered expectations on television before social media, now on-air journalists are expected to continue to perform this gendered and branded identity on their professional Instagram (Greer & Ferguson, 2011). This research reveals the ways on-air women journalists are presenting as

digital influencers on Instagram; I use this data to show that this labor should be more valued and compensated by their local stations.

<div align="center">Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework</div>

The literature review consists of three sections: social media and television news, social media as a space and practice, and gender and identity. This is the foundation that is laid out for the rest of the study and will help understand how social media platforms have influenced our culture and standard journalism practices. This provides the context for the purpose of this study: understanding how women journalists are digital influencers on Instagram and how that affects their use of their professional Instagram accounts. The literature review examines and provides better understanding towards concepts such as femininity and masculinity, as well as how women roles were once viewed and how they have changed. This study looks at how journalism as an industry has changed, beginning with broadcast television to the inclusion of social media.

The social media and television news section looks at research that gives a background knowledge of on-air women journalists. This section addresses a brief history of broadcast journalism, changes in the industry, labor, and marketing strategies. The information in the journalism section provides context of how the industry contained expectations for their on-air talent and how the on-air talent had a performed identity before social media. Although this looked different, knowing that the industry had these standards previously, helps the reader understand why these expectations and performances are being presented on Instagram.

Social media as a space and practice explains how people use social media and the unique affordances of the space. I refer to Humphreys' (2018) explanation of scrapbooks and how women would use it as a way to save family photos. The connection that scrapbooking has with Instagram is that it is a platform used to post photos of life events, trips, and selfies. Before

social media was invented, the women's role in the household, according to *Qualified Self* by

Lee Humphreys (2018), was to preserve the history and events of the family. It would be

common to share these photographs with family and friends when visiting. Like Instagram,

family, friends, and depending on if the profile is public or private, even strangers can see the

user's life events and trips. This is defined as media accounting, which is documenting our lives

(Humphreys, 2018). Theoretically, this section considers how personal and professional practices

merge on social media.

  The last section of the literature review is about gender and identity. This section contains

research from scholars such as Judith Butler to explain identity and gender as performative. This

part of the thesis discusses what scholars are currently saying and how I contribute to the

conversation.

Social Media and TV News

  Local news stations use social media platforms as a way to "attract and maintain an

audience" (Greer & Ferguson, p. 198). Using social media for the station helps their audience

reach, as such, on-air journalists are expected to use their social media accounts to promote the

station and on-air stories. In his book, *Multimedia Storytelling,* Seth Gitner (2015) argues that

journalists should use social media as a place to share information and connect with audiences.

The book breaks down how important it is to provide effective storytelling on different media

platforms. Gitner's book (2015) provides understanding over some of the strategies journalists

are currently using on their social platforms. I use this during my research as a foundation when

looking at what exactly women journalists are posting in regard to storytelling and promoting

news. Thus, Gitner (2015) argues how the news industry should embrace social media.

  Greer and Ferguson also have research about how television journalists use strategic

models for media promotions. The study, *Using Twitter for Promotion and Branding: A Content Analysis of Local Television Twitter Sites* (Greer & Ferguson, 2010) studies the Twitter platform and examines how stations use this platform to bring in viewers towards their regular newscasts (Greer & Ferguson, 2010). Greer and Ferguson explain that viewership and revenue has dropped over the past few years, and therefore, social media has become a challenging way to keep ratings up (Greer & Ferguson, 2010). This led to their study of seeing how stations used the social platform of Twitter and how stations would try to gain a following on the social platform to bring the viewer back to their newscast. According to their research, it did not really work overall for most stations. This research helped since this is similar to what stations are doing on Instagram. Greer and Ferguson share that by posting photos and videos of upcoming stories, journalists are branding themselves and maintaining an online identity that followers can trust and maybe even bring them back to watch their newscasts. The study uses examples of this when women on-air journalists give a little information and tell their followers that if they want to know their full story, to go to the link provided, which is the local station's website. Greer and Ferguson explain that websites receive impressions similar to television ratings. The station is able to collect some revenue based on how many impressions viewed the story. Thus, this research is helpful for this thesis since there are some similarities when looking at how broadcast journalism is using social media as a marketing and branding tool to bring in more viewers.

The article "I Always Watched Eyewitness News Just to See Your Beautiful Smile" by Teri Finneman, Ryan J. Thomas, and Joy Jenkins (2019), shares research about women journalists facing criticism and harassment throughout their career. In this article, it mentions how their appearance has been strongly enforced more towards women since the beginning of broadcast television, it was the first-time audiences would actually see the journalists (Finneman,

Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). This now includes the pressure of beauty and looks, gender-based stereotypes and the requirements of personal branding on their social media (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). This study provides a foundation of how women journalists have to manage the expectations from their audience and their stations on social media and television. Since the research for this study closely aligns with the type of research presented in the article, it helps to understand how online personal branding exposes women journalists. Having this understanding guides my discussion of self-branding that is similar to digital influencers, seeing that women on-air journalists present common characteristics to digital influencers on their social platforms.

Roger Desmond and Anna Danilewicz (2009) conducted a content analysis to see if there are gender differences in types of stories that reporters and anchors report. Their findings included that women were given feminine topics that were related to health or beauty and not hard news or politics. Women journalists would accept this limitation (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2009). Gender stereotypes have been presented in television news and now carry on to social media. This report helps with this study since it gives research on what women journalists would face before social media and their involvement in the news industry. This continues in my study, but I show what type of content women journalists post on their professional Instagram accounts. This includes fashion, type of content that is shared on Instagram, and what stories to focus on when sharing on Instagram.

Paromita Pain and Victoria Chen (2018), wrote about the negotiation of gender online and offline. This article shares how the harassment comments that are gender-focused can make the women journalists rely more on looks and physical attributes than their actual reporting. The section of the article, *Face Is Everything,* explains how one mistake on camera or not fitting the ideal look of a journalist may result in harassing comments that are focused on appearance rather

than on the actual work the journalists does. Understanding this helps with my research when it comes to the contextual analysis of posts. Since the article explains about the harassing comments, my thesis looks at the content that is provided and how journalists are preparing for the negative comments and how this formulates what they post on their accounts. This could be because having an identity that portrays journalists in pretty candid shots or working out and being fit limits the hateful harassment comments (Pain & Chen, 2018), that could be focused on outward appearance. This article proves that women self-objectify due to society's standard of what a woman should look, act, and sound like which is a prevalent theme in my thesis.

Social Media as Space and Practice

Theresa Senft's defines digital influencers as "a new style of online performance in which people employ webcams, video, audio, blogs and social networking sites to 'amp up' their popularity among readers, viewers and those to whom they are linked online," (Senft, 2008, p. 25). Although the definition is helpful to identify strategies local television news journalists use on their social platforms, Jonathan Mavroudis explains in *Fame Labor: A Critical Autoethnography of Australian Digital Influencers* (2018) that the goal in becoming a digital influencer is for someone to accumulate a large following and pass the microcelebrity status. Mavroudis defines reach as the number of followers, collaborative networks as "the professional and/or personal ties influencers have with fellow influencers on Instagram," and brand endorsement status, meaning if the influencer has a large reach, their value increases to advertisers "in regard to selling potential," (Mavroudis, 2018 pp. 85). Local television news journalists differ from Mavroudis' factors of digital influencers because journalists do not seek outside brand endorsement; however, I find it a useful lens for approaching the labor that women journalists do online. For women journalists, their station is their brand endorsement, meaning

the posts on their social platforms about the stories they are working on or content that airs later similar to an advertisement that a digital influencer would post on their platform. Journalists are hired by the station and use their platform to promote their stories or their station as part of their role. This makes their work similar to digital influencers, since journalists are expected to endorse the station. Rather than promoting a product, broadcast news journalists market the newscast. The expectation is that increased online followers may result in increased on-air viewers (Greer & Ferguson, 2011).

In Marwick's 2015 book, *Status Update*, she defines the edited self as an "entrepreneur whose product is a neatly packaged, performed identity" (p. 195). This definition is the foundation of how I analyze the ways journalists use their Instagram and Twitter. I demonstrate how they develop their self-brand that abides with the station's brand and strive to have a "self-conscious persona" that Marwick explains as "one that makes the world think they are entrepreneurial, knowledgeable, positive, and self-motivated," (p.194). Although Marwick is explaining general digital influencers, local news journalists do not need to come off as entrepreneurial or positive, but they do need to strive to present an identity of knowledge and self-motivation. Although they may post stories that are negative, they do this with the intention to post real news, whether they are positive or not. I use Marwick's definition of social branding, "the production of knowledge as a commodity, the belief that status is something better achieved than ascribed by the group," (p. 165). Mavroudis (2018) explains how fame labor is a large part of maintaining the status of digital influencer. Maintaining the digital influence status incorporates pressure for the users to have popularity on the platform. The digital influencer has a great deal of emotional work that is behind the scenes (Mavroudis, 2018, p. 90). The labor that

that journalists must exert to maintain a popular professional social media account is similar to that of digital influencers.

The imagined audience is an important concept that is part of this research. Marwick and boyd in, *I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience* (2010),  explain there is an audience that users think about when posting and are "constructed by an individual in order to present themselves appropriately," (Marwick & boyd, p. 115). In my research, I also consider how journalists imagine their audiences: as either personal or professional. Having personal posts brings authenticity to a journalist's identity since it is a way for their followers to see aspects of who they are when they are not on the clock. The local news journalists are able to demonstrate a different side that helps them be relatable to their followers. By posting personal photos, they are showing their audience their constructed lifestyle.

The book, *Instagram: Visual Social Media Cultures,* (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020), describe the platform and how it started as well as explaining how society uses it. One of the main themes I use from this book is the description of Instagram stories and the difference between a story and a post. According to Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin (2020), Instagram stories were introduced on the platform in August 2016. Although this was not a new invention from Instagram–rather, the idea was taken from Snapchat–it has changed how people use the Instagram on a day-to-day basis *(*Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020). They argue in the book that Instagram is mainly about communicating with others with a space that overlaps with commerce *(*Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020). Understanding how Instagram is a platform of communication, the use of stories based on this book, I analyzed how journalists are using their stories and if any themes have changed are stayed the same. Therefore, this book shows how

Instagram is a form of visual communication through its different aspects *(*Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020) and women journalists are communicating their work as well as their persona on their professional Instagram.

I use the book, *Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces* (Silva & Frith, 2012)*,* to help understand how public and private spaces intertwine and people use social media in ways that complicate the understanding of private and public. This is important in my research because there is a similar theme in social media and how people are using the platforms. The boundaries of private and public or personal and professional have never been as clearly defined as we often imagine, and social media presents new complications for negotiating space and identity. For journalists, the station might expect them to share personal lifestyles on their social platforms, which blurs the boundaries between personal and professional.

Gender and Identity

Judith Butler explains in the *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* (1988), the act of acting like a woman. Butler describes this similar to theater performance of how one would act in different characters on a stage. This is how some women may act in front of the public. "The act that one does, the act that one performs, is in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene" (Butler, 1988, p. 526). This act of a hyper feminine women continues today in our society and digital society. According to the patriarchy leaders in the news industry, because one is a woman, she should be feminine only and never show any masculine trait, but in other cases one can be both masculine and feminine (Butler 1988, p. 526). Regarding the study of women journalists, there is a performance of who they are online (Humphreys, 2018) versus who they are in a normal everyday setting (Butler, 1988). At times it can be very different because of the pressures that

women have in public (Butler 1988), whereas in private they can be themselves and not have to worry about the expectations that are put on them (Butler 1988) (Humphreys, 2018). This is helpful for the descriptive analysis since some journalists might admit that who they post on their social media is not really who they are as a person (Butler 1988), but also a fake persona to keep the audience happy as well as the station. Although they come off like the person, they say they are online is their authentic self, but in reality, it is just an act to keep others content with what they see.

Carter and Steiner in their book *Critical Readings: Media and Gender*, (2004) explain gender is important in media because the representation of women is often limited or stereotypical. Carter and Steiner are concerned that sexism causes people to think that "hierarchical sex-role stereotypes were 'natural' and 'normal'," (Carter & Steiner, 2004, p. 2). For this thesis, I consider the gendered identity performances of women journalists since their gender performances are presented on their Instagram profile. This is important since as mentioned, media have contributed to reproduction of "sexists' norms, values, and beliefs," (Carter & Steiner, 2004, p. 5). For local broadcast news, this statement is relating to what is seen today and how women journalists must show their feminine side. When a reporter is out live, unless it is raining, the viewer always sees them in full make up, hair, and wardrobe, but what if the reporter is actually not feminine and would rather wear polo shirt and slacks, like their male colleagues, or have a French crop haircut? That would be challenging the gender norms of reporters that the industry has put on their women on-air journalists. The amount of control that the station has over what a women's appearance is on television is strict (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019), and networks excuse misogynistic patriarchy expectations and pressuring gender

expectations in order to fit the brand created for the station (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019).

Erika Engstrom and Anthony J. Ferri (2000) explain that in their attempt to gain credibility as journalists, women in television news "have to cope with societal expectations of appearance and beauty" (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000, p. 615). Gendered expectations of women journalists are not new and are being extended to their identity performances on social media. Bock (2018) explains that age and beauty expectations differ for men and women journalists. They draw attention to race and how women of color are expected to look like a white person in regards of hair, on television.This article helps with understanding the different expectations of gender in the form of the body (Bock, Chacon, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, pp. 448-449).

*The Social Construction of Gender* by Judith Lorber (2018), gives information how gender is seen in public spaces. Lorber explains femininity and masculinity with the term "the process," meaning how society automatically associates femininity with women and masculinity with men (Lober, 2018). Because women journalists are pressured to be feminine on television (Greer & Ferguson, 2010) the expectation also follows on their social media posts (Humphreys, 2018). Although this should not be the case, some women journalists continue to post content that aligns with the gendered expectation of women journalists (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019).

Lastly, the book, the *Qualified Self* (Humphreys, 2018) helps when understanding why women journalists post more about the family than male journalists. Lee Humphreys explains media accounting, defined as documenting our lives that can be presented back to us (Humphreys, 2018). Humphreys mentioned that women used scrapbooks before social platforms in order to preserve special memories and maintain family history (Humphreys, 2018). It was the

role of a woman to maintain the family scrapbooks and was normal for guests to come and spend time sharing their memories with friends and family (Humphreys, 2018). Although scrapbooks are still around, Instagram is a similar form of this when looking at a user's profile. Photos of adventures, family gatherings, life moments, and selfies are constantly shared on the visual platform (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 26). Therefore, Humphreys' claim that people use their social platforms in a similar way to how people would use scrapbooks is helpful to understanding why personal and professional content is shared on professional on-air women journalists' profiles. This brings in some context on how on-air journalists use their Instagram. Some accounts may look similar to a scrapbook or their professional or personal life, and having the understanding of media accounting help analyze the posts (Humphreys, 2018).

## Methodologies and Data Collection

For this project, I used a multimethod approach to answer each research question, all of which was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Texas. For the first research question – how on-air women journalists are using their Instagram accounts – I conducted a content analysis of women journalists' Instagram posts. For the second question – how they are performing their identities – I conducted a textual analysis of these same Instagram accounts. And for the third question – how they negotiate gendered expectations – I conducted semi-structured interviews with on-air women journalists. My Instagram sample includes the professional Instagram accounts of on-air women journalists from different markets in the U.S., including news reporters, anchors, multimedia journalists, and digital reporters. I am defining professional Instagram accounts as public accounts that are used by their local station to promote viewers to follow them. Since these accounts are public, they are created for their followers and viewers to see their content. Due to confidentiality, I do not include identifiers nor names of the

journalists, but rather refer them by a code. The code used is the letter "J" and a number at the end, so the reader does not know which journalists I am analyzing closely.

I conducted a content analysis of six journalists and their first 30 recent Instagram posts to determine what kinds of photos they are sharing with their followers: personal, professional, or a hybrid of the two. I have provided the coding sheet for the content analysis as appendix A. In addition to determining if the posts are personal or professional, I also code other elements including if it is a group or individual photo, who is in the photo (e.g. family, friends, co-workers), and what kinds of activities are represented (e.g. work or personal lifestyle). After coding the posts for all the on-air journalists, I analyze common themes that are presented on their Instagram accounts.

The textual analysis moves beyond a content description to analyze how women are presenting their identities in Instagram posts. For this analysis, I looked at the most recent posts of six different Instagram journalist profiles. Based on Butler's (1988) understanding of gender performances, I look at the presentation of the body, including fashion, and context of the post as a way to analyze signifiers of gender and negotiations of professional and personal identity performance. I also identify the themes found during the content analysis that are based on their profile posts and Instagram stories.

Lastly, to understand how journalists negotiate professional expectations – and how these expectations are gendered – I conducted interviews with six women who are on-air talent and are currently working in television news. The sample of interview questions are located in appendix B. These questions are used to formulate discussion with the journalists about their role in the industry, their Instagram accounts, and their perceptions of their employer's expectations. When choosing the interviewees, I chose a diverse group of women journalists, including different

ethnicities, ages, television markets, and years of experience. This is important because I want to understand how these different aspects of their identities play a role in how they use their Instagram accounts and negotiate their professional identities. This helps to see if there is a difference with newer journalists, who had social media for a while, and have a different experience from journalists who started in the industry before social media was used. For example, a young journalist may not think much of using her Instagram account in personal and professional ways, whereas a more experienced journalist may see this as an added requirement to the job or a distraction. Another consideration is how market size makes a difference in how people use their professional Instagram account. Having different races and ethnicities might bring in a different understanding of certain expectations of culture presentation on their accounts. This chapter reveals journalists' perceptions of the expectations that the industry puts on them with regard to how they should use their social media accounts and if it is a requirement for the amount of posts a user must have on their professional Instagram account. Therefore, having a diverse group helps enrich this research further.

## Limitations of Methodology

This research is not intended to be representative of how all local women journalists and all stations in the United States use their Instagram platform; rather, the qualitative approach allows for a deeper analysis of how women journalists negotiate personal and professional identities online. Due to the amount of research that is conducted, I analyze only on-air women journalists in English-speaking TV stations. Understanding that each station is different, and each employee is different, I am not trying to say that everyone is doing the same with their Instagram based on the research that is provided for this thesis.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 2: Content Analysis of On-Air Women Journalists' Professional Instagram

Chapter 2 is a content analysis of the women's professional Instagram accounts. I used the data I collected to analyze common themes, including how the COVID pandemic affected what was posted, personal lifestyle and physical location, and market size. Since I am arguing that women on-air journalists are using their professional Instagram as digital influencers, I researched what type of content was presented on their professional accounts. The content analysis adds to the discussion of the type of personal and professional posts that are shown. For journalists, posting both professional and personal information can have multiple reasons, which are discussed more in the interviews. It could be that they are relating to their audience, or that they are expected to do so. Overall, having this chapter helps the research by helping the reader understand what posts are on on-air journalists' Instagram and how they are using the platform.

Chapter 3: Women On-Air Journalists' Gendered Performances on Instagram

The textual analysis chapter looks more critically at the content that is published on the on-air talent's Instagram account. This chapter examines posts and analyzes the photos presented visually. Analyzing the details of the visual content provides context as how the women are presenting their online persona and the presentation of their bodies. Analyzing specific attributes and gender signifiers helps argue that women journalists have gendered performances of identity shown on their professional accounts. This builds from the previous chapter of how they are using their platform but goes into a further discussion of gender and identity that is presented on their Instagram accounts. I argue that these performances have been around before social media but are now more commonly seen by the public. Before, the public would see what was on television, but now, the public has access to these accounts that are updated more regularly. This

chapter argues that on-air journalists' roles involve increased forms of emotional labor as they are becoming digital influencers and that gender expectations are shown through their posts on their professional Instagram.

Chapter 4: Descriptive Analysis of Six Women On-Air Journalists

In this chapter, I used semi-structured interviews to understand the journalists' perceptions of their news stations' expectations for acceptable social media use. I argue that followers and the station have gendered expectations towards the women journalists in light of their professional Instagram accounts. This section provides information on how some on-air journalists navigate the expectations and how they think through posting on their Instagram accounts. I apply the microcelebrity and digital influencer research and social media as a space to understand why they use their accounts. The questions provide context to understand their perceptions of their employer's expectations. This chapter gives the reader an understanding of journalists' perspectives on why they post certain posts that may contain common themes from chapter three. The significance of this chapter is to answer the research question of what is expected of on-air journalists. Based on the feedback from the interviews, I analyze common themes that each journalist faces in the industry.

Chapter 5: On-Air Women Journalists as Digital Influencers

The conclusion of this thesis is to argue that on-air women journalists are now expected to be digital influencers on their Instagram platforms. When looking at the research all together, it helps understand the amount of labor to be a digital influencer is now expected for on-air women journalists. With this comes the pressure and expectations for women journalists to present gendered performances of femininity. Some questions might arise include, such as, do younger journalists enjoy being a digital influencer more than an experienced journalist? How do

women feel about being pressured to be feminine on their professional Instagram accounts? Future research should consider having on-air journalists as digital influencers be the start of a new way for people to receive their news. Will journalists and/or journalism in general lose their integrity with this new form of communicating information? Exploring a better option that supports the emotional and physical labor that comes with maintaining the journalists' social identity should be considered in future research. Also, finding a better way for stations to respect their employee's boundaries with social media as a requirement of their job would be beneficial for both academia and the industry. Therefore, the implications of media studies and journalism as an industry is how the industry continues to change and move into a digital space.

Thus, significance of this study is to better understand how the role of an on-air women journalist has changed with Instagram. The research argues that there are gendered expectations on Instagram for on-air women journalists. Since these expectations have been around since the beginning of broadcast news, it continues to be presented on professional social accounts (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2009). But why do they continue? After decades, society still sees on-air women journalists similar to those who were on in the 1970s. Although gender performances and expectations have been presented on television before social media, now on-air journalists are expected to continue this identity on their professional Instagram (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). Therefore, after answering these questions, the researcher understands why on-air women journalist digital influencers are on Instagram and discusses whether that should be more valued by their local stations. The research argues that maintaining a professional Instagram account results in enhancing gendered expectations through online identity as well as emotional and physical labor added to the daily lives of women on-air journalists. To better formulate the argument, the literature review gives the researcher the foundation of which the

research stands on and continue to build. The research that is provided in the next chapters, content analysis, textual analysis, and descriptive analysis, all examines better understanding of how women journalists use their professional Instagram accounts as digital influencers.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ON-AIR WOMEN JOURNALISTS' PROFESSIONAL

INSTAGRAM

During a panel about news lifestyle at the 2019 Women in Visual Journalism conference, a student asked how she could continue to improve and move up in the markets as an on-air journalist. According to the two news directors, both in the top ten markets of the United States, social media is an important aspect when hiring a new journalist. The content that is provided on their professional social media helps the station have a view of how the journalist leverages their social platforms. Meaning, the journalist has the possibility to present themselves on their professional social platforms and connect with followers by giving updates on their work and life, similar to a microcelebrities and digital influencers (Marwick, 2015). The navigation and presentation of their professional social media is equivalent in importance as the number of followers that journalists have. Having popularity as well as a brand helps in the hiring decisions, according to the news director, because it is an example of how the journalists are connecting with an audience on different platforms. Although social platforms have provided a space where people can share their life updates, without necessarily having to communicate directly with each individual (Kapoor, Tamilmani, & Rana et al., 2017), they have also negatively influenced people to focus more on the personal aspects rather than the quality of journalism that is provided by individuals (Rodny-Gumede, 2017). Thus, adding the physical and emotional labor of having an online persona can broadly increase misguided information and research in local news, but also specifically can change role of a journalist to becoming a micro influencer on their social platform.

The research I conducted includes the amount of professional and personal posts that are

distributed on the professional Instagram's of the journalists that were used in this sample. The terms professional and personal are defined in Marwick's book, *Status Update,* to describe the different types of content distributed by a micro-celebrity or digital influencer. Marwick describes personal posts as content provided on their public professional account that gives the followers more information about the user outside of the professional boundaries; for example, having posts with their children, family, or hobbies (Marwick, 2015). As for professional posts, the content has the logo of the sponsor or the influencer's work so that the followers can know who the influencer is working for (Marwick, 2015). Although journalists are not sponsored by other businesses like a digital influencer, they do have content that points back to their station by referring to the station's digital platform for more information or telling their followers to join in during their television broadcast.

Aside from having professional and personal posts, there were also posts that included a combination of both professional and personal attributes. Examples of combination posts included, silly photos with coworkers, showing behind the scenes of production, and wearing comfortable clothing – i.e. sweat pants, leggings, or jeans – around the office. All three different types of posts help the research for this thesis to further acknowledge the use of Instagram and the type of content that is provided. Thus, this small portion and the other aspects of the research that is provided for this project, helps argue that journalists are expected to be digital influencers on Instagram, which creates emotional and physical labor, as well as influencing gendered expectations. Therefore, this chapter analyzes the type of content women journalists present on their professional Instagram based on the three categories, professional, personal, and combination.

The research for this chapter was conducted by viewing thirty posts from six journalists'

professional Instagram accounts from different markets. This led to a total of 180 posts that were

analyzed. By filling out a google form with questions that are shown in Table 1, each post was

analyzed descriptively to see what was included based on the questions. After gathering the data,

the calculated percentages of the answers for each question was shown to see how each journalist

used their professional Instagram account. Thus, while looking at the data, a lot of percentages

were not as juristic as expected due to randomly picking journalists led to more older journalists

being in this sample, rather than younger journalists.

## The Results and Explanations

The total results are shown in Table 1. When doing this research, because of the

unexpected results, more questions came up in regard to the type of content that was posted.

**Table 1: Question Results (%)**

| Question | Yes | No | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professional | | | |
| Is the photo taken at work? | 18.9 | 65 | 16.1 |
| Is the post promoting a news story? | 17.8 | 82.2 | |
| Are there co-workers or professional mentors/mentees in the photo? | 12.2 | 87.8 | |
| Is the post promoting the station or a station-related event? | 22.8 | 77.2 | |
| Personal | | | |
| Is the photo taken at home? | 35 | 65 | |
| Is the photo taken in a public space? | 43.3 | 56.7 | |
| Does the photo include family? | 33.3 | 66.1 | 0.6 |
| Does the photo include children? | 29.4 | 70.6 | |
| Does the photo include friends? | 11.7 | 87.8 | 0.6 |
| Does the photo reveal something about their personal lifestyle (e.g. fitness, religion, pets, food, hobbies, etc.) | 18.9 | 81.1 | |

For example, only 22 of 180 posts (12.2%) included mentors or professional friends but 33.3%

of photos were with family members. When looking at the numbers in the tables, there is not a

large difference between the results for each individual question. Some of the reasons for the numbers not having a varied difference could be due to external circumstances, such as the size of the market they live in, or it could be individual, such as the lifestyle of the on-air journalists. Therefore, the four themes that are extensively discussed for explaining the influence of the data include, the COVID-19 pandemic, news market size, digital marketing strategies and personal lifestyle.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

In March 2020, many journalists and employees started working from home as the COVID-19 infection numbers increased. Newsrooms had to think of a creative way to perform the safety precautions, but also still inform the public. Going live from home and conducting interviews digitally has changed what a reporter's job looks like. They have also changed how these journalists maintain their professional Instagram accounts. The pandemic may have influenced the research data since more journalists were working from, hence now mixing professional with personal spaces since their personal space, their home, became their professional space.

Viewers were now invited into the homes of the news anchors, since newscasts started to go live from their living rooms or backyards. Because of the shutdown and health concerns that came with this new illness, schools and other jobs were also under the shutdown order, which may explain the 33.3% of family posts calculated. Some of the posts were of children helping their parents get ready to go live, as Journalist 2 had shared on her Instagram. Journalist 4 would post photos of her 5-year-old child sitting in her chair with her laptop pretending to read the news as the journalist was setting up her camera. Others had posts trying to create a news topical – a promotion that runs throughout the day to promote the upcoming newscast – and having their

dog walk in the background or child laughing during their take.

Although amusing to their followers based on the engagement these posts, more people were beginning to know the journalists more than what they saw on regular television (Hedman, 2020). Journalist 3 did not have many posts in her Instagram about her children or dogs until September of 2020, when she posted a video with the caption "trying to work from home but my coworkers are so distracting," (September 2020). Referencing to her small dogs and children running around, she ends the captions with "but at least they are cute and give me motivation to continue to do what I do," (September 2020). She adds #workingfromhome and #workingmom along with other hashtags that relate to her being a mom and a journalist. Seeing the engagement with her followers, having this post shows that being open about the personal life of a micro-celebrity helps engage them and develops a loyal following. The posts can be intentional as a form of self-branding and engaging with the audience because of the visibility that is shown publicly on each account (Hedman, 2020) for others to compare. Journalist 4 put on her bio that she is a mom and a journalist and has a trend of posting frequently with her family or about her kids even before she was working from home, thus this being her self-brand of a working mom contributes to the 33.3%. Since working from home limited posts from focusing on the station or being in the field, Journalist 3 started a trend of posting about her family during the pandemic, which could be to have some content on her professional account and being present on her Instagram. Thus, working from home because of COVID contributes to the 33.3% of journalists posting content of family and 35% content of working at home.

In Figure 1, the pie chart demonstrates the results, concluding if the post was taken at work. 16.1% of on-air women journalists were working from home. While using their station's equipment to go live from their house rather than being in the studio because of state and nation

regulations, only 18.9% journalists posted photos of at work. Even though there were 18.9%, some of the posts were of memories of working in the studio by journalists. They would caption posts with the #throwback #beforecovid and sometimes explained what they missed or took for granted. Others included in the 18.9% were posting content of them going to work and not having many coworkers or having to wear mask at their desk. With all the changes, there were posts at the station and at home, but both showed content of work regardless of their physical space. If both percentages were to combine, the total of 34% would still be lower than the 65% of photos that were not taken at work or during work. The 65% of posts were a variety of vacation, school events, spending time with friends and family, or their pets.

**Figure 1: Photo Taken at Work (*n* = 180)**
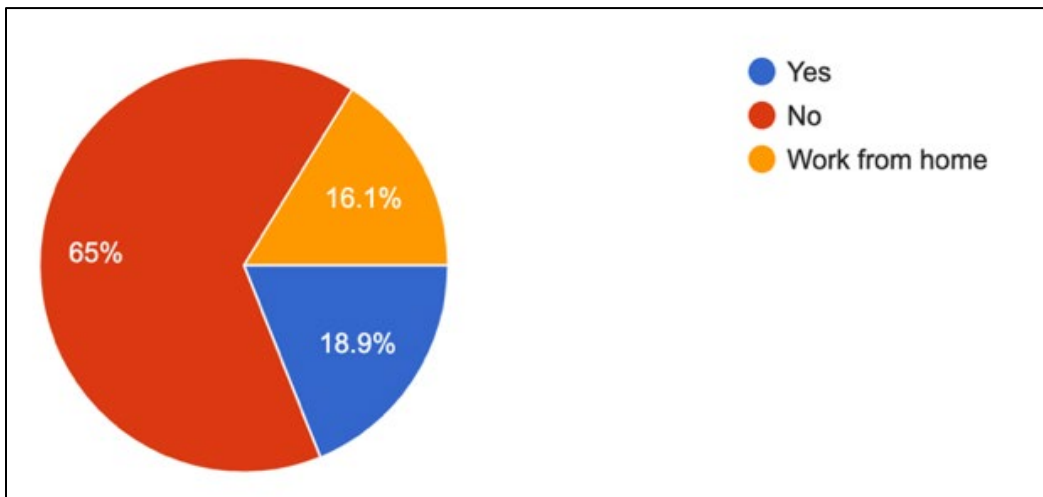


Therefore, a little more than half of the on professional Instagram profiles of journalists were not located at their jobs, whether it was at the station or remote working. More content was posts that just showed the everyday life and self-brand of the journalists, which led to wanting to post content that connects with their audience (Hedman, 2020). Thus, posting content of their everyday life showed their followers who they were as an individual person and not just a professional journalist. They no longer kept the boundary of professional life being separated

from their personal life; rather, they mixed it into one on their Instagram platform. Doing so keeps and increases their following, because followers who can relate to a journalist from a personal level may see them more as a friend instead of professional public figure (Marwick, 2015).

## Personal Lifestyle and Physical Location

The personal lifestyle presented on professional Instagram accounts is defined as, anything that contains information about the person's home or private life (Hedman, 2020). An example would be posts with family or friends that are outside of a work setting. The work setting of a journalist may look different compared to other positions, since journalists do not stay at their news stations during their entire shift. Since they work around the community, physical location can be anywhere their news coverage takes them. Therefore, analyzing their Instagram posts to determine if it is considered personal requires looking at detailed information provided by the posts. To establish what would be considered more of a personal lifestyle posts, table 2 includes questions that involve personal aspects related to their family or friends, as well as personal information such as religion, fitness, and pets.

**Figure 2: Photo Taken in a Public Space (*n* = 180)**
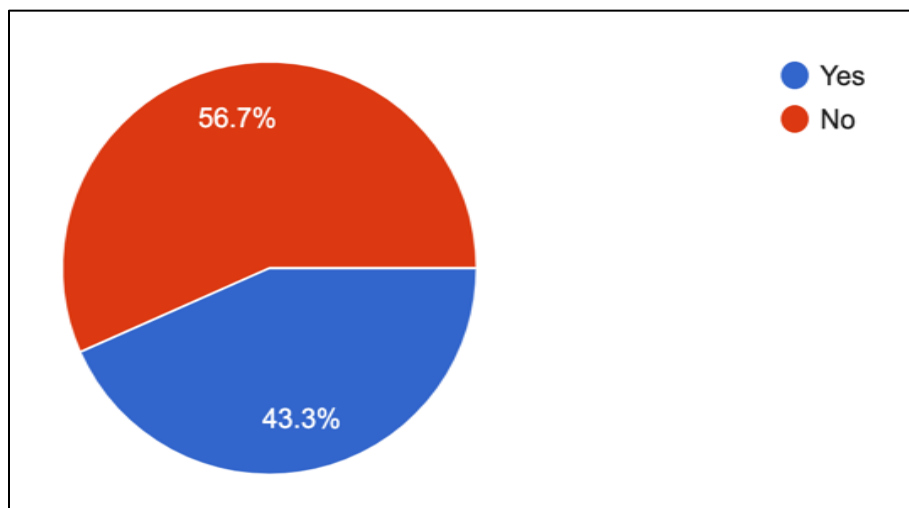
Physical location of the posts helps establish if the content is personal or professional. As seen in Figure 2, the question referring to location had 56.7% posts from journalists not being in a public space, but in private locations such as inside a home or outside in a backyard. Table 1 also shows that 43.3% of the posts analyzed are posts in a public location. Location is helpful, but not the only factor that establishes the content as personal or professional. Although a post is taken inside a home, the post could still be promoting work, which further blurs the boundaries between personal and professional and even private and public.

For example, in summer of 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, on-air journalists were sent to work from home. Journalist 4 had posts that were taken in their home. She mentions in the captions that they were doing a marketing shoot that took place in different rooms in her house, such as the kitchen or living room. Having her station identify the journalists as a working mom on television also influences her social media brand image. The focus of Journalist 4 is no longer about the professional work, but it is of the persona that is created by either her or her station of who she is outside of work and how she navigates her personal and professional life. The persona that is created could be who Journalist 4 truly is, or it could be who she or her station wants her followers to think who she is. Because this data is just showing the quantity of content, it cannot define the authenticity that is shown in the Instagram account of journalist 4, nor should assumptions be made. From what is presented in the post, journalist 4 has coworkers in her home capturing moments of mundane and everyday life routines with her family.

Doing so has now become part of her image as a journalist, as seen by digital influencers and microcelebrities (Marwick, 2015). Because of the growing audience in social media, particularly in the younger demographic, media corporations like Vogue in their *73 Questions* series shows the style of coming inside a celebrity's home to interview them while walking

around their home and making it more casual than formal (Nast, 2020). Similar to how some celebrities now use social media to just show off behind the scenes or what their daily routine looks like, the audience is invited into their personal spaces. As seen by celebrities, more journalists are starting to invite the audiences like Journalist 4 did for her television promotion and Instagram posts.

While other journalists posted in their homes but promoted their stations, some of the 56.7% were of everyday life that was not related to their work. These included posts with their children or family out in the backyard having a camp fire. Another example was from Journalist 6, when she posted a time-lapse video of her doing different yoga poses and sharing with her audience that stretching daily helps her take on her day. With 35% of the posts taken at home and 65% were not, but also not in a public space, some of the other posts consisted of private resort photos or being at a friend's house, yet physical location of the journalists can be conflicting in terms of research because some newscasts do include stories on lifestyle. Covering stories about reducing stress and relaxing is common for anchors and reporters who cover morning and midday newscasts. Therefore, a post of a journalists sharing a morning yoga time-lapse video on her professional Instagram could be just something to share with her followers, or it could mean more if she is a reporter that normally covers lifestyle stories for her station. Although Journalist 6 does not include that information on her Instagram, it could just be a hobby she enjoys and wants to share with her followers something personal about herself.

The friends and family question both have a 0.6% in the other category because the journalist does not specify in the post who the other people are. It could be to protect the identity of the other people, since a journalist's professional Instagram is public for any user to see. Since there was a photo of a journalist with a child actor in their post that was for a news promotion

they were working on, I did not want to assume that all children in photos with journalists could mean it was someone they were related to. There were some posts that were easy to identify as having family and children in the posts, because the journalists would mention their daily routines of getting ready or dropping off their kids to school while on their way to work. With posts sharing birthdays and family vacations, some women journalists did share extended family on their professional Instagrams, while others just stayed with close family or not having any present on their professional Instagram account. Journalist 1 had a few posts with her family and kids on her Instagram account, including one of her kids' first day of school picture. Journalist 1 also includes in her bio on her professional Instagram account that she is a mom to three before mentioning that she is also a on-air journalists.

When looking at an overarching view of table 2, it seems as a higher percentage of accounts are not presenting personal information based on the questions asked. Table 1 also had a low percentage when it came to professional content on women journalists' Instagram profiles. With only 17.8% of posts promoting news stories, and 22.8% promoting the station, a majority of the posts that were analyzed were not content related to work as a journalist on their professional profiles. Therefore, data alone would not be able to establish the use of their professional Instagram; rather, it is a stepping stone to understanding what is being presented in different journalists' accounts.

<div align="center">Television News Market Size</div>

The television news market size is based on the population of the city and active viewers (Harmon, 1989). It is data that is accessible to news stations to understand the estimation of viewers that are possibly seeing their newscasts (2021). In short, the news market is rated by the most viewers to least and in the news industry, the top markets are usually ones that are well

known because of the higher amount of viewership in that area. Market size can vary by each newsroom, but market size can play a significant role in how news is presented (Harmon, 1989). Smaller market sizes typically have journalists that are new to the industry and trying to navigate their professional career, whereas the large markets typically have the more advanced journalists since the reach of audience is larger (Harmon, 1989) ( Neilsen DMA Rankding, 2021). The larger markets also tend to have more of a budget then smaller ones, so they are able to offer more in terms of experienced journalists (Harmon, 1989). When analyzing the posts for the data presented, there was a theme of how different markets had journalists showing different type of content. Someone in a larger market like Los Angeles, California, which is a rank 2, presented a micro-celebrity persona where they posted photos of them getting coffee, being at the pool, or going out with friends, all of which were photos that were taken professionally by someone else (Nielsen DMA Ranking, 2021). Many factors could contribute to this theme, such as the fact that LA is a big celebrity scene. The audience is broad because you have your working middle class but also your upper-class society. Depending on the journalist and their target market, if they have one in mind, their content may be catered to that specific audience. The same trend is also noticed in New York City, where the market is number one also based on Nielsen's ratings (Nielsen DMA Ranking, 2021). Although this is not the case for every journalist, there were some women journalists in these areas that posted more lifestyle content on their Instagram without being work-related. As for a journalist in a smaller market like, Abilene, Texas, ranked 165, has more posts of stories that are going to be on later that day or photos of them on a shoot.

The women journalists in smaller markets really contributed to the data where personal information was not shown on their Instagram accounts. This theme presented could be because of being new to the journalism industry and wanting to focus more on their image as a journalist.

It was interesting to see the journalists in medium markets like Austin, market 38, and San Antonio, market 31, each journalist had a mixture of content that was personal and professional. With the medium markets, there were some of the younger journalists using their professional Instagram as their normal personal Instagram. Based on the data in Table 1, it can be a combination of both experience and market location since most large markets do not take in multimedia journalists, reporters, or anchors that have a small amount of industry experience, versus a smaller market who take fresh graduates.

Another finding could be generation-based. In lower-ranked markets there were new journalists posting more about their work but also posting some personal aspects of their lives, yet still tying it back to their occupation. As shown in figure 3, only 17.8% of the journalists promoting a news story were most from lower-ranked markets and a few from higher- and middle-range markets. In middle-range markets, some of the younger journalists were posting more personal content and using their professional Instagram like a personal account. Depending on their age, they may have grown up around social media and maybe are more comfortable using it like their personal account, yet still adding some professional content. For the higher-ranked markets with more experienced journalists, there was more structure and an identity being shown of the journalists. Since higher markets have more of a budget, this could be because of extra training depending on the newsroom, especially for people who have not grown up using social media. Learning digital strategies, like when to post and how to go around algorithms so your audience can see what you are sharing to grow your reach (Marwick 2015) is an added skill that on-air journalists are pressured to learn. I am not saying that other markets do not receive training and that all larger markets do, but after analyzing the different content that was presented in all the posts, market size, experience, and even generation could all factor in what

digital persona is presented on journalists' professional Instagram accounts. Therefore, a woman journalist in LA with more than ten years of experience compared to a woman journalist in Abilene who has been a journalist for three years, according to their professional profiles, present different personas on their Instagram.

**Figure 3: Post Promoting a News Story (*n* = 180)**
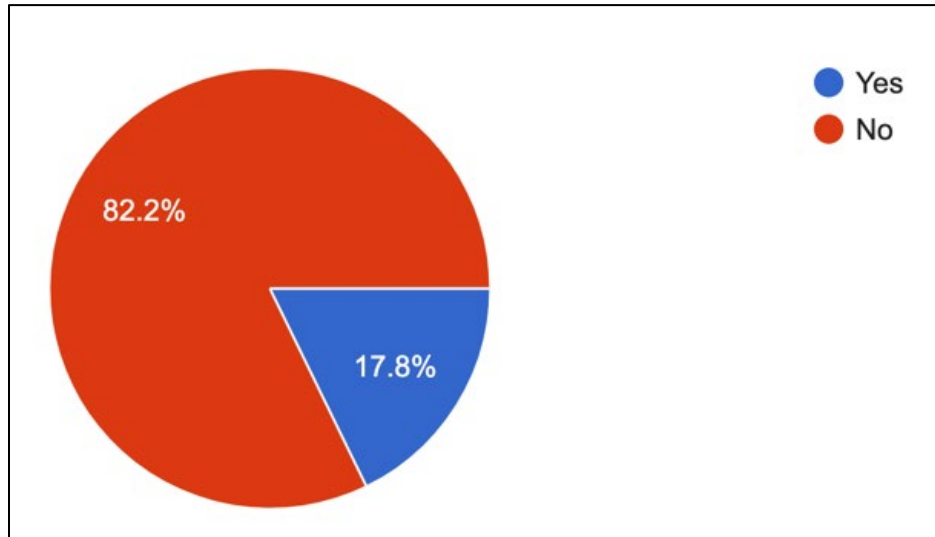


Therefore, the content analysis helps formulate the common trends that multiple journalists present by establishing the categories of the posts that are presented in the professional Instagram of the women journalists that were analyzed for this study. Although there are common variables like personal lifestyle posts, market size, and the COVID-19 pandemic, not every journalist uses their professional Instagram the same. As seen in the results, there were some posts that did not include family or kids, or if they were shown, sometimes not identified as family, therefore creating a personal post look but still having it being related to work. It was confusing to just look for one variable like physical location and expect to know if the content would be personal or professional, because journalists travel for their work and may cover stories in someone's home or at a country club, they might promote the story on social media with a behind-the-scenes photo or a photo of them just at the location with a caption that

tells their followers to either visit the news station's website or tune in later during the live newscast.

The generation can affect how a journalist presents themselves or their persona on their professional Instagram. Journalists who are young in the industry might focus more on themselves as journalists or have a mix of personal and professional posts on their Instagram accounts so that the followers are able to see them inside and outside of their work environment. The more experienced women journalists that were in medium and large markets seemed to show more about their lifestyle and presented content about themselves as people, not just journalists. There was a common theme of having an identity presented or their self-brand on their Instagram, as Marwick mentions in her book about digital influencers, which was similar to what these journalists were doing (Marwick, 2015). Since medium and large markets tend to have more budgets, depending on their newsroom, it could be because of more social media and digital strategies trainings provided for their employees. Thus, the profiles used for this study each had similar and different themes of including both personal and professional content on their professional Instagram accounts.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN ON-AIR JOURNALISTS' GENDERED PERFORMANCES ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram has grown and evolved in the social media industry, making it one of the most-used platforms. As technology has in the past, Instagram has enhanced our society by being an outlet to post visual content that can be seen by others (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 10). People from different backgrounds use this platform for their own needs. Although there are benefits to having an outlet to express the self in an artistic way, users may also influence the gender norms and gender performances on Instagram.

Since gender is performative (Lorber, 2018), it is understandable that women on-air journalists would have a gendered identity performance on their professional Instagram accounts. Women have had the pressure to look and act a certain way in the public eye before social media was created. "The concern for the societal pressures on young women is not a new dilemma" (Low and Sharrard, 1999, p. 314). On-air women journalists have had a history of performing gender norms (Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, pp. 442-444) since the time when audiences were able to see the journalists on television (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). Now with a visual social platform culture that has been enhanced by Instagram, self-objectivism is common due to the need of acknowledgment or having positive commentary on the user's profile (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018). By observing other attractive individuals receiving attention (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018), they can reinforce the cultural standards of beauty on this platform. Thus, gender expectations for on-air women journalists were not created through Instagram, rather they were enhanced by showing the self-brand of a woman on-air journalist on their professional accounts and mixing in personal content, which helps create their online identity.

The textual analysis examines how women present their identities on Instagram. Based on Butler's (1988) understanding of gender performances, looking at the presentation of the body, including fashion and context of the post, is a way to analyze signifiers of gender and negotiations of professional and personal identity performance. Focusing on multiple posts, as well as Instagram stories, by eight women journalists, the themes that are presented include: *a visual platform*, *the presentation of a woman*, and *the blurred lines of professional and personal posts*.

Instagram: A Visual Platform

There are different aspects to Instagram, the profile, stories, discovery section, messaging, and more, but the two focused on this research are the profiles of women journalists and their stories. In August 2016, Instagram developed a new aspect to their platform (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 26), similar to Snapchat–Instagram stories. When using the platform, these appear at the top of the user's home feed with different profile pictures of users they are following (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 26). This tool is used by many to post more everyday life content since they disappear within twenty-four hours of posting. Stories have transformed how people use their Instagram accounts, since they do not have to be in a landscape style, but in a more realistic, fast, and mobile preference. Posting silly photos and selfies on their story, to having interactive content, like using polls, letting followers ask questions, or putting music on story posts have become features for users to post more relatable content, rather than polished photos (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 26-27 & 59). Therefore, the addition of stories has allowed Instagram to combine two platforms in one.

Since March of 2020, some journalists changed how they used their stories. It was no longer just posting selfies at the desk, or pictures of them working on their on-air stories, but a

handful of women journalists that I monitored used stories to post incoming information about COVID-19 cases. From the start of the pandemic, information was being thrown on social media left and right for their audience to be aware. With new information constantly arising and new findings being presented, journalists found a way to share information through Instagram that helped all generations that use the platform. Waiting until the newscast was not enough for some audience members.

J3 posted a screenshot of all the direct messages she was receiving relating to the statistics of COVID cases in her local market. J3 started posting photos of the board from the newsroom of how her station was keeping track of COVID cases and deaths. She would not really explain anything; rather, just show the statistics and let her followers know that she would explain that night on the 6 p.m. newscast. Each time new information would show, she would post a new photo with a time and date stamp. Over time, more journalists from the same station did the same to show their audience this information. After two weeks, J3 mentioned in her story that because she had a large request for information on COVID cases in her market, she would start publishing charts on her stories daily. This led to more work, since the number of cases were changing by the hour. J3 previously would not really promote her stories or station before March of 2020. During the months of December to February, J3 would post about her vacation, holidays, and fun weekend things she did with her family on her professional Instagram account. This could mean two things, either her station noticed her large following and used this as a way for her to promote the station's newscasts since more people were at home and anxious about the pandemic, or J3 realized that there was a need that must be met and as a journalist her role is to inform the public and present information. As for the other journalists, doing similar work could also mean that the station told others to follow her lead, or

they noticed that more followers were interacting with J3 and also wanted that for their professional accounts. The identity of J3 transformed from just focusing on her mom life and sometimes working, to posting news on her stories that she would create herself on Instagram and posting them for followers to receive their news on a different platform.

The Presentation of a Woman

As referenced in the beginning of chapter 1, coming across the video of the Oregon anchor that had to address the high-waisted pants issue is a reminder of the pressures of "looking more like a woman" and having to show a feminine persona on air and on social media. The response of the anchor was a mixture of confusion and anger since a viewer had the audacity to tell her how she needed to look to be an on-air journalist. According to the viewer, he was offended that she wore pants on television and not dresses and skirts like other women on-air journalists did. Although she was dressed professionally and doing her job by anchoring the newscast on the weekends, the viewer felt the need to call her out on social media telling her that her pants were "ugly" and "distracting" (2019). Women on-air journalists encounter the stereotypes of presenting as feminine woman quite often. The presentation consists of gender expectations that one must express because they are a woman according to society. "Because women have been hired and rewarded for their adherence to feminine stereotypes, it is likely that the audience share these sorts of expectations and judgments," (Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, p. 443). This creates a misconception that in order to be a woman on-air journalist, one is expected to present themselves in a feminine way (Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, pp. 442-444).

Challenging the stereotypes of women, this study's purpose is to focus on how women do not have to be feminine just because of their gender. Sadly, based on the history of broadcast

news, being feminine is not just a standard of the station, but also of the audience, and it is pressured on intelligent women journalists (Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, p. 443) through the form of their outer appearance. Since the start of broadcast news and still today, the appearance of women on-air is an important aspect of the job. Therefore, when looking at the professional Instagram accounts of on-air journalists, the theme of femininity was visually presented in most of the on-air journalists, although through different perspectives. For example, mom life, and the self-care hashtag is used in many photos across the platform including those of professional Instagram accounts. Therefore, the theme of femininity in this chapter focuses on the content that is presented on professional journalists' accounts and how the body is presented, the clothing that the on-air journalists are wearing, and what is being shown in their posts.

Instagram stories have been used primarily for more everyday types of content, including showing an outfit of the day. J7 started a routine in September of 2019 to post every day on her story with a different song as she walks in the studio. At the station where she currently works, there is a large mirror when you first walk in to make sure that the anchors look presentable for their show. Each day that J7 walked in five minutes before air time, she would spend a few seconds walking towards the mirror and striking a pose, then continuing to walk towards the desk. Some days she would include the timestamp on her video showing that she was a little late or early. She would also sometimes make a comment on her outfit if something was different. For example, she would normally wear dresses, but when she wore pants, she would make sure to acknowledge that when striking her pose in the mirror. She would tell her followers that it was a pant-type of day or that all her dresses were dirty and she needed to do laundry. It came across as she was ashamed to wear pants, even though what she was wearing

was professional clothing. Granted, J7 is an experienced anchor, and clothing for women on-air talent has had a strict code for women more than men since the 1970s and 1980s (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). Appearance was emphasized more than reporting for women during this era for television journalists (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019). Today, not much has changed when it comes to strict dress codes and gender expectations for women on-air journalists. Therefore, J7 acknowledges that she was wearing pants instead of a tight colorful dress, which could be a defense strategy in anticipation of negative feedback. The same applied if she wears flats or sandals instead of high heels. She included an explanation when wearing something different than her normal and added a relatable phrase like "it is just that type of day" (2017). These two examples reflect the gender expectations of women on-air journalist. When pushing the norm, an excuse is provided that could be a defense mechanism or internal guilt of drifting from the misogynistic patriarchal perspective of extreme that are pressured towards women in the news industry by men in upper management. Thus, since J7 was wearing something not extremely feminine and different for on-air journalists in her market, her explanation would help her place herself in a gender status (Lorber, 2018).

In some professional profiles, women on-air journalists focused more on the personal aspect rather than the station. Promoting a self-brand of who they are as a journalist is common in the profiles used for this study. Showing new or favorite outfits was common by posting mirror selfies or photos taken of them that featured their entire outfits. Most of the outfits that were Insta-worthy, according to the likes and comments expressed, were tight outfits that objectified certain body parts. Others were photos in pants that were skin-tight and tucked in shirts to show that they were back in fashion. Since Instagram is mostly used by a younger demographic, compared to other social networks (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018, p. 312), it

would make sense that journalists try to fit in by wearing similar styles that their younger audience would most likely be wearing. Both of these styles showed the body in a voluptuous way. Although the anchors are not directly showing certain features, they use clothing that is looked upon as professional from length size, but yet tight enough to show the body in an appeal to the male gaze. Some scholars have even argued that the body and attractiveness of the women is for the pleasure of viewers (Berger, 1972; Bordo, 1993; Mulvey, 1975; Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018). Therefore, the photos that were showing the body in an objectifying look may be a social expectation of women on-air journalists. This expectation may cause them to have content on their professional Instagram profile that highlights their body and contains bright colors to maintain their feminine persona. The body and its presentation have been around since before Instagram, but it is now more common with the social visual platform.

Another common theme was posting in groups. Lee Humphreys (2018) explains that women tend to take photos in groups more than men. According to Humphreys, this is a common form before the digital age. Examples of this would be going out to lunch in groups, going to the powder room together, and having social gatherings. The lack of independence goes back to women needing people with them (Humphreys, 2018) or needing a husband to protect them (Humphreys, 2018). Before the first wave a feminism, women were not treated as individuals (Carter & Steiner, 2004). Today, it may be common for women to have photos alone, but it has been feminized such as the selfie by having certain angles to make the subject look appealing and feminine (Humphreys, 2018). While looking at J5 and J6 professional Instagram posts, there were posts of the women with coworkers, family members, or friends in the majority of the photos. There was usually another subject in the photo unless they were

trying to show off their clothing. Both of which are examples of femininity because they show that women are social (Humphreys, 2018) and graceful, not authoritative and powerful which would contradict the patriarchy. Thus, the use of Instagram has influenced femininity for on-air women journalists since most women continue to follow the same gender norms that have been put into place since before social media (Humphreys, 2018).

<div align="center">The Blurred Lines of Personal and Professional</div>

The personal and professional posts on the journalists' accounts presents an overarching theme of blurring the lines of personal and professional content on a professional Instagram profile. For microcelebrities and digital influencers, this is a common theme seen on Instagram since it is a way to come off as a relatable person, but also doing their professional work (Marwick, 2015, pp. 195). There were some posts that blurred the lines of personal and professional, meaning they were either taken at the station, but were just photos of their everyday work life, or there were posts of being out at a restaurant or bar with coworkers who were their friends. These posts mostly consisted of being silly together at work, having photos with co-workers at the station, but not actually working, and having behind-the-scenes photos or video of a promotional video.

By posting this content on their Instagram accounts, they are "balancing their individual and organizational identity in online spaces, as well as implications for professional reputation and image," (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019, p. 149). In J4 and J6 professional Instagram accounts, they posted photos where they were at the anchor desk and with co-workers in their photos. J4 posted a photo that expressed how fun it is to work with great friends. The posts were of her and her co-anchors together being silly in between the break of the newscasts. This can blur the lines of professional and personal, since they are in their place of work but taking a

break and showing the viewers that they can have fun at work. Calling her co-workers her friends also blurs the lines because there is another photo of them at someone's house having a casual hangout. Since they spend most of their days or nights together, it makes sense that friendships develop, as in any company, but it goes back to mixing both professional and personal on a professional Instagram account. J2 also presented a few similar photos, but instead of co-workers, her child is with her at work. Although they are not coworkers, J2 provided both her personal and professional life in one photo by having her child sit on her anchor desk at her station. As for professional content, J2 posted informing her followers of upcoming promotional videos for the station. These posts consisted of multiple candid photos on set, but the last one is with her eleven-year-old daughter, whom she gives credit for taking the photos. She captions this, "my little photographer." Based on past posts, the followers already know that this is her daughter. Posting about her kids is normal on J2's professional Instagram account that is public. She also has a first day of school photo where both of her children are wearing their school polo shirts with the name and city of the school. It may be understandable for that photo to be posted on her personal Instagram account that is private and only for family and friends, but considering the number of followers, it could be a risk to show her followers this amount of information because of the school polos that give information of where are children are during school.

Therefore, self-branding is shown on their professional accounts and used to "emphasizes two categories: self-promotion at work (e.g., images from the set or behind the scenes) and of their personal life (e.g., families, homes, personal interests or hobbies, travel)" (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019, p. 150). Some of the content provided on their professional accounts shows the followers an insight of their own lives outside of the work environment. Although this

may be a way to connect with their audience, some content might be questionable to present in a public account for an influencer with a large following.

#WorkingFromHome

A form of blurring the lines from professional and personal is through the Instagram stories during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because more on-air journalists started working from home, this changed the look on broadcast television since the viewer would no longer see two anchors next to each other on a desk at a studio; rather, there might be one person at the desk and the other going live from home. This not only changed how society viewed anchors on broadcast television, but also on social media. More Instagram story posts started being about working from home and what that looked like for on-air journalists. J7, J3, J4, and J5 all would post daily sitting in their living rooms and show the behind-the-scenes of how they would make their videos look good, even from home. J7 would post each day and if the station would give her something new like a monitor, teleprompter, camera, or lights, she would describe it in her story and would tell people that she may look different or sound different because of the technology she was given. J7 made her Instagram story feel like the viewer was in her home with her during the at-home production. J4 would do a live shot minutes before going on air showing her viewers what she was doing minutes before being on air, like drinking coffee, doing mic checks, or talking on the phone with her producers, listening for her cue to be ready. Showing these different work conditions made the journalists document how their professional roles changed in midst of a pandemic. Doing so created a space for them to share these changes on their professional Instagram with their followers as if they were on a phone call telling their friend how their job changed overnight. This blurred the lines from professional and personal since the story was about the career of being a journalist, but yet showed more behind the

scenes or personal things that were in their homes. J5 would do a poll on her story hours before for followers to pick which plant she should have in her background while she was live on broadcast television. Each day she would show the results and then show a screenshot of her anchoring on television with the plant that won that morning.

#TheMomLife

      While looking at the posts, I noticed several of the on-air journalists would post about their families. Three of the journalists even had the information that they were a mom in their Instagram bio. There were photos that had their kids dressed up in their school uniform or matching with their mom. There was one journalist that had a photo of her daughter with her during promotional shoots and at the anchor desk. Having photos of the family is an example that Humphreys (2018) explains as media accounting. This is the accountability of having to keep up with the family history. Before the digital society, the role of a woman was to keep photographs of the family to preserve their family history. It was more common for women to scrapbook and show friends and family the photos during social gathering (Humphreys, 2018). Today this concept of women sharing about their family (Humphreys, 2018) is still demonstrated in today's social media.

      Although this is common, there has been an increase of women on-air journalists showing their family on their professional Instagram accounts.

      When looking at J4's professional Instagram, she had more photos of her with her family on her account than photos of her work. The way she organized her professional Instagram was more interesting than other on-air journalists. She would use the feature of having Instagram stories as a way to share her breaking news and information of the upcoming newscasts, which would automatically delete in 24 hours. For her posts, which would stay on her Instagram

longer or until she wanted, she used mostly photos of her and her mom life. The content that she would provide in her posts were photos of her and her daughter having matching outfits for going out for brunch. She posted a few with her younger son in them, but they would usually include her husband with her. One can assume that this could be based on the fact that the son is younger and maybe J4 does not want him on her social platform as much as her older daughter. It could also be because if they are all together, it usually means that the father is also there.

Another assumption based on the professional Instagram account of J4 having so many "mom life" photos is due to the recent announcement that she is no longer doing the evening newscast since she wants to spend more time with her family. After going through her history of posts, it went from focusing on her and her career to her family and children. The change of her posts could be since she wants to transition her self-brand, starting with her professional accounts. The self-brand is how many microcelebrities and digital influencers present themselves on their social platforms (Marwick, 2015). If this is the reason that J4 has decided to transition her account from showing more of her mom life rather than her career, it could be for her followers to transition with her in this change. Another reason could be that she is trying to connect more with a certain audience. As Marwick (2015) explains in her book *Status Update*, digital influencers want to connect with their followers on social platforms, so they feel that they are more than just followers, but they are friends. Greer and Ferguson also explain the connection "with the on-air personality as if he or she were a friend who is part of a social life that includes relationships with actual friends," (Greer & Ferguson, 2011, p. 148).

#BlackLivesMatter

In May 2020 George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis. At this point, the U.S. was still struggling with the pandemic and social media became a source to

spread awareness and organize protests to arrest the officers responsible for the death of George Floyd. At the start, the women journalists that I analyzed would only post the articles published by their station. One of the journalists that I analyzed that was a black female journalists would also only post videos of the protests and of the local police standing and watching the protesters. She would promote the station's on-air stories that would air that night on television. She kept only sharing what she considered newsworthy information about the topic, but not her opinions or acknowledging that what was happening to the black community was not okay. Around June 2020, the same on-air journalists put a video of her talking about how the protest and the murder of George Floyd affected her. She started off saying that this was coming from her personally, not from the station and began to share her thoughts. This journalist is one of the few African American on-air journalists at her local station. While sharing her thoughts with tears, she also shared experiences she had faced involving racism. During her video, she kept apologizing for crying if a tear came out. At the end, she apologized for being emotional and sensitive, but said that she wanted to be honest with her followers. This blurred the lines from professional and personal since she shared personal childhood stories about her experience with racism on her professional Instagram account. Combining her professional and personal insights on social media provided an outlet for followers to know more about the journalist by presenting her personal thoughts and opinions to the situation. Apologizing every time, she made it seem like crying is a weakness or the pressure that women have to not be emotional in public (Pain & Chen, 2018). Crying about a hard topic and having to apologize every time a tear comes out contributes to the gender expectation of women having to keep it together (Pain & Chen, 2018), even during difficult times.

#Self-care

The theme of the self-care was shown throughout all the on-air journalists' professional Instagram accounts. The account that I want to focus on is J1 and her posts that resemble self-improvement and self-care. This on-air journalist has posts revolving around her daily workouts and showing the progress that she makes each day. In her bio, she says that she regularly attends a 5 a.m. workout class. In a way, she is showing that women can do it all, be a mother, have a career, and have the perfect body. She is blurring the lines of personal and professional identities by sharing with her audience about her family and workout routine and also expressing that she manages her personal lifestyle and maintains a career. By doing so she is trying to prove a false binary since no one is really saying a woman has to either be a mom or be in a career. Her posts include selfies of her at the gym with her trainer, being on at the cycle bar, and dieting and eating healthy meals. Her account looks more like a workout digital influencer account than a journalist's account. After some research about this journalist, I found that along with working with the station on multiple stories, she mostly focuses on the health stories. On the evening newscast where she anchors, there is a block dedicated to health. When they have health stories it can range from obesity to sickness and flu. The health block does not always focus on weight and image, but at times does contain that content. Knowing this, it would make sense that she would promote her healthy lifestyle on her professional Instagram account since this seems to be her self-brand (Greer & Ferguson, 2011, p.148). Even though this is part of her self-brand, it can cause more pressure on other women and how digital society expects them to look. This ties to the body and women's bodies are to be shaped in order to look attractive, according to how the industry has shown the public (Bock, Chacón, Jung, Sturm, & Figueroa, 2018, pp. 443). To say the least, J1 is a naturally skinny person based on her old

photos of when she was a teenager and though there is nothing wrong with wanting to self-improve, but constantly sharing about her workouts and body progress on her professional journalist Instagram account can influence the need to be small and petite to other women who might not have the same body type (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000). Because she is showing this to her followers, they are constantly consuming this content of needing to be a certain way (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000) (Marwick & boyd, 2010), hence the name influencer in the term digital influencer (Marwick, 2015).

When looking at the Instagram stories of the women on-air journalists, another example of self-care content was posting about getting pedicures. J4, J6, J8 each posted once a week their new nails or a photo of them sitting with their feet in the tub getting ready for a pedicure. Each time that J4 would post this, she would mention that it was needed time to relax since her kids and husband were at home playing games. She would tell her followers that being a mom and a journalist was exhausting sometimes and she needed to do some self-care time. J6 posted a few times about getting her nails done with her daughter and letting her son and husband spend quality time without them. This photo insinuates that only women should get their nails done and men have to do their own thing, despite that most nail salons provides service to anyone's nails despite their gender identity. J8 posted on 4 occasions that she was getting her nails done with her sister or friends and would selfie with them while getting their nails done. Group photos tie back to Humphreys' (2018) explanation how women lack independence, thus having to pose in groups and even if there are selfies on social media (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020), they are considered content that is more personal (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020), whereas a strong professional women alone is not appropriate for the misogynistic patriarchy that own the networks. As mentioned before, women's appearance has always been

important in the broadcast industry (Pain & Chen, 2018). A few times, J8 would have to mention in her story that her nails had to be simple and with a color that would look well with light color dresses. Despite whoever she would go with and whether they were able to get a design or pick a strong color, because her hands would show when holding a mic on air, she could only get certain colors for her manicure. These examples show gender expectations of women on-air journalists having to look camera-ready and sharing this information with their Instagram followers. They also show how much labor, energy, and money the women put in to look feminine.

The textual analysis over the professional Instagram accounts of on-air journalists shows common themes being used as a digital influencer and the pressure of having gender expectations on their accounts. Examples of this would be professional and personal posts that the journalists have on their Instagram accounts, the feminine content, and the explanations they would share if their content pushed against femininity. Having both professional and personal posts is a way to connect to the audience, according to Marwick (2015). Doing so adds to the pressure of having to maintain their professional identity on their Instagram accounts. Thus, it adds another responsibility to their job. It adds emotional and physical labor that does not end when they leave the office. Aside from that, it is also another platform where gender norms continue to be presented through their professional identities on their social platforms. Thus, on-air journalists have evolved from just working at the station to being digital influencers, which would be like doing two jobs under one title, similar to how Instagram is now two platforms under one.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SIX WOMEN ON-AIR JOURNALISTS

During a tour of KXAS, I remember seeing a large board that had different names on one side and numbers on the other in the main news conference table. When sitting there, the tour guide told students that the space we were sitting in was the news conference table that was used all throughout the day for employees to brainstorm a plan for each newscast that day. It was located in the middle of the news room. As he told everyone to look around and notice that it was an open space without doors or windows, he explained that in case an employee had to sit at their own desk to work on some last-minute edits, they were still able to hear the news meeting room from their seat. When it was time for questions, one of my classmates asked about the board of names that was by the big television near the head of the table. The tour guide explained that the board was a ranking of all the on-air journalists at KXAS based on their followers from their professional social media. The top ranked was the person with the most followers in all accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. He mentioned that they try to update the board to help the on-air journalists stay motivated to use their social media with friendly competition with their own co-workers. This sparked curiosity as to how much emphasis is expected for an on-air journalist to be present online and gain loyal followers as well as being a journalist and working to find information to present in the newscast.

When interviewing the six women on-air journalists that are currently working throughout the United States, I found that this was a common strategy used by different news stations. Some of the journalists explained it was similar to KXAS, where it was a ranking of only the on-air journalists in their station. Others mentioned that it was their corporate office giving them their rankings from all of the on-air journalists that worked for that specific

corporation throughout the U.S. This chapter has four main themes, emotional and physical labor, managing surveillance, dealing with gender expectations, and handling negotiations with news experience, all of which were analyzed after conducting the interviews.

## Emotional and Physical labor

Maintaining a professional Instagram, alongside meeting the daily work expectations, had most journalists explaining how their online presence was second nature to them because they love using Instagram. On the other hand, some shared how this added stress to their jobs and how they disliked having to keep up a persona online. During the interviews, Journalist 3 shared that her professional Instagram, along with her other social media accounts, caused a lot of stress from the physical and emotional labor. "I do not know why our company thinks it is a good idea to make something even more stressful by adding another fulltime job on top of the work we already do." (Journalist 3, 2020). Journalist 3 was working for a medium market in California as a reporter and mentioned the rush of covering stories, but also making sure to post behind-the-scenes on her Instagram during the work day. Aside from just doing her job as a reporter, she mentioned that her station also had mandatory meetings monthly about how to strategize their social media accounts.

> The station provides different times throughout the week for the meetings in case one day is more hectic, but there have been times when I have had to join in when it was outside of my shift because that week was very busy for me. I understand that they want us to get better and have a bigger presence on our social media but sometimes I wish my managers would know that there are boundaries for work life balance, and we can't do everything perfectly. (Journalist 3, 2020)

Journalist 3 had worked in a few other markets before and did mention that although it was a struggle, it was something she would have to get used to because she loved being a reporter. She explained that this was the career she always wanted to do and took pride in her work, but mentioned that at times she and her co-workers did find themselves feeling burned out more

because of the new social media policies that their company installed. Some of these policies included having to post at least three times per shift on all of their major accounts, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. With meeting the deadlines for her news station and making sure to be present on her professional accounts, Journalist 3 expressed the amount of labor being put on journalists today has increased because of the online presence.

Having an online presence is more than just posting a few times a day (Marwick, 2015), it is about having an audience and keeping them loyal to you in order to maintain followers (Marvroudis, 2018). It is thinking through the content that is posted and how it fits toward one's brand (Marwick, 2015). Although Journalist 2 and 5 enjoyed using social media and did not mind posting on their Instagram, all the journalists did mention having to check the posts to make sure they were worth sharing. When it came to fashion, some of the journalists mentioned that they had to wear makeup in their photos because they did not feel comfortable sharing a photo without it. "I cannot post a photo without makeup unless I use a strong filter for Instagram because I feel unprofessional," (Journalist 4, 2020). When asking why, journalist 4 responded with it being a personal insecurity and did not know how other journalists could just do it.

> My professional Instagram is open to the public, so anyone has access to comment and I have been around in the industry for a while. I have seen the mean comments people leave others on their social media and I just do not want to deal with it. I do not give people the opportunity to pick at me. If that means having to spend extra time to put some makeup on or edit the photo, then I will. Who wants to come home to mean comments and messages after a long day of work? (Journalist 4, 2020)

The emotional toll that that adds to their work is provided by having to handle negative feedback from either their station or followers. Fame comes with labor (Mavroudis, 2018) and that can include emotional labor when the goal is trying to keep them as followers, (Marwick, 2015) or trying to increase on-air viewers by promoting news stories on social media (Greer & Ferguson, 2011).

A majority of the participants expressed that the emotional labor came from thinking through the presentation of the self, and the reaction of their followers. Journalist 6 said since women have a stricter dress code for television then men, it would be normal for women journalists to feel more cautious of what they post on their Instagram. Some journalists shared that they would never post something they would not want their boss to see them wearing, while others said that they wanted to be authentic with their posts. Journalist 5 shared that she does not put as much thought in her posts because she wants her followers to know who she truly is inside and outside of work. She views her Instagram as a place where her followers get to connect with her as a person. "I like having a space where I can be myself and for others to see that I am not just a robot but an actual person" (Journalist 5, 2020).

When women were first able to become on-air journalists, the main focus was not the information they shared, but rather the way they presented themselves (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019), especially their looks. With a visual media platform like Instagram, the presentation shown in the content is focused more than the context that the post may have. For example, Journalist 5 presents a photo of her at the station where she is on-set standing next to a television screen with a graphic logo of a sports team. Most comments focused the presentation of what was on her body, rather than the graphic that took most of the screen. The post talked about how she was happy the team did well, yet the reactions she received did not focus on the logo, but the journalist. Journalist 2 posted a post with just a logo of a sports team without her in it and there were many followers reacting compared to Journalists 5. The reaction of journalists 5 could be based on the followers that each have, or based on the algorithms of Instagram (Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin, 2020) and depend on who and how many people were reached. Another reason could also be the fact that one post had the person in the photo whereas, the other only

had the logo. When asked if it was common to get more of a reaction on Instagram when they were in the photo versus when they were not, Journalists 2 shared that it was common. "I do not just want to be eye candy, I am putting effort and work into trying to share information with my followers but if I am in the post all they focus on is my outfit or me" (Journalist 2, 2020). Therefore, having to think through what to post and people's reaction adds extra labor to an on-air journalist.

<div align="center">Managing Surveillance</div>

Some stations conduct meetings and discussions with their on-air journalists on how to maintain their online presenc,e which would be an example of how the station manages the surveillance of the journalists' Instagram. "The meetings include social media strategies, like using hashtags and when it is better to post" (Journalist 1, 2020). Depending on the station, the meetings are not just for training but also to evaluate how the journalists are maintaining their professional Instagrams (Personal Interviews, Journalists 1, 2, 5, and 6). The journalists explained that the meetings would sometimes come from corporate as training on how to gain followers or ethical ways to use social media. "If it is not a training, it is sometimes an email sent to us on how to manage our professional Instagram," (Journalist 4, 2020). Their professional Instagrams are public, and some have their social media handle next to their name on a lower-third graphic that is shown when they are on-air (Journalist 5 and 6, 2020). Since this is a form of cross promotion, promoting one platform on a different one (Marwick, 2015), news stations manage surveilling the professional Instagram accounts by observing that the content resonates with their brand.

> My station told me when I was hired that if I wanted my handle to appear on screen when I am on air, I had to get my account verified and I had to give my login information to the digital team so they could also post on my social media or check on it if they needed to.

They normally do not do anything to my Instagram but sometimes they will post on my Facebook if I am not working and there is breaking news. (Journalist 3, 2020)

This was common for all the journalists interviewed. Their stations were able to login into their professional accounts and could do so without asking. A few of the journalists mentioned that it was part of their contract when being hired, whereas others said that it was highly recommended so that the digital team could help maintain the different social platforms (Journalists, 2, 3, and 5). Since their credentials were shared, changing them would be limited depending on the contract agreed upon. Either the journalists had to make a new professional account for each job in their career or have a professional account that was able to be interchangeable depending on where they were working. If their contract allowed for them to have full access to the account, only then would they be able to leave the station with their current social media accounts.

That is why I have two accounts. I had a friend that turned her personal account into her professional and signed her contract with a station that said they would own her account. She did not think that after she had left, they would still keep it. When she went to a different market, they continued to post on her account because she had a large following and wanted the viewers to stay with their channel. I thought that is a bit excessive. (Journalist 1, 2020)

It was also common for to hear in the interviews that they had co-workers follow them from their station, and even though some were friends, they also knew that some were there to make sure what they were posting was appropriate. "I have never been told to take anything off, but I have seen coworkers be told by others to be careful of what they post" (Journalist 1, 2020). By having people monitor their professional Instagram, and letting the station own the credentials to log in, it makes the Instagram not entirely owned by the on-air journalist. Therefore, creating a big brother type of surveillance for the journalists is a factor to keep in mind when using their professional Instagram. Depending on the station, the on-air journalist

might feel more compelled to use their social media more because of the surveillance of their accounts. Therefore, surveillance also causes emotional and physical labor for the journalist, because not only do they need to maintain a presence, but one that abides with the brand.

## Dealing with Gender Expectations

In regarding to gender expectations, some journalists felt like they had to be presented as a hyper feminine woman. Meaning, they would need to have things like being in groups with other women to show they were social and friendly. If they were alone in a post, they would share their outfits or do Instagram challenges to connect with other followers Regarding their clothing, the women shared that it had to be something they felt confident in and that their followers would like. "I make sure it makes my body type look good, but also classy because I want to be perceived serious even while doing something as an outfit of the day post" (Journalist 6, 2020). Yet the fact that the journalist had the pressure of participating in showing off their outfit on a visual platform was a form for them to act feminine just like how they were pressured on television and given light stories compared to their men colleagues (Pain & Chen, 2018). Because of the gender expectations by management, it is difficult for women journalists to challenge the expectations especially if it has been repeated to them so much that the expectations have become internal thinking.

Women fashion is something shared on Instagram, it is a form to connect with their followers, but some of the journalists shared that they not only had to share the outfit but also have a flattering pose. Although their motives may be to connect with their followers, or to simply show off an outfit, it also provides an opportunity to objectify them by their followers. "I hate the sexist comments, especially when I share an outfit of the day," (Journalist 1, 2020). Because of the gender expectations that are put on them, by either their station or by their

followers, creates a pressured space of being feminine even if one is not because of the patriarchal views that are from men in power at the stations.

Some of the journalists shared that their professional Instagram was like a different side of them. "I have never been the girly girl and I am also very shy, but I love being an anchor and that means pretending to be an extrovert sometimes. It also means pretending to be super feminine" (Journalists 4, 2020). Having a persona was common for most of the journalists that were interviewed because of what the followers expected but also the policy and guidelines that were presented to the women from their station.

> When you walk into the dressing room at the station there is dress code on the back of the door for the journalists. It makes me mad each time because the one for my male co-workers is like only a page and the women it is almost 5 pages. But that is the news industry for you, it is normal for the women to have stricter dress code rules then men and it is the same for social media in regards of clothing. (Journalist 4, 2020).

Journalist 4 mentioned that neckline guidelines were strict for her station as well as the sleeve lengths, but for social media her station was more flexible with those rules. According to the journalists, they were able to post in clothing they felt comfortable in. Depending on the station, swimsuits and clothing that was considered provocative would need to have a meaning as to posting on the professional Instagram. For example, if an on-air journalist was on vacation, they were able to post about it because it let the viewers know why she would not be on television, and it was within context. Although they were able to posts about their whereabouts, journalists 4, 6, and 1 all mentioned that they did not like to post where they were exactly until they were no longer at that specific location. "It is more for safety, you never know who is looking and what their intentions are" (Journalist 6, 2020).

Sharing posts in clothing that would not be on-air attire was normal for a few of the journalists, but most of the interviews did bring up the comment of gender expectations when it

came to what was considered provocative for their station's standards. Comparing to her male co-workers, Journalist 5 did not like that she had to have an explanation for wearing a crop top when that is normal to her in the summer but yet her male co-workers can wear muscle shirts without any explanation on their professional Instagram accounts. The double standard between women and men are patriarchal views that are brought to them by their station. The constant pressure of maintaining the brand on their social media (Pain & Chen, 2018) is really just continuing misogynistic patriarchy views. The gender expectations put on women on-air journalists is not unusual, since media has contributed to reproduction of sexist norms and values (Carter & Steiner, 2004), especially in the presentation of what a woman should look like according to the standards of upper management. Women are treated unequally and expected to maintain a certain image unless there is an explanation for them to be outside of the gender expectations that is put on them by different people, including the station they work in A news station has control over the appearance of the women on-air journalists while on television. The networks cover up their patriarchal values by suggesting that it is for the benefit of fitting the brand of the station (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019) and therefore, making women fit into the small box that management creates for them.

If it is considered fitting the brand, why is it more important to fit a brand then to hide the actual personality of a journalist? When looking at the Instagram accounts, some look like they are showing who they truly are and what their life is like outside of work as well as inside. But after interviewing the sample of journalists, having a different persona presented was common for women journalists to show on their professional Instagram accounts. It is not about them, but about what attracts the followers and what their audience wants. If the journalist continues to do this, who breaks the cycle of gender expectations for women journalists? Journalists perform the

gender expectations because it has been put on them for years (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000). With gender expectations constantly required, it becomes second nature to them and hard to break from. As an ongoing problem, the appearance and beauty by the standards (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000) of those pressuring the expectations on the journalists continues if there is not a hold on who truly holds agency of the professional Instagram. "I do not like to constantly show off I am into feminine things, sometimes I want to show my tomboy side, but I can't do that, it is too risky" (Journalist 3, 2020). In regards of showing masculinity for women, it has to be in moderation. According to some of the journalists, it is encouraged to keep up with their body and trying to do what they can to be healthy. It is applauded to show the cycling class, or yoga class they attend to show the community they are also taking part of these activities. These activities are not wrong to do, but it is rare to see a women journalist engaging in "masculine" activities such as a boxing class or power lifting. It they are showing that side it is only a few posts, or it is on their stories which delete after 24 hours.

> I have always been into intense workouts since I was young, it brings a rush when I go to the gym and I go to the section where all the body builders are, and I am over there doing weights trying to get stronger. I have been told to not post much of my weight lifting on my Instagram because it is too different from the other women journalists. I also take part of Zumba and Yoga classes but when I am having a stressful week, I need intense workouts that involve power lifting. I went around the not posting by just posting on my story every week when I am at the gym. It was hard at first, but after a while, I started getting support from followers and even gained some that really support women gym sharks. I later found out that some of my women co-workers also like to power lift but do not post about it because of fear from getting in trouble. It is not ok, if I am using this platform for people to know me, then why not actually post things that I do? My followers should know who I am, not what others want me to be. There is a line, and what I do outside of my work hours are my choice, not theirs. (Journalist 6, 2020)

Having a persona on Instagram can either be what the station wants, or it can be something that the journalist wants others to see. When interviewing participants about this specific topic, some of the women were upset about not being able to share things they wanted

because they did not fit their brand. Others shared that they created a different persona because that was their choice. They did not want people to truly know them because of fear of putting themselves or their family at risk from strangers. "With social media, you never know who is watching, I have been around to know that it is not always safe to post everything about yourself" (Journalist 1, 2020). While some may choose to have a different persona on Instagram, it is still within the standards of hyper femininity. Having the pressure of either the audience or the news stations, on-air journalists have an image to maintain on their professional Instagram including the gender expectations that are pressured on them. The pressure is from many years of misogynistic patriarchy views from management and enforcing their perspectives and calling that part of their brand for the station.

Handling Negotiations with News Experience

In any industry, negotiating terms of a contract can be difficult for newer employees that are starting out in their field. With having the confidence, and the skills to back up their argument, it comes to no surprise that some on-air journalists are able to negotiate when it comes to social media and its standards. After interviewing all the journalists, it is clear that now when discussing an on-air position, social media is part of the conversation and contract of the journalists. This also includes renewing contracts for employees that have been at the station longer.

When interviewing Journalists 6, she explained how she now has three different Instagram accounts. Her personal one is private, only for close friends and family. A professional account that is public as an on-air journalist that dates back to the beginning of her career and follows through her journey of being a journalist. She also maintains a professional public Instagram account that is specifically focused for the station where she works. When asked about

why she had two professional accounts, she explained that her station wanted to control and take over the account that she had been working on for many years. "I have a lot of followers on that account and continue to grow, they tried to get me to let them take it over, but I did not accept" (Journalist 6, 2020). Since she had spent so much time and money on her professional account as a journalist, she was not going to give ownership to any station. "I put in a lot of work into that account, so for them to try to take over is not going to happen," (Journalist 6, 2020). She mentioned that she had to turn down jobs before because of this issue. Journalist 6 was able to negotiate with her current station by making a new professional account that focused around her being a journalist at their station. The news station would have the login information and have access to the account at all times. "I told them I would make a new one and they said that was fine, but I only do what is required of me on that account, and nothing extra," (Journalist 6, 2020). She explained that because the expectations that they have for women journalists are at times unreachable in an eight-hour shift, journalists should not be expected to also be digital influencers for the company. "If they want to be like me and be an influencer but on my terms, by all means do it, but do not make the station work for them for free" (Journalist 6, 2020). Journalists 6 noticed that other women in her field were nervous to negotiate their terms and some did not see the problem with it. She shared that a problem for women journalists is being overworked and underpaid. Therefore, when journalists are more comfortable with negotiations, there can be some flexibility, depending on the news station.

As for the younger journalists that were interviewed, a few did not see a problem with having social media requirements as part of their contract for being an on-air journalist. "It makes sense they want us to be present on social media, the way the younger generation receives their information is different and we need to stay relevant" (Journalist 3, 2020). Since they grew

up using social media, it was natural to them when to posting. They did not think so much about each post because they each had their own moral code of what was appropriate and what wasn't. If it was something that did not align with the brand, they would just delete it quickly or if they were hesitant, some would ask co-workers for their guidance. It also helped the younger journalists that they were not in major cities at the moment. Since they are new to the career, they are learning everything and know that mistakes occur. "My co-workers and news director know I recently graduated and know that I will make mistakes, so they try to give me the tools to prevent that or to help me when that happens and that includes social media" (Journalist 3, 2020). Because this is the start of their career, it is easier for the stations to make this a normal part of the job.

Younger journalists might not negotiate as much because having these expectations early in their career makes it a normal aspect of the role versus someone that has been in the industry for some time and learning new strategies. This can change the role of a journalist in years to come because the focus is not only on broadcast television, but also being a digital influencer online to maintain a presence on their social platforms. There could be less needed to negotiate as time passes because of the normal for on-air women journalists, especially if it is already difficult now that there are a few journalists pushing back from the expectation of being both a journalist and a digital influencer. The younger journalists also may hold back because of discomfort when it comes to negotiating job requirements. "I get nervous just talking to my news director because I really want to do well in my career and in order to do that, I need a job. They make sure we know that anyone is replaceable" (Journalist 2, 2020). With the fear of holding back in discussing terms of a contract and role responsibilities, younger journalists are not just afraid of negotiating, but encouraged to go beyond in order for career growth. Also, being

present on social media is a way for on-air journalists to move up in markets. Since the way

society receives information is changing, and with simple access to the internet (Silva & Frith,

2012), having an employee that is navigating social media well might benefit the news station.

> I have been recognized by so many people in my everyday routine, but not because of
> being an anchor, but because I am so active on my social media. Especially Instagram, I
> try to connect with my followers and have interactive stories where I can answer their
> questions. I love being able to have a strong presence. I honestly never felt like I was the
> best anchor and struggled a lot. I had a lot of colleagues and co-workers that were better
> than me leave the industry because they were not growing in their career or receiving
> offers. They were better journalists. Right now, the world doesn't just want journalists to
> tell them what is wrong with the world, that is what Facebook and Twitter is for. People
> want to feel like you are their friend and trust you as well as your information. Our time
> is changing and we either have to change with it or get left behind. I might not be the best
> anchor, but what helped me grow in my career was building up my social media presence
> because that is something I can bring to the table. Anyone can stand in front of a camera
> and read a teleprompter, but not a lot of people can actually have a community to trust
> them and want to connect with (Journalists 5, 2020).

A way to turn the agency away from management control, is by using Instagram as well as other

social platforms to the advantage of the journalists, not just the station. By adding a skill to the

table along with others, it may help the journalists in their career growth.

Therefore, after conducting the interviews, the themes of labor, surveillance, gender

expectations, and negotiating were common topics when doing the semi-structured interviews.

Each journalist helped by proving their input and being honest to share their experiences and

thoughts when it comes to Instagram and managing their role as an on-air journalist. The role of

an on-air journalist is constantly changing throughout time and with social media, and it is to be

expected that change affects the news industry. Although there is change that could either better

the presentation of information or make things worse, how news stations are handling the change

with employees is a factor to the working experience for on-air journalist. As some of the

journalists mentioned in their interviews, the emails and training provided for them can

overwhelm them because of their busy schedules but it can also be towards their benefit in

growth when it comes to being present on social media if that is what they choose to do. Forcing upon the need for on-air journalists to be digital influencers when the journalists does not have a desire to can cause issues emotionally and physically. As noticed with some of the interviews, it can create a wedge between management and the journalist. Not only is that about labor but also the gender expectations that are put on women on-air journalist. By creating social media policies to fit the brand, the outcome of the visual aesthetic is promoting that women journalists should be hyper feminine regardless of their true self. It creates a performative persona for those who do not align with hyper femininity and adds to the notion of what the ideal image is for a woman on-air journalist.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION - ON-AIR WOMEN JOURNALISTS AS DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

Regarding Instagram, on-air journalists have realized that merely posting content to promote their station is not enough. Their brand identity provides a pathway to gain a loyal fan base (Finneman, Thomas, & Jenkins, 2019), but doing so provides the opportunity of becoming a digital influencer. This thesis examined how the role of women journalists have changed alongside changes in the local TV news industry, because of Instagram. This thesis also argues that misogynistic patriarchy is enforced towards women journalists to be hyper feminine in both television and social media. As a visual platform, the followers are able to see more than what is shown to them on television when on-air journalists are presenting their information. The followers have a platform to see past the robot-like structured figure that is presented on television. After doing the research, I have concluded that what may be posted on Instagram might look like the journalist is presenting themselves but also their online persona that is performed on their professional Instagram. The performance is part of their self-brand that also aligns with the brand of the station which is created mostly by male general managers or network CEOs.

Each part of the different analysis research done for this thesis helped answer each of the research questions. The first research question – how on-air women journalists are using their Instagram accounts – a content analysis of women journalists' Instagram posts was fitting by looking at six different women journalist professional Instagram profiles to see what type of content they provided. Once that was shown, I moved to the second question – how they are performing their identities – a textual analysis of eight different Instagram accounts showed what the on-air women journalists were portraying to the public and how they were showing the

common themes. The third question – how they negotiate gendered expectations – the semi-structured interviews with on-air women journalists provided more context from the journalists themselves and how they navigate through the misogynistic patriarchy at their stations and in what ways does that play a role in their professional Instagram. Each research question helped argue that on-air women journalists are digital influencers with gendered expectations that are put on them by their station management and their audience. The significance of the research is not only for academia, but also for the industry to show the physical and emotional labor that is enforced in on-air women journalists.

Although journalists are not promoting skin care products or makeup on their professional accounts, they do occasionally promote their stations, which offer employment to the journalists and letting their audience know who they work for. In a way this is a form of sponsorship because having a presentation on social media is now part of their requirements of being an on-air journalist. This means that on-air journalists are also digital influencers, since according to the definition given by Marwick, they have a large following, engaging with their audience and are promoting their sponsor (Marwick, 2015), or in this case the station that the journalist works for. Not all on-air journalists may be considered digital influencers due to their low reach of followers, but the strive for them to get there can be pressured by their station management and the network.

The labor that is encouraged by the station is not valued, yet it should be since a digital influencer requires active attention on their Instagram accounts. On-air journalists now have two full-time jobs and are paid for one in a span of an eight-hour work day. Overworking and required to have extra skills to provide for the needs of a company that continue to have misogynistic patriarchy perspective of women representation creates emotional and physical

labor that is uncompensated. Aside from already doing their own job, having to maintain an online presence, and finding different strategies to engage their audience is also energy and time that is put outside or during work hours in order to maintain with new digital strategies and trends. With the news stations also providing trainings and meetings for the journalists, this also adds to their physical labor and creates the standard for how to manage their social media.

Women on-air journalists present the gendered expectations on television and social media. The expectations are pressured on them by the station that are mostly run by men and ignoring to issue of a misogynistic patriarchy work environment for women journalists. Similar to the journalist that received criticism over wearing pants on-air and was told to dress like a woman, on-air women journalists are given negative feedback online and by their own management. Although not as blunt as an online comment, station management enforce stricter regulations towards women on-air journalists' appearance over their male colleagues (Pain & Chen, 2018). Even though both genders are both educated individuals with careers, men are seen as strong intelligent people while women are to show their hyper-feminine side where the focus is on their bodies or family (Pain & Chen, 2018). Having both genders presented in opposite perspectives doing the same role in television news is unfair and takes away from their equality towards educated professional women. Not only is this a problem for current women on-air journalists but also the culture that is observing. How can the cycle end if no one is willing to make a change in how society views women especially on-air women journalists? Even with more women leaders rising to positions in the news industry, it is hard to break old misogynistic patriarchal habits when only a minority group wants to challenge the norm. Limiting women on-air journalists is not only affecting the news culture, but also the younger girls looking up to these educated women and yet shown as a hyper feminine figure. Being feminine is not wrong,

but the act of forcing someone to be what they are not and perform a false identity to others through any media platform is the real issue. Thus, because of misogynistic patriarchy expectations, it creates an environment where a feminine persona is expected. Based on this research, many on-air women journalists are hesitant to challenge the gendered expectations or if they do it is small and unnoticeable because of fear of male management.

Moving towards a new form of public policy, it will be interesting to see new research of how on-air women journalists continue to navigate as digital influencers and how it will change the news and information industry. Will journalists also being digital influencers affect the credibility of information that is shared on their professional Instagram profiles? Meaning, with people favoring one journalist over others because they relate to that specific journalist's hobby that is posted on Instagram, the way they share information, or the type of content is shared could change how information is received. If the public is only receiving information from similar viewpoints and ideologies, the availability of growth in different worldviews may be limited. Aside from the public stand point, if social media is the new platform for news will all journalists be required to shoot, edit, and present their own content on their Instagram with the new feature Instagram TV, users can post longer videos (Instagram, 2021)? If that becomes the new trend, what will happen to news stations if they do not change with technology in an age of streaming and social media? Will the news stations start using their social media more and creating digital content, as some stations have started doing, or will this trend fade away?

More specifically, will gendered expectations still be required of women on-air journalists? If more journalists continue to become digital influencers, and the agency shifts from the station to the journalists for their own professional Instagram, there could be more liberation when it comes to the content and self-brand that is promoted. Instead of hyper-femininity being

the main root for women journalists, the followers might see more diverse content from journalists that is not limited to the likings of the patriarchy. Rather, it may highlight different everyday living, instead of a fake persona that is pressured by those who only care about the revenue. If hyper-femininity is what the journalists want to post, then they should have the freedom to choose but if it is not, the journalists should also have the agency to post their authentic selves if that is what we are leading into for the future.

Therefore, women on-air journalists are digital influencers on Instagram because of the requirements their station holds. They are not valued enough by their station for their work because either of lack of knowledge of the labor that is put into maintaining their account or the lack of caring they have for their own employees. As digital influencers, women on-air journalists also have responsibility for the image they are presenting to other women and younger journalists. As said in the name, an influencer is someone with a large loyal following (Marwick, 2015). Being an influencer on Instagram means they have an outlet to provide information that some people may trust. The lack of representation of diverse women, physically or emotionally, provides a wrongful message of the representation of women to others including women and young girls. Thus, this thesis looked at how on-air women journalists navigate their professional Instagram account and conclude that unless complete agency is given to them, the image of hyper-femininity will continue due to the misogynistic patriarchy dominating the expectations of gender and the influence of gender performance (Butler, 1988), women journalists are required to continue the trend of hyper-femininity until real change of a mindset perspective in management and in the networks occurs

APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING CHART

| Question | Yes | No | Other / Unk | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Professional** | | | | |
| Is the photo taken at work? | | | | |
| Are there co-workers or professional mentors/mentees in the photo? | | | | |
| Is the post promoting a news story? | | | | |
| Is the post promoting the station or a station-related event? | | | | |
| **Personal** | | | | |
| Is the photo taken at home? | | | | |
| Is the photo taken in a public space? | | | | |
| Does the photo include family? | | | | |
| Does the photo include children? | | | | |
| Does the photo include friends? | | | | |
| Does the photo reveal something about their personal lifestyle (e.g. fitness, religion, pets, food, hobbies, etc.) | | | | If yes, note here: |

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

About You / Your instagram

(1)     How did you know you wanted to be an on-air journalist?

(2)     How do you use your professional Instagram account?

(3)     How do you feel that your role as a journalist has changed with social media?

(4)     How do you choose what to post on your professional Instagram account?

(5)     9) Do you think about what you are wearing or how you look in your posts? If so, why?

(6)     10) Why do you think it is important to look a certain way on Instagram?

(7)     Can you think of a time you posted something, and you wish you hadn't, or you decided to go back and delete it?  If so, can you tell me about it?

(8)     What are the things you wish you could post but don't

(9)     Is your professional Instagram account more as a space to promote yourself as a journalist and your career or as a space to promote your station?


Audience / Station Expectations

(1)     7) Who do you imagine your audience to be when you are posting to your professional Instagram account?

(2)     8) What do you want people to know about you when they look/follow you on Instagram and how do you present that on the platform?

(3)     9) What do you think your station or audience expect from you to post online?

(4)     10) How does your station expect you to use your professional Instagram account? For example, do they encourage it? Do they track it? Do they have a policy about it?

**(5)**     11) Do you think your station has different expectations of how a woman journalist uses her account compared to men journalists? What about your audience?

(6)     12) What kind of training does your station give you for social media?

(7)     13) When do you normally post on your professional Instagram account?

(8)     14) How does your station keep track of your Instagram?

(9)     15) Why does your station have access to your account? Do they post for you?

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