EVALUATING THE CONTENT AND TONE OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWS COVERAGE
IN MARKET 40: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED INTERNET STORIES
FROM LAS VEGAS BROADCASTING NEWS OUTLETS

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The purpose of this research study is to analyze mental health related content on the three network affiliated stations in Las Vegas, Nevada. Online web stories from broadcast stations are analyzed in terms of the content and tone. These areas of analysis relate directly to the mass communication theories agenda setting and framing. Historically, mental health news reports have included content and tone that together can potentially create and further stigmatizing sentiments about those with mental illnesses. This study utilizes a chi square test to determine if a relationship exists between the three network affiliated stations, four a priori coded mental health content categories, and a rating of the overall tone using a value dimensions scale.

Supplemental analyses include frequency evaluations of what has been called “people-first” versus “non-people first” language. By analyzing mental health related content at these three stations in the Las Vegas market this study aims to add heuristic value to the study of mental health reporting in broadcast news. This study will allow for additional research to further test relationships between stations, content, and tone in the Las Vegas and other news markets. Ultimately, this study provides analysis and discussion of the important role of agenda setting and framing in the news industry as it relates to the coverage of mental health related content.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

As news media play an integral role in informing the public, it also influences public perception and opinion. There are 210 designated market areas in America where news is broadcast through local television stations (Nielsen, 2012). With the market penetration and reach to the public, news media are a primary source of information ranging from news of the day to sensitive issues such as mental health. A 2006 study by Wahl suggests that portrayal of mental health is often inaccurate and paints a picture of a person with a mental illness as dangerous and violent, despite the fact statistics show otherwise. As a result, he argues, this portrayal leaves devastating consequences for consumers and families with a stigmatized public opinion (Wahl, 2006). Other research has found that the agenda of the news media, often dictated by news management, determines the displayed content for news consumers (McCombs, 2004). The public and the news media work in a symbiotic relationship. The public relies on news for information about their community, and in turn the news relies on current events to exist in a local news market. The Internet has provided a way of news delivery that is both fast and pervasive (Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004). News staff for both print and broadcast will post content as it develops throughout the day. Often, news of the day will reach audiences before it is presented on the air because it has already been posted online. As a result, it is imperative that research continues to examine how the internet contributes to daily news content.

What is News?

What is news is a question researchers have studied extensively over the decades to seek answers for a greater understanding on what influences public perception. One definition classifies news as second hand information people otherwise would not be able to obtain
Molotch and Lester argue that the process through which news is created “determines the experience of publics; it is an important source of whatever ideological hegemony exists in a given society” (p. 247). In evaluating mental health coverage in particular it is critical to examine how news is determined, why certain content is chosen, and ultimately, what factors influence the way a story is told. Theorists have postulated what makes news. Herbert Gans (2004) wrote Deciding What’s News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time. He first conducted a study in the 1970s that examined the process of how news is decided. He tried to make sense of the often chaotic world of news by acting as a news liaison sitting in on editorial meetings, observing how reporters gathered information and interviewing news personnel in their working day to grasp how decisions are made. A major portion of Gans’ research also included analyzing news content from television and reading news magazines from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s.

Gans describes objectivity as a fundamental news value. As it stands, this method of remaining neutral with a news report is one of the major values journalists adhere to. This would refer to a reporter acting impartial through the fact finding process as well as the delivery of a story. For instance, a news story is acceptable if it is based on facts of an event or situation rather than opinion (Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1972). Consequences might result if a story is seen to have an apparent “bias” or slanting of factual information (Tuchman, 1972). Tuchman (1972) identifies these potential consequences as a libel lawsuit to a news outlet, which would also result in financial strain. Additionally, he says the public might view the news outlets credibility as tarnished if information is not reported accurately and based on facts. “Distortion” of content is said to appear if one ideological viewpoint is present over another. For instance, during a political campaign journalists will often report on two political parties or provide multiple sides
of an argument so as not to appear bias or distorted (Gans, 2004). Objectivity helps the news reporter to eliminate these consequences by sticking to the facts to tell a story. Sometimes these facts may not present themselves all at once depending on the nature of the story. In this case, the facts may surface during ongoing coverage of a story in the days following an initial report. This notion relates to what journalists have identified as “diversity” of news coverage, which in turn leads back to objectivity because a variety of coverage is being offered (Tuchman, 1972).

Objectivity is a cornerstone of journalism ethics. In the early 1920s the American Society of Newspaper Editors developed the canons of journalism which was based on accuracy, truthfulness, impartiality and sincerity and further highlighted that news content should be independent of personal opinion or bias (Schudson, 2011). In a 1925 announcement, Kent Cooper, the General Manager of the Associated Press News Wire, introduced his journalistic creed: “the journalist who deals in facts diligently developed and intelligently presented exalts his profession, and his stories need never be colorless or dull” (Schudson, 2011, p. 75). In other words, the journalistic profession will be more respected with a focus on content and delivery of facts rather than aggrandizing the story. Molotch and Lester (1973) discussed the “second face of power” in journalism where another viewpoint is suppressed or prevented from being publicly debated. In relation to mental health reporting, Wahl (2003) has stated that the news media will, either deliberately or inadvertently, present a person with a mental illness as being dangerous or violent without presenting an opportunity for public discussion about the topic area. Furthermore, a journalist should always ask whether mental illness is relevant to a story about violence and question if this component would further distort the fact that mental illness is not predictive for violent behavior (Wahl, 2003). As a virtue for journalists, Quinn discusses that “[r]eporters ought to be especially careful how invasive they are, particularly because they risk
corroding their subject’s well-being and their own integrity” (p. 182). Christians (2005) stated that journalism as a professional perpetuates the concept that sensationalized reporting is looked down upon and that a journalist or station that conducts fair-minded reporting and rewards equal time for sources is more respected.

Gans (2004) additionally found that one of the commonalities in news is that the actors appearing in the content are often affluent people. A majority of what actually makes up news is the inner workings of government. As a result, well paid government officials appear time and time again in coverage. The less affluent will appear in the news less often except in the cases of crime where people with lower socio economic status (SES) are more likely to be reported on as victims or participants in crime (Gans, 2004). Social order and “disorder” are another set of values often present in the news media. Order refers to the news supporting certain classes of individuals such as those in business and professional positions that help align the social order of the public. Individuals in this sector are more likely to fall into the middle to upper middle class sectors of society. When this “order” is disrupted, then “disorder” is said to occur. Social disorder news transpires when events occur that disturb “the public peace and may involve violence or the threat of violence against life or physical property” (Gans, p. 53).

However, when these values are considered in the news industry, often news personnel are not the ones determining coverage, but rather the sources feeding journalists different material (Gans, 2004). In other words, the deadline-driven nature of news requires a reliable flow of material to the news organization. Sources help serve this purpose (Gans, 2004; Schudson, 2011). These sources might be a government official, a press person to a high ranking official, a public relations professional, or an expert in a particular area such as a professor or medical practitioner (Gans, 2004). Reporters may be divided between covering general assignment
material and having a specific beat such as crime, government or education. Generalist reporters will reach out to more sources because they have more content to cover, whereas beat reporters will have fewer sources that are more likely to be available on a short notice. Either way sources serve an important process from the story conception to finished product (Gans, 2004).

Internet and the News

The turn of the 21st century brought new ways of disseminating information to the public. Already in place, the Internet became a fast-moving gateway for consumers and journalists alike to obtain information within seconds (Cooke, 2005; Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004). The Internet has created, a new way of reporting the news to the public and in turn, new opportunities for the public to play an active role (Craig, 2004; Foust 2005). Foust (2005) discussed how the Internet enabled a direct line of communication where in some cases viewers have more of an active role in allowing content to be a topic of daily online discussion. “When a user visits the online story, he [sic] will see not only what the journalist originally posted but also what other users have added” (p. 192). The Internet has become a daily part of news consumption for viewers and it has become a daily part of the job for journalists (Cooke, 2005).

In his book, The Sociology of News, Schudson (2011) points out that online news consumption has been dominated by a younger generation of news consumers. He added that the online news resources were the number one source from 2008 to 2009 for 18 to 24 year olds to obtain their news. Further research analyzed that the Internet was also the second dominate source of news consumption for 30 to 49 year olds. Foust (2005) contends that journalists can play off this by enhancing their online stories not only through writing compelling text, but by also including graphics, links, and video. Foust argues the Internet’s interactivity has allowed the
consumer to be more engaged in news consumption, and it allows the consumer to be more informed (Foust, 2005). Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor (2004) argue that compared to other media, such as radio and television, the Internet allows the user to have more control. Schudson adds that consumers are mostly scanning sites for only a minute or slightly longer, but argues that because they are searching out information of interest they are not falling into the category of indoctrination. Additionally, the Internet offers the use of online discussion boards, live chats, blogs, and email where users can respond much quicker to a news story compared to older methods (Foust, 2005; Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004).

From the early 1990s through the early 2000s, the Internet gained enormous public popularity (Cooke, 2005). Cooke (2005) discussed that “television news programs, newspapers, and independent news organizations developed an Internet presence, in part, by borrowing from visual trends in existing media” (p. 37). News websites did not act as sole proprietors in developing a format; rather the initial layout of a news web page resembled that of a newspaper. However, this would change as graphics, along with sound and video became possible.

Impact of Online Reporting

The Internet started to become similar to television, but still kept the traditional text included with news stories (Cooke, 2005; Foust, 2005). Researchers say new media will not supplant the traditional methods of news consumption; rather it is available as a function for efficient and easier usage that is relatively inexpensive (Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004). As a result, the Internet has changed the way traditional media conducts news. For instance, many newspapers in America have a strong web presence and television newscasters constantly push viewers to visit their websites for further information (Cooke, 2005).
Foust (2005) advises that reporters/news management should not allow the medium to drive content or dictate the way a story is told, but rather allow the content in the story to drive itself. Furthermore, even though online does not have the space restrictions in print or time limits for broadcast, journalists should still remain selective in providing the most important and captivating material for the online audience rather than giving consumers every detail of a particular story (Foust, 2005). Another challenge in presenting the online story is that the user will expect that material to be updated throughout the day once that story is first established on the web (Schudson, 2011). Schudson also says that constant updates to online material could put a strain on the reporter who is handling multiple deadlines. With the nature of 21st century news, added pressure exists for journalists and news organizations alike to keep up with even smaller amounts of information on that story throughout the day. Whether the source is from broadcast or print, the expectation is that a particular story will remain in a constant state of flux (Foust, 2005; Schudson, 2011). This constant state of flux can change the way stories are told because journalists need to look for available sources quickly as opposed to waiting for another source (Schudson, 2011).

Journalists have certain ethics to uphold when posting material online. News management and personnel will often handle daily use of the Internet. How media use the Internet goes beyond the legal ramifications of its use, but can also raise serious ethical concerns. As the Internet became a norm for news staff (Cooke, 2005; Foust, 2005; Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004; Schudson, 2011), it is also critical that the reporters and management alike make judgment determinations in what content will be posted on a station’s or paper’s website. Foust (2005) discusses the notion of linking other content to a reporter’s story. For example, if a reporter is doing a controversial story, perhaps about racism or a hate group, and
finds a website affiliated with the group, then the journalist should be cautious about choosing to post the link with the story. The news person should ask if it enhances the online story or if it fuels controversy. Furthermore, if a station uses a link to enhance a story it should cite where the link came from (Foust, 2005). Another example may also include an arrest report in regards to a high profile crime committed in a local community. The news organization has the power to post the entire report on its website, but the question remains as to whether they should, depending on the details in the report. What if the details of the report are graphic or the victim is a child? Does the news organization choose to redact certain information for ethical reasons? These issues present an entirely other concern of how the news organization’s agenda plays a major role in public salience (Schudson, 2011).
CHAPTER 2
THEORIES IN NEWS

Agenda Setting

News follows a specific structure or format in the organization of content or material. In broadcast news, content placement can demonstrate the importance of a story if the viewer watches a story in the top of the broadcast then this speaks to the importance of that story (Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1972). Additionally, the amount of time given to a broadcast report sends cues to the public on what is important (McCombs, 2004). To the news consumer it may appear that the journalist acts as a free agent selecting content as he or she pleases. Reporters and news staff will apply their own judgment in a given day from a professional standpoint as needed, but “they rarely make selection decisions on overtly ideological grounds; rather, they work within organizations which provide them with only a limited amount of leeway in selection decisions” (Gans, 2004, p. 79). In Gans’ (2004) research, some journalists described the news organization as “militaristic.” He argued that news management (editors, news directors, and producers) have the power to decide what gets on the air or what makes it to print and how much time is going to be dedicated to each story.

This organizational structure that exists in the news world is known as agenda setting. In 1922, Walter Lippmann wrote his book Public Opinion that would later direct other researchers to study this concept. This notion was based on how people constructed images in their heads (McCombs, 2004). At the time, the theory did not have a name. However, researchers would later find that the overarching component of this theory is public salience. Salience influences consumers in ways that stretch beyond the boundaries of what one will experience in a typical day. It shows the community what the important issues are and what people should be concerned
about (McCombs, 2004). Researchers have found that what is important to the news media subsequently becomes important to the public and typically this is a result of news content presented in a variety of media (McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Bell, 1996; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shaw, 1979). Bernard Cohen in 1963 further studied this developing mass media theory and its salience on the public (McCombs & Bell, 1996). He wrote: “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; p. 177). Five years later, in 1968, McCombs and Shaw would coin the term “agenda setting” in their Chapel Hill study. It involved public opinion surveys coupled with content analysis to examine undecided voters during the 1968 presidential election. Overall, the study found a fairly significant correlation between the media’s coverage and the influence on undecided voters (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

McCombs and Shaw built on this framework to examine four phases of agenda setting that would assist in explaining public salience. Initially, they observed the roles of newspapers and television and the need for the public to orient oneself with the agenda being presented. McCombs and Shaw then examined uses and gratifications theory to try to explain how one news consumer would be more likely to seek information over another. Then they asked the question “are the news media as successful in influencing the salience of issues on public policy agendas as they are in influencing the salience of issues on the public agendas?” (p. 103). Lastly, the major component being studied in agenda setting is looking at “who” actually sets the agenda of the news (McCombs & Bell, 1996). In short, the news agenda would be established by journalists in the industry also known as “gatekeepers” who determine what coverage makes it to air or print (McCombs & Bell, 1996; McCombs, 2004).
Theorist Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann categorized a set of attributes for media to explain how its agenda affects the public: ubiquity, cumulation, and consonance. The notion of ubiquity describes the ability of news media to influence the public by the simple fact that it has a widespread presence. Cumulation is an effect that occurs from media coverage over a longer period of time where the public’s concerns reflect that of the media’s (Noelle-Neumann, 1973). For instance, Wahl (2004) discusses how the news, when reporting about mental health over time, will often associate a person with a mental illness as being violent and likely to engage in criminal behavior. While studies show this is not the norm, the consistent reporting on this over time has enabled the public to believe otherwise (Wahl, 2004). Shaw (1979) also stresses that television news will emphasize themes, trends and topics that give viewers/readers a chance to not only orient themselves to the content, but a chance to classify news in an orderly fashion. Noelle-Neumann’s final characteristic of news media, consonance, refers to how similar characteristics of the news gathering process impacts news consumers. Consonance of reporting can be characterized as news media having a limited number of sources for obtaining information and the different news entities sharing similar capacities and following specific guidelines from management (Noelle-Neumann, 1973). While this impact could be positive to the public, a skewed opinion could also be the result. Working in tandem with one another, ubiquity and cumulation have the ability to influence consonance such that the public are consequently inundated by what is presented to them. The result may reduce the chances for the public to be selective during news consumption (Noelle-Neumann, 1973; Shaw, 1979).

Building off of these definitions, McCombs (2004) discussed the influence of how news entities essentially borrow from one another to produce and create an “intermedia” dependency. This concept, which is a subset of agenda setting theory, is known as intermedia agenda setting.
In the book, *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, McCombs (2004) summarized it best: “journalists frequently observe – and subsequently copy – their peers’ news coverage in order to validate their own news judgment [sic] about the day’s events” (p. 113). The question then arises as to “who” actually sets this news agenda? One theory is that elite news will set the tone for other news entities to follow suit (McCombs, 2004). This leads to the question of who the elite news media are. Schudson (2011) argues elite news media are still newspapers in America even in the 21st century. McCombs (2004) additionally discussed that elitist newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or wire services such as the *Associate Press* will dictate subsequent coverage after stories are printed or sent out on the wires. Some estimates show that 80% of all regenerated news coverage in television and other entities comes from newspapers (Schudson, 2011) and evidence reveals that the influence of newspapers on television news coverage is fairly significant (McCombs, 2004).

As research shows, intermedia agenda setting has a symbiotic relationship across news platforms, as well as within the context of each medium (i.e. broadcast stations adopting or following content from another broadcast station). As McCombs (2004) highlighted, local competition leads to local public attention over another news station. In any given designated news market, agenda setting’s influence is often present as local television stations will continue to influence one another, creating a cycle of competition. National news media are not exempt from this either, as the elite journalists and editors for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *Associated Press* are likely scouting each other’s work to stay ahead (McCombs, 2004).

Agenda setting theory helps to showcase the context in which news management commands much of the present coverage seen in broadcast and in print; and in turn how that coverage affects public opinion. It also encompasses answering “who sets the news agenda?” and
what dictates this agenda. Intermedia agenda setting specifically examines how news operations rely on one another to create a platform of competition and market coverage in a specific city or community. While agenda setting is an important component in explaining why content is chosen, it is a portion of the puzzle in explaining how coverage is often dictated. The following section on framing will help to outline the way in which news reports are developed and why this can be influential on public opinion.

Framing in the News

News framing is often described by researchers as an interpretive method for how an audience (television viewers) understands situations and activities, and in turn how the news media will determine coverage of specific content (Blood & Holland, 2004; Nisbit, 2010; Sieff, 2003). Researcher Ervin Goffman (1974) is most associated with the development of framing as a theory when he first described framing research as “schemata of interpretation.” Goffman (1974) theorized that words will often activate a certain contextual meaning when presented in a public fashion and guide people in understanding their surroundings through identifying certain issues, topics, and events. Sieff (2003), specifically examined framing analysis in terms of how negative frames about mental illness impact both audience and the news media. According to her research, framing analysis is a way for researchers to understand how news media reports stories, how viewers understand the stories being reported, and the interaction that exists between the news media and its audience members. In terms of news readers and television viewers, frames help to consolidate thought processes about images or other specifics about life events (Sieff, 2003).

Entman (1993) outlined four areas of framing that serve as a function in studying its effects: problem definition, which serves as a cost/benefit ratio; diagnosis of the cause that
engages in generating the problem; judgments, which evaluate the “problem definition” and the subsequent effects; and remedies, which clarify behaviors. To further breakdown these definitions in terms of news coverage about mental health, Sieff (2003) identified how each of these four areas can lead to negative frames. Problem definition might translate to the public as persons with mental illness are violent, which leads to diagnosis of the cause where someone might begin to think that a person with a mental illness will commit a crime. Sieff argues that judgments would then form and an audience would believe that a person with a mental illness is incapable of caring for oneself. Lastly, public perception might lead to the thought process that a person with mental illness should be put away if they are unable to care for themselves (Sieff, 2003). In essence, “media frames work by connecting the mental dots for the public. They suggest a connection between two concepts, issues, or things, such that after exposure to the framed message, audience accept or are at least aware of the connection” (Nisbit, 2010, p. 47).

Researchers have also distinguished between various types of frames such as syntactical structure and thematic structures (de Vreese, 2010; Sieff, 2003). In reference to news, syntactical frames would occur when language used in a headline or the first sentence of a news report, is presented in a way that would immediately grab someone’s attention. Frequently, stories about mental illness are often presented in this manner to draw a reader or viewer into that particular story (Sieff, 2003). On the other hand, Sieff explains that thematic-type stories would be more beneficial to a mental health consumer, because these stories often encompass the causal events leading to a particular scenario. An example might be a local station presenting an in-depth report about a poor state mental health system in reference to a crime committed by a person with a mental illness. This would provide a grander viewpoint of the larger picture of mental
health; however, this type of reporting often is not translated into top-story news coverage (Sieff, 2003).

As researchers have cited framing has the potential to influence not only the thought process of an audience, but also the news media presenting the frames (de Vreese, 2010 & Sieff, 2003), and it can also influence policy changes (Blood & Holland, 2004). Blood and Holland (2004) investigated media frames in the context of how news professionals presented reports of mental health news coverage that led to changes in local policies that took away the rights of individuals who had been hospitalized. In Australia, a man with schizophrenia had escaped from a psychiatric hospital in Brisbane, Australia. Previously, this man had killed his father, which landed him in the institution. The man along with a few other patients had escaped the hospital and the news media suggested that their pictures appear in the paper and on television regardless of whether this violated medical privacy practices. However, not all of the escapees had a criminal record. In turn, the government eventually “agreed that a photograph of every mentally ill offender who absconded from [a] hospital would now automatically be made public under new procedures” (Blood & Holland, 2004, pp. 335-336). Researchers argue this approach fueled the “news momentum” by grabbing people’s attention through creating an inherent community fear. Furthermore, with the amount of on-going coverage that was given to this story, the news media did not provide adequate information as to where community members could get help if they or a loved one had been suffering from a mental illness. In conclusion, the majority of reporting staff covering the escapees were either general assignment or police reporters instead of a medical reporter who would likely be more knowledgeable about mental health (Blood & Holland, 2004).
As studied by researchers, the effects of framing on audience perception are often influenced by the messaging that media professionals will include in news content (Blood & Holland, 2004; Nisbit, 2010; Sieff, 2003). Agenda setting will often determine why content is chosen and frames will determine how that content is presented to the public. Researchers have also suggested that syntactical frames are frequently the chosen method for reporting stories about mental illness, which in turn typically present a negative bias. Thematic framing would be the optimal method for reporting mental health stories, which would build upon an entire backstory about why there is a lack of resources or why someone with a mental illness would commit a crime (Sieff, 2003). In summary, news has an unprecedented amount of daily material to process. Without utilization of frames for both the public and the news media, Sieff argues that news would essentially become “unintelligible.” Frames then provide an accessible way for the media writer and the viewer to process information. The following section outlines more in-depth various studies presented on the viewpoint of news personnel in relation to mental health, and how this topic area is often presented in the news media.
CHAPTER 3
MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NEWS

For decades, researchers have been digging extensively to find answers to what they call “bias” or “stigma” when news media report stories about mental health (Byrne, 2003; Cutcliffe, 2001; Gray, 2002; Sieff, 2003; Taylor & Dear, 1981; Wahl, 2003; Wahl & Axelson, 1985). In 1981, researchers Taylor and Dear first created the Scaling Community Attitudes Toward the Mentally Ill or “CAMI” scale. In this study, not only did they examine past research to look at how negative community attitudes toward the mentally ill started, but developed a scale that would evaluate community attitudes based on four criteria: authoritarianism, benevolence, social restrictiveness, and community mental health ideology. In looking at authoritarianism, Taylor and Dear assessed whether the community believed that persons with mental illness were self-accountable and responsible for their illness. On the other side of this, benevolence evaluated how the community felt about mental illness and whether sympathy was expressed toward a person who was mentally ill. The community’s belief was in terms of individual rights of a person with a mental illness that lead to analysis of social restrictiveness. In analyzing social restrictiveness, Taylor and Dear examined how a mentally ill person was isolated from what would be considered normal social activities (housing, employment, relationships). Lastly, the component of community mental health ideology examined the acceptance of mental health facilities in residential neighborhoods (Taylor & Dear, 1981).

Wahl and Axelson (1985) expounded on the initial CAMI scale when they studied television news perspectives about those working in the mental health community and discrepancies identified by television broadcasters in reporting issues on mental health. In evaluating television news journalists, the researchers asked whether news personnel had
adequate resources from mental health professionals when reporting a story. They further evaluated whether time constraints and personal biases influenced the way persons with mental illness were portrayed in news reports. They created a 40-item Likert-type scale questionnaire with 26 news staff from a local television station and 37 mental health staff members within the same designated market area as the television station. Wahl and Axelson (1985) found that “newscasters were critical of their own work, held positive attitudes toward the mentally ill, and did not accept current constraints on their work as excuses for poor coverage” (p. 82). In sum, even though the news media felt they could have done a better job at reporting mental illness, the overall tone was still reported in a stigmatized fashion (Wahl & Axelson, 1985).

A decade after the CAMI study, Wahl released the first edition of his book about the frequent and often inaccurate portrayal of images of mental illness in various media formats. In Media Madness, Public Images of Mental Illness he discusses multiple accounts where film, television programming, advertisements, and the news media alike depicted a common theme of dangerousness, violence, and unpredictability of those living with a mental illness. Wahl (2006) postulates that it is unlikely the general consumer is able to see beyond the depictions in the news media unless he or she has experienced a mental illness or has a loved one who has struggled with it. Contrary to what is often reported in the news, research shows that lower SES is more predictive of criminal activity along with other factors such as male gender, youth and substance abuse, but not mental illness by itself (Wahl, 2003).

Since Wahl’s initial study with Axelson, other researchers have investigated the effects of mental health related content in the media (Blood & Holland, 2004; Byrne, 2003; Cutiliffe & Hanigan, 2001; Edney, 2004; Gray, 2002; Wahl, 2003). In a 2002 study, Gray examined stigma in media reports and how that stigma affects people with a mental illness. The term can be
defined as “the shame and expectation of discrimination that prevents people from talking about their experiences and stops them [from] seeking help” (Gray, 2002, p. 72). Further analysis found that stigma creates feelings of shame and can prevent people with a mental illness from recovering properly (Wahl, 2006).

Television in general can be a major source of information about mental health. Stigmas can cause repercussions to a person with mental illness and can result in lack of employment (Gray, 2002; Wahl, 2003; Wahl, 2006), lack of housing, tarnished relationships (Gray, 2002), and jeopardized community resources for proper care (Wahl, 2003, 2006). The Centers for Disease Control (2010) published *Attitude Toward Mental Illness* arguing that stigma can prevent people with a mental disorder to postpone treatment denying symptoms. Bryne (2003) states that the visual and fast moving components of television can be considered the worst in presenting a fair and accurate portrayal of those with mental health related concerns. The reason is because news reports are shorter in length than in print, and there are more opportunities for this medium to sensationalize content through video (Bryne, 2003). Discrepancies exist in news reports and the overarching theme from researchers is that negative connotations leads to negative consequences from society (Edney, 2004; Sieff, 2003; Wahl, 2003). Harmful verbiage and loaded language in particular can fuel stigmas even further. Sieff’s (2003) analysis related to negative frames of mental illness evaluated two cases where crime was present for psychiatric patients. In one situation, a man with schizophrenia had killed a woman by pushing her in front of a New York subway. During the man’s trial, he was repeatedly referred to as a “ticking time bomb” in the papers and his diagnosis was viewed as an admission of guilt (Sieff, 2003).

Public exposure to negative media reports about mental illness can leave lasting effects. In a 1993 study about the public’s reaction to a loaded headline, “Girl, 9 Stabbed to Death at
Fair: Mental Patient Charged,” the participants who read this headline as opposed to a more neutral headline were more likely to believe that a person with a psychiatric condition is violent and dangerous (Wahl, 2006). Researchers argue news media that uses this language is unreasonably labeling another person with a similar diagnosis as dangerous and incapable of recovery (Edney, 2004; Sieff, 2003; Wahl, 2003). The inaccuracies of reporting such stories further strains persons with mental illness. In 1998, researchers found that crime news as a whole filled the news slot only 10 percent of the time, while 65 percent of news stories involving mental health were news that involved crime (Edney, 2004). Wahl (2003) postulates that journalists are acting contrary to their “commitment to accurate and unbiased reporting” because the “vast majority of people with mental illnesses are neither violent nor criminal” (p. 1599).

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, mental disorders are some of the most common disorders nationally and internationally. In fact, nearly a quarter of Americans may suffer from one in any given year (NIMH, 2013). Mental disorders are often classified between mood disorders or anxiety disorders. A mood disorder could be anything from a major depressive episode, to bipolar disorder, to schizophrenia. When a mental illness is untreated the result can lead to someone committing suicide. In 2007, more than 34,000 people in the U.S. died by suicide and it’s estimated that 90% of those who kill themselves have a diagnosable mental disorder at the time of their death (NIMH, 2012). Media watch groups have formed both nationally and abroad in response to how the news media represents mental illness. As researchers such as Wahl (2003) have stated, this portrayal is often in a stigmatized fashion. Additionally, the watch groups will often contact news management, reporters and writers to educate them about the damaging effects of stigma-driven language in news reports about mental illness (Wahl, 2003).
Further diagnoses may include anxiety disorders such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (NIMH, 2012). For the purpose of this study, PTSD will be examined in the context of news media’s portrayal of mental illness.

According to Creamer et al. (2011), there is not a definitive number for how frequently PTSD can affect active duty military or veterans, but estimates show it can be anywhere from 2 percent to 17 percent total. Frequent rates of deployment, duration of deployment, and lack of resources when a soldier returns can increase the likelihood that PTSD will develop. Additionally, 80 percent of people with PTSD also develop another symptom of mental health such as substance abuse or depression (Creamer et al., 2011). As Wahl (2003) has previously stated, any form of mental health condition that is reported by the news media in a misinformed fashion, can lead to further stigma and lack of resources for the person experiencing the disorder.

All of these disorders and their depictions in the news media are reasons watch groups have coalesced. The Rosalynn Carter Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism was created by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter 30 years ago to bring awareness to the ways in which mental health is reported in the media. As cited from the Carter Center (2008), the former first lady said:

> Informed journalists can have a significant impact on public understanding of mental health issues as they shape debate and trends with the words and pictures they convey. They influence their peers and stimulate discussion among the general public, and an informed public can reduce stigma and discrimination.

In a question and answer session conducted with the First Lady four years ago, she was asked specifically about the discrimination and stigma presented about persons with a mental illness (Carter, 2008). Carter responded by saying that treatments are effective for those living with a mental illness and that if the general public understood this, then more people would be open to communicating about it. Furthermore, Rebecca Palpant, the Senior Program Associate for the
mental health division at the Carter Center, states that journalists have a unique opportunity to
shed light on public awareness of mental health as a result of its frequency: “mental illnesses are
among the most serious, unrecognized, and underreported health problems in the United States –
affecting one in four Americans in a given year” (Palpant & Hawkins, 2008, para. 1). Palpant
(2010) argues, in the information age, news media often portray persons with mental illness as
unable to recover. However, through various news outlets and suitable reporting techniques,
Palpant contends that journalists can shape the general public’s understanding and acceptance
toward mental health.

Researchers have argued the Internet can help those with mental illness seek information
about their disorder. Berger and Wagner (2005), conducted a study with a group of people who
had anxiety and depression and found this group overall had felt stigmatized at one point or
another. However, they also found that the group was more likely to seek the internet and online
forums for helpful information about their illness (Berger & Wagner, 2005). According to Byrne
(2003), the Internet can provide fast responses to consumer inquiries about mental health.
However, he does state that since the Internet is quick to generate new information, that it may
not be the most feasible resource for mental consumers because that information may have been
promptly written and may not be accurate. Additionally, he states that the added element of
potential video and pictures might further distort the view of a mental health story and again as a
resource for a consumer (Byrne, 2003).

As a result of the perpetual stigma presented in news reports throughout the years (Blood
& Warwick, 2004; Carter Center, 2012; Edney, 2004; Wahl, 2003, Wahl & Axelson, 1985), the
efforts to reduce stigma and provide accurate results of mental health in media is a continuing
concern (Balancing News Coverage, 2012). An online publication by the University of
Washington, *Mental Health Reporting*, suggests that for every news story about a mental illness and violence, an additional story should be presented about the ability of a person with a mental illness to recover (Balancing News Coverage, 2012). Journalists also should “not assume that an illogical act of violence is the result of mental illness” (Reporting on a Story, 2012, para. 1) and if someone has a mental illness this does not necessarily mean they will become violent (Reporting on a Story, 2012). *Mental Health Reporting* also suggests using what is called, “people first language,” instead of citing the phrase “schizophrenic,” use the phrase “a person with schizophrenia” (Eliminating Stigmatizing Language and Stereotypes, 2012, para. 1).

According to the Arizona Department of Health Services (2013), people in the general media should avoid such phrases as mentally/emotionally ill, “is a bipolar/psychotic person,” “is a patient,” “is normal/healthy,” “afflicted with…,” “suffers from…,” or “victim of…,” etc. ADHS recommends the preferred terminology to be as such: has a mental health problem or challenge, has a diagnosis of…, is a person who receives help/treatment for mental health problems, a consumer of mental health, receives mental health services, etc. Their concern is when the news media will sensationalize a story with language that denigrates a person through their condition (ADHS, 2013). Wahl (2006) argues that the result of stigmatizing language is not because the media purposefully do so; rather it goes back to the lack of education of reporters and journalists working on this type of content. As a result, he says news personnel will make uniformed decisions on how to obtain more constructive information about mental health. Lastly, *Mental Health Reporting* discussed reporting suicides, and said that if journalists must do so, then they should avoid details, reasons for the act, and any pictures, which may include photos of grieving family because using any of these details could incite imitation to occur. “Over 90 percent of suicide victims have a significant psychiatric illness at the time of their death” (Tips for
Reporting Suicide, 2012, para. 3). Advocates explain that news media should include crisis intervention services such as a hotline number or resources for someone to call because it could prevent another person reading the story from copying the act (Recommendation for Reporting Suicide, 2012; Tips for Reporting Suicide, 2012). These sources suggest that journalists can make simple changes in daily reporting that could have lasting effects on how mental illness is portrayed.

As discussed in the previous sections, the agenda of news and how news is framed highly influences news content, and in turn influences public perception. In regards to mental health stories, however, Wahl (2006) states that the agenda could fundamentally shift if allowed by news gatekeepers. Salter and Byrne (2000) discuss the need for news media and mental health professionals to work together on critical stories about mental health related issues. They suggest that psychiatric professionals reach out to the news media and be available if a story of this nature is to be reported. As stated in research, it is the responsibility of media to report important issues to the public in a fair and accurate manner (Gans, 2004; Shudson, 2011). Wahl (2006) contends that it is a similar responsibility for the mental health professional to educate the media to try to combat the devastating effects of stigmatized coverage.
CHAPTER 4
CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analyses within media studies have been used for decades to provide an objective and unbiased approach to investigate content within a given text (Macnamara, 2005). Neuman (1997) identifies content analysis as follows:

A technique for gathering and analysing [sic] the content of text. The ‘content’ refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The ‘text’ is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication. (pp. 272-273)

Quantitative analysis is often the more common method for conducting a content analysis study. For media analysis using a quantitative approach, content is collected in reference to certain key words, the circulation of that media (such as audience reach) and the frequency with which that content is distributed (Macnamara, 2005). According to Macnamara (2005), three main procedures fall into categorizing a content analysis study: the various media forms (i.e. newspapers or television), the issue dates or time period of selected content, and the relevant content related to the topic area within the selected media.

Philo et al. (1994) conducted a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative audience reception study in Scotland examining a general sample of subjects’ perspective on mental illness. Researchers conducted a content analysis of 562 news items with a sample size of 70 people. Philo et al. (1994) highlighted five criteria (violence to others, harm to self, sympathetic coverage, criticism of accepted definitions of mental illness, and comic images) that were seen as a common theme from national and local media. When analyzing the results, researchers found that 40 percent or two-thirds of the sample size believed that violence and mental illness were associated with one another and stated that the media was the reason for this perspective (Philo et al., 1994).
In Cutcliffe’s (2001) research, it was emphasized that 20% of media coverage in a 1997 study found “that mental health problems are treatable and that people with mental distress lead worthwhile lives” (p. 317). Further emphasizing the inaccuracies of news accounts, empirical research conducted since the 1960s shows a decline in violent crimes by persons with mental illness (Cutcliffe, 2001). In sum, whether the study is analyzing negative or positive coverage of mental health, a media content analysis can provide a systematic approach to using a variety of content gathered from a selection of news content to achieve quantifiable and objective results.

As the literature indicates, agenda setting has played a major role in determining what news management considers “newsworthy” material (Craig, 2004; Foust, 2005). If this content is considered more controversial, such as mental health, then journalists either have the opportunity to enhance the scope of their work or detract from it. In going forward, it is critical for researchers to study how the Internet is used within the journalism profession. Researchers have pointed out that mental health is often reported in traditional media (including broadcast) in a sensational fashion and stories often focus on violence and dangerousness as a theme for those persons with a mental illness. In turn, studies show this perception is not accurate (Wahl, 2006). As a result, further content analysis using framing and agenda setting can help to examine the coverage of mental health stories in the Las Vegas market.
CHAPTER 5
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

With over a quarter of the U.S. adult population in any given twelve month time period with a diagnosable mental illness, there is a need to understand the impact of news content as it relates to mental health (NIMH, 2012). As research has identified that news media often portray people with mental illness or mental health related issues as dangerous and violent (Cutcliffe & Hannigan, 2001; Edney, 2004; Berger, Wagner, & Baker, 2005; Wahl, 2003; & Wahl, 2006), other research has identified that government policies lack adequate coverage as a result of the negative stereotypes (Edney, 2004; Cutcliffe & Hannigan, 2001). Edney (2004) argued that persons with mental illness are less likely to recover as a result of the stigma that exists. Other research shows that persons with stigmatized illnesses will often avoid seeking treatment all together (Berger, Wagner, & Baker, 2005). The overwhelming impact of this reporting can even influence how health care practitioners treat people with mental illnesses. As research has shown, the general media can inadvertently influence personnel in the medical field to be less accepting of people with mental illness, while additionally influencing the public perception leading to stigma (Wahl, 2006). For the purpose of this study, a quantitative content analysis helped to identify specific broadcast news stories that have been portrayed as positive, neutral, or negative in the Las Vegas news market.

Research Questions

Two general research questions were developed to assess both the tone of mental health stories in relation to the content, as well as how each individual station compared in the overall tone of the mental health related content being examined. A report as discussed in this study
refers to a broadcast story that was included on the stations websites in the form of a written web
story. The questions are as follows:

RQ1) How are story tone and content categories distributed within each network affiliated station in the Las Vegas market?

RQ2) How do web stories from the different stations websites compare in terms of the overall tone of mental health related content?

Additionally, it was important to define the context of these research questions in relation to the overall study. The operationalized research questions studied for the overall quantitative analysis are defined as supplemental question 1 and supplemental question 2:

SQ1) Does the number of mental health related news reports in the Las Vegas market vary by station? (Based on the a priori coded content categories – agenda setting)

SQ2) Does the percentage of positive, neutral, and negative reports vary by station within the market? (based on modified value scale – framing)

Methodology

To thoroughly examine news content material (agenda setting) as it relates to the tone of each story (framing), a content analysis was conducted utilizing Internet broadcast news stories posted on network affiliated stations’ websites in Las Vegas [Neilson media market rankings defines Las Vegas as Designated Market Area (DMA) 40]. Specifically, the study observed the content of mental health related stories and the language within each respective story. Krippendorf (1980) defined content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (p. 21). Furthermore, Kerlinger (2000) identified content analysis as a systematic, objective and quantifiable way of measuring material. Conducting a content analysis helped to provide a framework for analyzing news content in a quantifiable fashion. Specifically, the content was chosen over a one year time period from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 to achieve a larger sample size. Based on the
research cited in chapter 3 (Mental Health in the News) of this study that outlines news reports often conducted related to mental health, four categories outlined in the Sampling and Coding Method section of this chapter were used from the three news entities being studied. A quantitative analysis for this study, helped to provide evidence over a given time period of how many mental health related news reports were conducted in DMA 40 and the overall tone of each story.

Sampling and Coding Method

To answer the research questions, the study examined the three network affiliated broadcast stations in DMA 40 (ABC 13, CBS 8, and NBC 3). As a reference, each station in the Las Vegas market is owned by separate companies/corporations: KTNV (ABC 13) network affiliate in Las Vegas is owned by Journal Broadcasting; KLAS (CBS 8) is owned by Landmark Communications; KSNV (NBC 3) is owned by Intermountain West Communications (KLAS, 2013; KSNV, 2013; KTNV, 2013). The sample size for the one-year time period (Jan. 1, 2012 – Dec. 31, 2012) was 194. To assess the relationship between tone and content effectively online, only the text portion of the website material was evaluated, any video and pictures included with each story was not used for the purpose of this particular study.

As discussed by Wimmer and Dominick’s (2006) book, a priori coding was used to establish the categories prior to the data being collected. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) define a priori coded categories such as reliability, mutual exclusivity, and exhaustive. For this study, four content areas were established based on the literature in chapter 3, Mental Health in the News. The four overall categories to be used with this study along with the operationalized definitions are as follows:

1) Mental health/mental illness and/or MH/MI educational content was evaluated as news reports that provided information to consumer and the public to raise awareness.
2) Crime/courts news stories were included when the report involved a person with a mental illness that committed a crime or was somehow involved with a crime.

3) Suicide related stories were also evaluated, which excluding murder-suicide (included in crime/court section), based on research presented that 90 percent of persons who complete a suicide have a serious mental illness at the time of their death.

4) Veterans/military related mental health/illness stories evaluated included any of the three prior categories as long as it was exclusive to either veterans or active duty military personnel.

To search for individual content evaluated on each website, key word searches were conducted to find online archives for each category. The key words were based on the content listed above. For example, ‘mental health’ or ‘mental illness,’ was typed into the search box on each stations website for Category 1. Because the second category was related to crime and/or courts, these two words were also typed into the search boxes and crime and/or court stories were chosen based on whether they mentioned words related to mental health. Some of these words and/or phrases include: ‘psychiatric or psychological evaluation,’ descriptions of specific disorders such as ‘bi-polar’ or ‘schizophrenia,’ and/or references to ‘insanity’ such as someone pleading guilty by reason of insanity. For Category 3, ‘suicide’ was typed into the search bar to identify stories related only to one person’s actions toward suicide. For the last category, ‘veteran’ and/or ‘military’ was used in the search bar to generate content in this category. Additionally, Associated Press content as used in the analysis of the 194 web stories if the three stations included this with the local content.

As a coding system, a value dimensions scale was used to assess the tone of each individual story presented. Researchers defined a value dimension as a component of content analysis that will attempt to classify “coverage in terms of value judgements [sic], or assessment of the ideological stance, accuracy, or informativeness [sic] of coverage” (Hansen, Cottle,
Negrine, & Newbold, 1998, p. 114). In 1992, the categories were developed by Einsiedel to analyze stories and code them according to either positive, negative, neutral, or mixed (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998). For the purpose of this study, an existing value dimensions scale was modified from four categories (positive, negative, neutral, and mixed) to include three of these categories: positive, negative, and neutral. The value dimensions for this research were operationalized as follows:

1) **Positive** – stories that include advocacy and educational elements concerning mental health or mental illness

2) **Neutral** – stories that describe a circumstance related to mental illness in a non-stigmatized fashion

3) **Negative** – stories that depict persons with mental illnesses in a stigmatizing fashion

As each news report was found related to one of the a priori identified categories mentioned previously that same story was evaluated on its tone with the value dimensions coding system. However, the four coded categories were not assessed based on being positive, neutral, or negative solely dependent upon whether they fell into a specific category such as crime/courts, or suicide (i.e. the value dimensions were evaluated independently of the a priori categories).

To assess the tone of each report, all 194 web stories were read and evaluated accordingly. Value dimension (tone) coding was based on the operationalized definitions of positive, neutral, and negative as previously defined above. Stories that were coded as positive were more educational in nature and included fewer instances of stigmatizing language. Similarly, stories that were coded as neutral were more fact-based news reports that did not include the advocacy related content as seen in the positive category, but also did not add to the stigmas associated with the negative category. Finally, stories coded as negative were more likely to portray individuals with mental illnesses in a stigmatized manner. After reading each
report an overall rating score for story tone was recorded on the coding sheet (Appendix-A) as 1-positive, 2-neutral, or 3-negative.

Additionally, the overall tone of each article was assessed to examine “people-first” language mentioned in chapter 3. This study differentiated the two categories as ‘people-first’ (PF) vs. ‘non-people first’ (NPF) language. PF and NPF words and phrases were coded in the Appendix-A coding sheet to determine the occurrence of PF vs. NPF language in relation to which value dimension category has a higher likelihood of using these key words and phrases. Each coded news report was organized into SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, for analysis. The coding sheet attached in Appendix-A included the date the story appeared, the news station that posted it, a sentence and word count, the a priori categories, the value dimensions, and the value dimensions assessment (PF/NPF). Every story was coded beginning with 001 and each station was coded as 1, 2, or 3 respectively. The four a priori coded categories were coded as Mental Health/Illness = 1, Crime/Courts = 2, Suicide = 3, or Veterans/Military = 4. Additionally, the value dimensions category was coded as either positive = 1, negative = 2, or neutral = 3. This allowed the assessment of the value dimensions to fall under the appropriate a priori category in an organized fashion.

For further analysis of language (tone) in the context of each category (content), a frequency count was conducted comparing what is called ‘people-first’ vs. ‘non-people-first’ language in this study. Chapter 3 outlines what is considered people-first language and the types of stories about mental health/illness that are more likely to use this. For instance, research states that crime stories are more likely to use NPF language over PF language (ADHS, 2013). In context, this study outlined how positive, negative, and neutral stories were distributed across the four selected content categories. Additionally, PF and NPF language was examined based on the
distribution across the value dimensions. Each element listed above was coded appropriately on
the Appendix-A coding sheet.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of this study followed a series of steps that involved a
combination of descriptive statistics as well as three chi square tests for independence. Researchers describe this test as a way to see if a relationship exists or not between two variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2002). The chi square tests specifically examined how the four content categories were distributed within each station, how the value dimensions (positive, neutral, negative) were distributed within each of the four content areas (mental health/illness, crime/courts, suicide, veterans/military), and how the value dimensions were distributed within each individual station. In order to discover if there was significance for the three chi square tests, the results were analyzed in SPSS and displayed through various tables in the Chi-Square Test/Cross-tabulation tables section of the results. The chi square test was able to determine the level of significance (.05 or less; .01 or less; and .001 or less) for distributions within each of these three specific areas (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2002), utilizing a chi square critical values chart (Warner, 2013). Throughout the results there were a total of 16 different graphs and tables that show the breakdown of the various results being analyzed.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the data in terms of frequency and distribution. Distribution shows the collection of numbers from the sample size (n=194) and frequency looks at the frequency of occurrence (i.e. how many stations had positive, negative, or neutral) (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Specifically, tone (value dimensions) was analyzed based on the frequency of occurrence within the four mental health content areas (a priori categories).
As well as the frequency of how many positive, negative and neutral stories appeared on each of the stations websites, and the frequency of value dimensions within the entire market.

Additionally, people-first vs. non-people-first language was examined in relation to value dimensions (positive, negative, and neutral stories), the four coded categories (mental health/illness, crime/courts, suicide, and veterans/military content), and the overall frequency in which PF and NPF appeared throughout all 194 coded articles. In sum, descriptive statistics allowed for the study to assist in summarizing and reporting content about mental health as it relates to overall broadcast coverage in DMA 40.
CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

The sample size for content found on each stations’ web site was N=194. The stories were found based on the a priori categories and coding was conducted in relation to the value dimensions. The local ABC affiliate, KTNV, had the highest number of stories that fell under the a priori categories and therefore had the most frequent stories mentioned over a twelve-month time period in relation to mental health or mental illness. The total number of stories and the percentages of the story content make-up for the entire market (DMA 40) from Jan. 1, 2012-Dec. 31, 2012 was as follows: KTNV (ABC) = 86 stories, 44 percent; KLAS (CBS) = 42, 21 percent; KSNV (NBC) = 66, 34 percent. Graph 1 displays the content and percentage distribution for each station.

![Figure 1. Television station report count (n=194)](image)

Additional percentages and content make-up was conducted based on the a priori categories and the value dimensions. Graph 2 displays the frequency of Mental Health/Illness stories, Crime/Courts, Suicide stories, and Veterans/Military content and how the percentages for each category were apportioned for the total market. Overall, the Crime/Courts category was the most prevalent and suicide related content was the second most frequent for the Las Vegas news
market. The content breakdown was as follows: Total Mental Health/Illness stories = 34, 17 percent; Total Crime/Courts = 83, 43 percent; Total Suicide stories = 46, 24 percent; and Total Veterans/Military content = 31, 16 percent.

Figure 2. A priori coded categories report count (n=194)

Lastly, the total percentages for value dimensions were conducted to show how positive, negative, and neutral stories were apportioned among the total market. Graph 3 below displays the total make-up and percentages for value dimensions. Overall, neutral stories were the most frequent in DMA 40, and positive stories were more prevalent overall than negative stories analyzed under the four categories. The frequency and percent of the total stories were as follows: Positive = 55, 28 percent; Neutral = 90, 47 percent; Negative = 49, 25 percent.
Figure 3. Value dimensions report count (n=194)

Results – Chi-Square Test/Cross-Tabulation Tables

Three chi square tests for independence were conducted to determine the distribution between the four coded categories (Mental Health/Illness, Crime/Courts, Suicide, and Veterans) and the three television stations, the value dimensions and television stations, and the four categories to the value dimensions. The results were generated in SPSS and for each category were organized into three different cross-tabulation tables for organizational purposes. The first chi square test was analyzing the distributions of reports within the a priori coded categories as compared to the three television stations. This test was conducted in SPSS and had a critical value of 10.72 with a degree of freedom (df) of 6. Based on the critical values of the chi square chart with a df of 6, 10.64 (Appendix-B) is the critical value for a 0.1 level of significance. The level of significance generated in SPSS was .089, which would make the coded category distribution within the television stations significant at the ‘less-than or equal-to’ (≤) value of 0.1.

Table 1 displays the observed distributions of the 194 stories evaluated based on their inclusion in both the a priori coded categories and the television stations. The significance of this chi square test is depicted at the bottom of the table and indicates there is a level of independence between the a priori coded categories and the television stations. In other words, the chi square showed that each station reported on stories from the four content areas independent of one another. The result of this first chi square test indicates some level of difference between these areas of analysis based on the 194 evaluated reports.
The second chi square test evaluated the distribution of the a priori categories to the value dimensions to determine if there was a level of significance for independence. The results in SPSS showed a critical value of 102.2 with a df of 6. Based on the chi square chart with a df of 6 the critical value is 22.46 (Appendix-B) with a level of significance of .001. Therefore the level of significance was found at the ‘less-than-or-equal-to’ value of .001. This would indicate that there was a greater level of independence between the a priori categories (Mental Health/Illness, Crime/Courts, Suicide, and Veterans) and the value dimensions than between the a priori categories and the television stations. Table 2 shows the distribution of reports included in both the four categories and the value dimensions with the chi square level of significance located at the bottom of the table. The result indicates there is a significant difference between the distributions of reports within these areas of analysis. In other words, when assessing the value dimensions, the distribution of reports from each of the four coded categories are independent of the other three coded categories.

Table 1

*A Priori Coded Categories * Television Stations Chi Square Cross-tabulation **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Priori Coded Categories</th>
<th>Television Station</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KTNV-ABC</td>
<td>KLAS-CBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health &amp; Mental Illness Awareness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Courts</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Related</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Related</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chi Square Significance: $X^2 (6, N=194) = 10.972 , p \leq 0.1$**
The third chi square test evaluated the distribution of value dimensions to the three television stations. With a df of 4, the critical value in the chi square chart (Appendix-B) is 9.49 and the critical value generated in SPSS for the value dimensions and television station comparison was 11.52. The level of significance was .021, which falls within a ‘less-than-equal-to’ significance of (≤) .05. Table 3 displays the results of how positive, neutral, and negative Internet stories were distributed within the three television station websites. The significance of this chi square is noted at the bottom of the table. It indicates there is a significant level of difference or independence between the distribution of the reports from KSNV, KTNV, and KLAS across the value dimensions. If the results were not significant, the expectation would be that the number of positive, neutral, and negative reports would be more evenly distributed within each station.
Further descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the frequency of what researchers have classified as ‘people-first’ language. As discussed previously, chapter 3 describes language often presented in news reports that constitute what is considered people-first language as well as language used that would further enhance stigma in a news report. For this study an evaluation of ‘people-first’ (PF) vs. ‘non-people-first’ (NPF) was tabulated for each individual television station, the a priori categories, and the value dimensions presented throughout this research. For this portion, six frequency tables were created comparing the frequency count and the total number of reports that had occurrence with people-first and non-people-first language.

Tables 4 and 5 show a comparison of the amount of PF language used throughout the three television stations versus the frequency of occurrence with NPF. Total number of stories without people-first and non-people-first were subtracted from the total number of stories (N=194) to determine the frequency of PF and NPF stories throughout the market [N=194 – 93 (report total =101, PF); N=194 – 85 (report total = 109, NPF)]. Overall, there were 109 stories
that included non-people-first and 101 stories that included people-first phrases. While there were only eight more stories that had NPF phrases over PF, the total occurrence of non-people-first language appeared 264 times, which was about 30 more occurrences than the people-first language, which appeared 235 times. The frequency count generated in SPSS showed the total number of NPF and PF occurrences in relation to the frequency of individual phrases per individual report (report total). To calculate the total PF and NPF counts, the total report counts were multiplied by the frequency of individual report counts (i.e. from table 4.0: 45x1=45, 26x2=52, 13x3=39, etc.). The total numbers were then added up to achieve the total counts (PF=235; NPF=264).

Table 4

*Frequency of People First Language * Television Station Cross-tabulation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of People First Language (per individual report)</th>
<th>KTNV-ABC</th>
<th>KLAS-CBS</th>
<th>KSNV-NBC</th>
<th>Report Total</th>
<th>Total PF Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>194</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 6 and 7 display a comparison with the occurrences of PF and NPF language used throughout the four coded categories. As indicated in Frequency Tables 4 and 5, the most occurrences for PF language in one individual story were nine and the most occurrences for NPF in an individual story were 13. As displayed in both tables, there were more stories with fewer occurrences of both PF and NPF language than not.
Table 7

Frequency of Non-People First Language * A Priori Coded Categories Cross-tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Non-People First Language (per individual report)</th>
<th>A Priori Coded Categories</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total NPF Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the previous tables showed the occurrences of PF and NPF in relation to the three television stations and the four coded categories, Frequency Tables 7 and 8 demonstrate the occurrences of PF and NPF in relation to the value dimensions. There were 15 stories that had one occurrence of people-first language, 24 neutral stories with just one occurrence, and 45 stories with one occurrence of non-people-first language.

Table 8

Frequency of People First Language * Value Dimensions Cross-tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of People First Language (per individual report)</th>
<th>Value Dimensions</th>
<th>Report Total</th>
<th>Total PF Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

*Frequency of Non-People First Language * Value Dimensions Cross-tabulation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Non-People First Language (per individual report)</th>
<th>Value Dimensions</th>
<th>Report Total</th>
<th>Total NPF Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluated Research Questions

The two main research questions and two supplemental questions were assessed throughout the analysis of mental health related content in the Las Vegas market. Those research questions will be directly addressed in this section based on the findings described in the first section of this chapter (Results).

**RQ1) How are story tone and content categories distributed within each network affiliated station in the Las Vegas market?**

Based on the chi square analysis results displayed in Table 1 the distribution of web reports within content categories and the three television stations were significant at the ≤ 0.1 level. This means that the distributions of stories from the three stations were significantly different or independent from one another when assessed within the content categories. The results of this chi square test provide support for the notion that the agenda setting activities of each station differ from one another. These findings present a portion of the answer for the first research question in terms of the content category distributions.
The results of the analysis of tone and television stations using a chi square test were displayed in Table 3. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the tone of different station reports at the ≤ 0.05 level such that the value dimension scores from each station varied independently of one another. These findings provide the framing portion of the answer to the first research question. Based on the results of this chi square test there are differences between the framing activities of the three different Las Vegas television stations. By combining these two chi square analyses together it can be presumed that the three network affiliates in Las Vegas distribute mental health related content differently. Similarly, these results indicate the overall story tone from station reports are distributed differently from station to station. Therefore, it can be presumed agenda setting and framing activities of each station are different from one another.

To further assess these findings, an additional chi square analysis was performed.

RQ2) How do web stories from the different station websites compare in terms of the overall tone of mental health related content?

This third chi square was designed to determine if statistically significant differences in the distribution of reports within the content categories and value dimensions exist in DMA 40. The results of this evaluation of tone and content categories displayed in Table 2 had a significance of ≤ 0.001. This analysis was designed to assess the existence of a relationship between agenda setting (the a priori coded categories) and framing (the value dimensions) in the Las Vegas market. The level of significance of this chi square test indicates a relationship between agenda setting and framing which not only answers the second research question, but provides further support for the results discussed in terms of answering the first research question. In this study the value dimension scores varied when distributed across the content categories indicating the existence of a relationship between agenda setting and framing, which will be further assessed in chapter 7 (Discussion). The two supplemental questions sought to
identify differences in station coverage of mental health related stories in terms of both content and tone.

SQ1) Does the number of mental health related news reports in the Las Vegas market vary by station?

Mental health related content varied by station in terms of the frequencies of mental health related stories within DMA 40. Graph 4 illustrates the differences in frequencies within KTNV covering 86 stories as compared to the 42 covered by KLAS and 66 covered by KSNV. Graph 4 also displays the distribution of mental health related stories within each station based on the four a priori coded categories.

Interestingly, KLAS covered the least number of mental health related stories, but had more suicide related stories (15, 35.7%) than any other category. The percentage of suicide related stories covered by KLAS is vastly different when compared to suicide related stories by KTNV (19, 22.1%) and KSNV (12, 18.2%). The KLAS coverage was more evenly distributed across the content categories as shown in Graph 4 (above), while the other stations had larger differences in coverage distributions. KLAS had the least amount of stories in the crime and
courts category (9, 21.4%) than the other stations, which had the largest number of stories included in the crime and courts category with KTNV covering 41 stories (47.7%) and KSNV covering 33 stories (50%). The frequency of stories included from each station in the different content categories further supports the differences in agenda setting activities discussed in the response to the first research question. To address the framing differences between the stations, supplemental question 2 similarly assesses the differences among the stations in terms of the value dimension scores.

SQ2) Does the percentage of positive, neutral, and negative reports vary by station within the market?

In discussing the effects of tone on the individual stations within the market, the percentage analysis of positive, neutral, and negative varied greatly depending on the station. Graph 5 and Table 10 display this variation in the distribution of station reports across the different value dimensions. Keeping in mind that KTNV had 20 more stories than KSNV and KSNV had 24 more stories than KLAS, KLAS had a greater percentage of positive stories (41%) within their station when compared to both KTNV (28%) and KSNV (21%). In assessing the neutral category, KTNV (50%) had the highest percentage of content when compared to KLAS (48%) and KSNV (41%). What is interesting is that KLAS had a greater percentage of neutral stories within their station even though KSNV had more overall stories. In evaluating the negative content, KSNV (38%) by far had the highest content in this area when compared to KTNV (22%) and KLAS (12%) within their individual station.
Further analysis in assessing tone was conducted to show the percentages of the value dimensions from each individual station as compared to the overall market. KTNV (43%) had the highest number of positive stories; however, KLAS (31%) had a higher number of positive reports than KSNV (26%). Based on the fact that KTNV had the highest number of stories, and
KSNV had the second highest, the percentages in the neutral category shown in Percentage Table 2 were congruent with the overall market trend. Interestingly, the negative category percentages for the individual stations, however, varied with the content market totals per individual station. For instance, KSNV (51%) had the highest percentage of negative content when compared to the overall market. Even though KTNV (39%) had the most stories included in this study, their negative value dimension category was approximately 12-percent less than KSNV. Based on KSNV’s percentage of negative stories within the individual station as seen in Table 10, and the overall percentage of negative stories compared to the total market (Table 11), this station had the highest occurrence of negative tone in the entire market. As expected, KLAS (10%) had the lowest percentage of negative content because this station had the least number of stories in this study.

Table 11

*Market Value Dimensions Percentages (n=194)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KTNV-ABC</th>
<th>KLAS-CBS</th>
<th>KSNV-NBC</th>
<th>Report Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>43.60%</td>
<td>30.90%</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>55 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>47.80%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>90 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>38.80%</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>51.00%</td>
<td>49 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings in this study, each station acts independently of one another when reporting stories about mental health related content. Each station has its own agenda and acts as a sole proprietor over how they present these stories on their respective station websites. This independence could be reflective as to how they actually report content on their various broadcasts throughout the day. Whether it is actually present throughout a station’s various newscasts or confined to only each stations website, the study is significant because certain stations such as KSNV present more negative story content in general compared to KTNV and KLAS. This could be significant for a mental health consumer. As Wahl (2006) has suggested, stigma is often the result in news reports. If a station, such as KSNV is reporting more negative content than positive content and is subsequently loaded with stigmatizing language, this could further enhance lack of knowledge about a mental illness and even result in lack of help for a person with a disorder. On the other hand, KLAS had the least amount of negative online content over the one-year time period and overall their stories were more equally distributed between positive and neutral. Based on the results of this study, a mental health consumer (person with a mental illness) would be better suited to watch KLAS over KSNV and KTNV.

The way stories are framed can have a lasting impact to the people watching. Sieff (2003) discussed how people develop frames to make sense of the world around them and in turn, the news media will often frame stories in a certain way because it makes sense to them. Negative frames about mental illness could influence someone to believe that all persons with a mental disorder are capable of criminal behavior. Contrary to this, positive frames could offer a new perspective and give the viewer an opportunity to eliminate any predisposed stigmas.
As discussed throughout this study, agenda setting and framing play into one another as to how the news sets their daily agendas and then how they frame each story. This study shows that the Las Vegas news market is no different and these two mass communication theories are prevalent in daily online reporting. Based on the results, the agenda of each station is different in how they report mental health content. For instance, some stations, such as KTNV, overall had more mental health related content. Why a station chooses to report more mental health related stories, could be based on how a particular station chooses to frame their overall content. KLAS, for example, may report more positive content about mental health because of how they choose to frame these types of stories.

Additional results of the study found that the majority of the content reported fell under the neutral category. In one sense, this is good because this means stations are offering balanced news coverage. On the other hand, this also means content isn’t offering resources for the larger mental health community such as outreach and community help.

The other important facet of this study was examining the frequency of people-first language versus non-people-first language. Throughout all 194 reports, there were 264 accounts of NPF and 235 of PF. As research has suggested, using PF language is highly beneficial to someone with a mental illness instead of language that fuels stigma. If the stations in this market use NPF language more frequently than PF language, this shows that even though the tone of the overall stories within Las Vegas are more likely to fall into the neutral category, stations are still more likely use loaded language. In addressing stigma once again, this only further enhances harmful language to a person with a mental illness.

Station agendas could also factor into how this agenda is presented. What is interesting is that there are fewer occurrences of higher frequencies of PF language within stories. For
instance, there was only one story with nine occurrences of PF and only two with eight occurrences. This suggests are fewer stories are presented overall with frequency of people-first language. When compared to the frequency of NPF language there are fewer stories with higher occurrences such as with PF, but the frequency count goes up to 10 per one story and highest at 13. Yet again, this suggests the overall news market could enhance people-first language usage within news stories online.

One solution is that news stations could have more reporters/writers covering stories that are not just general assignment, but are more specialized in nature such that they become familiar with this content. For instance, if a reporter is able to cover health related stories, than they would likely be the designated person to cover a story about mental health. As Blood and Holland (2004) discovered in their research, privacy rights were taken away from mental illness patients located in hospitals as a result of stigmatized news reports. They found that the reporters covering these stories were not specialized in mental health or health relate topics and were more generalist or crime beat reporters. Sieff (2003) also suggested that thematic over syntactical reporting is the more preferred method in stories about mental illness. Thematic builds the story and provides a background basis for why a person with a mental illness might commit a crime, whereas syntactical merely is designed to grab readers’ attention through headlines.

In sum, it is critical for all news personnel and management to be considerate of how they select daily content of mental health stories. They should ask whether a mental illness is relevant to a particular story and if it adds to the knowledge based in educating the public. Potentially, more importantly, if mental illness is a necessary part of the story, then they should consider how that story is framed and the type of language that is used in that report.
There were a few limitations to this study that could be further enhanced in future studies. One limitation is that the study only used descriptive statistics and did not use any inferential statistics. Therefore, any inferences about correlations and statistical testing of identified relationships were not possible. This study sought to identify an existence of a relationship between two variables (i.e. TV stations and content categories) for further analysis or future research studies.

Another limitation of the study is that it was only confined to the Las Vegas news market. Based on the DMA (designated market area), Las Vegas is a 40 market and falls within what is considered a ‘mid-market’ news station. A major media market such as the Dallas/Fort Worth area or Los Angeles might be better suited for a study like this because the markets are much larger and the staff is more likely to have more resources. In addition, there would likely be more internet news content with mental health related stories in a larger designated media market.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

The results of this study suggest the existence of a relationship between content of television news stories and the tone of the stories as displayed on station web pages. Future research could look at this relationship further to assess some additional impact variables on mental health coverage in local television markets. These studies could build off of the people-first versus non-people-first language discussion to determine some reasons for differences between stations, content categories, and value dimensions. Additional studies could also seek to evaluate the reason for which news management select and emphasize mental health related news coverage in terms of the distribution of reports across content categories. Further research, such as a qualitative and quantitative case study could also assess the impact of reporters’ personal perceptions of mental health and mental illness on the frequency of people-first versus non-people-first language as well as the distribution of reports across the different value dimensions.
APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SCHEDULE
**Content Analysis Coding Schedule**

**MEDIA COVERAGE OF MENTAL HEALTH -- MARKET 40**

### GENERAL CLASSIFICATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television Stations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KTNV-ABC - (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLAS-CBS - (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSNV-NBC - (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date Posted:**

| MM-DD-YYYY |

### OVERALL CONTENT COUNTS:

- **Sentence Count**
- **Word Count (including headline)**

### A PRIORI CODED CATEGORIES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health/Mental Illness Awareness - (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Courts - (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Related - (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Related - (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VALUE DIMENSIONS:

- **Positive - (1)**
- **Neutral - (2)**
- **Negative - (3)**

### VALUE DIMENSION ASSESSMENTS:

- Assessing overall tone based on the language included in terms of mental health terminology (people first language vs. non-people first language)
- Frequency of People First Language
- Frequency of Non-People First Language

### Identified "People First/Non-People First Language" Phrases and Words:
APPENDIX B

CRITICAL VALUES OF CHI-SQUARE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>df</th>
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<th>0.05</th>
<th>0.01</th>
<th>0.001</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>3.84</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>10.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>13.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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*modified from (Warner, 2013 p. 1063)
REFERENCES


