

THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISM ROLES AND MEDIA TRUST

Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences of the
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of

Master of Arts in Communication

By

Francesca Robin Hackworth, M.S.

Dayton, Ohio

May 2021



THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISM ROLES AND MEDIA TRUST

Name: Hackworth, Franchesca Robin

APPROVED BY:

Chad Painter, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Angeline Sangalang, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Jennifer Ptacek, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Joseph Valenzano, Ph.D.
Department Chair of School of Communication

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISM ROLES AND MEDIA TRUST

Name: Hackworth, Franchesca Robin
University of Dayton

Advisor: Dr. Chad Painter

In the midst of a public health crisis, the public seeks information to help make sense of the world around them. The news media in particular are considered a primary source for that information and context. Historically, journalists have followed a set of roles and responsibilities to ensure that they serve the public well, also known as social responsibility theory. The study investigates what roles the public perceives that journalists are fulfilling both on a day-to-day basis and in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, the study investigates if perceived role fulfillment predicts how much trust the public has in news organizations. The study also worked to learn if the type of news consumption is related to media trust. Overall, it was found that perceived role fulfillment does not predict media trust and the type of news consumption is not related to media trust. The findings indicate that perhaps there is a disconnect between the traditional journalism roles and what the public looks for in a trusted news source. Additional themes suggest that the relationship between the public and the news media would benefit from an open conversation and reevaluation of what is expected of one another in order for journalists to gain further trust from the public and fulfill the long-standing roles and responsibilities they ought to be fulfilling.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHOD.....	16
RESULTS.....	23
DISCUSSION.....	26
REFERENCES.....	38
APPENDICES	
A. Survey for the Public.....	42
B. Survey for Journalists.....	59
C. Informed Consent Form.....	67

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. It has swept through communities and continues to reign as uncertainty permeates among those trying to navigate a new type of world where masks are required and embracing loved ones is prohibited. As society tries to navigate what many are calling “our new normal,” they need someone to ask leaders and medical experts the tough questions, and to give meaning to orders and advice set forth by those leaders. That someone is the news media.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that has led to the death of more than 564,838 Americans and more than 3,003,403 people world-wide as of April 16, 2021 (New York Times, 2020; Worldometer, 2020). Further, the pandemic remains ongoing throughout the publication of this study. COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (World Health Organization, 2020). The virus primarily spreads between people when an infected person is in close contact with another person (World Health Organization, 2020). Additionally, the virus is spread as small liquid particles are transmitted by a person who coughs, sneezes, speaks, sings or breathes heavily into another person’s mouth, nose or eyes (World Health Organization, 2020). The details of how COVID-19 is transmitted has led to medical experts suggesting best practices for managing the virus such as social distancing, mask wearing and disinfecting. Keeping a set distance from others—the suggested space is six feet—is meant to keep droplets from entering each other’s eyes, nose, and mouth. If droplets leave a person but their neighbor is far enough away that the droplets will not reach their body, the virus most likely will not spread to

them. Wearing a mask is meant to add an additional protection by keeping the droplets that a person transmits from spreading far. The idea is that the mask catches the majority of droplets before they reach another person.

As suggestions from medical experts continue to change and develop, leaders are left with trying to decide what to do with the information and how to implement the advice. Many state governors, including Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, implemented a mask order stating that masks must be worn at any indoor location that is not a residence, outside when a person is unable to remain six feet away from someone who does not live in their household, and when waiting for, driving, riding or operating public transportation (Ohio Department of Health, 2020).

Once leaders decide how they will implement the advice of medical experts, it becomes the role of the journalist to distribute that information and give it meaning and proper context for members of society. Journalists have an inherent say in how people think about what medical professionals and government leaders do during a public health crisis by how they choose to frame the information they share. Not only do journalists choose what stories are most important to cover, they also choose how they will cover them. During a time when the world is experiencing a global pandemic, people turn to journalists. Forty-six percent of Americans surveyed say that local news outlets are a major source of news about the coronavirus outbreak (Shearer, 2020). Additionally, 50 percent of Americans say that local news media largely get the facts right about the COVID-19 outbreak (Shearer, 2020).

Members of society are acknowledging that they need journalists and newspapers to help keep them informed. Now more than ever, when little hope is found and so many

questions are left unanswered, it is imperative for journalists to fulfill the roles that the public expects them to. Fulfilling journalism roles shows the public that journalists are committed to being a watchdog for the public.

The purpose of this study is to examine the roles and responsibilities the press should fulfill that are in accordance with journalism ethics and what the public believes the press should be doing to serve its community well. The roles and responsibilities will primarily be assessed during a health crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic.

This research is important for scholars as it will help those who are educating future journalists. The list will create a deeper understanding of the ethical elements associated with becoming a journalist. By taking a closer look and comparing what society expects with what journalists actually do, the findings will further scholar's understanding of normative theory as it applies to journalists. A deeper understanding of how this theory applies to vocation will prepare instructors to lay out the key elements of vocation as it applies to journalists preparing to enter the workforce. Additionally, understanding the perceived role of a journalist during a health crisis is particularly important for furthering journalistic academia due to the prominent role the news plays during any crisis occurring within society. Journalists are essential to providing the public with information during a crisis. If scholars use this analysis of how well journalists are perceivably doing at providing crucial information during an uncertain time, then they can be further prepared to train upcoming journalists on what methods work and what methods do not work when trying to serve the public well during a health crisis.

Additionally, this set of roles and responsibilities set forth by both the press and the public are also imperative to journalists who are already working in the field. As

norms and expectations of society evolve and grow, it is possible that the expectations of the people serving that society may change over time as well. Although the core ethics of who a journalist must be will likely stay the same throughout time, it is important that those who have been in the journalism field continue to stay knowledgeable and focused when it comes to remembering what their key roles are as they pertain to society. By integrating traditional journalism ethics with a fresh set of expectations offered by the current members of society, this list will offer a new and balanced perspective for working journalists. Whether the findings in this study are the same as when journalists were first trained or they are altered as a result of society's evolution, the list will still serve as a fresh and modern tool for a journalist to check how well he or she is fulfilling his or her role.

Literature Review

Journalism roles and responsibilities

At its most basic definition, normative theory explains the things people ought to do. The theory outlines what roles and responsibilities people have, and when applied to journalism, scholars think of normative theory as the basis for why journalists have these roles and responsibilities. There are four components of normative theory: the authoritarian theory, the libertarian theory, the social responsibility theory of the press and the Soviet communist theory.

Social responsibility theory of the press. The social responsibility theory in particular applies to the relationship between the press and the public. Social responsibility theory lays out six tasks that journalists should carry-out: (1) serve the political system by providing information, discussion, and debate on public affairs; (2)

enlighten the public to make it capable of self-government; (3) safeguard the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government; (4) service the economic system by bringing together the buyers and sellers of goods and services through advertising; (5) provide entertainment; and (6) maintain its own financial self-sufficiency so as to be free from the pressures of special interests (Siebert et al., 1956). Scholars point out that despite these six functions being crucial parts of what makes journalism work, some news media organizations have failed to interpret them and carry them out in a way that is beneficial to the public (Siebert et al., 1956). Social responsibility theory is grounded in its focus on the public. Scholars say servicing the economic system or entertainment area should never take precedence over functions that promote democratic processes or enlighten the public, but they feel some news organizations have not followed this social responsibility ideal (Siebert et al., 1956).

Historical progression of journalism roles. During the Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947, commonly called the Hutchins Commission, a committee of twelve intellectuals who were not journalists came together to discuss roles and the responsibilities of journalists beyond the profession's code of ethics. It was crucial during the Hutchins Commission that the assessment of the press come from the outside. No one with ties to the press was to be a part of the decision-making process of what the citizens should get from the press. After many discussions during the commission, the committee came to agree on what the requirements of the press should be. A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events must be given in a context that gives those events meaning for citizens (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). Elements of giving that truthful and complete account of the day's events include

knowing what questions to ask to give better context to readers, and preferring first-hand knowledge instead of hearsay.

The second requirement of the press is to provide a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). Committee members argued that in order to be a free and democratic society, new ideas must be shared and not stifled by the press. If journalists are not publishing ideas that differ from their own, then they are not facilitating encompassing discussions that can be representative of multiple groups of people.

In addition to providing a public forum for all people, the commission stressed that the press must project a representative picture of the constituent groups in society. An example noted in the commission includes that a Black person must not only be portrayed as a servant in published works, he or she must be given equally representative roles as other races. Women should be depicted as managers and engineers: roles that go beyond the mother and caretaker. These portrayals could be used to spark discussion within the public sphere. If the press is exemplifying social aspirations of the public in published work, then the hope is that the public will gradually build up respect and understanding of it (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947).

Presenting and clarifying the goals and values of society is the fourth requirement of the press set in the Hutchins Commission (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). The committee argues that the press has the power to either clarify or blur values within the community based on how they present information at the end of the day (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). The press is regarded as an “educational instrument” that must neither idealize nor mitigate events that align with or stray away

from societal values (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, p. 28). Instead, the press should focus on realistic reporting and clarify how such events fit within the values of society (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947).

The fifth and final requirement set by the Hutchins Commission states that the press must allow full access to the day's intelligence (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). The committee explains that each person may not read every piece of information available to them in one given moment. However, if someone ever chooses to assume the power of making a decision, then the press has a responsibility to provide a record of information available to the public so that they have the tools they need to make such decisions (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947).

With the Commission on Freedom of the Press serving as one of the defining moments in regard to the role of the journalist, subsequent scholars have continued, added, and adjusted those five original requirements.

John Dewey began to shift what the role of the journalist means in 1954. Instead of only relaying information that explains the happenings of each day, a new idea formed that the press should be emphasizing alternative choices for the public so that they can take action in regard to the news of the day (Dewey, 1954). Dewey argues that it is not enough to present citizens with facts and assume they will create meaning by reading the material alone (Dewey, 1954). Instead he insists that in order for the public to become collaborators, the words must be altered and used to shape new points of view that create meaning. In the context of a democratic society, citizens cannot truly be self-ruling if the facts of each day are taken at face-value and never scrutinized for new context. It is the

role of the press to search for these new contexts with each passing day and provide them to the public so that society can continue to be free and self-ruling.

After establishing that the press has a duty to provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events; a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society; presenting and clarifying the goals and values of the society; full access to the day's intelligence; and context that can allow room for the public to create new meaning, a new set of scholars emerged in 2009 to bring about a fresh set of roles for the press (The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; Dewey, 1954).

Christians et al. (2009) lay out four distinct roles of the press: monitorial, facilitative, collaborative, and radical. Diving into the roles and responsibilities that journalists have is crucial because of their primary function to serve the public. Arguably, any group or organization that has a primary function of serving the community would benefit from a common ideology outlining what they should be doing so that they can periodically reflect and assess if they are in fact doing the things that they say they should be doing. Social responsibility theory reflects this ideology that the press has to continually balance between freedom and control, self-regulation and public regulation, respect for national culture and cultural diversity, personal needs and community needs (Christians et al., 2009). The press holds a certain power with the knowledge that they have and choosing how to expel that knowledge to the community can be challenging when considering the balancing act described by scholars. The ambiguous nature of information and the complexity that comes with choosing how it will be presented

provides room for a set of roles to help make the process a little less ambiguous for journalists.

The monitorial role of the journalist is described as surveillance (Christians et al., 2009). The media is often thought of as a lookout tower, overseeing the happenings of society for anything that must be brought to the attention of society. If anything happens that may threaten the self-governing society in place, it is the role of the journalist to be on the lookout and bring that information to light to be dealt with by society.

In addition to serving a monitorial role, journalists are called to be facilitators. It is not enough to lay out the associations and activities connected to society. Instead, the press must push citizens to improve political standings and associations themselves. Members of society should be encouraged to become a part of the conversation that decides what is important to the greater community instead of letting elite government officials decide what is best for them (Christians et al., 2009). The decisions government officials are making are primarily concerned with everyday citizens, so the press should be educating society on the politics happening behind closed doors in order for the public to have a say in its own future (Christians et al., 2009).

The radical role is the third function of the press suggested by Christians and his colleagues. This ideal of a radical function implies that the press must not tolerate any injustices within society (Christians et al., 2009). In the eyes of the press everyone is free and equal. Any movement that works toward stopping injustices must be supported and brought to life through the media so that each member of society has a fair chance at being represented and understood. It is the function of journalists to give context to such injustices. Not only should the incidents be reported, but questions should also be asked

addressing how the abuses of power were able to happen in the first place (Christians et al., 2009). Exposing injustice is one element of the radical role, but exposing the core of the systemic issues takes remedying injustices to the next level. Information explaining what leads to systemic injustices contextualizes how to resolve abuses of power within the larger society instead of fixing each isolated incident and never seeing societal improvement.

The fourth role of the press is collaborative. Christians et al., (2009) suggests a collaboration between the press and the state that facilitates mutual trust and a commitment to serve society. The press and the state often work together to provide information that will keep citizens safe (Christians et al., 2009). This collaboration gives journalists access to information and materials that would not otherwise be available. Information such as details of a crime or investigation, interviews that are not typically available and video footage. A collaborative relationship helps the press serve its community by providing details. If the state and the press did not work together and have the needs of society in mind, then citizens would be lacking a large portion of information that they need in order to live each day. The 2020 coronavirus pandemic is an example of state and media collaboration that is working to serve the needs and safety of the public. Without access to experts, data, and guidelines, the press would not be able to provide the public with the information it needs to live through a pandemic. The relationship between the state and the press is one of balance and accountability, but if upheld responsibly that relationship is one of the greatest tools set forth for society.

There is little doubt that society still sees the four functions set forth by Christians et al., 2009 being practiced by professional journalists today, but as society continues to

evolve and increase in complexity, so do the roles of journalists. The core roles of journalists are not likely to change, for example the press will always need to be monitorial and ensure that citizens continue to be self-governing. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2011, p. 14) argued for an “information created democracy,” driving home the point that without the press’ ability to provide the public with information, democracy cannot exist. Moreover, the heart of journalism may stay the same, but additions are sure to ensue so that the practice maintains its relevance in modern society.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2011) supply key elements of journalism in an attempt to update the Hutchins Commission findings. Most of the elements can be seen in roles outlined that date back to the Hutchins Commission in 1947 and continue with Dewey (1954) and Christians et al. (2009), but Kovach and Rosenstiel lay out elements that apply to the inner workings of society as we know them in the 21st century. Journalism’s primary purpose is described as providing citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2011). With this definition of journalism in mind, Kovach and Rosenstiel outline some of the essential elements that the press must keep in mind while providing information to the public.

- Journalism’s first obligation is to the truth;
- Journalism’s first loyalty is to citizens;
- The essence of journalism is a discipline of verification;
- Journalists must maintain an independence from those they cover;
- Journalism must serve as an independent monitor of power;
- Journalism must provide a public forum for public criticism and compromise;

- Journalism must make the significant interesting and relevant;
- Journalism should keep the news comprehensive and in proportion; and
- Journalists have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience.

The inherent obligations of telling the truth, giving meaning to events within society, serving as a watchdog over elite government officials, and allowing the public to form their own discussions on what they care about most in this world are functions reflected in The Hutchins Commission (1947), John Dewey (1954), the works of Christians et al. (2009), and Kovach and Rosenstiel (2011). These undeniable functions of the press continue to persist despite the evolution of society. Journalists have a social responsibility to seek truth, give it context, and provide it to the public so that new conversations and representations can always be present. The establishment of these roles can be used to hold the press accountable and assess whether or not they do in fact serve the functions set forth by scholars from the 1940s through the 2000s, and beyond.

News media and the public

There are times in society when public health crises permeate the thoughts and actions among citizens. The enduring and likely long-term health crisis known as the COVID-19 pandemic is now a part of many people's thoughts and actions every second of everyday. Members of society are consumed with the complexities of a virus that has uprooted their lives and contributed to a life full of "new norms" such as wearing masks in public, elbow bumping instead of handshaking, not hugging friends or loved ones, and staying away from any large gatherings like concerts or festivals. The one thing that does not seem to be changing during the public health crisis is the way that citizens are

consuming the information that they use when they talk amongst each other: the news media.

Societal effects of sourcing and framing. One of the greatest effects on a person's health is often the environment that they are living in (Coleman et al., 2011). The fact that the behavior of others has such a crucial impact on how each person lives emphasizes the importance of choosing a way to frame public health information. Society will discuss what is put in front of them by the media, and it is likely that it will be talked about in the way that it is portrayed by the media. This scenario indicates that the context of the information given has a direct impact on how people choose to live. In the past, scholars have found that public health framing has caused people to support public policy changes. If they understand the information enough to endorse policy change, then they might begin to think about changing their own health behaviors, which could help them live healthier and better lives (Coleman et al., 2011).

Media trust. For years scholars have investigated the relationship between the news media and the public, particularly in the context of how much trust the public has in the news media and the content they are reporting. In 2005, Tsfaty and Cappella noticed that trust in the news media was low, yet people were still consuming news, so they began to investigate why people follow mainstream news media if they do not trust it. The study results indicated that people may consume mainstream news media if they are skeptical of the content because they enjoy listening to diverse points of view, they like to deliberate about problems, and they get satisfaction from thinking (Tsfaty & Cappella, 2005). Despite the fact that Tsfaty and Cappella's (2005) findings show that people follow the mainstream news media regardless of their level of trust, it would be beneficial to

both journalists and the public if they could consume news that they trust in order to be a free and self-governing body of people.

Subsequent scholars have investigated what particular characteristics the public looks for in a trusted news media source. One study completed by Nedjat et al. in 2014 interviewed family households who consumed news in Tehran, Iran, about their level of trust in the health news that was delivered. A limitation of Nedjat et al.'s (2014) work and its applicability to the current study is the different cultural contexts that the results are found in. However, people have an inherent need for a truthful delivery of health information regardless of what culture they come from so that they can live a full and healthy life. Nedjat et al. (2014) found that people's level of trust in the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) health news was greater than their trust in satellite channels and internet health news.

Kalogeropoulos et al., (2019), established that news has drastically changed in recent years with the emergence of social media platforms being used as distribution channels, and that change is affecting the way we navigate the online news environment. Kalogeropoulos et al.'s (2019) findings show that higher levels of trust are associated with the use of mainstream sources such as TV news and websites of newspapers. Additionally, scholars found that lower levels of trust were associated with the use of social media as the main source of news (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). The findings of both Nedjat et al. (2014) and Kalogeropoulos et al. (2019) show that trust in the news media may indeed be dependent upon how the public is consuming their news. The current study is interested in investigating both how the perceived role fulfillment of journalists may be correlated with media trust and how type of news consumption may be

correlated with media trust. Although research in the past has addressed how type of news consumption correlates with media trust, little research has been done to investigate the relationship between role fulfillment and media trust.

Research Questions

RQ 1A. Does perceived role fulfillment predict general media trust?

RQ 1B. Does perceived role fulfillment predict COVID-19 media trust?

RQ 2. Does type of news media source predict media trust?

METHOD

Participants

A total of ($n = 62$) participants completed the survey for the public including 51.6% males ($n = 32$) and 48.4% females ($n = 30$). All of the participants were adults above the age of 18. The age range of respondents for the public was 16.1% 18-24 ($n = 10$), 24.2% 25-34 ($n = 15$), 14.5% 35-44 ($n = 9$), 12.9% 45-54 ($n = 8$), and 32.3% 55+ ($n = 20$). The participants' race/ethnicity for the public consisted of 4.8% Black or African American ($n = 2$), 1.6% Hispanic or Latino ($n = 1$), and 93.5% White ($n = 58$). For the survey of the public 11.3% reported living in an Urban area ($n = 7$), 43.5% reported living in a Suburb ($n = 27$), and 45.2% reported living in a Rural area ($n = 28$). Participants reported the following political affiliations: 8.3% consistently liberal ($n = 5$), 10% mostly liberal ($n = 6$), 28.3% independent ($n = 17$), 35% mostly conservative ($n = 21$), and 18.3% consistently conservative ($n = 11$). Regarding news consumption, 54.1% of participants reported that they consume news daily ($n = 33$), 23% several times a week ($n = 14$), 16.4% weekly ($n = 10$), 3.3% every couple of weeks ($n = 2$), and 3.3% every month ($n = 2$). Overall, 33.3% of respondents reported that they consume their news by television ($n = 20$), 31.7% by online articles ($n = 19$), 28.3% on social media ($n = 17$), and 6.7% by newspapers ($n = 4$).

A total of ($n = 51$) participants completed the survey for journalists. All of the participants were adults above the age of 18. The age range of respondents for journalists 17.8% 18-24 was ($n = 4$), 25.5% 25-34 ($n = 13$), 23.5% 35-44 ($n = 12$), 17.6% 45-54 ($n = 9$), and 25.5% 55+ ($n = 13$). Participants in the journalist survey consisted of 51% females ($n = 26$) and 49% males ($n = 25$).

Procedure

In order to answer the above research questions, quantitative research was conducted. Quantitative research is used to measure and observe communication phenomena as amounts, frequencies, degrees, values or intensity (Keyton, 2015). Specifically within the realm of the current study, quantitative research was used to investigate phenomena of journalism values through the lens of journalists and the public. Once an assessment of values was completed, the results were assessed for comparisons or related factors using descriptive and inferential statistic techniques (Keyton, 2015). Questions of value can be inherently ambiguous to assess whether they are in a research study or everyday conversation. Quantitative data collection can bring greater precision and objectivity to the study (Keyton, 2015). Quantifying complex phenomena allows researchers to make comparisons among large groups of participants, make generalizations and contribute to other studies that are similar by offering an easily assessed set of hard data (Keyton, 2015).

Deductive reasoning is used when researchers select a theory and test that theory in the study to see if it proposes to be true (Keyton, 2015). Analytical surveys allowed data to be collected from a group of people that is representative of a larger population (Berger, 2020). Surveys are the best way to answer this set of research questions because they investigate what certain groups of people are thinking as well as why they behave the way that they do (Berger, 2020). Surveys in which participants are asked to respond to stimuli are used to describe, compare or explain knowledge attitudes or behavior of people (Keyton, 2015). The results of the surveys will help the researcher learn if

journalists' behavior and thoughts are affected by their relationship with health care providers and the public.

Deductive reasoning was used in the quantitative study to evaluate whether the roles established for journalists have been able to remain steadfast in an ever-changing society that demands the service of journalism as a global pandemic ensues. The history of journalism has led to the development of a set of roles and responsibilities for journalists. The study surveyed the public and journalists themselves to determine whether or not the once-formed roles journalists play in serving society remain relevant and fulfilled today.

Past researchers have used surveys to understand the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of both journalists and the public. Regarding which roles journalists identify with most Berganza et al. (2017) used surveys. Researchers found that journalists considered themselves to be citizen spokespeople more than disseminators of information (Berganza et al., 2017). The findings of the surveys align with the goal of the current study when it comes to understanding what journalists feel their roles and responsibilities are.

Scholars have also been known to use surveys when evaluating how the public is affected by the information that journalists disseminate. A previous study investigating the effect that ethnic newspapers had on the public's health behavior used surveys (King et al., 2018). Researchers evaluated variables such as participant's readership of 11 newspapers, health literacy, health motivation, cancer prevention behavior and media use to identify possible correlations between the effect of news consumption on the population's health behavior (King et al., 2018). Researchers used survey questions investigating each of these variables to determine if there was a relationship between

newspaper exposure and cancer prevention behaviors. A quantitative analysis of the variables was able to determine that consumption of one newspaper in particular was positively related to participation in cancer screening for those with high health motivation (King et al., 2018). The current study will seek to not only look at the perspective of consumers of news, but also the perspective of journalists and whether or not they believe that they are fulfilling their role when it comes to disseminating proper health information to the public.

King et al.'s (2018) study is similar to the current study in its analysis of the public's behavior based on journalist's work. Instead of searching for a direct relationship between consumption and behavioral change, the current study will use a similar model to look for a relationship between consumption and perceived role fulfillment of journalists.

Pingree et al. (2018), conducted a study using both an experiment and pre-test/post-test surveys to evaluate media trust. The survey questions evaluating media trust used a Likert scale (Pingree et al., 2018). The researcher's method of surveying to evaluate media trust is relevant to the investigation of the current study because it will also seek to answer questions of the public regarding journalists' roles and media trust during a public health crisis (Pingree et al. 2018).

The analytical surveys in this study included both open-ended questions and interval response closed ended questions (see appendix A). Open-ended questions allowed the survey takers to answer questions without being led to a certain answer and provided insight as to how something could be improved, which could not be determined through closed ended questions alone (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). Additionally, open-

ended questions are beneficial in their opportunity to allow for responses that the researcher may not have anticipated during the creation of the survey (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). Closed-ended questions were uniform and easy to quantify (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The mixture of closed and open-ended questions kept the survey takers from getting fatigued while responding to all open-ended questions, but it also gave them a chance to express completely unique ideas.

Sampling

The online survey program Qualtrics was used to conduct two online surveys, one for journalists and one for the public. Convenience sampling was used to recruit 51 participants who are journalists and 62 participants who are considered the general public. Overall, 108 people completed the survey for the public and 75 people completed the survey for journalists. However, only 51 journalists answered every role question and 62 of the public answered each role question limiting the usable number of survey responses. Researchers recruited journalists by emailing news organizations and journalists the survey link. Researchers recruited respondents for the public survey by posting the link to social media and email. The surveys were completed by individuals 18 and older. The survey was able to be completed on a personal laptop or a phone.

Measures

Journalism Roles

Participants completed a series of closed-ended items based upon the social responsibility theory first proposed by Siebert et al. (1956). Items about Christians et al.'s (2009) four journalistic roles including the monitorial, facilitator, radical, and collaborative roles were adapted from a previous study by Berganza et al. (2017). Survey

items were approved by the University of Dayton Institutional Review Board March 1, 2021. The survey was open to the public from March 9, 2021 to April 7, 2021. Participants did not receive any compensation for completing the survey. Participants were instructed to “Rate the level of importance you feel journalists placed on the following professional roles” using a Likert scale with 1 being not at all important and 5 being extremely important. The mean of the responses for each role was calculated. An open-ended question was included in the survey for journalists and the public to indicate “any additional roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have when serving the public.” Questions regarding the monitorial role ($M = 3.12$, $sd = .67$) were measured with items like “Journalists monitor political leaders’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic” and “Journalists are impartial observers.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the monitorial scale was 0.51. The facilitator role ($M = 3.43$, $sd = .61$) was measured with items such as “Journalists provide a current affairs analysis” and “Journalists motivate people to participate in civic activities and political discussions.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the facilitator scale was 0.72. The radical role ($M = 2.44$, $sd = 1.01$) was measured with items like “Journalists promote social change” and “Journalists influence public opinion.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the radical scale was 0.72. Finally, the collaborative role ($M = 2.15$, $sd = .86$) was measured using items like “Journalists support government policies” and “Journalists offer a positive image of political leaders.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the collaborative scale was 0.60.

Media Trust

Participants answered a series of closed-ended items based on national and local news organizations to evaluate media trust. Items on media trust were adapted from a

Pew Research study by Gramlich (2020) and approved by the University of Dayton's Institutional Review Board. First, participants were asked if they had heard of the news organization. If the participant answered yes, they were then asked to "Indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news" using a Likert scale with 1 being no trust and 3 being high trust. If the participant indicated they had no trust in the news outlet, then they were asked to "indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news." The two-part questions were asked to ensure that reporting "no trust" did not inaccurately assume the respondent directly distrusted that media source. Participants were surveyed on media trust using 24 different news outlets. Five of the news outlets were used to create a composite variable of media trust: CBS ($M = 2, sd = .71$), CNN ($M = 1.7, sd = .64$), Fox News ($M = 1.8, sd = .72$), MSNBC ($M = 1.7, sd = .60$), and NBC ($M = 1.9, sd = .57$). The mean score for level of trust that each respondent indicated for the five news outlets was combined and averaged together to create the composite variable for overall media trust. In order to conduct a more reliable analysis, the four news outlets that participants responded to most were chosen.

Type of news consumption

Type of news consumption was evaluated using a closed-ended multiple choice question, "How do you consume the majority of your news?" Respondents selected one of four options: television, online articles, social media, or newspapers.

RESULTS

Research Question 1A

Research question 1A investigates if perceived role fulfillment predicts general media trust. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict general media trust based on four journalism roles: monitorial, facilitator, radical and collaborative. The regression equation was not significant ($F(4, 58) = 4.22, p = .01$), with an R^2 of .23. None of the journalism roles such as monitorial ($\beta = 0.25, p = .07$), facilitator ($\beta = 0.18, p = .18$), radical ($\beta = 0.25, p = .05$), or collaborative ($\beta = -.18, p = .15$) were significant predictors of general media trust.

Research Question 1B

Research question 1B investigates if perceived role fulfillment predicts COVID-19 media trust. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict media trust during the COVID-19 pandemic based on four journalism roles: monitorial, facilitator, radical and collaborative. The regression equation was not significant ($F(4, 58) = 4.93, p = .00$), with an R^2 of .25. None of the journalism roles such as monitorial ($\beta = -.10, p = .49$), facilitator ($\beta = .31, p = .06$), radical ($\beta = .17, p = .24$), or collaborative ($\beta = .22, p = .10$) were significant predictors of media trust during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Question 2

Research question two examined if the type of news media source predicts media trust. Media trust of individuals who consume news in four different ways was compared using a one-way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ($F(3,56) = .66, p = .58$). Media trust was not significantly higher or lower based on whether or not news was consumed by television, online articles, social media, or newspapers. People who

consume television news had an average media trust score of 1.92 ($sd = .40$). People who consume online articles had an average media trust score of 1.81 ($sd = .42$). People who consume news by social media had an average media trust score of 1.73 ($sd = .39$). People who consume news by newspapers had an average media trust score of 1.85 ($sd = .60$).

Perceived role fulfillment averages

Overall the public reported that they perceive journalists to regard the following roles with the corresponding average importance. The monitorial role had an average perceived importance level of 3.11 ($sd = .67$). The facilitator role had an average perceived importance level of 3.43 ($sd = .61$). The radical role had an average perceived importance level of 2.44 ($sd = 1.01$). The collaborative role had an average perceived importance level of 2.15 ($sd = .86$).

Overall journalists reported that they perceive the following roles to be of importance with the corresponding averages. The monitorial role had an average perceived importance level of 3.45 ($sd = .58$). The facilitator role had an average perceived importance level of 3.96 ($sd = .48$). The radical role had an average perceived importance level of 2.81 ($sd = .96$). The collaborative role had an average perceived importance level of 1.36 ($sd = .42$).

The facilitator and monitorial roles were perceived to be important by both the public and journalists. The collaborative and radical roles seem to be of less importance to both groups.

Twenty-four participants filled out the optional open-ended question, "If applicable, please explain any additional roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have

when serving the public.” In 13 of the 24 responses, participants wrote that journalists should be unbiased or keep their personal opinions out of the story. Sample responses include:

“The most important thing is to be unbiased.”

“Journalists have a duty to report news impartially and without bias, regardless of their personal feelings or opinions interfering.”

“Journalists should be as impartial as possible when providing information; if they are providing (their own) biased information, then they are trying to persuade the audience... I do not feel it is a journalist's 'job' to persuade the audience; I feel they should present the information as it is and let people make their own decisions.”

In 11 of the 24 responses, participants wrote that journalists should report facts only and focus on truth. Sample responses include:

“Only report what they know to be true. Do not just report what they are told, what is popular opinion, or wherever the money trail leads.”

“Should not be politically aligned... stick with the verified facts.”

“They should present facts, which can be substantiated by credible sources, and allow the public to form their own opinions!”

In 2 of the 24 responses, participants wrote that journalists should be a watchdog for the public. Sample responses include:

“Impartial watchdogs on those in power, whether political or economic/business.”

“Calling out hypocrisy and holding political actors’ feet to the fire when necessary.”

It should be noted that in many of the statements, the language used was overlapping and some of them could fall under the unbiased theme or the truth theme.

DISCUSSION

The study found that perceived role fulfillment did not predict general media trust or COVID-19 media trust. Additionally, the type of news consumption was not found to be a significant predictor of media trust. Finally, on average, both the public and journalists found the roles of facilitator and monitorial to be the most important and radical and collaborative to be less important.

Little research has been done thus far investigating whether or not people tend to trust the news media based on whether or not journalists appear to be fulfilling their professional roles established dating back to the Hutchins Commission of 1947. Although no statistically significant findings were concluded from the current study, the fact that the role of facilitator was perceived to be the most important role fulfilled among both journalists and the public helps give context to how the public perceives journalists. The parallels in perceived role fulfillment indicate that the beliefs about what a journalist ought to do may not be as different in the eyes of the public and journalists as people think they are.

It is promising that the highest perceived role being fulfilled, facilitator, was the same for both the public and journalists. It should be noted that the perceived most important role has traditionally been monitorial and the shift in perception for both journalists and the public says something about how the primary needs of the public may be changing. Perhaps the public feels they are capable of monitoring what their leaders are doing themselves as long as the news media are presenting the information and allowing for discussions about those decisions to be facilitated. Both groups of people seem to care most about being presented with and presenting the information needed to

allow the public to make decisions on their own and be self-governing (Siebert et al., 1956; The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; John Dewey, 1954; Christians et al., 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2011). So far, the results are indicating that at their core, the news media and the public believe journalists roles to be the same. The question remains, why is there such a disconnect between the public and the news media if they are foundationally believing the same things? It appears that future researchers would benefit from a more open-ended study of media trust and role fulfillment to allow the public and journalists to speak for themselves regarding what the disconnect may be.

Perhaps both groups of people do agree on what a journalist should be doing, there is just a gap in the way that the roles are translated from one group of people to the other. Journalists may benefit from being more conscientious of how they are viewed in the eyes of the public. If journalists are transparent in what they do and how they cover stories, there will be little room for doubt among the public on whether or not they are being ethical and truthful in their methods. The findings are indicating that the public and journalists both believe that the most important thing for journalists to do is provide details to the public on what is occurring within society so that they can make their own decisions and conclusions. Christians et al. (2009) states that being a facilitator means encouraging citizens to become part of the conversation and educating them so that they can make their own decisions and not rely on government elites to make decisions for them. Fulfilling the facilitator role means enlightening the public on the happenings of government and economic elites behind closed doors, so it would seem appropriate that journalists be held to the same standard as those elites by being expected to be transparent in their journalistic decisions (Christians et al., 2009).

Having open conversations, question-and-answer sessions, or panels could be growing opportunities for journalists as well as a chance for the public to voice how they feel journalists could better fulfill their role as facilitator so that the public has what it needs to be free and self-governing. Trust in the news media may increase if the public is provided with details on who the elites are that journalists are questioning to fulfill the watchdog role and what questions they are trying to answer to help give the public the context they need.

The second perceived most important role among journalists and the public is monitorial. Being facilitative and monitorial goes hand-in-hand when thinking about what the public can do to increase transparency and trust with the public and affirm that the two most important roles are being fulfilled. If journalists state what they are inquiring about and who they are inquiring, then the public can feel confident knowing journalists who are supposed to be the watchdogs are doing what they can to get the answers the public needs. A simple example of this type of transparency might be, “We called Gov. DeWine’s office to ask how the state plans to make up for the monetary loss of closing businesses for four months as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, but we have not received an answer.” Christians et al. (2009) explains that the monitorial role looks out for any actions that threaten the self-governing society. Asking questions of elites shows the public that journalists are not happy with simply accepting information, they will take the leap and ask the tough questions for the public and insist that elites explain themselves and the decisions they make that impact the society.

The first three tasks outlined in the social responsibility theory directly align with the facilitator and monitorial roles of Christians et al. (2009). Task one describes that

journalists have a duty to provide information and allow for a debate of public affairs (Siebert et al., 1956). Task two states that journalists ought to enlighten the public to make it capable of self-government (Siebert et al., 1956). Both tasks mirror what Christians et al. (2009) suggests as the purpose of the facilitator role. Furthermore, task three in the social responsibility theory states that journalists ought to protect the rights of individuals by serving as a watchdog against the government, aligning directly with the monitorial role (Christians et al., 2009; Siebert et al., 1956). Journalists have a social responsibility to keep the public informed about how the leaders they elected are making changes that will affect their lives for more than a year such as cancelling nearly every public event, mandating a mask be worn, and now pushing for everyone to be vaccinated. The one foundational element of the news media that has never wavered from Siebert et al. (1956) to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2011) is that journalism's first obligation is to the truth and the first loyalty is to the citizens. Through the progression of mediums such as print, television, online articles and now social media, the relationship between the public and journalists has never changed and that is reflected in the facilitative and monitorial needs of the public as presented in the current study.

A notable detail concerning the social responsibility theory and the current findings is that Siebert et al. (1956) argued there are other roles journalists ought to fulfill such as entertainment and economics, but none of them are as important as providing information and being a watchdog. Similarly, the perceived most important roles in the current study are facilitator and monitorial as Siebert et al. (1956) suggested and the least important are collaborative and radical (Christians et al., 2009). The collaborative role suggests that journalists and the state work together to serve society and keep citizens

safe (Christians et al., 2009). It is not surprising that collaborative was perceived as one of the less important roles given tensions surrounding the current media climate and concerns with fake news or partisan reporting. Although, interestingly, there has been deep collaboration between the press and the government (at the local, state, and federal levels) to keep citizens informed during the pandemic—from outbreaks, to vaccines, to shutdowns. There is a fine balance that needs to occur with the collaborative role because the news media cannot be experts in every topic and journalists need to draw from certain medical experts. In general, it would be accurate to say that the press should not rely on collaborations to provide information to the public on a day-to-day basis. However, during extenuating circumstances such as a pandemic with many scientific unknowns some responsibility does lie with the public to understand and acknowledge that some questions must go unanswered for the time being and the most reliable source for that information has to be with medical professionals.

The radical role, one of the perceived less important roles for both the public and journalists states that the news media must not tolerate any injustice within society (Christians et al., 2009). Christians et al. (2009) goes on to say that any movement that works toward stopping injustices must be supported and brought to life through the media. Based on the comments made in the open-ended portion of the survey that emphasized not taking sides and presenting facts only, it could be understood that the public may not agree with Christians et al.'s (2009) belief in supporting any movement that stops injustice because the public does not believe journalists should support or not support any group no matter how good or ill their intentions may seem.

Overall, scholars would benefit from open question-and-answer sessions or panels between journalists and the public to give context to some of these perceived roles so that they can instill and empower aspiring journalists to know what their responsibilities as a journalist will be when they enter the workforce and begin serving the public firsthand. A transparent flow of communication could strengthen the relationship between the public and journalists and remind both groups that the profession was established to serve the public. Strength in the profession can be attained through a focus on foundational, core values of journalism such as obligations to the truth, loyalty to citizens, and being a watchdog (Siebert et al., 1956; The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; John Dewey, 1954; Christians et al., 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2011). Despite the lack of significant findings regarding media trust and role fulfillment, there was a reoccurring theme in the open-ended section of the surveys where the public could indicate any important roles they believe journalists should fulfill.

The open-ended responses contribute to a better understanding of what the public suggests that the roles and responsibilities of journalists are and might even indicate that the perceived roles from the public's perspective may be evolving. It is worth noting that being monitorial, facilitative, radical, and collaborative will likely always be crucial components of being a journalist given that throughout the progression of history those four roles seem to remain intact (Siebert et al., 1956; The Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; John Dewey, 1954; Christians et al., 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2011). However, the themes found in the public's responses could be the beginnings of an even simpler set of roles and responsibilities that the public is interested in: being a truthful, unbiased watchdog on elites. The four roles and responsibilities established do consist of

the three components suggested by the public, but breaking the four components down might serve to be something simpler that is more tangible for journalists and clearer for the public specifically during a health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

When considering the most important roles to the public in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, it is understandable why facilitator and monitorial would be of high importance for the public during a time when they have so many questions left unanswered. Not only does the public have information being thrown at them from many different experts, some of that information is even contradictory. The public may not be able to make sense of the information that is released making it difficult to make decisions that will help them continue to be a self-governing society (Christians et al., 2009). Additionally, the public needs journalists to ensure government elites are not trying to take advantage of them during a time when the public may be more likely to believe officials because they have little contextual information to rely on. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many governors implemented orders establishing statewide shutdowns. The shutdowns affected nearly every aspect of the public's daily lives. Many could not go to work, trips to grocery stores were limited, and checking on family members was permitted if deemed an absolute necessity. Government leaders were uprooting the lives of the people and journalists' monitorial role is to watch out for decisions leaders make that threaten the public's freedom. Even though circumstances are extreme with it being a pandemic, it is still up to journalists to ensure that leaders are not abusing those circumstances by controlling the economic system through the closure of businesses and changes in unemployment benefits.

Despite there being a lack of research specifically geared toward the relationship between role fulfillment and media trust, some research has been done on the potential relationship between how the public consumes news and media trust (Nedjat et al., 2014; Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). The current study did not find the way news is consumed to be a significant predictor of media trust. However, the lack of significant findings could be due to the small sample size and the complexity of the questions regarding role fulfillment.

A fairly new proposal by researchers to predict media trust was found in a study that tested the effects of defending journalism and fact checking on the audience during real online news (Pingree et al., 2018). Researchers found that reading opinion pieces that defended journalists and included fact checking resulted in trust in mainstream media, self-confidence in their own ability to decide what is true in politics, and intention to use a mainstream news portal in the future (Pingree et al., 2018). If the public is increasingly skeptical of journalists' willingness to take medical experts at their word for information during the COVID-19 pandemic, creating articles that explain why journalists may or may not be accepting the advice of experts could be a way for the public to see that journalists are facing criticisms head-on. By addressing what the public is skeptical of, journalists can show that they are not hiding from the criticisms. Instead, they are simply doing the best they can in an uncertain time like everyone else.

Additionally, Schapals (2018) investigated the issue of fake news from a journalists' perspective. Overall, the journalists shared in their interviews that they felt their roles of being a watchdog and speaking truth to power were being threatened by the ongoing fake news era (Schapals, 2018). A few ideas presented by the journalists on how

to reaffirm their roles included rigorous fact checking and taking the time to get the facts right (Schapals, 2018). Schapals' (2018) findings are reflected in the open-ended responses of the current study that indicate the public wants only the verified facts. Many responses noted that they do not want journalists to take experts at their word, but verify the information the experts give for themselves. This type of rigorous verification and intense assessment of scientific studies released about the pandemic are methods the journalists can use to fight the fake news era and help the public feel more confident in coronavirus related news.

Pingree et al.'s (2018) and Schapals (2018) findings support the suggestion to have open conversations with the public and journalists in order to reestablish a good relationship. The fact that participants were interested in hearing what journalists had to say about their own credibility and defending their methods indicates that the public wants to "hear" journalists' side when it comes to why they have the procedures that they do. If journalists stand up for themselves, acknowledge there is a growing disconnect between the public and the news media, and work to close that gap, the public may have a renewed respect for the profession that serves them and allows them to be free and self-governing.

Overall, the comments in the current study and the findings of Pingree et al. (2018) make it seem as though the public is frustrated by journalists who do not acknowledge that people are unhappy with some of the perceived biases portrayed in news stories. The current study was working to close the gap between journalists and the public by investigating how well the public perceives journalists to be fulfilling their roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the current study helped close that

gap by suggesting that the perceived important roles are in fact the same among both the public and journalists. The next step is working to create more media trust and establish that the responsibilities of journalists are the same in the eyes of the public and the news media. For nearly a year, few stories made the news that did not have something to do with the coronavirus and it should be noted that the results may look different if circumstances were less uncertain. However, a public health crisis such as a pandemic can be arguably one of the most defining moments in a relationship between the public and journalists because it is a true test evaluating when times get hard, who will the journalists serve?

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of the study, and a potential impact on the lack of significant findings, is the overall sample size. Although 108 surveys from the public were completed, only 62 participants completed each question. Of the 75 surveys completed by journalists, only 51 participants completed each question. The small sample size makes finding correlations less reliable.

Another possible limitation of the study could be the ways in which the questions signifying roles were phrased in the survey. It is possible that respondents did not answer questions related to role fulfillment if they did not understand what the questions were asking or what roles the questions were indicating. The answers provided in the open-ended question on the survey contained themes similar to the ones that were portrayed in the survey questions, except they were worded in a different way. The open-ended answers that were similar to the closed-ended survey questions could indicate that the

public may have been unsure if the roles they truly wish journalists would fulfill were reflected in the language of the survey, thus suggesting a lack of clarity in the wording.

Additionally, the scale evaluating media trust had limitations because every respondent may not have been familiar with the news organization listed, and therefore could not record their level of trust for that outlet. In the future, a better approach would be to create generic scales for media trust that are not directly associated with specific news outlets, especially due to the perceived partisanship surrounding certain national television outlets.

Future researchers should consider conducting a similar study, but simplifying the wording of the journalism roles and ensuring that they do not include any professional jargon. Additionally, they could aim for a larger number of respondents to create a more reliable data set. An alternative to the larger data set, and one that fits the hope of a conversational element within the study, could be to conduct elicitation surveys or focus groups for a more open-ended version of the study. There is value in allowing participants to speak freely and tell journalists exactly where they are feeling a disconnect. Additionally, journalists would have an opportunity to speak freely and respond to raised concerns among the public. The consistent themes found in the open-ended question suggests that some of the individuals in the public may be unhappy with the current news media climate, making it clear that a conversation needs to occur. In some instances such as interviews or focus groups, both parties may benefit more from allowing the public to put into their own words what they need from journalists instead of forcing them to adapt to a traditional set of roles and responsibilities that is presented in a quantitative study. It may be found that the public still indeed does desire news media

that will fulfill all of the traditional roles. However, the public may need to come to that realization in their own way and in their own words.

REFERENCES

- Berganza, R., Lavín, E., & Piñeiro-Naval, V. (2017). Spanish journalists' perception about their professional roles. *Comunicar: Media Education Research Journal*, 25(51), 83–92.
- Berger, A. A. (2020). *Media and communication research methods: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Christians, C. G., Glasser, T. L., McQuail, D., Nordenstreng, K., & White, R. A. (2009). Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Coleman, R., Thorson, E., & Wilkins, L. (2011). Testing the effects of framing and sourcing in health news sources. *Journal of Health Communication*, 16(9), 941–954.
- Commission on Freedom of the Press. (1947). A free and responsible press. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- <https://archive.org/details/freeandresponsib029216mbp/page/n35/mode/2up>
- Gilles, I., Bangerter, A., Clémence, A., Green, E. G. T., Krings, F., Staerklé, C., & Wagner-Egger, P. (2011). Trust in medical organizations predicts pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccination behavior and perceived efficacy of protection measures in the Swiss public. *European Journal of Epidemiology: Affiliated to the European Epidemiology Federation*, 26(3), 203. <https://doi-org.libproxy.udayton.edu/10.1007/s10654-011-9577-2>
- Gramlich, J. (2020, August 18). *Q&A: How Pew Research Center evaluated Americans'*

- trust in 30 news sources*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/01/24/qa-how-pew-research-center-evaluated-americans-trust-in-30-news-sources/>.
- Kalogeropoulos, A., Suiter, J., Udris, L., & Eisenegger, M.ew (2019). News media trust and news consumption: Factors related to trust in news in 35 countries. *International Journal of Communication (19328036)*13, 3672–3693.
- Keyton, J. (2015). *Communication Research: Asking Questions and Finding Answers*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education.
- King, A. J., Jensen, J. D., Guntzviller, L. M., Perez Torres, D., & Krakow, M. (2018). Ethnic newspapers and low-income Spanish-speaking adults: influence of news consumption and health motivation on cancer prevention behaviors. *Ethnicity & Health, 23*(4), 410–424. <https://doi-org.libproxy.udayton.edu/10.1080/13557858.2017.1280133>
- Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2011). *The elements of journalism: What newspeople should know and the public should expect*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Nedjat, S., Nedjat, S., Majdzadeh, R., & Farshadi, M. (2014). People’s trust in health news disseminated by mass media in Tehran. *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 28*, 1–6.
- Ohio Department of Health. (2020). Director’s order for facial coverings throughout the state of Ohio. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Directors-Order-Facial-Coverings-throughout-State-Ohio.pdf>
- Pingree, R. J., Watson, B., Sui, M., Searles, K., Kalmoe, N. P., Darr, J. P., Santia, M., & Bryanov, K.(2018). Checking facts and fighting back: Why journalists should

- defend their profession. *PloSOne*, 13(12), e0208600. <https://doi-org.libproxy.udayton.edu/10.1371/journal.pone.0208600>
- Siebert, F. S., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, University of Illinois Press.
- Schapals, A. K. (2018). Fake News. *Journalism Practice*, 12(8), 976–985.
- Shearer, E. (2020, August 18). *Local news is playing an important role for Americans during COVID-19 outbreak*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/02/local-news-is-playing-an-important-role-for-americans-during-covid-19-outbreak/>.
- The New York Times. (2020). Covid in the U.S.: Latest map and case count. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>
- Tsfati, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2005). Why do people watch news they do not trust? The need for cognition as a moderator in the association between news media skepticism and exposure. *Media Psychology*, 7(3), 251–271. https://doi-org.libproxy.udayton.edu/10.1207/S1532785XMEP0703_2
- Van Duyn, E., & Collier, J. (2019). Priming and fake news: The effects of elite discourse on evaluations of news media. *Mass Communication & Society*, 22(1), 29–48. <https://doi-org.libproxy.udayton.edu/10.1080/15205436.2018.1511807>
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction*. Australia: Cengage- Wadsworth.

Worldometer. (2020). COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Accessed November 19, 2020.

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

APPENDIX A

Survey for the Public

Purpose

We are interested in the public's perception of journalists' responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For clarification purposes, we have provided a few definitions for terms that appear in the questionnaire:

- A journalist is anyone who publishes factual information for the public on behalf of a media publication via newspapers, websites, or broadcast television.
- Economic elites are a small group of powerful people that have a disproportionate amount of wealth or influence in society.

Thank you for sharing your perceptions of what is important to journalists.
You may skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

PERCEIVED ROLE FULFILLMENT IN GENERAL

First, we are interested in learning more about your perceptions of journalists' roles in their profession. *Please rate the level of importance you feel journalists place on the following professional roles.*

Journalists monitor political leaders.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists monitor economic elites.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists establish political agenda.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an adversary of the government.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an impartial observer.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide current affairs analysis.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists enable the public to express their point of view.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists tell stories about the world.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists educate the audience.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists orientate and advise the audience about their daily lives.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important

5. extremely important

Journalists provide citizens with the necessary information to make political decisions.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists motivate people to participate in civic activities and political discussions.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide the type of news that attracts the largest number of people possible.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists report events as they are.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote social change.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote tolerance and cultural diversity.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists influence public opinion.

1. not important at all

2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support government policies.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists offer a positive image of political leaders.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support national development.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

If applicable, please explain any additional roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have when serving the public:

PERCEIVED ROLES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Next, we are interested in learning about your perceptions of journalists' roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Please rate the level of importance you feel journalists place on the following professional roles during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Journalists monitor political leaders' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists monitor economic elites' financial stake in COVID-19 research.

1. not important at all
2. not very important

3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists establish political agenda consistent with government officials' agendas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an adversary of the government when coronavirus mandates are issued.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an impartial reporter when new COVID-19 research is published/found.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide current affairs analysis in regard to changes in mandates and safety protocols made by government officials.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists enable people to express their point of view on whether or not they agree with government mandates such as shutdowns, mask wearing, curfews, etc.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists tell stories about the world such as the economic and health impacts many go through as a result of the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important

4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists educate the audience on new scientific research and what it means regarding the COVID-19 virus.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists orientate and advise the audience about what health care professionals say they should do to stay safe and healthy.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide citizens with the necessary information to make political decisions during a time when the public health is at risk.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists motivate people to participate in civic activities and political discussions despite the uncertainty of the future during a global pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide the type of news that attracts the largest number of people possible.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists report events as they are regardless of which government officials the facts may benefit regarding COVID-19 developments.

1. not important at all
2. not very important

3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote social change.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote tolerance and cultural diversity when the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting various cultural groups at different paces.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists influence public opinion on COVID-19.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support government policies that are made to keep the public safe during the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists offer a positive image of political and economic leaders who are giving guidance to the nation during the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support national development when top researchers find new evidence regarding the vaccine.

1. not important at all
2. not very important

3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

If applicable, please explain any addition roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have when serving the public:

MEDIA TRUST

Next, we are interested in the media sources from which you may gather information. We will ask you if you recognize different media outlets and your perceptions of those media outlets.

We will begin with national news outlets.

ABC News

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

BBC

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

BuzzFeed

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

CBS News

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

CNN

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Fox News

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Huff Post

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

MSNBC

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

NBC News

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

The New York Times

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

NPR

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

AP

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust

2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

PBS

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Politico

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

The Hill

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

USA Today

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

The Washington Post

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Next, we are interested in local news sources.

WHIO-TV

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

WDTN-TV

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

WCPO-TV

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Dayton 24/7 Now TV

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Dayton Daily News

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

The Columbus Dispatch

Have you heard of the following news outlet?

If so, indicate your level of trust in the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No trust
2. Some trust
3. High trust

If you indicated “no trust” in the news outlet, indicate if you distrust the source for coronavirus related news.

1. No distrust
2. Some distrust
3. Highly distrust

Which outlet do you use most frequently to learn about coronavirus related news?

DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, we would like to learn a bit more about you.

What is your age?

1. 18-24
2. 25-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55+

What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female

What is your race/ethnicity?

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Hispanic or Latino
5. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
6. White

What state do you live in?

What type of community do you live in?

1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural

How do you consume the majority of your news?

1. Television
2. Online Articles
3. Social Media
4. Newspaper

How often do you consume news?

1. Daily
2. Several times a week
3. Weekly

4. Every couple of weeks
5. Every month

Which political view do you identify with most?

1. Consistently Liberal
2. Mostly Liberal
3. Independent
4. Mostly Conservative
5. Consistently Conservative

APPENDIX B

Survey for Journalists

Purpose

We are interested in journalists' perception of their responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For clarification purposes, we have provided a few definitions for terms that appear in the questionnaire:

- A journalist is anyone who publishes factual information for the public on behalf of a media publication via newspapers, websites, or broadcast television.
- Economic elites are a small group of powerful people that have a disproportionate amount of wealth or influence in society.

Thank you for sharing your perceptions of what is important to journalists.
You may skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

PERCEIVED ROLE FULFILLMENT IN GENERAL

First, we are interested in learning more about your perceptions of journalists' roles in their profession. *Please rate the level of importance you feel journalists place on the following professional roles.*

Journalists monitor political leaders.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists monitor economic elites.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists establish political agenda.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an adversary of the government.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an impartial observer.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide current affairs analysis.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists enable the public to express their point of view.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists tell stories about the world.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists educate the audience.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists orientate and advise the audience about their daily lives.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important

5. extremely important

Journalists provide citizens with the necessary information to make political decisions.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists motivate people to participate in civic activities and political discussions.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide the type of news that attracts the largest number of people possible.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists report events as they are.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote social change.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote tolerance and cultural diversity.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists influence public opinion.

1. not important at all

2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support government policies.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists offer a positive image of political leaders.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support national development.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

If applicable, please explain any additional roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have when serving the public:

PERCEIVED ROLES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Next, we are interested in learning about your perceptions of journalists' roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Please rate the level of importance you feel journalists place on the following professional roles during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Journalists monitor political leaders' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists monitor economic elites' financial stake in COVID-19 research.

1. not important at all
2. not very important

3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists establish political agenda consistent with government officials' agendas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an adversary of the government when coronavirus mandates are issued.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists are an impartial reporter when new COVID-19 research is published/found.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide current affairs analysis in regard to changes in mandates and safety protocols made by government officials.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists enable people to express their point of view on whether or not they agree with government mandates such as shutdowns, mask wearing, curfews, etc.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists tell stories about the world such as the economic and health impacts many go through as a result of the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important

3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists educate the audience on new scientific research and what it means regarding the COVID-19 virus.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists orientate and advise the audience about what health care professionals say they should do to stay safe and healthy.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide citizens with the necessary information to make political decisions during a time when the public health is at risk.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists motivate people to participate in civic activities and political discussions despite the uncertainty of the future during a global pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists provide the type of news that attracts the largest number of people possible.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists report events as they are regardless of which government officials the facts may benefit regarding COVID-19 developments.

1. not important at all

2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote social change.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists promote tolerance and cultural diversity when the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting various cultural groups at different paces.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists influence public opinion on COVID-19.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support government policies that are made to keep the public safe during the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists offer a positive image of political and economic leaders who are giving guidance to the nation during the pandemic.

1. not important at all
2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

Journalists support national development when top researchers find new evidence regarding the vaccine.

1. not important at all

2. not very important
3. more or less important
4. very important
5. extremely important

If applicable, please explain any addition roles or responsibilities you feel journalists have when serving the public:

DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your age?

What is your sex?

What is your job title?

1. Editor
2. Staff writer
3. TV reporter
4. Other

How long have you been a journalist?

In what state do you work?

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH Surveys and Interviews

Research Project Title: The role of journalists during the COVID-19 pandemic

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by Franchesca Hackworth from the University of Dayton, in the Department of Communication.

The purpose of the project is: To understand the public's perception of journalists' responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participating at any time for any reason. Answering the questions will take about 10 minutes.
- You will not be compensated for your participation.
- All of the information you tell us will be confidential.
- If this is a written or online survey, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to your responses. If you are participating in an online survey: We will not collect identifying information, but we cannot guarantee the security of the computer you use or the security of data transfer between that computer and our data collection point. We urge you to consider this carefully when responding to these questions.
- I understand that I am ONLY eligible to participate if I am over the age of 18.

Please contact the following investigators with any questions or concerns:

Franchesca Hackworth, hackworthf1@udayton.edu, Phone Number: 937-564-1937

Chad Painter, cpainter1@udayton.edu, Phone Number: 937-229-2367

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please email IRB@udayton.edu or call (937) 229-3515.