

A COMPARISON OF USAGE AND PLAY OF FRONT-PAGE  
NEWS BETWEEN DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS  
PUBLISHED IN A METROPOLITAN AREA

By

FANNIE BERENE HOLLAND

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

1972

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
July, 1984

Thesis  
1984  
H734c  
Op. 2



A COMPARISON OF USAGE AND PLAY OF FRONT-PAGE  
NEWS BETWEEN DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS  
PUBLISHED IN A METROPOLITAN AREA

Thesis Approved:

*Walter J. Ward*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

*William B. Hewey*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Philip E. Paulin*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Norman D. Rucka*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of Graduate College

## PREFACE

This study is a content analysis of front-page news during 1983, being confined to The Tulsa Tribune, The Oklahoma Eagle, The Daily Oklahoman and The Black Chronicle. The primary objective is to compare front-page news selection and emphasis between a major metropolitan daily newspaper and a metropolitan weekly newspaper in each of two metropolitan cities in Oklahoma.

The types of newspapers and the categories assume importance in this study. This investigation of daily and weekly newspapers and categories of news should help determine the differences in the usage and play of news existing between metropolitan daily and weekly newspapers.

The author wishes to express appreciation to her major adviser, Dr. Walter J. Ward, for his guidance and assistance throughout this study. Appreciation is also expressed to the other committee members, Dr. William R. Steng and Dr. Philip E. Paulin, for their valuable assistance in the preparation of the final manuscript.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	1
Background . . . . .	3
Purpose and Hypothesis . . . . .	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	8
Introduction . . . . .	8
The Gatekeeper Theory and the Play of News . . . . .	9
The Nature of News and the Play of News . . . . .	10
News Play and Usage Studies . . . . .	12
III. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS . . . . .	17
Selection and Sample of Newspapers . . . . .	17
News Categories and Definitions . . . . .	18
Content Analysis . . . . .	19
Attention Scores . . . . .	20
Analyses . . . . .	21
IV. FINDINGS . . . . .	24
Differences and Similarities in Usage and Play of News Categories . . . . .	25
Differences in Usage: All News Categories by Each Newspaper . . . . .	25
Differences in Usage: All News Categories by General v. Limited Circulation Papers . . . . .	27
Similarities in Usage of 14 Categories of News . . . . .	29
Differences in Usage: Eight Categories of News by Each Newspaper . . . . .	30
Similarities in Usage of Eight Categories of News: All Newspapers . . . . .	32
Differences in Usage: Eight News Categories by General v. Limited Circulation Newspapers . . . . .	33
News Play (Attention Scores) . . . . .	34
Differences in News Play of Eight Categories of News by Each Newspaper . . . . .	34
Similarities in News Play of Eight Categories of News . . . . .	36
Differences and Similarities in News Play by Type of Newspaper . . . . .	37

Chapter	Page
Relationship Between Usage and News Play . . . . .	38
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	41
Introduction . . . . .	41
Summary of Findings . . . . .	42
Conclusions . . . . .	45
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Number of Front-Page Stories: Per Month Per Newspaper . .	24
II. Number of Sampled Front-Page Stories by News Category by Newspaper During Three-Month Period . . . . .	26
III. Numbers of Sampled Front-Page Stories in Each of 14 News Categories by General and Limited Circulation Newspapers . . . . .	28
IV. Intercorrelations of Four Newspapers' Relative Numbers of Sampled Front-Page News Stories Printed in 14 Categories . . . . .	29
V. Sampled Front-Page Story Frequencies for Eight Categories of News: Each Newspaper (Collapsed from 14 Original Categories) . . . . .	31
VI. Intercorrelations of Four Newspapers' Relative Numbers of Sampled Front-Page Stories Printed in Eight Categories . . . . .	32
VII. Sample Front-Page Story Frequencies for Eight Categories of News: General v. Limited Circulation Newspapers . .	34
VIII. Average Sampled Front-Page News Play for Eight Categories of News (Collapsed from 14 Original Categories) . . . .	35
IX. Intercorrelations of Four Newspapers' display of Eight Categories of News . . . . .	36
X. News Play (Total Attention Scores) of Eight Categories of News by General and Limited Circulation Newspapers .	38
XI. Intercorrelations of Sampled Front-Page Story Usage and News Play . . . . .	39

## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Front page headlines, print size and type, factual simulation and brevity are among the things that generally attract readers to what are considered the most important news stories of the day. Competition and availability have a tendency to limit a metropolitan area to one major daily newspaper which plays a large role in meeting the news and information needs of the general population.

Metropolitan cities have geographical subsections containing various population segments and community areas that have newspapers to serve their news and information needs. Gibbons and Ulloth state:

More and more the newspapers [sic] experience in large cities has been dividing itself into a two-tiered arrangement whereby the major newspaper or newspapers serve the general needs of the total metropolitan population while a number of smaller dailies and weeklies serve the ethnic,<sup>1</sup> suburban or community needs of segments of the population.

These newspapers usually are smaller dailies and/or weeklies having news stories generally focused on subjects and principals interesting to their communities. Hynds and Martin suggest that the trend in metropolitan cities is toward the smaller specialized newspapers which satisfy the various population and community needs for information about events happening close to home.<sup>2</sup>



Hynds and Martin state:

Weekly and other non-daily newspapers would appear to have excellent potential for serving and, at least indirectly, influencing their readers. They provide a specialized and comparatively small audience with information and services not readily available elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Whichever type of newspaper is read, weekly, daily or both, some news stories appear more frequently than others. Therefore, the question arises as to which news stories are receiving more play than others and for what reason, and in which type of newspaper, daily or weekly. The questions arising from frequency of news stories will be answered in a later chapter.

Another question is whether certain categories of news receive more play than others. The categories of news stories are classified under 14 headings in this study: Politics, Miscellaneous, Crime, City Government, Sports/Entertainment, Legal, Schools/Universities, Energy/Utilities, International, Unemployment, National Government, State Government, Accidents, and Finance/Business. All of these categories do not appear on any one front page of a newspaper issue at one time.

Some content analysis studies, Gibbons and Ulloth,<sup>4</sup> Breed,<sup>5</sup> Gieber,<sup>6</sup> Stempel,<sup>7</sup> Budd,<sup>8</sup> and Hardt and White,<sup>9</sup> have sought to determine the nature of news play using approximate circulation volume as one basis for selecting the newspapers to be studied. Few studies have compared the news play and usage between dailies and weeklies published within the same metropolitan area.

## Background

Metropolitan cities have a variety of characteristics which make up various audiences which need information about their communities, in addition to information about the metropolis as a whole. This creates the demand for certain types of newspapers. Therefore, the types of newspapers consist of dailies or weeklies as a broad description in this study, with general circulation and limited circulation as further distinctions.

A general-circulation newspaper is designed to provide information to large geographical population sections, either of a state or a metropolitan area, and to provide various subsections of the area with information. For example, The Tulsa Tribune and The Daily Oklahoman are general-circulation newspapers, having readers and subscribers from many parts of the state and from their respective metropolitan areas. The content of general-circulation newspapers is primarily aimed at the audience having the largest, most homogeneous characteristics and interests.

Limited-circulation newspapers are specialized to the interests of specific segments of communities within the general population. The result is a smaller more defined audience with more strictly defined news and information needs.

Hynds and Martin state:

Most often, these newspapers are defined geographically; they serve residents of small towns or suburban areas or segments of metropolitan areas. They may also serve particular interests such as ethnic groups, religious denominations or business groups.

Stevens describes ethnic or limited-circulation newspapers as supplemental in nature to the general-circulation newspapers, whereby the smaller audience should seek more general information from the general-circulation newspaper.<sup>11</sup>

This thesis attempted to assess the editors' news selection patterns and the news coverage by both a general-circulation daily and a limited-circulation weekly newspaper, each within the same metropolitan area. In Tulsa, The Tulsa Tribune, a daily, serves the general needs of the total population, while The Oklahoma Eagle, a weekly, serves the general needs of Tulsa's ethnic population. Likewise, The Daily Oklahoman is a daily newspaper serving the general needs of Oklahoma City, and The Black Chronicle serves the ethnic population on a weekly basis.

Content analysis is a process whereby the characteristics of the front pages of the newspapers studied are determined through the kind of news stories written and the frequency with which these stories appear. Hence, this study lends itself to be examined by content analysis which will help to determine if there is a significant difference in front-page news play and usage of stories between general-circulation and limited-circulation newspapers.

Content can be analyzed quantitatively by using item count or frequency, and attention score. The frequency measurement includes recording and classifying each news story by category. The process results in a numerical count of categories of stories, all carrying the same weight, with the length of each story being irrelevant to the measure.

A news story is the final product of a reporter's work, whether it is information from a first hand interview or from the wire services and which is published in a newspaper. A news category consists of one or more classifications under which all news stories are listed. These classifications are defined in a later chapter.

Attention scores are numerical and measure the "emphasis" or "play" the editor gives each story. Budd has researched and developed the attention score for the purpose of devising a reliable index to measure the play of news in printed media.<sup>12</sup> Budd's research resulted in the establishment of four criteria which cover variables that he believed made one news story more prominent than another story.<sup>13</sup>

Budd stated:

The four criteria were established for assigning an attention score to each item: horizontal headline size, position of the article on the page, length of the article, and the page on which the article appeared. A maximum of five points, depending upon the particular combination of factors involved, could be earned by a single item.<sup>14</sup>

These criteria are further defined in a later chapter.

### Purpose and Hypothesis

The emphasis on front-page news stories in general-circulation and limited-circulation newspapers in Oklahoma's two metropolitan centers, Tulsa and Oklahoma City, are examined in this study. The objective was to determine if there were significant differences in the usage and play of news stories between general and limited circulation newspapers.

Although newspapers generally focus news stories on people and events which are generally recognizable and important to their audiences, the overall categories of news are common to both types of newspapers, dailies and weeklies.

This study analyzed the content of The Tulsa Tribune and The Oklahoma Eagle of Tulsa, and The Daily Oklahoman and The Black Chronicle of Oklahoma City, under the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the type of newspaper and the degree of usage and play of front page news categories.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>R. Arnold Gibbons and Dana R. Ulloth, "The Role of the Amsterdam News in New York City's Media Environment," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 59 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 451-455.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest C. Hynds and Charles H. Martin, "How Non-Daily Editors Describe Status and Function of Editorial Pages," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 56 (Summer, 1979), pp. 318-323.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Gibbons, pp. 451-455.

<sup>5</sup>Warren Breed, "Newspaper 'Opinion Leaders' and Processes of Standardization," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 32 (Summer, 1955), pp. 277-284.

<sup>6</sup>Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 33 (Fall, 1956), pp. 423-432.

<sup>7</sup>Guido H. Stempel III, "Content Patterns of Small and Metropolitan Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 39 (Winter, 1962), p. 88.

<sup>8</sup>Richard W. Budd, "U.S. News in The Press Down Under," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 28 (Spring, 1964), pp. 39-56.

<sup>9</sup>Hanno Hardt and Michael White, "Front Page News Similarities in A.M. and P.M. Papers," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 43 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 552-554.

<sup>10</sup>Hynds, p. 318.

<sup>11</sup>John D. Stevens, "Content-Cooperation Content in 14 Black Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47 (Autumn, 1970), p. 567.

<sup>12</sup>Richard W. Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play,'" Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 41 (Summer, 1977), pp. 259-262.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Richard W. Budd, "U.S. News in The Press Down Under," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 28 (Spring, 1964), p. 42.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The front page of a newspaper holds only a limited number of news stories and requires news editors to determine what function their newspapers are to perform and which audiences to capture. If the story appears on the front page of a newspaper, the general assumption is the story automatically receives a greater degree of emphasis than any news story not appearing on the front page. The front page is one of the major selling points of most newspapers.

The result is a pattern of publication that brands the newspapers and the editors politically and philosophically, and ultimately determines the characteristics of the audience sought. Each newspaper editor creates the image of the front page of the newspaper through the categories of and the emphasis or lack of emphasis on news stories. The general theme and purpose in the judgment of the editor is to practice the essential function of providing the reader with the "top news" of the day, while the pertinent value is consequence, which is the factor of importance to the largest number of people.<sup>1</sup>

The Gatekeeper Theory and  
the Play of News

News editors are a major source of control of news and information flows. The decisions about which stories are selected for front page display, and the strength of play or positioning of the story on the front page depend on the evaluations and judgments of the editors. This decision-making process incorporates "the editor's perception of his community and readers, the traditions of his newspaper and the news policies of his superiors, and his own biases."<sup>2</sup> The editor is performing the "gatekeeper" function. The result is a daily and a weekly newspaper essentially using the same or similar information on their front pages, but the final product or story is designed and given emphasis with a specific audience or audiences.

Madden did a study that included the gatekeeper role as part of news play. Madden investigated the gatekeeper effect of an editor's authoritarianism on the display of news in 1971. Madden concluded:

An editor's assessment of developments concerning some of the most heatedly discussed issues of the day can be biased by his psychological make-up, and relatively trivial details about hair,<sup>3</sup> dress or demeanor can measurably affect the 'play' of news.

Madden asked 28 editors of a metropolitan daily newspaper to rate synopses of hypothetical, realistic new stories on a nine-point scale representing combinations of page numbers and headline sizes. The task was to select a headline size and to assign the items to the first third or sixth page of the newspaper. Madden's thesis was that "an editor's authoritarianism could generate an editorial bias manifested in 'playing up' and 'playing down' certain elements in the news."<sup>4</sup>



Madden found the gatekeeper function of the editors related to the authoritarianism of the individual editors:

Editors who scored 'low' on a scale of authoritarianism showed a tendency to assign relatively higher priorities to protest demonstration stories, particularly when they involved unfavorably-portrayed participants. 'High' authoritarian editors on the other hand tended to play down all protest stories and were relatively unaffected by the way participants in them were portrayed.

The numerous tangible and intangible influences will continue to create problems for the gatekeeper as decisions are made to select and play one news story over another.

#### The Nature of News and the Play of News

Mass communications researchers have been working for several decades to develop a functional description of "the nature of news." That which is considered "news" is tightly interwoven with the gatekeeper function of selecting news stories for publication. To describe the characteristics of news, the investigator must go further into the process of news selection and discover the news value the editors are employing in their decisions of why one story is news and the other is not news.

One problem in defining the nature of news is the word "news." It has no meaning of its own. Korzybski described words that depend on other words for meaning as multiordinal terms. Korzybski stated:

The main characteristic of these terms consist of the fact that on different levels of abstraction they have different meanings, with the result that they have no general meaning; for their meanings are determined solely by the given context, which establishes the different orders of abstraction.

Gieber noted this characteristic of news and concluded from his research that "news does not have an independent existence; news is a product of men who are members of a news-gathering (or a news-originating) bureaucracy."<sup>7</sup>

Fowles recognized the multiordinality of news in his description of the function of news in the society in which news operates. "The nature of the news is not everywhere the same nor should it be. A news system is responsible only to the particular society it is embedded in."<sup>8</sup>

Lippmann also described news in terms of its relation to context. He suggested that information must become part of the system of record to be news.<sup>9</sup> Lippmann stated:

The events which are not scored are reported either as personal and conventional opinions, or they are not news. They do not take shape until somebody protests, or somebody investigates, or somebody publicly, in<sub>10</sub> the etymological meaning of the word makes an issue of them.

Lippmann concluded that every newspaper, when it reaches the reader, is a series of selections as to what items shall be printed, in what position they shall be printed, how much space each shall occupy, what emphasis each shall have, and in all this, there are no objective standards.<sup>11</sup>

With this understanding of news, researchers have moved into a more concrete understanding of the nature of news by describing news in terms of elements consistently found in stories published as news.

Nearly 20 years have passed since Ward sought to describe news through an underlying framework of three semantically independent, meaningful dimensions: (1) SIGNIFICANCE, with Impact, Magnitude and Neither elements; (2) NORMALITY, with Oddity, Conflict and Normal

elements; and (3) PROMINENCE, with Known and Unknown Principals elements.<sup>12</sup> Ward assembled a Q-sort deck of 54 news stories, three with each of the 18 combinations of news elements. Ten city editors from eight states ranked the stories on an 11-point continuum from most- to least-probably would use.

Since Ward's study, several other researchers have used the three-dimensional news model, or a variation thereon, with results similar to Ward's consensus of editors with similar preference patterns in using news stories. These researchers include Carter,<sup>13</sup> Rhoades,<sup>14</sup> Snipes,<sup>15</sup> Atwood,<sup>16</sup> Galow,<sup>17</sup> and more recently Badii<sup>18</sup> and Ludeman.<sup>19</sup> The results generally suggest substantial predictability of editors' news preference patterns when the stories are structured along the dimensions of the news model.

Thus, the nature of news, despite its multiordinality, can be described and defined in terms of news elements consistently present in stories selected as news by editors. This selection pattern also determines the emphasis editors give to different news stories as a result of the elements present within the news stories.

#### News Play and Usage Studies

Evidence of observed differences in content patterns between metropolitan daily newspapers prompted Stempel to attempt to determine if differences in content patterns existed between large and small daily newspapers.

Stempel analyzed the news content of eight daily newspapers, the four largest and the four smallest in the state. The hypothesis was that news play would have a more conservative pattern and a larger

proportion of hard news from the small daily because it is not competing for news-stand sales and has less need to entertain its readers.<sup>20</sup> Stempel concluded that the research data revealed "a tendency for the small-town daily to place a little more emphasis on hard news."<sup>21</sup> He concluded that there is relative agreement among these newspapers as to what categories of news are important, but considerable disagreement as to how important certain categories are.<sup>22</sup>

Sasser and Russell, in 1972, analyzed a metropolitan daily newspaper, two local early evening television news casts, and two radio stations during 10 days randomly selected from one month. The hypothesis was that the mass media in any local area should be expected to agree significantly on news topics of a given day and in the emphasis or placement of those topics in the news presentation.<sup>23</sup>

Using content analysis of the treatment in terms of selection, length of story, and position of local stories appearing in a metropolitan newspaper, Sasser and Russell tested two commonly held beliefs about the news judgments of news editors and directors of both print and broadcast media: (1) they are capable of making judgments about what events of a day should be considered news of public importance; (2) they are capable of discriminating the most important from the least important.<sup>24</sup> The researchers found no consistency in the emphasis and in the use of similar stories:

One must conclude that there is no such thing as news of the day important to the public or that there is no such thing as news editors having background to know what the news of importance to the public is.<sup>25</sup>

The data revealed that although all media studied carried the most prominent occurrences of the day, the newspapers carried more stories of interest to specialized audiences, while the broadcast media

have to be more selective.<sup>26</sup> Sasser and Russell concluded that the results indicate relatively weak signs to overlap, even when bases such as time and space available are standardized through percentages.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the media have no clear consistent pattern of emphasis and use of the news stories.

Hardt and White studied the front pages of one metropolitan morning newspaper and six afternoon dailies to determine the degree of similarity as to the play of the news stories in each afternoon daily. The hypothesis was that a high correlation existed between the front page treatment of national and international news in the metropolitan morning paper and the afternoon papers. Hardt and White concluded that news stories in metropolitan morning papers are 'repeated' in the afternoon press. Once a story is selected, the play is affected by the newspaper's policies rather than the play in the morning paper.<sup>28</sup>

The researchers also found that none of the stories which were repeated by the afternoon papers appeared below the fold of the metropolitan morning newspaper, and the repeated material accounted for 9 to 20 percent of the story content of the front pages of the afternoon papers.<sup>29</sup> Hardt and White noted, as have other researchers, that some news editors tend to look at other newspapers before deciding on news treatment and front-page make-up.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 33 (Fall, 1956), p. 430.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas James Madden, "Editor Authoritarianism and Its Effect on News Display," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 48 (Winter, 1971), pp. 660-666.

<sup>4</sup>Madden, pp. 660-661.

<sup>5</sup>Madden, p. 665.

<sup>6</sup>Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics (Lancaster: Science Press, 1941), pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup>Walter Gieber, "News is What Newspapermen Make It," in People, Society, and Mass Communication, Anthony L. Dexter and David Manning White, eds. (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 180.

<sup>8</sup>Jib Fowles, "The Nature of News," Et Cetera, Vol. 34 (December, 1977), p. 593.

<sup>9</sup>Walter Lippmann, "The Nature of News," in Mass Media and Communications, Charles S. Steinberg, ed. (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1966), p. 144.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Walter J. Ward, "News Values, News Situations, and News Selection: An Intensive Study of Ten City Editors," an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.

<sup>13</sup>Lorenzo E. Carter, "News Values of Editors-Reporters on Five Oklahoma Newspapers," an unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1970.

<sup>14</sup>George R. Rhoades, "News Values and News Decisions of Selected Associated Press and United Press International Newsmen in Oklahoma," an unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1970.

- <sup>15</sup>Ronald L. Snipes, "News Values and News Decisions of High and Low Authoritarian Editors," an unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1973.
- <sup>16</sup>L. Erwin Atwood, "How Newsmen and Readers Perceived Each Other's Story Preferences," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47 (Summer, 1970), pp. 296-302.
- <sup>17</sup>Carl F. Galow, "A Comparison of One Newspaper's Editors and Subscriber News Values," an unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1973.
- <sup>18</sup>Naiim Badii and Walter J. Ward, "The Nature of News in Four Dimensions," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 57 (Summer, 1980), pp. 243-248.
- <sup>19</sup>Allan L. Ludeman, "The Nature of News: Effects of Added Levels of Conflict and Prominence," an unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1981.
- <sup>20</sup>Guido H. Stempel III, "Content Patterns of Small and Metropolitan Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 39 (Winter, 1962), p. 88.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup>Emery L. Sasser and John T. Russell, "The Fallacy of News Judgment," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 49 (Summer, 1972), p. 280.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup>Hanno Hardt and Michael White, "Front Page News Similarities in A.M. and P.M. Papers," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 43 (Autumn, 1966), p. 553.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 554.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

#### Selection and Sample of Newspapers

Data for this thesis were obtained from front-page news stories in issues of The Tulsa Tribune, The Daily Oklahoman, The Oklahoma Eagle and The Black Chronicle. These two dailies and two weeklies, respectively, have a common characteristic. All are located and published in a major metropolitan area. The two weekly newspapers, The Oklahoma Eagle and The Black Chronicle are limited-circulation newspapers, primarily serving the black communities of Tulsa and Oklahoma City, respectively.

The Tulsa Tribune, a daily newspaper, serves the general needs of the Tulsa metropolitan population, while The Oklahoma Eagle serves the black community of Tulsa. In Oklahoma City, The Daily Oklahoman serves the general population's needs for news and The Black Chronicle serves the needs of the black community.

Issues of the newspaper were sampled from the months of September, October and November, 1983. A randomly selected sample of 48 newspapers, comprising 12 issues of each newspaper, during the three months, was analyzed. Stempel has determined that such a random sample of newspapers per year satisfactorily represents a newspaper's yearly attention given to a particular subject.<sup>1</sup>



The weekly newspapers, The Oklahoma Eagle and The Black Chronicle, are published each Thursday. Each issue for the three months was used. The exception was September which had five Thursdays. Each of the publication dates was put into a container and one Thursday was randomly discarded. This maintains the requirement for random selection of the sample.

For The Daily Oklahoman, published every day of the month, each date was put into a container and four dates were drawn. This procedure was followed for each of the three months, resulting in the random selection of 12 issues.

The Tulsa Tribune is published six days per week. There is no Sunday edition. Twelve issues were randomly selected from the total issued published during the three-month period.

#### News Categories and Definitions

The categorizing of each news item was facilitated by a combination of types of news previously defined in research and by the author, herself. The 14 categories of news used in the content analysis of sampled newspaper front pages, were as follows:

Politics--party activity in campaigns and elections, in legislative bodies and in the executive branch of government.<sup>2</sup> This also includes activities on the community level.

Miscellaneous--any news stories that did not fit into the other 13 categories, including pictures.

Crime--any story involving the police and courts, and their investigation of complaints by citizens.

City Government--all activities within the respective cities that are not tied definitely to "politics" as defined.<sup>3</sup>

Sports/Entertainment--sports represents all pastimes pursued in the open air or having an athletic character as hunting, fishing, racing, wrestling, all "ball" games, olympics and similar activities. Entertainment represents a dramatic performance such as musicals, musical groups, theater plays, movies, and similar activities which provide diversion, amusement, and accommodate guests in some capacity.

Legal--any stories that contain court decisions about wide-reaching questions, complaints and actions filed regarding similar questions which affect a group or groups of persons in the community, locally and nationally.

Schools/Universities--any stories concerning day care through higher education facilities, employees, programs, funding and curriculum on the local, state and national levels.

Energy/Utilities--any news stories about rate hikes, telephone company activities, gas and electric companies' activities, the Corporation Commission decisions, and other stories related to citizens coping with, paying for, or receiving utility services.

International--news stories about situations involving more than one nation, internal strife in another country where U.S. citizens are also involved such as troops, advisers, and religious organizations.

Unemployment--any news stories about unemployment levels on the local, state or national levels.

National Government--news dealing with events mainly about the three branches of the U.S. government and decisions by the president affecting all levels of government, foreign policy and relations.

State Government--any events within Oklahoma dealing with state lawmakers, state agencies, and organizations, but which are definitely tied to politics.

Accidents--any stories about natural disasters, vehicles, personal injuries, and similar events over which the principals have little or no control.

Finance/Business--any news stories or blurbs about the stock market, the stock exchange, business activities and business conferences.

#### Content Analysis

Content analysis comprised simply the recording of stories published in each news category by each newspaper. Presumably, these frequency counts of stories by news category provide a rough index of editors' news values--that is, news values from the standpoint of the relative number of stories published in various categories on the sample of front pages.

#### Attention Scores

Budd and other researchers have tested tools such as column inch and item count in their content analysis studies, but found neither to be totally acceptable. Budd sought to "devise a single index which would reveal either the nature or the direction of communication content."<sup>4</sup> This was the "attention score," a method of scoring newspaper items from zero to five, depending upon how and where the article was played.<sup>5</sup> Although Budd considers the attention score suitable for publications of similar size, he suggests caution when measuring

newspapers of dissimilar size. He suggests:

The total attention scores of two publications dissimilar in size, need to be mediated through another factor so that they might be compared directly. The fact that a larger paper has more space available in which to publish more items than a smaller publication, gives the larger newspaper a decided advantage toward amassing a higher attention score.

Since only front-page news stories were analyzed in this thesis, and since item count was used in conjunction with the attention score, this drawback was felt to be neutralized, essentially.

The attention score attempts to measure the emphasis a front-page news story is given on the basis of location on the page, headline size and location in the issue. Budd concluded: "The attention score, because of the greater number of variables covered by the measure, was more discriminating than the sole measure of column inches or item count."<sup>7</sup>

Components of Budd's scoring criteria, which give one item prominence over another by their presence or absence, are these:

1. A headline two or more columns wide, but not more than half the number of columns on the page: one point.
2. A story with the headline more than half the number of page columns: two points.
3. A story whose first line of body content is above the fold or the horizontal center of the page, including pictures or cartoons which start above the fold: one point.
4. A story three-fourths column long or more, counting picture space into overall length if it belongs with the story, and lone pictures or cartoons at least three-fourths column long: one point.
5. A story on page one, the editorial page or the first page of departmental sections: one point.

(In this study, which dealt only with front pages, every story scored at least one point.)

This measurement raises several questions concerning this investigation. How much emphasis or attention did the newspapers give front page news stories? Is there a difference in the play of news between dailies and weeklies? Between the weeklies? Between the dailies?

### Analyses

Budd suggests using the attention score with the item count. This suggests a comparison of the two indices, which, in turn, hits on the notion of construct validity, in a rough sense, at least.

For the most part, then, analyses and interpretations centered on measures of differences and associations that addressed the following:

1. Differences in number of stories printed, by each newspaper in the various categories of news. In this analysis, the newspapers first were treated individually, then collapsed into weeklies and dailies. The collapsed newspapers were called Limited and General circulation types.

2. Similarities among newspapers in the number of stories printed in the various news categories. In this analysis, each newspaper was correlated with every other paper on frequencies of stories published in news categories.

3. Relationship between news category, item frequency and news play (total attention score). This analysis not only addressed the question of construct validity, overall, but served as an index of a newspaper's consistency of usage vs. emphasis given to the types of news; i.e., were the categorical item counts and categorical attention scores for a given newspaper highly correlated?

The analysis of differences between the newspapers' news usage was pretty much qualitative, although it was obvious the differences highlighted exceeded the chance expectations of the chi square probability model. The analysis of similarities analyzed the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and subsequent Coefficient of Determination as descriptors.

In general, the author expected the weekly and daily newspapers to differ on all indices. Further, the association of usage and news play was expected to be high and marked, over all, and by individual newspapers.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Guido H. Stempel III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 29 (Summer, 1952), pp. 333-334.

<sup>2</sup>Edward R. Cony, "Conflict-Cooperation Content of Five American Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 30 (Winter, 1953), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Inc., 1973), p. 525.

<sup>5</sup>Richard W. Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play,'" Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 41 (Spring, 1977), p. 259.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

A total of 290 front-page news stories in the 48 sampled issues of the newspapers were recorded and categorized. The Black Chronicle published 86; The Oklahoma Eagle, 66, and The Daily Oklahoman and The Tulsa Tribune, 69 each (see Table I).

TABLE I  
NUMBER OF FRONT-PAGE STORIES: PER MONTH PER NEWSPAPER

Newspaper	September	October	November	Totals
Tulsa Tribune	27	22	20	69
Oklahoma Eagle	16	32	18	66
Daily Oklahoman	19	26	24	69
Black Chronicle	23	32	31	86
Totals	85	112	93	290

$\chi^2 = 6.9097$ , newspapers-by-months,  $p > .05$  at  $df = 6$



The probability that a differential relationship existed between a particular newspaper and the monthly allotment of sample front-page stories was not great enough to establish confidence beyond the required 95% level.

Differences and Similarities in Usage and Play  
of News Categories

Differences in Usage:

All News Categories by Each Newspaper

In Table II, usage of each of the 14 categories of news is designated by the number of front-page stories printed in each category by each newspaper.

As the column totals indicate, the total number of front-page stories published during the three-month sample period was about the same, except for The Black Chronicle which logged 86 stories, compared to 69 each in The Tulsa Tribune and The Daily Oklahoman, and 66 in The Oklahoma Eagle.

News category usage showed wide variation, from a low of 2 stories on Unemployment to more than 40 each for Miscellaneous and International news. These totals for news categories in Table II, however, are deceiving in that very high variations in use exist between newspapers according to category. In other words, the relative over-all usage of news in many of the categories may have reflected the front pages of some newspapers more than others.

TABLE II  
 NUMBER OF SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE STORIES BY NEWS CATEGORY  
 BY NEWSPAPER DURING THREE-MONTH PERIOD

News Categories	Tulsa Tribune	Oklahoma Eagle	Daily Oklahoman	Black Chronicle	Totals
Miscellaneous	8	6	<u>15</u>	<u>20</u>	49
International	<u>25</u>	0	<u>15</u>	1	41
National Government	3	6	9	10	28
Crime	8	<u>12</u>	5	2	27
Sports/Entertainment	1	<u>16</u>	2	7	26
City Government	0	8	5	<u>11</u>	24
State Government	<u>10</u>	1	2	<u>10</u>	23
Finance/Business	4	6	5	3	18
Accidents	<u>5</u>	2	<u>6</u>	1	14
Politics	0	3	4	6	13
Legal	0	1	0	<u>9</u>	10
Schools/Universities	2	2	1	4	9
Energy/Utilities	2	3	0	1	6
Unemployment	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	69	66	69	86	290

For example, the high usage of Miscellaneous items mostly was due to the Oklahoman and Chronicle, while International news usage was due almost solely to the Oklahoman and Tribune. Other glaring examples of

Newspaper-Category variation show the following: Crime and Sports/Entertainment (Eagle); City Government (Eagle and Chronicle); and State Government (Tribune and Chronicle).

Difference in Usage: All News Categories  
by General v. Limited Circulation Papers

From Table II, it appears that a relationship might exist between the type of newspaper (General or Limited circulation) and news category usage. In Table III, the four newspapers in Table II are collapsed into the General (Tribune and Oklahoman) and Limited (Eagle and Chronicle) circulation groups.

Newspaper Types-News Category usage variations are spotted easily by the "difference" column in Table III. Total use of International and Accident stories came mostly from General circulation newspapers, while Sports/Entertainment, City Government and Legal news usage came mostly from the front pages of the Limited circulation papers.

These variations in usage of categories of news account for the low correlation between Limited and General circulation papers. In other words, as far as number of stories printed in the various categories was concerned, the Limited and General circulation papers did not see "eye-to-eye." Their agreement was practically zero ( $r = -.012$ ). (See Table III.)

TABLE III  
 NUMBERS OF SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE STORIES IN EACH  
 OF 14 NEWS CATEGORIES BY GENERAL AND  
 LIMITED CIRCULATION NEWSPAPERS

News Categories	General Circulation	Limited Circulation	Totals	Differences
Miscellaneous	23	26	49	- 3
International	<u>40</u>	1	41	39
National Government	12	16	28	- 4
Crime	13	14	27	- 1
Sports/Entertainment	3	<u>23</u>	26	-20
City Government	5	<u>19</u>	24	-14
State Government	12	11	23	1
Finance/Business	9	9	18	0
Accidents	<u>11</u>	3	14	8
Politics	4	9	13	- 5
Legal	0	<u>10</u>	10	-10
Schools/Universities	3	6	9	- 3
Energy/Utilities	2	4	6	- 2
Unemployment	1	1	2	0
Totals	138	152	290	

Relative usage correlation  $r = -.012$ , general v. limited circulation

Similarities in Usage of 14 Categories of News

Intercorrelations of the four newspapers' rank-order of usage of the 14 categories of news (Table IV) shows The Tulsa Tribune and The Oklahoma Eagle most alike in priority of usage ( $r = .665$ ). This means that about 44 percent of the variation in categorical usage was shared by the two newspapers.

TABLE IV

INTERCORRELATIONS OF FOUR NEWSPAPERS' RELATIVE  
NUMBERS OF SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE NEWS  
STORIES PRINTED IN 14 CATEGORIES

Newspapers	Tulsa Tribune	Oklahoma Eagle	Daily Oklahoman	Black Chronicle
Tulsa Tribune	----	<u>.665</u>	<u>.229</u>	-.122
Oklahoma Eagle	<u>.665</u>	----	.028	<u>.361</u>
Daily Oklahoman	.229	.028	----	.197
Black Chronicle	-.122	.361	.197	----

The Black Chronicle showed a rather weak correlation with The Ok-  
homa Eagle ( $r = .361$ ), while The Daily Oklahoman was even less  
correlated with The Tulsa Tribune.

In essence, there was no clear-cut division in the relative use of news categories. From the findings, one cannot say that the Limited and General circulation newspapers stood in any stark contrast in the relative number of stories printed in the various categories.

However, when usage of the two Limited circulation papers was combined and compared with the combined categorical story frequencies of the two General circulation papers, the relationship was practically nil ( $r = -.012$ ), as shown previously in Table III. In other words, the number of stories printed in a category by the General circulation papers revealed nothing about the number printed by Limited circulation papers.

#### Differences in Usage:

##### Eight Categories of News by Each Newspaper

Since several of the news categories were similar in scope, the author collapsed the original 14 into 8 and repeated the frequency tabulation (Table V).

Scanning the columns of Table V, one sees that the greatest number of stories dealt with National/International events, mostly due to heavy usage by the Tribune and Oklahoman.

City/State news usage stood out in the Chronicle, as did Law and Politics. But the Chronicle ran far fewer Crime and Accident stories than did the other papers. The Eagle, unlike the other papers, highlighted Sports and Entertainment on the front pages.

TABLE V  
 SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE STORY FREQUENCIES FOR EIGHT  
 CATEGORIES OF NEWS: EACH NEWSPAPER  
 (COLLAPSED FROM 14 ORIGINAL  
 CATEGORIES)

News Categories	Tulsa Tribune	Daily Oklahoman	Oklahoma Eagle	Black Chronicle	Totals
National/ International	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>	6	11	69
Miscellaneous	8	<u>15</u>	6	<u>20</u>	49
City/State	10	7	9	<u>21</u>	47
Crime/Accidents	13	11	14	<u>3</u>	41
Economics	7	5	9	5	26
Sports/ Entertainment	1	2	<u>16</u>	7	26
Law/Politics	0	4	4	<u>15</u>	23
Education	2	1	2	4	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>290</b>

Similarities in Usage of Eight

Categories of News: All Newspapers

As shown in Table VI, the only two newspapers which substantially agreed on relative usage of the collapsed categories of news were the Tribune and the Oklahoman ( $r = .91$ ).

TABLE VI

INTERCORRELATIONS OF FOUR NEWSPAPERS' RELATIVE  
NUMBERS OF SAMPLE FRONT-PAGE STORIES  
PRINTED IN EIGHT CATEGORIES

Newspapers	Tulsa Tribune	Oklahoma Eagle	Daily Oklahoman	Black Chronicle
Tulsa Tribune	-----	.01	.91	.06
Oklahoma Eagle	.01	-----	-.09	-.28
Daily Oklahoman	.91	-.09	-----	.27
Black Chronicle	.06	-.28	.27	-----

The relative number of stories printed in the various categories by the Tribune accounted for some 83 percent of the number printed by the Oklahoman.

None of the other news usage patterns was close to significant. The two limited-circulation papers, in fact, showed a low negative correlation in number of stories printed in various categories.



Table VI, in essence, says that with the exception of the two general-circulation newspapers, the number of stories (in a category) printed by one paper was a poor predictor of the number printed by any of the other papers.

Differences in Usage: Eight News Categories by  
General vs. Limited Circulation Newspapers

As shown in Table VII in the "difference" column, the limited-circulation papers printed a considerably higher number of City/State, Law/Politics and Sports/Entertainment stories. The two general-circulation papers, on the other hand; printed three times as many National/International news stories as the Chronicle and Eagle printed.

The variations in Table VII accounted for the low correlation between categorical news story usage by the two types of newspapers ( $r = .127$ ). In essence, when the papers were combined into Limited and General circulation types, the front pages of one type would give very little indication of what the front pages of the other type would comprise, in terms of number of stories used in various news categories. (See Table VII.)

TABLE VII  
 SAMPLE FRONT-PAGE STORY FREQUENCIES FOR EIGHT  
 CATEGORIES OF NEWS: GENERAL V. LIMITED  
 CIRCULATION NEWSPAPERS

News Categories	General Circulation	Limited Circulation	Totals	Differences
Miscellaneous	23	26	49	- 3
National/International	52	17	69	35
City/State	17	30	47	-13
Crime/Accidents	24	17	41	7
Law/Politics	4	19	23	-15
Economics	12	14	26	- 2
Sports/Entertainment	3	23	26	-20
Education	3	6	9	- 3
Totals	138	152	290	

$r = .127$ , general v. limited circulation

#### News Play (Attention Scores)

#### Differences in News Play of Eight Categories of News by Each Newspaper

News play, as measured by the Budd Attention Score procedure, shows a sharp division among the papers in nearly all categories of news. (Note underlined entries in Table VIII.)

TABLE VIII  
 AVERAGE SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE NEWS PLAY FOR EIGHT  
 CATEGORIES OF NEWS (COLLAPSED FROM  
 14 ORIGINAL CATEGORIES)

News Categories	Tulsa Tribune	News Play Daily Oklahoman	Oklahoma Eagle	Black Chronicle	Totals
Miscellaneous	19	<u>45</u>	29	54	147
National/ International	<u>68</u>	<u>42</u>	7	15	132
City/State	25	34	13	<u>48</u>	120
Crime/Accidents	<u>38</u>	20	<u>41</u>	1	100
Law/Politics	11	10	27	<u>45</u>	93
Economics	16	9	<u>22</u>	11	58
Sports/ Entertainment	1	<u>46</u>	3	7	57
Education	7	0	4	<u>13</u>	24
<b>Totals</b>	185	206	146	194	731

For example, The Daily Oklahoman and The Black Chronicle (a large and small paper) played Miscellaneous news higher, while The Tulsa Tribune and The Oklahoma Eagle played Crime and Accidents higher than did The Daily Oklahoman and The Black Chronicle. The two larger papers displayed National/International news higher than did the two smaller papers. The Black Chronicle stood alone, so-to-speak, in its higher play of City/State, Law Politics and Education news. The Oklahoma

Eagle displayed Economic news higher than did the other three papers.

Similarities in News Play of Eight

Categories of News

As shown in Table IX, none of the newspapers was correlated highly with another on its relative display of the eight categories of news. In fact, none of the correlations in Table IX is significantly above zero. (At  $df = 14$ , an  $r$  of  $.497$  is the critical value for  $.05$  level of significance.)

TABLE IX  
INTERCORRELATIONS OF FOUR NEWSPAPERS' DISPLAY  
OF EIGHT CATEGORIES OF NEWS

Newspapers	Tulsa Tribune	Daily Oklahoman	Oklahoma Eagle	Black Chronicle
Tulsa Tribune	----	<u>.313</u>	.104	-.137
Daily Oklahoman	<u>.313</u>	----	-.167	<u>.218</u>
Oklahoma Eagle	.104	-.167	----	.161
Black Chronicle	-.137	.218	<u>.161</u>	----

A study of Table IX shows that the four papers tend to fall into one cluster. The Tribune, Oklahoman, Chronicle and Eagle tend to play the news similarly. That is, no one paper deviates enough in its news

play to be singled out as a "maverick." At the same time, no two papers were in significant agreement. A more appropriate description of the newspapers' displays of news categories would be that "they agreed to disagree."

Differences and Similarities in News Play  
by Type of Newspaper

With the newspapers collapsed into General and Limited circulation types, differences and similarities in news play stand out more clearly as shown in Table X.

Patterns of news category play by the two types of newspapers show practically no similarity ( $r = -.032$ ), and the "differences" column of Table X reveals the reasons.

General circulation papers gave bigger headlines and choicier newsholes to National/International, Crime and Accident, and Sports/Entertainment news. Law/Politics, Miscellaneous, Education and Economics netted higher play by Limited than by General circulation papers. (See Table X.)

TABLE X  
 NEWS PLAY (TOTAL ATTENTION SCORES) OF EIGHT  
 CATEGORIES OF NEWS BY GENERAL AND  
 LIMITED CIRCULATION NEWSPAPERS

News Categories	General Circulation	Limited Circulation	Totals	Differences
Miscellaneous	64	83	147	-19
National/International	110	22	132	88
City/State	59	61	120	- 2
Crime/Accidents	58	42	100	16
Law/Politics	21	72	93	-51
Economics	25	33	58	- 8
Sports/Entertainment	47	10	57	37
Education	7	17	24	-10
Totals	391	340	731	

$r = -.032$ , general and limited circulation

#### Relationship Between Usage and News Play

A major consideration in this thesis dealt loosely with the notion of construct validity. That is, the author sought to determine if the Budd Attention Score was significantly correlated with usage. Both appear, in the abstract, to reflect news value priorities.

In short, the author asked if the more-frequently used categories of news also received more display in terms of location, headline size,

length, etc. Table XI confirms that there is a strong relation between the usage and emphasis put on the different categories of news.

TABLE XI  
INTERCORRELATIONS OF SAMPLED FRONT-PAGE STORY  
USAGE AND NEWS PLAY

News Category Usage	Tulsa Tribune	<u>News Play</u> Daily Oklahoman	Oklahoma Eagle	Black Chronicle
Tulsa Tribune	<u>.988</u>	.701	-.163	-.114
Daily Oklahoman	.647	<u>.846</u>	.098	.326
Oklahoma Eagle	-.275	-.109	<u>.891</u>	.006
Black Chronicle	-.139	.528	.229	<u>.946</u>

The underlined correlations in Table XI tell a clear-cut story of consistency in news usage and the emphasis put on categories of news. Each newspaper correlated higher with itself on usage and news play than with any other newspaper. The Tulsa Tribune, for example, showed a correlation of .988 on usage and news play. By squaring the correlation coefficient, the coefficient of determination shows that the relative number of stories used in the different categories explains 97.6% of the relative emphasis placed on the categories. In other words, the more stories printed in a category, the higher was the

display given to those stories, and the relationship was almost 1-to-1.

The Daily Oklahoman was a little less consistent in usage as related to news play, but still highly significant ( $r = .846$ ). News category usage explained 71.6% of the news play.

The Oklahoma Eagle correlated .891 on news usage and play, while The Black Chronicle correlated .946. This means that the Eagle's usage explained 79.4% of news play, while Chronicle usage explained 89.5%.

On the average, then, the four newspapers' news usage patterns explained about 85% of the relative emphasis placed on the news.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The ultimate goal of this thesis was to determine differences between, and similarities of, limited- and general-circulation newspapers with regard to frequency and display of front-page stories. Papers studied were: The Tulsa Tribune, The Oklahoma Eagle, The Daily Oklahoman, and The Black Chronicle.

Front-page news stories of 48 issues, comprising 12 each of the four newspapers, were analyzed regarding usage and play of news within 14 categories of news stories. The newspapers were classified according to metropolitan area, and daily and weekly, one of each in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

The newspapers were analyzed individually, then measured alongside other newspapers studied. The contents were tabulated as to number of stories representing each news category, and were evaluated with an attention score based on location, length and headline size.

Then, these two measures, frequency and attention score, were correlated to determine construct validity, to the extent that frequency of certain types of stories would predict display given stories in various news categories.

Consistency within themselves and variation between each other characterized the front page usage and display of news among the two weekly (limited circulation) and daily (general circulation) newspapers in this study.

### Summary

#### Differences in Usage

As shown in Tables II and III, pages 27 and 29, the Tulsa Tribune and Daily Oklahoman published a notably higher number of out-of-state stories (especially international) than did the Black Chronicle or Oklahoma Eagle, the two weekly papers surveyed. These latter two Limited Circulation papers published a higher volume of Sports/Entertainment and local government stories. Each story was tabulated as belonging to one of 14 categories of news.

After the original 14 news categories were collapsed into 8, the dailies still showed heavier usage of non-local front-page stories (national/international) while weeklies were heavier on local, state, law/politics and sports/entertainment. (Table V, page 32). The Limited Circulation Oklahoma Eagle accounted for the higher usage of Sports/Entertainment by weeklies, while the Black Chronicle filled larger portions of its front pages with local, state and law/politics.

After collapsing the four newspapers into General and Limited Circulation types and looking at the eight categories, the familiar pattern aforementioned remained (see Table VII, page 35). Limited circulation papers showed heavier use of local, state, law/politics and sports/entertainment, while the daily General circulation papers went

heavier on national/international news.

### Similarities in Usage

Similarities in relative frequency of stories published in the original 14 categories of news were most evident between the General Circulation Tribune and the Limited Circulation Oklahoma Eagle. The Oklahoman and Black Chronicle showed little similarity in news usage priority, either between themselves or with the Tribune or Eagle (see Table IV, page 30).

However, when news categories were collapsed from 14 to 8, only the Tribune and Oklahoman showed significantly similar news usage priorities (see Table VI, page 33). Relative usage of stories in the eight different categories by the Eagle or Chronicle was a very poor predictor of another paper's priorities.

### Differences in News Play (Attention Scores)

As with the news category usage, the four newspapers, for the most part, were not unified in their play of front-page news, as measured by the Budd Attention Score procedure.

The Tribune and Oklahoman, unlike the Limited circulation papers serving the black community, assigned choice space and bigger headlines to national/international news (see Table VIII, page 36). The Tribune most resembled the Eagle, however, in the emphasis placed on crime/accident stories. The Oklahoman and Chronicle gave similar play to miscellaneous news. The Eagle, on the other hand, stood apart from the other papers in emphasis placed on economic news. The Chronicle stood alone in greater emphasis on local, state, law/politics and education

stories. The picture changed somewhat when the four papers were analyzed as two: Limited vs. General Circulation types.

The General Circulation Tribune and Oklahoman still played national/international news higher. But viewed as a combined General Circulation type, they played crime/accident and sports/entertainment higher than did the smaller special interest papers (see Table X, page 39).

#### Similarities in News Play

Correlation of attention scores over the eight categories of news (Table IX, page 37) showed that none of the papers agreed substantially on the rank-order of emphasis given to the categories. In other words, high and low attention scores of any one newspaper were poor predictors of high and low attention scores of any other paper, as far as types of news were concerned.

#### Similarities in News Usage and News Play

If both the number of stories and news display are indicants of news values, then the two indicants should be highly correlated. That is, the greater the number of stories a paper publishes in a given category, the greater should be the attention score of that news category.

Table XI, page 40, shows high intra-paper consistence in news usage and news play. Between papers, there was less of a relationship, especially between the General and Limited Circulation types.

The Daily Oklahoman was a little less consistent in usage as related to news play, but still highly significantly ( $r = .846$ ). News

category usage explained 71.6% of the news play. The Oklahoma Eagle correlated .891 on news usage and play, while the Black Chronicle correlated .946. This means that the Eagle's usage explained 79.4% of news play, while Chronicle usage explained 89.5%. On the average, then, the four newspapers' news usage patterns explained about 85% of the relative emphasis placed on the news.

On the inter-paper comparison, news usage of the Tribune correlated .701 with the Oklahoman, while the Oklahoman's usage correlated .647 with the Tribune attention scores. Put more simply, given the eight categories of news, the Tribune's usage explained a little less than half the Oklahoman's display of those categories, while the Oklahoman's usage explained about 42 per cent of the Tribune's display.

On the other hand, the Tribune's usage and Oklahoman's usages showed practically no correlation with either of the smaller papers' play of the news. What's more, the Eagle's news usage was a poor predictor of the Chronicle's news play and vice-versa.

In sum, each paper's news usage was a good predictor only of that newspaper's news emphasis. As far as one type of newspaper's usage predicting the play of news of the other paper in its type, the General Circulation papers showed some relationship, but the Limited Circulation papers showed practically no relationship between usage on the part of one and news play by the other.

## Conclusions

The four newspapers have four ideas of what categories of news represent the top news of the day. While readership for Limited and General circulation newspapers overlap in the metropolitan areas, the concept of publishing for the most homogenous audiences for the individual newspapers appears to stand for these editors. The results of this study indicate no category or categories of news indigenous to Limited or General circulation newspapers, or to a specific metropolitan area.

News category usage is widely varied among the newspapers. The figures are deceptive in that very high variations in use exist between newspapers according to category. These variations might be attributed to the audiences these newspapers are reaching and to the size of the newspapers. For example, the two general-circulation papers are large enough to have several major sections in which certain types of news stories are printed, and the variety of audiences these larger papers are designed to attract make it necessary to present a wide range of news stories which will affect most members of these audiences.

On the other hand, the two limited-circulation newspapers, which some researchers classify as supplemental to the general-circulation papers, did not use some of the categories of stories found in the larger papers. The limited-circulation papers have a much smaller and more cohesive audience. The news stories in these papers are designed to appeal to the needs of the smaller audiences who would otherwise not find much news of their communities and representatives in the general-circulation papers. In other words, the general usage of news in many of the categories may have reflected the front pages of some newspapers

more than others.

The results indicate that a relation might exist between the type of newspaper, general and limited circulation, and news category usage. Again, this trend is probably related to the purposes of the two types of newspapers. The smaller papers are intent upon informing their audiences of news within that community while the larger papers are presenting an overview of news which may indirectly affect most segments of their audiences.

The limited and general circulation papers did not agree on the categories of news used on the front page. As far as number of stories printed in the various categories was concerned, there was no consensus among the types of newspapers.

A similar lack of agreement was found in the rank-order of usage of the categories of news. There was no clear-cut division in the relative use of news categories between limited and general circulation newspapers. This means, the number of stories printed in a category by the larger papers did not predict the number printed by the smaller papers.

Because of similarity in scope, the categories were collapsed from 14 to 8, revealing again some indication that a relation might exist between type of newspaper and news category usage. The general circulation newspapers showed heavy usage in national/international news. The limited circulation papers showed no agreement on news usage. It must be remembered that because of the small size of the limited circulation papers, the lack of some sections of the paper may account for certain categories appearing on the front page.

With the data categorized by type of newspaper, limited and general, the differences in newsplay are more obvious in certain categories. General circulation papers gave larger headlines and choicier newsholes to national/international, crime/accidents, and sports/entertainment news. But, law/politics, miscellaneous, education and economics news received more play by limited than by general circulation papers.

This study encompassed a very small universe. The conclusions serve only as indicators for future studies. This study was designed to examine the differences in front-page news stories in limited and general circulation newspapers in regard to the usage and play of news categories.

Overall, the null hypothesis was not confirmed. There is a significant difference between types of newspapers in regard to the selection of news within some categories. It should be noted that between the individual papers and metropolitan areas, no significant difference exists. However, when the papers are categorized as limited and general circulation, the differences become apparent. Of equal importance is the consistency with which the individual newspaper used and played front-page news stories. Each newspaper editor is committed to printing the day's top news stories, as perceived within his system.



## A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Gieber, Walter. "News Is What Newspapermen Make It." People, Society, and Mass Communications. Eds. Anthony L. Dexter and David Manning White. New York: The Free Press, 1964, pp. 173-181.
- Kerlinger, Fred N. Foundations of Behavioral Research. 2nd Ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Inc., 1973.
- Korzybski, Alfred. Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics. 2nd Ed. Lancaster: Science Press, 1941.
- Lippmann, Walter. "The Nature of News." Mass Media and Communications. Ed. Charles S. Steinberg. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1966, pp. 143-151.

### Journal Articles

- Atwood, L. Erwin. "How Newsmen and Readers Perceived Each Other's Story Preferences." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47 (Summer, 1970), pp. 296-302.
- Badii, Naiim and Walter J. Ward. "The Nature of News in Four Dimensions." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 57 (Summer, 1980), pp. 243-248.
- Breed, Warren. "Newspaper 'Opinion Leaders' and Processes of Standardization." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 32 (Summer, 1955), pp. 277-284.
- Budd, Richard W. "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play.'" Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 41 (Spring, 1977), pp. 259-262.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "U.S. News in The Press Down Under." Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 20 (Spring, 1964), pp. 38-56.
- Cony, Edward R. "Conflict-Cooperation Content of Five American Dailies." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 30 (Winter, 1953), pp. 15-22.

- Fowles, Jib. "The Nature of News." Et Cetera, Vol. 34 (December, 1977), pp. 384-394.
- Gibbons, R. Arnold and Dana R. Ulloth. "The Role of the Amsterdam News in New York City's Media Environment." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 59 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 451-455.
- Gieber, Walter. "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 33 (Fall, 1956), pp. 423-432.
- Hardt, Hanno and Michael White. "Front Page News Similarities in A.M. and P.M. Papers." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 43 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 552-554.
- Hynds, Ernest C. and Charles H. Martin. "How Non-Daily Editors Describe Status and Function of Editorial Pages." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 56 (Summer, 1979), pp. 318-323.
- Madden, Thomas James. "Editor Authoritarianism and Its Effect on News Display." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 48 (Winter, 1971), pp. 660-666.
- Sasser, Emery L. and John T. Russell. "The Fallacy of News Judgment." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 49 (Summer, 1972), pp. 280-284.
- Stempel, Guido H. III. "Content Patterns of Small and Metropolitan Dailies." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 39 (Winter, 1962), pp. 88-90.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 29 (Summer, 1952), pp. 333-334.
- Stevens, John D. "Conflict-Cooperation Content of 14 Black Newspapers." Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47 (Autumn, 1970), pp. 566-568.

#### Theses

- Carter, Lorenzo E. "News Values of Editors-Reporters on Five Oklahoma Newspapers." (Unpub. M.S. Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1970.)
- Galow, Carl F. "A Comparison of One Newspaper's Editors and Subscribers News Values." (Unpub. Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1973.)
- Ludeman, Allan L. "The Nature of News: Effects of Added Levels of Conflict and Prominence." (Unpub. M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1973.)

- Rhoades, George R. "News Values and News Decisions of Selected Associated Press and United Press International Newsmen in Oklahoma." (Unpub. M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1970.)
- Snipes, Ronald L. "News Values and News Decisions of High and Low Authoritarian Editors." (Unpub. Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1973.)
- Ward, Walter J. "News Values, News Situations, and News Selections: An Intensive Study of Ten City Editors." (Unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.)

Z  
VITA

Fannie Berene Holland

Candidate for the Degree of  
Master of Science

Thesis: A COMPARISON OF USAGE AND PLAY OF FRONT-PAGE NEWS BETWEEN  
DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN A METROPOLITAN  
AREA

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in the town of Langston, Oklahoma, January 4,  
1950, the daughter of T.H. and Fannie B. Holland.

Education: Graduated from Guthrie High School, Guthrie, Oklahoma,  
in May 1968. Received a bachelor of science degree in  
business administration/accounting from Oklahoma State Uni-  
versity in May 1972. Completed requirements for the master  
of science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1984.

Professional Experience: Student Assistant, Oklahoma State Uni-  
versity-Library, Reference Department, Stillwater, Oklahoma,  
1970-1971. Retail Store Manager, Army and Air Force Exchange  
Service, Fairfield and Monterey, California, 1972-1974.  
Accounting Clerk, Department of Housing and Urban Develop-  
ment, Washington, DC, 1974-1975. Operating Accounting,  
Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Public Debt, Washington  
DC, 1975. Operating Accountant, Federal Aviation  
Administration, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1976-1977. Savings  
and Loan Examiner, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, District  
office in Topeka, Kansas, 1977-1982. Savings and Loan  
Association Supervisory Staff, Federal Home Loan Bank of  
Topeka, Topeka, Kansas, 1982. News Broadcaster/Writer, KOSU-  
FM, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1982-  
1983. Public Relations Intern, Stillwater Medical Center,  
Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1983-1984. Computer Operator, Oklahoma  
State University Library, Cataloging Department, Stillwater,  
Oklahoma, 1983-1984.