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GEOLOCATING MOBILE MEDIA: EXPLORING GRATIFICAITON OPPORTUNITIES
AND LOCATION BASED SERVICES IN LOCAL OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

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GEOLOCATING MOBILE MEDIA: EXPLORING GRATIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES
AND LOCATION BASED SERVICES IN LOCAL OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

Traditional media, such as newspapers, have been struggling to maintain their autonomy in the wake of the digital revolution in mass media. Smaller news outlets situated in local communities have been subject to declining revenues and readership, forcing many organizations to sell to large investment firms or simply close their doors. This study looks to examine how traditional news outlets can strengthen their position in local media markets by developing complementary mobile news technology, and if location-based services plays a significant role in the gratifications of mobile news consumption. The theory of uses and gratifications (focusing on mobile media) will be used to survey businesses and newspaper readers in seven communities in eastern Oklahoma to determine (1) if a mobile news application or mobile news in general would potentially increase readership and revenue for local newspapers and (2) how newspaper readers interact with mobile media on their smartphones by way of mobile media gratifications. Gratification opportunities, in the vein of the U&G approach, will also be employed to further the theoretical assertions of U&G as well as apply new media gratifications to local communities and community newspapers.

    Keywords: location-based services, community journalism, mobile media, smartphone, news application, uses and gratifications, newspapers, local news

Introduction

The daily newspaper was once an economic force to be reckoned with. At the turn of the century, the American newspaper industry was the second oldest mass media industry in the United States and contributed nearly $50 billion to the U.S. economy annually (Picard, 2003). During the second half of the 20th century, newspapers continued to experience exponential advertising revenue growth as the advent of online advertising was introduced to the business (Picard, 2002). Although circulation revenue had fallen flat during the 1980s, U.S. newspapers were receiving almost two and a half times more advertising revenue in 2000 than they were in 1950, and dependence upon advertising revenue had grown 16% from between 1956 and 2000 (Picard, 2002). In 1984, American newspapers were circulating daily editions at a rate of 63.3 million papers per day (Doctor, 2010). Overall, newspapers ad revenue showed consistent growth leading into the 21st century, and newspaper managers were confident that even in the wake of technological evolution, their form of media would continue to show improvement (Picard, 2002).

Especially for local media in small, rural communities, newspapers have played an integral part to daily life as they have provided accountability for local elites, a public forum for discussion and a community-wide connection for local inhabitants (Nielsen, 2015). Since 1929, local news has been viewed as a valuable asset that has driven the overall societal and cultural health of a community (Hollander, 2010). Even though local newspaper and media managers were warned that the onset of digital technology in the future would disrupt their future business models, community news outlets were optimistic that online platforms would allow local operations low-entry costs to edge out competing entities and produce in-depth, unique content for community residents (Nielsen, 2015).

Yet, the narrative of both contemporary national and local journalism business around the U.S. can be described with one word: struggle. Over the past 15 years, more than 1,400 cities and towns across the United States have experienced the loss of a newspaper (Bauder & Lieb, 2019). Newspapers in the 20th century were characterized by "relatively few media creating and controlling content disseminated to large, mass audiences" (Gade, 2008, p. 371). Now, with a tidal wave of streaming services, instantaneous mobile news notifications and digitally-driven media, the contemporary model of the media industry is "discordant, more like a cacophony of voices than the sonorous choruses we grew up with," (Doctor, 2011, p. 6). Weekday print circulation for newspapers dropped from 60 million in 1994 to only 35 million (combined in print and online platforms) while advertising revenue has fallen from $65 billion in 2000 to less than $19 billion in 2016 (Perry, 2013; Trends and Facts on Online News, 2018; Barthel, 2018). Less revenue equates to less income for media operations, leading to decreases in media employment. Between 2008 and 2017, newsroom employment declined by 23%, amounting to a loss of almost 23,000 media positions (Grieco, 2018).

Audiences today are increasingly connected to most media while "on-the-go," (Demographics of Mobile Device Ownership, 2018). In 2017, digital advertising accounted for 44% of the total amount of advertising revenue, an 37% increase from 2016 (Local News Audiences, 2019). However, mobile advertising has experienced rapid growth, from $47 billion in 2016 to $61 billion in 2017 (Trends and Facts on Online News, 2018). Local news is increasingly becoming more digital as well, as 37% of community audiences are partial to online media while 41% of community audiences would rather acquire their local news through television, a far cry from who prefer a printed newspaper as their news source (13%) (For Local News, 2019). The increase of digital news use among Americans as well as the rapid revenue

potential for mobile media warrant further investigations into how local community members are using digital media, and how their local newspapers are managing to stay relevant in a ever-increasing digital sphere of information.

The purpose of this research is to see how media audiences are connected to their local news through digital media (most notably, mobile news). The theory of uses and gratifications will be used to analyze how community members from seven different communities in eastern Oklahoma consume information through their phone, and if mobile media could aid their local newspaper in potentially increasing their readership and revenue. Uses and gratifications was chosen as a theoretical vehicle for this study because the theory aims to discover the meaning of audience activity in their interaction with media (Rubin, 2009). Studies typically involving the theoretical assertions of uses and gratifications generally emphasize explication of how news consumers gratify their information needs, identify motivations behind media behavior, and tend to recognize the functions or consequences of said needs, motives and behaviors (Rubin, 2009).

In the vein of the theory of uses and gratifications, gratification opportunities was used to further the theory of uses and gratifications by not only examining how audiences are interacting with local media, but also how different technology vies for audience attention in communities. Gratification opportunities can be defined as a "belief that a medium allows [consumers] to obtain greater opportunities for satisfaction, more specifically, the perceived attributes of a medium relating to time use and expanding choice of content," (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004, p. 22). By incorporating gratification opportunities with traditional theoretical operations of uses and gratifications, this study was able to explore the gratification dimension of "sought gratification" that has not been thoroughly investigated with local communities and their

community journalism outlets, but also the gratification characteristics of mobile media, an medium continuously increasing in scope as previously specified (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004).

Seven different questionnaires were deployed digitally via social media, email, and interpersonal communication (i.e. door to door surveying) to analyze the mobile media gratifications community members harness from smartphone use as well as their inclination to use a news application. Another set of seven surveys were deployed via email and social media to local businesses in order to evaluate the adoption of a local news-based application produced by their local newspaper. Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior was used to determine if a mobile application would be financially feasible for certain papers. Geolocation capabilities on a smartphone are defined as "finding, determining and providing the exact location of a computer, networking device or equipment," using GPS coordinates to specific geographic locations (Technopedia, n.d.). If combining a smartphone's location-based service capabilities with immediate and easily accessible mobile journalism publishing practices, geolocation may be able to offer mobile journalism a competitive edge in the digital news market by allowing community connection and offering audiences real-time news updates and information pertaining to their area (Schmitz Weiss, 2018). With this study, this thesis wishes to assert that "unless the qualities that make newsprint so much more engaging than online journalism can be harnessed to propel a reading resurgence, newspapers' decline will continue, with important social, cultural, and political consequences," (Thurman, 2017, p. 1).

<div align="center">**Review of Literature**</div>

Consolidation and News Deserts

As of 2018, 171 counties in the United States do not have a local newspaper, and almost half of all counties (1,449) only have one local newspaper, which is usually a weekly

(Abernathy, 2018). In total, the United States has lost 1,800 local newspapers since 2004, and parallel to the decline of traditional media, especially in small and rural communities, is the loss of readership, which is seen in the 40.2% decrease in weekly and daily newspaper circulation (from 122 million to 73 million) (Abernathy, 2018). Although Abernathy (2016) painted a stark future for local journalism in her 2016 report which stated that corporate conglomerates were absorbing small newspapers at a rapid rate in order to manage their decline and make a profit, her new report continues to uncover what the loss of local newspapers mean to community members and how the loss of a local newspaper creates a news void or "desert" (Abernathy, 2018).

From 2004 to 2016, New Media/GateHouse, Digital First Media and Gannett acquired 1,004 local newspapers, of which twice as many papers—257—were bought in rural areas (Abernathy, 2016). New managers at these papers tend to have three differing strategies when directing new local newspaper operations: grow the paper, which is a long term strategy and rarely used, maintain the status quo by cutting costs to parallel decreases in revenue, or manage the decline, which is comprised of "harvesting revenue" and trading or shutting the paper down (Abernathy, 2016). For example, most communities that experience this decline either rely on social media for information or a "word-of-mouth" information sharing method, as is the practice of residents in Saguache, Colorado, a town with a population fewer than 500 and no local newspaper (Owen, 2016).

According to the *Chicago Tribune,* "buying smaller publications and slashing costs has become a way to buy time while figuring out how to make more money online" for many owners of large, metropolitan dailies (Smith, 2016). In 2015, the media industry saw the largest monetary acquisition of newspapers since the 2008 financial crisis—70 dailies were bought by

large media houses for a combined $827 million (Smith, 2016). Large media organizations are finding that consolidation of smaller outlets bide them time until they figure out how to edge out digital competition (Smith, 2016). Since 2013, *The Denver Post* has experienced significant loss of staff as their New York City-based hedge fund, Alden Global Capital, has forced staff reductions to the point that the paper issued out a opinion-editorial piece pleading for help (*Denver Post* Editorial Board, 2018).

The Post cited Alden for reducing the quality of journalism in the paper while increasing subscription rates and pumping profits into business ventures unrelated to journalism (Denver Post Editorial Board, 2018). What was once a newsroom of 250 strong have shrunk to less than 100 due to layoffs, generating a steady lack of local journalism in an area that increased in population by roughly 100,000 citizens since Alden took the reins of the publication (Denver Post Editorial Board, 2018). As local newspaper owners experience pressure to attend to community issues, corporate owners constantly strive to please private investors by decreasing the quality of the newspaper, number of journalists, and circulation in order to increase profits (Picard & Van Weasel, 2008). Picard and Van Weasel (2008) conclude in their study of different advantages and disadvantages of newspaper ownership that the best model of proprietorship is private possession, however the competitive market forces many publications to become publicly traded entities or seek investment elsewhere for the continuity of operations and journalistic investigation (p. 29). Abernathy's (2018) report also investigated the southern region of the country and discovered it had lost the most dailies since 2004. Oklahoma has lost around half a dozen or so (Abernathy, 2018).

One recent and closure of a local newspaper in Oklahoma is the *Pryor Daily Times* in Mayes County (with a population of 40,000), which is only an hour drive from this research's

nearest study site (Abernathy, 2018; Google, n.d.). Locals were reportedly shocked when the paper decide to shutter operations, and Pryor Creek's mayor, Jimmy Tramel, expressed his astonishment by saying, "We have a huge communication gap in this country today, and I don't know what the answer is. It's a drastic blow to our city because, how do we get information out?" (Savage, 2017). The *Pryor Daily Times*, like many other local newspapers around the country, is owned by Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc., or CNHI, LLC (Savage, 2017). Just in Oklahoma, CNHI owns 15 local papers (Savage, 2017). This is a minute example of the media consolidation that is taking place around the U.S. (Abernathy, 2016).

However, there are many movements around the state of Oklahoma to keep ownership of newspapers within local communities. This is readily apparent in Seminole County, when in early 2019, the Seminole Economic Development Council purchased three newspapers in Seminole County following the death of Stu Phillips, the third-generation publisher of the *Seminole Producer* (Ellis, 2019). It was reported that the council has zero interest in running the papers, but will delegate responsibilities to a publisher and editorial staff as to not lose the quality of the business nor the history it represents for the county (Ellis, 2019). The Thomas Tribune, located in Thomas, Oklahoma, was another site for local purchase when the owner of Trail Miller Co., LLC acquired the paper from owners whose proprietorship began in 1973 (Oklahoma Press Association, 2019). The owner of Trail Miller Co. stated he wished to keep the original staff that had worked with the paper before the acquisition in an effort to maintain the quality of journalism and not disrupt the operations of the traditional media outlet (Oklahoma Press Association, 2019). When outside funding interests are nonexistent and newspaper operations are dwindling, especially in local communities, traditional media outlets are required to shut their doors or turn to local businesses for support. Such is the case for the Bristow News

Record in Bristow, Oklahoma, who have rallied community businesses to sustain newspaper operations with advertising sales. This year, the 120-year-old Bristow News Record has been operating without a town reporter and relies on only two individuals to run the entire paper according to a report by a journalism student from the University of Oklahoma. The advertising executive for the newspaper, Tim O'Neil, stated that the paper was struggling because community members simply have lost interest in the paper and enjoy getting information through social media more. Mike Legg, a Bristow resident, said that he buys the paper when his children are featured in it, however he prefers reading the online version on his mobile phone, an area that the paper has not yet monetized.

Community newspaper closures present substantial problems for communities. According to Danny Hayes, a political scientist who studied the effects of community newspaper closures on local political participation in elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, "When local papers cut coverage there's essentially nothing to take its place in these local communities," causing a decline of political participation and furthering the increasingly apparent phenomenon of news deserts (Brown, 2018). In 2010, it was uncovered that a town manager had embezzled $5 million by overpaying the small Los Angeles suburb of Bell, however the story went unreported for years due to a lack of local reporting (Fox, 2019). A small investigative team for the *Los Angeles Times* released a report that led to the 2014 sentencing of Robert Rizzo, the town manager, to 12 years in prison (Fox, 2019).

Political and administrative consequences for the closure of local newspapers are readily apparent. Rubado and Jennings (2019) find that after studying local elections in parallel with 11 different Californian newspapers, towns that were served by understaffed newspapers had a reduced political competition in mayoral races and potentially lower voter turnout. Municipality

spending has also been observed to surge without local media holding leadership accountable (Gao, Lee & Murphy, 2018). Furthermore, local media alternatives, whether print or digital, are usually insufficient in filling the gap brought on by local newspaper shutterings (Smethers et al., 2007). When the Humboldt Union ceased publication in April 2005, citizens of Humboldt, Kansas, reported that different media in their town did not fill the void of losing their longtime local newspaper and was missed as a community surveillance feature (Smethers et al., 2007). The loss of local newspapers across the United States not only affects the knowledge diffusion throughout a community, but also has detrimental effects on the well-being of municipalities and others areas of interest left unobserved by local reporters. Abernathy (2018) describes the consequences blatantly: "The stakes are high, not just for the communities that have lost newspapers — or are living with the threat of losing a local newspaper – but also for the entire country."

Local News and Its Audience

A Pew Research report has recently stated that although 71% of Americans think their local media outlets are financially successful, only 14% have contributed their own money toward the media operations, either through subscription, donation, or membership (For Local News, 2019). Nearly nine in 10 residents reported that they follow local news closely in a study conducted by the Pew Research Center in three American cities—Denver, Colorado, Macon, Georgia, and Sioux City, Iowa (Pew Research Center, 2015). Yet, the question as to whether local news can follow the digital trend of the media market (and if they can convince print audiences to follow them into digital spaces) still remains a question that many news outlets are attempting to tackle.

Traditional media finds itself in a crossroads when attempting to transition their print audience to digital spheres and noting that new, electronic content is "more glanced at, it seems, then gorged on," (Benton, 2018). Audience trends are constantly shifting, and 21st century readers find themselves in a media environment distinguished by "more and more abundant information, and more and more sources to choose from," causing audiences to choose not just one but multiple methods for information acquisition (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017). Fletcher and Nielsen (2017) conclude from their investigation into the fragmentation of news audiences that all communication is contextual within the definition of its audience, and research trends play out in differing circumstances and locations.

The Pew Research Center released a study this year that focused on the local news landscape of various cities and towns across the United States (What is the local news landscape, 2019). The analysis of 35,000 American adults and their preference and opinions on local news consumption supports the findings of Fletcher and Nielsen (2017) and their deduction of local news atmospheres depending upon contextuality. For instance, in Oklahoma City, a midwestern metropolitan area with an estimated population of 1.3 million, 51% of adults preferred method of to acquire local information and news from television, however 24% preferred a news website or mobile application to consume news (the next biggest category) (What is the local news landscape, 2019). For those that utilized websites, 59% of adults reported that they often or sometimes used news websites or mobile applications to consume news, and 75% of respondents who consumed local news digitally reported that they used their mobile phone to do so (What is the local news landscape, 2019). Although the survey sample size was not large enough to display individual results for areas smaller than Oklahoma City, towns such as Ada, Bartlesville, Altus, and Duncan among others were grouped into a larger, rural subset, revealing that only

40% of adults consume news by watching television, 20% prefer online websites or mobile applications, and 16% still enjoy reading daily newspapers, which is more than double the percentage of respondents who say they read print newspapers for local news in Oklahoma City (What is the local news landscape, 2019). Generally, residents of smaller, more rural towns tend to prefer methods of traditional media consumption to acquire local news rather than digital methods (Miller et al., 2012).

Local print media may have an upper hand over their regional and local counterparts (Radcliffe & Ali, 2017). The Tow Center for Digital Journalism released a report specifying findings about small-market newspapers and their response to digital disruption, which has several key assumptions: (1) local media should be referred to in a variant manner compared to their regional and national cousins based on local context, (2) local print media may be in a better position than larger newspaper organizations based on lack of competition and exclusive geographical content, (3) local papers experience digital change at a slower pace, and (4) financial survival is dependent upon income diversification (Radcliffe & Ali, 2017). These stark dissimilarities between national and local print showcase local traditional media's potential in, and simultaneously make a case for, experimenting with new digital technology to diversify income of newspapers and deliver unique community content. Many signs in the contemporary media market point toward a needed emphasis on digital forms of technology, such as the transcendence of social media over print media as a news source as well as a sudden uptick of the use of news applications around the world (Shearer, 2018; Newman et al., 2018). Use of news applications, which will be discussed in a later section, is especially interesting as, after a period of little or no growth in the use of mobile news applications, the United States experienced an 8-point percentage increase in 2018 in use of news applications for news

consumption (Newman et al., 2018). Although mobile news applications are expensive to develop, market, and maintain, they could offer local media another stream of revenue in which local traditional media could capitalize on to soften the blow of digital disruption (Gahran, 2012).

The main thread of local American communities is that community members want to move into digital spaces and utilize more digital media, however they still feel kinship to their local news outlets (For Local News, 2019). A major theme reverberating in local media outlets are "what works in one area, won't necessarily in another," and both content and revenue-related endeavors should be optimized for outlets on a basis of location and community context (Radcliffe and Ali, 2017). Small market print media makeup 6,851 of the 7,071 weekly and daily newspaper publications in the United States, and according to Radcliffe and Ali (2017), "they're a silent majority too often absent from discussions about the information needs of communities and the future of journalism. It's time we include them in the conversation."

Traditional and Digital Business Realities

One would think that community newspapers are attempting to adapt to the digital age, but a Tow Center study reveals that only one in 10 local newspapers have websites, and many don't have a social presence of Facebook (Holcomb, 2018). Digital revenues have yet to make up for print revenue declines, and the total newspaper circulation for 2016 to 2017 dropped an estimated 11% (Pew Research Center, 2018). Advertising revenue, the primary method of profit for legacy media, decreased from about $18.3 billion in 2016 to nearly $16.5 billion in 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2018). Although the portion of digital advertising revenue newspapers receive from digital advertising accounted for 31% of all advertising revenue (a nearly 7% increase from 2016), the slow increase does not make up for print losses (Barthel, 2018).

According to the Internet Advertising Revenue Report (2018), overall digital advertising revenues increased from $40.3 billion to $49.5 billion during a half-year-over-half-year comparison between 2017 and 2018.

Yet, advertising in the digital sphere is "a volume game, dominated by large players like Google and Facebook" who are increasingly offering geographically targeted advertising at low rates (Nielsen, 2015, p. 8). A duopoly of Facebook and Google mostly account for a supremacy over digital media advertising as they captured a combined 56.8% of U.S. digital ad investment in 2018 (Koetsier, 2018). Although this is a decline of 1.8 percentage points in 2017, they still maintain a dominion over the digital advertising sphere by offering targeted and personalized ads for web traffic (Koetsier, 2018). The decrease of price in subscriptions and distribution due to the digitization of publications have forced many local outlets to change their business models and cut overhead costs and staff to remain competitive in their particular market (George & Waldfogel, 2006).

While the overall digital media market is experiencing significant gains, many news outlets have reportedly had to scale back operations due to revenue declines. Vice Media, a digital and broadcasting news outlet, reported layoffs in February of this year that would impact about 250 employees, or 10% of its total workforce (Jarvey, 2019). Yet, this is just a small fraction of the current "landslide" many digital-savvy media corporations have found themselves in (Goggin, 2019). Business Insider reports that over 2,400 individuals lost their positions in their respective media companies so far this year (Goggin, 2019). These companies include *Buzzfeed, New York Media, Digg.com,* Verizon*,* McClatchy, and even Gannett Co., Inc., the largest newspaper corporation in the United States (Goggin, 2019). In total, from 2014 to 2017, it is estimated that 5,000 journalism positions have been eliminated as the media industry (Goggin,

2019). From 2017 to 2018, The Pew Research Center estimates that nearly 36% of the largest newspapers in the country and 23% of digitally native news outlets have experienced significant layoffs as well (Greico, Sumida, Fedeli, 2018).

Even though print newspapers have experienced a general decline in overall revenue stemming from a decline in advertising and circulation, various reports show that the largest newspaper conglomerates are experiencing an upswing of revenue from digital subscriptions. In its third quarter earnings report for 2018, Gannett reported a year-over-year loss of $32.6 million in overall revenue despite gaining $3.3 million in digital advertising and marketing (Toy, 2018). This narrative is similar for many large newspapers: *The New York Times* recently reported an overall digital revenue pull of $709 million for 2018, and an increase of 27% in users who pay for their digital products (Peiser, 2019). The most surprising statistic of *The Times*' digital success is that digital advertising surpassed print advertising for the first time in the fourth quarter of 2018, reaching revenues of $103 million, which is a 23% increase from 2017 (Peiser, 2019). Print advertising revenue for *The Times* dropped to $88 million, a 10% year-over-year decrease (Peiser, 2019). Overall, newspapers continue to show digital gains as digital advertising now accounted for roughly 31% of all traditional media advertising revenue in 2017 (Percentage of Newspaper Revenue, 2018). This is a 10 percentage-point increase from 2014 and a 3-percentage point increase from 2016 (Percentage of Newspaper Revenue, 2018).

Not only are mobile and smartphone application news consumption increasing drastically as reported above, but mobile advertising revenue made up two-thirds of all digital advertising revenue in 2017 (Trends and Facts on Online News, 2018). However, with the dominance of digital media conglomerates such as Facebook and Google, mobile advertising is very much restricted to these monopolies. Facebook's fourth quarter 2018 mobile advertising revenue was

announced to make up 93% of total sales, accounting for much of the 61% net income increase

(to $6.88 billion) in the last quarter of 2018 (Williams, 2019). Statista estimated that Google

netted a worldwide mobile advertising revenue of $61.26 billion worldwide in 2018 (Statista,

2019). Only sizable competitors, such as Amazon, who is reportedly expected to control 10% of

the digital advertising market by 2020, can contend with the digital advertising duopoly, leaving

other media outlets, such as traditional media and digital native operations, to search elsewhere

for monetary gain (Delventhal, 2019). Chao (2018) conducted a three-part study researching the

effects of traditional, digital and mobile advertising. He concluded that although traditional

media (print) is still the preferred method of reaching customers, traditional, digital and mobile

advertising work well if used in conjunction (Chao, 2018). Reaching target customers via print

media is the preferred way to reach targeted customers, however "smartphone advertising has a

strong presence, and it will work hand-in-hand with traditional media advertising owing to the

fact that traditional media advertising still carries more weight as it still attracts more advertising

dollars," (Chao, 2018, p. 7). The study adds that smartphone advertising not only gives an

additional channel to advertisers to reach their targeted customers, but additionally gives

customers the chance to reach advertisers directly, allowing advertisers to know how effective

their advertisements are in real time (Chao, 2018). It remains that while digital advertising is a

critical sector of media revenue, it solely cannot support high quality journalism, and "across the

industry we are seeing a renewed push to persuade consumers to pay directly for online news

through subscription, membership, donations or per-article payments," (Newman et al., 2018).

Mobile Media

As early as 2011, the Pew Research Center made a sizable, parsimonious claim: "Local

news is going mobile," (Purcell, Rainie, Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2011). While mobile news

consumption has grown in popularity and is being used significantly in daily life, this is only apparent of the past several years and starkly differs from perceptions of mobile media consumption in the early 2010s (Westlund, 2012). The Reuters Digital News Report of 2018 found that 62% of respondents were likely to use their smartphone for news consumption on a weekly basis while 39% reported that they used social media as a browsing source for news, although the year-over-year comparison shows a decrease of social media news consumption (Newman et al., 2018). Use of mobile news has grown enough in the past decade to outpace laptop and desktop news consumption by a substantial margin (Fedeli & Matsa, 2018). The Pew Research Center reports that 58% of adults say they often get news from their mobile devices, while only 39% of desktop and laptops users say the same (Fedeli & Matsa, 2018). Younger demographics are shown to use mobile media as news sources while older demographics tend to still prefer traditional media agencies such as newspapers, television, and radio (Fedeli & Matsa, 2018).

As reported by Newman et al. (2018), use of mobile news applications to consume news has spiked not only in the United States, but in many areas around the world as well. Large news aggregates like Apple News have seen dramatic increases in readership, which now amounts to 90 million annual readers while cutting deals with publishers on subscription fees and media organization advertisements (Nicas, 2018; Tran, 2018). Apple News will allow publishers to sign up for the service by hosting a channel on the website, letting the media outlet run its own ads and even signing up new subscribers (Apple is allowed 30% of the revenue from within the application) (Nicas, 2018). While Facebook had changed its algorithm earlier in 2018 to reduce the visibility of media publishers, many Apple executives were hopeful that Apple News could be a Netflix-like supporter for local media publications, and foot traffic for companies such as

Vice Media and the Meredith Corporation doubled over the past year (Nicas, 2018; Tran, 2018).

However, the popular news application fails to show publishers of various media substantial

monetary gain, causing exasperation among owners of other media outlets (Nicas, 2018). For

instance, the online news site *Slate* generates more money in 50,000 views on their own webpage

compared to the 6 million monthly views on Apple News (Nicas, 2018). Smartphone news

applications overall must decide how to effectively monetize mobile news content beside their

other media products while offering unique content across platforms. Ye et al. (2018) conducted

a study that examined a model to measure continuous use for smartphone news applications and

found that the quality of information and the news application itself has positive effects on the

continuation of users' intention to use the application while personalized characteristics of

mobile news apps positively affects user satisfaction. This concept of the quality of system,

service, and content paired with an effective diversity of income (subscriptions, advertisements,

per-article payments, or native advertisements) could have a positive impact on the livelihood of

mobile news applications, including applications manufactured by local news entities (Ye et al.,

2018).

Westlund and Fardigh's (2015) study of complementary and displacing effects and

mobile media consumption among Swedish evening tabloids found that mobile media increased

the general levels of cross-media use (i.e. using a computer and a phone or a print product and a

phone to access news), and complementary effects are products of this cross-media usage (i.e.

distinct age cohorts using more than one media product). The researchers cement the fact that

newspapers may have desire to move toward a more mobile-based operating system parallel to

their print newspaper product in terms of "generating new revenue streams while developing

more intimate relationships with their community and advertisers, possibly also leading to

reducing costs," (Westlund & Fardigh, 2015, p. 27). Another study of a digital media corporation found that the introduction of a smartphone news application to the organization's audience caused complementary use of its online website, supporting the view that differing technologies offering different forms of content drive cross-media use (Xu, Forman, Kim & Van Ittersum, 2014).

Mobile media fills gaps of usage that are common with traditional media—traditional media uses fill traditional niches with limited user displacement effects while mobile media usage occurs in the gaps in which traditional media is not used, bolstering cross-usage among news consumers (Dimmick, Feaster & Hoplamazian, 2010). Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) offer a exploratory study in which the concept of gratification opportunities are unearthed, which examine how a new medium "grows, competes and prospers by providing utility or gratifications to the consumers," (p. 31). Their findings from a telephone survey of 211 respondents show that the internet news consumption displaces newspaper use, but the two mediums share a high degree of overlap in gratification opportunities in that they compete for niches of news consumption throughout the day of the individual (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). Much like the idea of complementarity as introduced by Xu, Forman, Kim and Van Ittersum (2014) as well as Westlund and Fardigh (2015), different mediums of technology occupy different spatial and time dimensions while competing for the attention of audiences (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). This is based in the theory of the niche, which assumes that industries have varying levels of technology all battling to occupy a certain niche to survive and prosper (Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984). In order to win over the attention of media users, technology must offer unique resources to audiences or draw boundaries to which it allows space and time access to other technology (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). Mobile media, if paired with traditional forms of media, could

very well occupy different niches in space and time (i.e. users take more time with newspapers and read mobile news while on the go) and benefit certain media organizations in both revenue and circulation if used simultaneously.

Overall, smartphone news consumption has become one of the most popular methods for news consumption among audiences and could offer distinct financial and expansion possibilities for local traditional media (Fedeli & Matsa, 2018). Although younger demographics still outpace mobile news consumption levels compared to elderly news consumers, older adults are the main reason for mobile news consumption growth in the last decade, which could be significant in transferring their readership from traditional to more mobilized, technological methods (Fedeli & Matsa, 2018).

Location-Based Services

Business Wire reported that the market share of location-based services is predicted to grow from $18 billion (the 2016 value) to $96.01 billion by 2021, an incremental growth of $78.01 billion (Global location-based services, 2017). In 2015, 90% of adults used location-based services on their mobile device (Ehlers, 2018). This increase possibly warrants for experimentation and potential incorporation of location-based services into the journalistic profession. Schmitz Weiss (2018) defines a location-based service as access to a mobile phone's GPS signal to relay specific device information or identification of a user through cellular triangulation or WiFi access. Most mobile news applications only focus on traffic and weather when employing location-based services, and connection to content and the user's physical space might positively engage the news consumer (Schmitz Weiss, 2013). Local news outlets, such as televisions stations, radio networks, newspapers and even digitized news outlets engage users with local stories and information, but their reach is broad and does not focus on exact location

(Schmitz Weiss, 2013). However, a smartphone application that is tied to a precise location could increase immediacy, accessibility, and social utility in the gratifications sought by an audience member.

Ehlers (2018) states that, "localization can strengthen the local focus and the communication with the local community as a key asset of local news organizations," (p. 3). Ghose, Goldfarb and Han (2012) conducted a study that reviewed the usage patterns of a South Korean micro-blogging website and found that in mobile internet and news browsing, the mobile phone poses benefits in distance and geographically tied information. In terms of ranking on both PC-based and mobile based web browsers, hits to geographically-close information were higher ranked or more accessible on the mobile phone, and geographically-targeted advertisements and e-commerce messages were more effective (Ghose, Goldfarb & Han, 2012). If implementing this concept regarding a news application, it would most likely be in the form of a hyperlocal news aggregator, or an application that can capture news stories from a specifically targeted area from within a small community. However, this study argues that a narrower form of news aggregation dependent upon the location of the user would enhance gratifications found in mobile media news consumption, specifically in a smartphone application and potentially serve as a source of gratification for a news consumer (especially consumers in smaller communities).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications play an integral part into understanding what needs media fulfill in the lives of readers. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) developed the uses and gratifications theory of media, which assumes a litany of presumptions:

1. An active media audience uses media in a goal-oriented method.

2. Need gratification and medium choice is linked directly to the individual audience member.

3. Media compete with other resources for need satisfaction of audience members.

4. Much of the goals of mass media use—interests, motives and desires—can be derived directly from said audience member(s).

5. Value judgements about mass media can only be accessed by audience members. (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 510-511) .

Rubin (2009) states that contemporary views of U&G focus on how the behavior of media audiences are motivated, purposive, and goal-directed while audience members initiate the active selection of technology for communication. The use of U&G in media studies is beneficial to understanding how the media gratify the needs of audience members and uncover certain motives for certain use of different mediums (Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasarosa, 2004). Ruggerio (2000) stated that the origins of U&G may be traced back to the 1940s, when research scholars attempted to discover the reasoning behind audiences behavior when consuming television and radio. After its inception as a widely used theory for media effects in the mid 1970s, the concept seemed to fade as criticisms for the theory not being a rigorous scientific theory and having "no common model, set of procedures or purposes informs the tradition" seemed to hurt the operationalization of the concept in media studies (McQuail, 1984, p. 181). Therefore, until the rapid development of telecommunications technology and new media, U&G was generally held as an unfavorable theory in the eyes of mass media scholars (Weiyan, 2015).

The introduction of digital media to audiences has completely changed the method of consumption as well as the motives and purposes behind media consumption (Weiyan, 2015). As audiences are presented with insurmountable amounts of media choices, "motivation and

gratification become one of the most crucial factors of audience analysis" (Weiyan, 2015, p. 75). Ruggiero (2000) stated in his theoretical investigation of the uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century that a continually modernized theory of U&G is needed in different sociological and cultural contexts in order to allow the theory of uses and gratifications to be "highly serviceable" once new technology breaks into the sphere of the now user-dominated landscape of digital media. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) also argue that media research should be directed at studying human needs to discover if the media subscribe to their creation and fulfillment. Studying different uses of media as well as different mediums has the ability to unearth certain kinds of use and gratifications inherent in media users, subsequently avoiding any overgeneralizations of content use (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

Weaknesses of U&G

Some scholarly work has pointed out some gaps in U&G research and have attempted to discredit it as a scientific theory of communication. Although supportive of the theory, Rubin (2009) identified many widespread criticisms of U&G as being too dependent on self reporting measures (subsequently lowering levels of validity in studies), possessing a lack of clarity among central constructs and how different meanings can be attached to different constructs by different researchers, and supporting a view of the audience being too active or rational in its behavior. Ruggerio (2000) likewise cited that a lack of internal consistency in studies as well as theoretical deficiencies in operations models of U&G. Contemporary criticisms of the theory comment that the theory may be too individualistic as the theory focuses on individual information consumption, the synthetic production of typologies within the theory that cause confusion among specific motives, and again the prediction that every audience is active and rationale in its information consumption (Ruggerio, 2000).

Yet, U&G provides a comparative framework that works well with comparing different uses of technology and offering an explanation for audiences' usage. The choices that individuals make while consuming news on digital devices "are motivated by the desire to satisfy a wide variety of functions: entertainment, diversion, social connection, personal identity, information and the like," (Cho, De Zuniga, Rojas & Shah, 2003, p. 49). Researchers ought to study human needs in order to evaluate if certain mediums of media contribute to their existence, and, in return, understand how media may better serve the needs of audience members as new technology is introduced in their community and how different outlets compete for the attention of audience members (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). For purposes of this research, U&G seemed like a reliable comparative framework to analyze how and to what extent local community members consumed news.

Gratification Opportunities

Mobile media fills gaps of usage that are common with traditional media—traditional media uses fill traditional niches with limited user displacement effects while mobile media usage occurs in the gaps in which traditional media is not used, bolstering cross-usage among news consumers (Dimmick, Feaster & Hoplamazian, 2010). No two mediums may occupy the same channel of communication or information dissemination and survive, and in a study conducted by Dimmick, Feaster and Hoplamazian (2010) time-space diary self-reporting measures discovered that traditional media occupy rather general time-space intervals of user attention (newspapers consumed in the morning, radio consumed during drives and television consumed in the evenings), however new mobile media is utilized in "transit" or when an individual is on the move in between niches of media use (p. 34). This leads to new gratification opportunities between different forms of media (Dimmick, Feaster & Hoplamazian, 2010).

Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) offer an exploratory study in which the concept of gratification opportunities are unearthed, which examine how a new medium "grows, competes and prospers by providing utility or gratifications to the consumers," (p. 31). Their findings from a telephone survey of 211 respondents show that the internet news consumption displaces newspaper use, but the two mediums share a high degree of overlap in gratification opportunities in that they compete for niches of news consumption throughout the day of the individual (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004).

Much like the idea of complementarity as introduced by Xu, Forman, Kim and Van Ittersum (2014) as well as Westlund and Fardigh (2015), different mediums of technology occupy different spatial and time dimensions while competing for the attention of audiences (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). This is based in the theory of the niche, which assumes that industries have varying levels of technology all battling to occupy a certain niche in order to survive and prosper (Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984). In order to win over the attention of media users, technology must offer unique resources to audiences or draw boundaries to which it allows space and time access to other technology (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). Mobile media, if paired with traditional forms of media, could very well occupy different niches in space and time (i.e. users take more time with newspapers and read mobile news while on the go) and benefit certain media organizations in both revenue and circulation if used simultaneously.

Media gratifications inherent in the construct of gratification opportunities are *accessibility* (ease-of-use), *immediacy,* and *mobility,* which will be measured in this study via online questionnaire. Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) identified gratification opportunities between different mediums in quickness (to get information as quickly as possible), which can be defined as an "immediacy" gratification. Convenience of access or (news that fits into

someone's schedule) can be categorized into an accessibility (ease of use) gratification (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). Lastly, the media gratification of mobility can be defined as having the ability to be in touch with digital realms anytime, anywhere (Chan, 2015). Therefore, mobile media offers mobility affordances which traditional media do not possess. This transitional characteristic in mobile media allow for the gratification of mobility to be housed within the construct of gratification opportunities.

Mobile Media Gratifications

A recent trend of research into U&G have explored for what purposes individuals use mobile media and the gratifications sought from such mobile use. Common gratifications in mobile news are cited as *social utility*, *entertainment*, *information-seeking*, *enjoyment* and a media gratification of *location-based content* or *services*.

Entertainment and Social Utility. Leung and Wei (2000) described social utility as being connected with others in your immediate community. Wei (2008) also found that younger demographics tended to use mobile phones for consuming news and entertainment while mobile phone news consumers were generally motivated to seek news through instrumental motives. While discussing the different types of news that is consumed via mobile devices, Shim, You, Lee and Go (2015) found that entertainment news (soft mobile news) was commonly associated with consuming news through social media and news applications. There is an inherent thread of being connected to another individual through your mobile device which combines the utilities of the telephone and social media to satisfy that need (Shim, You, Lee & Go, 2015).

Information-Seeking. Motivations for using the mobile phone for news-seeking in order to gratify needs are generally driven by instrumental motives (Wei, 2008). Information seeking is determined to be one of the highest predictors of mobile media usage (Shim, You, Lee & Go,

2015). Chan (2015) found that the information seeking (or desire to surveillance an environment) was also the strongest predictor of hard news consumption.

Enjoyment. After interviewing mobile users, the media gratification of "enjoyment" or the aspect of emotional pleasure from being connected to other audience members as well as being informed, was found to be a significant mobile media gratification (Incollingo, 2018). Socialization motivations are driven by the gratification of enjoyment, and mobile users typically consume "soft news," or entertainment-based information when satisfying a enjoyment need (Shim, You, Lee & Go, 2015). The pleasure of reading was also situated as a factor of enjoyment in mobile media among users, and enjoyment was correlated positively to higher levels of mobility for users (Incollingo, 2018).

Location-Based. Schmitz Weiss (2018) reached three conclusions in her study of norms and values with location based services: (1) "journalism is now produced to facilitate increasingly mobile places of consumption," (2) journalism is now produced to adjust for the faster pace of the information age (Speed), and," (3) journalism is now produced to interact with and provide multiple channels of access for audiences." Gratifications in location-based services journalism have not been thoroughly researched, but perceived value in marketing location-based services have revealed that conditional value is predictive of location-based service use (Pura, 2005). Therefore, a location-based media gratification can be derived from Schmitz Weiss' (2013) conception of what would make audiences attracted to such technology, such as the ease-of use of attaining geographic-specific news, the immediacy of being delivered news based on a certain physical location, and the overall connection one has to a community when fed news based on a physical location, which could be categorized as social utility or sociability.

Theory of Planned Behavior

For the purpose of this study, we wish to measure the value of purchase intention within the group of local advertising buyers. Purchase intention can be predicted with Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior. Ajzen (1985) classifies planned behavior as having three human considerations:

1. "Beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behavior and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioral beliefs)."

2. "Beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs)."

3. "Beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs)." (Ajzen, 1985, p.1).

Among behavioral beliefs, attitudes (both favorable and unfavorable) can be drawn from these beliefs (Ajzen, 1985). Normative beliefs give way to perceived social pressure, and control beliefs are manifest of perceived behavior control (whether a certain factor will positively or negatively affect a behavior) (Ajzen, 1985). These three concepts—attitudes, perceived subjective pressure and behavior control—all lead to intention of a behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Intention is predicated upon the three human considerations of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, if measuring all three concepts, intention to advertise can be observed among local advertisers of newspapers and business owners in their attitudes toward purchasing advertisement in a new product.

According to Ajzen (1991), "the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance," (p. 181). Therefore, the stronger the intention to advertise, the more likely an advertiser will purchase advertising in the near future. Although the theory of

planned behavior is used to discover whether an action will be carried out, it can be related to a business sector to discern if mobile advertising would be feasible in local communities. Matheison (1991) conducted a study to test if the theory of planned behavior could measure the intention of technology adoption and found that the theory of planned behavior is more specific in finding the barriers to use and performance (i.e. in this case, advertising), and explains possible sources of resistance as well as social pressures. For advertising, the theory of planned behavior is a suitable model to measure the intention to advertise and the prediction of whether businesses would pay to advertise in a local news application.

Summary

Mobile news consumption is on the rise and could be a significant bolster to community newspaper and traditional media operations. In rural areas and small communities, corporate media companies are swallowing swaths of traditional media outlets and appealing to corporate investors rather than local readers (Abernathy, 2016). The results are revealing: hundreds of papers across the countries have shuttered as corporate entities either manage their decline or demand for employee layoffs (i.e. *The Denver Post*). News deserts are expanding across the United States, and new methods of online community outreach should be pursued in order to preserve community journalism and local information (Thurman, 2017).

Mobile media looks to be a promising sector of technological potential for traditional media as both mobile news consumption and advertising have steadily increased over the past several years. Smartphone news applications have also seen a resurgence in the United States, however the most popular ones, such as Apple News, fail to significantly and financially support local publishers who choose to open channels with them (Nicas, 2018). Location-based services, an up-and-coming sphere of both scholarly research and market value, has ballooned and shown

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a $78.01 billion increase to global market value (Global location-based services, 2017). Schmitt Weiss (2013) argues that there is a gap between what consumers need (i.e. information about physical spaces) and what news consumers can provide (i.e. inability to produce geolocated content). Furthermore, Schmitt Weiss (2018) concludes that "geolocated local news can benefit news organizations that are seeking larger audiences," as location-based services can make local news more accessible to mobile users (p. 50).

Two theories—the theory of planned behavior and uses and gratifications—were introduced in order to ascertain media gratifications of mobile media (namely news on the smartphone) and an intention to advertise with media outlets among businesses (Ajzen, 1895; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). U&G has experienced a resurgence during a technological growth in the 21st century and is recommended as a means to study the motives and purposes behind certain new mediums of media (Ruggiero, 2000). Five different media gratifications were identified through previous scholarly research: social utility, entertainment, information-seeking, enjoyment and a media gratification of location-based content or services. Gratification opportunities were incorporated as a construct of the U&G approach, and three gratification opportunities—accessibility, immediacy, and mobility—were highlighted from Dimmick, Chen and Li's (2004) investigation into different time/space usages of different technological mediums in media.

Research Questions

On the outset of this study, mobile media and newspapers were thought to be at the focal point of this research. The principle investigator wished to study how mobile media was being utilized for news consumption in local Oklahoma communities and why. The theory of uses and gratifications and the concept of gratification opportunities allows this study to use theoretical

concepts to study why newspaper readers use mobile media, and why newspaper readers read their local newspapers.

Accordingly, the first three research questions are:

RQ1: What is the relationship between smartphone use and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

RQ2: What is the relationship between mobile news consumption and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

RQ3: What is the relationship between news consumption and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

As mentioned above, including gratification opportunities in this study allows for the investigation into the relationship between traditional and new media in small, rural communities in Oklahoma. Previous scholarly research indicates that although small, local community members are active and invested in digital media, they still hold close ties to their local print news entity. Therefore, an inquiry into what gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers in small Oklahoma communities is warranted to understand mobile media's position among newspaper readers.

Accordingly, the next three research questions are:

RQ4: What is the relationship between smartphone use and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

RQ5: What is the relationship between mobile news consumption and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

RQ6: What is the relationship between news consumption and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

Lastly, for the benefit of the studied Oklahoman newspapers, this research wished to provide the publisher with a metric of how willing businesses would be in his region to advertise on a mobile news application connected to his seven print newspapers. If a mobile news application connected to a community's newspaper was employed, would businesses support it through advertising? Although mobile news applications or mobile news websites feature many other avenues for income diversifications, advertising is a familiar business transaction with businesses around

Accordingly, the last three research questions are:

RQ7: What is the relationship between behavioral beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

RQ8: What is the relationship between normative beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

RQ9: What is the relationship between control beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

Method

This study looks to use multiple online surveys created through the University of Oklahoma's Qualtrics Survey Software to answer the aforementioned research questions. The above research questions can be categorized in measuring three different concepts: media gratifications, gratification opportunities, and the intention to advertise with the paper. Three research questions asked what the relationship was between media gratifications and smartphone use, mobile news consumption, and news consumption among newspaper readers in various, small Oklahoma towns. Three further research questions were proposed to investigate the relationship between smartphone use, mobile news consumption, and news consumption and

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gratifications opportunities among local newspaper readers. Lastly, this study wishes to discover the relationship between behavioral, normative, and control beliefs and the intention to advertise with a newspaper.

Sampling

Community residents were sampled from seven communities covered by seven local newspapers—the Sequoyah County Times, the Okmulgee Times, the Eufaula Indian Journal, the McIntosh County Democrat, the Henryetta Free Lance, the Eastern-Times Register, and the Vian-Tenkiller News. The survey was distributed via Facebook and posted on the newspaper's Facebook walls. Facebook seems to be the most logical method of sampling due to the immense size of the population meant to be studied as well as the geographic distance from each town. Again, the communities of Vian, Okmulgee, Henryetta, Sallisaw, Roland, , Checotah, Gore and Eufaula will all be surveyed in order to answer the above research questions. Baltar and Brunet (2012) refer to social survey methods as a viable way to reach "hard-to-reach" populations while also increasing sample sizes that traditional methods of sampling would be unable to attain. The researchers conclude that the benefits of using a social networking site to administer such a survey depends on the transparency of the surveyor (the ability of respondents to see the surveyor's profile) (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). The Facebook surveys were distributed three times over the course of a month and a half (late February 2019 to early April 2019). Custom videos created by the principle investigator were posted to each wall in the third distribution phase to better explain the study and ask for further response. The videos were roughly 45 seconds each and contained a continuous shot of the principle investigator explaining the purpose of the study as well as warranting further response from each section of readership. The surveys accepted

responses from anyone following the certain Facebook walls for each newspaper until April 5, 2019.

The papers were picked when this study was initially a pilot project for a mobile news application planning to implement geolocated news stories to provide newspaper readers with another avenue of personalized, geographic-specific news content deliverable directly to their mobile phone. However, due to the minute size of the investigation team (only a student as a principle investigator) and time constraints, the study was altered to analyze why and how newspaper readers use mobile media and if business owners would have interest in advertising on a mobile news application. Professor John Schmeltzer, the chair for this master's thesis, provided the principle investigator with the contact for Jeff Mayo, the publisher and owner of the seven above-mentioned newspapers. The initial news application was going to target media companies who owned several newspapers, giving readers across a wide geographic area a one-stop-show for local news. However, the research aim was changed, yet Mayo's papers remained the focus of the research. Mayo was involved in this study by distributing survey links via Facebook and spreading the word throughout his hometown of Sallisaw, Oklahoma about the survey links. He also instructed his editors at other newspapers in different towns to do the same for their communities in order to better response rates.

Contacting business owners in each town proved to be difficult unless a rapport was developed with each chamber of commerce. Initially, each chamber of commerce in every town (Sallisaw, Muldrow, Roland, Eufaula, Henryetta, Checotah, Gore, and Vian) were contacted to distribute the survey amongst their business directory. After several contacts and interpersonal meetings, the executive directors of the chambers of Henryetta, Sallisaw, Gore, Eufaula, and Roland agreed to distribute the online survey to their business directory. No results were

recorded for Muldrow because the executive director failed to get any response from his directory. In Sallisaw, the executive director of the chamber of commerce decided to issue out paper surveys for those not willing to take the survey online (see Limitations). When insufficient data was recorded by March 16, 2019, the principle investigator personally drove to Sallisaw, Roland, Chectoah, Vian and Eufaula to walk door-to-door with an Apple iPad and ask business owners to complete the survey. The investigator spent 4 hours in Sallisaw, Oklahoma and only 30 minutes in Roland as it was decided that the chamber of commerce should handle response collection for that area. Roughly 10 to 15 minutes were spent with each business owner either explaining the survey and then moving onto another owner after a refusal of participation or waiting until an owner completed the survey. The second day, Vian, Checotah, and Eufuala were visited, but most of the work done during this time was focused on building rapport with chambers of commerce. Eufaula elicited the most responses from business owners, but after the business owners of Vian, Checotah and Okmulgee failed to submit enough responses to test those communities independently, the data for all communities was combined together to test the overall intention to advertise against the theory of planned behavior.

Questionnaire

The close-ended questions for community members were scaled on a five-point Likert scale ranging from hard data (a range of hours spent on a mobile device) degrees of agreement or disagreement about a certain assertion. The value of 1 is acquainted with a strong level of agreement with the respondent, and a value of 5 indicates strong disagreement of the respondent. Yes/No questions were also introduced to access smartphone ownership as well as if they use social media and/or smartphone news applications or aggregators to consume information. The surveys will be weighted by age, gender and, income level. Surveys were chosen as a

methodological instrument as many prior studies concerning uses and gratifications research has utilized self-reporting measures to discover the behavior of media audiences in order to offer explanations for their consumption patterns. With this particular study, which spanned several cities and a large geographical area, it was thought that surveys targeting readers and business owners would be best administered through self-reporting measures online as to increase response rate as well as collect responses in a timely manner from a large area. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) specify that survey responses have the ability to discover situations in realistic settings, the cost of online surveys are relatively low compared to the information being gathered, a large amount of data can be gathered with relative ease from a large sample of a population, surveys are not constrained by geographic barriers, which was instrumental in obtaining data for this research.

Gratifications and Gratification Opportunities

Research questions 1 through 6 were examined using SPSS analysis software. Based on prior research, certain gratification opportunities (accessibility and immediacy) were measured using multiple questions (see Appendix A). Mobility was measured by asking about using media while "on-the-go." Many media gratifications (information-seeking, social utility, and location-based services) were also measured by multiple survey questions. Entertainment and enjoyment were measured separately with one question each. These questions were compiled based off of Shim, You, Lee and Go's (2015) and Incollingo's (2018) surveys measuring the same gratifications in mobile media use. Bivariate correlations using Pearson's correlation was used between media gratifications/gratification opportunities and smartphone use, mobile news consumption, and news consumption.

Intention to Advertise

For business, a separate survey was created to determine whether a mobile application could be supported via advertising. To test the advertising intention of local businesses, a factor analysis will be performed using SPSS software followed by a bivariate Pearson's correlation. This method will test hypotheses six, seven and eight. The survey subscribed to Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior and the three concepts that underlie the theory--behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs—to ascertain respondents' intention to advertise. Question 11 seeks to understand the respondent's behavioral beliefs (whether they are favorable or unfavorable of mobile advertising). To measure behavioral beliefs, respondents were asked to rate the statement "Advertising my business on a mobile news website (news on a smartphone) would help my business" on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from a score of 1 representing a degree of "Strongly Agree" and a score of 5 representing a degree of "Strongly Disagree."

To measure control and normative beliefs, a SPSS factor analysis was performed on all questions to ascertain which variables (assertions from the questionnaire) correlated to control and normative beliefs. After a factor analysis was performed, two components resulted from the operations. Three questions were all grouped in a component while question 24, question 23, question 15 and question 13 were grouped in a second component (see Appendix C).

A confidant for this study (Jeff Mayo) informed each paper of this research intent and instructed them to post a survey link with a recruitment message approved by the Internal Review Board of the University of Oklahoma. An online condensed consent form was used to collect informed consent, and one member among all participants was given a $50 Amazon gift card. Mr. Mayo was also present to explain the procedure and include all elements of informed consent to the directory of the Sallisaw Chamber of Commerce after the chamber wished to distribute paper surveys. All data was inputted from paper surveys manually by the principle

investigator. No compensation was given to respondents of the business survey. Recruitment was simultaneously pursued through email and the Facebook direct Messenger application by the principle investigator, which used the same recruitment text.

Descriptive Statistics for Newspaper Readers and Business Owners

Overall, there were two categories of surveys in which almost 350 newspaper readers answered. A set of questionnaires were distributed among seven newspapers in eastern Oklahoma via social media sites to measure the mobile media gratifications of traditional media news consumers. Another questionnaire was distributed among business owners in the same towns the newspapers were located in, and saw nearly 90 business owners start the online survey. No data was recorded for the business owners of Roland, Oklahoma due to lack of response. After missing data was dealt with, 226 ($N = 226$) partially or fully complete survey responses from community members and 78 ($N = 78$) partially or fully complete survey responses from business owners was integrated into data analysis.

Smartphone ownership was extremely high as 221 out of 226 respondents reported they owned one (over 97% of the sample size). 173 respondents (76.5%) reported to spend more than 40 minutes on their smartphone every day, making this sample a high smartphone-using variety. The amount of time that was spent consuming news on a smartphone was evenly distributed ($M = 3.21$), although the sample did tilt toward a more robust definition of heavy mobile news consumption as 69 respondents (30.5%) reported spending more than 30 minutes consuming mobile news and 37 respondents (16.4%) reported spending 21 to 30 minutes consuming mobile news every day. For news consumption, only 24 respondents (10.6%) read their local newspaper every day while 83 respondents (36.7%) read it weekly. However, 87 respondents (38.5% of the

sample size) report spending more than 30 minutes every day consuming news, showing a majority of respondents are heavy news consumers.

Furthermore, 81.9% of newspaper readers cited social media as a news source, and 59.7% (inclusive of respondents who use social media as a news source) cited mobile news applications as a news source. 76.1% of the sample also said they read local news on their smartphone, most likely from mobile web browsers (at the time of this writing, only one known mobile application, OkmulgeeNow, has been created, but data from that application is not included in this study). Overall, for the feasibility of a local smartphone news application, 68.1% of survey respondents said they agree or strongly agree with the statement, "I would like being able to access local news through a smartphone app," ($M = 1.92$). The mean of this measurement is representative of the direction of the scales that were set during the creation of each questionnaire. In the survey created for local newspaper readers, all measurements quantifying metrics of agreement were coded in reverse order ((i.e. score of 1 = strongly agree, score of 5 = strongly disagree).

Business owners were mostly in the range of making $70,000 per year (37.2% of the sample, 29 respondents) and the majority were in the 25 to 65 demographics (70.5% of the sample, 55 respondents). Online advertising seemed to be popular among businesses as 67.8% of business ($N = 61$) reported that they advertised their business online and 55 business owners (70.5% of the sample size) stated they paid to have their business advertised through more than one outlet. The number of outlets they advertised their businesses through (1 to 5 or more) was fairly evenly distributed and showed that most respondents advertised their businesses through more than one channel (only 10% of business owners use one outlet to advertise their business).

Only 27 respondents (34.6% of the sample size, said they advertised with their local paper and 51 respondents (65.4% of the sample size) said they did not.

Missing Data

For missing data values, a report dealing with SPSS data values suggested that there are three general ways to handle missing data: mean substitution, full imputation, and full information maximum likelihood (Schloman, Bauman & Card, 2010). In their study of the patterns of missing data, mean substitution was found to be a poor method of dealing with missing data while full imputation and full information maximum likelihood were both optimal methods (Schloman, Bauman & Card, 2010). However, for Likert scales specifically, item and person mean substitution were found to be good representations of original data when the percentage of missing items were 20% or less, which was close to the number missing from both business owners and newspaper readers (Downey & King, 1998). When missing items or people tended to be 20% or less, item and person mean substitution have been found to increase the reliability of the results of a study (Downey & King, 1998). Therefore, for each individual question, the mean score was taken from all existing responses. Subsequently, this individual mean was input for all missing data in order to increase reliability as well as achieve normal distribution of responses. Simply dropping the respondents from the study altogether would have reduced both the accuracy and capacity of the study to make generalizable conclusions, and simply ignoring the data would have also weakened the variable-to-variable relationships, debilitating the rich results found in this research (Downey & King, 1998).

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study can be categorized into three separate categories: media gratifications, gratification opportunities, and the intention for businesses to advertise. Both

media gratifications and gratifications opportunities look to Before any data analysis, any questionnaire that reported a 0% rate of completion was deleted entirely from the data set. Again, 226 (N=226) partially or fully complete survey responses from community members and 78 (N=78) partially or fully complete survey responses from business owners were analyzed using SPSS software. Below, all correlations that show a positive correlation between variables (when one variable increases, the related variable does as well), will display negative correlations. This is due to the direction in which questions were coded compared to how the variables (smartphone use, mobile news consumption, and news consumption) were coded. For example, the range for smartphone use, mobile news consumption, and news consumption were measured by questions that ranged from a score of 1 representing low media use or consumption and a score of 5 representing high media use or consumption. However, media gratifications and gratification opportunities were measured using the reverse scoring range (a score of 1 representing high agreement, a score of 5 representing high disagreement). Therefore, much of the positive correlations appear negative in tables.

Media Gratifications of Smartphone Use

Below is the table depicting the relationship between five media gratifications (information-seeking, social utility, entertainment, enjoyment, and location-based services). All media gratifications showed a statistically significant correlation to smartphone use at the 95 percent confidence level or higher.

Table 1.1. *Relationship Between Smartphone Use and Media Gratifications Among Local Oklahoma Newspaper Readers*

Gratification	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Information-seeking	-.377**	.000
Social Utility	-.239**	.000

Entertainment	-.252**	.000
Enjoyment	-.348**	.000
Location-Based	-.241**	.000

*Note. ** Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two tailed) or higher. Negative correlations result due to inverse of 5-point Likert scale for gratification measurements.*

Since the 5-point scale agreement/disagreement measurement was inversed for media gratifications (meaning a score of 1 represented strong agreement and a score of 5 for smartphone use represented heavy smartphone use) the correlations can be depicted as having strong, statistically significant correlations to smartphone use at the 99 percent confidence level. The results indicate that a heavy smartphone user is more likely to have their media needs gratified by a mobile media gratification. This goes for all five mobile media gratifications. The more information-seeking, social utility, entertainment, enjoyment, and location-based media gratifications fill the media needs of smartphone users, the more likely these smartphone users are likely to be categorized as heavy smartphone users. All media gratifications have positive relationships to smartphone use, implicating that smartphone users who are also newspaper readers use their smartphone in order to fulfill these certain media needs.

Gratification Opportunities of Smartphone Use

Gratification opportunities (accessibility, immediacy, and mobility) also indicated statistically significant correlations to smartphone use among sampled newspaper readers.

Table 1.2. *Relationship Between Smartphone Use and Gratification Opportunities Among Local Oklahoma Newspaper Readers*

Gratification Opportunity	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Accessibility	-.513**	.000
Immediacy	-.260**	.000

| Mobility | -.405** | .000 |

Accessibility, immediacy, and mobility all showed statistically significant correlations to smartphone use at the 99 percent confidence level. This indicates that the more a smartphone user has their media needs fulfilled by these three gratification opportunities, the more likely they are to be a heavy smartphone user. This is not an indication for causation, but only a symptom of two factors being highly related. To translate these findings, one could say the more "accessibility" plays into the act of fulfilling media needs, the more a newspaper reader is likely to use their smartphone for overall media consumption. The more "immediacy" and "mobility" fulfill the media needs of newspaper readers, the more likely the reader is to use their smartphone for overall media consumption.

Media Gratification of Mobile News Consumers

After analyzing the relationship between mobile news consumption and media gratifications, this study presents mixed results with implications for community newspaper readers.

Table 2.1. *Relationship Between Mobile News Consumption and Media Gratifications Among Local Oklahoma Newspaper Readers*

Gratification	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Information-seeking	-.426**	.000
Social Utility	-.197**	.003
Entertainment	-.370**	.000
Enjoyment	-.392**	.000
Location-Based	-.258**	.000

Once again, all media gratifications had statistically significant correlations to mobile news consumption among Oklahoma newspaper readers. To interpret these results, this study could posit that the more information-seeking, entertainment, enjoyment, social utility, and location-based services factor into fulfilling the mobile media needs of newspaper readers, the more time readers are likely to spend consuming mobile news. This is a significant finding in that local news consumers utilize their smartphone for mobile news and have their mobile news consumption needs met by these media gratifications, however the newspapers being studied do not offer significant mobile news outreach. Therefore, respondents must be utilizing other means of mobile news consumption (via social media or mobile web browser) to gratify their smartphone news consumption needs.

Gratification Opportunities of Mobile News Consumers

After data analysis which determined the relationship between mobile news consumption among newspaper readers and gratification opportunities, two out of three gratification opportunities showed a statistically significant correlation to mobile news consumption.

Table 2.2. *Relationship Between Mobile News Consumption and Gratification Opportunities Among Local Oklahoma Newspaper Readers*

Gratification Opportunity	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Accessibility	-.404**	.000
Immediacy	-.130	.051
Mobility	-.385**	.000

Both accessibility and mobility indicated statistically significant correlations to mobile news consumptions among newspaper readers in this sample. Immediacy, however, showed no significant correlation. To interpret these results, this study can posit that the more accessibility and mobility are sought to fulfill mobile media needs in the lives of newspaper readers, the more likely they are to spend more time consuming mobile news. No conclusion can be drawn for the gratification opportunity of immediacy.

Media Gratifications of News Consumption

Overall, media gratifications showed one significant correlation to news consumption among Oklahoma newspaper readers in the concept of enjoyment. This could be due in part to the survey asking respondents about mobile media gratifications rather than general media gratifications. The results are displayed below (Table 3.1). No conclusions may be drawn in the relationship between mobile media gratifications and overall news consumption. The next page shows the relationship between news consumption and media gratifications among local Oklahoma newspaper readers.

Table 3.1. *Relationship Between News Consumption and Media Gratifications Among Local Oklahoma Newspaper Readers*

Gratification	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Information-seeking	-.121	.071
Social Utility	-.058	.385
Entertainment	-.141**	.036
Enjoyment	-.165**	.013
Location-Based	-.049	.466

Note. ** *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two tailed) or higher. Negative correlations result due to inverse of 5-point Likert scale for gratification measurements.*

Only enjoyment and entertainment had a statistically significant correlation to news consumption among Oklahoma newspaper readers. This could be interpreted by saying the more enjoyment is sought to fulfill mobile media needs by newspaper readers, the more likely readers are to spend more time consuming traditional forms of news. The same may be said for entertainment, which would be logical as much of the local news in this region may be classified as covering local school sports and events that directly impact the lives of citizens. No conclusions can be drawn from the rest of this data set. Similar to the findings of the media gratifications of media consumption, no gratification opportunities posited any significant findings in relation to news consumption among Oklahoma newspaper readers. Since there was not a statistically significant between gratification opportunities and news consumption among newspaper readers, no conclusions can be drawn between this relationship. News consumption overall was a poor indicator of any type of gratification in this study.

Frequency of Smartphone Application Advertisement

Of the 90 business owners that participated in the online questionnaire, only 78 ($N = 78$) responses were recorded as the other 12 responses were incomplete. Surprisingly, only 33.3% of respondents answered the question "How long have you been advertising with your local newspaper," so any analysis obtained from that question may yield a substantially higher level of error which prompted the researcher to remove the question from further data analysis. This could be because of the fact that many respondents didn't currently advertise with their local community papers.

A majority of business owners (50%) would like to advertise their business on a mobile website ($M = 1.90$), and 46.2% of business owners responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I would like to advertise my business in a smartphone news app," ($M =$

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2.05). The statement "I would like to advertise my business in a local smartphone news application produced by my local newspaper" had less agreement among business owners (43.6% of the sample size, $M = 2.09$). The distribution of the statement "I would pay to advertise my business in both my local newspaper and that newspaper's smartphone application" was evenly distributed among agreement, neutrality, and disagreement ($M = 2.28$) as well as the statement "I would pay to advertise my business in a local newspaper's smartphone application, but not the local newspaper ($M = 2.50$). However, a majority of business owners (44.9%) disagreed with the statement, "I would pay to advertise my business in a local newspaper, but not the newspaper's smartphone application" ($M = 2.82$). Both statements are skewed to the left, indicating a slight level of general agreement among business owners about the financial feasibility of a smartphone application produced by the region's local traditional media outlets.

Businesses' Intention to Advertise

By measuring business' intention to advertise, the principle researcher compared the means of the questions based on behavioral, control and normative belief assertions related to Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior. There are statistically significant correlations between different modes of behavior and an intention to advertise. All three modes of belief revealed statistically significant correlation to the variable "intention to advertise," (see Table 4.1). Intent to advertise was constructed by combining the questions "I would like to advertise my business on a mobile website," "I would like to advertise my business in a smartphone news app," and "I would like to advertise my business in a local smartphone news app produced by my local newspaper" in SPSS statistical software.

Again, behavioral beliefs are beliefs held by an individual about the likely outcome and evaluation of a behavior. A bivariate correlation statistical test using Pearson's correlation

revealed a positive correlation between the variable intention to advertise and a variable representing a behavioral belief.

Table 4.1. *Relationship Between Behavioral Beliefs and Intention to Advertise Among Oklahoma Business Owners*

Type of Belief	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Behavioral	.732**	.000
Normative	.539**	.000
Control	-.075	.515

*Note.**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed) or higher.*

The closer the correlation to 1, the more significant the correlation. Therefore, we can affirm that the correlation between advertising on a smartphone or mobile news website and intention to advertise is a positive one. Business owners who agree that advertising on a mobile news website on a smartphone could help their business will have a higher intention to advertise.

Component 1 seemed to consist of control beliefs, and component 2 seemed to consist of normative beliefs after running a SPSS factor analysis. After grouping these questions into variables and running a bivariate Pearson's correlation, findings show behavioral beliefs have a positive, statistically significant correlation to the variable "intention to advertise" while control beliefs do not have any signifiance to report. To interpret this correlation, we may say the more perceived social pressure or the greater the norm in the community to advertise a business is, the higher the business owners' intention to advertise will be. The correlations on this data set are positive because the questions used to measure the "intention to advertise" variable were coded in the same direction as behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. That is, all questions included in these variables ranged from a score of 1 indicated a high sense of agreement and a score of 5 indicated a high sense of disagreement.

Key Findings

To interpret these findings, all research questions will be restated in order to answer each thoroughly:

RQ1: What is the relationship between smartphone use and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

RQ2: What is the relationship between mobile news consumption and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

RQ3: What is the relationship between news consumption and gratifications sought by newspaper readers?

RQ4: What is the relationship between smartphone use and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

RQ5: What is the relationship between mobile news consumption and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

RQ6: What is the relationship between news consumption and gratification opportunities sought by newspaper readers?

RQ7: What is the relationship between behavioral beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

RQ8: What is the relationship between normative beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

RQ9: What is the relationship between control beliefs and the intent to advertise with a community newspaper among business owners?

Smartphone Use

The relationship between smartphone use and media gratifications indicated statistically significant relationships for information-seeking, social utility, entertainment, enjoyment, and location-based services-related mobile media gratifications. That is, the more newspapers readers seek out these five mobile media gratifications to fulfill their daily media needs, the more likely they are to be heavy smartphone users (i.e. spend more time on their iPhone or Android). The same can be said for the relationship between smartphone use and gratification opportunities. All three gratification opportunities (accessibility, immediacy, and mobility) indicated a statistically significant relationship with smartphone usage. The more newspaper readers seek these gratification opportunities to fulfill their mobile media needs, the more likely they are to be categorized as heavy smartphone users. These results have implications as previous scholarly research depicts small, rural communities mostly detached from technology and dependent upon traditional, local media for information. Yet, the U&G approach as well as the concept of gratification opportunities have revealed that community newspaper readers in Oklahoma are extremely attached to their smartphone devices, demonstrating community members are seeking technologically-driven gratifications for daily media use. There is potential for the introduction of mobile-based news technology among each town with smartphone users, and the seven newspapers included in this survey would benefit from employing such to meet further smartphone needs of their readership. In these findings, location-based services was also a point of interest, meaning more geographically-driven news could have a positive impact on smartphone media consumption. Smartphone users are finding avenues to appease their media needs through other mobile approaches, as can be surmised from the findings about mobile news consumers. These findings answer RQ1 and RQ4.

Mobile News Consumption

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The mobile media gratifications of information-seeking, entertainment, enjoyment, social utility, and location-based services showed statistically significant correlations to mobile news consumption. These results could be interpreted as the more newspaper readers seek out these five media gratifications to fulfill their daily media needs, the more likely they are to spend a greater amount of time consuming mobile news. Two gratification opportunities—accessibility and mobility—pointed to a statistical relationship with mobile news consumption among Oklahoma newspaper readers. Immediacy indicated no significant relationship. Therefore, the more individuals seek out accessibility and mobility as methods of gratifying daily mobile media needs, the more likely they are to spend more time consuming mobile news. No conclusions may be drawn from immediacy. The gratification opportunity of immediacy exhibiting no overall relationship with mobile news consumption among traditional media consumers gives a foundation of community journalism to future research as to what gratification opportunities community newspaper readers seek to fulfill their daily needs. As previously stated when discussing smartphone users, traditional newspaper readings in the seven surveyed Oklahoma towns are discovering methods of accessing local mobile news to their benefit even though there is no digital infrastructure to support such news consumption. Community inhabitants seem to be connected simultaneously to both printed and mobile news as has been supported by previous research, offering an affirmation to traditional media outlets who are debating about whether or not to implement mobile community news outreach within their traditional business models. These findings answer RQ2 and RQ5.

News Consumption

Only enjoyment and entertainment showed statistically significant correlations to news consumption among Oklahoma traditional media consumption. No other mobile media

gratifications or gratification opportunities were related to news consumption as shown in the results of multiple Pearson correlations. News consumption may need to be more thoroughly measured, as this questionnaire only asked two questions to measure individuals' daily news consumption. No definitive relationship can be attained through this statistical analysis, answering RQ3 and RQ6.

Intention to Advertise

With business owners, behavioral and normative beliefs were found to be considerable measures of the intent to advertise and advance Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior by applying the theoretical framework to the sphere of community journalism research. Using SPSS software, a bivariate Pearson's correlation was run to analyze if behavioral beliefs were correlated to the variable intention to advertise. The test produced a positive, statistically significant correlation that shows the more positive attitudes the respondents had about advertising and the belief that advertising their business would help their business, the higher the level of intention to advertise was. The same case was found for normative beliefs. A factor analysis was performed on all variables to obtain two components that showed traits of both normative and control beliefs. Both sets of behavior indicated positive, statistically significant correlations to the variable intention to advertise. It was concluded that the more social pressure or normalcy the behavior of advertising is to an individual or society the higher the respondents' intention to advertise was. Control beliefs, or the perceived control over one's actions that could facilitate the performance of a particular behavior, had no significant relationship to an intent to advertise among business owners. The results indicate that survey owners feel the social norm in their communities are to advertise their businesses, and with that comes the social pressure of paying either local news outlets or digital outlets to feature their business to outside consumers.

However, not many business owners indicated that they advertised in their local paper, and less indicated how long they had been doing so. Many of them responded in the affirmative of advertising their business via social media, but also indicated that advertising their business through more than one outlet, especially digital, mobile outlets, could lead to future success for their business (as specified by the positive correlation between behavioral beliefs and the intention to advertise). Most of the respondents seem to have a desire to advertise their business via unique digital/mobile methods, although there is not means in these communities to do so. It may also be said that advertising from local business owners may not be sufficient to support a model of mobile news for a community newspaper (via an application), and other forms of revenue should be considered before taking the time to code, model, design, produce, and fund a workable news application. These results answer RQ7, RQ8, and RQ9.

This study provides useful information about the mobile media consumption habits of local news readers. Readers tend to read by loyal to their newspaper and a majority read their local paper weekly, however almost all respondents indicated they owned a smartphone, and a majority of them (more than 68%) indicated they would be willing to invest their news browsing efforts in a local smartphone news application, which could be helpful in discovering alternate income channels and readership avenues for the seven local newspapers included in this study.

Discussion/Conclusion

This study examined the role of mobile media in the news consumption patterns of newspaper readers in eastern Oklahoma as well as analyzed the financial and circulatory feasibility of a mobile news application produced by Cookson Hills Publishers, Inc. What was discovered was that many newspaper readers are interested in a mobile news application produced by their local newspaper and would most likely utilize it as a high percentage of both

smartphone users and mobile news users indicated. Bivariate correlations using SPSS analytical software determined that smartphone use ad mobile news use had relationships to mobile media gratifications and gratifications opportunities whereas no definitive conclusions can be drawn between the relationship of news consumption and mobile media gratifications/gratification opportunities. Smartphone use and mobile news consumption indicated many more relationships with media gratifications and gratification opportunities than the variable of news consumption. This study indicates that previous research in community journalism has not specially analyzed why community members, who are closely-tied to their local newspaper, use different mediums for news consumption, and in effect, now characterizes contemporary traditional media consumers differently. Community newspaper readers are having their mobile media needs gratified by certain aspects of their smartphones even though their newspapers are providing any platforms to aid in this process, which could be a potentially missed opportunity financially.

Mostly, the implications are for mobile media. Although there is a loyalty to community newspapers, mobile media is becoming increasingly prevalent in their lives. Yet, media outlets, such as the ones studied here, are not utilizing these channels to generate additional readership or revenue. There is a missed opportunity among community newspapers in that many newspaper readers have phones and can be reached in between the niches of traditional media, as conceptualized by Dimmick, Chen, and Li (2004) as well as Dimmick, Feaster, and Hoplamazian (2010). Newspaper readers that are consistent smartphone media consumers and mobile news consumers seek mobile media gratifications and gratification opportunities to satisfy their daily information needs. Over 75% of newspaper readers cited their smartphone as a tool for obtaining local news or reading local news even though the newspapers don't yet have a concrete smartphone news application (excluding OkmulgeeNow). Smartphone ownership was incredibly

high in this sample size (only 5 respondents did not own a smartphone) and leads to the reconfiguration of the generalizability of technology ownership in small communities, especially in Oklahoma. These seven newspapers could better fulfill these needs by producing unique content (i.e. both content that is unique per medium and unique per geographic location) in order to better serve their readership. These implications should be tested among other communities around the country to discover if these findings are apparent in other communities and for their traditional media outlets.

Even though Schmitz Weiss (2013) states that geolocation, or location-based services, may be helpful in bolstering business operations of local news outlets while connecting more readers to media outlets, this research found that only heavy smartphone users sought a location-based media gratification to fulfil their daily media needs. A more practical research method (using an actual project) or a study employing mixed-methods may be more helpful in discovering media gratifications of location-based services.

For business owners, Azjen's (1985) theory of planned behavior was utilized in order to predict the intention to advertise among business owners. All three tested beliefs produced positive, statistically significant correlations to the sample size's intention to advertise. Descriptive statistics and the means of variables support this correlation. All newspapers surveyed could have financial backing from advertisers if they released a new avenue for readership, and as Ye et al. (2018) discusses, income diversification among local media is essential to long-term success, and different avenues of revenue, even for a smartphone application, would be best to sustain the introduced technology. Further studies on this subject could look at how rural, local communities such as the one's studied here would adopt said mobile news technology in the future.

One large reason for the success of these seven newspapers in eastern Oklahoma is private ownership. All publications are printed out of Sallisaw, Oklahoma (the headquarters of the Sequoyah County Times), and many know the editors of each paper if not the owner himself. Interpersonal communication and connection between media outlets and their audience is key in all small communities, and mobile media and mobile news have the potential to forge more connections and reinforce media business models. Restating the importance of Picard and Van Weasel's (2008) suggested ownership model of media, private ownership of traditional media seems to account for more community connection and a higher standard/quality of journalism. Media consolidation has the potential to This study is extremely significant in that it analyzes small, rural traditional media outlets and provides generalizable data for future studies. This study is also significant in that it shows the importance of mobile technology and the implications of motivations, uses, and gratifications of mobile news media within rural populations. Local media are now torn between their reliability on traditional media outlets for local information as well as having other technology at their disposal (For Local Media, 2019).

Although these local media outlets do have digital community outreach, such as social media and news websites, their readership are highly interested in mobile news consumption, and a mobile news application could have potential in providing more support for daily operations. Many traditional media outlets "are not yet willing to adopt the principals of the environment in which they find themselves," which often lead to declining readership and revenue (Bowman & Willis, 2005). Yet, the newspapers included in this survey inhabit a region of the country that is extremely beneficial to them: there is little to no competition around them, the community is strongly connected to their operations, and businesses are willing to engage in financial support. However, the papers could even better their situation by including mobile

news outreach in the form of a news aggregator or application, which would most likely attract younger demographics and more foot traffic on mobile websites/applications throughout the day. In the wake of media consolidation, more nuanced forms of outreach and community connection will be required if local, traditional media wish to placate print revenue losses and improve business operations. Because of significant smartphone ownership, rising levels of digital revenue, and increasing interests in mobile news technology not just in local communities but throughout America, mobile media will play a crucial part in the future of the traditional media landscape. This study allows future research to better understand what gratifications small, rural community members seek in satisfying their media needs, and what traditional media outlets should do to support them. Moreover, a substantial takeaway from this study is the connection between community members in small towns. While traveling from town to town in eastern Oklahoma, the relationships residents forged were extremely friendly and well-received. The level of trust, unity, and support among the population of each town was surprisingly secure, and the ability of a local media outlet to reinforce this connection with other mediums and channels of communication would be only beneficial to both parties.

Limitations

Some limitations for this study include the failure to gain any traction with the Muldrow Chamber of Commerce (covered by the Eastern-Times Register) and failure to obtain any results from the Roland Chamber of Commerce. Likewise, the Facebook page for the Eastern-Times Register only produced minimal results compared to the other papers. This could be attributed to not only the small size of the community, but the proximity of the community to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, was cited as a major problem by both the publisher and community members of Sallisaw, Oklahoma. Many said Roland was a "bedroom" community for both Sallisaw and Ft.

Smith, Arkansas as many individuals commute to either site in order to work. Therefore, it can be said that attempting to survey this area individually would have resulted in unreliable data.

Subsequently, a qualitative research method of in-depth interviewing was determined to attain more meaning from survey responses, however time restraints of this report and the existence of only one primary investigator interviewing a large geographic region seemed implausible. Also, the questionnaire itself could have been lengthier, however the principal investigator worried that if the questionnaire was made to be too long, it could deter respondents and subsequently damage sampling error. Already at almost 40 questions, the response rate was surprising. Reaching out to businesses was another setback and was only reasonably accomplished when/if the various chambers of commerce decided to take part in survey distribution. This shows in the data gathering: Sallisaw, Eufaula, Henryetta, and Gore were the only chambers of commerce to agree to participate in the study, and their response rate was nearly at 20 business owners per location. Even though the Roland Chamber of Commerce opted to participate, their business base did not return any surveys. Muldrow was taken out of the study entirely, and Checotah, Vian and Okmulgee responses were attained with personal outreach conducted by the principle investigator (but still aligning with the University of Oklahoma's Internal Review Board procedures, informed consent and recruitment messages). The use of a mixed-methods approach would add meaning and depth to this study that some can argue is warranted because of the lack of reliability and validity U&G approaches offer scholarly research. However, U&G was the only appropriate theoretical framework to answer this study's research questions and did so successfully.

One large restraint on this study was time. Since this was conceptualized and executed under a tight deadline (only three months), the principle investigator was unable to utilize a

mixed-method inquiry to obtain more meaning behind the motivations and news consumption habits of rural community members. Yet, sufficient data was recorded online to draw conclusions for this study, and hopefully this serves as a testament to future surveying via email and social media sites, such as Facebook and Facebook's instant Messenger. Due to time constraints, this research only studied seven newspapers in eastern Oklahoma. To attain more substantive data, this study could have looked at other privately-owned publishing companies and newspapers housed in those companies in order to compare geographical areas and the certain mobile media gratifications and gratification opportunities derived from each region. Geographic boundaries added to the hardship of this research as the farthest town that was being investigated was situated hundreds of miles from the University of Oklahoma. With only one principle investigator, this made data collection difficult. Online surveys were decidedly the best option for this study, however paper surveys are much friendlier to smaller communities as bandwidth or technology ownership might be lacking. Facebook was extremely useful in garnering survey responses, and scholars attempting to survey smaller communities in the future should rely on social media sites to connect with local inhabitants.

One final limitation was inherent in the design of the survey. The principle investigator failed to make some of the questions mandatory for both newspaper readers and business owners, amounting to missing data on the questionnaire. Although this was mended by inputting the mean of responses as replacement for missing data, future online questionnaires should take note to make their responses mandatory for respondents. Otherwise data might be skewed and unreliable, amounting to what seems like a substantial amount of responses but ultimately resulting in hollow meaning.

Future Research

Research conducted in the future should explore gratification opportunities further as this concept should shine light on the relationship between different mediums of communication, especially in smaller community environments. To test the feasibility of a local news application, market research is indeed required, but a pilot program is also needed in which a sample of a population uses the application to discover if the model could be sustainable. From this research, local inhabitants are interested in local news applications, but also are attached to their local newspapers. Hopefully, this research will aid future research about local mobile media gratifications and the relationship between traditional and new media.

Location-based services also didn't show significant correlations to two out of the three variables in this study, and this concept could be reworked to better fit future studies. Again, Schmitz Weiss (2018) concludes in her study about geolocation employment among news media that many news media outlets do not use location-based services in their models and for those that do, only weather and traffic are used for geolocating services. It is this investigator's position that location-based services could offer unique gratifications to traditional news consumers, and if tested the appropriate way, could head unique results, especially with community journalism. Again, perhaps a mixed-method inquiry along with more practical implications (i.e. a pilot program of location-based services in a community) would be able to discover if location-based services is a gratification sought by traditional media consumers in small communities.

Lastly, further inquiry into gratification opportunities as an advancement of the U&G theory should be accomplished in order to modernize the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications and allow the theory to be more malleable with further advents of technology. Traditional media outlets in small communities will continue evolving as time progresses and

studying how technology effects readership as well as studying the relationship between old and

new media will be crucial. Gratification opportunities is a useful concept to study this

phenomenon and will benefit both news consumers (giving audiences more choice in local news

access) as well as reinforcing the financial position of traditional, local media outlets.

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Table 5.1. *Measures of Media Gratifications Via Online Questionnaire*

Media Gratification	Assertion*
Information-Seeking	I access news on my smartphone to get more professional news.
	I access news on my smartphone to get various types of news.
	I access news on my smartphone to get in-depth information.
	I access news on my smartphone to read up-to-date information.
Social Utility	I access news on my smartphone to let others know up-to-date information.
	I access news on my smartphone to avoid becoming too old-fashioned.
Entertainment	I am entertained by getting news on my smartphone.
Enjoyment	I enjoy getting news on my smartphone.
Location-based	I would value a smartphone giving me news based on my location.
	Getting local news on my smartphone based on my location would make it convenient to find the news I want.
	Receiving local news through my smartphone based on my location would make it easier to access information at any place.

Receiving local news through my smartphone based on my location would make it easier to access information at any place.

Receiving local news through my smartphone based on my location would be quicker than watching a local TV news program.

Receiving local news through my smartphone based on my location would make it easier to be updated on news in my community.

*Note. *Respondents were asked to rank each assertion based on a 5-point Likert scale where a score of 1 represented strong agreement with the statement and a score of 5 represented strong disagreement.*

Table 5.2. *Measures of Gratification Opportunities Via Online Questionnaire*

Gratification Opportunity	Assertion*
Accessibility	I use my smartphone to access news because it is convenient to find the news I want.
	I use my smartphone to access news because I like easily accessing information at any place.
Immediacy	I access news on my smartphone because it is quicker than reading a newspaper.
	I access news on my smartphone because it is quicker than watching the local TV news.
Mobility	I like how reading news on a smartphone lets me read news while "on-the-go."

*Note. * Respondents were asked to rank each assertion based on a 5-point Likert scale where a score of 1 represented strong agreement with the statement and a score of 5 represented strong disagreement.*

Appendix C

Table 6.1. *Measures of Theory of Planned Behavior Via Online Questionnaire*

Belief	Assertion*
Behavioral	Advertising my business on a mobile news website (news on a smartphone) would help my business.
Normative	My customers expect me to advertise my business.
	Most businesses in my community advertise their business.
	I like advertising my business to my community.
	Advertising my business helps my business be successful.
Control	I don't need to advertise my business at all.
	I don't advertise my business because I am satisfied with the amount of customers that regularly visit my business.

*Note. * Respondents were asked to rank each assertion based on a 5-point Likert scale where a score of 1 represented strong agreement with the statement and a score of 5 represented strong disagreement.*