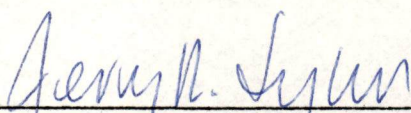


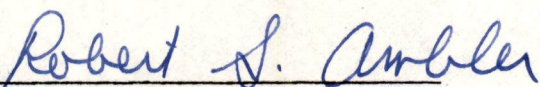
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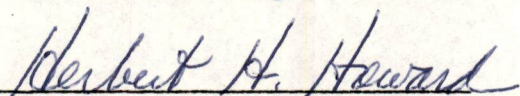
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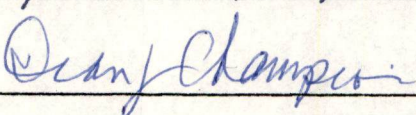


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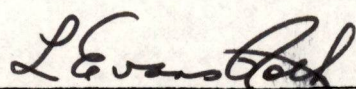
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THE EFFECTS OF SEX, AGE, AND SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES
ON TELEVISION NEWSCASTER CREDIBILITY:
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether credibility differs for male and female and young and mature television newscasters. The study also examined the influence of the viewer's sex, age, and sex-role attitudes on perceptions of credibility for male and female and young and mature newscasters.

A post-test only, comparative treatments laboratory research design was employed to test the hypotheses derived from source credibility, sex-role attitude, and television newscaster research. To control for possible bias from the content of the newscast message and personal traits of the newscasters, a pretest was given to a separate, but similar, group of 25 subjects. From the pretest, four messages, which were judged interesting or neutral, and eight newscasters, who were judged to be similar in attractiveness and professional speaking abilities, were selected for the experiment.

The experimental subjects were 92 students from The University of Tennessee Evening School who were randomized into four treatment groups according to sex and age. Each group was shown videocassette taped newscasts of either two young male, two mature male, two young female, or two mature female newscasters. The four newscast messages were identical for each treatment group.

The subjects noted their perceptions of newscaster credibility on a seven-interval, semantic differential scale. The message impact was measured on a five-interval Likert-type scale. Viewer sex-role attitudes were measured on a four-interval Likert-type scale. The t-test of

significance and multiple regression techniques were used to analyze the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, credibility.

Major findings were that there was no significant difference in credibility ratings between male and female newscasters or between young and mature newscasters. However, when the variables sex and age of the newscaster were examined together, mature male newscasters were perceived as significantly more credible than mature female and young male newscasters, but not young female newscasters.

In addition, there was no significant relationship between the sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of television viewers and credibility of male and female or young and mature newscasters. Secondary analysis showed that viewers did not perceive newscasters of the same sex or age as significantly more or less credible than other sex-age categories of newscasters, with the exception of young female viewers, who perceived mature male newscasters as significantly more credible than young male newscasters.

The study used a sample population of adult television viewers who were above average in education and generally professionally employed. Additional research is needed using a random sample of general television news audiences and target segments of these audiences. Newscaster delivery, articulateness, voice, diction, eye contact, appearance, and appeal also should be examined. Longitudinal studies on the acceptance of women, particularly mature women, as television newscasters are warranted. This study has practical application to television news directors and newscasters and contributes to existing research on the credibility of television newscasters.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The broadcasting industry realizes the importance of news programming. A news show attracts viewers, increases profits, and contributes greatly to the station image. Stations constantly compete for ratings by changing formats, set designs, and news personalities. News directors want a newscaster who will be appealing to the audience; however, hiring decisions often are based on speculation about audience preference, rather than on research. This trial-and-error method does not always result in the best person for the job.

It is difficult to assess viewer preference of a newscaster. One reason is that preferences vary in different areas with different groups, so research often is conducted locally. However, it is hard to isolate factors which influence perceptions of a newscaster; variables such as format, photographic coverage, backup team, and newscasters' traits, like sex, age, and race, must be considered (Singletary, 1976).

Newscasters, nevertheless, are eager to be what they believe the audience wants them to be. The "how to" books for people reporting the news stress articulateness, neat appearance, sincerity, and confidence (Fang, 1972; Tyrrell, 1972). According to David Brinkley (1966), however, these characteristics are not enough. He says the on-camera script reader has been changed to a newscasting personality. He describes the role of a television "newsman" as that of an "all-wise, all-knowing journalistic superman" (p. 13).

Academic research on television newscasters reveals that viewers prefer various factors, such as voice and speech, professional attributes,

personal appearance, and appeal (Shosteck, 1973). A newscaster also, however, must be perceived as credible to be believed.

Credibility is not a single characteristic of an individual but rather a set of perceptions held by the receiver (Bettinghaus, 1968). Many researchers state that credibility includes dimensions equivalent to trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969). McCroskey and Jensen (1975) contend that the dimensions of credibility include competence (expertise), character (trustworthiness), sociability, composure, and extroversion (dynamism).

It is impossible, in one study, to test all of the variables which may influence audience perceptions of a television newscaster. This study examines the effects of sex and age of the newscaster and sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer on perceptions of television newscaster credibility.

I. THE PROBLEM

According to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (1979), the broadcasting industry is dominated by white males. This is especially true in the area of news, where employment practices apparently have been based on long-held but relatively untested assumptions about the lack of effectiveness and believability of female newscasters (Marzolf, 1977; Whittaker & Whittaker, 1976).

Pauline Frederick, who was recently NBC's United Nations' correspondent, joined ABC News full-time in 1948. For 12 years, she was the only woman reporting hard news stories on network radio and television. Women generally did not appear on network television news programs until the 1960 political conventions. In 1963, network evening news was extended to a

half-hour and included more women reporters. Network executives were quoted as saying that women "brighten up" a news program and that they had won places on these programs by being "good reporters" (Marzolf, 1977, p. 165).

Nancy Dickerson became a Washington correspondent in 1960 for CBS and then went to NBC in 1963. Dickerson was the only woman to have a daily network television news program in 1963 and the first woman correspondent to report from the floor of a national political convention with Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite. She subsequently became one of Washington's most respected news correspondents and political analysts (Marzolf, 1977).

Although women were breaking into newscasting, in 1971 Reuven Frank, while President of NBC News said, "I have the strong feeling that audiences are less prepared to accept news from a woman's voice than from a man's" (New breed" 1971, p. 63). Increasing employment of women in the broadcasting industry is attributed to feminist groups who began challenging broadcasting licenses on the basis of inequality in hiring and to subsequent affirmative action through the Amendment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (United States, 1979). The license challenge against WABC-TV in 1972 charged that

much of the discrimination stems from unfair and highly prejudicial stereotypes which are force-fed in a daily barrage by radio and television to millions of men, women and children. (Marzolf, 1977, pp. 178-179)

The Federal Communications Commission's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission pressed stations to hire women newscasters (Stone, 1973; Federal Communications Commission, 1971; Fang & Geval, 1971).

Early in 1976, the national spotlight was on Barbara Walters who was hired as co-anchor on the "ABC Evening News" and host of other specials for \$1 million. The year before, Walters received two coveted awards for

achievement as a television journalist. She received an Emmy and was selected as "Broadcaster of the Year" by the International radio and Television Society, an honor previously bestowed to only three broadcast journalists--Chet Huntley, Walter Cronkite, and Lowell Thomas (Gelfman, 1976). Despite the awards and the fact that several of Walters' male colleagues grossed similar incomes, the press play up her gender and her salary (Powers, 1977). For example, Newsweek labeled her as "The \$5 Million Woman" (Waters, 1976). Walters is quoted as saying:

Suddenly all my credentials were examined. Is she a journalist? All the years of the Kissinger interviews, the Nixon interviews, the Haldeman interviews--everything I'd done: Cuba, China--that was all down the drain. Suddenly I was a female showgirl. They immediately believed the makeup and the hairdresser and the limousine, even though logically, they knew it had to be untrue. (Powers, 1977, p. 172)

The recent cover of Time hailed Dan Rather as "The \$8,000,000 Man," and the tone of this article was quite different from Walters' (New face, 1980).

For the most part, white, middle-aged men report the networks' evening news (Gelfman, 1976). Many of these men (e.g., Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, and David Brinkley) started in the early days of broadcasting and have helped to shape the image of today's television newscaster. The most popular American newscaster is Walter Cronkite, who advocates newscasters with experience which he equates with age. In comparing older newscasters with younger ones, Cronkite says:

I wonder if those stations that hire the young and beautiful, but inexperienced and callous, to front their news broadcasting are not getting ripped off. . . .

[The older,] slightly tousled codger is going to exude more authority and reliability and believability and integrity from the nail on the little finger of his left hand than that pompadoured, pampered announcer is ever going to muster. And isn't that really what our news departments are all about, isn't that really what you want to sell; authority, believability, credibility, integrity? (Powers, 1977, pp. 201-203)

Although Cronkite, age 62, endorses older newscasters, he recently announced his voluntary retirement. Pauline Frederick was asked to retire when she approached this age. Tuckman, Daniels, and Benet (1978) note that 10 percent of the present newscasters are women, and these women usually are young and attractive. Al Littleton, Vice-President of ABC News states:

It's unusual to see an unpleasant looking person on television. It's important because the first impression is a physical impression. . . . Women have a further burden. Women are supposed to be beautiful. People anticipate what a woman is supposed to look like . . . I haven't seen an unattractive woman on television yet. So they have even a greater burden. In fact, they're hired . . . because of the way they look and their image than because of their background. A man with a very strong background and a man who has broken stories . . . can get away with a little bit of homeliness. Men aren't expected to always be attractive. Women have a tougher time. (Gelfman, 1976, p. 53)

Women are now working as regular newscasters reporting all types of stories at most television stations in the United States. At the local level, women serve as co-anchors on television evening news programs; however, the anchor positions at the network level are held by men. The only minority to have appeared as network anchors have been black males. Black men and white women either share the anchor role or are confined to early morning or late night newscasts (Eddings, 1978).

Marlene Sanders appeared as an ABC network anchor in 1964 (Marzolf, 1977). Jessica Savitch, NBC's Washington correspondent and New York's weekend anchor, sometimes substitutes in the anchor position for the evening news on NBC (Emerson, 1979). Barbara Walters was the first woman to co-anchor on a relatively permanent basis for the "ABC World News Tonight." She now heads the ABC "Special Coverage Desk" in New York. While co-anchoring the news, she expressed pessimism about the future of women as news anchors:

I don't see the day we'll have a woman anchor alone. If Harry Reasoner were to leave, there would be no question about me doing it alone. They would bring in a man. At NBC they made the decision to take off Jim Hartz, but they made Tom Brokaw the host and put the woman [Jane Pauley] in a subsidiary position. . . . They will not accept a woman as the head of a program. I can't imagine two females doing the news, as Chancellor and Brinkley. Of course they allow a woman alone on Sunday, but that's throwaway time. (Eddings, 1978, p. 156)

There also is inequity between male and female news correspondents. ABC News has 48 males and 11 females; NBC has 59 males and 11 females; and CBS has 16 women and an undisclosed number of males. In addition, female correspondents appeared less than one-tenth of the time that men appeared on the news in 1977 (United States, 1979). The most well-known female correspondents are Catherine Mackin, ABC's Washington correspondent, and Lesley Stahl, CBS's Washington correspondent (Emerson, 1979).

Some researchers who have examined the emergence of women in broadcasting news believe that the acceptance of women as newscasters and anchors is simply a matter of time and television exposure (Whittaker et al., 1976; Stone, 1973). Some executives in the industry agree. Av Westin, ABC's Executive Producer of the nightly news stresses the point by assigning "hard news" stories to women as well as men.

It is a sign of how news coverage has progressed, how the industry has matured. . . . In the 1960's if you found a woman you wanted to move along there was some, well, not really what you could call resistance but you got some raised eyebrows. We're not afraid to send them into tough stories anymore. And if they're not any good, we are no longer afraid to fire them. (Emerson, 1979, p. 11)

Marzolf (1977) explains that when women first began reporting, they were assigned stories on the basis of traditional sex-defined roles. In the 1960's, women were assigned to political conventions. In 1963, the network evening news was extended to a half hour, which lead to larger

on-air staffs and more female reporters. In the late 1960's, the networks actively were seeking capable women reporters.

Due to federal pressure on the broadcasting industry, women began to work in other areas of television, such as production, management, and sales, during the 1960's. It is possible that women in these positions helped to increase acceptance of women in newscasting roles (United States, 1979). Networks and local stations contend that women who serve as hosts of television news and public affairs shows are popular with audiences. Network hosts, such as Jane Pauley of NBC's "Today" show, Barbara Walters, previous host of "Today" and "Not for Women Only," and Sandy Hill of ABC's "Good Morning America," have helped to familiarize audiences with female personalities in news-type roles. Interviews by Marzolf (1977) of women on network news programs show that these women believe they are helping future female reporters and anchors to have an easier time in the industry. The women feel that audiences will become more accepting of women in authority positions as audiences become used to seeing women in such roles.

In 1971 Reuven Frank, while President of NBC News, was widely quoted as saying that audiences were not prepared to accept news from a woman's voice. In 1974, after women had been broadcasting the news for several years, he said:

For a long time I thought and was quoted and it was thrown in my teeth that I did not think the American public was ready to accept a woman. We live on acceptance. If they don't accept us, they turn us off. There is no theoretical or ethical goal that we can aspire to that can counteract that. People don't watch what they have to. They watch what they like. . . . I think they have now been conditioned-- and all it is is a process of conditioning and development-- so that in reporting they will take it. (Gelfman, 1976, p. 104)

There are researchers, however, who believe that the overall image of women in television is changing, but for the worse. Gerbner (1978 states:

Today television is, for all practical purposes, the common culture. Culture is the system of messages that cultivates the images fitting the established structure of social relations. As such, the main function of culture is to cultivate resistance to change. It functions to make people accept life as good and society as just, no matter how things really are. (p. 47)

Gerbner's research summarizes three main tactics which television uses to resist the changing status of women--discrediting, isolating, and undercutting. He states that feminists are discredited by being called "women libbers" and depicted as hostile and aggressive on television. Television isolates women by giving them special "women's programs," rather than including their interests in public affairs shows. The undercutting of women is depicting them as victims of rape (which often is portrayed as a natural occurrence) and as sexual objects. Gerbner states, however, that the most serious practice to resolve is that of stereotyping, which he believes reinforces public acceptance of women in subservient societal roles.

Stereotyping is the general inclination to place people in categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristic, such as age, sex, or ethnic membership. Qualities believed to be typical of members of that category are then attributed to the individual (Tagiuri, 1969). Stereotyping is used to impose penalties on the individuals based on the groups or class to which they belong (Pool, 1973; Allport, 1954). According to Katz (1976), stereotyping is due primarily to cognitive weakness or limitations in the intellectual processes. Because stereotyped labels carry heavy emotional loading, they are resistant to fact and logic.

In examining possible sex-role stereotyping of newscasters, it is important to look at the treatment of men and women in other areas of television programming. Media research on sex-roles shows that men and women continue to be cast in traditional roles in television programs and commercials, and also in magazine advertisements, films, and textbooks (Seegar, 1977). Females in television are associated with domesticity and submissiveness or are shown as sex objects and decorations. Males are associated with more worldly roles and dominance (Busby, 1975; Dominick & Rauch, 1972). O'Donnell and O'Donnell (1978) point out that these television roles have not changed for men and women over the years.

Men presently dominate women in comedy and drama approximately 70 percent of the time. The male voice is used the majority of the time for "voice-overs" (the voice of an authority figure who is not seen in television commercials) and public service announcements (Lemon, 1978; Marecek, Piliavin, Fitzsimmons, Krogh, Leader, & Trudell, 1978; Paletz, Pearson, & Willis, 1977). The United States Commission on Civil Rights (1979) points out that women make up 51 percent of the population and 42 percent of the work force and are employed in almost every type of work. However, women are not portrayed in their contemporary roles on television. Women, the Commission says, are getting more exposure, but mostly for their bodies.

Television characters who are older also are portrayed negatively. Schreiber (1979) observes that the American society proclaims itself as the "land of youth" and that the American media seem to reflect this assertion. Tibbitts (1962) and Rosow (1974) express concern that derogatory stereotypes of the elderly deprive older people of the social roles and status that they enjoyed during their earlier years. Both the abnormal depiction of elderly characters and the omission of such characters from

dramatic television presentations may have serious potential effects (Schreiber, 1979).

Females on television usually are approximately 10 years younger than their male counterparts, but both women and men are stereotyped as they age. In prime-time drama, male villainy increases with age, and female characters "fail" because they are old. Thus, older people on television programs are associated with evil, failure, and unhappiness (Aronoff, 1974). In commercials, older people are seen using products, such as denture adhesive and hair darkeners, designed to minimize the effects of normal aging. Hess (1974) states, "old people are 'poor copy'; they remind us of role loss, deprivations, and ultimate demise, none of which is a helpful product association" (p. 77).

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) point out that age in some situations, however, may be regarded as an indication of the extent of a source's experience and thus expertise (which is a dimension of credibility). Other researchers agree that the way a source is perceived depends upon the source's function and the situation (Cronkhite & Liska, 1976). Rokeach (1972) explains this phenomenon by his dual attitude theory. According to Rokeach, each individual has two attitudes which are operational in any given situation. A person can have an attitude toward an object and an attitude toward the situation in which the object is found. The behavior an individual exhibits in relation to the object is a function of both the object and the situation. Each will be mentally weighted for importance by the individual, and the attitude given the most importance will determine the person's behavior. Therefore, if audiences perceive a source according to the source's role and situation, it may be possible that women and older people are perceived differently in television programming than in newscasting.

II. PURPOSE OF STUDY

Women have been reporting the news regularly on television in the United States since the 1960's. Their emergence as newscasters in this traditionally male occupation results primarily from pressure on broadcasting stations by feminists and subsequent affirmative action hiring programs. Despite the fact that the position of newscaster is regarded as one of authority, few scientific studies have been conducted on women in this role. For example, it is not known whether women newscasters are perceived as being more credible now, since they are more familiar to viewers, than when they first started reporting. It has not been established whether female newscasters are perceived as being as credible as male newscasters. Women newscasters also are younger than their male counterparts; however, no studies could be found dealing specifically with newscaster age and credibility. In addition, audience perceptions may vary with the age, sex, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer--these variables need to be examined.

These issues are especially important considering that women and older people are stereotyped in nonauthoritative and submissive roles in all other television programming. Some researchers believe that such stereotyping reinforces attitudes towards the role of men and women in society. Other researchers believe that television audiences perceive sources according to the source's role and situation.

When examining the audience perceptions of newscasters, many variables, such as newscaster characteristics, audience demographics (e.g., sex, age, level of education, occupation), and news programming, must be considered. It is difficult to test all of these variables at once;

therefore, individual factors must be selected for examination. Sex and age of the newscaster and sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer were chosen as the variables to be examined in this study because of the lack of research on these important factors. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a difference in viewer perceptions of credibility for male and female newscasters?
2. Is there a difference in viewer perceptions of credibility for young and mature television newscasters?
3. Do the sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer influence perceptions of newscaster credibility?
4. Does the similarity between sex and age of the viewer and sex and age of the newscaster influence perceptions of newscaster credibility?

This study will contribute to the sparse research on the credibility of television newscasters. It also will add to the existing research on the image of women in the media. The subject of this research is timely, but the study may be used for future comparison as women become more prevalent as newscasters. News directors and newscasters (or aspiring newscasters) should benefit from the study's practical application.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the influence of sex and age of a newscaster and sex, age, and sex-role attitudes on perceptions of television newscaster credibility. Important to this research is an examination of studies on source credibility, audience perception, television newscaster credibility, sex-role attitudes, and message salience.

I. SOURCE CREDIBILITY

An individual's acceptance of information and ideas is based in part on "who said it." This variable, the source's role in communication effectiveness, has been given many names--ethos, prestige, charisma, image, and source credibility. Research indicates that the more credibility the communicator is perceived to have, the more likely the information transmitted will be accepted (Berlo et al., 1969).

Credibility, according to Bettinghaus (1968), is a "set of perceptions about sources held by receivers" (p. 104). As a set of perceptions, credibility is subject to change (Berlo et al., 1969). Aristotle (1926) described the three components of source credibility as high character (the honesty of the source), good will (the purity of the source's motives), and wisdom (the competence or authoritativeness of the source). Credibility characteristics equivalent to Aristotle's dimensions have been found in later studies.

Mortensen (1972) says credibility is not a single, unitary variable; rather, it is a multidimensional construct composed of a number of factors which form the total impression of the source. Researchers differ on the

dimensions that comprise credibility, however. Hovland et al., (1953) state that credibility depends on a two-dimensional conception--trustworthiness and expertise. Trustworthiness refers to the degree to which an audience perceives the assertions made by a communicator to be ones that the speaker considers valid. Expertise refers to the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions. McCroskey (1966) also found two dimensions of credibility which correspond to expertise and trustworthiness--authoritativeness and character.

Berlo et al. (1969) found the dimensions of safety (analogous to trustworthiness), qualification (analogous to expertise), and dynamism (e.g., energetic, bold, aggressive). In addition to the three main dimensions of credibility--trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism--Whitehead (1968) adds objectivity.

McGuire (1973) states that the source must be perceived as knowing what is correct and being motivated to communicate it. Often, the source's purpose is to change attitudes and behavior. McGuire believes that Kelman's (1958, 1961) theory of source valence is one of the most highly developed conceptualizations of source effects. Kelman's source valence theory can easily be applied to this study of newscaster credibility.

According to Kelman, a source can produce attitude change through three types of characteristics--credibility, attractiveness, and power. These characteristics may influence attitude change through three psychological modes called internalization, identification, and compliance, as shown in Table 1.

Credibility of the source is his/her apparent expertise and trustworthiness; the source's perceived ability to know the correct stand on an issue and motivation to communicate this knowledge without bias. The

TABLE 1
KELMAN'S SOURCE VALENCE THEORY

Source Factors	Psychological Modes
CREDIBILITY Expertise Trustworthiness	INTERNALIZATION
ATTRACTIVENESS Similarity Familiarity Liking	IDENTIFICATION
POWER Control Over Means and Ends Concern About Compliance Scrutiny Over Compliance	COMPLIANCE

source's credibility or relation to the content of the message is important. A receiver may adopt the recommendations of an expert, or highly credible source, and behave accordingly if the recommendations are relevant to the target person's own problems and congruent with his/her own values. Often, recommendations are adopted selectively and in modified form. The receiver will tend to manifest the attitude change in his/her language and behavior even though the original source of the message is forgotten. Kelman calls this process internalization and states that it occurs when the behavior is congruent with the target person's value system and is intrinsically rewarding. The satisfaction derived from internalization stems from the content of the new behavior.

The second characteristic in Kelman's source valence theory is attractiveness. A source has valence for producing attitude change through the attraction mechanism insofar as the recipient perceives the source in a way that would make sharing an opinion with the source gratifying. For example, the source might be so well liked or admired that the recipient would receive gratification from identifying with the source through shared beliefs. Or, the source might be perceived as so familiar or similar to the recipient that the same interests are assumed.

Identification can be said to occur when an individual adopts behavior derived from another person or group because this behavior is associated with a satisfying, self-defining relationship. Identification may serve to maintain an individual's relationship to a group or person in which self-definitions are anchored. An influencing source who is likely to be attractive is one who occupies a role desired by the receiver.

Source attractiveness as a factor in social influence has been studied under at least three aspects: familiarity, similarity, and liking.

The three aspects are interrelated--similarity may lead to familiarity, and familiarity to liking, or liking may lead to familiarity, and familiarity to similarity (Newcomb, 1961; Krugman & Hartley, 1960). Kelman's components of credibility and attractiveness raise the question of whether a viewer will perceive a newscaster who is similar in age and sex or one who is familiar as more credible than one who is not.

There is a considerable body of evidence supporting the notion that a person is influenced by a persuasive message to the extent that it is perceived as coming from a source similar to him/herself. The receiver assumes that they share common goals and needs and that what the source is urging is good for both of them. Kenneth Burke (1962) calls this process a "strategy of identification," whereby the source attempts to persuade by showing the subject that their interests and needs are mutual. One case of intercomponent conflict is that in which peers are pitted against authorities as sources of persuasive messages. A source who is an expert on the issue gains persuasive valence via the credibility component (due to knowledgeability), but loses via the attraction component (due to dissimilarity from the receiver). Conversely, a source who is the subject's peer gains on attractiveness, but loses on credibility because he/she is high on similarity, but low on expertise (McGuire, 1968; Mausner, 1953).

Katz and Lazarsfield (1968) found that in natural social settings, people are more influenced by their peers than by their superiors where they are of the same demographic category in regard to age, sex, and social class. McGuire (1968) contends that the credibility component is stronger than the attractiveness component in authority situations. A person would be most influenced by a source slightly superior to him/herself.

Ideological similarity has a greater effect on liking of the source than demographic similarity (Rokeach, 1960; Stein, Hardyck, & Smith, 1965).

Levy (1979) reports that familiarity of newscasters is important to viewers and that viewers create an affective tie with newscasters. Even though this "para-social" interaction is the subjective invention of the audience, viewers interpret the behavior of the newscasters as reciprocating this "real" bond. He states:

People who engage in para-social interaction are often reassured by a familiar, friendly "image" of their intimates-at-a-distance; and para-socially active viewers experience a sense of order, belonging, and context from their relationship with the news personae. (p. 78)

Kelman maintains that opinions adopted through identification remain tied to the external source and are dependent on social support. The ideas are not necessarily integrated with the individual's value system. Charters and Newcomb (1958) add that the maintenance of new beliefs based on source attractiveness depends on the source's continued advocacy of them, the receiver's continued role relationship to the source, and the salience of this relationship.

The third characteristic of Kelman's source valence theory is power. The receiver determines whether the source can administer positive or negative sanctions, cares if there is conformity, and is able to observe whether the source's position is accepted. To the extent that the joint probability of these three contingencies is high, the receiver complies with the source, at least as far as public compliance is concerned. Because newscasters cannot observe the viewer's conduct, have little control over means and ends, or scrutiny over compliance, power is not an area of consideration for this study. The power component mostly is

utilized in interpersonal communication. Kelman's conceptualizations are important in understanding source valence, and although these conceptualizations are sound, he does not offer an empirical guide on operationalization. Therefore, standardized credibility scales which also were pertinent to this study were sought.

Cronkhite et al. (1976) maintain that credibility is not a set of scales or factors, but rather the capability of a source to produce changes in the receiver's opinions, policies, and behavior. It is crucial to remember that "the credibility of sources usually depends heavily upon the specific functions they perform in specific topic-situations for specific listeners" (p. 105). Sources may act as purveyors of information, provide rewards and punishment, or help clarify listeners' self-concepts along with a variety of other functions. The authors states that it is incorrect to assume that any of the credibility rating scales or dimensions are those which listeners consistently use as the basis for their perceptual judgments.

Other researchers agree that credibility scales should be designed according to the nature of the source's role, function, and situation. Markham (1968) evaluated newscasters on a 55-item semantic differential instrument and identified the major dimensions of credibility to be message validity, dynamism, and trustworthiness. McCroskey et al. (1975) factor analyzed existing source credibility rating scales and established scales for rating the credibility of mass media news sources, which specifically includes television newscasters. Thus, the McCroskey et al. scales were chosen as the instrument for measuring newscaster credibility for this study. The credibility dimensions include competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion.

II. PERCEPTION

Hovland et al. (1953) state that credibility is a perceptual variable intervening between the speaker as a physical stimulus and the listener's response. In the gestalt sense, perception is the total configuration of the outside world as it is interpreted by the individual rather than a given material object or stimulus (Mortensen, 1972).

Social, interpersonal, or "person" perception refers to the process by which an individual comes to think and know about others--their characteristics, qualities, and inner states (Tagiuri, 1969). The experimental study of human perception reveals that values, needs, beliefs, and attitudes play an influential role in determining how stimuli are selected from the environment, and how meaning is attributed to those stimuli. Thus one important product of human learning is the acquisition of stable predispositions or habits concerning the perception of events. Perception differs systematically from one person to another, according to the nature of individual personality structure.

* Berlo (1960) says that it is impossible to observe everything; therefore, perception is selective and dependent upon cultural background. He states, "Our own prior experiences, our own values, are inextricably woven into our judgments and into the perceptions produced by them" (p. 231). Therefore, there is bias in perception introduced by the expectations an individual has about the nature of the physical world and the roles of the people therein. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1975) point out that people in an audience select and interpret mass communication content in widely varying ways. One of the most important factors the receiver brings to a viewing situation is a perception of the particular media source (McCroskey et al., 1975).

Two studies investigated the relationship between the sex of the receiver and the sex of the speaker on speaker credibility. In a doctoral dissertation, Vigliano (1974) found that female speakers were perceived by both sexes to be more credible (trustworthy, competent, and dynamic) than male speakers.. Sloman (1974) found no significant difference in perceived credibility between male and female speakers by either male or female listeners.

III. TELEVISION NEWSCASTER CREDIBILITY

Most of the research on television newscasters deals with the personal appeal and related characteristics of news "personalities." In 1973, Shosteck analyzed surveys of viewer reactions to news personalities (newscasters, weather reporters, sportscasters, commentators, and editorialists). The surveys were commissioned by individual stations in five major American markets in order to increase audience viewing of their news, weather, and sportscasts. The first two results correspond with Kelman's attractiveness component--viewers tend to like those newscasters who are more familiar and similar. The results of Shosteck's study are as follows:

1. Personalities who are best known tend to be better liked.
2. News personalities may not have the same appeal for all segments of the audience. Appeal varies substantially with age, sex, or socioeconomic status of the viewer. Personalities who are liked for their appearance and personal appeal tend to attract viewers who are older, female, and of lower socioeconomic status. Personalities who are rated highly because of their professional attributes tend to draw viewers who are younger, male, and of higher socioeconomic status.

3. To gain prominent audience appeal, a news personality must be more than just "good," he/she must possess a distinctive characteristic such as a good voice or obvious knowledgeability. An unfavorable characteristic may be balanced by a distinctive favorable characteristic.

4. Voice quality and manner of speech of a newscaster are of central importance.

5. Professional character of a newscaster is less important as a basis for viewer appeal than voice and speech.

6. The personal appeal characteristic of a news personality appears to have the least important influence on viewer preference.

Shosteck lists, in order of importance, the four clusters which influence popularity of a news personality as voice and speech, professional attributes, personal appearance, and appeal.

Nonverbal cues also affect the attitude of the audience towards the newscaster. Tankard's 1970 laboratory experiment shows that eye contact may be effective in influencing the viewer's image of television announcers. Julian (1977) found that college students perceive male newscasters with good eye contact and those wearing casual clothes as more trustworthy than newscasters with poor eye contact and those wearing dress suits. Mandell and Shaw (1973) suggest that mechanical aspects of television news can have an effect on perception of the newscaster. Camera angle may influence viewer perceptions of newscaster effectiveness, knowledgeability, and authority (Tiemons, 1970).

In an attempt to determine why one newscaster is more "watchable" than another, Sanders and Pritchett (1971) found that viewers favored the 31- to 40-year-old newscasters and disliked the 21- to 30-year-olds. The "key combination," they contend, is to be between 31 and 55 years old,

with brunette or blond hair, and of medium height and build. In addition, the reporter should wear a dark coat, white shirt, a solid or striped tie (not a bow tie), and should avoid having a beard or mustache. The authors conclude that the ideal "newsman" composites appear to be partly the results of what viewers are accustomed to seeing on the network. It is not known whether female newscasters were included in the survey.

Sargent (1965) found that the personal integrity (sincerity, accuracy, and responsibility) of newscasters appears to account for more appeal than does their method of presentation. Cathcart (1969) found the most desirable characteristics of a newscaster to be knowledge, experience, personal conviction, unbiased approach, honesty, trustworthiness, and articulation.

Few studies have been conducted involving female newscasters. In 1965, Kienzle surveyed newspaper editors and broadcasting news directors in 50 states to determine their attitudes on hiring women. A preference for hiring men was expressed by 73 percent of the news directors, who said that men sound more authoritative.

In 1973, Stone surveyed news directors, college students and professors, fourth- and fifth-grade students, and parents of these children to see if the attitudes of news directors accurately reflect the attitudes of the broadcasting audience. Although 83 percent of the news directors believed that their audiences would prefer a male reporter, at least half of every audience group surveyed said that the sex of the newscaster did not matter. Grade school children and their parents stated that on occasions the preferred sex of a newscaster depended upon the story. This group preferred a male for reporting from Viet Nam or a football game and a female reporter for a White House social event. This finding implies that some people typecast newscasters as having more expertise in

traditional sex-role related topics. Stone admits that the sample for this study is not representative of the general population. However, he raises the question of whether news directors are assuming biases that do not exist.

Two experimental studies tested newscaster sex and perceived credibility. Balon, Philport, and Beadle (1978) examined the effects of a television newscaster's sex and race on audience perceptions of credibility. Two-hundred students saw a 15-minute newscast with various combinations of newscaster race and sex. The results show that males are perceived as less verbal, qualified, and thus less credible than females. Blacks are perceived as more anxious, less qualified, and thus less credible than white newscasters. In this study, no controls were made for the race of the students, who were 88 percent white and 12 percent black. No breakdown of the sex of the students was given.

The study most pertinent to this research was conducted by Whittaker et al. (1976). The authors examined the factors of acceptance, believability, and effectiveness of male and female newscasters as perceived by adults in a controlled listening situation. Four professional newscasters (two females and two males) recorded two newscasts each, which varied in organization, writing style, and factual points. Eight groups of adult subjects (approximately 160 people) were exposed to two newscasts--one by a male, the other by a female reporter. A multiple choice questionnaire was administered to examine effectiveness and believability. A second questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions and examined verbalized believability, preference, and acceptance. There was no significant difference in the degree of acceptance of either male or female newscaster; over 50 percent of the subjects voted for acceptance of both sexes of newscasters. There was no significant difference in

believability or in retention of the stories delivered by either the male or female newscasters. In addition, the authors found no significant relationships between the subjects' ages or sex and newscaster preferences.

IV. SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES

According to Allport (1935), an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness which is organized through experience. It exerts a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Attitudes involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. McGuire (1973) points out that an attitude involves an oversimplification of the actual complexity of an organism. "Ideally, an attitude is an informal empirical theory based on what the person has directly observed and what has been communicated to him by others" (pp. 158-159).

Attitudes towards sex-roles vary among cultures, but according to Spence and Helmreich (1978), there is universal differentiation among sex-roles in human societies.

Women and men are assigned different tasks, rights, and privileges and are likely to be subject to different rules of conduct, particularly in interaction with each other. . . . men and women are typically assumed to possess different temperamental characteristics and abilities--distinctive sets of attributes . . . whose inculcation is believed to be necessary if members of each sex are to fulfill their assigned functions. (p. 4)

Spence and Helmreich summarize that sex-roles refer to the distinguishing characteristics of women and men, differences in behavior, abilities, personalities, preference, and other areas. Sex-roles involve a multitude of roles and role combinations that vary across social settings and the life span. Angrist (1969) states that the importance attached to

these behaviors vary; role violators may be severely punished in some instances or treated with relative indifference in others. If there is conflict with the contemporary value system of the society, change in sex-roles may occur, either slowly or rapidly in response to an accumulation of social pressure or to shifts in political ideology.

In 1972, Helson described the changing image of the working woman. He notes that in the 1950's, women with a genuine career interest were described as both rare and maladjusted. Today, there is a decreased emphasis on motherhood and an increased emphasis on women's careers. Janeway (1971) posits that in middle-class families, women have traditionally been confined to domestic chores, leaving the support of the family to the husband. However, occupational competency presently depends less on physical strength and more on formal education, thus women's participation in the work force has been systematically rising. The educational level of women has risen over the past century along with that of men. According to Scanzoni (1975), better-educated people tend to have more egalitarian attitudes towards the sexes and are less likely to impose rigid sex-role standards in rearing their children. These people demand more educational, vocational, and interpersonal activities which contribute to their feelings of social competence and self-esteem. Green and Cunningham (1975) add that due to the changing role of women in the United States, "society is experiencing a breakdown in cultural norms and ideals pertaining to men's and women's tasks" (p. 325). This change in sex-roles has led to tolerance of men and women in activities previously reserved for a particular sex.

Some researchers believe that sex-role attitudes for most people are slow in changing. An examination of sex-role research studies shows

that characteristics ascribed to men are positively valued more often than those ascribed to women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972). The authors posit that women are perceived as relatively less competent, independent, objective, and logical than men. These sex-role differences are considered to be desirable by college students, healthy by mental health professionals, and are seen as ideal by both men and women (Lunneborg, 1970; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968).

Spence et al. (1978) point out the differences in findings in sex-role research studies. They contend that current research is reappraising the concepts of masculine and feminine characteristics and their roles in the personality.

V. MESSAGES

In examining viewer perceptions of source credibility, it is important to note that messages may affect attitudes towards the source (Tannenbaum, 1956). Bettinghaus (1968) states that messages produce effects because of the similarities of meanings that various stimuli have for the source and receiver. Because people develop connotative, or internal, meanings for words, messages may have different meanings for different people. Mortensen (1972) agrees that word meanings and their arrangements are never fixed; there is no assurance that words will be interpreted according to their intended meanings. The gap between assigned and intended meanings can be enormous. Mortensen points out that ego-involvement refers to the relevance, significance, or meaningfulness that an issue or topic has for an individual. Ego-involved people are least likely to interpret the meaning of messages in an accurate and objective

manner. In laboratory research, where other variables are to be examined, presenting a neutral message is important, but it can be difficult.

There are several factors which can affect the source because of his/her message. Addington (1965) states that content variables, such as faulty grammar and poor organization, are accurately perceived by an audience and produce a poor opinion of the source. Bettinghaus (1968) states that messages are not created from words alone, but from the placement of words into larger structures. Ideas can be expressed with different words in the same language code; for example, the use of a different modifier can drastically change a receiver's impression of the message. Many sources manipulate messages by using appeals--ideas that appeal to the listener's moral principles, emotions, or intellect. For example, a speaker may use an emotional as opposed to a rational appeal or a self-interest as opposed to a justice appeal. The type of appeal used depends on the source's motives and audience. In a study examining public service announcements, Lynn (1974) found that message evaluation was related to the appeals used within the announcements.

There is a large body of research on message content, structure, and effects. A source must take this knowledge into consideration when delivering a message, if credibility is an issue.

VI. SUMMARY

The literature review shows that source credibility is generally thought to consist of dimensions equivalent to expertise, trustworthiness, and dynamism. However, perceived credibility is dependent upon the source's function, situation, and attitudes towards the source. Kelman's source valence theory raises the question of whether television newscasters are

considered credible because of factors associated with expertise (age and maleness), attractiveness (similarity of viewer and newscaster age and sex, or familiarity of a newscaster--what the audience is used to seeing), or both of these factors. However, no scale has been designed specifically for testing Kelman's conceptualizations. The scale designed to measure television newscaster credibility by McCroskey et al. (1975) was selected for this study. The dimensions of the scale are competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion.

Perception is the process by which an individual comes to think and know about others. A person's own experiences, values, and biases are woven into his/her perceptions. What the viewer brings to a viewing situation, his/her background and preconceived notions about the source, is an important determinant of the media impact. Thus, the viewer plays an important role in examining newscaster credibility. Messages also are important because they can effect perception of the source.

Sanders et al. (1971) found that viewers favored the 31- to 40-year-old newscasters and disliked the 21- to 30-year-olds (it is not known whether female newscasters were included in this study). Credibility research shows that in certain situations, age is used as a measure of experience and thus expertise, which is a dimension of credibility. In an authority situation, people tend to be influenced by a source who is perceived to be slightly superior, or more credible, than one who is similar to themselves.

Surveys dealing with the sex of a television newscaster and perceived credibility show that news directors believe audiences prefer a male newscaster; audiences of these surveys expressed no preference for either sex. Those respondents who expressed a preference wanted a male or female for

traditionally male or female-oriented topics. Some viewers may like who they are used to seeing as television newscasters.

Experimental studies on male and female speakers conclude that females are perceived as more credible or equally as credible as male speakers. The experimental study on television newscasters concludes that there is no difference in perceived credibility between male and female newscasters. Research examining sex-role attitudes differ in their findings. Some studies show that sex-roles are changing to a more mutual sharing of positions. Other researchers report that male characteristics are valued more than female characteristics and that most people see traditional sex-roles as important.

This study examines the effects of sex and age of the newscaster and sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer on television newscaster credibility.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were derived from the theoretical framework set forth in the preceding chapter.

H₁: Sex of a newscaster does not account for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility.

H₂: Age of a newscaster accounts for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility.

H_{3a}: Sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of young male television newscaster credibility.

H_{3b}: Sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of mature male television newscaster credibility.

H_{3c}: Sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of young female television newscaster credibility.

H_{3d}: Sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of mature female television newscaster credibility.

H_{4a}: Age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of young male television newscaster credibility.

H_{4b}: Age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of mature male television newscaster credibility.

H_{4c}: Age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of young female television newscaster credibility.

H_{4d}: Age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of mature female television newscaster credibility.

H_{5a}: Sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young male television newscaster credibility.

H_{5b}: Sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of mature male television newscaster credibility.

H_{5c}: Sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young female newscaster credibility.

H_{5d}: Sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of mature female newscaster credibility.

H_{6a}: Sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young male television newscaster credibility.

H_{6b}: Sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of mature male television newscaster credibility.

H_{6c}: Sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young female newscaster television newscaster credibility.

H_{6d}: Sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of mature female newscaster television newscaster credibility.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

General Terms

The general concepts and terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Source credibility. Bettinghaus (1968) states that source credibility is not a single characteristic of an individual, but rather a set of perceptions held by the receiver. Mortensen (1972) concurs that source credibility is a multidimensional construct composed of a number of factors which form the total impression of the source. Many studies examining the dimensions of source credibility find factors equivalent to trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism (Berlo et al., 1969). Kelman (1961, 1958) posits that the source has valence for changing attitudes through credibility, attractiveness, and power. McGuire (1968) summarizes credibility as the extent to which the source is perceived as knowing the right answer and is motivated to communicate it.

Cronkhite et al. (1976) maintain that the credibility of a source depends upon the specific functions he/she performs in specific situations for specific listeners. McCroskey et al. (1975) developed scales specifically for measuring credibility of mass media news sources which include the dimensions of competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion. These scales were used to measure television newscaster credibility in this study.

Perception. When the term "credibility" is used in this study, it is meant to imply perceived credibility, or whether the audience sees the newscaster as being credible. In the gestalt view, perception is the total configuration of the outside world as it is interpreted by the individual (Mortensen, 1972). "Person" perception is the process by which people come to know and to think about others--their characteristics, qualities, and inner states (Taguiri, 1969). In a media situation, McCroskey et al. (1975) point out that the single most important factor

a viewer brings to that situation is a perception of the image of the particular media source. Berlo (1960) states, "Our own prior experiences, our own values, are inextricably woven into our judgments--and into the perceptions produced by them" (p. 23). Ordinarily, only a few moments of speaking time are required to form an impression of a given source (Andersen & Clevenger, 1963; Brooks, 1970).

Television newscasters. The male or female news announcer who is responsible for reporting the news on a regularly scheduled news program. The news announcer also may be the anchorperson.

Television audience. Adult members of the population who view regularly-scheduled news programs presented on television.

Operational Terms

Credibility. Credibility is the dependent variable in this study. Credibility of television newscasters consists of the dimensions of competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion in the McCroskey et al. (1975) "Scales for Measurement of Mass Media News Source Image." These dimensions were measured on a semantic differential-type scale with 25 bipolar adjectives separated by seven response intervals, providing interval-type data. A copy of the scale is given in Appendix A.

Sex. Sex is one of the independent variables in this study. It is defined as the male or female gender and all of the attributes by which males and females are distinguished. Although of the nominal-data type, a dummy variable was created for the regression analysis. The sex of the newscaster was apparent by American cultural dress, hairstyle, and makeup codes for men and women. The subjects listed their sex on one of the test questionnaires.

Age. Viewer age is an independent variable of interval-type data. Age is defined as the time that a person has existed since birth. The newscasters were assigned to the various age categories on the basis of a pretest in which the subjects ranked them according to their perceived age group. "Young" newscasters were those perceived to be in the 34-year-old and under category; "mature" newscasters were those ranked in the 35-year-old and over category. The subjects in the experiment listed their ages on a questionnaire.

Message impact. Message impact is defined as the psychological closeness of an issue reported in a news story to the reader. Subjects in the pretest group indicated their attitudes towards 10 topics on a Likert-type scale (see Appendix B). Four messages which were checked on the "Agree," "Undecided," or "Disagree" interval were determined neutral or of interest and written into four one-minute, thirty-second news stories for the experiment (see Appendix E). To ensure minimal message impact on the experimental groups, these subjects also were administered a Likert-type scale of questions pertaining to the four chosen messages (see Appendix C).

Attitudes toward sex-roles. Attitudes toward sex-roles is an independent variable. The attitudinal scale used in the study was the short version of the "Attitudes Towards Women Scale" (AWS) by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1973) which has a correlation of .95 with the original version of the AWS. It is a Likert-type scale, producing interval-type data, containing 15 statements concerning the rights and roles of women in vocational, educational, intellectual, and sexual activities. The subjects responded to the statements on intervals marked "Agree Strongly," "Agree Mildly," "Disagree Mildly," or "Disagree

Strongly." Each item on the scale was weighted to determine whether the subjects had conservative (more traditional) or liberal attitudes towards sex-roles for men and women (Appendix D).

III. PRETESTING

The purpose of this experiment was to determine any differences in television viewer perceptions of credibility between male and female newscasters and also young and mature newscasters. In addition, the relationships between viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes and newscaster credibility were examined. In order to conduct the study, a pretest on a separate group of subjects was necessary to select four messages and eight newscasters. It is important to point out that a larger number of newscasters and stories could have been used, but it would not have been feasible for this study due to the large sample size required and the television production involved. The design for the pretest, using the Haskins (1977) notational system, is given in Figure 1.

Twenty-five graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in Curriculum and Instruction 4750 served as the pretest group. These students were similar in age, sex, occupation, educational level, and academic background to those subjects selected for the experiment. There was no apparent contamination effects from the pretest subjects to the experimental ones. The pretest group was given the test for message impact two weeks before the newscaster-selection test. The selection process for the messages and the newscasters is discussed separately.

	t1	t2	t3
P1	--	M1	T1(fx) M2

- t1 Time prior to the pretest
- t2 Time for testing newscast messages
- t3 Time for testing newscasters, two weeks after message test
- P1 Curriculum and Instruction students, N = 25
- T1(fx) Videocassette tape of 12 television newscasters (forced exposure)
- M1 Likert-type scale measuring message interest, neutrality, and emotional involvement
- M2 Likert-type scale measuring newscaster appearance, articulateness, and voice quality. Open-ended question measuring newscaster age

Figure 1. Research Design for Pretest.

Selection of Newscast Messages

Tannenbaum (1956) points out that the message may affect attitudes towards the source. Therefore, it was important that the topics have controlled or minimum impact on the perceived credibility of newscasters. The messages had to be neutral or of some interest to the subjects, not highly emotional. Ten topics were selected for pretesting which were thought to be appropriate to the nature of the experiment. The topics came from stories reported in the Knoxville News Sentinel or the Associated Press Wire Service.

The topics were listed in statement form on a Likert-type scale with response selections of "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." The Likert-type questionnaire was administered to 25 pretest students during a regular class period as an in-class assignment, with no explanation as to its real purpose. The topics for the message pretest are given in Appendix B.

From the ten topics pretested, four topics which were rated most frequently as interesting or neutral, were selected and written into stories for the newscasts in the experiment (see Appendix E). The topics in the pretest are listed in Table 2 with the subjects' responses given in percentages. The four selected topics were written into individual news stories using standard television newswriting style. The facts for the stories came from their original stories published in the Knoxville News Sentinel or the Associated Press Wire Service. Each story was approximately one minute, thirty seconds in length.

Selection of Newscasters

Because personal traits of the newscasters may influence credibility ratings, it was necessary to pretest the newscasters. Twelve

TABLE 2
MESSAGE PRETEST

Topics	Interesting/ Neutral %	Emotional %
Expo '82	89	11
Unemployment	87	13
*Trade School Diplomas	93	7
Smoking	90	10
*Junk Foods	95	5
Legal Age for Drinking	91	9
*Consumer Groups	96	4
*Trolley Cars	98	2
Pardoning Powers	85	15
Teacher Strikes	88	12

*Topics selected for newscasts

people, three in each sex-age category, were chosen by the author for the pretest, resulting in three young males, three mature males, three young females, and three mature females. "Young" was defined as 34 years of age and under; "mature" was 35 years of age and over. These people had professional speaking and/or broadcasting experience and were able to play the role of a television newscaster.

For the presentations, the newscasters were dressed similarly--- the men wore blue jackets, light-colored shirts, and conservative ties, and the women wore blue jackets and light-colored blouses. Hairstyles and makeup were similar, but not identical, and none of the newscasters wore glasses or had any distracting features.

Each person read two of the four messages selected in the topic pretest, so that each message was read by at least one person in each sex-age category. The newscasters were coached on presentations so that eye contact, voice intonation, and diction were similar. The author personally produced and directed the videotaping of the newscasters to ensure similarity of set design, lighting, and camera angles. The newscasters were videotaped on individual three-quarter-inch videocassette tapes. The individual presentations were then edited and transferred to one videocassette tape with twenty seconds of blue background between each newscast. The videotaping of the newscasters was conducted in a fully-equipped television station studio with professional production crews and engineers.

Approximately two weeks after the message pretest was given, the twenty-five students in Curriculum and Instruction 4750 signed an "Informed Consent Statement" (see Appendix F) and were asked to view

the 12 newscasters. After each newscaster presentation, the subjects rated the person on a Likert-type scale for articulateness, voice quality, and physical attractiveness. The subjects also were asked to judge the newscaster's age on an open-ended question. The pretest questions for newscaster selection are given in Appendix G. The ratings of the 12 newscasters were compared, and two in each sex-age category (totaling eight) were selected for the experiment. Table 3 shows the total responses for the newscasters according to categories. The newscaster presentations for each of the four treatment groups were then transferred to individual videocassette tapes for the experiment.

IV. METHODOLOGY RATIONALE

Research Design Choice

The ideal design for any experiment is the controlled field experiment which requires a naturalistic environment and allows for both internal and external validity. This design, however, dictates that the subjects be unaware that they are participating in an experiment (Haskins, 1976). The controlled field experiment was not used in this experiment because of circumstances beyond the researcher's control. The University of Tennessee requires that researchers using human subjects inform the subjects of the purpose of the experiment before it takes place. In addition, the subjects must sign "Informed Consent Statements" before participating in the experiment (see Appendix F). This particular study mandated the use of expensive and sophisticated television equipment which is stationary in The University of Tennessee Communications and Nursing buildings. Therefore, it was necessary to

TABLE 3
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES FOR PRETEST NEWSCASTERS

<u>Newscasters</u>		<u>Frequency of Responses</u>			
<u>Sex-Age</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Questions</u>			
<u>Category</u>	<u>Perceived Age</u>				
		<u>Highly</u>	<u>Articulate</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Highly</u>
		<u>Articulate</u>	<u>Articulate</u>	<u>Inarticulate</u>	<u>Inarticulate</u>
		6	13	6	--
<u>Young Males</u>					
*A	27.36	6	13	6	--
*B	25.22	4	10	10	1
C	24.13	1	8	13	3
<u>Mature Males</u>					
*A	44.10	5	11	9	--
B	49.81	2	7	14	1
*C	50.86	8	14	3	--
<u>Young Females</u>					
*A	30.14	7	14	4	--
B	23.49	1	9	13	2
*C	26.10	4	11	9	1
<u>Mature Females</u>					
*A	42.07	5	11	9	--
*B	51.35	3	9	13	--
C	37.54	2	10	12	1

TABLE 3 (continued)

<u>Newscasters</u> Sex-Age Category	<u>Frequency of Responses</u>				
	<u>Questions</u>				
	Highly Pleasant	Pleasant	Average	Unpleasant	Highly Unpleasant
<u>Young Males</u>					
*A	4	12	9	--	--
*B	2	11	11	1	--
C		7	15	2	1
<u>Mature Males</u>					
*A	5	14	6	--	--
B	2	9	12	2	--
*C	6	11	8	--	--
<u>Young Females</u>					
*A	8	13	4	--	--
B		7	17	--	1
*C	5	11	9	--	--
<u>Mature Females</u>					
*A	1	10	14	--	--
*B	4	14	7	--	--
C	1	11	12	1	--

TABLE 3 (continued)

<u>Newscasters</u> Sex-Age Category		<u>Frequency of Responses</u> Questions				
		Highly Attractive	Attractive	Average	Unattractive	Highly Unattractive
<u>Young Males</u>						
*A		7	14	5	--	--
*B		2	10	13	--	--
C		1	12	11	1	--
<u>Mature Males</u>						
*A		5	12	8	--	--
B		3	10	12	--	--
*C		2	9	14	--	--
<u>Young Females</u>						
*A		7	11	7	--	--
B		2	9	14	--	--
*C		10	12	3	--	--
<u>Mature Females</u>						
*A		2	8	14	1	--
*B		3	11	11	--	--
C		5	12	8	--	--

* Newscasters selected for the experiment

ask the subjects to go to either of the two buildings to view the video-cassette tapes.

Because of the University requirement for human subjects' approval and the logistical problem inherent in the equipment, a comparative treatments, post-test only, controlled laboratory experiment using university evening students was selected. This experimental design guarantees internal, but not external validity. Because of the control factors, however, any difference in perceived credibility can be contributed to the treatments. The design is given in Figure 2.

Scale Choices

Newscaster credibility. The first measure given in the experiment was the McCroskey et al. (1975) semantic differential-type scale for measurement of newscaster credibility. The semantic differential technique was developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) as a measure of the meaning of psychological, social, and/or physical objects to a subject.

The semantic differential consists of a series of bipolar characteristics which should represent three basic dimensions of the person's attitude toward the object--potency, evaluation, and activity. The semantic differential was originally employed with factor analysis to locate various concepts within an hypothesized semantic space which includes a number of intervals to differentiate the positions of concepts within that space (Darnell, 1970). Semantic differential-type scales are often used in communication research to study the credibility of sources (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970; McCroskey, 1966).

	t1	t2		t3
Pla	--	T1a(fx)	M1a	T1b(fx) M1b,2,3
Plb	--	T2a(fx)	M1a	T2b(fx) M1b,2,3
Plc	--	T3a(fx)	M1a	T3b(fx) M1b,2,3
Pld	--	T4a(fx)	M1a	T4b(fx) M1b,2,3

t1 Time prior to viewing newscasters

t2 Viewing of videocassette tapes of newscasters and measurement No. 1

t3 Time for measurements Nos. 2 and 3

P1 The University of Tennessee-Knoxville Evening School English, Speech, Education and Sociology classes. Day Speech class and an independent film class

Pla Randomized subsample of P1, N = 26

Plb Randomized subsample of P1, N = 18

Plc Randomized subsample of P1, N = 31

Pld Randomized subsample of P1, N = 17

T1a(fx) Videocassette of young male newscaster No. 1 (forced exposure)

T1b(fx) Videocassette of young male newscaster No. 2 (forced exposure)

T2a(fx) Videocassette of mature male newscaster No. 1 (forced exposure)

T2b(fx) Videocassette of mature male newscaster No. 2 (forced exposure)

T3a(fx) Videocassette of young female newscaster No. 1 (forced exposure)

T3b(fx) Videocassette of young female newscaster No. 2 (forced exposure)

T4a(fx) Videocassette of mature female newscaster No. 1 (forced exposure)

T4b(fx) Videocassette of mature female newscaster No. 2 (forced exposure)

M1a Semantic differential-type scale measuring perceived credibility of Newscaster No. 1

M1b Semantic differential-type scale measuring perceived credibility of Newscaster No. 2

M2 Likert-type scale evaluating message impact

M3 Likert-type scale measuring attitudes towards sex-roles

Figure 2. Research Design for Experiment.

McCroskey et al. (1975) point out that available scales for the measurement of source credibility should not be assumed to be universally applicable measures of source credibility. Scales should be designed to determine perceptions of source image for different types of sources on the part of different kinds of receivers to find measures of specific communication contexts. On this basis, the McCroskey et al. "Scales for Measurement of Mass Media News Source Image," which was designed for general adult and college student populations, was selected as the appropriate scale for measurement of newscaster credibility in this study.

To construct the scale, McCroskey et al. initially employed standardized semantic differential-type scales representing dimensions of source credibility reported by Norman (1963), McCroskey (1966), Markham (1968), Whitehead (1968), and Berlo et al. (1970). Media news sources were used, and data were collected from randomly-selected adults and college students. The data were submitted to three sets of analyses--factor analysis and varimax rotation, canonical correlation analyses, and multiple regression. The resulting scales of competence, character, sociability, composure, and extroversion are offered as a measure of media source image that can be used across subject populations with reasonable assurance of reliability and validity. Internal reliability estimates (employing analysis of variance procedures) for each of the dimensions with each of the samples exceeded .90. Construct validity is suggested by visual examination of the scales and the fact that reasonable factorial stability was observed. Predictive validity is suggested from results of analyses involving prediction of data

on communication and communication-related behavior scales. The scale, which includes 25 bipolar adjectives on a seven-interval scale, is given in Appendix A.

Message Impact. The second measurement in the experiment was a Likert-type scale to measure message interest or neutrality. The summated rating feature of Likert measurement is designed to evaluate the intensity with which an attitude is expressed. The logic is that people who possess some attitudes more strongly than others will occupy a different position along the attitudinal continuum from high to low. The intensity of a given attitude is determined, in part, by weighting the responses a person gives to each statement (Black & Champion, 1976). The Likert scale is highly reliable and is the most common measurement format (Miller, 1977).

It was important that the news stories or messages have controlled or minimum impact on the perceived credibility of the newscasters; therefore, the messages had to be of general interest or neutral to the majority of subjects. The Likert-type scale is an appropriate method of determining emotional attitudes towards the messages. Four news stories were written for the experiment from four topics judged interesting or neutral in the pretest. Statements concerning these news stories were listed on a Likert-type scale with five intervals of "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree" and administered to the subjects to determine the impact of the message. In addition to testing the interest of the news stories, the Likert-type scale helped to conceal the real purpose of the experiment--that of measuring perceived credibility of television newscasters.

Attitudes towards sex-roles. The third and last instrument administered to the experimental group dealt with the subjects' attitudes toward sex-roles. How the viewers felt about roles for men and women was believed to have been an important factor in the subjects' perceptions of male and female newscaster credibility. To measure sexual and generational differences in attitudes toward the proper roles and behaviors of men and women, a short version of the "Attitudes toward Women Scale" (AWS) by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1973) was selected. This standardized scale reflects the degree to which an individual holds traditional or liberal views towards women. The scale is concerned with abstract attitudes and does not necessarily identify the particular roles that an individual has adopted for him/herself. The scale was designed for use with college students or adults, but it allows for comparisons of the attitudes of various groups on the role of women in society.

The short version of the AWS scale is a Likert-type scale containing 15 items which describe the rights and roles that women ought to have or be permitted, as compared with men, in such areas as jobs, education, freedom, independence, social etiquette, sexual behavior, and marital relationships. Correlations between scores on the short and the full (55-item) versions of the AWS were .95 or above. Items require responses on a four-point scale ranging from "Agree Strongly," to "Disagree Strongly" (see Appendix D). The AWS scale was administered last because the nature of the questions possibly alerted the subjects to the purpose of the experiment.

Subjects

The subjects for this experiment consisted of 92 volunteer undergraduates and graduate students enrolled in English 1010, Curriculum and

Instruction 5510 and 4360, Speech 2311 and 2351, Educational Psychology and Guidance 2520, and Sociology 5320 at The University of Tennessee Evening School. Volunteers from the day section of Speech 2351 and adults from an off-campus film group also participated.

Before the experiment, instructors of the volunteer classes submitted a list of the students with their names, ages, and sex to the researcher. These subjects, which totaled 128, were randomized into four stratified groups according to sex and age. All subjects then received instructions as to which room they were to report on the evening of the experiment. Of the 128 people who volunteered, 92 reported to their respective groups, resulting in cell sizes given in Table 4.

Evening school students were preferred because of the number of older and employed people, who are more representative of the general population than are students from day classes. The volunteers represented most of the colleges and classifications in the University, which reduced vocational or academic-interest bias in the results. The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 71-years, with 60 percent being 34-years-old or younger and 40 percent being 35-years-old or over. The mean age was 32.02 years. Educational levels ranged from high school to doctoral degree status. The mean average of education level was 15 years. A sample profile of the subjects by educational level is given in Table 5. Occupations varied from secretaries to attorneys. Forty-one percent of the volunteers were full-time students, 51 percent were employed in addition to being students, and 8 percent were non-students. A sample profile of the subjects by occupation is given in Table 6.

TABLE 4

PROFILE OF TREATMENT GROUPS BY SEX AND AGE

Treatment Groups Newscasters	Sex of Subjects		Age of Subjects		Totals	
	Sex	#	Young	Mature		
Young Male	Males	14	Males	10	4	
	Females	12	Females	7	5	
	Totals	26		17	9	26
Mature Male	Males	10	Males	7	3	
	Females	8	Females	5	3	
	Totals	18		12	6	18
Young Female	Males	12	Males	8	4	
	Females	19	Females	8	11	
	Totals	31		16	15	31
Mature Female	Males	7	Males	4	3	
	Females	10	Females	6	4	
	Totals	17		10	7	17
Totals		92		55	37	92

TABLE 5
SAMPLE PROFILE OF EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<u>Treatment Groups</u>	High School	<u>Educational Level of Subjects by Frequency</u>				Totals
		College Undergraduate	College Graduate	Masters Degree	Doctorate/Law Degree	
Newsletters						
Young Male	1	13	7	4	1	26
Mature Male	4	3	6	4	1	18
Young Female	2	14	8	6	1	31
Mature Female	2	7	2	4	2	17
Totals	9	37	23	18	5	92

TABLE 6
SAMPLE PROFILE OF OCCUPATIONS

Treatment Groups	Occupations of Subjects by Frequency							Totals
	Full-Time Students	White Collar	Medical/ Teachers	Psycho.	Attorneys	Blue Collar	Home- makers	
News- casters								
Young Male	9	4	6	--	--	2	3	26
Mature Male	2	5	2	2	1	1	4	18
Young Female	7	5	5	4	1	2	5	31
Mature Female	4	2	4	1	--	--	6	17
	22	16	17	7	2	5	18	92

V. EXPERIMENT

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 1, 1979, 92 volunteer subjects reported to one of four assigned rooms in either the Communications Building or the Nursing Building on The University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus. Each group met simultaneously in classrooms equipped with videocassette tape players. A male and a female confederate in each class gave identical introductory remarks and instructions to the subjects. The groups were told that they would be asked questions about their perceptions of television newscasters. The subjects also were informed that their participation, or lack of same, in no way reflected upon their course grade. The subjects were then given the opportunity to ask questions or excuse themselves from participating in the experiment. No subjects refused to participate and all of them signed an "Informed Consent Statement."

Each treatment group saw a videocassette tape of either two young male newscasters, two mature male newscasters, two young female newscasters, or two mature female newscasters. Each newscaster presented two, one-minute, thirty-second messages. The messages were rotated so that each story was presented by a newscaster in each sex-age category. After each newscaster presentation, the subjects rated the newscaster on the McCroskey et al. (1975) credibility scales.

After the credibility questionnaires were collected, the message impact questionnaire was administered. Following completion of this instrument, the subjects completed the sex-role attitude questionnaire. The entire experiment took approximately 30 minutes.

VI. STATISTICAL ANALYSES

In this experimental study, credibility was the dependent variable and television newscaster sex and age were the independent variables for the first two hypotheses. For the remaining four hypotheses, credibility of male and female and young and mature television newscasters was the dependent variable, and viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes were the independent variables. In order to analyze the data, the t-test of significance and multiple regression were employed by means of the SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975). The level of significance adopted for all analyses was the .05 alpha level.

The t-test of significance was used for Hypotheses 1 and 2 to determine any differences in perceived credibility between male and female newscasters and between young and mature newscasters. The t-test for significance is a statistical procedure to discover and evaluate the differences between effects rather than to examine the effects themselves. Researchers use the t-test most often to compare the means of two groups. If the two sample means are far enough apart, the t-test will yield a significant difference (Nie et al., 1975; Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). The mean is defined as "that measure of central tendency which is the average value of all values in a distribution of scores" (Champion, 1970, p. 39). The t-test assumes a normal distribution of the population and can be used with small sample sizes.

To test Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6, multiple regression was used. Multiple regression is a general statistical technique through which the relationship between a dependent variable and a set of independent or predictor variables can be analyzed. As a descriptive tool, multiple regression can find the best linear prediction equation and evaluate its prediction accuracy. This technique also controls for other confounding factors in order to evaluate the contribution of a specific variable or a set of variables. It finds structural relations and provides explanations for seemingly complex multivariate relationships.

The main focus of multiple regression is the evaluation and measurement of overall dependence of a variable on a set of other variables. However, the relationship between the dependent variable and a particular independent variable is also examined. Figure 3 shows the multiple regression model with the dummy variable of sex created for the treatment conditions.

$$Y = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + E$$

Where:

Y_1 = Credibility of Young Male Newscasters

Y_2 = Credibility of Mature Male Newscasters

Y_3 = Credibility of Young Female Newscasters

Y_4 = Credibility of Mature Female Newscasters

X_1 = Sex of Viewer

X_2 = Age of Viewer

X_3 = Sex-Role Attitudes of Viewer

E = Error

Figure 3. Multiple Regression Model.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

I. FINDINGS

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, the t-test of significance was used to examine the difference between the dependent variable, perceived credibility, and the independent variables, sex and age of a television newscaster. To test Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6, multiple regression was used to examine the relationships between the independent variables of viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes and the dependent variable, credibility of male, female, young, and mature newscasters.

Credibility of Male and Female Newscasters

Table 7 shows that the mean scores for viewer perceptions of newscaster credibility were 113.8295 for male newscasters (young and mature newscasters combined) and 112.9271 for female newscasters (young and mature newscasters combined). The T value observed was .33 and the associated probability was .745, which was not significant at the .05 level. This means that there was no significant difference in perceptions of credibility for male and female newscasters. These findings supported Hypothesis 1, which states that the sex of a newscaster does not account for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility.

When the mean scores of the newscasters were examined individually, according to age-sex categories, mature male newscasters were perceived as significantly more credible than mature female newscasters. The mean credibility scores were 119.5278 for mature male newscasters and 108.8529 for

TABLE 7
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY
OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Independent Variable	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Male Newscasters	44	113.8295	13.128	0.33	90	.745
Female Newscasters	48	112.9271	13.412			

mature female newscasters, with a T value observed of 2.40 and an associated probability of .022, as shown in Table 8. When the variables sex and age of the newscaster were examined together, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Young female newscasters were perceived as more credible than young male newscasters. The mean credibility score was 115.1613 for young females and 109.8846 for young males, with an observed T value of -1.57 and an associated probability of .121, which approaches significance (also in Table 8).

Credibility of Young and Mature Newscasters

In Table 9, the mean scores for viewer perceptions of credibility were 112.7544 for young newscasters (male and female combined) and 114.3429 for mature newscasters (male and female combined), with the observed T value of -.56 and the associated probability of .578. Although mature newscasters were perceived as slightly more credible than young newscasters, the difference in perceptions of credibility between the two groups was not significant at the .05 level. Thus, when the age of the newscaster was examined as the only independent variable, the findings did not support Hypothesis 2, which states that the age of a newscaster accounts for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility.

Table 8 shows the mean credibility scores of newscasters according to individual sex-age categories. The findings show that there were no significant differences in perceptions of credibility between mature males and young females, mature females and young males, or mature females and young females. However, the mean credibility scores were 115.1613 for young females and 108.8529 for mature females with a T value of 1.58 and an associated probability of .120, which approaches significance.

TABLE 8

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: PERCEPTIONS OF NEWSCASTER
CREDIBILITY BY SEX AND AGE CATEGORIES

<u>Newscasters</u> <u>Independent</u> <u>Variable</u>	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Males	26	109.8846	13.206			
Mature Males	18	* 119.5278	11.014	-2.54	42	.015
Young Females	31	115.1613	12.075			
Mature Females	17	108.8529	15.091	1.58	46	.120

TABLE 8 (continued)

<u>Newslanders</u> Independent Variable	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	Value	df	Prob.
Young Males	26	109.8846	13.206			
Young Females	31	115.1613	12.075	-1.57	55	.121
Young Males	26	109.8846	13.206			
Mature Females	17	108.8529	15.091	0.24	41	.814

TABLE 8 (continued)

<u>Newscasters</u> <u>Independent</u> <u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Prob.</u>
Mature Males	18	119.5278	11.014			
Young Females	31	115.1613	12.075	1.26	47	.214
Mature Males	18	*119.5278	11.014			
Mature Females	17	108.8529	15.091	2.40	33	.022

*Significant at the .05 level

TABLE 9

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY
OF YOUNG AND MATURE NEWSCASTERS

Independent Variable	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Newscasters	57	112.7544	12.767			
Mature Newscasters	35	114.3429	14.040	-0.56	90	.578

Mature male newscasters (119.5278) were perceived as significantly more credible than young male newscasters (109.8846), with the observed T value of -2.54 and the associated probability of .015. This finding supports Hypothesis 2.

Credibility of Young Male Newscasters

As shown in Table 10, viewer sex and age accounted for a total of 10 percent variance in perceptions of young male newscaster credibility, with the variable sex accounting for 74 percent of the proportion of variance. Viewer sex-role attitudes did not shown enough variance to calculate. Thus, Hypothesis 6a, which states that sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young male newscaster credibility, was not supported.

Viewer sex accounted for 7.5 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility of young male newscasters. There was, however, a negative relationship between sex and the dependent variable, credibility, although the coefficient was quite small (-.27). This signifies that males gave slightly higher credibility ratings than did female subjects. The relationship between viewer sex and credibility of young male newscasters was not significant at the .05 level, which supported Hypothesis 3a.

Viewer age accounted for 2.5 percent of the variance in perceptions of young male newscaster credibility. The relationship between viewer age and credibility was not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hypothesis 4a, which states that the age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of young male newscaster credibility, was not supported. Sex-role attitudes did not show enough variance to calculate; therefore, Hypothesis 5a, which states that sex-role attitudes account for significant variance in perceptions of young male newscaster credibility, was not supported.

TABLE 10

MULTIPLE REGRESSION SUMMARY WITH CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG
MALE NEWSCASTERS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent Variable	Simple R	R Square	RSQ Change	Proportion of Variance	F
Sex	-.27476	.07549	.07549	.74499	1.95977
Age	.08634	.10133	.02584	.25500	1.29666
Sex-Role Attitudes	--	--	--	--	--

Dashes = Level insignificant for computation

Credibility of Mature Male Newscasters

As Table 11 shows, viewer sex, sex-role attitudes, and age accounted for 7.9 percent of the variance in perceived credibility of mature male newscasters, with sex accounting for 56 percent of the proportion of variance. The relationship among the three independent variables combined and perceptions of mature male newscaster credibility was not significant at the .05 level; Hypothesis 6b was not supported.

Viewer sex accounted for 4.4 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility of mature male newscasters; however, the F value of .75152 was not significant at the .05 level. The variable, viewer sex, therefore, did not predict credibility of mature male newscasters, and Hypothesis 3b was supported.

Viewer sex-role attitudes accounted for 1.7 percent of the variance in credibility with an F value of .50047. Viewer age also accounted for 1.7 percent of the variance with an F value of .40427. Neither viewer sex-role attitudes nor age accounted for variance significant at the .05 level, which means that these variables were not predictors of mature male newscaster credibility. Thus, Hypotheses 4b and 5b were not supported.

Credibility of Young Female Newscasters

Together, the independent variables of viewer sex, sex-role attitudes, and age accounted for 3 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility for young female newscasters, with sex accounting for 93 percent of the proportion of variance. The variables were not significant at the .05 level, and Hypothesis 6c, which states that viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes account for significant variance in

TABLE 11

MULTIPLE REGRESSION SUMMARY WITH CREDIBILITY OF MATURE
MALE NEWSCASTERS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent Variable	Simple R	R Square	RSQ Change	Proportion of Variance	F
Sex	.21181	.04486	.04486	.56271	.75152
Sex-Role Attitudes	.20635	.06256	.01769	.22190	.50047
Age	.09915	.07972	.01717	.21537	.40427

perceptions of young female newscaster credibility, was not supported, as shown in Table 12.

Viewer sex accounted for 3.2 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility of young female newscasters; however, the F score of .98041 was not significant at the .05 level. Viewer sex was not found to be a significant predictor of credibility for young female newscasters, which supported Hypothesis 3c.

Viewer sex-role attitudes accounted for .1 percent of the variance with an F value of .49607, which was not significant at the .05 level. Thus, Hypothesis 5c, which assumes viewer sex-role attitudes as a predictor of young female newscaster credibility, was not supported.

Viewer age accounted for .07 percent of the variance and 2 percent of the proportion of variance, but the variable was not significant at the .05 level, and thus, Hypothesis 4c was not supported.

Credibility of Mature Female Newscasters

Table 13 shows that sex-role attitudes, sex, and age accounted for 8 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility of mature female newscasters. The relationship between these independent variables and perceived credibility; however, was not significant at the .05 level and did not support Hypothesis 6d. Viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes were not predictors of credibility for mature female newscasters.

Viewer sex-role attitudes accounted for 2 percent of the variance in perceptions of mature female newscaster credibility and only 24 percent of the total proportion of variance. The F value of .31314 was not significant at the .05 level, and Hypothesis 5d, which assumes viewer sex-role attitudes as predictors of mature female newscaster credibility, was not supported.

TABLE 12

MULTIPLE REGRESSION SUMMARY WITH CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG
FEMALE NEWSCASTERS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent Variable	Simple R	R Square	RSQ Change	Proportion of Variance	F
Sex	.18084	.03270	.03270	.93562	.98041
Sex-Role Attitudes	.12090	.03422	.00152	.04349	.49607
Age	.04365	.03495	.00072	.02060	.32590

TABLE 13

MULTIPLE REGRESSION SUMMARY WITH CREDIBILITY OF MATURE
FEMALE NEWSCASTERS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent Variable	Simple R	R Square	RSQ Change	Proportion of Variance	F
Sex-Role Attitudes	.14300	.02045	.02045	.24680	.31314
Sex	-.11045	.08074	.06029	.72761	.61484
Age	.00120	.08286	.00212	.02558	.39151

Sex of the viewer accounted for 6 percent of the variance with a negative Simple R of $-.11$. This means that male viewers in the treatment group perceived the mature female newscasters as being more credible than did female viewers, although the difference is slight. The F value for the variable sex is $.61484$, which was not significant at the $.05$ level. The findings supported Hypothesis 3d, which states that sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of credibility of mature female newscasters.

Viewer age accounted for $.02$ percent of the variance, with an F value of $.39151$, which was not significant at the $.05$ level. Of the three independent variables, age accounted for the least proportion of variance (2 percent). Hypothesis 4d was not supported; age was not found to be a predictor of mature female newscaster credibility.

Credibility by Viewer-Newscaster Sex-Age Categories

A secondary analysis was made to examine the data according to various combinations of the sex and age of the viewer and newscaster. The first t-tests examined differences in viewer perceptions of credibility between the sex of the newscasters and the ages of the newscasters. Additional t-tests were made to determine the mean credibility scores for male and female and young and mature newscasters by male and female and young and mature viewers. It should be noted that the Newman-Kuels test, which evaluates all mean differences simultaneously is somewhat more conservative than multiple t-tests (Winer, 1971). The Newman-Kuels test also was employed, and in this instance, the number of significant mean differences were identical.

Table 8 (Pages 61-63) shows the mean credibility scores for individual sex-age categories of newscasters. The mean credibility scores for newscasters, ranked from highest to lowest, were 119.5278 for mature males, 115.1613 for young females, 109.8846 for young males, and 108.8529 for mature females.

There was almost a significant difference in perceived credibility between young female newscasters (115.1613) and mature female newscasters (108.8529), who had an observed T value of 1.58 and an associated probability of .120. As reported, there was a significant difference in perceptions of credibility between young male newscasters (109.8846) and mature male newscasters (119.5278), who had an observed T value of -.254 and an associated probability of .015.

Young female newscasters (115.1613) were perceived as more credible, and almost significantly so, than young male newscasters (109.8846), with an observed T value of -1.57 and an associated probability of .121.

There was no significant difference in perceptions of credibility between young male and mature female newscasters or between mature male or young female newscasters. As reported, mature males were perceived as significantly more credible than mature females, with a mean credibility score of 119.5278 (for mature males) and 108.8529 (for mature females), and an observed T value of 2.40 and an associated probability of .022.

Table 14 shows the summary of mean credibility scores by viewer-newscaster sex-age categories. Tables 15 through 26 shows the breakdown of mean credibility scores by individual viewer-newscaster categories. When comparing sex of the viewer with sex of the newscaster, both young and mature male viewers perceived the male newscasters as slightly more credible than the female newscasters (Tables 14, 17, and 18). However, female viewers (both young and mature) perceived the female newscasters

TABLE 14

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY OF MEAN CREDIBILITY
SCORES BY VIEWER-NEWSCASTER SEX-AGE CATEGORIES

Viewers	Male	Female	Means of Newscasters			
			Young Male	Mature Male	Young Female	Mature Female
Young Male	113.4118	111.2500	111.2000	116.5714	113.6875	106.3750
Mature Male	118.7857	112.8571	118.1250	119.6667	110.0000	116.6667
Young Female	110.8750	111.3929	104.0714	*120.4000	114.8125	106.8333
Mature Female	114.8125	115.7333	108.8000	124.8333	118.3636	108.5000

*Significant at the .05 level

TABLE 15

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Male Newscasters	12	110.8750	14.289			
Female Newscasters	14	111.3929	14.550	-0.09	24	.928

TABLE 16
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Male Newscasters	8	114.8125	13.030			
				-0.17	21	.868
Female Newscasters	15	115.7333	12.203			

TABLE 17

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Male Newscasters	17	113.4118	13.876			
				0.42	27	.677
Female Newscasters	12	111.2500	13.181			

TABLE 18
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Male Newscasters	7	118.7857	10.070			
				0.83	12	.421
Female Newscasters	7	112.8571	15.926			

TABLE 19
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Female Newscasters	8	114.8125	13.066			
Mature Female Newscasters	6	106.8333	16.364	1.02	12	.329

TABLE 20

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Female Newscasters	11	118.3636	10.966			
Mature Female Newscasters	4	108.5000	14.107	1.44	13	.175

TABLE 21
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE MALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Male Newscasters	7	104.0714	12.972			
Mature Male Newscasters	5	*120.4000	10.709	-2.30	10	.044

*Significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 22
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE FEMALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE MALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Female Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Male Newscasters	5	108.8000	12.945			
Mature Male Newscasters	3	124.8333	4.252	-2.02	6	.089

TABLE 23

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Female Newscasters	8	113.6875	9.138			
Mature Female Newscasters	4	106.3750	19.868	0.90	10	.390

TABLE 24

T'-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE FEMALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Female Newscasters	4	110.000	19.617			
Mature Female Newscasters	3	116.6667	12.066	-0.51	5	.630

TABLE 25

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: YOUNG MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE MALE NEWSCASTERS

Young Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Male Newscasters	10	111.2000	13.778			
Mature Male Newscasters	7	116.5714	14.452	-0.78	15	.450

TABLE 26

T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE: MATURE MALE VIEWERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CREDIBILITY OF YOUNG AND MATURE MALE NEWSCASTERS

Mature Male Viewers	No. of Cases	Mean	SD	T Value	df	Prob.
Young Male Newscasters	4	118.1250	12.106			
Mature Male Newscasters	3	119.6667	9.074	-0.18	5	.862

as slightly more credible than the male newscaster (Table 14, Page 74; Table 15, Page 75; and Table 16, Page 76). However, the difference in mean credibility scores was not significant at the .05 level for either group.

Mature female and young and mature male viewers perceived the mature male newscaster as more credible than the young male newscasters, but not significantly so (Table 14, Page 74; Table 22, Page 82, Table 25, Page 85; and Table 26, Page 86). Young female viewers, however, perceived the mature male newscasters as significantly more credible than the young male newscasters (at the .05 level). For young female viewers, the mean credibility score was 120.4000 for the mature male newscasters and 104.0714 for the young male newscasters, with a T value of -2.30 and an associated probability of .044 (Table 21, Page 81).

Young female, mature female, and young male viewers perceived the young female newscasters as slightly more credible than the mature female newscasters (Table 14, Page 74; Table 19, Page 79; Table 20, Page 80; and Table 23, Page 83). However, the mature male viewers perceived the mature female newscaster as slightly more credible than the young female newscaster (Table 24, Page 84). None of the mean credibility scores were significant at the .05 level, however.

When examining the similarity between viewer and newscaster age, Table 14 (Page 74) shows that mature male and female viewers perceived mature males as more credible than young male and female newscasters. Mature male viewers also perceived mature female newscasters as having more credibility than young female, but not young male newscasters. Young male viewers perceived the young female and the young and mature male newscasters as having more credibility than the mature female newscasters.

Young female viewers perceived the young female, but not the young male newscaster, as having more credibility than the mature female newscaster. Both young male and female viewers perceived the mature male newscaster as having more credibility than the young male and female newscasters. None of the mean credibility scores were significant at the .05 level.

Message Impact

The summary of the impact for the four newscast messages is given in Table 27. The percentage of viewers who judged the messages interesting or neutral were 94 percent for "Consumer Groups," 79 percent for "Trade School Diplomas," 96 percent for "Trolley Cars," and 85 percent for "Junk Foods." All of the messages were given by newscasters in each of the four treatment groups; therefore, any emotional impact from the messages was spread equally across the groups.

II. SUMMARY

This study examined the difference in perceptions of credibility for male and female and young and mature television newscasters. It also examined the relationships between viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes and perceptions of credibility.

The subjects for this experiment consisted of 92 volunteer undergraduate and graduate students who were mainly from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Evening School. The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 71 years, with 60 percent being 34-years-old or younger and 40 percent being 35-years-old or older. The mean age was 32.04 years. Educational levels ranged from high school to doctoral degree status with the average of 15 years of schooling. Occupations varied from secretaries to attorneys.

TABLE 27
SUMMARY OF MESSAGE IMPACT

Messages	Responses by Percentage	
	Interesting/ Neutral	Emotional
Consumer Groups	94	6
Trade School Diplomas	79	21
Trolley Cars	96	4
Junk Foods	85	15

Forty-one percent of the volunteers were full-time students, 51 percent were employed in addition to being students, and 8 percent were non-students.

Hypothesis 1 states that the sex of a newscaster does not account for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility. When the mean credibility scores for both young and mature male newscasters were compared with those of young and mature female newscasters, there was no difference in perceptions of credibility, and thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. When the mean credibility scores of the newscasters were examined individually, however, mature male newscasters were perceived as more credible than mature female newscasters. These findings did not support Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 states that the age of a newscaster accounts for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility. When the mean credibility scores were combined for young male and female newscasters and compared to those of mature male and female newscasters, there was no difference in perceptions of credibility, and Hypothesis 2 was not supported. However, when the mean scores for individual sex-age categories of newscasters were examined, mature male newscasters were perceived as more credible than young male newscasters, which supported Hypothesis 2. The t-test of significance was used to examine the first two hypotheses.

Multiple regression was used to examine the remaining hypotheses. The results supported Hypotheses 3a-d, which state that the sex of a viewer does not account for significant variance in perceptions of young male, mature male, young female, and mature female newscaster credibility.

Hypotheses 4a-d, which state that the age of a viewer accounts for significant variance in perceptions of young male, mature male, young female,

and mature female newscaster credibility, were not supported at the .05 level.

Hypotheses 5a-d, which state that the sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young male, mature male, young female, and mature female newscaster credibility, were not supported.

Hypotheses 6a-d, also were not supported. These hypotheses state that the sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of a viewer account for significant variance in perceptions of young male, mature male, young female, and mature female newscaster credibility.

The secondary analysis showed that newscasters who were perceived as the most credible, in order of mean score rankings, were mature males, young females, young males, and mature females. Mature male newscasters were perceived as significantly more credible than young males or mature females. Young females were perceived as more credible than young male and mature female newscasters, at a level almost significant at the .05 level. There was no significant difference in perceptions of credibility between mature female and young male newscasters or between mature males and young female newscasters. When the sex and age of the viewers and newscasters were compared, young female viewers perceived the mature male as significantly more credible than the young male newscasters. There was no significant difference for other combinations of sex-age categories.

The newscast messages used in the experiment were found to be interesting or neutral to the majority of viewers. The significance of these results are discussed in the summary, conclusions, and implication sections of the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

I. SUMMARY

This study examined the difference in credibility for male and female and young and mature television newscasters. It also examined the relationships between viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes and credibility of male and female and young and mature television newscasters. The findings will be summarized according to the research questions posed in Chapter 1 (Page 12). The questions are as follows:

1. Is there a difference in viewer perceptions of credibility for male and female newscasters?

The results given in Table 7 (Page 59) show that there was no significant difference in mean credibility scores for male (both young and mature) and female (both young and mature) newscasters. These findings supported Hypothesis 1, that newscaster sex does not account for significant difference in perceptions of television newscaster credibility. When the variables of newscaster sex and age were examined together, however, mature male newscasters were perceived as significantly more credible than mature female newscasters. In addition, young female newscasters had a higher credibility rating than the young male newscasters, which approached significance (Table 8, Page 61). These findings did not support Hypothesis 1.

The results lend partial support to the findings of three major studies included in the literature review. The Whittaker et al. (1976) study, which was the most pertinent to this research, also resulted in

no significant difference in perceptions of credibility for male and female newscasters by either male or female viewers of any age group. Stone's (1973) survey reported that audiences showed no preference for either male or female newscasters. Sloman's (1974) findings showed no significant difference in perceived credibility between male and female speakers (not television newscasters) by either male or female listeners. These studies, however, compared the sex of the newscasters or speakers, but not the interaction of both sex and age variables.

It is possible that the sex of a newscaster does not influence perceptions of credibility because viewers are used to seeing both men and women in a newscasting role. Although there are more male than female television newscasters, and viewers are more used to seeing male newscasters, young women have been reporting the news since the early 1960's and are no longer a novelty as newscasters. In 1971, Reuven Frank, while President of NBC News, was widely quoted as saying that he did not believe the American public was ready to accept the news from a woman's voice. In 1974, he changed his position stating

People don't watch what they have to. They watch what they like. . . . I think they have now been conditioned [to female newscasters] so that in reporting they will take it (Gelfman, 1976, p. 104).

As Kelman (1961, 1958) points out in his Source Valence theory, as a source becomes familiar, he/she becomes more likeable and able to produce attitude change. Levy's (1979) findings conclude that familiarity of a newscaster is important because viewers can create effective ties with the newscaster. Shosteck (1973) also found that viewers prefer newscasters who are well-known or very familiar; those who are best known are better liked by most viewers. Thus, perhaps female television

newscasters have become familiar to viewers and subsequently accepted by them. Mature male newscasters, however, have been reporting the news longer than young male, young female, or mature female newscasters. Mature males were seen in the beginning of television (and radio) broadcast news programs and are still prevalent at the network level (Window Dressing, 1979). It is possible that if viewers perceive the mature male as the most credible of newscasters, it is because of the familiarity factor. Mature females, however, are rarely seen as newscasters, and this group was given the lowest credibility rating in this study. Young females were perceived as more credible, and almost significantly so, than young male or mature female newscasters. This finding indicates that young women have become more familiar as newscasters and are therefore accepted in this role.

It is important to note, however, that men and women continue to be stereotyped by producers and viewers in all other television programming. The issue of stereotyping is addressed in Research Question 3, which deals with sex-role attitudes of the viewer.

2. Is there a difference in viewer perceptions of credibility for young and mature television newscasters?

The pretest section of Chapter 3 explains how the newscasters were selected for the young (34 years and under) and mature (35 years and over) classifications. In essence, the pretest subjects judged the newscasters according to perceived age as shown in Table 3 (Page 42). Combining the mean ages for both sexes in each group resulted in 27.20 for the young newscasters and 47.09 for the mature newscasters. With a perceived age difference of approximately 20 years (19.89), it was possible to distinguish between the young and mature newscasters.

The results of this study show that newscaster age did not account for significant difference in perceived credibility, when mean scores were combined for male and female newscasters in each age category. These findings did not support Hypothesis 2, that the age of a newscaster accounts for significant difference in perceptions of newscaster credibility. When the mean scores were examined for each newscaster group individually, which allowed for interaction of the variables sex and age, viewers perceived the mature males as significantly more credible than the young male newscasters.

The secondary analysis showed that newscasters seen as the most credible, in order of mean scores, were mature males, young females, young males, and mature females (not all scores were significant at the .05 level, however). It is interesting to note that mature males and younger females report the news at the network level; mature and younger males and younger females serve as newscasters at the local level. As mentioned, rarely are women over the age of 40 seen as television newscasters at either network or local stations (Window dressing, 1979). Even though the mature women received the lowest mean credibility score, the study's findings indicate that mature female newscasters are perceived as credible as the young males, almost as credible as the young females, but not as credible as the mature male newscasters.

3. Do the sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer influence perceptions of newscaster credibility?

The relationships of the independent variables, viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes, to newscaster credibility were examined as a group and individually for each treatment group. Combined or individually, viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes did not account for significant variance in perceived credibility for any of the four treatment groups.

Sex of the viewer accounted for the most proportion of variance in each treatment group. Age and sex-role attitudes accounted for the least proportion of variance in the groups. Viewer sex, age, and sex-role attitudes, therefore, were not found to be predictors of credibility in this study. The findings regarding sex-role attitudes, however, are reluctantly accepted due to the research on sex-role attitudes and stereotyping.

Studies in the literature review point out that stereotyping is the general inclination to place people in categories according to some characteristic. Stereotyping causes heavy emotional loading, is resistant to fact and logic, and is used to impose penalties on individuals (Katz, 1976; Pool, 1973). An examination of sex-role attitudes in society show that women are perceived as relatively less competent, independent, objective, and logical than men (Broverman et al., 1972; Lunneborg, 1970, Rosenkrantz et al., 1968). In television programming, women are underrepresented and stereotyped into submissive, domestic, or sexual roles; men are associated with more wordly roles and dominance (O'Donnell et al., 1978; Lemon, 1978). Female newscasters, however, are perceived as credible as male newscasters, according to this study and ones by Whittaker et al. (1976) and Stone (1973).

Cronkhite et al. (1976) and Rokeach (1972) explain this seemingly contradiction by stating that the way a source is perceived depends upon the source, the source's function, and the situation. It seems, then, that viewers perceive men and women differently in newscasting roles and other television programming roles, an issue that definitely warrents further investigation.

Sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewers accounted for approximately 10 percent of the variance in perceptions of credibility, which

leaves approximately 90 percent of the variance in this study unaccountable. It is probable that a combination of factors influence perceptions of credibility of television newscasters and that these factors vary for different groups of viewers. The viewer's educational level may be an important predictor of credibility. Occupation, which is usually an outcome of education, may also be a predictor; viewers who are used to seeing men and women in nontraditional jobs may not perceive a difference in credibility for male and female newscasters. It seems plausible that those who have more liberal sex-role attitudes will be more accepting of women in newscaster positions than those persons who have traditional sex-role attitudes. The variable sex-role attitudes definitely warrants further investigation.

Other factors which may predict newscaster credibility are those which affect the professional delivery of the newscaster. Variables such as voice, diction, articulateness, and eye contact are important (Shosteck, 1973). Personal appearance, appeal, and personality also are relevant. These important variables should be examined individually and in combinations.

The "familiarity" component of Kelman's (1961, 1958) Source Valence model seems to be paramount to this research. Viewers seem to like newscasters, male or female, whom they are used to seeing. As pointed out, and agreed upon by Levy (1979) and Shosteck (1973), the familiarity variable may be an important predictor of perceived credibility and should be investigated further.

4. Does the similarity between sex and age of the viewer and sex and age of the newscaster influence perceptions of newscaster credibility?

The secondary analysis showed that male viewers perceived male newscasters as more credible than female newscasters. However, female viewers perceived female newscasters as more credible than male newscasters. The difference in mean credibility scores was not significant for either of the groups, however.

Mature male and female viewers perceived mature male newscasters to have more credibility than young male or female newscasters. Mature male viewers also perceived mature female newscasters as having more credibility than young female newscasters, but not more than young male newscasters. Young male and female viewers perceived young female newscasters as having more credibility than mature female newscasters, but not mature male newscasters. With the exception of the young female viewers who found the mature males significantly more credible than the young male newscasters, viewers did not perceive newscasters who were similar in sex or age as significantly more or less credible than other newscasters. Thus, Kelman's (1961, 1958) attractiveness subcomponent of similarity, which contends that people are "attracted" to sources who are similar (meaning sex and age in this study) did not necessarily bear out.

II. CONCLUSIONS

This study is a good example of how a group of adult viewers who are above average in education and generally professionally employed, perceive credibility of television newscasters. The educational range of the 92 subjects varied from high school graduate to doctoral degree status, with the mean being 15 years of education. Forty-one percent of the subjects were full-time students, 51 percent were employed in addition to being students, and eight were non-students employed or working in the

home. This population also had a larger number of professionally employed people (45 percent) as opposed to blue-collar workers and homemakers (30 percent). The mean age of the evening school students was 32 years; however, the ages ranged from 18 to 71 years.

The findings show that for this homogeneous groups of subjects, there was no difference in perceptions of credibility for male or female or young or mature television newscasters, when the age and sex variables were examined individually. When the variables of sex and age were examined together, however, mature male newscasters were perceived as significantly more credible than young male and mature female newscasters.

There was no significant difference in perceived credibility for newscasters who were similar in sex and age to the viewers. Younger females, in fact, perceived mature males as significantly more credible than young male newscasters. The results of this study also showed that sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewers were not significant predictors of credibility for male and female and young and mature newscasters.

It is probable that the educational and professional levels of the subjects played an important part in the results. Scanzoni (1975) points out that better educated people tend to have more egalitarian attitudes towards the sexes and are less rigid in sex-roles. It is also probable that better educated people are more accepting of young and mature persons in various roles.

Precaution should be taken in generalizing these results, however. Bower (1973) states that of the people who watch television, women watch more than men, the elderly watch more than the younger, blacks watch more than whites, the poor watch more than the wealthy, and the lower-educated watch more than the college educated. However, when Bower examined

viewing habits during evening hours only (the time during which most news programs are aired), he found that habits were similar for all persons. The differences in age, income, sex, education, and race tend to disappear.

Surveys conducted annually by the Roper Organization show that television is the major source of news for the American people (Agee, Ault, & Emery, 1976). The sample used in this study, therefore, presents one segment of the total population of television viewers. This segment of viewers, who were above average in education and employment status would, however, normally watch television news programs and thus, the results of this study are important. It should be reiterated that the Whittaker et al. (1976) study used a random sample of the general population and also found no perceived difference in credibility for male or female newscasters or a relationship between credibility and sex and age of the viewer and newscaster. Stone (1973) used random samples of four population groups and found that television viewers did not have a preference for male or female newscasters. These studies did not, however, examine the interaction of the variables newscaster age and sex.

It should also be pointed out that this study used evening school students as subjects. Although these students, for the most part, were older, employed, and thus more representative of the general population, the fact remains that they were night students who were aware of participating in an experiment. In such a laboratory experiment, the internal validity is good, however, the setting is artificial and not ideal for external validity. The best design for research of this type is the controlled field experiment, in which the setting is more natural, such as homes or places where television sets are normally viewed, with typical television viewers. To conduct a controlled field experiment,

however, would be difficult, expensive, require the efforts of several researchers, and the opportunity for unobtrusive measures, which are not allowed under The University of Tennessee's policy on research using human subjects.

In addition to the limitations of the population and laboratory design, it should be noted that the cell sizes for the four treatment groups were unequal. Although care was taken to randomize the subjects into the treatment groups, 92 out of the 130 assigned subjects reported to their groups. The number of subjects were 26 in Treatment Group 1, 18 in Treatment Group 2, 31 in Treatment Group 3, and 17 in Treatment Group 4. To test the hypotheses, the data from the groups were analyzed individually and together. Chapter 3 gives a breakdown of each group by subject sex, age, occupation, and education. The tables show that all four groups had subjects who were similar in these characteristics. Therefore, it is doubtful that equal cell sizes would have produced different results.

III. IMPLICATIONS

This study has practical application for news directors and aspiring television newscasters as well as contributing value to existing research. News directors tend to hire more men than women, and mature males but not mature females. The results of this study show that audiences above average in education, do not perceive a significant difference in credibility for male and female newscasters or for young and mature newscasters in general. When the variable sex is combined with age, however, viewers perceive mature male newscasters as significantly more credible than young male or mature female newscasters. Young females were perceived

as more credible than young male and mature female newscasters, and almost significantly so. There was no significant credibility difference between mature males and young females or mature females and young male newscasters. In the early 1960's, young females were introduced as newscasters in non-prime time hours, then gradually moved to reporter and anchor status on evening news programs. News directors who wish to use older females (or any particular type of newscaster) may consider gradual advancement of the newscaster so that the audience will become accustomed and conditioned to seeing the particular newscaster.

The similarity of the viewer and newscaster, in terms of sex and age, did not have a significant bearing on perceptions of credibility. Therefore, careful consideration should be given in newscaster hiring and firing decisions. For example, it may not be to the station's advantage to hire a young male over a mature female newscaster, or to fire an older newscaster to make room for a younger one in order to appeal to a more youthful audience.

This study lends to the limited amount of research on the credibility of newscasters. Although women have been reporting the news on television since the early 1960's, few studies have been conducted to examine their effect on the viewers. The examination of women in the newscasting role should be longitudinal or order to detect any changes in public attitude toward them. This study will contribute to that research.

There are numerous studies which could be made pertaining to variables effecting newscaster credibility. However, an important question which this research poses is, would a random sample of television viewers perceive a difference in credibility for male and female or young

and mature newscasters? Although the Whittaker et al. (1976) study addresses this issue, more studies are needed, particularly examining the interaction of the variables, newscaster sex and age. It is also important to conduct this research on separate segments of the television audience, such as lower educated and blue-collar workers or homemakers. It is possible that with certain segments of the population, there is a significant relationship between the sex, age, and sex-role attitudes of the viewer and perceptions of credibility for television newscasters.

More research is needed on the factors which may influence perceptions of newscaster credibility, such as newscaster articulateness, voice, diction, eye contact, appeal, and personality. There seems to be much emphasis on the physical attractiveness of newscasters, particularly females. It would be valuable to determine whether attractiveness adds or detracts from newscaster credibility. It could be, however, that attractiveness is more important than credibility. The key component in perceptions of credibility seems to be familiarity. It is likely that as newscasters become more familiar, they are seen as more credible. The familiarity component definitely warrants more investigation.

More research is needed using the mature female newscaster as a treatment, particularly since viewers are not familiar with this type of newscaster. It would be of value to determine whether perceptions of credibility changes for male and female newscasters as they age. In addition, it would be extremely interesting to see whether viewers would accept two women co-anchoring the news, a situation which is not common in most markets.

Because viewers in various regions are different, this research should be conducted in different areas. For example, viewers in the deep

South may perceive newscaster credibility differently than viewers on the Westcoast. Viewers may also have different expectations and/or preferences for local and network television newscasters; comparison studies are needed in this area.

The necessity for research on the credibility of television newscasters has been demonstrated. Television news programs are vying for the attention of the American public and thus, news directors and other administrators are more willing to accept the findings of research studies. It is hopeful that this study will contribute to the limited amount of knowledge on newscaster credibility and encourage future research on the subject.

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APPENDIXES

CRANES & CRANES

APPENDIX A

CREDIBILITY SCALE

VOLUNTEER NUMBER _____

YOUR SEX _____ AGE _____ LEVEL OF EDUCATION _____

OCCUPATION _____

On the scales presented below, please indicate how closely the television newscaster is related to one of the adjectives on either side of the scale. If your perception of the newscaster is very closely related to either adjective, please check the appropriate extreme interval of the scale. If your impression of the newscaster is neutral, or if the scale is irrelevant, check the middle or fourth interval.

EXAMPLE: GOOD ____: ____: ____: X : ____: ____: ____: BAD

Note that positive or negative adjectives may appear at either end of the scale.

TELEVISION NEWSCASTER

QUALIFIED	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	UNQUALIFIED
EXPERT	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	INEXPERT
RELIABLE	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	UNRELIABLE
BELIEVABLE	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	UNBELIEVABLE
INCOMPETENT	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	COMPETENT
INTELLECTUAL	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	NARROW
VALUABLE	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	WORTHLESS
UNINFORMED	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	INFORMED
CRUEL	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	KIND
UNSYMPATHETIC	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	SYMPATHETIC
SELFISH	_____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	: _____	UNSELFISH

APPENDIX B

MESSAGE PRETEST

Respond to the following statements as to whether you "Strongly Agree," "Agree," are "Undecided," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree."

EXAMPLE: Knoxville should provide free public transportation.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided X Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

1. Expo '82 will be beneficial to the people of Knoxville.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

2. Unemployment is a major problem in Tennessee.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

3. For some teenagers, a trade-school diploma may be more beneficial than a college diploma.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

4. Smoking should be illegal in public places.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

5. "Junk food" should not be sold to kids in school until after lunch.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

6. The legal age of drinking should be raised to 21 years of age.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

7. Private citizens should have a voice in limiting the amount of commercial and promotional material on television.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

8. Electric-powered streetcars, often called trolley cars, are one alternative to cars and buses.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

9. The governor of a state should have absolute power in pardoning prisoners.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

10. Teachers should strike for higher wages.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided ___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

APPENDIX C

MESSAGE IMPACT

Respond to the following statements as to whether you "Strongly Agree," "Agree," are "Undecided," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree."

EXAMPLE: Knoxville should provide free public transportation.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided X Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

1. For some teenagers, a trade-school diploma may be more beneficial than a college diploma.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

2. "Junk food" should not be sold to kids in school until after lunch.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

3. Private citizens should have a voice in limiting the amount of commercial and promotional material on television.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

4. Electric-powered streetcars, often called trolley cars, are one alternative to cars and buses.

Strongly Agree___ Agree___ Undecided___ Disagree___ Strongly Disagree___

APPENDIX D

SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES

Respond to the following statements as to whether you "Agree Strongly," "Agree Mildly," "Disagree Mildly," or "Disagree Strongly."

EXAMPLE: Admission to a university should not be based on money.

Agree Strongly X Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

1. Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman's than a man's.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

2. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

3. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

4. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

5. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

Agree Agrongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

6. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

7. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

8. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

9. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

10. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

11. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

12. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

13. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set by men.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

14. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

15. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

Agree Strongly___ Agree Mildly___ Disagree Mildly___ Disagree Strongly___

APPENDIX E

NEWSCAST MESSAGES

Newscast No. 1

Call them trolleys or call them streetcars, but more than a dozen U-S cities from Boston to El Paso have announced plans to build new systems or refurbish old ones.

The American public transit association says that the rebirth of light-rail transportation is due, in part, to federal revenues through Carter's proposed windfall tax on oil company profits.

Projects range from "exotic" to modest. Cleveland will feature 80-foot-long, half-million-dollar "super cars." El Paso plans to resurrect some faded beauties from the scrap heap. Trolley and subway cars will be utilized best in cities of under one-million people. Although some people don't like the overhead electric wires necessary to power the cars, the cost for a passenger mile is cheaper than for buses, and there are no diesel fumes to pollute the air.

U-S manufacturers will have a hard time competing with foreign producers in delivering quality for the price. Japan is emerging as the leader in trolley and subway car contributors, and they're staying busy filling orders from around the world.

Here in the U-S, trolleys are expected to have a big impact on traffic, especially in the downtown areas, but transit planners say they will never reach the popularity they enjoyed at the turn of the century. They are expected to be one alternative to the increasing problem of transportation.

Newscast No. 2

The agriculture department again is proposing new regulations that will make it impossible for students to buy junk food until after school lunches have been served for the day.

The proposed new rule will take effect January first and apply to schools serving federally subsidized lunches--about 98 percent of the nation's public schools. The department has spent more than a year working to officially define "junk food," which will be called "foods of minimum nutritional value." Foods will fall into this category if a portion with 100 calories contain less than 5 percent of the recommended daily allowance of any one of 8 basic nutrients. For the most part, these foods will be sodas, chewing gum, frozen desserts, and certain candies.

Agriculture secretary, Carol Foreman, proposed a similar rule last year, but withdrew the proposal because of complaints that the regulation contained no criteria for evaluating the nutritional value of food. Critics of the present proposal want more foods banished or the restrictions extended for the entire school day.

Vending machine distributors, the food industry, and the public will have 60 days to comment on the proposal before the final regulations are published. From all appearances, it looks as though students will have to curb their sweet tooth until after lunch is served.

Newscast No. 3

A Ralph Nader consumer group, called the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasters has taken action against the broadcasting industry. The Committee asked the Federal Communications Commission for rules limiting the amount of commercial and promotional material on television.

This proposal means that the total of non-program material aired, be limited to ten minutes an hour during most broadcasting hours. The Nader group asked the F-C-C to limit non-program material to 5 minutes an hour during children's programming, to limit the number of program interruptions to 4 breaks an hour for adult broadcasts and one break a half-hour between children's programs. The group also wants more air time for public service announcements, a type of non-commercial message.

An official of the National Association of Broadcasters announced immediate opposition, saying the industry already sets reasonable limits on all of these factors and that government regulation is inappropriate. The official added that without the right to decide on commercial time, the broadcasting industry would not be able to bring the public the present quality of programs.

The Nader group says the National Association of Broadcasters limits were set without consulting the public, whose interests the broadcasters are required by law to serve.

Newscast No. 4

For some American teenagers, a trade school diploma might pay off better than a college education. Head of the National Educational Corporation, David Bright, says that this year the average cost of college expenses for live-in students will go up 9 percent. However, monetary gains that college graduates can expect to make over high school graduates has shrunk from 24 percent in 1969 to 6 percent today.

The University of Michigan Research Center found that because so many people went to college in the 1950's and 60's, about 27 percent of American workers are overqualified for their jobs. Many of these positions could be filled with people with much less education than the job holders.

More students are turning to trade schools that offer courses in real estate, electronics, computer programming, and other marketable skills. They believe that they will be more employable than someone with a liberal arts degree from a university.

College officials maintain that there are benefits in receiving a college education which cannot be measured in monetary terms. They warn that students should not underestimate the value of a college diploma. Many teenagers are not heeding this advice, however. The trade school industry presently has 7000 schools doing a \$3-billion a year business.

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

NOTE: The University of Tennessee requires that an Informed Consent Statement be signed and dated by persons agreeing to participate in studies conducted and sponsored by students enrolled in the University.

Please read and sign (if willing to participate in this study) the following:

I, the undersigned, understand that the procedures used in this experiment involve watching four videotaped messages, each approximately one minute and thirty seconds in length. I will be asked to respond to questions dealing with the content of the messages and the presentations.

I realize that there will be no discomforts or risks. I understand that there will be no payment for my participation and no penalty for discontinuing participation at any time. I understand that my participation (or lack of same) will have no bearing on my classroom participation or grade.

I understand the objectives of the experiment, and I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the nature of the experiment.

I further understand that my identity will remain confidential, although I will be asked to include my sex, age, occupation, and level of education on one form I will complete. I understand that this statement will be kept for the duration of this project, and for at least three years thereafter.

Signature_____ Date_____

Project Director: Virginia S. Strickland, Communications Building, Room 98,
The University of Tennessee 37916. Phone: 974-6651.

APPENDIX G

NEWSCASTER PRETEST

Please fill in YOUR:

AGE _____ SEX _____ LEVEL OF EDUCATION _____

OCCUPATION _____

You are about to see 12 videocassette tapes of newscasters presenting very short news stories. After each presentation, please respond to the questions below by checking the blank next to the answer you believe to be the most accurate.

EXAMPLE: This newscaster is:

Highly Pleasant _____ Pleasant _____ Average X Unpleasant _____

Highly Unpleasant _____

NEWSCASTER NO.

1. This newscaster's age is probably _____.

2. This newscaster is:

Highly Articulate _____ Articulate _____ Average _____ Inarticulate _____

Highly Inarticulate _____

3. This newscaster's voice is:

Highly Pleasant _____ Pleasant _____ Average _____ Unpleasant _____ Highly

Unpleasant _____

4. This newscaster's physical appearance is:

Highly Attractive _____ Attractive _____ Average _____ Unattractive _____

Highly Unattractive _____

VITA

Susan Strickland was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and was graduated from Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery, Alabama. She received the Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in 1974 and the Master of Arts degree in Speech and Theatre in 1976 from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

As a doctoral student, she was a graduate teaching assistant for broadcasting and communication courses. The author worked as a producer and talent at WKAB-TV in Montgomery, Alabama, and at WTVK-TV in Knoxville. In 1977, she became a producer/director at WSJK-TV in Knoxville. While at that public television station, she produced and hosted an evening public affairs program and a daily morning show.

She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Kappa Tau Alpha Journalism Society, and is listed in Who's Who of American Women 1978/1979. At The University of Tennessee, she received the 1979 Chancellor's Citation for "Extraordinary Professional Promise." She is a member of The National Association of Educational Broadcasters and has served on a number of broadcasting advisory panels and boards.

The author plans to continue her career in broadcasting and teaching.