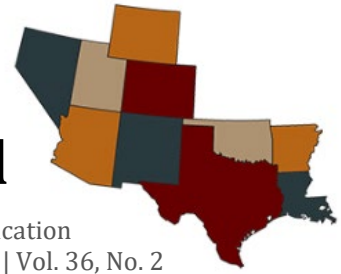


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## A Review of Job Satisfaction in Journalism

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This paper provides a review of literature on the concept of job satisfaction in journalism and explores how job satisfaction has been applied in the journalism field as a new theoretical framework. Specifically, the research questions are about the basic information among the 41 published articles, including (1) the popular journals, (2) the active authors in this field, (3) the popular theories, and (4) the research samples; this paper also examines whether there is a relationship between the time periods (in which the articles were published) and the different independent variables.

*Keywords: job satisfaction, journalism professionalism, two-factor theory*

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**T**his paper reviews literature on job satisfaction in journalism and explores how job satisfaction as a new theoretical framework has been applied in the journalism field. The concept of job satisfaction is not new in the management area, with a theoretical framework established in 1959 (Rogelberg, 2007), but it is a developing concept in journalism studies. The first related published article in this field was “A Standardized Test to Measure Job Satisfaction in the Newsroom” by Samuelson in 1962 with the second published article written 24 years later with Shipman’s “Computerization and Job Satisfaction in the Newsroom: Four Factors to Consider” (1986). Since the second article was published, a theoretical framework has slowly but continually developed in journalism research, and many scholars have used different independent variables to predict job satisfaction among different media job position groups such as journalists, copy editors and journalism organizations as a whole. Based on the published articles in this area, this review will draw a detailed map of this broad landscape, presenting how many independent variables have been used, how job satisfaction has been measured, and whether significant, popular variables have emerged in this niche academic field.

Variables of social forces and changes in organizational goals initially attracted scholars to study job satisfaction (Pollard, 1995; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Barrett, 1984). The entire media industry landscape changed when developing technology transitioned from traditional media to the digital era (Stamm, Underwood & Giffard, 1995; Fowler & Shipman, 1989). New job positions appeared (Perez & Cremedas, 2014), audience demand changed (Beam, 2006), and advertiser requirements changed (Barrett, 1984). These changes made journalists ponder their profession's value and their career path's future. Many contemplated the possibility of layoffs, and with shrinking morale, the study of job satisfaction in journalism began in earnest. Scholars have tried to understand which factors have negative or positive effects on a journalist's job performance, introducing niche areas of research. For example, one specific niche studies—*burnout*—in the industry (Macdonald et. al., 2016; Lim & Lim, 2013; Filak & Reinardy, 2011), within journalism, this kind of study explores the negative effects of technological development on factors of job satisfaction.

To explore how the theoretical framework of job satisfaction developed in the field, research questions will address basic and in-depth review information. Unlike a narrative review, this paper uses a systematic review to extract and focus variables that can be replicated. It will also identify and synthesize basic information about each article including the published year, journals and authors. This review then explores in-depth information including which independent variables and theories have been most used. In particular, this reviews finds that many studies include sophisticated quantitative methods and statistical results sections with large sample sizes. For example, research on job satisfaction of newspaper staff collected 1,746 mail surveys (Pokrywczynski & Crowley, 1997); a study about the impact of journalists' political leanings on job satisfaction consisted of 1,536 research samples (Scherr & Baugut, 2016). A meta-analysis based on these methods may be warranted, and it will be discussed later in the section of future study.

This comprehensive review conducted an inclusive list of articles related to job satisfaction and journalism. The population for this research is all the published articles that could be located. Therefore, this paper will contribute new, rich information to the body of knowledge. For instance, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory has dominated studies in this area, and more concepts have been introduced in this field, such as “work-family conflict” (Filak & Reinardy, 2011) and “emotional stress” (MacDonald et. al., 2016; Lim & Lim, 2013). The findings of this review contribute to the existing understanding of job satisfaction in journalism by providing a fresh perspective and broad map on job satisfaction studies and by highlighting several independent variables that could be studied in more depth.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many scholars consider journalism a value-driven rather than profit-driven occupation (Picard, 2005). According to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, motivators (so-called intrinsic factors) are necessary to make people happy at their jobs, but hygiene issues (extrinsic factors) are indicators of job dissatisfaction (Rogelberg, 2007). Journalism scholars have been interested in how such intrinsic factors (e.g., journalism professional value) may affect job satisfaction. This literature review will therefore examine the theoretical framework of the concept and of journalism as a profession. Only in more recent decades have scholars approached journalism as a profession, testing many factors that may affect

journalists' job satisfaction (Hollifield, Wicks, Sylvie, & Lowrey, 2015). Although job satisfaction is an emerging concept in journalism, it is an established concept in management (Rogelberg, 2007). This review will address the transfer of this concept across the two academic fields.

### **Journalism as a Profession**

In the early 20th century, journalism was studied as an occupation rather than profession because it had no standards and could be practiced in many ways (Cameron, 1967). Even in the late 20th century, journalism was defined as “the collection, preparation, and distribution of news and related commentary and feature materials through such media as pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, radio, motion pictures, television and books” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1989). Nowadays, the concept of journalism is more consistently described as a profession through multiple dimensions: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Merritt, 1995; Golding & Elliott, 1979). According to the meaning of autonomy, journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work (Deuze, 2005). According to Wilensky (1964), the core idea of the concept of a profession is “extraordinary autonomy” and “associations, licensure, and ethics codes” provide professionals the authority to regulate themselves. In summary, autonomy (journalism's profession value) is a motivating factor of job satisfaction and is essential to understanding studies of journalism as a profession.

### **Theoretical Framework of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is not a singular concept but is rather a component of the construct job attitude, which contains other elements like morale, commitment, involvement, engagement, work subjective well-being, and work affect (Judge et. al., 2017). The construct of job attitude describes how people think about and relate to their work and jobs (Judge et. al., 2017). Among those related concepts, job satisfaction refers to the overall evaluative judgment one has about one's job (Weiss, 2002). Studies suggest that a universally agreed upon definition of satisfaction could be the feelings or affective responses to a particular job. These are usually reflected in six areas of job satisfaction (Smucker et. al., 2003): pay, opportunity for promotion, attitudes toward people/colleagues, attitudes toward supervisors, the work environment, and overall satisfaction with the job itself (Smith et. al., 1969). In addition, based on Judge and colleagues' 2017 research on job attitude, job satisfaction became popular in what they termed the “Epoch 2: Postwar Era (1945-1960).” During that period, scholars began to discuss how managers could enhance employee satisfaction by providing opportunities to fulfill human needs for self-actualization (McGregor, 1960).

The dominating theory about job satisfaction within the journalism field is Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory -- also known as the two-factor theory. Herzberg and his colleagues first proposed this theory in management studies in 1959. They found that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction do not have opposite meanings and cannot be measured by the same set of conditions; rather, each attitude results from different factors (Rogelberg, 2007). Journalism studies focus just on indicators of job satisfaction. The indicators have two aspects: job-intrinsic factors, such as autonomy, creativity, variation, contacts, intellectual challenge, control, etc.; and job-extrinsic factors including prestige, social commitment, pay, work hours, stress, company values and goals (Beam, 2006; Herzberg et. al., 1959; Stamm et. al., 1993). Two studies found that employees consider value-intrinsic rewards such as the nature of the work itself more significant than pay (Rogelberg, 2007; Jurgensen, 1978).

The review of this literature includes research questions to draw a broad map of job satisfaction in journalism from the first related article to the present.

### Research Questions:

RQ1: What is the basic information among the 41 published articles? Specifically, what are (1) the popular journals, (2) the prevalent authors, (3) the popular theories, and (4) the size of the research samples?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the years articles were published and the different independent variables (IVs)?

## METHODS

This review uses content analysis focusing on 41 published articles related to the topic of job satisfaction in the journalism field. This comprehensive review conducted an inclusive list of articles related to job satisfaction and journalism. Materials were collected via the University of Oklahoma Libraries' electronic database (e.g., EBSCO, JSTOR, and ABI/INFORM) based on a search for the key words job satisfaction and journalism. The search identified 34 published articles. After reviewing the 34 articles' references, seven more published articles were then retrieved on Google Scholar. The population for this review is thus 41 published articles. To answer the two research questions, this paper will examine several variables from the research population, including "published journal," "author(s)," "theory(s)," "research samples," "published year," and "independent variables."

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For mapping the broad landscape, the basic information will be explained first, and the second research question will be addressed with more detail.

### Popular Journals

Of the 41 articles, 26 were published in two publications: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (JMCQ) (N=17) and *Newspaper Research Journal* (NRJ) (N=9). These publications are the two top journals in the field, and they address all aspects of the worldwide media industry. JMCQ, established in 1924, is the most referred scholarly journal providing leadership in scholarship for the field of mass communication. NRJ, founded in 1979, focuses on research investigation questions about U.S. and foreign newspapers. Several journals not fully connected to the study of journalism account for the publishing of a few articles. For example, as seen in Table 1, *Burnout Research* focuses on clinical burnout across society.

Table 1  
*Publication Sources of the 41 Articles*

Journal	N
Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly	17
Newspaper Research Journal	9
Sage Journals	4
Journalism & Mass Communication Educator	3
Asian Journal of Communication	1
Journalism Educator	1
Journal of Sport Management	1
The Western Journal of Black Studies	1
Burnout Research	1
Atlantic Journal of Communication	1
Others	2
Total	41

### Active Authors

This review found that 52 authors have contributed to this area, many of whom have multiple articles. Beam (N=3) and Reinardy (N=5) are the most active among the group of the sampled scholars. Reinardy specifically focuses on burnout in the journalism field, while Beam's studies are applicable to the topic of this present review study: how the concept of job satisfaction is addressed in the journalism field. This could explain why Beam's studies have been cited more. For example, regarding Google Scholar's record, the article "Changes in Professionalism of U.S. Journalists in the Turbulent Twenty-First Century" (Beam & Weaver, 2009) was cited the most (135 times) among the articles. Reinardy considers burnout a niche area of job satisfaction and focuses on its negative indicators, such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Filak & Reinardy, 2011). In management studies, the concept of "burnout" falls into the job behavior area, but in journalism, the concept is used more broadly, which is usually seen as a negative indicator of job satisfaction (Judge, 2011). For example, burnout can describe feelings of emotional exhaustion and difficulty concentrating or thinking (Shirom & Melamed, 2006). Burnout also entails feelings of reduced personal efficacy (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

Among the 41 articles, the earliest article about job satisfaction was published in 1962: "A Standardized Test to Measure Job Satisfaction in the Newsroom" (Samuelson, 1962). However, this was the only article located by this author and is not included in Table 2, which focuses on authors with at least two published articles.

Table 2  
*The active scholars in the area of job satisfaction in journalism*

Last name	Article (published year)	Cited times (Google Scholar)	N
Beam	2006, 2002, 2009	107 / 52 / 135	3
Bramlett-Solomon	1993, 1992	10 / 32	2
Demers	1994, 1995	41 / 32	2
Doug	1995, 1993	19 / 78	2
Filak	2011, 2008	9 / 11	2
Keith	1995, 2005	19 / 21	2
Pedersen	2004, 2003	23 / 107	2
Reinardy	2007, 2011, 2008, 2009, 2012	56 / 9 / 11 / 52 / 24	5
Shipman	1986, 1989	7 / 2	2
Smucker	2004, 2003	23 / 107	2
Whisenant	2004, 2003	23 / 107	2

### The Popular Theory

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (N=15) is the most frequently used theoretical framework for job satisfaction. Though some articles (N=4) do not use it directly, they utilize the foundational definition of job satisfaction from the management field theory (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Smucker 2004; Demers, 1994; DeFleur, 1992; Fowler & Shipman, 1989) to explain why intrinsic motivation has positive effects. For example, Demers and Pearce (1994) found that autonomy is a mediating factor to job satisfaction, and while income is not related, it is a key part of the job characteristics model (motivator-hygiene theory as described by Hackman and Oldham, 1976). With intrinsic intention a core concept of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, 19 articles were related to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg's two-factor theory states that intrinsic job factors contribute to job satisfaction (such as achievement, responsibilities, chance for advancement) while extrinsic factors (such as company policy, supervision, salary and working conditions) are associated with job dissatisfaction (Rogelberg, 2007).

Herzberg and colleagues (1979) found job-related motivators such as achievement and challenging work were necessary to make people happy at their jobs. On the other hand, the hygiene factors, such as employer policies, work relationships, and working conditions, can prevent motivation from occurring, (Rogelberg, 2007). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory cannot explain or predict all reasons for job satisfaction in reality. For example, many contextual factors such as flextime, gyms, or time-sharing arrangements may motivate people. Though these are neither intrinsic nor extrinsic factors, they can build commitment and job-staying power (Rogelberg, 2007).

Table 3  
*Dominant theories of journalism job satisfaction*

Theory	N
Motivation-hygiene theory / Herzberg's two-factor (intrinsic vs. extrinsic)	15
Adam Smith & Karl Marx & Hawthorne Studies (foundations of job satisfaction)	4
Achievement motivation theory	1
Conservation of Resources theory	1
Maslach Burnout Inventory	1
Path-goal leadership theory	1

### **The Research Samples**

The research population has been covered broadly among the 41 articles. Journalists in general (N=11) is the most popular research population, and some articles' research sample sizes can statistically represent the journalist population. For example, Reinardy (2012) conducted a nationwide survey of newspaper journalists in the United States. Of 139 newspapers included in the database representing all geographic regions of the U.S., 9,629 journalists' email responses were collected. Scheer and Baugut (2016) collected 1,536 usable results representative of journalists in Germany.

Position within the journalism field is another significant independent variable. In management studies, job satisfaction is normally applied to the relationship between the population of employee and supervisor (Rogelberg, 2007). However, in journalism, different job positions have different intrinsic and extrinsic stress factors, and hence, new job positions can become extrinsic stress factors to traditional employees.

Table 4  
*Categories of sample populations*

Research population		N	
Journalists in general (By country)		16	
TV/broadcast journalist		4	
Regional journalist		5	
In school	Faculty in JMC school / High school	3	4
	College newspaper editors	1	
By occupation	Sports editors	3	8
	Online journalists	1	
	Copy editors	1	
	Other staffs (ad department)	1	
	freelance journalists/multimedia editors	2	
By Demography	Black journalists	2	4
	Women journalists / editors	2	

### The Relationship Between Independent Variables and Time Periods

To answer this question, the independent variables were identified and categorized. Then, the time period of the research was established. This information was analyzed to understand the logic behind this relationship.

**Independent variables.** This paper uses Shoemaker and Reese's shifting circles to group the various independent variables (IVs) that have been used. Shifting circles is a model that can explain the hierarchy of influences on media content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 263), and these include from the micro to the macro: individual characteristics of specific news workers, their routines of work, organizational-level concerns, institutional issues, and larger social systems. The model "takes into account the multiple forces that simultaneously impinge on the media and suggest how influence at one level may interact with that at another" (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014, p. 263). In using this model, 11 IVs can be classified into four groups: "Social level" (N=4), "Organizational level" (N=26), "Group level" (N=12), and "Individual level" (N=16). The IVs in "Organizational level" attracted more attention; the specific IVs in this circle were organizational size/structure (N=6), organization's goal (N=3), technology stress (N=3), and journalism professional value (N=14).



Journalism professional value is a significant indicator of job satisfaction. According to Beam et. al (2009)'s findings, professional organization membership declined among journalists because of a period of significant economic and technological turmoil for news organizations. This decline posed threats to journalistic autonomy as they became more ethically cautious. Pollard's (1995) study about the daily news media workers in Canada similarly show that reliance on hierarchal authority and rule enforcement was a significant influence to undermine job satisfaction.

Table 5  
*The independent variables of job satisfaction in journalism*

IV		N	
Social level	Social change	4	
Organizational level	Organizational size/structure	6	26
	Organizational goal	3	
	Technology stress	3	
	Journalism professional value (autonomy)	14	
Group level	Management style/support	8	12
	New job position	2	
	Task stress	2	
Individual level	Demography (age, gender, income, race)	10	16
	Emotional stress (burnout)	6	
Other	Measure scale development for Job satisfaction	1	

**Time periods.** This review finds small gaps when the topic of job satisfaction fades from the literature. Two potential reasons for these gaps may be because of missing articles not identified by search engines for this review or because not many scholars have constantly worked on this niche area, instead pursuing other research interests. The research is thus divided into three time periods based on these gaps: Before 2001, 2002-2009, and 2010-present.

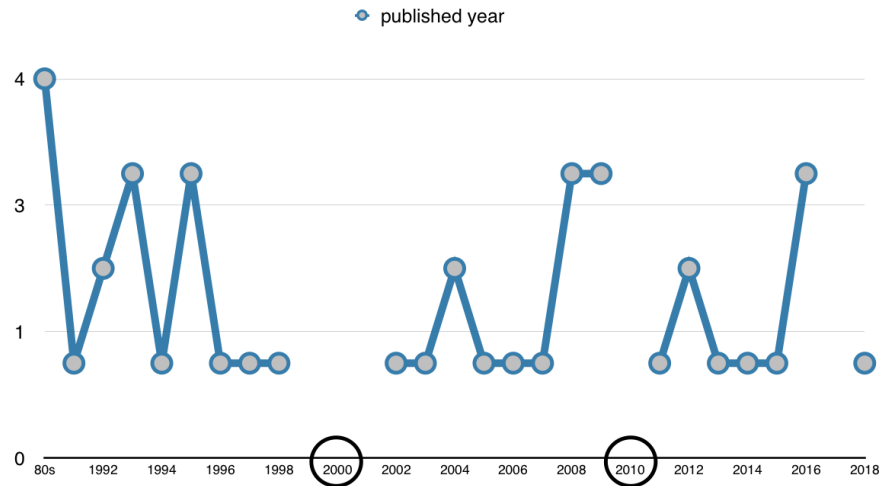


Figure 1: the published year distribution of the 41 articles.

The number of articles published in these periods do not vary significantly with 18 published before 2001, 13 between 2002-2009 and 10 from 2010-present. However, the first period comprises 38 years, whereas the second and third periods include 9 and 8 years respectively. Moreover, the number of IVs is similar among the three periods: “Before 2001” (N=8), “2002-2009” (N=8), and “2010-present” (N=9). The focus of variables, however, is different.

**Before 2001 (N=18).** The most popular IV is “journalism professional value” (N=8), with “organizational size/structure” (N=5) and “demography” (N=6) also tested prevalently. The concept of job satisfaction was an emerging idea in this period, with many scholars using Herzberg’s two-factor theory. No pattern emerged of studies focusing on one specific research problem during this time. For example, Sharon (1993) used both “demography” (e.g., race, income) and “journalism professional value” (e.g., autonomy) simultaneously to determine whether job satisfaction motivations of black journalists are similar to those in studies of white journalists, and the authors found no significant result. As another example, DeFleur (1992) applied the foundational theory of job satisfaction to media industries as a whole, with the possible measurements including income, power, prestige, autonomy, and creativity. The results of DeFleur’s study indicated that prestige has the most effect on job satisfaction, while income has the least effect (1992).

Table 6  
*Independent variables used before 2001*

Published Year	IV	N
<i>Before 2001</i>	Demography	6
<i>N= 18</i>	Organizational goal	1
	<b>Journalism professional value</b>	8
	Management style/support	2
	Organizational size/structure	5
	Technology stress	2
	Social change	1
	Emotional stress (burnout)	1

**2002-2009 (N=13).** Although “journalism professional value” was still a prevalent IV (N=4), “management style/support” (N=5) achieved more attention during this period. Management style/support” was an emerging concept, especially compared to its frequency of study in “Before 2001” (N=2), and “2010-present” (N=1).

Reinardy introduces another management research concept called “work-family conflict” in 2007, when he uses this as an IV to test the influences of life issues on job satisfaction in the population of sports editors. He also mentions that supervision support has a moderate effect on this relationship. Meta-analyses on the consequences of work-to-family conflict in management studies near this same period (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) find typical outcomes of work-to-family conflict include lower family and career satisfaction, lower organizational attachment and commitment, greater hostility at home, and a variety of negative physiological and psychological health outcomes when conflict is high (see also Eby et al., 2005). In addition, Whisenant and Pedersen (2004) point out that the influence of a management style—comparison—for female journalists in newsrooms may have negative effects.

Table 7  
*Independent variables from 2002 to 2009*

Published year	IV	N
<b>2002—2009</b> <i>N=13</i>	Technology stress	1
	Emotional stress (burnout)	2
	<b>Management style/support</b>	5
	Demography	2
	Journalism professional value	4
	Organizational size/structure	1
	Organizational goal	1
	Social change	1

**2010-present (N=10).** “Emotional stress” (N=3) and “task stress” (N=2) are dominant IVs during this period. Because of significant technological turmoil for news organizations (Beam et. al., 2009), task stress and heavy workload leads to strong emotional stress in newsrooms. For example, online journalists constantly evaluate competitors' websites to find any news that they or their organizations may have missed (Boczkowski, 2009). The so-called “scoop mentality” (Lim, 2013) is visible in this behavior. Moreover, Filak and Reinardy (2011) used the Maslach Burnout Inventory to show that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were significant negative predictors of editors' job satisfaction. In addition, the Maslach Burnout Inventory was constructed on the basic premise that stress is a gateway to burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). For example, new job position is a significant factor that stress to burnout. In the paper titled “Can Old Dogs Learn New Tricks? Do They Want to?” (Perez & Cremedas, 2014), the authors use an emerging job position—the multimedia editor—as an independent variable to test its effects on traditional full-time journalists' job satisfaction.

In fact, this is also a developing concept in the management field. Scholars are examining how workers express emotions in a variety of work settings and the relationship between this emotional expression and employee effectiveness (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Table 8  
*The independent variables that have been used from 2010 to present*

Published year	IV	N
<b>2010—present</b>	<b>Emotional stress (burnout)</b>	3
<i>N=10</i>	Task stress	2
	Management style/support	1
	Demography	2
	New job position	1
	Journalism professional value	2
	Organizational size/structure	1
	Organizational goal	1
	Social change	2

## CONCLUSION

In countries such as the U.K. and Italy, the research of media management falls under the management discipline at business schools, so scholars can share many theories and perspectives about how to apply broader management theories and perspectives specifically to the media industry. In the U.S., media management studies are found in journalism and mass communication schools (JMC). Thus, while JMC scholars have deep understanding of journalism’s professional value and of the macro-level of the media economic environment, they usually can’t keep up with developments of business management theory, especially at the individual and group level.

This literature review can help JMC scholars realize which management theory stage they are currently at and which research interests may be worthy to investigate. For instance, clarifying the concepts (such as job satisfaction, job attitude, job behavior, job outcomes, and so forth) would be a meaningful research topic. Such concepts have distinguished definitions in the management academic field, although there is some overlap. However, in journalism, the group of similar concepts is still under construction, with only job satisfaction having been developed. For example, using the key words “journalism” and “job attitude” in a search of the OU Libraries electronic database and Google Scholar finds no strongly related articles. The concept of “work-family conflict” has been discussed in the management field (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), but only a few studies and scholars have discussed it in the journalism academic field (Filak & Reinardy, 2011; Reinardy, 2012, 2009, 2007).

Another concept worthy of future research is a quantitative research review—a meta analysis of job satisfaction in journalism. Many authors applied statistical methods to analyze samples and find generalizable results. Determining which IVs significantly influence job satisfaction in journalism could

be part of a research question during such an analysis. To accomplish this, a broader collection of other manuscripts (i.e., unpublished articles, abstracts of conference papers on websites) is needed.

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### **About the Author(s)**

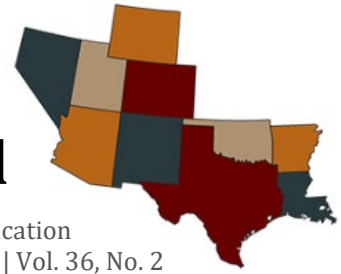
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