MILITARY SPOUSES' RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDIA DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

by

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ABSTRACT

Military spouses have a complex relationship with news coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 2003 Iraq War. Utilizing uses and gratifications, hostile media perception, and cognitive dissonance perspectives as a basis, the researcher studied military spouses' media behaviors, perceived benefits of media usage, and whether hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance were present in this convenience sample of military spouses. Thirty military spouses participated in in-depth interviews. The results showed a desire for more positive news stories and less negative news stories about Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance responses were noted among participants–especially with regard to the media's tracking totals of soldier and civilian casualties. Military spouses in this sample found military news sources more credible than civilian news sources. They also described using news coverage for the purposes of gaining information, surveillance, political competency and empathy.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Overview

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began in 2003, public attention has been focused on media coverage of the operation (Pew Research Center, 2007b). OIF would turn into a years-long war with ups and downs that warranted intense media coverage and continued public attention and media usage. One group of media users of this coverage is military spouses. Military spouses' dependence on media varies, and some use media as a source of deployment information (Bell, Teitelbaum & Schumm, 1996). According to Military One Source, a Web site used as a consultation tool for military families, consuming media coverage of the war can be stressful (Mezey, 2006). This study will focus on military spouses' uses and opinions of media during OIF. The general questions of this study are:

What are media behaviors of military spouses?

What are the perceived benefits of media usage for military spouses?

What are military spouses' opinions on media coverage of the war?

How do military spouses respond to media coverage that causes psychological discomfort?

Additionally, other factors and demographics will be explored.

Background

Public Opinion of the War. The 2003 invasion of Iraq and subsequent war seems to be a polarizing topic for the general public (Young, Clarke, & Gunnell, 2003). A poll conducted by CNN on June 27, 2007, found that just 30% of respondents support the U.S. war in Iraq. However, in a survey conducted February 20 to 24, 2008, the number of those who thought using military force in Iraq was the right decision was 38% (Pew Research Center, 2008). The same

survey found that Americans who say the military situation in Iraq is going well and those say it

is not going well were neck in neck at 48% each (Pew Research Center). The research

organization has tracked this issue since the start of the war and found in February 2007 that

67% of Americans though the war in Iraq was not going well—the largest percentage expressing

this view since the war began (Pew Research Center). The number of people supporting a troop

pullout peaked in June 2007 at 56% of respondents (Pew Research Center).

Events leading to OIF. The primary reasons for invading Iraq were these: There was

intelligence that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and refused to disarm;

Saddam Hussein was responsible for oppressing and torturing his own people; and the Iraqi

regime aided terrorists. United States President George W. Bush outlined these points in his

March 17, 2003, address to the nation:

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime

continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has

already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people.

The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of

America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives

of al Qaeda. (Bush, ¶4-5).

But after two years of searching for weapons of mass destruction, the CIA's top weapons

inspector announced the end of the search with no weapons of mass destruction found (Shrader,

2005). The Abu Ghraib prison scandal showed American troops torturing Iraqi detainees after

Hussein was removed from power (Hersh, 2004). And when formerly classified documents were

declassified and released, a top U.S. Democrat said they undercut claims of a link between

Hussein and al Qaeda networks (AFP, 2005).

Polls on OIF. As the war has progressed, support for the military operation among the general U.S. population has waned. In July 2003, 21% of respondents said the war in Iraq was not going well and in February 2007 the number had steadily risen to 67% (Pew Research Center, 2007a). However a poll conducted in November 2007 found the figure had fallen to 48% of respondents saying the war was not going well (Pew Research Center, 2007d). According to a poll conducted by Gallup in July 2007, 62% of respondents said they thought the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq (Jones).

Situational Factors

The Active Component of the Army is made up of soldiers who are continually on active duty either at an Army post or deployed in support of a contingency operation. The Reserve Component of the Army is comprised of Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers. Active Component soldiers are full-time soldiers who are required to move around to different duty stations every few years. Reserve Component soldiers are supposed to serve on a part-time basis—one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer, and most Reserve Component soldiers have a different full-time civilian career. However, according to the chief of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, the days of serving one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer are gone (Stultz, 2006). As of July 1, 2007, the number of Active Component soldiers serving in Iraq was 94,532 compared with 20,204 Reserve Component soldiers (Bowman, 2007). Since Sept. 11, 2001, 162,000, or 80% of all Army Reserve soldiers, had been mobilized to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries (Stultz, 2006).

According to U.S. Code 10C1003, the purpose of each Reserve Component is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for Active Component in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill

the needs of the armed forces whenever more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components (2006).

Major Robert J. Moore of the U.S. Active Guard Reserve said, "The disruption is greater for Reserve Component soldiers because so many more people are affected by their deployment. They have families who are not accustomed to Active Component life and they have employers who suffer from their absence as well." Their spouses also have differences in living arrangements and access to installation support and information during deployments.

Differences between Active Component and Reserve Component spouses. There are differences also between the spouses of Active Component and Reserve Component soldiers. Spouses of Active Component soldiers have the option to live on an installation or within a civilian community. Communities that surround military installations, though, typically have enough military families to make even a "civilian community" a military community. Geary County School District USD 475, which encompasses a nearby community to Fort Riley, Kansas, had 64% of their students from Fort Riley in September 2006 (Fort Riley Plans, Analysis, and Integration, 2006). Living in a military community provides easier access to support channels at military installations and better understanding within the community of the plight of military spouses (NMFA, 2005). According to the National Guard and Reserve Strategic Readiness Plan from 2000 to 2005, Reserve Component soldiers do not live near military installations where family support services are most readily available, and they may not know what services are available. Even when they are aware of available services, they may encounter difficulties in accessing them (Department of Defense, 1999).

The circle of military spouses, also known as the "rumor mill," can be a means of information for Active Component spouses, albeit unreliable information at times. In a smaller

rural town, Reserve Component spouses might be the only person in town experiencing a deployment with no other military spouse even somewhat nearby. Therefore, Reserve Component spouses may use media as a means of information, since they do not have the advantage (or disadvantage) of the rumor mill.

Active Component spouses are not typically moving off a military installation during deployments to be closer to their families anymore. Ricks (2004) reported that the current generation has broken the pattern of returning home for the duration of a husband's deployment in favor of living in a community with fellow military families. One spouse, as well as many others, said, "The farther away you get from post, the less understanding there is" (Ricks, ¶51). One spouse said she recognized the benefit of having other military spouses nearby when she moved closer to her parents during her husband's deployment (Davis, 2003).

Problem

There are two problems this study will attempt to address. First, no scholarly research on military spouses' relationship with media has been formally conducted, so this study will be the first of its kind. Knowledge about military spouses' media behaviors may have application to their opinion of their soldier's career, and thus affect retention and the Department of Defense's readiness.

Understudied segment. Studies of military spouses are few and none has been conducted to study their relationship with media. This study is the first of its kind and will answer critical questions to better identify this subgroup of media consumers. The fact that this subgroup has been infrequently studied warrants an examination of their relationship with media.

Nationwide implications. Spouses are a crucial factor in a servicemember's decision to reenlist (Harris, Rorie, & Nicole, 2003). Their opinions influence soldiers' decisions and if

spouses are dissatisfied with military life, they could convince soldiers not to reenlist, resulting

in retention problems. A 2004 *Washington Post* survey found that about 76% of military spouses

polled said they believe the Army is heading for personnel problems and three in 10 respondents

said they are "certain their spouses will get out—and that they want that to happen" (Ricks,

2004, ¶67).

In a governmental survey of Army families, 49.3% of spouses say they were

dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with deployment and the amount of time their Soldier is away.

However, 58% of spouses with soldiers currently deployed said they want their soldier to stay in

until retirement. Twenty-eight percent said they wanted their soldier to get out before or upon

completion of their obligation. Compared to the survey conducted in 1991-1992, 71% of spouses

in the 2004-2005 survey are less likely to support their soldier remaining in the Army (U.S.

Army Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command). If media coverage of their soldiers'

efforts shapes their opinion of having their soldier in the Army, the coverage is important in

determining the fate of the military.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine media behaviors of military spouses; explore

the perceived benefits of media usage for military spouses; identify military spouses' opinions on

media coverage of the war; and look at how military spouses respond to media coverage that

conflicts with their psychological cognitions. The study also will examine any other themes that

emerge in the research.

Justification

Given that military spouses are an understudied segment of the population, it is important

to assess their opinions on topics such as media coverage and the war. These topics are far-

reaching and their responses and opinions are informing for the larger public. Much public attention is given to the soldiers fighting the war, but the Army recognized the need to appease and consider their family's opinions and feelings. "We recruit a soldier, but we retain a family" Col. Glen Bloomstrom said in a *People* magazine interview (Fleming, 2005, p. 132). The Army Family Covenant, which was signed by the Army chief of staff in 2007, represented a $1.4 billion commitment to improving quality of life for soldiers and families. "Our Army is the strength of our nation. And the strength of our Army depends on the strength of the Army Family," Gen. Charles E. Campbell, commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command said at the Fort Riley signing (2007).

Military spouses' opinions and perceptions on OIF and media need to be examined in order to predict larger outcomes such as retention in the Department of Defense. Considering that many military personnel use their spouse's input in their decision whether or not to reenlist, it is vital to understand how this group perceives their servicemember's mission and coverage of the mission. If military spouses perceive the coverage to be negative, they could develop negative feelings toward the mission and thus convince the servicemember to get out of the military. If large numbers of soldiers do so, serious retention problems for the military will follow. Results from this study will illuminate military spouses' relationship with media and contribute to the body of literature that exists about the military and media relationship and research on military spouses.

Theoretical Frameworks

At least three communication theories relate to the situation of military spouses' opinions and use of media during OIF. The first approach is uses and gratifications, advanced by Herta Herzog (1944). Uses and gratifications studies focus on how and why people use media. The

perspective assumes that people are not helpless victims of media, but instead they use media to fulfill their needs. This study will aim to determine if military spouses report standard gratifications for consuming media coverage or if other reported gratifications emerge.

The second theory is the hostile media perception (Vallone, Ross & Lepper 1985). The theory suggests that media consumers will perceive media coverage to be biased toward the opposite view they hold. Hostile media perception has been previously applied to political perspectives. This study will apply the phenomenon to military spouses to ascertain whether they perceive the media coverage to be disagreeable with their point of view.

The third is cognitive dissonance theory. This theory describes the psychological discomfort felt when there is an inconsistency between cognitions (Festinger, 1957). This study will explore whether military spouses feel psychological discomfort when they encounter media coverage that disagrees with their perspective on the war. These three theories will be further explained and applied to the topic in more detail in Chapter Two.

Organization

Chapter Two will be a review of literature that describes the historical background of the military/media relationship and how it has changed. It also will explicate the three theories that are the theoretical basis for the study. The preceding findings concerning the theories will be applied to military spouses and their relationship with media. Based on the previous literature and theories, research questions will be posited.

Chapter Three will explain the methodology used in this study. It also will explain how the respondents were solicited and selected. Then it will describe the sample of military spouses who were interviewed and compare it with demographics of the entire Army. Next it will detail the instrument used in the interviews and finally it will describe the variables of interest.

Chapter Four will present the relevant findings related to the research questions and note any other themes that emerged. Findings related to media behaviors, perceived gratifications, hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance will be drawn from resonating themes and repetition of responses. The themes will be presented along with their frequencies. Some of the most salient quotes will be inserted in tables and in the text.

Chapter Five will discuss the findings of this study in detail. The researcher will concede any limitations and offer suggestions for future researcher. Finally, the researcher will conclude the study with a recap of notable discoveries in military spouses' relationship with media.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature will describe the historical background of the military/media relationship and how it has changed. The preceding findings concerning the theories will be applied to military spouses and their relationship with media. This chapter also will explicate the three theories that are the theoretical basis for the study. Based on the previous literature and theories, research questions will be posited.

Historical Background of the Military/Media Relationship

Media need to fulfill their obligation of covering newsworthy events, such as wars (Segal, Segal, & Eyre, 1992) and the military cannot argue they do not need public understanding, support, and funding (Holm, 2002). The adversarial nature of the military/media relationship fluctuates between satisfying operational security and the public's right to know (Holm, 2002). Another issue is the military's distrust of the press (Fox, 1995), but Holm illuminates how denying access hides more good accomplishments than negatives. "Perhaps the biggest mistake the Pentagon made was not its inability to make the occasional negative story go away but its inability to sell its multitude of positive actions" (Holm, 2002, p. 64).

Historically, media access to the military has ranged from wide-open and unrestricted policies of Vietnam (Howell, 1987) to logistical breakdowns that resulted in severely underreported conflicts, such as Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983 and Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989 (Holm, 2002). Several commissions have convened to address the concerns of the military/media relationship. The Sidle Panel was formed after Operation Urgent Fury and was charged with determining the best method for providing media coverage of a military operation without compromising security (Holm, 2002). The Hoffman Report addressed mistakes in Panama and directed ground commanders not only to address the media pool but also

to support it (Holm). A journalist teaching at the U.S. Army War College speaks of a generation

of soldiers who will "go to their graves hating all journalists for the reporting of some" (cited in

Holm, 2002, p. 62). In his essay, "Stop Whining," Gen. Walter Boom advises military leaders to

allow the American people—those whose taxes pay servicemembers' salaries—a view of its

military. "Now, it doesn't make a difference then whether you like the media or you don't like

the media, they're here to stay" (cited in Holm, 2002, p. 62).

How time and technology affected coverage of wars. The history of wars has established

a military/media continuum ranging from open access to either highly restricted or nonexistent

access depending on the military conflict. The Vietnam War was brought to the American public

mostly through television with graphic reports of what was happening (Choi, Watt & Lynch,

2006). Media coverage of the Vietnam War ultimately was able to convince the public the war

was not going well, despite official government pronouncements (Choi, Watt & Lynch). During

the Gulf War in 1991, media were tightly controlled and were able to show few actual battle

operations in real time (Choi, Watt & Lynch). Embedded journalists were increasingly used in

the 2003 Iraq War, but unlike Vietnam, they had no freedom to go where the action was. Their

positioning was a form of gatekeeping (Choi, Watt & Lynch). "The 2003 Iraq War coverage

combined the Vietnam War coverage sense of 'being there' with the continuous coverage

alongside the implicit pro-government position of the coverage of the Gulf War of 1991," (Choi,

Watt & Lynch, p. 211).

Technology also has changed the way reporting is done and thus changed the relationship

between military and media. Military leaders have attempted to discriminate between television

reporters and print journalists, perceiving television as a bigger threat (Fox, 1995). Howell

(1987) posited that greater amounts of television coverage during Vietnam and other subsequent

events produced less public support. He went on to point out that Grenada, with its limited

television coverage, had produced more public support. He called television cameras

interferences and commented, "We need…not freedom of press but freedom *from* the press

(Howell, p. 78). He also recommended censorship saying, "Censorship during U.S. conflicts is

an established, tried and true method of preventing the enemy from gaining advantage" (Howell,

p. 78).   The introduction of media-owned satellite uplinks provided reporters capability for real-

time, audio-visual broadcasting. This technological advance has required the military to revise

its policies to guard against security problems inherent in live reporting (Fox, 1995).

How embedding influenced coverage. Embedding reporters with combat units has been

advanced as an agreeable compromise to the military/media problem. Col. Barrett King, a public

affairs officer who was serving in Iraq wrote an editorial explaining why he revoked credentials

for the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper, which had sent reporters to Iraq to embed.

Media embedding is supposed to be a win-win situation. The military wins because the

American people get a first-hand look, without a public affairs escort, at what soldiers, sailors,

airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and our civilians do in a war. And the media win because

they are trusted enough to go out and be at the front lines and to travel with the troops. But with

access comes great responsibility. Don't report or show things that bring the possibility of harm

to America's sons and daughters (King, 2005, ¶7-8).

Holm (2002) explained how reporters in Vietnam had a personal stake in the men they

watched and reported on. "Although the military leadership called the press the enemy, the

better reporters were actually wading through rice paddies with the soldiers on the ground" (p.

63). A poll by the Pew Research Center conducted during the first few days of OIF found one-

third of the respondents thought embedding was not a good thing. A sample of those who had an

unfavorable opinion about embedding was asked why they didn't like it. "Most said they felt the reporters were providing too much information. Among these, many expressed concerns that the coverage provides intelligence to the enemy that could compromise the military campaign" (Pew Research Center, 2003, ¶5-6). The same poll found only a few people saying the media embedding would produce biased reports (Pew Research Center, 2003, ¶7).

Pfau, Haigh, Gettle, Donnelly, Scott, Warr, et al. (2004) studied the effect embedded reporting had on the coverage of OIF. They hypothesized that, "Knowing the troops they are covering can lead to bias in news coverage of the military and its personnel" (p. 78). They also hypothesized that "Embedding might produce a narrow, decontextualized coverage of war" (p. 76). Both hypotheses were supported by the data. "Results revealed that embedded coverage of (OIF) was more favorable in overall tone toward the military and in depiction of individual troops" (p. 83). They also wrote, "embedding…provided a positive spin to news coverage" (p. 84).

Prior Research on Military Spouses

Scholarly researchers have infrequently examined military spouses and families. The examinations of military spouses and their media usage have been cursory in nature, mostly interviews for non-academic publications. A scholarly qualitative study focused on military spouses and their relationship with media has not been conducted.

Non-academic studies. The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC), in conjunction with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) conducted a survey of Army families in 2006. The *Survey of Army Families V* is the most recent of governmental surveys and most of the data focus on quality of life and family concerns. No data on Army families' usage of media was collected.

The National Military Family Association Web site hosts several surveys for military spouses to complete. In March 2008, there were 13 surveys with posted results and two surveys available to complete—none focused on military spouses' relationship with media. Most surveys had at least 500 respondents (NMFA, 2008). According to Office of Army Demographics figures in 2006, there were 526,202 Active Component, Reserve and National Guard spouses (Maxwell, 2006).

Preliminary findings on media usage of spouses. Although communication directly from the soldier has greatly improved from previous wars through access to e-mail (Bergin, 2004), use of cell phones, and expedited mail, spouses rely on news media to fill in the gaps. A survey conducted by *The Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University in 2004 was the first nongovernmental survey of military spouses since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks (Ricks, 2004). The spouses in the survey viewed the media coverage as a powerful drug (Ricks). One spouse said of media coverage, "We're addicted to it, we need the information—but then we turn around and bash it" (cited in Ricks, 2004, ¶46). Army counselors and others said that an indication a spouse is "headed for trouble is when she takes hours-long wallows in the news" (cited in Ricks, ¶48).

In a feature on life during wartime published in *Texas Monthly*, spouses talked about their reliance on media for information and solace. "As soon as I would wake up, I'd run downstairs and get on the computer," said Sarah Jefferies, whose husband was deployed to Iraq. "I'd read everything that had happened since I'd gone to bed the night before, until I was sure Perry was safe. Then I could breathe and have a day" (cited in Colloff, 2004, ¶16).

Academic studies. A review of scholarly journals did not yield greater results. The search terms "media usage and spouses," yielded more than 500 results in the *Military Review*

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journal, but the highest ranked article was 77% relevant. The study surveyed military spouses but did not focus on their opinion of media or uses of media. The search terms "military spouses and media," and "OIF and media" in the *Military Review* journal yielded a few articles on the importance of having Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) and the role of Public Affairs reporters in the military. One study had a question asking spouses where they get their information during deployments. The respondents reported relying on CNN and accounts from their soldier for information during deployments (Bell, Teitelbaum, & Schumm, 1996).

The same search terms in the JSTOR and PsychInfo databases did not yield any studies on military spouses and media. The search term "military" in the Communication Abstracts database yielded 265 hits, but no titles had indication of studying military spouses. The search terms "media" and "coverage" and "war" yielded more hits but only a few were relevant and, again, none had studied military spouses and their uses of media.

Two scholarly studies that are somewhat relevant to this topic exist. One study examined the ability of media users in Germany, the United States, and Australia to disregard media reports that are presented as fact but subsequently retracted (Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer, & Morales, 2004). The three countries differed greatly in their rankings of reasons to go to war. The U.S. participants ranked the destruction of weapons of mass destruction first while Germany and Australia ranked securing oil supplies for Western nations and changing the regime in Iraq first, respectively (Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer, & Morales).

The other study, conducted by Segal, Segal, & Eyre (1992), focused on how military spouses and families socially construct peacekeeping missions. The authors allude to the differences in social construction between soldiers and their spouses. "The wives were given the same organization definition [of peacekeeping], but then had no direct experience with the reality

of the MFO [multinational forces]. Their subsequent impressions were reports from (and

interpretations by) their spouses" (Segal, Segal, & Eyre). These two studies, although they

provide some insight into the topic at hand, do not examine the military spouses' usage,

behaviors, and opinions of media.

Theories to Apply

There are three theories that apply to the topic of military spouses and their relationship

with media. Uses and gratifications theory developed by Hertz Herzog in 1944 examined how

people use media and what benefits they get from it. This study will examine how military

spouses use media--in what quantities, types and what their perceived benefits of media usage

are. Hostile media perception is a perspective advanced in 1985 by Vallone, Ross & Lepper that

posits that individuals perceive information to be disagreeable with his or her point of view.

This study will explore whether the hostile media perception exists in military spouses'

relationship with media. Cognitive dissonance theory posits that people have cognitions that

consist of our values, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts about our world and the items in it

(Festinger, 1957). When people encounter an inconsistency, Festinger said there is

"psychological discomfort" and people naturally seek to alleviate it (p. 2). This study will look at

whether cognitive dissonance occurs when military spouses' encounter psychological discomfort

when consuming news media.

Uses and Gratifications

Herta Herzog developed the uses and gratifications theory in 1944. The theory and

research that proliferated out of it focus on how people use media. In 1974, Katz, Blumler &

Gurevitch further explicated gratifications into four categories: escapism; personal relationships

(using it as a companion); personal identity (including value reinforcement); and surveillance,

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which may be traced to a desire for security or to satisfy curiosity. Two other gratifications found in UG research were functions of social utility and empathy (Blumler, Brown & McQuail, 1970). They also assert that books and movies have been found to cater to needs concerned with helping individuals connect with themselves, while newspaper, radio, and television help connect individuals to society (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch). Most uses and gratifications research up until the point that Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch examined the body of research was conducted by eliciting from respondents, in an open-ended way, statements about media functions. Then the researchers would group gratification statements into labeled categories without noting the distribution of their frequency in the population. "People are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motivates in particular cases" (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, p. 511). This study will look at uses and gratifications using a similar methodology, except for reporting frequencies of gratification statements in the sample.

As far as media choices are concerned, it is likely that whether spouses live in a primarily military or civilian community will affect whether they use military or civilian media more frequently. Spouses on or near installations will have better access to military media, such as installation newspapers, *Army Times* and *Stars and Stripes*. Spouses outside military communities do not have as great access to military media.

Options for consuming war coverage. The 2003 Iraq War is the first war where Internet emerged as an important channel of war news for a significant portion of the news audience (Choi, Watt & Lynch, 2006). Choi, Watt & Lynch also found that people reported the main reasons for using the Internet for news were source variety, rapid updates and different news points of view. This study will explore whether military spouses use Internet, television,

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newspapers, or radio the most for their news coverage. Most spouses have access to the Internet (MWR Research, 2003).

In a Pew Research Center survey, 60% of respondents reported watching TV news yesterday; 42% reported reading a newspaper the day before; 40% reported using radio news, but only 24% reported getting news online (2004). The same survey found that it has become increasingly common for Internet users to come across news inadvertently while online for other purposes. A majority, 73% of Internet users reported bumping into the news while online, up from 53% in 1996.

The use of television. Forgette and Morris found that conflict-laden television coverage decreases public evaluations of political institutions, trust in leadership and overall support for political parties and the system as a whole (2006).   They also assert that Americans are increasingly news "grazers," as discovered in a survey that found 72% of people watch the news with their remotes at the ready (Pew Research Center, 2004). Most Americans (55%) express a preference for seeing pictures or video footage showing what happened; 40% say they learn more from reading or hearing the facts of what happened (Pew Research Center, 2004).

Claussen conducted a study involving the uses and gratifications model in 2004. He studied how the use of television and newspapers has (or has not) changed since the 1980s. Claussen found that people rely more on television as their source of media consumption, but he lists several reasons why television is not such a wise choice. "Much of the American public erroneously convinced itself that television news is as complete, more accurate, more credible, less biased, and so on as newspaper content" (p. 216). He went on to point out the following situations:

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- People perceive news media as intrusive, yet TV reporters are those typically accused;

- People accuse news media of sensationalizing stories, yet TV is the most able to (and does) stir emotions;

- Although newspapers have a greater chance of making errors considering the volume of coverage, TV doesn't run corrections or letters to the editor;

- People complain that the coverage of topics and events is not as comprehensive as it should be—yet TV omits more stories than newspapers.

These are just a few of the assertions Claussen makes. This study relates to the current topic in that the coverage of the war on television is more immediate and fulfills the need for information quickly—television also has audio and visual gratification.

Gratifications of consuming war coverage. In the case of military spouses, they use the media as a source of information (Ricks, 2004) about a topic of high importance to them. Demerath (1993) studied the relationship between gaining knowledge and how it relates to our opinion of whether something is "good" or "bad." Demerath found that "When knowledge is increased, predictability is enhanced and the affective response is positive. When knowledge is decreased, predictability is reduced and the affective response is negative" (p. 136). This finding easily can be applied to military spouses. The *Washington Post* survey noted one point where the respondents' attitudes' toward the Army turned negative: keeping them informed about the timing and duration of deployment (Ricks, 2004). Satisfaction with Army life is driven by predictability (U.S. Army Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command, 2004-2005). The question then is whether the decrease in knowledge and thus reduction in predictability causes a negative affective response. It is possible military spouses will view the situation in a negative

way because of the lack of knowledge and predictability inherent in the way the Army conducts its business. The Survey of Army Families recommended maximizing predictability as an action to improve deployment and separation adjustments (U.S. Army Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command, 2004-2005).

Many respondents in the *Washington Post* survey reported they had received e-mails three to four times a week and one respondent said, "Technology has made a huge difference…I think it's kept marriages together" (Ricks, 2004, ¶43). Spouses might use a combination of media and accounts from their soldier to gain information about OIF.

Schuman and Rieger (1992) studied the use of media during the first Persian Gulf War and found that 89 percent of the American public claimed to be following the news from the war "very closely" or "fairly closely." The current war is reported as the most followed news story 18 of the 22 weeks that Pew tracked public attentiveness to news (Pew Research Center, 2007c) The first question this study will explore is what are military spouses' media behaviors, including how much time they spend consuming news coverage of the war each day and what types of media they use. The second question will ask what psychological satisfaction military spouses report concerning media coverage of the Operation Iraqi Freedom.

RQ1: What are the media behaviors of military spouses?

RQ2: What are their perceived benefits of media usage?

The Hostile Media Perception

Partisans tend to view media coverage of controversial events as unfairly biased and hostile to the position they advocate (Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Another study found that the phenomenon was unique to mass media (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004). Hostile media effect assumes two conditions: a highly issue-involved audience and neutral news content. The highly

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issue-involved audience typically is referred to as the partisans (Choi, Watt, & Lynch, 2006). Opponents of the war favored Internet as the most credible news medium followed by newspapers. Neutrals chose television and then magazines; and supporters of the war perceived television as the most credible medium, followed by Internet (Choi, Watt & Lynch). While this study will look at the most used sources for news coverage, it will not examine the perceived credibility of each of these sources.

A study by Eveland and Shah found that individuals' political orientations and social networks play a significant role in shaping perceptions of media bias. They also found that Republican party identifiers, strong partisans, and the politically involved all indicated news media were biased against their views (2003). A fundamental goal in journalism is to write a neutral or balanced news story (Choi, Watt & Lynch, 2006). People affiliated with the military historically have been unwilling to share their political opinions, because it is seen as unprofessional and questioning elected officials' decisions, who are their ultimately their superiors. In order to get military spouses to speak about the media usage, the researcher will not ask for their political affiliation or opinion of the war. This decision will likely get a larger number of respondents and keep them comfortable sharing their opinions of media coverage of the war.

In an article that appeared in *Texas Monthly* about news coverage of the war, one soldier voiced the sentiments commonly held by soldiers who worked daily to improve the conditions in Iraq. "There is so much good that happens in Iraq that is never reported. When I was there, we put sonogram machines and medicine and syringes into hospitals. We got paper and pencils for kids, and we painted their schools. I can't even count how many lives we saved. We got medicine for sick children, and IVs for people who were dying of dehydration. But you never

hear about those stories on the news" (Colloff, 2004, ¶26). The *Washington Post* survey found that only four in 10 military spouses said media coverage of the war was good, and even fewer approved of the coverage of military families (Ricks, 2004, ¶44). In a speech delivered at the 2008 Worldwide Public Affairs Symposium, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren said there were 90 stories about Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith, the first Medal of Honor recipient in the Global War on Terror and 5,000 stories about Lynndie England, a soldier involved in the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal (Geren, 2008).

Mistrust for news media. In a survey by the Pew Research Center (2004), a majority of Americans (53%) agreed with the statement, "I often don't trust what news organizations are saying." Forty-three percent disagreed with that statement (Pew Research Center, 2004). Younger women were found to be decidedly less negative with 35% of women under age 30 expressing mistrust for news outlets (Pew Research Center). CNN, which formerly held the top spot as the most credible television news source has declined over time from 38% reporting they believed all or most of what the organization says to 32% in 2004. National Public Radio and MSNBC were rated the lowest in credibility at 23 and 22% (Pew Research Center).

Military spouses may have similar concerns about story selection, slant and their opinion of how media are covering the war. They may accuse media of being biased in their coverage either for or against the war. Therefore, the third research question will address the existence of a perceived disparity between media content and one's view on the conflict.

RQ3: Is hostile media perception present in military spouses' assessment of news coverage?

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Leon Festinger developed the theory of cognitive dissonance in 1957. The theory posits that we all have cognitions that consist of our values, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts about our world and the items in it. Littlejohn (2001) explained that there are three possible relationships between our cognitions: *null*, the majority of what our cognitions are, means that they are irrelevant; *consonant*, which means that the cognitions are consistent with one another; *dissonant*, which means that the cognitions are inconsistent. Festinger's theory focuses primarily on the phenomenon that occurs when the cognitions are inconsistent, but looks at consonance as a way we respond to dissonance.

Festinger (1957) said that in the presence of an inconsistency, there is "psychological discomfort" and we naturally seek to alleviate it (p. 2). Littlejohn (2001) described the dissonance as "produc(ing) tension or stress that pressures the individual to change so that the dissonance is reduced" (p. 141). He further describes that the individual will not only attempt to reduce the dissonance, but will also avoid situations in which additional dissonance might be produced. Spouses may experience dissonance if media sources disseminate information that is inconsistent with their cognitions.

Strategies to reduce dissonance. In Festinger's original research, he discussed several strategies to reduce the dissonance. One of his hypotheses was that "when dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance" (1957, p. 3). He went on to say that a person would seek sources that would add new elements that increase the consonance and would "certainly" avoid sources that would increase the dissonance.

Littlejohn (2001) further explicated the strategies to reduce dissonance by expanding them into five responses:

1. The individual might change one or more of the cognitive elements.

2. The individual might come to see the elements as less important than they used to be.

3. The individual might seek consonant information. (In this situation, consume media that aligns with their opinions and attitudes through selective exposure).

4. The individual might add new elements to one side of the tension or the other. (The spouse might dismiss reports that are dissonant and/or blame media for providing inaccurate or exaggerated reports.

5. The individual might distort or misinterpret the information involved. (The spouse might try to convince himself or herself that the portrayal is incorrect or not credible.)

Harmon-Jones and Mills (1999) juxtapose the options for reducing the dissonance: (by) "removing dissonant cognitions, adding new consonant cognitions, reducing the importance of dissonant cognitions, or increasing the importance of consonant cognitions" (p. 4). In the case of media use, it is likely that the individual will seek consonant information while at the same time avoiding the information that will cause the dissonance. These actions are referred to as selective exposure and selective avoidance.

Selective exposure. Carter, Pyszka & Guerrero (1969) discussed selective exposure in their examination of cognitive dissonance. "The individual is viewed as selecting that content which is supportive of his values, with the corollary that any effect of the exposure is primarily reinforcing of those values." Greenwald and Ronis (1978) cited a different study in which the researchers said it was difficult to find evidence of selective exposure. "Wicklund and Brehm (1976) have concluded that, 'it is difficult to obtain evidence for selective avoidance of 'dissonance-arousing' information" (p. 189). In the situation of military spouses' uses of media, selective exposure may be a prominent reaction to dissonance-arousing information. Since

military spouses select what media to consume, it follows logically that they will choose media coverage that is consonant and avoid media that is dissonant.

The situation of military spouses' uses of media is likely to illuminate whether they use selective exposure as a method to reduce dissonance. It is feasible to consider that if spouses are faced with coverage of the war that does not align with their opinion of how the coverage should be, they simply will elect to consume media that does align. The uniqueness of this segment of the population is that they are not consuming media like the general population. The content they consume involves the fate of one of the most important people in their lives. Their use of media is much more emotion-laden compared with the general population who does not have as strong of a connection with the content.

When dissonance is not reduced. Harmon-Jones and Mills (1999) described what happens when the dissonance is not reduced to an acceptable threshold level and the person must seek an alternative plan for coping. "If dissonance is not reduced by changing one's belief, the dissonance can lead to…rejection or refutation of the information, seeking support from those who agree with one's belief, and attempting to persuade others to accept one's belief" (p. 6-7). If military spouses cannot reduce the dissonance through the ascribed methods, they might reject what the media are telling them. They might see that another source covered it differently and note the differences as evidence that neither account is accurate. The truth would have to be corroborated by multiple sources.

The element of importance. The concept of importance has not been prominent in the research on cognitive dissonance. In this situation, however, the importance is a large factor in predicting the military spouses' behavior. Littlejohn (2001) talked about the role importance

plays in the dissonance. "Dissonance itself is a result of two other variables, the importance of the cognitive elements and the number of elements involved in the dissonant relation" (p. 141).

In Eliasoph's focus groups (1997), she found that volunteers viewed the issues that were "close to home" as important to them. While the war in Iraq is not necessarily "close to home," there is a relation in how the volunteers decided what issues were important. "Volunteers used phrases such as, 'I care only about issues that affect me and my kids or in which I have a vested interest" (p. 278). She reported a phrase the general American public uses to explain their political apathy and involvement was, "I care if it affects me personally" (p. 605). These remarks are allusions that one who is married to a soldier deployed to a war zone would view that cognition as a highly important one.

Reducing the importance. Festinger (1957) posited that if two elements are dissonant with one another, "the magnitude of the dissonance will be a function of the importance of the elements" (p. 16). Because of the great importance of the issue, it is unlikely that participants in this group will reduce dissonance by reducing the importance of the issue.

Cognitive dissonance in news consumption. Most Americans (58%) do not care if the news reflects their own viewpoint on politics and issues, but among those who followed international, national, local, government, and business news, 43% say they like news with their point of view (Pew Research Center, 2004). Across all political parties, knowledge levels and levels of interest in hard news, respondents reported a far greater "like" when news shares their point of view than "disliking" it, although the majority tended to report that it didn't matter to them (Pew Research Center).

RQ4: Are indicators of cognitive dissonance emerging when military spouses consume media coverage of OIF? How do they respond to the dissonance?

Implications

Describing media behaviors, examining psychological use of media and understanding media hostility perception and dissonance are the goals of this research project. In review, the research questions are:

RQ1: What are the media behaviors of military spouses?

RQ2: What are their perceived benefits of media usage?

RQ3: Is hostile media perception present in military spouses' assessment of news coverage?

RQ4: Are indicators of cognitive dissonance emerging when military spouses consume media coverage of OIF? How do they respond to the dissonance?

Chapter Three will explain the methodology used in this study to answer these questions. It also will explain how the respondents were solicited and selected. Then it will describe the sample of military spouses who participated in this study and explain the method used to examine the research questions. Chapter Three also will explicate the instrument and the variables of interest.

CHAPTER 3 - METHOD

This chapter will explain the methodology used in this study. It also will explain how the respondents were solicited and selected. Then it will describe the sample of military spouses who were interviewed and compare it with demographics of the entire Army. Next it will detail the instrument used in the interviews and finally it will describe the variables of interest.

Since the topic has not previously been studied by scholars, an exploratory, qualitative method was suitable in the current research. Therefore this study explores military spouses' relationship with media using in-depth interviews. The instrument included planned interview questions with a few follow-up questions depending on responses. About half of the planned questions studied demographics (See Appendix A). The interview questions were piloted on two interviewees and adjustments were made where needed. A consent form was read to the participant in telephone interviews and provided to the interviewees in face-to-face interviews (See Appendix B). All of the interviews were recorded to facilitate compilation of data. At the conclusion of the interviews, the interviewer read a short debriefing paragraph to the interviewee that provided information about how to contact the researcher or where to go if they wanted counseling following the interview (See Appendix C). Protocol met requirements of the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board.

Army Approval

In addition to meeting the requirements for the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board, the researcher complied with Army Regulations for conducting research with military personnel. Army rules prohibit solicitation of military personnel with flyers, handouts or booths without approval from the Army. Also, lists of military personnel's phone numbers and e-mail addresses are not releaseable outside the Department of Defense without submitting a

Freedom of Information Act request that demonstrates the need for and privilege to the lists. A contact at the Army Research Institute recommended the researcher approach the Public Affairs Office at Fort Riley to gain permission and authorization to disseminate information about the study and how to participate. The Public Affairs Officer decided there was an Army and Fort Riley interest in the data and results and provided the researcher an authorization memo to approach military personnel to ask for assistance with increasing awareness of the study and increasing participation. The researcher approached the Fort Riley Family Readiness Group leader about sending an e-mail to her contacts and asking them to forward it on to their contacts and so on until the greatest number of spouses was aware of the study. To increase participation, the researcher also encouraged spouses who consented to the interview to refer other spouses to the researcher. The researcher e-mailed Family Readiness Group leaders in National Guard and Reserve units and requested that they forward the information to their contacts in the same manner.

The 30 interviews were conducted between October 2006 and February 2008. Data analysis was conducted February 2008 to April 2008. Following the interviews, the researcher placed the responses to demographic and media behavior questions into an excel spreadsheet to determine averages and frequencies. Then the researcher typed responses from the hand-written notes and recorded interviews. Finally, the researcher highlighted statements in different colors and tabulated frequencies of patterns of responses. Although frequencies were tabulated, none of the frequencies were analyzed statistically, given that it was a qualitative study.

Sample

A convenience sample of military spouses was solicited via e-mails sent through the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Family Readiness Group leader, installation support activities

and word-of-mouth referrals. The sample included 30 respondents from three subsets: spouses

with soldiers who previously had deployed to Iraq, those whose soldiers were currently deployed

to Iraq, and the smallest subset—those whose soldier had never deployed to Iraq. At the time of

the interview, 10 of the spouses' soldiers currently were deployed to Iraq. To study the

similarities and differences between spouses of full-time Active Component soldiers and part-

time Reserve Component soldiers, the sample included both components.

Description of Sample

All of the Active Component spouses were from Fort Riley, Kansas, and almost all of the

Reserve Component spouses lived in Kansas, except for one spouse in Nebraska and another in

Washington. The average age of the respondents was 33 and the average length of marriage was

7.7 years. The respondents had an average of 1.46 children living with them most of the time.

The respondents' soldiers had deployed on average 1.18 times for an average 15.61 months

served in support of OIF. Four of the spouses reported their soldier had not been deployed to

Iraq; 17 reported one deployment; eight reported two deployments; one reported three

deployments. The Reserve Component spouses' soldiers had been deployed an average of 1.375

times for an average of 18.19 months.

The Active Component spouses' soldiers deployed an average of 1.14 times for an

average of 13.9 months. Twenty-one of the respondents' soldiers were enlisted and nine were

spouses of officers (See Figure 1). The sample's split was similar to the demographic make-up of

the entire Army (See Figure 2). Twenty-two of the respondents were spouses of soldiers in the

Active Component and eight had soldiers serving in the Reserve Component (See Figure 3).

More Reserve Component spouses would have needed to be interviewed to replicate the

component split in the actual Army (See Figure 4). Two dual-military couples were interviewed and four of the respondents were male spouses.

Figure 1 Sample's rank split

Sample's rank split
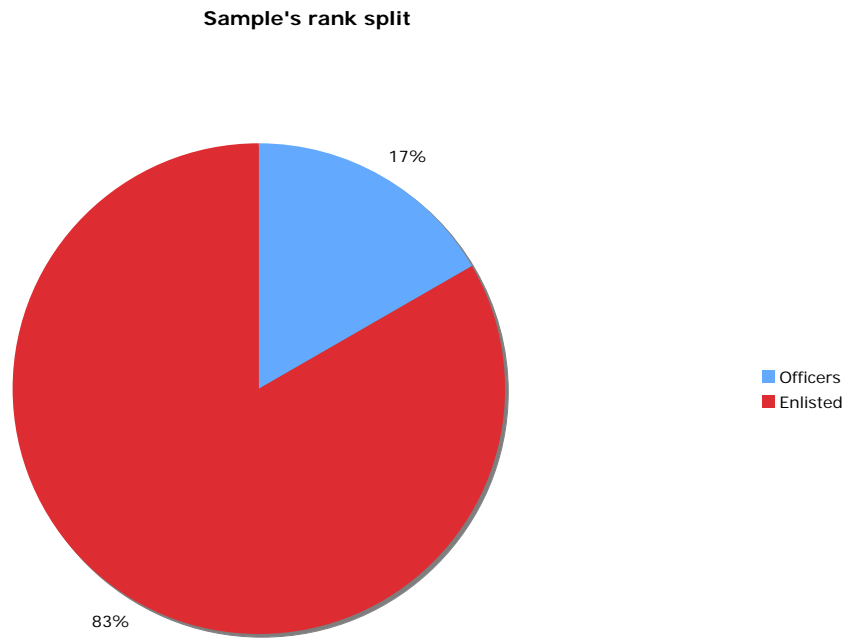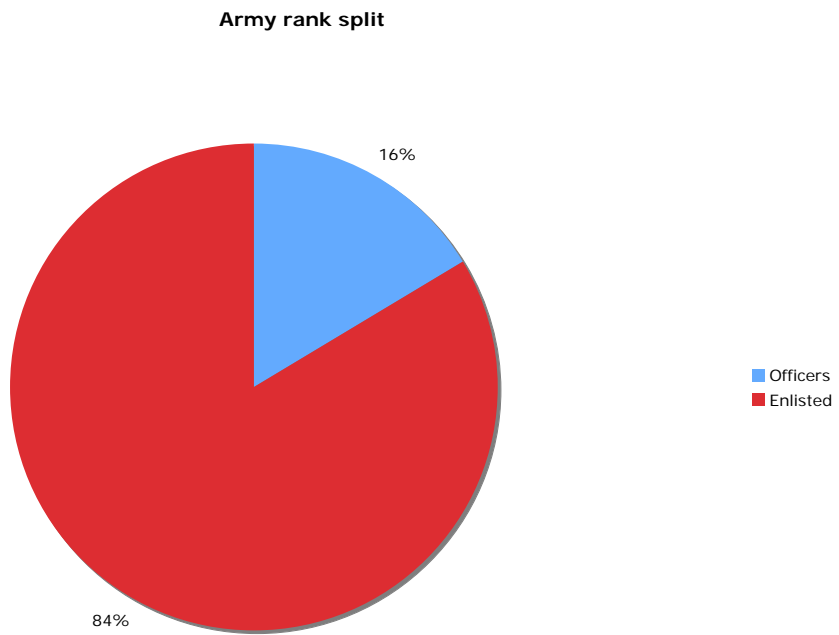

17%

83%

- Officers
- Enlisted

Figure 2 Army's rank split

Army rank split

16%

84%

- Officers
- Enlisted

Figure 3 Sample by component
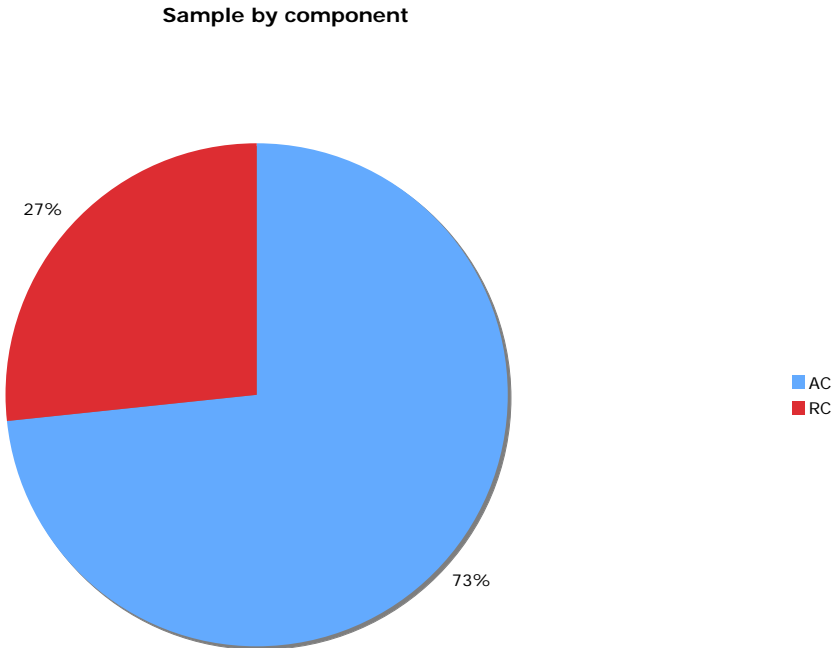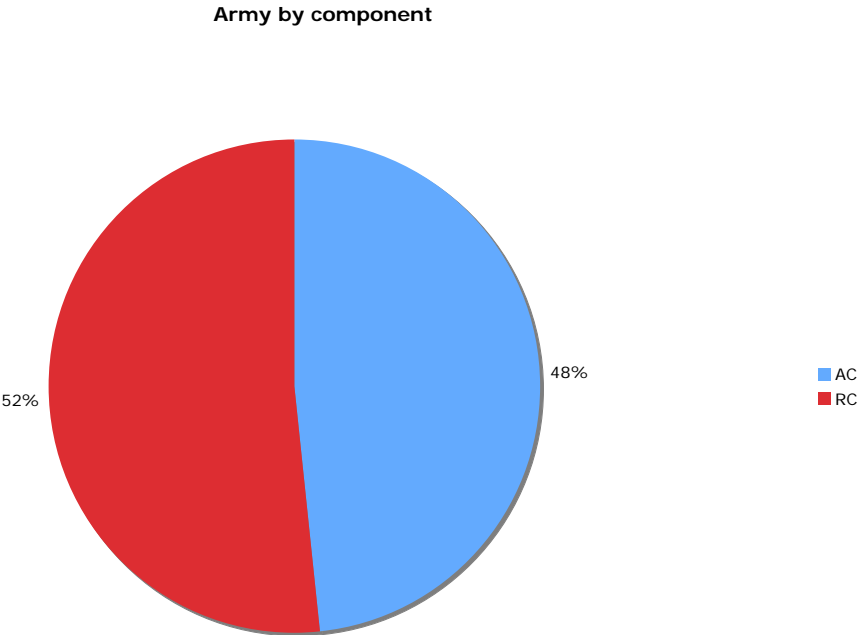
Sample by component

Figure 4 Army by component

Army by component

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Instrument

The instrument was a 32-question, semi-structured interview. The first set of questions aimed to determine military spouses' media behaviors. The next set of questions was designed to identify perceived benefits of consuming media coverage of the war. The next set of questions was aimed to determine if hostile media perception was present. Three questions were designed to identify if cognitive dissonance existed. The final questions examined demographic variables (See Appendix A). Some of the questions allowed the respondents to provide as many responses as they desired. For instance, the researcher asked, "Where do you get your news for Operation Iraqi Freedom coverage? Television, radio, Internet, newspaper, blogs, etc…." The respondents could choose from the options or supply their own responses. Other questions were more open-ended, such as, "What do you get out of the media coverage of OIF?" The demographic section contained the only mutually exclusive responses. For instance, the spouses were asked if their soldier was in the Active Component or Reserve Component and the spouses chose one of the supplied options.

Variables of Interest

The study was aimed at exploring military spouses' relationship with media. The variables of interest were media behaviors, such as the types of sources used and in what quantities. Specifically, the respondents were asked what media they used for news coverage of the war, such as television, Internet, newspaper, radio, etc. They also were asked how much time per day the respondents used media for news coverage of the war, whether they primarily used civilian or military media and whether they used local or national news coverage.

Chapter 4 will present relevant findings for each of the research questions and note any other themes that emerged. The findings will be presented in the same format used in Boone,

Penner, Gordon, Remig, Harvey and Clark's qualitative study on safe food-handing behavior among adults (2005) with topics, themes, and quotes. The findings related to perceived gratifications, hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance will be drawn from resonating themes and repetition of responses. The themes will be presented along with frequencies.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

This chapter will present the relevant findings related to the research questions and note any other themes that emerged. Findings related to media behaviors, perceived gratifications, hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance will be drawn from resonating themes and repetition of responses. The themes will be presented along with their frequencies. Some of the most salient quotes will be inserted in tables and in the text.

Themes

Because a qualitative, exploratory method was used to examine military spouses' relationship with media, the researcher looked for themes and patterns to emerge. Although the structured interview questions aimed to explore spouses' media behaviors, perceived benefits of media usage and whether hostile media perception or cognitive dissonance were present in the same, other findings resulted. Several of the respondents discussed similar themes without being asked for a specific answer or being asked a specific question. Some responses had frequencies well over the majority of total of respondents and other responses were mentioned only a few times, but they were unique responses and therefore noteworthy considering that multiple people cited a similar, unique response.

RQ1 Findings

RQ1 examined media behaviors of spouses, specifically what media, in what quantities and what sources they selected. The most-used medium for war coverage the respondents reported was television, with two-thirds citing it as a news source for war coverage. The second-most-used medium was Internet with 57% (n = 17) of respondents reporting using Internet for news coverage of the war. Six respondents reported using newspapers; three respondents said they used radio and one respondent said she used a magazine as a source for war coverage. The

top four responses were supplied options by the interviewer. The interviewer supplied blogs as a possible option, however no one reported using blogs as a source for war coverage. The spouses were permitted and encouraged to list all media they used for war coverage.

Respondents reported watching CNN, MSNBC/NBC, and FOX the most frequently. Internet was the second most-used medium, and 60% (n = 18) cited reading the news headlines on their Web-based e-mail account homepage (i.e. Army Knowledge Online e-mail, Yahoo e-mail, MSN e-mail, etc.). The common media behaviors of the military spouses are presented in Table 1.

The average time spouses said they spent consuming media each day was an average of 1.25 hours with the least amount, two respondents saying "no time at all," and one respondent's high of six hours per day. The largest group, 46.67% (n = 14), indicated they spent less than one hour consuming media for war coverage. Four respondents said they consumed media because their soldier was deployed and said they do not consume it when he or she is not deployed. "I wouldn't consume nearly as much as if he wasn't there," one female spouse said.

Most of the spouses said they use civilian and national media. While 71.4% of Reserve Component spouses indicated they used local media at all, even if it they used national more frequently, only 13.6% (n = 4) of Active Component spouses reported using local media at all. With regard to the military, civilian or both question, spouses were asked to categorize their answer as primarily using military, civilian or both equally. The most frequently cited military news sources were *Army Times*, the *Fort Riley Post* newspaper and Armed Forces Network television in Germany, although only 20% (n = 6) of the respondents mentioned the military sources. Notably, no Reserve Component spouses indicated they used any military sources. One

Reserve Component spouse said he used military news primarily, but when later asked what specific outlets he used, he listed CNN and NBC and did not mention any military sources.

Table 1 Common media behaviors of military spouses

	Frequency	Percent of whole
Time spent per day consuming news coverage of the Iraq War	Not at all* - 2 Less than one hour - 14 1-2 hours - 7 More than 2, up to 3 hours - 5 More than 3 hours – 2	6.67% 46.67% 23.33% 16.67% 6.67%
Primarily use civilian or military media sources	Civilian – 23 (16 AC; 7 RC) Military – 2 (1 AC; 1 RC) Equally – 5 (5 AC; 0 RC) None – 0	76.67% 6.67% 16.67% 0%
Primarily use local or national media	National – 24 (18 AC; 6 RC) Local – 6 (4 AC; 2 RC) Equally - 0 None – 0	80% 20%

*"not at all" includes spouses who said they do not consume it; it's just "on"

RQ2 Findings

RQ2 asked what the perceived psychological benefits for consuming news coverage of the war were. The spouses offered their gratifications in response to the questions, "What do you get out of media coverage," "What is the benefit to consuming it," and "Why do you consume media coverage?" There was not a list of options to choose from, and spouses were encouraged to offer as many benefits to using news coverage as they desired.

Respondents' reported gratifications for news coverage of the war can be categorized in four groups: information, surveillance, political competency and empathy. Gaining information was the most cited gratification for consuming news coverage of the war. The majority, 70%, of spouses indicated they used the media to be informed, up-to-date, current, or some other synonym. A few spouses reported they used media to keep tabs on their soldier, to keep up with what was going on in the area, and to know if anything bad happened there.

Spouses who reported they used news coverage to gauge the war's progress or lack thereof represent the surveillance gratification. The political competency gratification was represented in spouses reporting using news coverage to form an opinion on the war or make decisions about electing political leaders. Empathy emerged in spouses' reporting they used news coverage to show support for soldiers, understand what they go through and feel closer to their soldier.

Three respondents stated they did not see a benefit to consuming news coverage of the war. One spouse said consuming it too much would stress her out and, "when I get a whole lot of information, it causes me to worry." Another spouse said she knew women who didn't even turn on the television. A male spouse said he wouldn't let their children watch the news. "I give them accurate information. I tell them where Mom is, but that's it," he said. The relevant findings related to perceived benefits of media usage are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Perceived benefits of media usage

Reported gratifications	Theme/frequency	Quote
Gaining information	To be informed, up-to-date, current, in the know (70%)	• "Because I want to keep informed of what the media is saying so I can know since my husband is in Iraq and most of our family sees what media are seeing. When they say, 'Oh, my God, did you see…'" I can set them straight." • "Feeling like I'm in the know"
	To keep up with the area my soldier is/was in (16.67%)	• "I search for my husband's unit for current events and focus on the neighborhood he's patrolling" • "Just because he's deployed—to see if there's anything written about the place he's at" • "I wouldn't consume nearly as much as if he wasn't there"
	To know if something bad happened (13.3%)	• "Of course I google my husband's base to see if anything has happened" • "My husband can't give me specific details—media can give a little" • "To see where the hot spots are, the trouble spots."
Surveillance	To gauge the progress of the war, how it's going, or where it's going (20%)	• "I try to see if things are worse or better, I guess." • "I want to see the progress, see if things are getting better or at a standstill."
Political competency	To form an opinion on the war or make decisions about electing political leaders (6.67%)	• "I like being informed and know what's going on to form opinions politically and morally." • "I consume it to pick leaders and understand their beliefs—to know what would happen with OIF."
Empathy	To show support for soldiers (6.67%)	• "I feel closer to my husband" • "I want to show support to people doing it now and know what they're going through"

The existence of clear hostile media perception was ambiguous. However, strong indicators emerged that spouses did not approve of media's job performance. A majority, 83.33% (n = 25) of the respondents, indicated they thought media were focusing on negative stories and avoiding covering positive ones. Spouses said they wanted to see more positive and fewer negative stories. The responses were to questions such as, "What do you think of the media coverage of OIF," and "Do journalists bring you the stories about the war you want to have?" The theme of more positive and fewer negative stories emerged without spouses being prompted to provide an answer to that direct question.

Some spouses indicated they thought media influence public opinion. One third of the respondents said media influence public opinion and many of those said they influenced it against the war. One male spouse said, "The entire country wants to be done with the war and media are trying to help with that matter." These responses were not prompted and spouses expressed them in response to questions about journalists doing a good job or bad job reporting the war, reporting the war accurately, and bringing the stories about the war spouses wanted to have. There were no links or patterns in responses with regard to demographics or whether spouses' soldiers were part of the active component or reserve component.

Assessment of media's job performance. While 43% (n = 13) of the respondents said they did not have an opinion, or thought the media were doing a fair job covering the war, 30% (n = 9) said they were doing a good job, and 16.66% (n = 5) said they were doing a bad job. Ten percent of the respondents said media were doing *their* job, and one said she thought they were doing a bad job by her standards, but a great job according to what she said she believes

journalists are taught or encouraged to do. The responses about media job performance are

outlined in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 Non-prompted responses about media job performance

Topic	Theme/frequency	Quotes
Media capitalize on the negative and do not highlight the positive	There should be more positive and fewer negative stories (83.33%)	• "Their story selection needs to slant more to the positive aspects. That may be because I support the war because my husband strongly believes in what he is doing." • There are some reporting the good going on. I mean it's frustrating as a military spouse to see all the negativity with the war." • "(From soldier reporters) we get to hear our husbands are actually doing something worthwhile" • "We don't get the whole picture. I hear failures more often than I hear success. That's not what I hear from the military guys." • "I would like to see more progress and goodwill stories than blowing-things-up stories."
Media influence	They influence public opinion of the war (33.33%)	• "I'm worried the American public is going to give up before we get there." • "I think they sway public opinion immensely." • "The entire country wants to be done with the war and media are trying to help with that matter." • "There has been a decided shift in public opinion from when the war started to now. You could say it's because soldiers are dying or something, but I think it's coming from what media tell us Americans."

Table 4 Responses to direct questions about media job performance

Question	Theme/frequency	Quote
Are journalists generally doing a good job or bad job reporting the war?	They are doing a good job (30%)	• "Sometimes I really appreciate they're there in a really hard situation. I'm very proud of them." • "They do a good job with the information they're given. It's not their fault. Things get misunderstood." • "When they're embedded, they do a better job. When they're not, they don't." • "I would say (coverage) in general is good, but it's selection of the story that I object to or have frustrations with."
	They are doing a bad job (16.67%)	• "They are doing a disservice to soldiers and soldiers' families who willingly sacrifice and put themselves in harm's way." • "A bad job. I don't think they're giving enough information, above the body count." • "A bad job. It's always negative. I have yet to see any positive."
	They are doing their job (10%)	• "They're doing their job. You have to have shock value to get publicity. It's that rubber-necking factor. The thrill, adrenaline like from a car wreck or fire." • "I think they're doing the job they were taught; they're probably doing a great job. By my standards, I don't think it's great." • "I don't want to say they're doing a bad job. They're doing their job."
	No opinion, fair job, neutral opinion, unwilling to answer (43%)	• "That's subjective. They work with what they're given." • "It depends on the journalist." • "A little of both." • "They're doing OK."
How do you think journalists report on OIF?	They make a big story out of something little; generalize things; sensationalize (16.67%)	• "They're making it too doom and too—they're sensationalizing it." • There's sensationalism. They're trying to sell ad space and air time. It's about dollars and making money—not about what's taking place." • "They make a little thing a big thing. There have been cases where one American does one thing wrong and they can make a whole week of (covering) it."

RQ4 Findings

RQ4 aimed to identify if cognitive dissonance was occurring when military spouses consume media coverage of the war and what the primary response to the dissonance was, if it was present. Cognitive dissonance is psychological discomfort that occurs when individuals encounter information that is inconsistent with their existing cognitions—their attitudes, values, and beliefs. Military spouses' relationship with media provides an interesting basis for analysis of their reaction to inconsistent cognitions in news coverage of the war.

Cognitive dissonance. The researcher attempted to gauge cognitive dissonance by asking the interviewees if they ever encountered news reports that conflicted with what they knew about the situation. Although 50% (n = 15) of the respondents reported they had experienced such an occurrence, cognitive dissonance was more evident in the discussion of casualties. None of the questions asked about coverage of casualties, but more than half of the respondents indicated they were tired of hearing about soldier casualties, and five respondents indicated they were tired of hearing about civilian casualties. The fact that the spouses did not want to casualties to be tracked indicates they feel psychological discomfort. The discomfort could be from worry that their soldier could be a casualty, especially if there is an increase in casualties, and therefore a greater probability for their soldier. Or the discomfort could be from pointing out drawbacks of the war to influence public opinion that the war is too costly, measured in human lives lost and in actual funds, without enough benefit. One spouse who also is a soldier in a dual-military couple said while crying, "I want to know what we're doing right. I don't want to know that there's a soldier at Walter Reed that lost his arm or leg and may never get to go back to his job, because that's a number. I want to know whose life he saved while doing that. I don't want to hear just numbers of soldiers dying."

Methods to reduce dissonance. One question was aimed at determining what method spouses employed to reduce dissonance: "How do you respond when you encounter news reports that conflict with what you know about the situation?" Again, few of the responses pointed to a clear reaction to cognitive dissonance according to Festinger (1957) and Littlejohn (2001). However, spouses talked about some of their behaviors regarding media usage that did point to some of the reactions, namely selective exposure and selective avoidance and reducing the importance of dissonance cognitions (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999). Cognitive dissonance indicators are represented in Table 5.

Reducing the importance. Six respondents made comments that indicated the negative events that were being covered were not as big a deal as they were made to be. Spouses talked about casualties and civilian casualties as a fact of war or part of the price to be paid for success in Iraq. "We don't deliberately kill them but when something explodes and it's aimed at American soldiers, a civilian set off that explosion," one female spouse said. "Soldiers are being charged with murder. If they did it, OK. Every time you turn around another one is being brought up on charges. They're trained to kill," another female spouse said.

Table 5 Cognitive dissonance indicators

Topic	Theme/frequency	Quote
Cognitive dissonance	They find reports that conflict with what they know about the situation (50%)	• "Overall what I see, it's not as positive as what I've heard from guys coming home." • "With pictures, they cut it or put a spin on it that's totally out of context."
	Too much focus on soldier casualties (53.33%)	• "All you hear about is death tolls, attacks and suicide bombers." • "They always capitalize on casualties, always." • "There's more to Iraq than a body count." • "It's like they just want to cover the death toll."
	Too much focus on civilian casualties (16.67%)	• "It seems like they're always focusing on the number of people that have died either soldiers or civilians." • "There's a lot of focus on casualties; there's a lot of focus on civilian casualties." • "They're focusing on the death toll and the death toll for Iraqis and that's it."
Reactions to dissonance	Selective exposure, avoid consuming media (30%)	• "I tried to avoid (news coverage)." • "I don't like to see the news. I see it first hand (as a soldier herself). I don't need a play by play. I don't make a point of watching it." • "I think we avoid watching the news because it's overload." • "(I watch) FOX, because it's the closest to what I see as the truth."
	Negative cognitions inherent in soldiers' job (killing) are viewed as unfortunate but necessary for soldiers' mission (20%)	• "Civilians are going to get killed and I hate that." • "The Army needs to do what they need to do." • "It made it look more depressing than it is; makes it look like soldiers are being rough but maybe they had a cause to." • They're not just there to take lives."
Negative reactions to news coverage	Causes them to feel stressed, worried, scared or frightened (30%)	• "It's filled with depressing news and it's hard for me to be encouraging for my husband." • "I worry a little."
	Causes them to feel frustrated or angry with media reports (30%)	• "Sometimes I think the angle of the news, it causes me some frustration with the war in Iraq. I'm irritated with the press." • "All media sources should be kept out of theater. They don't provide real news information, so there's no reason to be there."

Other Notable Findings

There were two themes that emerged without direct questions. The themes were spouses' trust of civilian and military sources and their opinion of embedded reporters, who get their stories right alongside soldiers fighting the war.

Trust of civilian versus military sources. Though no questions were aimed at determining whether spouses trusted a specific source, many spouses indicated they trusted military sources and several noted their soldier as a good source of truthful information. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated they trusted military sources, such as military Web sites, public affairs personnel and their soldier to tell them what the war is really like. "My best source was my wife when she could get a phone call," one male spouse of a Reserve Component soldier said. Another spouse pointed out that the information she got through military sources was more trustworthy than news media. "I get weekly e-mail of what's going on in the military like a *Military Times* thing. It's very non-biased because it's put on by the military," she said. Two respondents said they don't believe, trust or find media credible. "I don't like to (consume media). I can only believe maybe 10% of it 90% of the time," another female spouse said.

Embedded reporters. No questions in the structured interview instrument related to embedded reporters, however, eight respondents brought up embedded reporters in their interviews. Four respondents said they like embedding reporters and thought embeds and soldier reporters gave them a better picture of the war. The soldier reporters a few of the spouses referred to are likely public affairs soldiers who essentially are Army journalists, but nonetheless a military source. Spouses who reported they trusted military sources also likely would trust reports from soldier journalists, though they lumped these reporters in with their opinion on embedded journalists.

Four other spouses said they did not like having reporters embedded and said they saw them as an added burden and a threat to their soldier's safety. "I would tell my husband, if it's between you and the journalist, throw the journalist in front. It's not safe for our troops," one female spouse said.

Chapter Five will discuss findings relevant to the research questions and the other notable findings. The researcher will concede any limitations and offer suggestions for future research. Finally, the researcher will conclude the study with a recap of notable discoveries in military spouses' relationship with media in this sample.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings of this study in detail. The researcher will concede any limitations and offer suggestions for future researcher. Finally, the researcher will conclude the study with a recap of notable discoveries in military spouses' relationship with media.

Media Behavior

It appears television is the most-sought source for news coverage regarding OIF by military spouses, which is not surprising given the visual and auditory nature of television and consumption by the general public. The networks respondents mentioned the most were CNN, MSNBC/NBC and FOX. Internet was the second-most sought format for news. Respondents reported clicking hyperlinks to stories from headlines on their e-mail home pages. Spouses likely use e-mail a considerable amount for communicating with their soldier, so this is a realistic finding.

Differences between Reserve and Active Components. Reserve Component spouses do not have as great of access to military media, such as installation newspapers or other military publications that are distributed through the Post Exchange and other outlets on installations. The results indicated Reserve Component spouses did not use military media as often as Active Component spouses reported using military media sources. This is probably because Reserve Component spouses do not live on the installation and therefore do not have military media as readily available to them. Likewise Active Component spouses indicated they did not typically use local media, which is plausible, because they move around frequently and probably do not use the local media to their current duty station as their primary source.

Four respondents indicated they used media more or only when their soldier was deployed and used it less or not at all when their soldier was not deployed. This is indicative of

Eliasoph's (1997) focus group finding that issues "close to home" are more important to people. Having their soldier deployed brings the war closer to home for them and makes it more important to them, and therefore they pay more attention to it through news coverage.

Military spouses' use of local, national, civilian and military media revealed an unforeseen pattern related to their soldier serving in the Reserve or Active Component. This finding was the only one that tended to exist depending on the soldier's component. No other demographics influenced or were linked to what responses spouses gave. The few respondents who indicated they used media more when their soldier was deployed and less when their soldier was home was not a surprising response, but perhaps the lack of spouses who reported such behavior was surprising. A direct question about such behavior might illuminate whether that is the case for many military spouses.

Uses and Gratifications of War Coverage

The information gratification was not a surprising result. Spouses should have had a considerable interest in knowing about the war and how it affects their lives, so consuming media to learn more about the war and what their soldier was doing is plausible.

The surveillance gratification, which emerged as others reported they used media to judge the progress of the war presented an interesting relationship for analysis. Many spouses said they felt the media did not show the positive actions and stories from Iraq. As indicated by many of the spouses, they felt the coverage pointed out the failures and what wasn't going well more often than the alternative. Therefore using the media to gauge the progress would have been inherently flawed if they assert that media only show negativity and failures. If indeed media were only presenting negative stories, consuming news coverage of the war should make the spouses think the war wasn't going well for the United States. Some of them indicated they

thought the war would end up well, so it's likely they were using reports from their soldier to counteract the negative reports and judge that there was progress being made toward success in Iraq.

The political competency gratification that emerged as spouses reported using media coverage to form an opinion on the war and to make election decisions was unexpected. Often people indicate media do not influence their opinions or beliefs, but a few spouses admitted they specifically use media to form their opinion of the war and to influence their election decisions. Also, it would seem logical that they would form their opinion of the war based on input and knowledge they gain from their spouse who is directly involved with fighting the war, as opposed to using information provided by journalists who may or may not be reporting from the front lines.

The empathy gratification represented in the responses that consuming news coverage made spouses feel closer to their soldier or allowed them to show support for soldiers was an unexpected finding, because of the typically negative relationship between spouses and the media. In a sense, they were giving credit to the media for the spouses being better supporters of their soldiers.

Hostile Media Perception

Although the presence of hostile media perception was ambiguous, there were several indicators of spouses' distrust of media reports or disapproval of their job performance in reporting the war. It could be said that spouses in this sample did not care for media, but the typical hostile media perception of media presenting the opposite opinion of the consumer was not a significant finding in this study.

A dominant theme that emerged without provocation was the issue of too many negative stories and not enough positive stories. It is likely this feeling was particularly strong for the spouses, given that they voiced it without being prompted. Also, few were willing to say journalists were doing a bad job, but hostile media perception was found.

The only theme that somewhat indicated a presence of hostile media perception was when a few spouses reported media influencing public opinion to end the war in Iraq. A classic sign of hostile media perception is an indication that the media present the opposite opinion the consumer holds. Although spouses were not asked for their opinion of the war, a few spouses said they felt the media either were reflecting the anti-war opinion of the American public or were influencing the American public's opinion to becoming anti-war and it is believable that many of the spouses were pro-war.

Cognitive Dissonance and Responses

Spouses were concerned about media tracking the number of casualties of both American soldiers and Iraqi civilians. This finding hearkens back to the Vietnam War when American public opinion was against the war and death tolls were continually reported. Media tend to use the death toll as a measure of the magnitude of the event, but spouses thought there was such a focus on casualties that other, positive stories were being missed. It is difficult to tell if spouses were uncomfortable about the death toll because it made them think of their worst fear or because of the concern for the effect a rising death toll could have on the American public opinion of the war.

The spouses in this sample showed loyalty to soldiers whether it was siding with the soldier about accusations of misconduct or not blaming soldiers for engaging the enemy or civilians (they made no distinction). Although none of the questions elicited a description of

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emotions felt when consuming media coverage of the war, many spouses describing feeling frustrated, mad, angry, irritated, scared or worried. These descriptions show the tenuous relationship between spouses and the media. Even though spouses say media make them feel these emotions, still they use media as a source of information. While psychologically they probably would be more at ease not consuming the reports, the thirst for information outweighs it, and they end up with aroused concern for their soldier and a negative picture of the war. They may have set out to see progress, but then they say they think is not being reported.

Civilian Versus Military Media Sources

Another unexpected finding was the discussion of what information sources the spouses trusted. They often said they trusted their soldier or military media to tell them the truth—but are they confusing the truth with what they want to hear? They often spoke of positive stories coming from their military sources, but they did not often report that mainstream media were inaccurate. They explained they thought mainstream media sought out negative stories similar to military media bringing them positive stories. One spouse said she would use more military media if she could get more of it. It is not necessarily that they trust their military sources more—it is that they get more of what they want to hear from those sources. In many cases, it seems they would like to use their soldier and military sources as their only information source but in the end they use mainstream media as a supplement to gratify their curiosity.

Embedded Reporting

Surprisingly the sample was split on the use of embedded reporters. Again there was no specific question that elicited responses about embeds, but eight of the spouses brought it up without provocation. Half of the eight said they liked the stories embeds told, mostly because the journalists were down with the soldiers getting it first hand. The other half, however, said they

thought embeds were a nuisance that gave their soldier something else to worry about. Those

respondents did not like the added responsibility on the soldier to keep the embed safe.

Limitations

The sample was a convenience sample of spouses with a soldier at Fort Riley or in the

Kansas/Midwest region; therefore the results cannot be applied to all military spouses. A larger

sample that includes more Reserve Component soldiers' spouses could inform better the issues

specific to Reserve Component spouses.

The researcher selected questions for the instrument that were intended to gauge media

behaviors, gratifications, hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance. Unfortunately,

specific themes related to those questions did not emerge. However other dominant themes that

explain military spouses' relationship with media did emerge. Better-phrased or more

concentrated questions might provide specific patterns and responses as results.

The method of in-depth interviews was employed after an attempt to survey spouses

failed to get an acceptable number of respondents. In-depth interviews do not have the statistical

reliability that quantitative studies can provide; therefore the themes are not generalizable to the

military spouse population. The researcher included only Army spouses, so the perspectives of

Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy and Marines were left out.

Also, spouses were not asked for their opinion on the war, because it was assumed fewer

spouses would consent to participate in the study if required to express their opinion on the war.

A study that could assess spouses' opinion of the war would provide greater clarity on the

cognitive dissonance phenomenon. Without knowing their opinion, it becomes difficult to

assess whether they think media present the opposite view in their coverage.

Future Research

A quantitative approach to this topic would be generalizable to the military spouse population. A greater sample size with more diversity across military branches and components also would provide more insight into the spouse and media relationship. A longitudinal study that examines how media usage fluctuates throughout a war or a deployment would provide information about how usage changes with regard to individual factors and specific events in the war. The effects that tracking soldier casualties have would be informing. A look at how usage changes for spouses who are in the beginning of their relationship with their soldier and the Army compared to spouses who have been married to the soldier for many years could point to whether they use mainstream media to educate themselves about their soldiers' career and lifestyle.

Conclusion

The relationship between the military and media has been tenuous, but also has been examined frequently. The relationship between military spouses and the media, however, has not been researched extensively. Although the findings indicate a similar tenuous relationship to the military media relationship, further research could provide mutual benefits for military spouses in their understanding of journalists' story selection and content, while also educating journalists and publishers about what stories cause military spouses to react negatively to news coverage of the war.

Given the strong attitudes, opinions and beliefs spouses likely have regarding their soldiers' career and the United States' involvement in wars, cognitive dissonance theory and hostile media perception are theoretical bases to examine the military spouse relationship with media. Spouses who are dissatisfied with their soldier's career or the nation's involvement in a war are likely to persuade their soldier to end their career with the Army, so an examination of

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how they form their opinion of their soldier's Army service and the war can inform retention analysis.

Over the years, media access has changed resulting in providing media consumers with many and varied media products. An examination of how access, especially with regard to embedded reporters, affects coverage and media consumers' opinion of the coverage provides further insight for decision-makers about what amount of access is best and for whom.

Military spouses have a complex relationship with news coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 2003 Iraq War. Utilizing uses and gratifications, hostile media perception, and cognitive dissonance perspectives as a basis, the researcher studied military spouses' media behaviors, perceived benefits of media usage, and whether hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance were present in this convenience sample of military spouses. Thirty military spouses participated in in-depth interviews. The results showed a desire for more positive news stories and less negative news stories about Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hostile media perception and cognitive dissonance responses were noted among participants–especially with regard to the media's tracking totals of soldier and civilian casualties. Military spouses in this sample found military news sources more credible than civilian news sources. They also described using news coverage for the purposes of gaining information, surveillance, political competency and empathy.

Military spouses' relationship with media provides a multitude of aspects for analysis and is a valuable research topic in predicting retention for the Army and therefore, Army readiness to perform missions of disaster response and defense of the nation.

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Appendix A - Interview questions

Media Behaviors

1. Where do you get your news for Operation Iraqi Freedom coverage?

2. (television, radio, Internet, newspaper, blogs, etc.)?

3. About how much time per day do you spend consuming your favorite medium?

4. About how much time per day do you spend consuming all media?

5. Do you primarily use civilian or military media?

6. Do you primarily use local (media produced within your state) or national media (media produced outside your state)?

Media Benefits

7. What do you get out of the media coverage of OIF?

8. Why do you consume media coverage?

9. If you don't consume media coverage of OIF, why not?

10. Do media reports influence your opinion of the war either way?

Hostile Media Perception

11. Are journalists reporting accurately on OIF? Example?

12. Are the journalists generally doing a good job or a bad job reporting the war?

13. Do journalists bring you the stories about the war you want to have?

14. How do you think journalists ought to report on OIF?

15. How do you think journalists do report on OIF?

16. What do you think of the news coverage of OIF?

Cognitive Dissonance

17. Do you encounter news reports that conflict with what you know about the situation?

18. How do you respond when/if that happens?

19. Do you have particular news outlets that you get your news from? What are they?

Demographics

20. Is your spouse a member of the Active Component (Active Component) or rc (Reserve or National Guard)?

21. What is your spouse's branch of service (Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force)?

22. Do you live on or off post? How many miles do you live from a military installation?

23. Has your spouse deployed in support of OIF?

24. How many deployments?

25. How many total months has your spouse served in support of OIF?

26. What is the current status of your spouse (deployed; going to deploy; recently returned from a deployment; don't know)?

27. Male or female?

28. What is your age? What is your spouse's rank?

29. For how long have you been married to your spouse?

30. How many children do you and your spouse have living with you most of the time?

31. Did you grow up with an immediate family member who served in the military?

32. Have you ever or do you currently serve in the military? What branch/component/rank?

33. Anything else you would like to add about media coverage of OIF?

Appendix B - Consent form

The purpose of this study is to gather information about military spouses' usage and opinions of media during Operation Iraqi Freedom. My name is Alison Kohler, and I am a graduate student in Journalism and Mass Communications at Kansas State University. I am conducting research on military spouses' usage and opinions of media for my thesis project. I will attempt to gauge your opinion of media coverage during OIF. I will also try to identify how you use media and determine what benefits you get from media usage during OIF.

This interview should take approximately 30 minutes. Your participation in this study is completely optional, and your responses will be kept confidential. For instance, your responses will be cited in such a way as to not identify you by name, i.e. "A female spouse of an Army Reserve Soldier said…". You may withdraw your participation from this study at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns after your interview, please contact me at (785) 587-9299 or by e-mail at alp8844@ksu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Rick Scheidt, Institutional Review Board Chair, 203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506 or by phone at (785) 532-3224. The Military One Source website may also be of use if you prefer to be connected with a consultant after this interview. Military One Source can be accessed at www.militaryonesource.com or by calling 1-800-464-8107, which is available 24 hours a day.

By signing below, you are agreeing to the terms above for participation in this study. You also are attesting you are married to a servicemember and are more than 18 years of age.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____

Printed name

Appendix C - Debriefing statement

Thank you for your participation in this study. Again, your responses will be kept confidential. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (785) 587-9299 or by e-mail at alp8844@ksu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Rick Scheidt, Institutional Review Board Chair, 203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506 or by phone at (785) 532-3224. The Military One Source website may also be of use to if you prefer to be connected with a consultant after this interview. Military One Source can be accessed at www.militaryonesource.com or by calling 1-800-464-8107, which is available 24 hours a day.