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Jhoana Paula L Tuazon, Jasper Emmanuel Y Arcalas, Janine Marie D Soliman, Jeremaiah M Opiniano
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Abstract

Creativity in journalism has always been a challenging concept. Journalism has not often been seen as creative due to its structured conventions. In response, a few journalism scholars claim there is creativity in journalism. However, no studies reveal a creative process in journalistic writing. This grounded theory research from the Philippines revealed a creative process of journalists (N=20): A *Bicycle Wheel of Journalists' Creative Process in Newswork*. This model sees journalists undergo the phases of cognizance, cultivation, captivation and introspection in their efforts to be creative. Motivation and experience, plus their work environments, even contextualize these creativity-related efforts of journalists. Understanding this journalistic creative process will help practitioners and editors aspire for high journalistic standards and write engaging stories that are of public interest, and that are also relevant and significant.

Keywords   *Creativity; creative process; journalism; news writing; Filipino journalists*

Introduction

Creativity has made rounds across various domains of knowledge and in psychology (Runco, 2014). Creativity is defined (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006; Boden, 2004; Sawyer, 2006) as a production of an idea (concepts, recipes, theories and other intangible materials) or artifact (e.g., sculptures, pottery, paintings and other tangible products) that are original (Weisberg, 2006; Runco, 2007), valuable (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), and useful (Hayes, 1989) in its respective domain.

Across time, creativity has been associated with writing (Cowley, 1958; Sawyer, 2006). This association is through "imagination-based" forms of writing like fiction and poetry. However, some think creativity is less linked to the journalistic craft because journalism contradicts creativity given the former's "objective" and "fact-based" structure (Liao et al., 2016). Criticisms include calling literary journalism "an oxymoron" (Zdovc, 2007: p. 1). In contrast, some assert journalism and novel writing were strongly linked; talented journalists apply techniques from novel writing to write "accurate non-fiction" (Liao et al., 2016: p. 12).

Psychology had studied creativity in different domains of knowledge. Many of these works focused on creativity as a *product* and as a *process*, and on the *creative person* (Runco, 2007; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Fulton and McIntyre (2012) also said creativity is a "product of a system." Meanwhile, creativity has been studied in different fields and disciplines. However, creativity has been less tackled in journalism as much as it is in creative writing (fiction and poetry). Moreover, some journalists and scholars think journalism is not a creative endeavor given the field's structured conventions.

This grounded theory study aims to analyze the creativity of journalists in their newswork in order to see how journalism may be a creative endeavor. Such study is anchored on the execution of one's work as possibly where creativity processes by journalists can be seen. This perspective emanates from Sawyer (2006) who stated two

72   views in creative processes: *idealist theory* and *action theory*. Idealist theorists argue

73   that once you come up with an idea then the process itself is done; action theorists give

74   emphasis on the execution of one's work. Newswork contextualizes this study, yet

75   researchers aim to show the presence of a creative process of journalistic writing —that

76   which has been missing in the literature. Findings here, coming from the Philippines,

77   may even bring forth implications unto the work of journalists and news organizations.

78

79

80   **Literature Review**

81

82

83   ***Creativity discourse***. This review starts off the discussion with defining creativity. Philip

84   McIntyre (2006, p. 41) defined creativity as "a productive activity whereby objects,

85   processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of

86   someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel

87   variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social

88   setting."

89

90   Views, approaches and processes on creativity have been pursued since the late 19th

91   century. The earliest scholars have assigned *processes* to creativity. Helmholtz (1896)

92   developed a three-stage process —preparation, incubation and illumination— to refer to

93   the formation of a new thought. Poincare (1908 [1982]) advanced a two-step process in

94   the context of mathematical discoveries: incubation and illumination.

95

96   Soon after, succeeding scholars took off and developed their own processes of

97   creativity. Wallas (1926) proposed five stages: (1) *Preparation*, or consciously finding

98   solutions to a certain problem; (2) *Incubation*, consisting most of the unconscious state;

99   (3) Intimation, or the coming up of an idea; (4) *Illumination*, where the idea is finally

100   made yet is subject to verification and development; and (5) *Verification*, where the

101   "illuminated" idea is tested and developed (also in Sadler-Smith, 2015). Cowley (1958)

102   then applied creativity into writing and developed four stages: (1) *Ideation*, where the

103 idea unconsciously begins; (2) *Meditation*, where there is a "more" conscious effort to
104 shape the story; (3) *First draft*, putting the idea into text; and (4) *Revision*, where the first
105 draft is analyzed and edited to produce the final piece.

106

107 The aforementioned models and processes were only applied to the objective fields of
108 science and mathematics (Hadamard, 1954) and creative writing (Cowley, 1958).
109 However, such models and processes have yet to be applied in journalism. As for the
110 field of journalism, researchers put forward here a stipulative definition of creativity
111 (adopting McIntyre, 2006): *a product and a process where journalists, with their talents*
112 *and background, learn and use the rules, procedures and previous works in the*
113 *journalism domain to write articles that are both novel and appropriate to the contexts*
114 *these were written for.*

115

116 On this score, the systems model of creativity by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1997) may
117 provide some contexts unto viewing journalism as a creative process. He said creativity
118 can be found in the interaction of a system which has three elements: a *domain of*
119 *knowledge* (the cultural structure of the system), a *field* (the social structure), and an
120 *individual*. In this model, an individual must learn about its domain —its rules,
121 conventions, techniques, guides and procedures— for a creative product to be
122 produced (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Hennessey (2017) supported Csikszentmihalyi,
123 saying creativity must be viewed as "a system of interrelated forces operating at multiple
124 levels." Creativity is even a confluence, as well as a product, of social and psychological
125 processes, as well as cultural and cognitive influences (Hennessey, 2017). Other
126 factors have to be considered as well: neurological, affect, cognition, training, individual
127 differences and several socio environmental factors like motivation, workplace, work
128 environment and even culture (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). All these factors may
129 have to be incorporated into a single, interactive and non-linear whole (Hennessey,
130 2017).

131

132 Amid the diversity of approaches, views, models and processes in creativity, rationalism
133 and romanticism have been the two established *approaches* to creativity (Sawyer,

134   2006). Rationalism believes creativity is generated by the conscious, deliberating,

135   intelligent and rational mind. In romanticism, on the other hand, creativity comes from

136   an irrational unconscious; the rational mind interferes with the creative process (Sawyer,

137   2006).

138

139   *Ideas and factors*. Creativity must start with something for it to occur. Ideation begins

140   creativity in Cowley (1958). Journalists, on the other hand, produce their story ideas —

141   may it be encouraged or not by their editors (Fulton and McIntyre, 2012), or coming

142   from various sources such as media releases, wire services, peers, beats, audience

143   (Fulton, 2011) that may serve as the ideation to creativity by the journalist.

144

145   In debates among creativity scholars, unconscious effort and conscious thinking

146   produce ideas (Helmholtz, 1896; Poincaire, 1908 [1982]; Wallas, 1926; Hadamard,

147   1954; Cowley, 1958; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Journalism also conceptualizes ideas

148   through such means since journalists analyze current issues that lead them to construct

149   journalistic ideas. These ideas are produced through conscious and even unconscious

150   efforts, like when a news event suddenly breaks. Csikszentmihalyi (1996 as cited in

151   Sawyer, 2006) once said: "You don't know when you're going to be hit with an idea; you

152   don't know where it comes from."

153

154   In order to produce a creative journalistic piece, certain elements may be involved.

155   Creative journalistic activity cannot result solely from an individual; it is a product of a

156   *system* (Fulton and McIntyre, 2012). Thus, the journalism field itself and its activities

157   such as the interaction between and among journalists, editors' "abrasive style of

158   teaching," capability building activities (e.g., on-the-job trainings, cadetships), and

159   awards (Fulton, 2011) may influence a journalist's creative process positively or

160   negatively.

161

162   *Newswork and verification.* News making decisions see journalists ponder and decide

163   what kind of story is newsworthy based on news values. Certain combinations of news

164   values appear almost to guarantee coverage in the press (Harcup and O'Neill, 2010).

165 Journalists use raw materials, containing news values or hard facts, in a story
166 (Newhagen and Zhong, 2009). Other assessments of newsworthiness include
167 opportunities for good pictures and headlines, for entertainment, the involvement of
168 popular personalities (Harcup and O'Neill, 2010) and editors' interest on the importance
169 of the news event (Strömbäck et al., 2012).

170

171 The process of identifying what is news appears to be diverse, with no set of well-
172 developed ideas on what and how to produce good news outputs (Matheson, 2003) and
173 what stories are newsworthy. These news values shape up the journalistic idea at hand
174 so as to become a full-blown story (in reference to Cowley's [1958] second stage of
175 writing: meditation).

176

177 News gathering thus becomes essential. Sources play a vital role in this regard. While
178 exercising doubt, journalists trust sources on varying levels depending on the type of
179 information the latter gives (Newhagen and Zhong, 2009). Meanwhile, information from
180 official documents are said to be the most reliable (Shapiro et al., 2013) since these
181 provide the most useful information (Newhagen and Zhong, 2009). This is where
182 verification matters. Verification is an interweaving between corroboration and original
183 information-gathering (Muñoz-Torres, 2007), demanding journalists to filter and select
184 facts. For this reason, verifying information given by sources greatly influences a
185 journalist's decision-making in newswork. If a source or information is deemed
186 unreliable, the product itself may also be deemed as such. Verification may then be
187 paralleled to the last stage of the creative process by Wallas (1926): the creative
188 product undergoes *critical evaluation* for it to be truthful and valuable.

189

190 ***Writing processes and structures.*** Journalists try to keep a sense of impartiality and
191 fairness (Thomson et al., 2008) in newswork. However, such values do not hinder
192 journalists to go beyond their journalistic sense of writing. The harder the writing product
193 is to be achieved, the more it is valued (Matheson, 2003).

194

195   There are various guiding elements to a journalist's' writing process. Voice is one
196   element: journalists write either using the reporter voice, the correspondent voice or the
197   commentator voice (Thomson et al., 2008) in order to be authoritative. Journalists also
198   use framing and angling depending on the story's relevance and the original approach
199   applied unto the story (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009). Therefore, studying elements
200   affecting the journalist's writing process matters in knowing their creativity.

201

202   Journalism values what is called "skilled writers" and "good writing" or "stylish and well-
203   constructed" articles (Matheson, 2003). Journalists also usually follow a certain
204   structure, reflecting their style of writing (Fulton and McIntyre, 2012). Examples of story
205   structures include the inverted pyramid (Munoz-Torres, 2007), the "martini glass," the
206   "kabob" structure (Harrower, 2012 —the latter reflecting the appearance of the Arabian
207   skewer), and the "unconventional" inverted pyramid (Johnston and Graham, 2011).

208

209   There are certain elements that constitute a journalist's style in news writing: language
210   (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009), voice (Zdvoc, 2007), narrative tools and techniques
211   (Johnston and Graham, 2011), angling (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009), and forms of
212   journalistic pieces (Fulton and McIntyre, 2012). These elements show how journalists
213   think outside of the box to produce the creative product.

214

215   ***Personality and attitude.*** Most studies on creativity focused on the creative person
216   since understanding this person leads to understanding her or his creative process
217   (Csikzentmihalyi, 1997; Runco and Kim, 2018). Rhodes (1961) identified the "4Ps" of
218   creativity, with *person* being mostly about the personality as a primary factor in studying
219   creativity. The complex personality of creative people also reflects one's flexibility and
220   adaptability (Runco, 2009). Some characteristics of a creative person include
221   passionate, motivated, intelligent, open-minded, humble, proud and physically fit
222   (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; 2013).

223

224   More so, creative researchers have emphasized the importance of *motivation*, be it
225   *intrinsic* (the pleasure one feels when doing something or *extrinsic* (outer desire to work

226 for rewards and competitions). People tend to be more creative when they are working

227 on a task they truly enjoy (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010), or if the field fits one's

228 personality and ==working== style (Sawyer, 2006).

229

230 This literature review reveals how creativity has been studied in different fields and

231 disciplines. However, creativity is less tackled in journalism compared to abundant

232 discussions in creative writing (fiction and poetry). Moreover, ==the creativity of journalism==

233 is still disregarded given its structured conventions (Liao et al., 2016). ==We explore in this==

234 ==paper== the processes surrounding the creativity of journalists in their newswork.

235

236

237 **Methods and Design**

238

239

240 This grounded theory study sought to answer this central research question: *How do*

241 *Filipino journalists execute their creativity in daily news reporting?* Grounded theory was

242 used due to its rigid coding structure for analysis, as well as its stress on verification and

243 validation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

244

245 *Sample*. A total of 20 Filipino journalists —18 working in the Philippine capital region of

246 Metro Manila and two in the provinces— were interviewed over a two-month span. The

247 nine male and 11 female respondents were selected through *reputational case*

248 *sampling* (chosen by experts in the industry) and through ==*referral sampling*==

249 (recommended by participants earlier interviewed) (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

250 Researchers adopted the following selection criteria: a) S/he is a current practitioner; b)

251 S/he has at least three years of work experience; and c) S/he works for any news

252 organization regardless of platform (print, online, broadcast).

253

254 *Instrumentation and ethical considerations*. Researchers used a two-part qualitative

255 instrument to surface the activities of journalists in relation to unleashing their creativity

256 in newswork. The first part is a *robotfoto* (in Dutch, an initial sketch of the subject or, in

257   the case of this paper, the respondents [De Guzman et al, 2012]), putting together

258   respondents' demographic profiles [*see Table 1*]. The second part of the instrument, an

259   *aide memoire* (interview guide), mostly carried questions on the processes journalists

260   undergo vis-à-vis their professional experiences. Questions during the interview were

261   asked in English but respondents were allowed to speak using the Filipino language.

262   Interviews ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 hours.

263

264   **[Insert Table 1 here]**

265

266   An institutional review board of a university's journalism program granted ethics

267   approval. All respondents signed consent forms where their identities were anonymized

268   (examples of respondent codes in this paper: "J1," "J14"). Researchers also went to

269   suggested interview locations of respondents (e.g. offices of assigned beats,

270   newsrooms, drinking joints, etc.) so that the former captures data in these comfortable

271   environments of journalists.

272

273   ***Data explication / Mode of analysis***. Data from the *robotfoto* were described

274   descriptively [*refer to Table 1*]. Interviews were all transcribed verbatim as field texts,

275   which were then subjected to the steps under the grounded theory approach of Strauss

276   and Corbin (1990).

277

278   Researchers employed combinations of first- and second-cycle coding methods. These

279   include initial coding, sub-coding, descriptive coding, *in vivo* coding, process coding,

280   theoretical coding (Saldaña, 2013) and open coding (Given, 2008). The eclectic use of

281   various coding methods helped in sorting, categorizing (*cool analysis*) and thematizing

282   (*warm analysis*) the field texts.

283

284   Researchers employed axial coding, a procedure where data "are re-assembled so that

285   the researcher may identify relationships more readily" (Given, 2008: p. 51). To flesh out

286   the context, causal conditions, intervening conditions and consequences, a within- and

287   cross-case analysis table was used and subjected to axial coding. Researchers then

288 derived phases of respondents' creative writing process to unfold the *lebenswelt* (life
289 world) of journalists interviewed.
290
291 The grounded theory outcome was applied to a diagrammatic metaphor to best illustrate
292 the creative process of respondents. This diagram is called a *metaphorical visual*
293 *display,* a type of qualitative data display that portrays "in a metaphorical way the topics
294 of themes found… in a structured and organized way" (Verdinelli and Scagnolli, 2013:
295 pp. 225, 230). Themes were subjected to member-checking procedures to establish the
296 trustworthiness of the data.
297
298 **Limitations**. Researchers acknowledge the limited number of respondents given time
299 constraints and the professional work commitments of the targeted respondents. About
300 90 percent of respondents were based in the National Capital Region (where national
301 news outlets operate). Rural contexts of journalists —environment, resources and
302 journalists' capabilities— were minimally captured here.
303
304
305 **Findings**
306
307
308 Given the richness of respondents' descriptions, the ***Bicycle Wheel of Journalists'***
309 ***Creative Process in Newswork*** model was developed [*see Figure 1*]. This model sees
310 journalists undergo four sub-processes: *cognizance, cultivation, captivation and*
311 *introspection* (the major grounded theory themes). The four phases of this model were
312 found to be cyclical, similar to a bicycle tire's shape and movement. The speed of the
313 tire's motion signifies the rate of how the creative process happens. The rim of the tire is
314 where the whole creative process takes place. The spokes that connect the central hub
315 to the rim symbolize the experiences and motivations of journalists interviewed; in
316 technical terms, having more spokes means having a stronger tire. That being said,
317 more experiences and motivations bolster the creativity of a journalist.
318

319   However, at the same time, this *Bicycle Wheel* process shows that journalists go back-

320   and-forth to each of these phases when needed. This reflects how iterative or recursive

321   (thus, non-linear) this creativity process is.

322

323   **[Insert Figure 1 here]**

324

325

326   ***Cognizance phase: Ideating the news story***

327

328   This phase involves the conscious effort and awareness to ideate a news story due for

329   submission to news desks. Creativity springs when journalists consciously get story

330   ideas from almost anywhere, this act being creative in itself. The cognizance phase has

331   three sub-phases: *conceiving, valuing* and *validating*.

332

333   •   **Conceiving**. Given daily story quotas, journalists start their work with

334   formulating a story. All respondents said stories are everywhere: from one's

335   curiosity, press releases, documents, the assigned newsbeat, the newsroom,

336   etc. [J7, J1] —and even occurring on a "slow" news day. So journalists check

337   their human sources and available printed and electronic information and data

338   [J11, J2]. Respondents also revealed experience and expertise in the field are

339   important since conceiving a story idea comes with one's knowledge and

340   familiarity of their news organization [J16] and of assigned beats [J14].

341

342

343   •   **Valuing**. When a story idea is conceived, journalists test that story's

344   newsworthiness using news values to order to give shape to that story idea.

345   However, not all story ideas materialize because some stories are not

346   practical, may have limited information collected, and may lack

347   newsworthiness. For some respondents, getting human voices carries

348   "stronger chances" of getting their stories published [J16].

349

350

- **Validating**. Even if a story idea is newsworthy enough, journalists still test the feasibility of that idea in terms of available materials, sources, time and effort [J13]. Validation also involves the sense and purpose of pursuing and writing a story. Validation also subscribes to some principles of journalism —truth, objectivity, fairness and public service:

> "You have to find your 'why' in journalism. 'Why are you writing this story in the first place?' If you cannot even answer that, don't bother. Do not pursue it if you cannot answer your 'why.' Because it's not enough that you know what you're gonna write… to know how you're going to write it. You have to answer the 'why.' You have to have a purpose… a reason for pursuing the story" [J1].

All respondents said they have to be creative throughout the cognizance phase in order to produce exclusives and new story angles. These efforts are not only their responses to news competition, but are means to display the social relevance of journalism:

> "…When you see a story that can shake the hornet's nest and unearth a past that has been neglected, and continues to have significance…" [J10]

Some respondents think a creative story idea contains certain elements — unconventional yet significant and socially relevant facts that are for the public interest, and that even stir social change:

> "It (a story) will generate a kind of response to them whether it will generate action or discussion, inspiration, fascination. It doesn't matter but… you have to find that core, you have to find that (something) which people who will really react to it, in your writing." [J7]

Cultivation phase: Building the news story

The cultivation phase is essentially news gathering. The two sub-phases here are *collecting* and *analyzing*.

- **Collecting**. Journalists here have already determined the feasibility of a story idea, thus making them read press releases and e-news advisories, surf the

391   Internet and social media, deal with diversified sources, and uncover hidden

392   public documents [J5, J14, J20].

393

394   A great deal of reporting involves taking time and effort to cultivate

395   relationships with human sources. Some respondents said cultivating sources

396   —through earning their respect and trust— is unquantifiable, and may take at

397   least two-to-three years of reporting. [J9, J3, J16]. In order for these

398   journalists to build strong relationships with sources, they take extra effort in

399   getting to know them:

400
401   "Even if you don't have a story to write, take some time in calling them and asking how
402   their days are going." [J2]
403
404

405   Ideally a news story should follow the two-source rule of news gathering.

406   However, most respondents said this does not happen <mark>often</mark> because of

407   deadlines, beat dynamics and the weight of a source being interviewed —like

408   a victim of a crime [J19], or the head of state [J2].

409

410   • **Analyzing**. Journalists verify and analyze the materials hauled from news

411   gathering. <mark>Verification matters</mark> since this serves as the anchorage of truth,

412   objectivity and fairness [J16], or even the basis of a journalist's credibility [J8].

413

414   To fulfill truthfulness and accuracy, respondents claim going back-and-forth to

415   sources, to documents and to other data they had gathered. Verification itself

416   is a process needing, and leading to, a deeper analysis of information

417   gathered. Some even have to pause their news gathering work and assess if

418   the right details are gathered. Others use verification to remind of their roles

419   as journalists:

420
421   "There is a process. I gather the data. I go over the data whether or not I'm smoking my
422   cigarette, I will go over the data. I listen to my interviews. Whenever I find difficulty
423   understanding the data, I confirm with the other editors. If I can't get the data during
424   conferences with the other editors, I look for experts to help me interpret the data I don't
425   understand. I never start off thinking I'll understand everything. Then when I have all the
426   facts clear, then I write." [J11]

In the cultivation phase, respondents revealed creativity is closely linked to their resourcefulness in gathering information, their diligence at work, and their resilience to deadlines and source-induced pressures. Creativity also occurs when journalists break barriers of conventional news gathering and conquer all adversities to get relevant information and context (without sacrificing credibility and ethical principles):

> "Did I have to get creative? Yes. Things like, the secretary's office was locked but the windows have plate glasses that are taller than me. So, I got out the fire escape, crossed the ledge, then held on to the ledge glass and started listening to the sources' conversation" (*Sources eventually let the journalist inside*) [J11].

Captivation phase: Writing the news story

This third phase focuses on the conscious efforts of respondents to write a story using various writing techniques and strategies. Two overlapping stages, *enhancing* and *engaging*, comprise this phase.

- **Engaging**. Respondents apply certain writing techniques to make the story engaging. Most said they utilize some story structures —e.g., inverted pyramid [J7] and hourglass [J20]— that would convey the news story in an organic manner. Even the length of sentences and the sentencing "styles" of journalists play a key role in this sub-phase:

> "I try to avoid the one-word lead. Sometimes it creates greater impact if your lead is short. (But) it really depends on the kind of story that you're working on." [J14]

Journalists adopt their own writing style to make the story more engaging and compelling, and a good story structure is not enough. Some respondents are concerned with inserting the context of a story [e.g. J16]; others are

464 meticulous at word usage to simplify the story [J16], while some use unusual

465 words fit for the beat so as to express creativity [J2].

466

467 Choosing the right voice for the story is also important. Voice sets the tone

468 and mood of the text, and also helps convey the story easily to readers:

469

470 "…that they [journalists] find something new, it's not something that's already been talked
471 about, also that they have strong identity, writing identities, that they have a strong voice."
472 [J7]
473
474

475 The opening part (*lead*) of a journalistic piece matters also for respondents.

476 The lead is crucial if readers want to hold on and read journalists' stories, until

477 the end:

478
479 "If the story has a magnetic pull on me: Whether it's literary or journalistic, because if you
480 lose me at your first paragraph or at any point in the story before the end of the story, it's
481 not good." [J11].
482
483

484 The news platforms where stories get published matter in writing creatively.

485 The nature of the news platform seems to dictate respondents' judgment in

486 how to structure their pieces [J1]. Says a respondent: "there are no space

487 restrictions" for online journalists [J9].) Interestingly, all respondents said

488 some stories beg for their own structure and style depending on the nature of

489 a story, like investigative reporting or human interest profiles [J7], or the event

490 (e.g. summary news leads for political news [J14]).

491
492

493 • **Enhancing the self**. Alongside the writing of engaging stories, all

494 respondents claim to be aware of steps they need to continually do to further

495 hone their journalistic craft. These are reading, practicing, exploring, and

496 making every kind of writing an experience:

497
498 "Journalistic writing is basically just like any type of writing, what is important is that you
499 read and you write…It's important that they find different approaches to seemingly
500 overuse or maybe over utilize angles of stories —that they find something new." [J7]
501

502

503 Creativity springs forth during the *captivation* phase when journalists use different
504 writing styles and structures to convey news ==properly== to audiences. Creativity also plays
505 a big role when respondents make their writing relevant to audiences, and when they
506 also achieve some goals (self-fulfillment and readership considerations):

507
508 "You are creative whenever you tell the story in its best way possible without fabricating… You
509 tell the story the way it should be…. as best you can." [J5].
510

511

512

513 *Introspection Phase: Learning the news story*

514

515

516 This final phase involves the conscious effort of journalists to learn, re-learn and reflect.
517 Through a sub-phase called *post-editing,* respondents assess their published works in
518 hopes of improving their craft; in having a sense of career direction; in having new
519 knowledge; and in learning from mistakes.

520

521 • **Post-editing**. This stage sees journalists engage in self- and guided-learning
522   activities to hone their craft. Even self-editing and editorial consultations
523   contributed to the development of respondents' creativity.

524

525 ==The editors-cum-mentors of respondents== both praise and criticize published
526 works [J1], making respondents conscious check their articles and learn how
527 these were edited [J4]. Eventually, lessons they got from editors and from
528 edited stories led respondents to ideate more and write better stories:

529
530 "You will learn to correct your mistakes when you read your story once it's published;
531 read it through and study how your lead was edited." [J3]
532
533

534 ==Editors had provided lessons unto respondents, and these lessons==
535 ==contributed to the development of creativity by these reporters.== Continuous
536 learning stirs their creativity to come up with relevant story ideas, better data

537   gathering strategies, and improved writing styles and structures. These then

538   develop respondents' sense of journalistic purpose and higher calling:

539
540   "I want to change how things were done, I wanted people to be inspired… to look at
541   themselves and be the change that they want to be in their lives. But I am not going to
542   look back and say that I wrote it well, I worked on it well, I worked on it great. When it
543   comes to, whether I love the story or not, I do believe that they meant something… to
544   people who had read it." [J1]
545
546

547   Post-editing is not a linear stop to the *Bicycle Wheel* model. This sub-phase

548   leads back to the *cognizance* phase. Post-editing also helps speed up one's

549   creativity process when the journalist returns to the cognizance phase,

550   depending on one's learning curve and on openness to criticisms.

551

552

Discussion

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555

556   We sought to determine the creative process of some 20 Filipino journalists. Their

557   verbalizations led to the *Bicycle Wheel of Journalists' Creative Process in Newswork*

558   model. This four-phase model operates in the context that journalists accrue experience

559   and motivation in order to become better and, in the process, creative. This model is

560   also akin to previous studies about creative processes.

561

562   *Cognizance*. The *cognizance* phase is about the conscious effort of journalists to ideate

563   and shape up story ideas daily. This phase can be paralleled to the combined first four

564   stages of Wallas' (1926) five-step creative process (preparation, incubation, intimation

565   and illumination), and the combined first two stages of Cowley's (1958) four-step

566   creative process in writing (ideation and meditation). Meanwhile, the *conceiving* sub-

567   phase is similar to the first three stages of Wallas' (1926) process —preparation,

568   incubation and intimation— and Cowley's (1958) ideation stage.

569

570 Journalists' daily story quotas push them to find stories. For the creative process to stir,
571 it must start with something, with a germ of an idea (Cowley, 1958). This conscious
572 effort to search and ideate a story idea can be seen in Wallas' (1926) preparation stage
573 wherein people are conscious in solving a certain problem; for journalists, the problem
574 is their story/ies for the day.

575

576 Journalists <mark>must</mark> produce story ideas from various human and non-human sources
577 (Fulton, 2011). In relation to producing story ideas, ideas can be products of
578 unconscious effort and conscious thinking (Helmholtz, 1896; Poincare, 1908 [1982];
579 Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Journalists analyze current issues that may lead them to ideas
580 (conscious effort), leaving the unconscious efforts that are linked with the dynamic news
581 environment. Ideas can come whenever, wherever, whatever, and to whoever.

582

583 The second sub-phase, *valuing*, involves journalists consciously shaping (a) story idea/s
584 through the guidance of news values. *Valuing* is similar to Cowley's meditation stage
585 (1958), the shaping up of a story idea. Meditation is the stage wherein writers determine
586 the details of a possible story (e.g., characters and setting). On the other hand, Wallas
587 (1926) argues there is an incubation stage, the sinking of a story idea into the
588 subconscious, and anticipating the moment of eureka. This eureka can be linked to the
589 valuing stage at only some circumstances because journalists do not have the luxury of
590 time (given deadline pressures) to put a story idea into the subconscious state. As some
591 of the respondents verbalized:

592

593 "Deadline is always at the back of my mind. So aside from the things I want to express, I'm
594 conscious about the number of words, accuracy and prose." [J2]
595
596 "I get up, I stretch, I sit down, I do it. Get back to the job. It's called discipline. I work through the
597 difficulty. I don't have the luxury to let deadline wait." [J11]
598

599

600 The last sub-phase, *validating*, leads to the <mark>practicality</mark> of the story idea. *Valuing* is
601 similar to Wallas' (1926) illumination stage: the idea is ready for research and
602 development. Interestingly, an idea should be novel and original (Boden, 2004),
603 valuable (Sawyer, 2006) and useful (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006) in its respective context,

604   i.e., journalistic products being new, up to date, relevant, and significant to readers.

605   These characteristics of a news idea are weighed further through news values (Harcup

606   and O'Neill, 2010). The cognizance phase is evident in the systems model of creativity

607   proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1997): journalists are aware of subscribing one's self to

608   the existing domain (journalism knowledge and history) to write the day's news.

609

610   ***Cultivation***. This phase covers the nitty-gritty work of gathering information and data to

611   concretize a story idea**.** This phase can be mirrored as a continuation of Cowley's

612   meditation stage, involving a "more conscious effort of shaping up the story" (1958, p.

613   8). The shape of a news story does not end in the idea's validation through news

614   values; that shape continues until the idea is materialized through documents, interview,

615   statistics, etc. The cultivation phase can also be paralleled to the last stage of the

616   creative process (verification) by Wallas where the story idea is put into "test and

617   development" (Wallas, 1926: p. 10).

618

619   The first sub-phase, *collecting*, deals with the back-and-forth gathering of relevant and

620   necessary information (e.g. documents, human sources, press releases, statistics,

621   observational details). Respondents were aware they need to have two polar sources

622   since this is the usual rule in journalistic sourcing for objectivity. However, respondents

623   admitted they do not frequently follow this rule due to deadline pressures and

624   unavailable sources. Between this *collecting* sub-phase and the next sub-phase

625   *analyzing*, verification is being done (Muñoz-Torres, 2007). Journalists' trust unto these

626   sources, as part of their verification, depends on the level of information given to them

627   (Newhagen and Zhong, 2009) and if these sources may carry an agenda.

628

629   Verification and accuracy are exercised also in the analyzing sub-phase. Journalists

630   believe official and legal documents are the most reliable sources (Shapiro et al., 2013)

631   and authorities (Newhagen and Zhong, 2009). The analyzing sub-phase helps

632   journalists filter and select facts (Muñoz-Torres, 2007) as well as determine if the story

633   can be written, and if information hauled may warrant another round of data gathering or

634   not.

635

Captivation. The *captivation* phase has two overlapping sub-phases —*enhancing* and *engaging readers*— that reflect the meticulous news writing proper. Captivation involves the consideration of readers' interests and tastes, leading journalists to tell stories in compelling ways. Journalists here use various writing tools like sentencing, story structuring, wording and voice —all of which are considered part of framing and angling (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009). Study respondents also explore the limits of language by using simple words; varying sentence length; having the correct voice; and even going beyond the usual "inverted pyramid" news structure. Respondents also consider the nature of their news platforms in efforts to let their writing hook audiences given their writing styles. Matheson (2003) notes the harder the writing is to achieve, the more it is valued by journalists. All these experiences under the captivation phase are analogous to previous researches that documented journalistic use of language (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009; Fulton and McIntyre, 2012), voice (Zdvoc, 2007), narrative tools and techniques (Johnston and Graham, 2011), and angling (Grunwald and Rupar, 2009).

The *enhancing* sub-phase focuses on the personal goals and reasons of journalists in producing well-crafted stories, such as their interest, self-improvement and fulfillment. These goals and reasons also affect the way journalists write. The process of writing offers something other domains do not provide: the opportunity for self-disclosure (Runco, 2009). A journalist has a conditional agency that allows her/him to choose, amid the existence of a field that constrains them (Fulton and McIntyre, 2012). Employing conditional agency is used on top of how journalists employ techniques coming from fiction writing to "make the facts clearer to readers, and enhance a reader's ability to understand these facts" (Fishkin as cited in Liao et al., 2016: p. 10). (As to be explained later, motivation is one of two factors that affects the creativity of journalists interviewed.)

Introspection. This last phase of the *Bicycle Wheel* model involves the post-editing sub-phase where journalists learn from their editors. Journalists make efforts to assess their work/s and learn from mistakes during this whole phase. This is reflective practice

666   (Schön, 1983) at work. Post-editing also helped respondents ideate better ideas and

667   prospective stories.

668

669   ***The model as recursive***. The Bicycle Wheel model is not linear. Yes, journalists

670   interviewed undergo cognizance, cultivation, captivation and introspection as a process,

671   but the daily journalism set up sees the tendency of these phases to overlap.

672   Intersections between and among these phases arise when journalists gather and verify

673   information; when information springs forth a new story idea or a different story angle; or

674   when journalists write their stories. Such experiences of respondents associate the

675   creativity process to a bicycle wheel: cyclic. A creative process is more cyclical and

676   does involves a lot of hard work: "Creative people are good at switching back and forth

677   at different points in the creative process" (Sawyer, 2006: p. 45).

678

679   ***Factors affecting the creative process***. Interview field texts identify two factors that

680   affect the whole creative process of these journalists: *motivation* and *experience*. In our

681   Bicycle Wheel model, the spokes of the bicycle represent motivation and experience

682   since spokes support the rim, i.e., the four phases. Motivation plays an essential role in

683   creativity (Sawyer, 2006); even enjoying one's work will increase one's chances to

684   reach the fullest potential and capabilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Be they *intrinsic*

685   (the drive to do something for sheer enjoyment, interest and personal challenge) or

686   *extrinsic* (expected rewards, evaluation, surveillance, competition and restricted choice),

687   motivation is affected by individuals' social environment which, in turn, can significantly

688   influence their creative performance (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). If journalists

689   receive useful information in a supportive way, or if their stories enable readers to do

690   something good, these extrinsic forms of motivation can actually enhance intrinsic

691   motivations —especially if the latter is already strong (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010).

692   Extrinsic motivation in journalism can be paralleled to awards, commendations from

693   editors, editorial mentoring, and audience recognitions which inspire respondents to

694   write better. These extrinsic forms of motivation also support the love for writing by

695   respondents, and their desire to learn new things and applying these to future stories.

696

697 A conjoint factor here is experience. <mark>Continuous reporting helps journalists become</mark>

698 <mark>adept, more flexible and plausible at their craft</mark> (Fulton, 2011). Experience is anchored

699 on the interaction between journalists, mentoring, and basic training activities like

700 internships (Fulton, 2011). Motivation and experience, like the spokes in the bicycle

701 wheel, support the entire *Bicycle Wheel* process. Motivation and experience buoy a

702 journalist's chances of fortifying her/his creativity.

703

704 ***Omniscience, and being both conscious and unconscious***. Creativity by journalists

705 in their newswork is seen to be omniscient throughout the Bicycle Wheel process. The

706 value and weight of a story idea (as mentioned in the cognizance phase) begins the

707 creative process, followed by cultivation (when journalists get into newsgathering and

708 make human sources to talk without sacrificing their credibility and ethical principles).

709 Evident also in the whole creativity process <mark>are the conscious efforts of journalists</mark> to

710 use certain words, length of sentences and types of leads; to consider capturing the

711 reader's attention; and to be conscious of one's pursuit of self-fulfillment.

712

713 Creativity here also seems to be both *an unconscious and conscious* outcome. It is

714 conscious <mark>because</mark> journalists know there are stories of great social significance

715 <mark>needing</mark> exhaustive legwork, and <mark>that must</mark> be told / written in compelling <mark>ways.</mark>

716 Creativity is also unconscious since journalists are already exploring and extracting their

717 own creative strategies through daily newswork. Creativity is also the reason behind

718 <mark>exclusive stories and stories that highlight</mark> original news angles.

719

720

Conclusion

722

723

724 The *Bicycle Wheel of Journalists' Creativity in Newswork* is a humble contribution to the

725 understudied theme of creativity in actual journalistic practice and theory. The paper

726 even graphically answered a question earlier posed by Fulton and McIntyre (2013):

727 "How can a journalist be creative?" (p. 20).

728

This *Bicycle Wheel Model* has also somehow helped include journalism as a domain or profession with its contextualized processes of creativity, similar to other domains or fields (e.g., McIntyre, 2012). Amid criticisms that journalism and creativity are incompatible (Zdovc, 2007; Liao et al., 2016), viewing journalism in the rationalist point of view —focusing on the process itself (Fulton and McIntyre, 2013)— unravels the creativity of journalism.

735

Creativity in journalism lies in the whole process of producing a highly journalistic craft. Beyond that, creativity also springs from the daily hard work of a journalist. Creativity by journalists not just covers the written piece, but also involves non-writing engagements (e.g. cultivating human sources, editorial engagement). Motivation and experience even play pivotal roles on this regard. Our Bicycle Wheel Model can be used to encourage journalists to comprehend and value the creative processes they undergo. Valuing the creativity of journalists will ultimately lead them to work further in producing better journalistic pieces. This eventually benefits the journalism profession, and news audiences.

745

Editors and broadcast producers can also find the *Bicycle Wheel* model useful, especially by knowing how their reporters become ingenious in their work. Knowing such usefulness may benefit news managers in terms of aspiring for more conducive working environments, and systems of motivation within and outside newsrooms, for journalists. These conducive environments and mechanisms can lead new and aspiring journalists to know that writing and producing good stories are *always* process-laden. May journalists and editorial supervisors consider the above-mentioned possibilities of being creative in journalism.

754

Researchers also recommend further explorations to the concept of creativity in journalism, particularly the *intricacies* of the creative processes of journalists. As Runco (2009) argues, writing is best described *as a process rather than a product:* Writing may be that very process that benefits the writer. This research theme can also lead to

759 further studies, using larger numbers of respondents and even multiple country contexts
760 (the latter being an exciting prospect), to determine how creativity works in the general
761 scheme of journalism. Other researchers, through ethnographic methods, can also
762 tackle the creative personalities of journalists and the creative environments where they
763 belong to. Creativity processes by journalists may also help future studies where
764 psychology and journalism intersect naturally.

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Table 1. Profile of respondents

Demographics	Details
Gender	Male 9 Female 11
News media affiliation	Newspaper 14 Tabloid 1 Radio 1, Television 2 Online 18 Mobile 1 Others 3
Reach of news organization	National media 19 Community media 1
Years of news media experience	One-to-five years 3 Six-to-ten years 4 11-to-15 years 3 Over-15 years 10
Types of stories written as a journalist	Standard news story 18 Breaking news story (online) 13 Feature article 15 Feature article – profile 19 News feature article 16 Commentary 6 Explanatory story 14 Investigative story 10 Q&A story10 Data journalism story 13 Newspaper editorial 5 Long form / Narrative journalism piece 15
Beats covered	Political beats 9 Government agency beats 11 Police beat 7 Metropolitan beat 6 Sports beat 6 Business beat 10 Arts and culture / Lifestyle beat 9 Entertainment beat 8 Foreign news beat 5 Specialized reporting beats 9

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