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“I Have Good News and Bad News:”
The Effects of Power Imbalances and Physical Distance on News-givers’ Use of Blended
News Delivery

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Psychology

by

Angela M. Legg

December 2013

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Kate Sweeny, Chairperson

Dr. Robin DiMatteo

Dr. David Funder

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The Dissertation by Angela M. Legg is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgments

A number of people deserve thanks and recognition for their contributions to this dissertation, whether they realized how much they helped me or not. Although this section comes at the beginning of my dissertation, I saved the writing of it until last. Sadly, the words in my vocabulary and my ability to sew them together will never do justice to the amazing people acknowledged here. It is my hope that they can read between the lines and know just how much they inspire me and how much I respect them.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Landis and Carol Legg. While I attended grad school they saw me too little and heard from me too infrequently yet still sacrificed everything they could so I could realize my dreams.

This dissertation is also dedicated to Bonnie Reilly who will live on forever in my heart and reminds me exactly why I do research.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“I Have Good News and Bad News:”
The Effects of Power Imbalances and Physical Distance on News-givers’ Use of Blended
News Delivery

by

Angela M. Legg

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Psychology
University of California, Riverside, December 2013
Dr. Kate Sweeny, Chairperson

People dislike giving bad news, and one strategy they use to ease the process is to pair bad news with some good news, a phenomenon called *blended news delivery*. Often, blended news arrives from people in power positions such as physicians, managers, or teachers. But followers also find themselves needing to give bad news to those in higher power positions. Similarly, people can choose how they deliver bad news, such as in person or over email. The current study brings much needed empirical attention to this phenomenon and the way power imbalance and physical distance may influence blended news delivery. Participants completed the study alongside one confederate whom they believed would receive personality test results at the end of the session. Participants completed personality measures and then participated in an origami task in which they were randomly assigned to either a *leader* or *follower* role (the confederate played the other role). After the origami task, participants were randomly assigned to deliver the confederate’s test results *in person* or through *email*. In person interactions were video-

recorded. Participants then completed one final questionnaire about the experience.

Trained research assistants provided ratings of the news-delivery videos and emails.

Although power did not influence how people delivered blended news, physical distance affected the news people began and ended with, whether they sandwiched bad news, and the relative emphasis placed on bad news compared to good news. The way people delivered blended news also influenced ratings of warmth, social skills, directness and bluntness. These findings suggest a number of considerations and recommendations for people who deliver bad news.

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Introduction

Like taxes, receiving bad news and giving bad news are inevitable aspects of life. Even more similar to taxes, very few people enjoy giving bad news to others or getting bad news themselves. One more similarity: People love telling jokes about both taxes and giving bad news. The setup for a bad news joke often involves one person asking another person whether they want good news or bad news first. For example:

“A doctor enters a patient’s room and says, “Well sir, I have good news and bad news. Which would you like first?” The patient responds, “I dunno doc, I guess tell me the bad news.” The doctor says, “Ok, the bad news is that we’re going to have to amputate both legs.” The shocked patient exclaims, “What could possibly be the good news then?” The doctor replies, “I’m willing to pay you \$200 for your Italian leather shoes.”

This situation is not contrived simply for comic relief, however. Rather, people pair good news with bad news with some frequency, although the exact frequency remains a mystery as bad news researchers tend to ignore the usage of good news during bad news delivery. But good news paired with bad news can appear in a variety of situations such as patients receiving diagnostic health test results, employees receiving annual work evaluations, or students receiving feedback on essays or exams. When scholars recommend pairing good news with bad news, they often do so with vague recommendations and little to no attention to the specific ways to pair the news or to the consequences associated with pairing good and bad news (e.g., Brewin, 1991; Brinko, 1993). The current study brings much needed attention to this strategy, a phenomenon I

have termed *blended news delivery*, and the way power imbalance and physical distance may influence how news-givers engage in blended news delivery.

Background Research on Blended News Delivery

Emerging within the past two decades are a handful of studies beginning to address blended news delivery. The first such paper addressed news-recipients' preferences for hearing good or bad news first and established the dominant pattern that news-recipients desire to hear bad news first (Marshall & Kidd, 1981). This dominant preference was later confirmed in series of recent studies (Legg & Sweeny, in press).

The dominant preference to hear bad news first likely reflects people's tendency to prefer improving sequences, or events that begin negatively and end positively as Ross & Simonson, 1991). To illustrate, people expecting both a financial gain and loss prefer the lose-then-gain pattern over the gain-then-lose pattern (Ross & Simonson, 1991).

Related to these improving sequence preferences, people also prefer peak-end experiences or events that end on high notes; a kiss at the end of an enjoyable first date, for example. This same improving sequence or peak-end preference also emerges for how people prefer to experience headache pain (Chapman, 2000), spend their weekend time (Lowenstein & Prelec, 1993), and experience comfort or pain during dental procedures (Kaakko, Horn, Weinstein, Kaufman, Leggott, & Coldwell, 2003). Not only do people report a strong preference for these improving sequences, but improving sequences also result in more positive affect following an event with both positive and negative aspects (Baumgartner, Sujan, & Padgett, 1997; Kaakko et al., 2003; Kahneman,

Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993; Legg & Sweeny, in press; Nguyen, Legg, & Sweeny, 2011).

The story behind news-recipients' preferences seems to be becoming clear. However, the story becomes complicated when examining the news order people prefer as news-givers. If news-givers find improving sequences appealing, they too should prefer to open with bad news. However, news-givers experience a conflicting motivation in the MUM effect, which suggests that it is difficult for most people to relay negative information (Rosen & Tesser, 1975). The MUM effect also dictates that people will engage in a variety of strategies in order to delay or avoid giving bad news to others. These MUM effects override the preference for improving sequences and predict that news-givers will open with good news as a way of easing into the bad news conversation and delaying the transmission of the bad news.

This prediction is further complicated by news-givers' differing motives. When entering into a bad news conversation, people can attempt to protect the news-recipient (e.g., trying not to hurt their feelings) or protect themselves (e.g., saving face or minimizing the potential for retaliation). Again, the findings from Legg and Sweeny (in press) support this prediction as well as the consequent news order preferences. News-givers who reported other-protection motives tended to give news in the order preferred by recipients (e.g., bad news first). In contrast, news-givers who reported a self-focused motive more frequently wanted to give good news first (perhaps as a way of delaying the bad news or as a way of saving face). These news order preferences are quite flexible, however, and just a simple priming of other-focus or emotion-protection goals (i.e., a

motive to protect the recipient) is sufficient to sway news-givers in the direction of delivering bad news first (Legg & Sweeny, in press).

A final question addressed in the recent studies on blended news delivery examines whether news order actually yields changes in how news-recipients experience and respond to blended news. Two studies demonstrate that news order has important consequences for news-recipients' reactions (Legg & Sweeny, in press; Nguyen, Legg, & Sweeny, 2011). The strongest effect occurred in regards to news-recipients' mood following news delivery: News-recipients who receive bad news last report the most negative mood across multiple studies. News order also predicts immediate behavioral outcomes. That is, although receiving bad news last had a negative effect on recipients' mood, it also motivated action in response to the news, an effect mediated by increasing worry over the course of the conversation (Legg & Sweeny, in press, Study 3).

In short, blended news delivery is a complicated process. To date, the majority of research focused on a single aspect of blended news delivery, news order. Many questions still surround the issue of news order, but it is also time to expand the lines of inquiry to include other predictors, manifestations, and consequences of blended news. The Blended News Delivery framework (Legg & Sweeny, 2013) provides one such theory to guide the future of blended news delivery. I will briefly summarize the framework below, with particular attention to the aspects of the theory most relevant to the present study.

Theoretical Background

People hold strong opinions about how to give bad news to others, as evidenced by the 41,400 results yielded in a Google search for “how to give bad news,” 2,191 videos on YouTube about giving bad news, and 2,634 books for sale on Amazon.com instructing people on the best ways to deliver bad news (including one titled *Grandma’s Dead: Breaking Bad News with Baby Animals* by Amanda McCall and Ben Schwartz). Bad news delivery is no stranger to the scholarly literature, either. In fact, scholars in a variety of fields including business, education, communication, medicine, and psychology provide commentary on how to delivery bad news better (e.g., medical, Baile, Buckman, Lenzi, Globber, Beale, Kudelka, 2000; business, Wagoner & Waldron, 1999; and educational, Brinko, 1993; Eckstein, Bergin, & Sharp, 2002).

Despite these numerous prescriptions for giving bad news, scholarly or otherwise, the literature provides very few theoretical efforts in the realm of bad news delivery (see Sweeny & Shepperd, 2007 for a rare exception). The existing theories do not provide a full picture of bad news delivery in that, among other omissions, they largely ignore the role of good news. The Blended News Delivery framework (Figure 1), in contrast, provides one such framework to organize the predictors, characteristics, and outcomes of blended news delivery.

The Blended News Delivery framework identifies a variety of predictors of blended news delivery. That is, news-givers sometimes have the option of using a blended news approach or to use a bad news only approach. Variables that predict the use of blended news delivery and the specific manifestation of the blended news include

characteristics of the bad news itself (e.g., severity of the bad news, whether good news is readily available), characteristics of the news-giver (e.g., individual differences in empathy), and dyadic characteristics (e.g., power imbalance). One strength of the framework is that it provides methodological guidance for conducting research on blended news delivery by providing three characteristics of blended news that researchers can easily quantify and assess: news order, relative emphasis of good versus bad news, and the content of the good news. The current study uses two of the three measurement variables (news order and relative emphasis) and examines two predictors described in the Blended News Delivery framework: power imbalance and physical distance.

Power Imbalance

Sometimes people of equal social status, such as friends, romantic partners, and colleagues, give blended news to each other. However, another dynamic more traditionally explored in bad news delivery is that of a power-imbalanced dyad. Both leaders and followers have reasons to dislike giving bad news to each other. Leaders, who presumably want to maintain rapport and solidarity with their employees, need to give negative feedback in order to promote productivity and better employee behaviors. Followers, on the other hand, when put in the position of having to give negative feedback to a superior, may experience fear of future retaliation from their higher-ups. Regardless of the specific threat about giving bad news, neither leaders nor followers seem to seek out opportunities to give each other bad news (Jablin, 1979; Yariz, 2006).

Recommendations on how physicians, teachers, and managers should give bad news to their patients, students, and employees make up a large portion of the bad news

delivery literature (e.g., medical, Baile, Buckman, Lenzi, Guber, Beale, Kudelka, 2000; business, Wagoner & Waldron, 1999; and educational, Brinko, 1993; Eckstein, Bergin, & Sharp, 2002). Once again, people often recommend incorporating some type of positive information when giving bad news to subordinates, and some research even provides evidence as to how information delivery changes for subordinates and superiors (O'Reilly & Roberts, 1974). For example, research finds that people prefer to give more positive information and less negative information to superiors or peers, but they are willing to give more negative information and less positive information to subordinates (O'Reilly & Roberts, 1974).

Physical Distance

Technology affords news-givers a variety of ways to more efficiently deliver news to others. In fact, news-givers can choose to give news face-to-face, over the phone, through email, or through a website, or they can ask someone else to give the news. It may seem that if news is severe or important, people would want to give news face-to-face, but people can now access very consequential bad news without ever seeing another person. For example, some patients can access certain diagnostic lab results through email (Hassol et al., 2004; Wakefield et al., 2010). Patients undergoing diagnostic tests may receive emails with the test results or access the results via a healthcare website. In the event that lab results indicate problematic health conditions, notices may accompany the results requesting that patients make an appointment with their physician to discuss the results. Another common electronic delivery of bad news occurs when academics learn the fate of their manuscripts and grants via electronic notification.

Some research provides evidence that news delivery changes based on physical distance. Specifically, participants in one study were more likely to delay bad news delivery when news-recipients were in sight compared to out of sight (Bond & Anderson, 1987), and another study found that news-givers more often distorted bad news in a positive direction when giving the news face-to-face or over the telephone compared to over email (Sussman & Sproull, 1999). These findings suggest that news-givers are more likely to engage in blended news delivery in person than on the phone or over email.

Overview and Hypotheses

The current study provides the first empirical examination of blended news delivery and how power imbalance and physical distance influence delivery. Thus, I had both theoretically-driven goals and exploratory goals. Based on the Blended News Delivery framework (Legg & Sweeny, in prep) and relevant previous research, I hypothesized that power imbalance and physical distance would alter the presentation of blended news. My specific hypotheses are as followed:

Hypotheses 1a-1c: Followers will begin and end the conversation with good news and rely more on sandwiching techniques compared to leaders. Leaders will end the conversation with good news but tend to begin the conversation with bad news and rely less on sandwiching. Leaders will emphasize bad news more than followers.

Hypotheses 2a-2c: People delivering news in person will more often begin and end with good news and rely on sandwiching techniques. People delivering news through email will more often begin the email with good news, end the email with bad news, and

will rely less on sandwiching. People will emphasize good news more in person and bad news more over email.

Hypotheses 3a-3d: Leaders giving news over email will begin with bad news, end with good news, and rely the least on sandwiching compared to other groups. Leaders giving news over email will also emphasize bad news the most compared to the other groups. Followers giving news in person will begin the conversation with good news, end the conversation with good news, and rely more on sandwiching compared to the other groups. Followers giving news in person will also emphasize more good news than bad news relative to the other groups.

Two main goals inspired the exploratory analyses conducted. First, given that both leaders and followers give bad news and people deliver bad news in person and over email, the first exploratory analyses sought to examine whether coders rated news-givers differently based on condition. The second exploratory goal was to examine whether the Big Five personality traits or trait empathy influenced news delivery.

Method

Participants

A total of 167 undergraduate students (65.9% female; $M_{age} = 19.34$, $SD = 1.30$) enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of California, Riverside consented to participate in this study. The sample was ethnically diverse: 49.1% identified as Asian, 25.8% identified as Hispanic/Latino, 9.6% identified as White/Caucasian, 6.6% identified as mixed ethnicity, 4.8% identified as Black/African-American, 3.0% identified as Middle Eastern, 0.6% identified as Native Hawaiian or

Pacific Islander, and 0.6% identified as an unlisted ethnicity. The vast majority of participants ($n = 151$, 90.4%) reported being completely fluent in English. Only 13 participants reported being “mostly fluent” in English and 3 reported being “not fluent” in English. The three non-English-fluent participants’ data (most notably their open-ended responses and, if available, email to the confederate) were read for clarity and a basic grasp of English grammar and were judged to meet a minimum fluency level. As such, they were not excluded from further analyses. This judgment was made prior to conducting any statistical analyses.

Procedures

Prior to participants arriving at the lab, the research assistant randomly assigned each participant to either the *leader role* or the *follower role*. The research assistant also randomly assigned whether the news delivery would take place *in-person* or via *email*.

One participant and one confederate arrived at the lab to participate in the study. After hearing a cover story about developing a test for use in businesses, the research assistant drew a piece of paper out of a cup to ostensibly randomly assign the participant and confederate to fake conditions: news-giver or news-recipient. In reality, all participants served as news-givers, and confederates always served as news-recipients. The research assistant then seated the participant and confederate in separate rooms, and the participant completed a personality measures that s/he believed was unrelated to the true purpose of the study. During this time, the participant believed that the confederate was completing the real test described in the cover story (i.e., the test to be used by businesses in hiring and promotion decisions). After enough time passed for the

participant to complete the personality measures, the research assistant returned and indicated that s/he would need a few minutes to score the confederate's personality test and that during that time the participant and confederate would engage in a cooperative task.

Participants and confederates worked together for five minutes to fold an origami dog. In the *leader role* condition, the research assistant instructed the participant to supervise the confederate and instruct him/her on how best to construct the origami. In the *follower role* condition, the research assistant instructed the confederate to supervise the participant and instruct him/her on how best to put construct the origami (these instructions occurred in front of the participant). The origami task was video-recorded. At the conclusion of the origami task, the research assistant asked the participant and confederate to return to their original rooms.

The research assistant then entered the participant's room with a sheet of paper that listed the fake personality test results for the confederate. The research assistant asked the participant to carefully examine the personality test results and consider how to deliver the results to the confederate.

In the *in-person delivery* condition, the research assistant led the participant into the room with the confederate and the video camera. The research assistant set the video camera to record and asked the participant to deliver the personality test results to the confederate. In the *email delivery* condition, the research assistant opened an email document on the participant's computer and instructed the participant to craft an email to deliver the personality test results to the confederate.

After the participant provided the test results to the confederate, the participant completed a final short questionnaire about the news-giving task, and then the research assistant verbally debriefed the participant to ensure full understanding of the true nature of the study.

Measures

Participants completed the Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), the Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006), the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980, 1983), and the Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (Caruso & Mayer, 1998). All scale and subscale means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas are listed in Table 1.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) is a 44-item scale with five subscales that measure extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Participants provided answers on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006) is a 20-item scale that measures both cognitive and affective empathy. Participants provided their answers on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980, 1983) measures four facets of dispositional empathy. Of interest for this study are the perspective taking, empathic concern, and personal distress subscales. The fourth scale, fantasy, is of less relevance to the task of blended news delivery. The IRI is a 28-item measure that

includes seven items per subscale. Participants provided their answers on a 5-point scale ranging from A (*does not describe me well*) to E (*describes me very well*).

The Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (Caruso & Mayer, 1998) offers another way to measure participants' trait empathy and consists of 30 items. Participants provided responses on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Although an overall score can be computed, the scale also provides six subscales: suffering, positive sharing, crying, emotional attention, feel for others, emotional contagion.

Video Recordings and Email Coding

Three trained research assistants coded the videos and emails collected from the participants. All responses were coded for news order (“Did the participant begin with good or bad news?”; “Did the participant end with good news or bad news?”; 0 = *good*, 1 = *bad*) and whether the participant alternated or sandwiched the news (“Did the participant ‘sandwich’ the news?”; 0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). In instances when the three coders did not agree on these items, I referred to the videos or emails to make a final judgment.

Research assistants also coded on a variety of more subjective items (see Table 2 for intraclass correlations). The following items were rated on a scale of 1 (*the participant did not display this trait at all*) to 4 (*the participant displayed this quality a lot*): Empathy/caring for the news-recipient, warmth toward the news-recipient, social skills, comfort when giving news, confidence when giving news, anxiety, directness/bluntness when giving the results, and effort put into giving the results well. A final item assessed the extent to which news-givers relied on the results to deliver the

news, as opposed to adlibbing or adding their own interjections (“How much did the participant [read from / write] exactly what the results said for the [bad / good] news?”; 1 = *the participant ONLY [read/wrote] EXACTLY what was on the results sheet*, 4 = *the participant did not use the results sheet at all or added a lot of extra details not on the sheet*).

Three different coders recorded the total words written in each email, the total good-results-related words, and the total bad-results-related words. For the in-person condition, one coder timed each interaction, the amount of time spent related to the good results, and the amount of time spent related to the bad results. In order to compare the two conditions, I first calculated a proportion of time/words spent on good vs. bad (i.e., time spent giving good news / total interaction time or words used giving good news / total email word count). Proportions were then standardized using z -scores to provide a more interpretable means of comparing emails to face-to-face interactions.

Results

Preliminary Data Analysis

To assess whether gender or ethnicity influenced the findings, I conducted nine independent samples t -tests on the continuous dependent variables of interest. Only one significant result emerged: Participants rated as warmer by the coders were more likely to be females, $t(162) = 2.83$, $p = .005$, $r = .22$. To further assess whether this effect was driven by the coders seeing the gender of the participants in the in-person condition, a 2 (Gender) x 2 (Physical Distance) ANOVA was conducted. The interaction term was not

significant, $p = .23$, indicating that the gender effect was not due to a bias from seeing the participant versus reading their emails.

For the three dichotomous dependent variables (which news people gave first and last and whether they sandwiched the news), I conducted three chi-square goodness-of-fit analyses. No significant differences emerged between male and female participants. Group *ns* were too unequal to test every ethnicity against each other, so only the most frequently reported ethnicities were compared (Asians, Hispanic/Latinos, and White/Caucasians). Eight analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on the continuous dependent variables and post-hoc Least Significant Differences tests produced pairwise comparisons. No differences by ethnicity emerged. Once again, for the three dichotomous variables, chi-squares were used to assess any differences by ethnicity. No significant differences emerged.

Primary Analyses

Correlations between blended news delivery characteristics. I examined the relationship between how participants started the blended news conversation, how they ended it, whether they used sandwiching, and the proportion of time (or words in the *email* condition; hereafter simply “time”) spent giving good or bad news. People who started with good news were also more likely to end with bad news, $r(162) = -.56, p < .001$. People who started with good news were also more likely to spend a greater proportion of time on good news, $r(164) = -.16, p = .04$ and marginally less likely to spend more time on bad news, $r(164) = .13, p = .10$. The news participants started with was unrelated to use of sandwiching, $r(163) = .07, p = .37$. However, people who *ended*

with good news were more likely to use sandwiching, $r(162) = .40, p < .001$, spent a marginally greater proportion of time on good news, $r(162) = -.12, p = .13$, and spent marginally less time on bad news, $r(162) = .13, p = .10$. People who sandwiched the news spent proportionately less time on bad news, $r(163) = .26, p = .001$, but did not necessarily spend the time on good news, $r(163) = -.08, p = .33$. Table 3 presents the full correlation matrix.

Hypothesis testing: Blended news delivery characteristics as dependent variables. Three logistic regressions were conducted to assess the hypothesized main effects of the power manipulation and the physical distance manipulation on news order and sandwiching and to assess whether the conditions interacted to predict these strategies.

How did news-givers start? Power did not predict which news participants opened with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = .54, p = .46, \phi = .06$. However, physical distance did predict the news participants opened with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 4.90, p = .03, \phi = .17$. Although the majority of participants in both conditions opened with good news, participants in the *in-person* condition were 1.67 times more likely to start with bad news compared to participants in the *email* condition. Power did not interact with physical distance to predict the news participants opened with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = .38, p = .54, \phi = .05$.

How did news-givers end? Power did not predict which news participants ended with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = .39, p = .53, \phi = .05$. However, physical distance did predict the news participants ended with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 10.95, p = .001, \phi = .26$. Most

participants (53%, $n = 44$) ended with good news in the *in-person* condition, whereas most participants (73%, $n = 56$) ended with bad news in the *email* condition. Power did not interact with physical distance to predict the news participants ended with, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = .10, p = .76, \phi = .03$.

When were news-givers most likely to use bad news sandwiches? Power did not predict use of sandwiching, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 159) = .01, p = .95, \phi = .01$. However, physical distance did predict use of sandwiching, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 159) = 15.08, p < .001, \phi = .31$. A majority of participants (53%, $n = 44$) used a bad news sandwich in the *in-person* condition, whereas few participants (23%, $n = 18$) used a bad news sandwich in the *email* condition. Power did not interact with physical distance to predict use of sandwiching, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 159) = .05, p = .82, \phi = .02$.

Did the relative emphasis on good news differ by condition? The standardized proportions of time spent giving good and bad news were used to address the hypothesis regarding how much emphasis would be placed on good versus bad news over email and in-person. A 2 (*Power*) x 2 (*Physical Distance*) MANOVA was conducted to assess the effects on proportion on good and bad news delivery. The omnibus test indicated that the two main effects did not significantly predict the proportion of time participants spent giving good news or bad news, $ps > .35$. The interaction term, however, indicated a significant interaction between the two independent variables for at least one of the dependent variables, $F(2, 159) = 2.94, p = .06$. Examination of the subsequent ANOVAs indicated that the interaction between conditions only influenced the proportion of time spent giving bad news, $F(1, 160) = 3.89, p = .05, r_{es} = .15$. Leaders spent a relatively

greater proportion of time on bad news when writing emails, whereas followers spent a relatively greater proportion of time on bad news when giving bad news in person (see Table 4 for means and standard deviations).

Correlations between blended news delivery characteristics and ratings of news-givers. I next conducted correlations between the five blended news delivery characteristics (i.e., beginning news order, ending news order, sandwiching, proportion of good news, and proportion of bad news) and the coders' ratings of news-givers (Table 3). The news participants opened with did not correlate with any of the ratings, all p s > .36. However, the news participants ended with did correlate with coders' ratings of the news-giver. Participants who ended with good news were rated as warmer, $r(162) = -.20, p = .01$, more socially skilled, $r(160) = -.15, p = .06$, and marginally less direct and blunt, $r(162) = .14, p < .09$.

Participants who used a bad news sandwich were also as warmer, $r(163) = -.20, p = .01$, more socially skilled, $r(163) = -.15, p = .06$, and less direct/blunt, $r(163) = .19, p = .02$. Participants who spent proportionately more time on good news were rated as warmer, $r(164) = .13, p = .09$. Participants who spent proportionately more time on bad news were rated as less empathic and caring, $r(164) = -.20, p = .01$, less warm, $r(164) = -.16, p = .04$, less socially skilled, $r(164) = -.14, p = .07$, more direct/blunt, $r(164) = .24, p = .002$, and engaged in less adlibbing, $r(164) = -.17, p = .03$.

Exploratory Analyses

Were news-givers rated differently based on conditions? To examine whether coders rated participants differently based on condition assignment, nine analyses of

variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. The two experimental conditions (power and physical distance) did not interact to predict any of the coders' ratings (all $ps > .42$), so only relevant main effects are discussed.

Power marginally influenced coders' ratings of empathy/caring, $F(1, 160) = 1.76$, $p = .19$, $r_{es} = .10$. Participants in the *leader* condition were rated as slightly more empathic/caring ($M = 2.30$, $SD = .71$) than participants in the *follower* condition ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .68$). Power also marginally influenced coders' ratings of anxiety, $F(1, 160) = 2.41$, $p = .12$, $r_{es} = .12$. Participants in the *leader* condition were rated as slightly less anxious ($M = 1.29$, $SD = .37$) than participants in the *follower* condition ($M = 1.34$, $SD = .43$).

Physical distance influenced coders' ratings of participants' anxiety, $F(1, 160) = 86.87$, $p < .001$, $r_{es} = .59$, such that participants in the *in-person* condition were rated as more anxious ($M = 1.55$, $SD = .42$) than participants in the *email* condition ($M = 1.08$, $SD = .17$). Participants' ratings of their own anxiety while giving the news supported the coders' impressions: Participants in the *in-person* condition reported feeling more anxious ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .92$) than did participants in the *email* condition ($M = 2.24$, $SD = .91$), $F(1, 161) = 18.90$, $p < .001$, $r_{es} = .32$.

Participants' use of adlibbing also differed based on physical distance, $F(1, 160) = 16.63$, $p < .001$, $r_{es} = .31$. Participants in the *email* condition were less likely to rely on the specific wording on the personality test results sheets ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .89$) than were participants in the *in-person* condition ($M = 1.83$, $SD = .87$).

Three marginal main effects of physical distance emerged but should be interpreted with caution. Physical distance influenced coders' ratings of participants' confidence, $F(1, 160) = 2.74, p = .10, r_{es} = .11$, such that participants in the *in-person* condition were rated as less confident ($M = 2.77, SD = .65$) than participants in the *email* condition ($M = 2.92, SD = .60$). Physical distance also influenced coders' ratings of participants' directness/bluntness, $F(1, 160) = 2.04, p = .16, r_{es} = .11$, such that participants in the *in-person* condition were rated as slightly more direct/blunt ($M = 3.16, SD = .62$) than participants in the *email* condition ($M = 3.05, SD = .47$). Finally, physical distance influenced coders' ratings of participants' effort, $F(1, 160) = 3.23, p = .07, r_{es} = .14$, such that participants in the *in-person* condition were rated as putting in less effort ($M = 2.07, SD = .81$) than participants in the *email* condition ($M = 2.30, SD = .80$).

Personality measures. The Big Five personality traits and dispositional empathy were also explored to assess whether they predicted blended news delivery. I first conducted logistic regression analyses for the three categorical dependent variables (beginning news order, ending news order, and sandwiching) and multiple regressions for the two continuous dependent variables (proportion of good and bad news) to assess main effects of personality and whether personality interacted with physical distance to predict blended news delivery. The personality variables of interest and the physical distance condition (dummy coded) were first mean centered. An interaction term was computed by multiplying the centered personality variables by the centered physical distance condition.

Personality did not predict how people started or ended the conversation, whether they used sandwiching, or the proportion of good and bad news delivered. However, personality interacted with physical condition to predict delivery characteristics in four instances. Extraversion and physical distance interacted to predict how people ended the news delivery conversation, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 162) = 12.96, p < .001, \phi = .28$. Conscientiousness interacted with physical distance to predict the proportion of time/words spent on bad news, $\beta = .16, t(160) = 2.16, p = .03$. General empathy interacted with physical distance to predict how people ended the news delivery conversation, Wald $\chi^2(1, N = 162) = 3.85, p = .05, \phi = .15$. Given the large number of analyses used to test these interactions, the conscientiousness and general empathy results would not withstand a statistical adjustment to account for the inflated Type I error rate. Although I urge caution when interpreting the following analyses, I present the associated patterns for extraversion, conscientiousness, and general empathy below.

Extraversion. In the *in-person* condition, more extroverted participants were more likely to end with good news, $r(83) = -.24, p = .03$. This pattern did not emerge for extraverts in the *email* condition, $r(79) = .14, p = .23$.

Conscientiousness. In the *in-person* condition, more conscientious participants were spent a smaller proportion of time on bad news, $r(84) = -.21, p = .06$. This pattern did not emerge for extraverts in the *email* condition, $r(80) = .14, p = .23$.

General empathy. In the *email* condition, more empathic participants were more likely to end with bad news, $r(79) = .20, p = .07$. This pattern did not emerge for empathic participants in the *in-person* condition, $r(83) = -.11, p = .31$.

Did participant-reported anxiety mediate blended news delivery? As mentioned earlier, participants giving blended news in person reported feeling more anxious than participants delivering blended news over email. Anxiety did not predict how participants began or ended the conversation, but it did predict whether participants relied on sandwiching, $r(161) = .32, p < .001$. Thus, using methods developed and recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008), I estimated the path coefficients in a mediation model and generated bootstrap bias-corrected confidence intervals (5000 bootstrapped samples) for indirect effects of physical distance condition on use of sandwiching through participant-reported anxiety. See Table 5 for bivariate correlations. The direct effect of anxiety ($b = .63, p = .002$) was statistically significant, and the bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects of physical distance condition on sandwiching through anxiety did not contain zero (95% CI = .15 to .82), suggesting full mediation.

Discussion

This study provides a novel glimpse into how news-givers construct blended news conversations. The Blended News Delivery framework (Legg & Sweeny, 2013) consists of three such characteristics that define blended news: news order, relative emphasis, and the content of good news. The specific content of the news was held constant in this study to maximize experimental control. This consistency in the content of both good and bad news allowed for more precise assessment of news order and relative emphasis of good news versus bad news in blended news delivery. The findings provide several key insights into blended news conversations. First, order predicts certain patterns during

blended news delivery. For example, beginning the conversation with bad news corresponds with ending with good news. People who end the conversation with good news are more likely to rely on sandwiching (shrouding bad news by beginning and ending with good news or alternating good and bad news throughout the conversation). Finally, sandwiching correlates with less emphasis given to bad news. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that order influences other important aspects of a conversation such as the amount of emphasis placed on good versus bad news. Beyond these general conclusions about the nature of blended news, the findings also provide insight into the predictors of news order, bad news sandwiching, and relative emphasis on good and bad news.

The Role of Physical Distance in Blended News Delivery

News order. Past research demonstrates that news-recipients hold a dominant preference for how they want to receive blended news: They want bad news first (Legg & Sweeny, in press; Marshall & Kidd, 1981). Furthermore, some evidence also indicates that news-givers, especially those focusing on themselves rather than recipients, prefer to give good news first (Legg & Sweeny, in press). The present study replicates this effect and confirms that news-givers dominantly prefer to begin blended news conversations with good news. However, this preference is somewhat mitigated when people give blended news in person. Although the majority of people giving blended news face-to-face opened with good news, a larger percentage opened with bad news compared to people who gave blended news over email.

Two possible explanations can account for this finding. First, research on psychological distance suggests that people process targets differently based on a variety of psychological distancers (e.g., spatial and temporal; Trope & Liberman, 2010). That is, because people giving news in person are psychologically and physically closer to news-recipients, they can more easily consider the perspective of news-recipients. Prior research indicates that an other-focus promotes giving bad news first, as recipients prefer (Legg & Sweeny, in press).

A second explanation is that people can rely on nonverbal communication to indicate empathy in face-to-face interactions, but these cues are largely absent when giving news over email. That is, face-to-face conversations provide more tools for communication such that news order may become less important. In contrast, opening with good news over email may be one of very few ways news-givers can establish rapport and empathy. Regardless of why news-givers choose to open with good or bad news, it is interesting to note that the news people opened with did not predict third-party ratings of warmth, empathy, social skills, or anxiety.

Another interesting pattern emerges when considering how people choose to end blended news conversations. When giving news face-to-face, people overwhelmingly end with good news, but they tend to end with bad news over email. Once again, the psychological distance implicated in face-to-face versus emailed blended news delivery may explain why this pattern emerged. When giving news in person, self-presentational priorities likely take precedence (e.g., Leary, 1996; Schlenker, 1980). Not only do news-givers care about putting their best (and most polite) face forward, they also care about

minimizing any potential retaliation. For news-givers wanting to look good and protect themselves, ending on a high note in person is a viable strategy.

Self-presentation and protection motives may explain how people end conversations, but the current finding may also reflect a conversational norm: Ending or exiting a positive conversation is easier than exiting a bad news conversation (Maynard, 2003). This argument has some empirical and anecdotal support in that good news is one conversational way to exit out of difficult conversations (Grainger et al., 2005; Maynard, 2003). Exiting gracefully from the conversation, however, becomes less important when crafting a bad news email.

If news-givers end with good news because they want to save face, they may possess some insight into how others will view them. Indeed, people who ended on a high note were rated as warmer, more socially skilled, and less direct and blunt. Many occasions call for news-givers to protect their relationship or maintain rapport with news-recipients. However, many other occasions require news-givers to deliver bad news in ways that will inspire behavior change for the recipient. In these instances, promoting the interpersonal relationship by ending with good news may come at the cost of promoting behavior change, especially if ending on a high note mitigates any worry felt by news-recipients (Legg & Sweeny, in press).

Bad news sandwiches. Perhaps the most insidious news-giving prescription involves the use of the bad news sandwich. Oft recommended, yet rarely empirically examined, the bad news sandwich feels like a silver bullet for news-givers in that it ostensibly accomplishes the goal of relaying bad news while also protecting the news-

giver. The current study demonstrates that sandwiching, although not the dominant delivery strategy, occurs more frequently in person compared to over email. Shrouding and enveloping bad news with good news helps news-givers save face, appear polite, and delay giving bad news (Maynard, 2003). Over email, news-givers may not feel these pressures as strongly.

Sandwiching is inextricably linked with a tendency to end with good news, so it should come as no surprise that sandwiching also related to higher ratings of warmth and social skills, and lower ratings of directness and bluntness. Perhaps these interpersonal benefits associated with sandwiching are helpful if news-givers need to maintain a good relationship with news-recipients, such as when businesses want to retain customers or advisors want to maintain good relations with their graduate students. Self-proclaimed bad news experts laud the effectiveness of sandwiching, as this advice from one online blogger illustrates:

The sandwich technique sets a positive tone to the conversation, making it much easier to communicate and absorb the negative news. The communication is topped off with a positive spin making the entire message more positive. The fact that we can remember more of the beginning and ending of a communication also makes this an ideal method, since we are bound to be left with an overall positive feeling even though the real intent was to deliver bad news, which is also accomplished (Alfie, 2009).

The bad news sandwich may leave people feeling better, but it likely does little to motivate them to take action, and moreover, inference suggests that sandwiching is a

strategy that mainly benefits news-givers as the following online posting also illustrates: “The ‘Bad News Sandwich’ approach doesn’t guarantee your readers will be happy to receive the news, but it does show you’re sensitive to how they’ll react when they read it” (Torpey, 2012).

Anxiety over giving bad news, as demonstrated by the current study and illustrated in the above examples, mediates the relationship between physical distance (in person vs. email) and the reliance on sandwiching. Thus, sandwiching may help news-givers mitigate their own anxiety and may promote a positive self-presentation, all under the guise of making the bad news easier for the recipient to hear. Unless the goal purely is to make the recipient feel good, little evidence suggests that sandwiching is the golden ticket to perfect bad news delivery.

Relative emphasis. The degree of emphasis placed on each type of news can also sway the interpretation of the news itself and how people view the news-giver (Legg & Sweeny, 2013). This study provides evidence that people who emphasize good news are perceived as warmer, whereas people who emphasize bad news are perceived as less empathic and caring, warm, and socially skilled, and more direct and blunt. Once again, a familiar theme emerges: News-givers risk interpersonal costs when emphasizing bad news, but these interpersonal costs may promote critical behavior change in news-recipients (Legg & Sweeny, in press). An important next step for future research is to identify ways news-givers can promote beneficial behavior change for news-recipients while still maintaining rapport with news-recipients.

Power Imbalance

Overall, my power manipulation did not influence blended news delivery, nor did it interact with physical distance except in one instance: Leaders emphasized bad news more over email and followers emphasized bad news more in person. The finding for leaders makes sense given that leaders presumably want their followers to become more productive or make decisions that will benefit the business. Thus, sending an email with bad news might negate the need for leaders to overly emphasize good news when the primary goal is to change something the follower is doing. In contrast, in-person interactions between leaders and followers typically invoke motivation to maintain rapport, so leaders may feel some pressure to communicate in ways that also maintain the relationship, thus emphasizing good news in this communication context.

Less intuitive is the finding that followers tended to emphasize bad news more in person than in email. This finding is surprising and requires caution alongside interpretation. On the one hand, perhaps followers felt encouraged to discuss bad news in front of the leader because they just completed the origami task in which the leader quite freely delivered both encouragement and correction as the follower constructed the origami dog. This finding could also be an artifact of how the videos and emails were coded or a spurious finding due to a somewhat small n (the four groups each contained fewer than 50 participants). This finding may also be an artifact of the way the study was conducted. Followers were relatively quiet during the origami task, so perhaps they felt like they should talk more during the in person delivery task, and the bad news provided additional content that they otherwise might have deemphasized. In contrast, leaders

spent a good bit of time giving instructions during the origami task, so perhaps they felt less motivated to talk during the news delivery task.

The lack of a larger effect of my power manipulation is surprising given that much research, especially in the organizational and management literature, focuses on power imbalance and how managers, physicians, and teachers can best give bad news to their subordinates (Baile et al., 2000; Brinko, 1993; Yariv, 2006). One possible explanation for the lack of effects is that the power imbalance manipulation (i.e., giving or receiving instructions during the origami task) did not sufficiently override the ultimate power held during the study, the power held by the research assistant. That is, perhaps the participants still felt closer in power to the confederate in comparison to the power imbalance between research assistant and participant. Another possibility is that the origami task did not last long enough or produce enough personal investment to optimize the power imbalance. A final explanation is that the origami task, instead of inducing a power imbalance, created a cooperative environment and had the opposite effect than intended. A more effective, more realistic power manipulation could illuminate the differences in news delivery that no doubt exist in power-imbalanced relationships outside of the lab.

Personality and Blended News Delivery

One exploratory goal of the current study was to examine the role of personality in blended news delivery. Very few findings with personality and trait empathy emerged, and those that did appear should be interpreted with caution due to the large number of analyses conducted and thus the inflated Type I error rate. One interesting finding of note

is that personality, at least as assessed in this study, was entirely unrelated to how people began the blended news conversation. This finding supports the notion that giving good news first is a dominant preference for news-givers and likely reflects a strong social norm. Despite the few personality correlates found in this specific study, personality almost certainly plays some role in blended news delivery and should remain a variable of interest in future research. Of note, the current study restricted the content of good and bad news in order to optimize experimental control. However, in uncontrived situations, news-givers have more flexibility with the type of good news they pair with bad news. Personality variables such as trait empathy and neuroticism likely play a key role when news-givers select blended news delivery over a bad news only delivery.

Future Directions

This study not only provides one of the first glimpses into the blended news conversation, but it can also serve as a launching point for future research in this area. For example, research on MUM effects captures people's reluctance to deliver bad news (Dibble & Levine, 2012; Rosen & Tesser, 1975). Yet these studies have not examined blended news delivery as a strategy to delay giving bad news. Rather, the studies typically examine whether people avoid giving bad news altogether (Rosen & Tesser, 1975), assess how long people delay giving bad news (Bond & Anderson, 1987; Yariv, 2006), or compare how quickly people give good news in a good-news-only condition compared to a bad-news-only or neutral-news condition (Dibble & Levine, 2013). A more thorough connection between MUM effect research and blended news delivery can serve to answer four important questions. First, is the dominant preference to give good

news first a reflection of the MUM effect, self-presentational efforts, or conversational mores? Second, to what extent does blended news delivery quell the anxiety associated with the MUM effect? Third, do MUM effects relate to sandwiching behaviors? Finally, if MUM effects drive the conversation up to the onset of bad news, what variables influence the progression of the rest of the conversation? My study provides evidence that even after giving bad news, people still engage in behaviors such as sandwiching.

Another future direction involves examining more complicated situations in which the relationship between the good and bad news is less contrived. The Blended News Delivery framework (Legg & Sweeny, in prep) provides an outline of the variety of options news-givers have for the content of good news, and thus this framework can inform how future studies examine blended news delivery outside of laboratory settings. Interestingly, many news-givers in my study added good news beyond the positive personality test results. For example, some news-givers in the study offered advice for how the confederates could improve negative aspects of their personality, but this tactic did not appear in all conversations. Rather than providing advice, some news-givers made positive comparisons (e.g., “I’m sure you’re not as bad as most people”), provided reassurance (e.g., “Don’t let these results get you down”), or tried to spin the result in an optimistic way (e.g., “Well, this test says that trait is negative but, ya know, in some situations it’s actually a good thing”).

Finally, this research can inform future studies examining news-givers who deliver bad news frequently, such as physicians. Burnout, anxiety, and stress can all accompany frequent bad news (Ramirez et al., 1996; Rosenbaum et al., 2004; Sussman &

Sproull, 1999). For example, a sizeable proportion of physicians (42%) in one study reported that the long-term stress and anxiety associated with bad news delivery can last anywhere from a few hours to up to three days after giving bad news to a patient (Ptacek et al., 2001). These self-reports likely reflect internal physiological and biological stress markers. In fact, recent findings clearly indicate that giving bad news is a stressful task, both psychologically and physiologically (Hulsman, Pranger, Koot, Fabriek, Karemaker, & Smets, 2010; Hulsman, Smets, Karemaker, & de Haes, 2011). The potential long-term health risk to people who regularly give bad news is a critical but understudied aspect of bad news communication (Ramirez et al., 1996), and blended news delivery may be one way to mitigate these serious consequences for news-givers.

Minimizing news-givers' stress certainly is an important goal, but an equally critical goal is to identify blended news techniques that optimize the reactions of news-recipients. Further, examining whether blended news delivery benefits news-recipients above and beyond a bad news only approach can also inform better communication training for frequent news-givers.

Conclusion

Bad news delivery is a difficult task. As evidence of its difficulty and complexity, more and more medical schools include a communication component in which students role play delivering bad news to patients (Weimar-O'Brien, 2012). These programs typically educate students about verbal and nonverbal communication, patients' reactions, and promoting empathic and ethical care. These programs reflect well-intentioned ideals of promoting optimal communication in very consequential settings.

Despite the best intentions of these programs, however, many recommendations for giving bad news remain largely anecdotal and driven by common-sense perceptions such as the benefits of using bad news sandwiches. People want to believe that pairing bad news with good news results in the perfect bad news delivery strategy. But the vague and under-researched recommendations for these tactics may leave news-givers ill-equipped to effectively deal with bad news delivery. The current study experimentally examined some of these common sense ideals (e.g., the use of bad news sandwiches) through the manipulation of power and physical distance between given and recipient. With future explorations, good news can emerge as a consequential player in the bad news conversation rather than just the punch line to another “good news, bad news” joke.

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Tables

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for all measures.

	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha
Big Five Inventory			
Extroversion	3.11	.67	.85
Conscientious	3.46	.54	.79
Openness to Experience	3.44	.55	.80
Agreeableness	3.81	.57	.81
Neuroticism	3.01	.64	.81
Basic Empathy Scale			
Affective Empathy	3.49	.56	.82
Cognitive Empathy	3.96	.40	.77
David Interpersonal Reactivity Inventory			
Fantasy	24.59	5.02	.78
Empathic Concern	27.43	4.22	.78
Personal Distress	19.77	4.75	.79
Cognitive Perspective	24.89	4.29	.73
Multidimensional Emotional Empathy Scale			
Empathic Suffering	4.10	.52	.77
Positive Sharing	4.10	.61	.86
Responsive Crying	3.01	1.19	.82
Emotional Attention	3.66	.61	.42
Feeling for Others	3.00	.64	.60
Emotional Contagion	3.58	.71	.51

Table 2. Intraclass correlation coefficients for coded items

Rating	ICC
Beginning news order	.96
Ending news order	.87
Sandwiching	.85
Empathy / Caring	.79
Warmth	.69
Social Skills	.67
Comfort	.62
Confidence	.60
Anxiety	.53
Directness / Bluntness	.53
Effort	.80
Ad-libbing	.85
Total Word Count in Email	.99
Good Results Word Count in Email	.97
Bad Results Word Count in Email	.96

Table 3. Correlations between news order, sandwiching, and coders' ratings.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Starting News Order													
2. Ending News Order	-.56*												
3. Sandwiching	.07	.40*											
4. Good News Proportion	-.16*	-.12	-.08										
5. Bad News Proportion	.13 ⁺	.13 ⁺	.26*	-.60*									
6. Empathy / Caring	.05	-.08	-.06	.09	-.20*								
7. Warmth	.03	-.20*	-.20*	.13 ⁺	-.16*	.82*							
8. Social Skills	.07	-.15 ⁺	-.15 ⁺	.05	-.14 ⁺	.81*	.77*						
9. Comfort	.06	-.06	-.00	.02	-.10	.72*	.65*	.81*					
10. Confidence	.05	-.03	.09	.04	-.09	.64*	.59*	.70*	.83*				
11. Anxiety	.02	-.06	-.12	.12	.02	-.25*	-.23*	-.29*	-.43	-.47*			
12. Directness / Bluntness	.06	.08	.19*	.02	.24*	-.63*	-.64*	-.56*	-.51*	-.50*	.21*		
13. Effort	.03	-.08	-.08	.02	-.12	.88*	.79*	.78*	.72*	.69*	-.28*	-.74*	
14. Ad libbing	.05	.01	.06	.07	.17*	.69*	.62*	.55*	.55*	.50*	.27*	.73*	.82*

Note. * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$. Starting news order was coded as 1 = Good News First, 2 = Bad News First. Ending news order was coded as 1 = Good News Last, 2 = Bad News Last. Sandwiching was coded as 1 = Sandwiching Present, 2 = Sandwiching Absent.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for the Power x Physical Distance Interaction Predicting Proportion of Time Spent Giving Bad News

	Leader Condition	Follower Condition
In-Person Condition	-.16 (.96)	.21 (1.02)
Email	.11 (1.10)	-.12 (.88)

Note: Standard deviations are presented within parentheses. The means reflect the standardized proportion of time spent giving bad news.

Table 5. Correlations between physical distance, anxiety, and use of sandwiching.

	1	2
1. Physical Distance		
2. Anxiety	.33*	
3. Sandwiching	.26*	.32*

Note: * $p < .05$. Physical distance was coded as 0 = *in-person*, 1 = *email*. Anxiety was reported such that *lower* numbers indicate higher anxiety. Sandwiching was coded as 1 = *Sandwiching present*, 2 = *Sandwiching absent*.

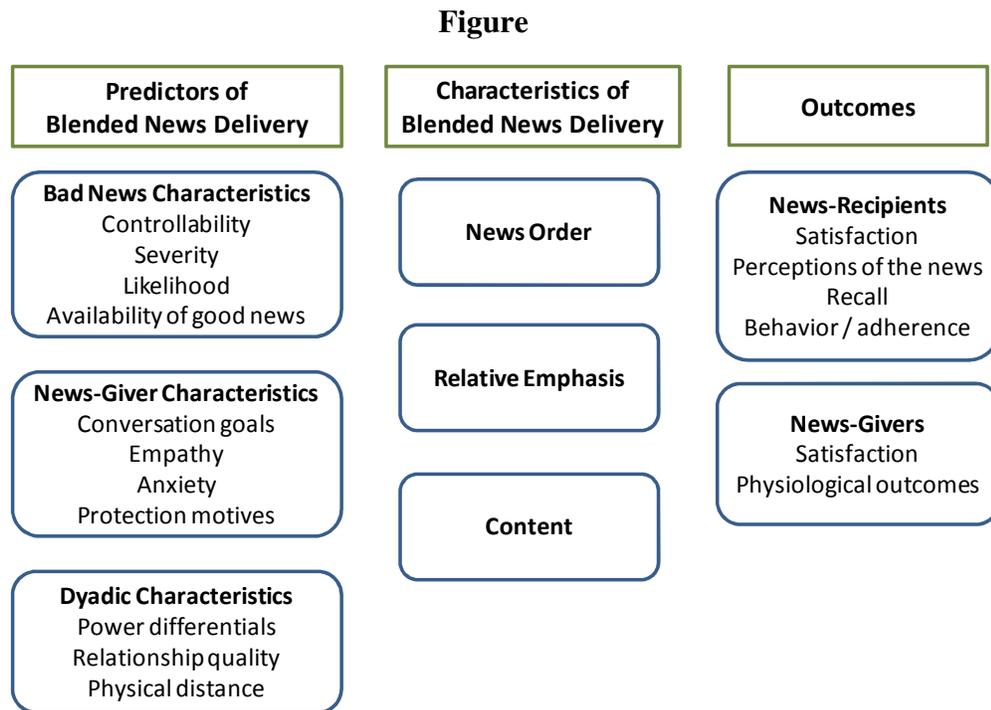


Figure 1. A framework for blended news delivery.