



Media Literacy *and* Academic Research

Vol. 5 || No. 2 || December 2022

ÜcmFTK

Editorial Board

Editor-In-Chief

Norbert Vrabec (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Deputy Managing Editor

Monika Prostináková Hossová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Indexing Process

Lucia Furtáková (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Technical Editors and Distribution

Ľubica Bôtošová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Vladimíra Hladíková (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Lukáš Pieš (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Lucia Furtáková (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Proofreading Team and English Editors

Michal Valek (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

František Rigo (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Photo Editor

Lucia Škripcová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Grafic Production Coordinator

Martin Graca (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Web Editor

Andrej Brník (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Editorial Team

Norbert Vrabec (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Viera Kačínová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Oľga Škvareninová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Sláva Gracová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Daniela Kollárová (*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic*)

Advisory Board

Piermarco Aroldi (*Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milano, Italy*)

Jan Jiráček (*Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic*)

Miguel Vicente Mariño (*University of Valladolid, Spain*)

Radek Mezulánik (*Jan Amos Komenský University in Prague, Czech Republic*)

Stefan Michael Newerkla (*University of Vienna, Austria*)

Shahreen Mat Nayan (*University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*)

Gabriel Paľa (*University of Prešov, Slovak Republic*)

Veronika Pelle (*Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary*)

Charo Sádaba (*University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain*)

Anna Stolińska (*Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland*)

Zbigniew Widera (*University of Economics in Katowice, Poland*)

Markéta Supa (*Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic*)

Yao Zheng (*Zhejiang University of Media and Communications, China*)

About the Journal

Media Literacy and Academic Research is a scientific journal focused on the academic reflection of media and information literacy issues, media education, critical thinking, digital media and new trends in related areas of media and communication studies. The journal is devoted to addressing contemporary issues and future developments related to the interdisciplinary academic discussion, the results of empirical research and the mutual interaction of expertise in media and information studies, media education as well as their sociological, psychological, political, linguistic and technological aspects.

Media Literacy and Academic Research is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal published twice a year. The journal is international and interdisciplinary, inviting contributions from across the globe and from various academic disciplines of social sciences. It focuses on theoretical and empirical studies, research results, as well as papers related to the new trends, practices and other academic research areas. Also encouraged are literature reviews, innovative initiatives, best practices in online teaching, institutional policies, standards and assessment. The Journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence.

The members of the journal's Editorial Board are members of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), UNESCO-UNAOC UNITWIN Network for Media and Information Literacy, European Association for Viewers Interests (EAVI), The Slovak EU Kids Online Team, Media Literacy Expert Group and International Association for Media Education.

The journal is now indexed in these databases: Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) – Web of Science Core Collection, ERIH Plus, Ulrich's Periodical Directory, CEEOL, CEJSH and Index Copernicus.

The complete version of Media Literacy and Academic Research's Editorial Policy is available online at www.mlar.sk.

Media Literacy and Academic Research

Vol. 5, No. 2, December 2022, price 5€

ISSN: 2585-9188

EV/25/22/EPP

Publisher

Faculty of Mass Media Communication
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

Námestie Jozefa Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

<https://fmk.sk/en/>

www.mlar.sk

IČO 36 078 913





The enormous global challenges and conflicts we are currently up against significantly alter the dynamics of international and interpersonal relations and the ecosystems of media outlets. Not only are social media and other communication platforms passive agents that inform about the current situation, but they are also significant to the social problems that citizens and governments worldwide are attempting to address. No aspect of our lives is untouched by the pervasive presence of digital technologies, which actively influence the structure and dynamics of social relations and bring a new set of challenges. For instance, the global crisis associated with

the COVID-19 pandemic and the military conflict in Ukraine has significantly altered our perspective on the dissemination of misinformation, manipulation, and hate speech.

However, we have been facing hybrid threats and sophisticated pro-Russian propaganda strategies for a much more extended period of time. These factors have contributed significantly to the polarization of society and the mistrust of democratic values and principles held by a portion of society. In this context, the importance of a systematic approach to the development of media literacy is growing, with particular attention paid to the fundamental shifts in the design of media ecosystems and the roles played by a diverse range of participants that affect it.

Users of digital media should be aware of the role that algorithms and artificial intelligence play in gaining their attention. They should also know how these new technologies can be misused as sophisticated tools and distribution channels to spread harmful misinformation and hybrid threats. New media literacy models should combine knowledge of how digital tools and technologies work with the practical skills of critical thinking and building resilience to the ever-changing economic, social and cultural conditions in which we live.

Interventions and initiatives to address these challenges are carried out at various levels and require the involvement of multiple participants. They include actions taken by digital platforms to block content that violates their rules and the many different types of inappropriate content that fact-checkers or social network users themselves report. A restrictive approach to reducing the amount of content that spreads disinformation is also very noticeable in the relatively wide range of measures taken by public authorities at both European and national levels.

Increasing the level of critical thinking among citizens and bolstering their resistance to disinformation campaigns and hybrid threats is another challenge that is becoming increasingly important in the educational context. In addition to the school curriculum, many organizations that are part of civil society have developed interventions and initiatives in the field of media literacy to assist children and young people as they learn to navigate the online world.

The most recent issue of our journal is dedicated to one of the most pressing problems in academic research and media literacy. That problem is having a comprehensive understanding of the contexts in which these complex problems of media ecosystems occur and influence individuals and society.

Pleasant reading,

Norbert Vrabec
Editor-In-Chief

Contents

Studies

What's for Breakfast? An Analysis of American Breakfast Food Advertisements and the Promotion of Binge Eating Disorder Behaviors	6
<i>Debbie Danowski</i>	
Signs and Values of Mainstream Audio-Visual Content Intended for Children and Youth	26
<i>Lenka Rusňáková, Monika Prostináková Hossová</i>	
One Literacy and Multiple Intelligences? The Case of Media Literacy	54
<i>Eva Belvončíková, Denisa Čiderová</i>	
Contemporary Media Culture in the Coordinates of Game Principles	71
<i>Hana Pravdová, Zora Hudíková</i>	
Disappointed and Dissatisfied – the Impact of Clickbait Headlines on Public Perceptions of Credibility of Media in Croatia	82
<i>Igor Kanižaj, Boris Beck, Stela Lechpammer, Igor Weidlich</i>	
Perception of the Higher Education in Digital Games by Slovak High School Students	95
<i>Katarína Fichnová, Zdenko Mago, Patrik Lenghart</i>	
On the Threshold of a Journalism Education Studies Terminology	110
<i>Tijana Vukić</i>	
The Role of Digital Media in the Russian Language Classroom and Teacher Education Programmes	132
<i>Sonja Bacher</i>	
Social Media Use and Adolescents' Levels of Advertising Literacy	147
<i>Ludmila Čábyová, Viktória Hudáková</i>	
The Relation Between Political Indifference and Resilience to Disinformation	164
<i>Edlira Palloshi Disha, Agron Rustemi</i>	
Coverage of Migration in the Most Visited Slovak Online Medium in the First Half of 2021	178
<i>Lucia Spálová, Ľubica Račeková</i>	
New Media Literacy Education in Communication Training in Ghana: Evidence from Two Public Universities	196
<i>Akwasi Bosompem Boateng</i>	
The Media in Times of the Pandemic – Comparing Viewing Figures and Interactions of Serious, Tabloid and Conspiracy Media on Facebook During the Covid-19 Pandemic	212
<i>Peter Krajčovič</i>	
What, How and Why? Tiktok As a Promising Channel for Media Promotion	225
<i>Iryna Mudra, Mariana Kitsa</i>	
The Relevance of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in the Consumer Buying Process in the Context of Persuasive Advertising	238
<i>Sunita Kumar, Shivi Khanna</i>	
The Use of Communication Tools in Human Resources Marketing and the Role of Critical Thinking in This Process	259
<i>Martin Uhlík, Jaroslav Bednárík, Martin Solík, Juliána Mináriková</i>	



Debbie Danowski

What's for Breakfast? An Analysis of American Breakfast Food Advertisements and the Promotion of Binge Eating Disorder Behaviors

ABSTRACT

"They're great!!" an animated Tiger named Tony shouts as both children and adults cheer about the introduction of a new cereal that is chocolate frosted. Later in the 15-second commercial, children are encouraged to *"LET YOUR GR-R-REAT OUT"* with wording that appears above an image of a father and son eating cereal together seated closely on a sofa. This ad, which first aired on January 1, 2018 and stopped airing on October 1, 2018 received over 4 billion TV impressions of which more than 3.8 billion were shown nationally. And, as most of those watching were unaware, it also included 8 portrayals of Binge Eating Disorder (BED) behaviors. Currently, there is no research examining the promotion of Binge Eating Disorder behaviors in American breakfast food advertisements. However, a study by Danowski examined BED behaviors in snack foods using a BED Advertising Analysis Chart (BEDAAC) to measure addictive, behavioral, emotional, and physical characteristics of Binge Eating Disorder. This current study will use the BEDAAC as it seeks to fill the research void by examining breakfast food advertisements, specifically cereal, yogurt and bread, to determine the presence of Binge Eating Disorder indicators. In total, 75 ads were analyzed. Of these, 100% portrayed signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change. 99% included representations of deep emotional attachment to food. 87% contained portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding.

KEY WORDS

Food Advertisements. Binge Eating Disorder. Cereal. Yogurt. Bread.

1 Introduction

Binge Eating Disorder was first recognized as a diagnosable eating disorder by the American Psychological Association in 2013 “to increase awareness of the substantial differences between binge eating disorder and the common phenomenon of overeating”.¹ Unlike occasional overeating, Binge Eating Disorder is identified by eating more food than most others would eat in a short amount of time while feeling out of control.² Those suffering from Binge Eating Disorder feel guilty, embarrassed, ashamed, and disgusted oftentimes eating even though they are full and eating alone to hide their behaviors.³ Binge Eating Disorder is marked by feelings of depression, hopelessness, and distress. Unlike overeating “recurrent binge eating is much less common, far more severe, and is associated with significant physical and psychological problems” which do not involve purging behaviors.⁴ Additionally, Binge Eating Disorder “is associated with marked distress and occurs, on average, at least once a week over three months”.⁵

Research has shown that three out of ten individuals who look for and/or participate in weight loss treatments suffer from Binge Eating Disorder.⁶ Similarly, it has been proven that Binge Eating Disorder is three times more common than anorexia and bulimia combined and more common than breast cancer, HIV and schizophrenia.⁷ According to the National Eating Disorders Coalition, individuals who are overweight are at an increased risk of developing eating disorders as are those who engage in unhealthy behaviors such as purging, using diet pills and fasting.⁸ The same article points to other risk factors which include both social factors such as peer and familiar pressure to maintain certain body sizes as well as societal factors including “sociocultural norms, media exposure and weight discrimination”.⁹

The importance of including media exposure in a list of risk factors for developing eating disorders points to the value of the current study. Many experts estimate that Americans see approximately 5,000 ads per day. Considering this, the study of the behaviors presented in these advertisements becomes crucial to understanding the risks and norms in media portrayals. Add to this, Social Learning Theory suggests that learning takes place through observing the behavior of others¹⁰ and has been found particularly valuable in analyzing the possible effects of television violence, but it is also a general theory of learning that can be applied to other areas of mass media effects¹¹ thus validating the importance of analyzing the messages sent out through mass media and specifically, in the current study, breakfast food advertisements.

1.1 Cost of Binge Eating Disorders

Streatfield et al. studied the social and economic costs of eating disorders in the United States. The researchers began with the objective of identifying the one-year cost to not only the health

¹ American Psychiatric Association DSM-5 Fact Sheets. [online]. [2022-09-14]. Available at: <<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/dsm-5-fact-sheets>>.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ See: WESTERBERG, D. P., WAITZ, M.: Binge-Eating Disorder. In *Osteopathic Family Physician*, 2013, Vol. 5, No. 6, p. 230-233.

⁷ See also: HUDSON, J. L. et al.: The Prevalence and Correlates of Eating Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. In *Biological Psychiatry*, 2007, Vol. 61, No. 3, p. 348-358.

⁸ *Eating Disorders and People of Higher Weight*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/people-living-in-larger-bodies-and-eating-disorders/>>.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ See: BANDURA, A., WALTERS, R. H.: *Adolescent Aggression*. New York : Ronald Press, 1959.

¹¹ See also: SEVERIN, W. J., TANKARD, J. W. Jr.: *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media*. New York : Longman, 2001, p. 262-292.

care system but also those to productivity, wellbeing, as well as other economic costs. They estimated the costs of eating disorders by using “bottom-up cost-of-illness methodology, based on the estimated one-year prevalence of eating disorders” and the “intangible costs of reduced wellbeing” estimations by “using disability-adjusted life years”.¹²

The researchers found that eating disorders cost “\$64.7 billion in fiscal year 2018-2019, equivalent to \$11,808 per affected person” with 30% of these costs directly related to Binge Eating Disorder.¹³ They also noted that the reduction in wellbeing costs associated with all eating disorders was valued at \$326.5 billion pointing to a total of nearly \$400 billion during the fiscal year studied.¹⁴ They further note an “urgency” to identify policy actions to help reduce eating disorders.¹⁵ This “urgency” is important as it relates to the identification of binge eating disorder behaviors in the current study. Identification of the binge eating behaviors in food advertisements is a logical first step in developing future advertising regulation policies.

It’s worth noting that increased spending on advertising contributes to the number of advertisement individuals see. As one researcher points out: “Corporations now spend more than \$200 billion a year on advertising in the U.S. alone, a figure that’s greater than the total GDP of many countries.”¹⁶

1.2 Influence of Food Advertisements

The theoretical foundation of the study of advertising’s influence on food choices was created by Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. Though Bandura’s classic “Bobo Doll” studies in the early 1970s focused on aggression being something that children can learn through observation¹⁷ subsequent research has proven this to be the case with advertising and other behaviors as well. For example, a classic study by Wilson and Blackhurst of food advertisements in women’s magazines concluded that these ads can “mirror the painful, obsessive states of body hatred, weight preoccupation, and compulsive dieting” so “that women with eating disorders cannot help but recognize themselves” in the “casual, almost upbeat tone of the advertisements” where “disordered eating is portrayed as normal, even humorous, and without emotional or physical consequences”.¹⁸ The researchers in this study concluded that, “...food advertisements may be even more harmful than the fashion and beauty advertisements” due to the fact that “food advertisements not only promote the thin ideal, but also explicitly endorse high-risk eating behaviors as a way of attaining that ideal”.¹⁹

Wilson and Blackhurst point to the deconstruction of “potentially harmful messages in food advertisements” as being “essential” due to the “powerful messages” in these advertisements.²⁰ They further note that, “eliminating these messages in food advertisements as well as other media will be central to reducing the prevalence of eating disorders”.²¹ The note by researchers about the importance of identifying “potentially harmful messages in food advertisements” as

¹² STREATFIELD, J. et al.: Social and Economic Cost of Eating Disorders in the United States: Evidence to Inform Policy Action. In *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 2021, Vol. 54, No. 5, p. 851.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ JHALLY, S. (Director): *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse*. [DVD]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation, 2017.

¹⁷ See: BANDURA, A., WALTERS, R. H.: *Adolescent Aggression*. New York : Ronald Press, 1959.

¹⁸ WILSON, N. L., BLACKHURST, A. E.: Food Advertising and Eating Disorders: Marketing Body Dissatisfaction, the Drive for Thinness, and Dieting in Women’s Magazines. In *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development*, 1999, Vol. 38, No. 2, p. 119.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem.

being “essential” directly relates to the value of the current study. The identification of binge eating disorder behaviors in food advertisements is a first step in the deconstruction process.

The power of food advertisements to change eating behaviors was later reinforced in a study by Rusmevichientong et al. but this time with a different approach. The researchers studied the impact of food advertising on consumers’ choices of lunch items. A total of 186 participants were divided into four groups. One group watched healthy food advertisements, a second group anti-obesity advertisements, a third group unhealthy food advertisements and a fourth group watched a mix of the three different types of advertisements. The researchers concluded that “*healthy, anti-obesity, and mixed food advertising reduced intakes of total calories, fat, sodium, and carbohydrates*” and that exposure to these types of advertisements resulted in “*the probability of selecting more healthy items and fewer unhealthy items from a menu*”.²² This study reinforces the power of food advertisements to affect eating behaviors which points to the need to identify those behaviors as in the current study.

Research that same year by Zimmerman and Shimoga further reinforced the educational nature and power of food advertisements to influence food choices. In this study, students at UCLA were recruited to watch pre-recorded movie segments including advertisements. Food advertisements were included in two of the groups while the other two included no food advertisements. Following the viewing there was a brief break for snacks. The researchers found that, “*those exposed to food advertising took a set of snacks with 65 more calories than those exposed to non-food advertising*”.²³ This led researchers to conclude that, “*televised food advertising has strong effects on individual food choice*”.²⁴

More recently, research by Smith et al. about food advertisement placement in video games once again reinforced the fact that food advertisements influence eating behaviors. In this study, Australian children 7 to 12 years old were given a four-minute online game to play. Children were divided into four groups, in which some were shown advertisements and one of which included “rewarded video advertisements” where children were given rewards within the game for watching the advertisement. The researchers concluded that, “*children’s choice of the test brand was significantly influenced by the rewarded video advertising condition*” thus again highlighting the influence advertising has on food choices.²⁵

Another study in 2019 by Castonguay et al. looked at adolescents’ responses to cereal ads and how the body weight of the characters in the ads affects perceived healthfulness of the advertised product. In this study, adolescents aged 12 to 14 years old were shown advertisements at random and provided with an online survey about their responses to the ad. The ads were created by a graphic designer to create male and female characters who were either thin or overweight. It was concluded that “*higher BMI adolescents in particular believe a food to be healthier when promoted by a thin character*”.²⁶

The findings from the Castonguay et al. study are especially pertinent to the current research. In their study, the researchers proved that heuristic health cues influence perception of food healthfulness in food advertising, thus reinforcing the instructional nature of advertisements as well as their effect on attitudes and behaviors about food and eating. This study as well as those previously mentioned points to the importance of identifying unhealthy eating portrayals in food advertising as a means of creating awareness and ultimately regulation of the advertisements both children and adults see, which is the focus of the current study.

²² RUSMEVICHIENTONG, P. et al.: The Impact of Food Advertisements on Changing Eating Behaviors: An Experimental Study. In *Food Policy*, 2014, Vol. 44, p. 59.

²³ ZIMMERMAN, F. J., SHIMOGA, S. V.: The Effects of Food Advertising and Cognitive Load on Food Choices. In *BMC Public Health*, 2014, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 1.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ SMITH, R. et al.: Advertising Placement in Digital Game Design Influences Children’s Choices of Advertised Snacks: A Randomized Trial. In *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics*, 2020, Vol. 120, No. 3, p. 404.

²⁶ CASTONGUAY, J. et al.: Adolescents’ Responses to Cereal Ads: An Assessment of Weight and Gender. In *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 2019, Vol. 25, No. 8, p. 785.

1.3 Binge Eating Disorder Promotion in Advertising

Currently, there is no research specifically examining American food advertisements for cereal, yogurt, and bread as they relate to the promotion of Binge Eating Disorder. However, a 2019 study examined Binge Eating Disorder and Food Addiction behaviors in American advertising in ice cream, candy, cookies, chips, snack cakes, cereal, granola bars, fast food, frozen prepared meals and fruit yogurt advertisements. In this study, only five brands in each category were analyzed and only two ads from each specific product, one current and one older were used. Additionally, bread advertisements were not researched.

In the Danowski study, a BED (Binge Eating Disorder) Advertising Analysis Chart (BEDAAC) was created to measure addictive, behavioral, emotional, and physical characteristics of Binge Eating Disorder. To create the chart, “*information was used from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the Food Addiction Institute and the National Eating Disorders Association. Criteria based on intake/diagnostic questions for potential patients and the general public were re-written to reflect use in food advertisement analysis*”.²⁷

In the Addictive category, the following characteristics were included: (A1) Signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change; (A2) Evidence of neglecting daily responsibilities due to eating; (A3) Representations of deep emotional attachment to food; (A4) Indicators of doing anything to obtain food/inability to control cravings; (A5) Portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding.²⁸

In the Behavioral section, the characteristics included there are: (B1) Images of eating alone; (B2) Signs of stealing, hiding, or hoarding food; (B3) Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day; (B4) Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws; (B5) Signs of food rituals (won't let foods to touch, only eating red candy, etc.).

In the Emotional category, the following characteristics were included: (E1) Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food; (E2) Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating; (E3) Evidence of distress before or after eating; (E4) Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others; (E5) Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape.

In the Physical section, the characteristics included there are: (P1) Representations of large amounts of food; (P2) Indications of eating quickly; (P3) Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts; (P4) Portrayals of weight fluctuations; (P5) Indicators of stomach/gastrointestinal distress/complaints.²⁹

1.4 Breakfast Food Sales

Breakfast has been labelled the most important meal of the day by doctors and nutritionists³⁰ is one of the most advertised meals by corporations and is coveted by food manufacturers for decades as one of the most lucrative revenue streams.³¹ According to statistics company

²⁷ DANOWSKI, D.: Bet You Can't Eat Just One: Binge Eating Disorder Promotion in American Advertising. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 10.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 11.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ DONNELLY, S. C.: Breakfast - The Most Important Meal of the Day!! In *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, 2018, Vol. 111, No. 10, p. 681; See also: RANI, R. et al.: Importance of Not Skipping Breakfast: A Review. In *International Journal of Food Science & Technology*, 2021, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 28-38.

³¹ BURROWS, D.: *America's Most Popular Breakfast Cereals (And the Stocks behind Them)*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.kiplinger.com/slideshow/investing/t052-s001-america-s-most-popular-breakfast-cereals-stocks/index.html>>.

Statista, breakfast food sales in grocery departments alone topped over \$18.7 billion. Three of the main staples of breakfast include cereal, yogurt, and bread.³²

Over 40% of the \$18.7 billion figure or \$8.5 billion can be attributed to breakfast cereal sales.³³ Despite a slight decrease in sales during 2018, cereal product revenue is expected to increase over the next few years due to millennials using cereal as a snack food.³⁴

Similarly, some industry experts expect yogurt sales to reach \$9 billion despite a slight dip in sales over the past few years.³⁵ “Yogurts with new flavors and in new formats, such as glass jars, have also kept consumers interested in the category, and have helped broaden yogurt’s appeal as a breakfast item, snack, dessert or meal replacement.”³⁶

Though bread is still an important part of breakfast, sales remained flat while still holding at \$9.1 billion with whole wheat at 45% being the most popular flavor among all generations.³⁷ Following this, white bread at 43% and multi-grain at 22% are the next popular bread flavors.³⁸

Cereal Advertisements

There exists a large body of research on advertising sugary cereals to children. More recently, Longacre et al. and Emond et al. studied television advertising as it relates to consumption of high-sugar cereal. Longacre et al. recruited parents of children ages 3 to 5 years old to report whether their children had watched 11 designated children’s television channels over a week time period. From this, researchers calculated the children’s exposure to high-sugar breakfast cereal based on advertising data during that same time frame.

Researchers concluded that 40.6% of the children studied saw child-targeted ads for high-sugar cereal during the week. It was also concluded that, “children consumed 14% more SBC [high-sugar breakfast cereal] brands for every 10 SBC ads seen in the past 7 days”.³⁹ The researchers found that there was a positive association between the advertising of high-sugar cereals and consumption in preschool-aged children.⁴⁰

The results of this study were consistent with a later one by Emond et al. which also examined preschoolers’ intake of high-sugar breakfast cereal after exposure to child-directed television ads. Researchers in this study concluded that, “findings indicate that child-directed advertising influences begin earlier and last longer than previously demonstrated, highlighting limitations of current industry guidelines regarding the marketing of high-sugar foods to children under age 6 years”.⁴¹

Yogurt Advertisements

Though research on breakfast cereal is plentiful, studies about yogurt and bread advertisements are limited. Brennan researched Greek yogurt maker Chobani’s controversial slogan, “Nature

³² U.S. Breakfast Foods: Statistics & Facts. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1661/breakfast-foods/#topicHeader__wrapper>.

³³ BURROWS, D.: *America’s Most Popular Breakfast Cereals (And the Stocks behind Them)*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.kiplinger.com/slideshow/investing/t052-s001-america-s-most-popular-breakfast-cereals-stocks/index.html>>.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ TURCSIK, R.: *Yogurt Sales Approach \$9 Billion*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.supermarketnews.com/dairy/yogurt-sales-approach-9-billion>>.

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ BROWNE, M.: *What Consumers Want from Their Daily Bread*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.supermarketnews.com/bakery/what-consumers-want-their-daily-bread>>.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ LONGACRE, M. R. et al.: Child-Targeted TV Advertising and Preschoolers’ Consumption of High-Sugar Breakfast Cereals. In *Appetite*, 2017, Vol. 108, No. 1, p. 295.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ See: EMOND, J. A. et al.: Exposure to Child-Directed TV Advertising and Preschoolers’ Intake of Advertised Cereals. In *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2019, Vol. 56, No. 2, p. e35-e43.

got us to 100 calories, not scientists”⁴² and Chadrzynski examined marketing initiatives in the yogurt industry in Poland.⁴³ An article titled “David Newnham is Astounded and Distracted by Yoghurt” in *Nursing Standard* examined the contrast between yogurt television advertisements and the benefits to human health.⁴⁴

Bread Advertisements

Research specifically focused on bread advertisements is limited. Pohjanheimo et al. studied bread choices based on individual’s personal values⁴⁵ while Chang and Tseng examined the use of sexual appeals in advertising using images of bread among others.⁴⁶

2 Methodology

The combination of textual analysis combined with case study methodology allows for both an overview of large amounts of material as well as specific focus on some which is appropriate for this study considering the many images and words in the 75 commercials viewed. As Beetham points out, “textual reading depends on close attention to particularities” while case study methodology provides “a way of dealing with the sheer mass of material” involved in a large study.⁴⁷ This combination as outlined by Beetham in her study of women’s magazines is a valid research methodology for analyzing media texts. As Beetham notes, “treating the magazine as a text” allows for consideration of the “way it developed as a form over a period of time” while case study methodology allows for research about “expressions of ideas and ideology” in media texts as well as study about representations of “particular moments”.⁴⁸ Though she refers to women’s magazines, it’s not difficult to translate these ideas for use in advertising texts.

The importance of content analysis methodology to “quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts” has been reinforced in the public health field as well.⁴⁹ This method allows researchers to “make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of surrounding the text”⁵⁰ making these methods are ideally suited for use in the analysis of binge eating disorder behaviors in food advertisements.

Raw Data Chart

A Raw Data Chart, which included five categories: Name of the Product, Gender Representation (broken down by Adult Male or Female and Male or Female Children), the Date the last time the commercial was aired or posted, the BEDAAC label and a Link to the Ad was created. Following this, a search was conducted using Google to find the top-selling brands in each of the three categories (cereal, yogurt, and bread). From this, five commercials from each of the

⁴² BRENNAN, M.: Blogroll: Yoghurt vs Scientists. In *Nature Chemistry*, 2014, Vol. 6, No. 8, p. 657.

⁴³ See: CHADRZYNSKI, M.: Product and Marketing Innovation on the Yoghurt Market in Poland. In AUZINA, A.: *Economic Science for Rural Development Conference Proceeding*. Jelgava : Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, 2013, p. 158-164.

⁴⁴ See: NEWNHAM, D.: David Newnham is Distracted and Astounded by Yoghurt. In *Nursing Standard*, 2007, Vol. 22, No. 13, p. 26-27.

⁴⁵ See also: POHIANHEIMO, T. et al.: Food Choice Motives and Bread Liking of Consumers Embracing Hedonistic and Traditional Values. In *Appetite*, 2010, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 170-180.

⁴⁶ See: CHANG, C. T., TSENG, C. H.: Can Sex Sell Bread? In *International Journal of Advertising*, 2013, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 559-585.

⁴⁷ BEETHAM, M.: *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914*. New York : Routledge, 1996, p. 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ *Content Analysis*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/content-analysis>>.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

top brands were analyzed for a total of 75 advertisements. Wherever possible, the most current commercials were used. Each advertisement was analyzed for behaviors outlined in the BED Advertising Analysis Chart (BEDAAC)⁵¹ then recorded in the Raw Data Chart.

In order to complete the chart, each commercial was viewed a minimum of six times by two different researchers individually at separate times. The first time was an initial viewing to determine the basic elements and message of the commercial. The second viewing was to record gender representation in the commercial as well as a preliminary analysis of the eating behaviors portrayed. The third viewing was to compare the behaviors listed in the Addictive section of the BEDAAC to those in the commercial. The fourth was to compare behaviors in the Behavioral section of the BEDAAC while the fifth and sixth were to compare behaviors in the Emotional then Physical sections of the BEDAAC.

Once the Raw Data Chart was completed for all 75 commercials by each researcher individually, the Find Tool was used in Microsoft Word to count the number of occurrences for each label. Following this, the two researchers compared results and discussed any discrepancies to create one shared results chart. These numbers were double checked by both researchers then a percentage was calculated for each of the 20 characteristics listed on the BEDAAC.

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability allows for assessment of agreement among multiple researchers and their assignment of codes to texts and allows for evaluation of whether coders make similar decisions in their research. Though Cohen's kappa is an accepted method of evaluating agreement among researchers and an online calculator⁵² was used in this study to calculate researcher agreement when using the BEDAAC chart, *"the calculation of chance can lead to some oddities" when "identical marginals across raters can lead to lower kappa due to increased degree of chance, but chance itself is determined because the raters agreed"*.⁵³ This is true in the current study and will be discussed in the results section.

Furthermore, though disagreement among researchers was calculated as a means of establishing intercoder reliability, the goal of this study was to complete one shared results chart to better determine the presence of binge eating disorder behaviors in food advertisements as mutually agreed upon by both researchers, which Syed and Nelson identify as a means to *"reconcile differences via consensus"*.⁵⁴ To align with this goal, after individually, separately, and blindly to each other's conclusions, each researcher completed their own BEDAAC chart, then the researchers compared their results. Any disagreements were viewed, analyzed, and discussed among the two researchers until agreement was reached on the specific behaviors presented in each of the ads thus creating one shared results chart.

3 Results

In total, 75 ads were analyzed by two different researchers. The first researcher concluded that all 75 commercials included at least one BED behavior while the second researcher identified 71 commercials portraying BED behaviors. A total of 355 portrayals of BED behaviors in the 75 commercials were recorded by the first researcher and a total of 319 by the second researcher.

⁵¹ See: DANOWSKI, D.: Bet You Can't Eat Just One: Binge Eating Disorder Promotion in American Advertising. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 6-23.

⁵² Autor's note: Cohen's kappa free calculator, available at: <<https://idostatistics.com/cohen-kappa-free-calculator/#risultati>>.

⁵³ SYED, M., NELSON, S. C.: Guidelines for Establishing Reliability When Coding Narrative Data. In *Emerging Adulthood*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 387.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 384.

Using a Cohen's kappa calculator agreement among researchers was calculated where, a Cohen's k of 0.2645 was achieved among researchers which notes a fair level of agreement. In order to use Cohen's kappa, the total number of binge-eating disorder behaviors (1,500) was used as the possible agreement level among researchers. This number represents the 20 behaviors outlined on the BEDAAC chart multiplied by the total number of ads viewed (75). The researchers both agreed to exclude 1,181 BED behaviors from the 75 ads while the first researcher agreed to include 355 and the second researcher 319. As noted previously, a high level of agreement among researchers lowers the Cohen's k score which is the case in the current study.

Among the researchers, there was agreement on 319 BED behaviors and disagreement on 36. The majority of disagreements fell in the B3 (portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day) category with 10 disagreements. Following this, there were nine disagreements in the P2 category (Indications of eating quickly), five each in the E1 (Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food) and the P3 (Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts) categories, two each in the A2 (Evidence of neglecting daily responsibilities due to eating and E2 (Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating categories, and one each in the A4 (Indicators of doing anything to obtain food/inability to control cravings), B2 (Signs of stealing, hiding, or hoarding food, and E4 (Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others) categories.

Each disagreement was reviewed and discussed by the two researchers with the goal of "*reconciling differences via consensus*"⁵⁵ to create a shared results chart. During this process, it was discovered that in the B3 area, one of the researchers failed to see signs of grazing throughout the day, which were detected by the other researcher through portrayals of light to reflect times of day and amounts of food present in the ads. Additionally, in the P3 area, the two researchers individually defined indications of eating quickly differently but were able to come to agreement on a shared definition that included as in the case of the Frosted Flakes "*Show Your Stripes*" (2013) ad, taking another bite while still chewing or in the Pepperidge Farm Raisin Cinnamon Swirl (2019) ad, animated bites that occurred without a break for chewing (2019).

Of the 355 BED portrayals, 132 or 37% of these were in yogurt product ads, 126 or 35% were in cereal advertisements, and 97 or 27% were in bread ads. Of the ads studied, 100% or 75 portrayed (A1) signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change. 99% or 74 included (A3) representations of deep emotional attachment to food. 75% or 56 contained (A5) portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding. 47% or 35 showed either (B1) images of eating alone and/or (P1) representations of large amounts of food.

On the lower end, 1% or one of the portrayals were of (E4) portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others; (P4) portrayals of weight fluctuations; and (B4) evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws. 3% or three were of (E5) representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape and 4% or three of the portrayals were of (E2) indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating.

The Cinnamon Toast Crunch "*Churros For Anytime*" (2019) ad contained the largest amount of BED behaviors with 10 occurrences. (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B2, B3, E1, P1, P2). Thirty-two of the 75 ads analyzed, or 43% included five or more behaviors listed on the BED Chart. Of these, 10 were cereal advertisements, 16 were yogurt ads, and six were bread advertisements. Additionally, five of the ads contained two portrayals of BED behaviors. Of these, all but one (Honey Nut Cheerios – "*To The Honey*" (2019)) were bread advertisements. Every ad studied contained at least two BED behaviors with an average of approximately five per advertisement.

⁵⁵ SYED, M., NELSON, S. C.: Guidelines for Establishing Reliability When Coding Narrative Data. In *Emerging Adulthood*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 384.

Mmmm Chocolate!

In the 2018 *Mmmm Chocolate!* Chocolate Frosted Flakes advertisement, young children and an adult male are shown exclaiming the virtues of the chocolate added to the cereal along with Tony the Tiger. The adult male and the male child are shown cheering, “*Yeah! Chocolate!*” while others are dancing to the words, “*Mmmm chocolate*” with one female child even holding her arm out and appearing to pass out from excitement about the chocolate added to the cereal. All of this is underscored by an enthusiastic male announcer who says, “*Crunch into chocolate greatness!*” just before Tony ends the commercial with “*They’re great!*” and the words “*LET YOUR GR-R-REAT OUT!*” appear under Chocolate Frosted Flakes.⁵⁶

Using the criteria from the BED Advertising Analysis Chart, this ad included the following addictive behaviors: (A1) Signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change; (A3) Representations of deep emotional attachment to food; and (A5) Portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding as well as the following behavioral actions: (B1) Images of eating alone and (B3) Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day, the following emotional behaviors: (E1) Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food and the following physical behaviors: (P1) Representations of large amounts of food; and (P3) Signs of difficulty concentration due to food presence/thoughts.

Drawing on Potter’s idea about altered reality this example shows how children (and adult) cereal consumers are promised that the addition of chocolate to an already sugar-filled cereal will change their lives and make them and their lives great. The association of happiness to the cereal, the deep emotional attachment to sugary cereal, the images of food related to physical activity and the portrayal of food as a means of replacing relationships or bonding all contribute to one message: Eating this cereal will make you happy and change your life. The portrayals of both fit and healthy adults and children easily participating in physical activity (mainly dancing) in this commercial also promise health and do not address the consequences of eating large amounts of sugary cereal, most notably obesity.

In this commercial, reality has been altered. Add to this the fact that this is only one example out of 75 that were viewed for this study and it’s clear how powerful the alteration of reality has become in food advertising. In other words, whether it’s sugary cereal, yogurt with sugar or concentrated fruit juice, or bread with sugar, the reality and consequences of eating too much of these things has been altered. By including portrayals of healthy, active adults and children in ultra-processed food commercials, the consequences of eating these foods are all but annihilated.

Smiling Tummy

While very few yogurt commercials address the unpleasant side effects of overeating, they all do so when offering their products as solutions. For example, the 2014 Dannon Activia “*Smiling Tummy*” ad featuring Laila Ali shows the former professional boxer and daughter of Muhammad Ali talking to viewers saying: “*There’s nothing like leaving home feeling attractive but too many times I feel bloated, gassy, uncomfortable with gurgling.*”⁵⁷ During this time, she is shown trying on various outfits in front of a mirror and looking unhappy even distressed. She continues by saying, “*Nothing seems to feel right and yet another pile of clothes on my bed*” and is shown tossing a clothing item on her already full bed.⁵⁸ She tells viewers that she is taking the Activia Challenge and that “*When your tummy smiles things just feel right.*”⁵⁹ During this time, she is shown in a vibrant red dress with a sparkling smile over her stomach and looking very happy at her image in the mirror. At the end of the ad, she encourages viewers to take the Activia Challenge.

⁵⁶ *Chocolate Frosted Flakes TV Spot, ‘Mmmm Chocolate’*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d1XH/chocolate-frosted-flakes-mmmm-chocolate>>.

⁵⁷ *Activia TV Spot, ‘Smiling Tummy’ Featuring Laila Ali*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7jDi/activia-smiling-tummy-featuring-laila-ali>>.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

It's worth noting that Activia yogurt, like most other yogurt brands, lists cane sugar as the second ingredient. Cane sugar is extracted from the sugarcane plant and, though less processed than white table sugar is still a highly addictive substance for those physically addicted to sugar as well as a very sweet taste that triggers a neurological reward system in the brain of even those who have normal eating patterns. According to Amy Reichelt, BrainsCAN Research Associate, Western University, *"When we eat sweet foods the brain's reward system — called the mesolimbic dopamine system — gets activated. Dopamine is a brain chemical released by neurons and can signal that an event was positive. When the reward system fires, it reinforces behaviours — making it more likely for us to carry out these actions again. Dopamine "hits" from eating sugar promote rapid learning to preferentially find more of these foods."*⁶⁰

As Reichelt points out, even those who are not eating disordered experience cravings for sugar-filled foods, *"in the case of sweet foods, this means we need to eat more to get the same rewarding feeling — a classic feature of addiction"*.⁶¹ Couple this with the pervasiveness of advertising and the promotion of food as a means of emotional change and/or relief of emotional discomfort and the dangerous psychology of encouraging eating disorders becomes clear.

4 Discussion

The practice of using Binge Eating Disorder behaviors to promote unhealthy foods can be dangerous especially when taking into consideration the extremely high and growing obesity rate and past research noting the power of food advertising to influence eating behaviors. According to the World Health Organization, *"1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these over 650 million were obese"*.⁶² It is not unreasonable to assume a link between the promotion and passive acceptance by consumers of binge eating disorder behaviors in food advertising and the drastic obesity crisis in the U.S. Most notably, this means that those who are eating disordered are repeatedly through various appealing images and words being shown how eating certain foods, most of which are high in sugar, can change their lives while normal eaters who are biologically wired to seek out sweet foods⁶³ are also sent the same message thus creating the potential for both populations to develop BED or, at the very least, become overweight.

This is particularly alarming considering that 100% of the advertisements in this study included portrayals of using food to relieve emotional discomfort and seek emotional change and 99% contained representations of deep emotional attachment to food, both of which are classic characteristics of addiction. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of advertising in American society, makes avoidance of these messages impossible, which only adds to the widespread promotion of unhealthy eating behaviors in society. As Jhally notes, *"advertising is impossible to avoid"* and *"corporations now spend more than \$200 billion a year on advertising in the U.S. alone, a figure that's greater than the total GDP of many countries"*.⁶⁴

Additionally, Bandura's social learning theory and Potter's discussion of the *"unconscious effects of advertising"* that *"(...) gradually over time (...) alter our standards, our perception of needs, and our expectations of life"* by *"showing us that we can change our attractiveness, body image, smell, whiteness of smile, relationships, self-image, and degree of happiness by*

⁶⁰ REICHELT, A.: *The Impact Sugar Really Has on Your Brain*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://halifax.citynews.ca/local-news/the-impact-sugar-really-has-on-your-brain-1876806>>.

⁶¹ Ibidem.

⁶² *Obesity and Overweight*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>>.

⁶³ REICHELT, A.: *The Impact Sugar Really Has on Your Brain*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://halifax.citynews.ca/local-news/the-impact-sugar-really-has-on-your-brain-1876806>>.

⁶⁴ JHALLY, S. (Director): *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse*. [DVD]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation, 2017.

using certain products”⁶⁵ to the educational nature of the media in general and food advertising specifically. As Potter further notes advertisements “can alter our perceptions of what is real”⁶⁶ meaning that viewers of these commercials can grow to believe that the foods advertised can and will provide them with emotional change and solace thus increasing the dangers of an already serious public health crisis.

Alternative Reality

Another point worth noting is the absence of consequences in the commercials viewed for this study. For example, there was only one portrayal in each of the following categories: (B4) Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws; (E4) Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others; and (P4) Portrayals of weight fluctuations. Additionally, 3% of the ads contained (E5) Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape while 4% of the ads included (E2) Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating; and (E3) Evidence of distress before or after eating. All these patterns reflect the consequences of eating disorders, food addiction and overeating. The fact that they are absent from commercials, of course, makes sense from a marketing perspective where highlighting the benefits of a product is a powerful sales technique. Yet, from media literacy viewpoint, this exemplifies Potter’s “alternative reality” concept. This is evident as it relates to the ads in this study, all of which send the “alternative reality” message that eating sugary, high calorie food has no health consequences.

It is this symbiotic relationship between the “alternative reality” messages in food advertisements and the increased pervasiveness of advertising that perpetuates the increasing rise in the obesity rate. The promotion of eating high calorie foods without consequences and the existence of ads to remind consumers how delicious these foods are have created a climate of denial which ultimately contributes to unprecedented obesity-related health consequences. If left unrestricted the promotion of binge eating disorder behaviors in food advertisements has the potential to create entire generations of obese children within a matter of decades thus crippling health care systems nationwide.

Not only do these BED portrayals in food advertising have the potential to greatly affect healthy-eating perceptions, but they also have the potential to alter perceptions of reality to the point of dramatically increasing the number of BED sufferers as well as those who are overweight. A recent study noted that “more than \$1 trillion per year in health-related costs [are] paid by Americans, with an estimated \$604 billion of that attributable to diseases — such as hypertension, cancer and diabetes — linked to diet”.⁶⁷ The portrayal of BED behaviors in food advertising has the potential to greatly increase this figure to the point of bankrupting the American health care system if action is not taken to regulate the messages presented in food advertisements.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the current study, it can be concluded that breakfast food advertisements, specifically cereal, yogurt and bread ads, use a large number of Binge Eating-Disorder behaviors to promote their products. This is evidenced by the fact that there were 355 BED behaviors presented in the 75 advertisements studied, which translates into an average of approximately 5 BED behavior portrayals per commercial. It can be further concluded that breakfast food advertisements contain few portrayals of the actual health dangers in consuming these products.

⁶⁵ POTTER, W. J.: *Media Literacy*. Los Angeles, CA : Sage, 2019, p. 402.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

⁶⁷ REILEY, L.: *The Total Health and Climate Consequences of the American Food System Cost Three Times as Much as the Food Itself*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/07/16/true-cost-of-american-food-system/>>.

This is evidenced by the low number of portrayals showing the consequences resulting from eating large amounts of these foods, including (B4) checking the mirror for body flaws (1%), (P4) portrayals of weight fluctuations (1%), (E5) negative feelings about body weight/size/shape (3%), (E3) evidence of distress before or after eating (4%), and (E2) feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating (4%).

It is recommended that future studies include of a larger number and variety of food advertisements. Some of these items may include food items more suited to lunch and/or dinner such as hot dogs, packaged pasta or rice mixes, canned soups, or bottled sauces. Future studies may also seek to examine advertisements for desert foods such as ice cream, cookies, or other snack foods. Comparison of ads for these types of foods to the current study would provide additional information about the techniques used to food. It is also recommended that future studies examine causal relationships between food advertisements and BED behaviors.

Acknowledgement: The author wishes to thank Mary Hoag for serving as second researcher on this paper.

Declaration of Interests Statement: The author acknowledges a personal and professional interest in food addiction recovery.

Appendix

Product	Gender	Date	Label	Link
Cheerios – Block Party	Adult - F Voice/ Food Animation	2018	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d2Cp/cheerios-block-party
Cheerios – Good Goes Round	M/F – all ages	2018	A1, A3, A5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Z51hdZ2cdI
Cheerios – Learning to Eat Cheerios	Adult – F Baby	2018	A1, A3, A5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7Vgs/cheerios-learning-to-eat-cheerios
Cheerios – Gluten-Free Violet	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2017	A1, A3, A5, B1, B2, B3, P1, P3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/Ad1A/cheerios-gluten-free-violet
Cheerios – One Gram of Sugar	Food Animation	2014	A1, A3, A5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/71A0/cheerios-1-gram-of-sugar
Honey Nut Cheerios – To the Honey	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2019	A1, A3,	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lZm2/honey-nut-cheerios-to-the-honey
Honey Nut Cheerios – Dancing Remix	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, B3, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wCLr/honey-nut-cheerios-dancing
Honey Nut Cheerios – Rollercoaster	Honey Bee	2019	A1, A3, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d78N/honey-nut-cheerios-roller-coaster
Honey Nut Cheerios – Fuel the Fun	Food Animation	2018	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wQmy/honey-nut-cheerios-fuel-the-fun
Honey Nut Cheerios – Dancing Dads	Adults – M Children – F	2016	A1, A3, A5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/ANHD/honey-nut-cheerios-dancing-dads
Frosted Flakes – New Drone Great!	Adult – M Children M/F Tony Tiger	2019	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lb2B/frosted-flakes-new-drone-great
Frosted Flakes – New Trick	Adult – M Children – M/F Tony Tiger	2019	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lB1A/frosted-flakes-new-trick

Chocolate Frosted Flakes – Mmmm Chocolate	Adult – M Children – M/F Tony Tiger	2018	A1, A3, A5, E1, P1, P3, B1, B3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d1XH/chocolate-frosted-flakes-mmmm-chocolate
Frosted Flakes – Pregame Rituals	Children – M/F Tony Tiger	2016	A1, A3, A5, B5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7hMr/frosted-flakes-little-league-pregame-rituals
Frosted Flakes – Show Your Stripes	Children – M/F Tony Tiger	2013	A1, A3, A5, P2	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7wBs/frosted-flakes-show-your-stripes
Honey Bunches of Oats – Breakfast Time With Dad	Adults – M Children - F	2019	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, B2	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IVJD/honey-bunches-of-oats-breakfast-time-with-dad
Honey Bunches of Oats w/ Almonds - Diana	Adults – M/F	2019	A1, A3, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dWYa/honey-bunches-of-oats-diana
Honey Bunches of Oats - Outtakes	Adults – M/F	2018	A1, A3, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dEFj/honey-bunches-of-oats-outtakes
Honey Bunches of Oats with Almonds - Troops	Adult – M Children - M	2019	A1, A3, A5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IV54/honey-bunches-of-oats-troops
Honey Bunch. Oats w/ Almonds – Spoon, Bowl, Action	Adults – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, P1, P3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dWmU/honey-bunches-of-oats-with-almonds-spoon-bowl-action
Cinnamon Toast Crunch Churros – For Anytime	Animated Food Characters Child – Voice Only	2019	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B2, B3, E1, P1, P2	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/l6RM/cinnamon-toast-crunch-churros-when-ever
Cinnamon Toast Crunch – Cinna-Milk Mountain	Animated Food Characters Adult – F – Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1, P2	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IH7Y/cinnamon-toast-crunch-cinna-milk-mountain
Cinnamon Toast Crunch – Science Teacher	Adult – M Children – F/M	2019	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1, P2	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5_2scEAHas
Cinnamon Toast Crunch – Concert	Food Characters Adult – F – Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A4, A5, B3, E1, P1, P2	https://www.tvcommercialad.com/watch/AHAsYCsZpsOKHq7
Cinnamon Toast Crunch – Squares vs. Squares	Food Characters – Adult – F – Voice Only	2019	A1, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1, P2	https://abancommercials.com/cinnamon-toast-crunch/squares-vs-squares-ad-commercial/58787/
Chobani Greek Yogurt – Wonderful World of Less	Adults – F/M	2019	A1, A2, A3, B1, B3, E1, E2, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lpux/chobani-less-sugar-greek-yogurt-wonderful-world-of-less-song-by-rosco-gordon
Chobani Gimmies – Coming To Our Town	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2019	A1, A2, A3, A4, E1, P1, P3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IFge/chobani-gimmies-coming-to-our-town
Chobani Gimmies – Cotton Candy Queen	Children – F	2019	A1, A3, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IFx3/chobani-gimmies-cotton-candy-queen
Chobani Gimmies – To All The Moms Out There	Adult – F Child – M (dressed as female)	2019	A1, A3, A4, A5, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IHVv/chobani-gimmies-to-all-the-moms-out-there
Chobani Less Sugar Greek Yogurt – Less Technology	Adult – M and F Voice Only	2019	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, E1, E3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lpNc/chobani-less-sugar-greek-yogurt-less-technology

Dannon Activia Show Your Gut Some Love	Adults – F Voice Only plus other gut body parts	2019	A1, A3, A5, B1, E5, P5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lnLh/dannon-activia-show-your-gut-some-love
Dannon Activia Healthy Routine Feel My Best	Adults – F Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, P5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dtUo/dannon-activia-probiotic-dailies-healthy-routine-feel-my-best
Dannon Activia Exceptional Taste	Adult – F Voice Only	2017	A1, A3, P5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/AmFS/dannon-activia-exceptional-taste
Dannon Activia Digestive System Issues	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2015	A1, A3, A5, B1, B3, E3, P1, P2, P5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/74rE/activia-challenge-digestive-system-issues
Dannon Activia Smiling Tummy	Adults – F and M Voice Only	2014	A1, A3, A5, B1, B4, E3, E5, P4, P5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7jDi/activia-smiling-tummy-featuring-laila-ali
Yoplait Oui Upside Down Spoon	Adults – F/M	2019	A1, A3, A5	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/l2al/oui-by-yoplait-and-yq-upside-down-spoon
Yoplait Oui Sea Salt Caramel Upside Down	Adults – F/M	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d6JY/yoplait-oui-sea-salt-caramel-upside-down
Yoplait Oui Impractical	Adult – F / M – Voice Only	2019	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d6hv/yoplait-oui-impractical
Yoplait Backseat	Adult – F / M Voice Only Children – M/F	2017	A1, A3, A5, B3	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkWDz7eRcH4
Yoplait Mom	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2017	A1, A3, A5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRclYOM1wEQ
Oikos Triple Zero Fuel Your Hustle	Adults – M	2018	A1, A3, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wFeu/oikos-triple-zero-fuel-your-hustle-featuring-dak-prescott
Oikos Triple Zero Official Yogurt of Fuelling Your Hustle	Adults – F / M Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, P1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cms05lcMarM
Oikos Triple Zero Official Yogurt of Fuelling Your Hustle (60 second)	Adults – M/F	2019	A1, A3, A5, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lqVa/oikos-triple-zero-the-official-yogurt-of-fueling-your-hustle-featuring-dak-prescott
Oikos Nonfat Yogurt Drink Portable Life	Adults – M/F	2016	A1, A3, A5, B1, B3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/ANCN/oikos-nonfat-yogurt-drink-portable-life
Oikos Triple Zero Protein Punch	Adults – M/F	2017	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7HLU/oikos-triple-zero-protein-punch-featuring-cam-newton
Fage Yogurt Peace of Mind	Adults – F/F Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, B3, E2	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/w4zL/fage-yogurt-peace-of-mind
Fage Yogurt Right	Adults – M/F Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/w4N4/fage-yogurt-right
Fage Yogurt Good Karma	Adults – F/F Voice Only	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, B3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/w4Ma/fage-yogurt-good-karma
Fage Yogurt Total Split Cup Everything You Want	Adults- M/F Children - M	2018	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, B3, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dlur/fage-total-split-cup-everything-you-want
Fage Yogurt Plain Extraordinary	Adults – F/F Voice Only Child – F	2019	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZHOIOwBnZk
Thomas' Breakfast	Children - M	2019	A1, A3, A4, A5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sksDBPLqsj4

Thomas' Breakfast Swappin In	Adult – F Children F	2019	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MmpQtph0uU
Thomas' Pulled Pork Eggs Benedict	Adult – F – Hand Only	2017	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAhZNRrGik
Thomas' Breakfast Toppings	Adult – F/ Voice and Body Only	2019	A1, A3	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjkiQXHXGM
Thomas' Breakfast Butter Tub	Adult – F	2019	A1, A3, A5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbd2QRFW1E
Wonder Bread Power of Softness	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1, P3	https://vimeo.com/260064835
Nature's Own Perfectly Crafted	Adults – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, E1, P1, P3	https://www.facebook.com/NaturesOwnBread/videos/10155455280595936/?v=10155455280595936
Nature's Own Tradition	Adult – F Children – M/F	2019	A1, A3, A5, E1, P1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8l0WHNXtiYE
Nature's Own Compassion	Adults – M/F Child – M	2019	A1, A3, A5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJW9hECMEFs
Nature's Own Inspiring Creativity	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y06fcdHNYE
Pepperidge Farm Raisin Cinnamon Swirl (3 sec.)	No People	2019	A1, P2	https://www.facebook.com/PepperidgeFarm/videos/440335486699149/
Pepperidge Farm Respect the Bun Grill Off (7 sec.)	No People	2019	A1, A3, P1	https://www.facebook.com/PepperidgeFarm/videos/446746482821900/
Pepperidge Farm Cinnamon Swirl Baked French Toast	Hands Only	2019	A1, A3, A5	https://www.facebook.com/PepperidgeFarm/videos/330712957645533/
Pepperidge Farm First Day of Spring (3 sec.)	No People	2019	A1, A3, P1	https://www.facebook.com/PepperidgeFarm/videos/311885259520031/
Pepperidge Farm Chef Kaylee Farmhouse Hearty White Bread	Adult – F Children – M/F (photos)	2019	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.facebook.com/PepperidgeFarm/videos/247760186127170/
Healthy Life Breakfast Toast 9 Ways	Adult – F (hands only)	2019	A1, A3, P1	https://www.facebook.com/officialgoodful/videos/2618573731546410/UzpfSTIxMDl0Nzk5NTEwNToxMDE2MTYwMjU5MzlyNTEwNg/
Arnold Oatnut Bread No Added Nonsense	Adult – F Children – F	2019	A1, A3, A5, B1, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IP6N/arnold-oatnut-bread-no-added-nonsense
Wonder Bread America the Wonderful Sandwiches	Adults – M Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.facebook.com/WonderBreadUSA/videos/1631410646927571/
Wonder Bread America the Wonderful Cookout	Adults – M/F Children – M/F	2018	A1, A3, A5, P1	https://www.facebook.com/WonderBreadUSA/videos/1631408163594486/
Wonder Bread Wonder-ful Holidays	Adult – F (Hands Only) Child – F	2017	A1, A3, A5, B1	https://www.facebook.com/WonderBreadUSA/videos/1177353085666665/
Dave's Killer Bread Organic English Muffins	No People	2019	A1, A3	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lahkqc1Nxxg4

Dave's Killer Bread Activate Your Awesome (6 sec.)	No People	2019	A1, A3	https://www.facebook.com/DavesKillerBread/videos/2281797615236045/?v=2281797615236045
Sara Lee Artesano Build Something Better	Adult – F Voice Only	2018	A1, A2, A3, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wc7e/sara-lee-artesano-build-something-better
Sara Lee Artesano Bread More to Love	Adult – F Voice Only	2018	A1, A2, A3, P1	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IFvF/sara-lee-artesano-bread-more-to-love
Sara Lee Classic White Bread Soft and Fluffy	Adult – F Children – M	2019	A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, B2, E4, P3	https://www.ispot.tv/ad/oVMO/sara-lee-classic-white-bread-soft-and-fluffy

TABLE 1: Food Addiction Advertising Analysis Raw Data

Source: own processing, 2022.

BED Advertising Analysis Chart	
Label	Description
Addictive	
A1 – 100%	Signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change
A2 – 17%	Evidence of neglecting daily responsibilities due to eating
A3 – 99%	Representations of deep emotional attachment to food
A4 – 12%	Indicators of doing anything to obtain food/inability to control cravings
A5 – 75%	Portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding
Behavioral	
B1 – 47%	Images of eating alone
B2 – 7%	Signs of stealing, hiding, or hoarding food
B3 – 16%	Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day
B4 – 1%	Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws
B5 – 3%	Signs of food rituals (won't let foods to touch, only eating red candy, etc.)
Emotional	
E1 – 15%	Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food
E2 – 4%	Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating
E3 – 4%	Evidence of distress before or after eating
E4 – 1%	Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others
E5 – 3%	Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape
Physical	
P1 – 47%	Representations of large amounts of food
P2 – 11%	Indications of eating quickly
P3 – 9%	Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts
P4 – 1%	Portrayals of weight fluctuations
P5 – 7%	Indicators of stomach/gastrointestinal distress/complaints
<p>**Adapted for food advertising analysis using information from <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)</i>, the Food Addiction Institute, and the National Eating Disorders Association.</p> <p>© Debbie Danowski, 2019</p>	

TABLE 2: Food Addiction Advertising Analysis Result

Source: own processing, 2019.

Literature and Sources:

- Activia TV Spot 'Smiling Tummy' Featuring Laila Ali*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7jDi/activia-smiling-tummy-featuring-laila-ali>>.
- American Psychiatric Association DSM-5 Fact Sheets*. [online]. [2022-09-14]. Available at: <<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/dsm-5-fact-sheets>>.
- BANDURA, A., WALTERS, R. H.: *Adolescent Aggression*. New York : Ronald Press, 1959.
- BEETHAM, M.: *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914*. New York : Routledge, 1996.
- BRENNAN, M.: Blogroll: Yoghurt vs Scientists. In *Nature Chemistry*, 2014, Vol. 6, No. 8, p. 657. ISSN 1755-4330.
- BROWNE, M.: *What Consumers Want from Their Daily Bread*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.supermarketnews.com/bakery/what-consumers-want-their-daily-bread>>.
- BURROWS, D.: *America's Most Popular Breakfast Cereals (And the Stocks Behind Them)*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.kiplinger.com/slideshow/investing/t052-s001-america-s-most-popular-breakfast-cereals-stocks/index.html>>.
- CASTONGUAY, J. et al.: Adolescents' Responses to Cereal Ads: An Assessment of Weight and Gender. In *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 2019, Vol. 25, No. 8, p. 785-804. ISSN 1540-4102.
- CHADRZYNSKI, M.: Product and Marketing Innovation on the Yoghurt Market in Poland. In AUZINA, A.: *Economic Science for Rural Development Conference Proceeding*. Jelgava : Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, 2013, p. 158-164.
- CHANG, C. T., TSENG, C. H.: Can Sex Sell Bread? In *International Journal of Advertising*, 2013, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 559-585. ISSN 1759-3948.
- Chocolate Frosted Flakes TV Spot 'Mmmm Chocolate'*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d1XH/chocolate-frosted-flakes-mmmm-chocolate>>.
- Content Analysis*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/content-analysis>>.
- DANOWSKI, D.: Bet You Can't Eat Just One: Binge Eating Disorder Promotion in American Advertising. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 6-23. ISSN 2585-9188.
- DONNELLY, S. C.: Breakfast - The Most Important Meal of the Day!! In *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, 2018, Vol. 111, No. 10, p. 681. ISSN 1460-2725.
- Eating Disorders and People of Higher Weight*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/people-living-in-larger-bodies-and-eating-disorders/>>.
- EMOND, J. A. et al.: Exposure to Child-Directed TV Advertising and Preschoolers' Intake of Advertised Cereals. In *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2019, Vol. 56, No. 2, p. e35-e43. ISSN 0749-3797.
- HUDSON, J. L. et al.: The Prevalence and Correlates of Eating Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. In *Biological Psychiatry*, 2007, Vol. 61, No. 3, p. 348-358. ISSN 0006-3223.
- JHALLY, S. (Director): *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse*. [DVD]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation, 2017.
- LONGACRE, M. R. et al.: Child-Targeted TV Advertising and Preschoolers' Consumption of High-Sugar Breakfast Cereals. In *Appetite*, 2017, Vol. 108, No. 1, p. 295-302. ISSN 0195-6663.
- NEWNHAM, D.: David Newnham is Distracted and Astounded by Yoghurt. In *Nursing Standard*, 2007, Vol. 22, No. 13, p. 26-27. ISSN 0029-6570.

Obesity and Overweight. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://www.who.int/newa-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>>.

POHIANHEIMO, T. et al.: Food Choice Motives and Bread Liking of Consumers Embracing Hedonistic and Traditional Values. In *Appetite*, 2010, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 170-180. ISSN 0195-6663.

POTTER, W. J.: *Media Literacy*. Los Angeles, CA : Sage, 2019.

RANI, R. et al.: Importance of Not Skipping Breakfast: A Review. In *International Journal of Food Science & Technology*, 2021, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 28-38. ISSN 0950-5423.

REICHEL, A.: *The Impact Sugar Really Has on Your Brain*. [online]. [2022-09-11]. Available at: <<https://halifax.citynews.ca/local-news/the-impact-sugar-really-has-on-your-brain-1876806>>.

REILEY, L.: *The Total Health and Climate Consequences of the American Food System Cost Three Times as Much as the Food Itself*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/07/16/true-cost-of-american-food-system>>.

RUSMEVICHIENTONG, P. et al.: The Impact of Food Advertisements on Changing Eating Behaviors: An Experimental Study. In *Food Policy*, 2014, Vol. 44, p. 59-67. ISSN 0306-9192.

SEVERIN, W. J., TANKARD, J. W. Jr.: *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media*. New York : Longman, 2001.

SMITH, R. et al.: Advertising Placement in Digital Game Design Influences Children's Choices of Advertised Snacks: A Randomized Trial. In *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics*, 2020, Vol. 120, No. 3, p. 404-413. ISSN 2212-2672.

STREATFIELD, J. et al.: Social and Economic Cost of Eating Disorders in the United States: Evidence to Inform Policy Action. In *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 2021, Vol. 54, No. 5, p. 851-868. ISSN 1098-108X.

SYED, M., NELSON, S. C.: Guidelines for Establishing Reliability When Coding Narrative Data. In *Emerging Adulthood*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 375-387. ISSN 2167-6984.

TURCSI, R.: *Yogurt Sales Approach \$9 Billion*. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <<https://www.supermarketnews.com/diary/yogurt-sales-approach-9-billion>>.

U.S. Breakfast Foods: Statistics & Facts. [online]. [2022-09-09]. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1661/breakfast-foods/#topicHeader_wrapper>.

WESTERBERG, D. P., WAITZ, M.: Binge-Eating Disorder. In *Osteopathic Family Physician*, 2013, Vol. 5, No. 6, p. 230-233. ISSN 1877-573X.

WILSON, N. L., BLACKHURST, A. E.: Food Advertising and Eating Disorders: Marketing Body Dissatisfaction, the Drive for Thinness, and Dieting in Women's Magazines. In *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development*, 1999, Vol. 38, No. 2, p. 111-122. ISSN 1931-0293.

ZIMMERMAN, F. J., SHIMOGA, S. V.: The Effects of Food Advertising and Cognitive Load on Food Choices. In *BMC Public Health*, 2014, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 1-18. ISSN 1471-2458.

Author



Dr. Debbie Danowski

Sacred Heart University
School of Communication, Media, and the Arts
Fairfield, CT 06825
USA
danowskid@sacredheart.edu

Dr. Debbie Danowski is an associate professor of Communication Studies at Sacred Heart University in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts where she teaches advertising, public relations and journalism courses including Food Advertising and Magazines and Body Image. She is the author of several journal articles about food advertising including “COVID Comfort: Food, Advertising, Family, and Unity During a Pandemic”, in the *Popular Culture Studies Journal*, and “Selling Safety: Food and Beverage Advertising During a Pandemic, Then and Now”, in the *Journal of the Communication, Speech & Theatre Association of North Dakota*, as well as five popular books about food addiction and body image, including the best-selling *Why Can't I Stop Eating?: Recognizing, Understanding, and Overcoming Food Addiction* co-authored with Dr. Pedro Lazaro. She is currently working on an academic book titled *Stuff Your Face and Lose Weight, Too: Food Addiction in American Advertising* and is under contract to write a popular book for Urano US about female empowerment titled, *Manless: A Celebration of Single Life and Achieving Deeper Fulfillment on Your Own*, which is scheduled to be published in July 2023.

Lenka Rusňáková, Monika Prostináková Hossová

Signs and Values of Mainstream Audio-Visual Content Intended for Children and Youth

ABSTRACT

Mainstream audio-visual culture is a firmly established part of our everyday lives, reflected in an uncomplicated approach of recipients to individual products as part of ordinary activities. Mainstream works compete for daily attention of media audiences, relying on the viewers' belief that desires, common to the entire society, can be realized in social reality. They raise the interest of the recipients mainly by means of perceived meanings, signs and values. Regarding the topic of the study, we assume that the story of audio-visual contents intended for children and youth equally reflects a set of several preferred values and signs from which the given content is built and which are part of most globally successful films. The main goal of the study is therefore the reflection of the globalization tendencies of the media industry in the sense of identifying the universal features and preferred values in mainstream images intended for children and youth. For the purpose of achieving this goal, we carry out a discursive analysis of the most commercially successful films of 2021 and one of the most profitable films worldwide within the entire "film history", *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021, director Jon Watts), based on the analytical categories defined in the methodological part of the study. In this context, it is necessary to define the discussed issue from a theoretical point of view (with an emphasis on the cultural overlap of stories intended for a mass audience) supplemented by a case study (discursive analysis) of representative research material.

KEY WORDS

Films for Children and Youth. Globalizing Tendencies of Media Culture. Globalization of the Media Industry. Mainstream Audio-Visual Contents. Mainstream Characters. Media Audiences. Preferred Values. *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.

1 Instead of an Introduction: Theoretical Framework of the Issue

Artifacts of mainstream filmmaking and their globalization, dynamic development and expansion into several countries or branches of the media industry represent a series of different production, promotional or distribution activities that together transform a film in a mass-consumed element. The basic characteristic of such media contents is the effort to raise the interest of media audiences through the contained meanings. When universal elements of the dominant culture are discovered in media content, their transformation into production strategies of individual film companies takes place. This shows a set of signs and values is created, which is then used in the creation of many audio-visual works. According to J. Radošínská, the Hollywood style mainstream film is a typical bearer of a wide spectrum of socio-cultural meanings and ideas. It makes intensely symbolic experiences available to its recipients, reflects their experiences, preferences, at the same time, helps them to further shape them.¹ Thus, paying close attention to mainstream film,² while trying to assess the globalization tendencies of media culture, is, for the mentioned reason, a deliberate intention.

Mainstream audio-visual content implies a certain type of apparatus for its own production and values aimed at its consumption. In the above-mentioned way, the cultural unification of media audiences, who accept the same signs, values, faith and orientation, takes place precisely through chosen mainstream images. For the given purposes, some unwritten rules of creation are used in the production of mainstream audio-visual contents:³

A mainstream film should, first of all, use the variability of genres (a combination of elements of several genres within one picture), which should be at least partially “enriched” with an element of entertainment, regardless of the corresponding genre (e.g., the use of light-hearted, humorous sequences in horror or fantasy stories, thrillers, dramas, etc.).⁴ The popularity of individual genres helped the film industry construct a base for efficient film production, as a result of what marketing and promotional strategies did not have to be devised for each film separately. However, the traditional division of genres into defined categories no longer applies and we are witnessing the crumbling of boundaries between strictly defined genres. Due to the hybridization of film genres, it is not possible to create a universal categorical apparatus for them, and it is also impossible to clearly define the most popular mainstream genre of all times. L. Artz claims that among the clearly identifiable features of contemporary global blockbusters are genre patterns of action and adventure films, elements of real or alternative history, fantasy motifs, themes related to revenge and humorous situations.⁵ However, the

¹ RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Vývojové trendy americkej mainstreamovej filmovej produkcie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 12.

² Remark by the authors: Mainstream film or “blockbuster” is a film adapted to the preferences of the majority media audiences.

³ For more information, see: CHRENKOVÁ, L.: Elektronická invázia amerických filmov. In *Media Literacy Student Magazine*, 2015, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 4-10; SCHATZ, T.: New Hollywood, New Millennium. In BUCKLAND, W. (ed.): *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*. London, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 32-33; HUNTINGTON, P. S.: *Střet civilizací: Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague: Rybka Publishers, 2001, p. 51; CASSETTI, F.: *Filmové Teorie 1945-1990*. Prague: Akademie múzických umění, 2008, p. 295; CHRENKOVÁ, L., VALENTOVIČOVÁ, D.: Digital Media: Invasion of American Film. In MATÚŠ, J., PETRANOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: Digital Life – Part II. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava: FMK UCM in Trnava, 2015, p. 399-414; RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: The Production Mechanism of American Mainstream Film and Their Influence on the Recipient. In ČÁBYOVÁ, L., VELICKÝ, P. (eds.): *Quo Vadis Massmedia, Quo Vadis Marketing. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava: FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017, p. 131-142.

⁴ See, for example: *Deadpool*, 2016, director Tim Miller – Action / Comedy / Adventure / Sci-Fi / Romance; *Thor: Love and Thunder*, 2022, director Taika Waititi – Action / Adventure / Fantasy / Sci-Fi / Comedy, etc.

⁵ ARTZ, L.: *Global Entertainment Media. A Critical Introduction*. Malden, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, p. 195-199.

presentation characteristics of a mainstream film should, in any case and regardless of the specific genre classification, refer to the natural need of the target audience to be entertained by referring to popular socio-cultural activities, meanings and values of everyday reality (e.g., love, love life, friendship, wealth, power, etc.).

Another important feature of the dominant culture that is transformed daily into the contents of mainstream film works is the archetype. This is understood as the embodiment of various identities, the ideal of a person or some of his personality traits.⁶ Most of the commonly used archetypes refer to mythology. In the environment of American cinema, we most often talk about the myth called “American Adam”, which is associated with the manifestation of success, untouched land, the fate of Americans and their continent in the early 19th century. The concept of “American Adam” primarily refers to male protagonists as representatives of American exceptionalism. He is most often portrayed as an innocent and lonely hero confronted with the harsh reality of the present, freed from the burden of the past and enthusiastically looking to the future.⁷ **Therefore, the main protagonist of a mainstream film should be a man, a loner (by choice or by circumstances), who is under pressure from the society and performs some, at best, heroic deeds.**⁸ The motif of an individual taking fate into his own hands is popular in Western culture. His quest for self-improvement, self-actualization, recognition or uncovering a conspiracy is understandable to both children and adults. The hero fights against evil, or struggles with nature, irrational forces, his own dark side; he longs for justice, Promethean rebellion, omnipotence, heroic deeds or eternal love, and he tries to achieve his goals through the motif of “scapegoat” and/or “saviour”.⁹ However, in the current audio-visual environment, mainstream film is characterized by a change in the position of the male protagonist in the story. It is gradually being replaced by the archetype of a woman as a heroine, mother, wife, etc.¹⁰ This change is probably caused by the strengthening role of women in society.

The positive economic situation in the sphere of commercial film production was also achieved with the help of standardization. This is perceived as the creation of template-like images with stereotypical narration, characters and model relationships. This set of elements has been many times tested in films succeeding both financially and with the audience. In this context, the term “stereotype” means a set of commonly expected patterns of behaviour based on the characteristics of a role (e.g., mother, father) or personal characteristics of an individual (e.g., race, age or sexual orientation). The portrayal of a stereotype becomes a form of communication and often reflects the attitudes of dominant social groups. It is important to add that the standardization of stereotypes and their application to the narrative structure of the work is directly based on the archetypal and mythical patterns mentioned above (e.g., Achilles, Odysseus, Herakles and many others, but not only ancient heroes and mythological stories connected with them). A similar situation can also be identified in cinematography - mainstream film not only presents archetypes (e.g., hero, mother, father, sage), but also works

⁶ NELMES, J.: *Introduction to Film Studies*. Oxon, New York : Routledge, 2012, p. 481.

⁷ ROLLINS, C. P.: *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past*. New York : Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 561-565.

⁸ See, for example: Dre Parker – Jaden Smith (*The Karate Kid*, 2010, director Harald Zward); Bruce Wayne – Christian Bale (*The Dark Knight*, 2008, director Christopher Nolan); Hancock – Will Smith (*Hancock*, 2008, director Peter Berg); Peter Parker – Tom Holland (*Spider-Man: Homecoming*, 2017, director Jon Watts); Eddie Brock – Tom Hardy (*Venom*, 2018, director Ruben Fleischer), etc.

⁹ Compare to: RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Prague : Wolters Kluwer, 2020, p. 171; PLENCNER, A.: Sociálne významy v mainstreamovom filme. In MAGÁL, S., MISTRÍK, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Médiá, spoločnosť, mediálna fikcia. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava, Bratislava : FMK UCM in Trnava, Kabinet divadla a filmu SAV, 2008, p. 90.

¹⁰ See, for example: Katniss Everdeen – Jennifer Lawrence (*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2*, 2015, director Francis Lawrence); Lara Croft – Alicia Vikander (*Tomb Raider*, 2018, director Roar Uthaug); Natasha Romanoff – Scarlett Johansson (*Black Widow*, 2021, director Cate Shortland), etc.

with various character stereotypes (e.g., housewife, male saviour, male warrior) and transforms them into a more specific, slightly modified form (a stereotype treated as a comic film element – gay hairdresser, an unintelligent blonde, physically unattractive members of the digital gaming subculture). The mass use of stereotypes and their subsequent standardization is based on the needs of the mass consumer, the viewer who wants to know what they can expect from the film already at the moment when they decide whether to buy a ticket to the cinema or not. **People like a certain cyclical nature of motifs and their repetition, standardization in various types of popular genres**¹¹ (e.g., the hero should experience a fight with himself and at the same time an external fight with “evil”, or the film should contain a love story as part of the side plot).

Based on the above, we conclude that the current American mainstream film tends to portray a mythological, bizarre or fantastic world. The emerging trend of portraying gods, superhuman beings, and superheroes as the main heroes of the story is currently being used in several films achieving profits in millions.¹² **A mainstream film should therefore provide a story that can be handled with dazzling graphics and advanced computer effects** (e.g., the main and secondary characters should have bizarre and/or fantastical features that could be enhanced using digital effects).

The commercial aspects of film production reveal that Hollywood bases its strategy on a certain basis of “chaos”. This state is manifested in using massive advertising, the application of various methods and strategies, the construction of multiplexes and the availability of a huge budget intended for the production, promotion and subsequent distribution of individual outputs. All this happens within the creation of one commercial film project, while all these strategies and procedures are dependent on a developed and constantly improving computer technology.¹³

Through electronic media and cooperation with media industry sectors, creators have many opportunities to connect the given content with the widest possible media audience. **For this reason, a mainstream film should bring with it a piece of intellectual property in order to strengthen the “flow” of media messages between multiple media platforms.** The cooperation of various branches of the media industry and the migratory behaviour of media audiences makes it easier to obtain preferred pleasures (e.g., figurines created on the basis of animated characters used in various industries).¹⁴ This process of convergence is an irreversible phenomenon occurring in all media processes. Just think of the fairy-tale characters Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse, who are not only animated heroes, but also brands appearing in the food, textile and entertainment industries. Cartoon comic book characters have thus become elements of mass culture.

The American production of film works for the majority audience is currently one of the most profitable segments of the global media industry and, due to its commercial success and cultural dominance, represents not only the driving force of the economic and investment potential of films, but also, to an increasing extent, the source of the recipients’ social and cultural identity. It achieves its leading position thanks to commercial products – films that are easy to understand and at the same time sufficiently attractive.¹⁵ Among other things, the use of fragmented narrative structures, open, contradictory and unbalanced endings helped

¹¹ Compare to: MAGÁL, S., VALENTOVIČOVÁ, D.: *Filmový a mediálny manažment: Filmová produkcia I*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2011, p. 134; NELMES, J.: *Introduction to Film Studies*. Oxon, New York : Routledge, 2012, p. 499.

¹² See, for example: *Immortals*, 2011, director Tarsem Singh; *300*, 2006, director Zack Snyder; *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, 2014, director Ridley Scott; *Thor: Ragnarok*, 2017, director Taika Waititi, etc.

¹³ DE VANY, A.: *Hollywood Economics – How Extreme Uncertainty Shapes the Film Industry*. London, New York : Routledge, 2004, p. 255.

¹⁴ JENKINS, H.: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York, London : New York University Press, 2006, p. 2-3.

¹⁵ For more information, see: RÖWEKAMP, B.: *Hollywood*. Brno : Computer Press, 2004, p. 92; RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Vývojové trendy americkej mainstreamovej filmovej produkcie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 11.

it achieve a positive result.¹⁶ **It means that a mainstream film should be open to another plot continuation, and the completion of the plot line with a happy ending should not eliminate any future prospects for its continuation.** Media content ending with an “open conclusion” provides the recipient with space to react individually to existing cultural messages, signs and values.

In order to avoid a situation in which the recipients could interpret the content negatively, unexpectedly or unpredictably, media producers subordinate the creation of new products to the preferences of the recipients, or media audiences.¹⁷ **The central value of the American mainstream film, for example, is built on the universal human interest in love, sex, violence, mystery, heroism, wealth, which relates to the ability of a profit-oriented society, especially the American one, to use this interest commercially for its own benefit.** However, as a result of adapting to the audience’s taste, the tension between reception and production is gradually increasing, which is characteristic of the current socio-cultural status of the mainstream. It means that recipients understand mediated messages based on individual values and beliefs, which often results in conflicting interpretations (e.g. different views of the mentioned mainstream values from the point of view of Eastern and Western countries). The strong determination to prevent misinterpretation of the presented audio-visual material dates back to 1930, when strict production rules labelled as the *Production Code* were created. The rules proclaimed the inviolability of marriage and prohibited the depiction of extramarital sex and rape, blasphemy, swearing, violence, murder, or racist statements in media content. Films adhering to the given principles, however, gradually began to experience financial and audience loss. Creators and producers understood that the images simply have to appeal to the emotions of the recipients themselves, to the circulation of their pleasures, to the feelings of relaxation, otherwise they would not achieve any breakthrough success with the mass audience. This was the main reason for the demise of the hard “production censorship” in 1966. Subsequently, the shots and subjects that had been taboo until then or had had to be masked became available. Open depiction of violence and sexuality on an unprecedented scale gradually conquered the movie screens and shocked the audience.¹⁸ The general comprehensibility and ability of films to appeal to universal human interests have become the key advantages of American mainstream production. Producers began to realize the constant changes in the preferences, needs and interests of the audience, which caused changes in the production strategies themselves. Production companies subsequently adapted film concepts to audiences based on predetermined ratings (in the US, the rating is awarded by the *Motion Picture Association of America MPAA*, which has been operating since 1966).¹⁹

The age limit of the majority audience is currently between 12 and 24 years. The key rating for mainstream films is therefore PG-13 (*Parents Strongly Cautioned*). Such films are unsuitable for children under the age of 13, or they should be accompanied by a parent to a film with this designation. This category is not only the most comprehensive, but it is also the highest possible rating that producers can get for a film without significantly affecting its profits.²⁰ Films intended for audiences of all ages are rated PG (*Parental Guidance Suggested*). The PG rating

¹⁶ See, for example: *Inception*, 2010, director Christopher Nolan; *Donnie Darko*, 2001, director Richard Kelly; *The Batman*, 2022, director Matt Reeves; *Interstellar*, 2014 director Christopher Nolan, etc.

¹⁷ RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne trendy v mediálnej kultúre*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2013, p. 18.

¹⁸ Compare to: HUNTINGTON, P. S.: *Střet civilizací: Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2001, p. 54; RÖWEKAMP, B.: *Hollywood*. Brno : Computer Press, 2004, p. 56; FARMER, B.: *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, Gay Male Spectatorships*. London, Durham : Duke University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Vývojové trendy americkej mainstreamovej filmovej produkcie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 23-24.

²⁰ Movies with PG-13 rating: *Transformers: The Last Knight*, 2017, director Michael Bay; *The Simpsons Movie*, 2007, director David Silverman; *Avatar*, 2009, director James Cameron, etc.

warns parents to consider watching the relevant content with younger children, or to accompany them in this activity, as some of the scenes contained in it are unsuitable for younger children.²¹ Rating G (*General Audiences*), on the other hand, guarantees that the picture in question is “harmless”, aimed exclusively at a child recipient.²² The rating marked R (*Restricted*) is typical for works intended for viewers over 17 years of age, while children under the age of 16 may watch the film only accompanied by an adult.²³ Awarding a film with the strictest rating NC-17 (*No One 17 And Under Admitted*)²⁴ announces that the film is intended for persons over 17 years of age, as it contains strong expressions of sexuality, nudity, violence or strong language.²⁵

Sex and sexuality are values that are currently quite often constructed by the dominant culture through various institutionalized ways, but **the absence of explicit displays of nudity and sexual act in mainstream films is the key to box office success.**²⁶ In the indicated manner, the potential audience is expanded to include child viewers both on the domestic and foreign markets. Therefore, we find almost no sexually oriented nudity in the narrative structures of the most profitable audio-visual works of recent years. According to E. J. Epstein, the principle in today’s Hollywood is that the only way to success is without nude scenes.²⁷ Despite the above, we encounter extraordinary audience popularity of films marked “R” and “NC-17”. They do not achieve such commercial success as PG-13 films, but nevertheless they make the mass audience aware.²⁸

When it comes to depictions of violence in films, the MPA’s meter is highly inconsistent in its rating system. In the media environment, but also in the socio-cultural environment, we witness various acts of violence and the violence in news is presented to us almost constantly. We become “immune” to a lot of such information, which also results in a more benevolent approach to awarding individual ratings regarding the occurrence of violent scenes in a specific film. In visualizing the sins committed and their subsequent punishment, the same can be said about America as about gladiatorial games in ancient Rome - America also tends to show viewers live violence (e.g., *NFL: Super Bowl*, *UFC: MMA Fighting*), where violent scenes are amplified by media promotion followed by massive dissemination to diversified media audiences. Thanks to such depictions, Hollywood mainstream production presents a distorted view of life itself and its values. It turns out that the impact of violent scenes is more pronounced and distorted if the crime is not punished, brings success to the person who uses it, is carried out by a group, not an individual, serves a higher purpose, is received in the environment in which the perpetrator lives, is depicted realistically, with details, or it is performed by an actor who is considered nice, attractive and popular outside the film.²⁹ In this context, the “cult of movie

²¹ Movies with PG rating: *Shrek the Third*, 2007, director Chris Miller, Roman Hui; *Bolt*, 2008, director Chris Williams, Byron Howard; *Home Alone*, 1990, director Chris Columbus, etc.

²² Movies with G rating: *High School Musical 3: Senior Year*, 2008, director Kenny Ortega; *Cars 3*, 2017, director Brian Fee; *The Lion King*, 2019, director Jon Favreau, etc.

²³ Movies with R rating: *Sex and the City*, 2008, director Michael Patrick King; *The Matrix Resurrections*, 2021, director Lana Wachowski; *Deadpool 2*, 2018, director David Leitch; *Joker*, 2019, director Todd Phillips, etc.

²⁴ Movies with NC-17 rating: *Pulp Fiction*, 1994, director Quentin Tarantino; *Crush*, 2013, director Malik Bader; *Fifty Shades of Freed*, 2018, director James Foley, etc.

²⁵ KOCHBERG, S.: The Industrial Contexts of Film Production. In NEMES, J. (ed.): *Introduction to Film Studies*. 5th Edition. New York, London : Routledge, 2012, p. 34.

²⁶ BENSCHOFF, M. H.: (Broke) Back to the Mainstream: Queer Theory and Queer Cinemas Today. In BUCKLAND, W. (ed.): *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*. London, New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 195.

²⁷ EPSTEIN, J. E.: *Ekonomika Hollywoodu: Skrytá finanční realita v pozadí filmů*. Prague : Mladá Fronta, 2013, p. 33-36.

²⁸ See, for example: *Fifty Shades of Grey / Darker / Freed*, 2015 – 2018, director Sam Taylor-Johnson, James Foley; *The Hangover – part 1 – 3*, 2009 – 2013, director Todd Phillips; *Ted – part 1 – 2*, 2013 – 2015, director Seth MacFarlane, etc.

²⁹ Compare to: RÖWEKAMP, B.: *Hollywood*. Brno : Computer Press, 2004, p. 94; ZASEPA, T.: *Médiá v čase globalizácie*. Bratislava : LÚČ, 2002, p. 39, 170; BOLTON, K., OLSSON, J.: *Media, Popular Culture, And American Century*. Lund : Mediehistoriskt Arkiv 20, 2010, p. 221.

stars” seems to be another extremely important fragment of the mainstream, which, among other things, is closely related to the constantly recurring casting of individual actors in similar variations of characters, themes and environments.³⁰ **Actors become an excellent tool in the presentation of a mainstream film, which makes a film, a product of mass consumption, a successful attraction.** We will mention James Dean, the eternally lonely rebel of the 1950s fight against the injustice of society, or the likeable actor Keanu Reeves playing the character of John Wick, and many other chronically well-known members of the mentioned “cult”.³¹ Violent acts and criminality committed continuously by a popular actor are thus often justified by society (viewers) precisely because of the actor’s popularity among the target audience.

Mainstream film characters and values are used in the production of commercial films simulating a wide spectrum of socio-cultural meanings and ideas. Within this hyperbolized reality, we consider the viewer to be a part of an imaginary story built on the concepts of undying love, happiness until death, or cynicism, which reaches him precisely through the media and mainstream film, especially the American one. However, it is necessary to emphasize the visible encroachment of Eastern culture towards the West. In the Hollywood’s mainstream works, this situation manifests itself in the changes of the film environment adapted to the atmosphere of Eastern civilizations, while the very basis of the film remains unchanged. For example, the American films *Batman* (1989, director Tim Burton); *The Hangover 2* (2011, director Todd Phillips); *47 Ronin* (2013, director Carl Rinsch) place the main resolution of the story – the third act – in an Eastern environment (Hong Kong, Bangkok, Tokyo, etc.). Even *Walt Disney Pictures* has several animation divisions of its studios in Asia. With the introduction of the rating system of labelling and the influence of Eastern cultures, the current American production has been slightly modified, but the set of preferred or of universal mainstream signs and values has not changed radically.

Using archetypes, mythology, chaos, convergence, cyclical motifs, standardization, cult of actors, hybridization of genres, genre formulas, open narrative structures, graphic conveniences and many other elements, forms a mass people responding to the given elements within their ordinary activities. All these universal elements of the dominant culture become a set of customary mainstream signs and values that have been used for several decades in the creation of most works of Hollywood film production. Their moderate application to the production strategies of commercial filmmaking is generally seen as a prerequisite for the future success of an audio-visual picture, for example in the form of a positive audience response and a decent monetary profit.

2 Objectives and Methods

The presented study is specified to reflect the globalization tendencies of the media industry in the sense of identifying the universal elements of the dominant culture, which have become part of the production strategies of large film companies. In this context, we assume, that the existence of a set of common signs and values typical for mainstream audio-visual production is, among other things, linked to commercially successful films intended for children and youth recipients. The subsequent case study reflects the selected globalization tendencies of media culture of the 21st century. The attention is focused on a mainstream audio-visual work aimed

³⁰ ROBERTSON, P.: *Guinnessova kniha filmových rekordů*. Prague : Cinema, 1995, p. 71.

³¹ See, for example: James Dean – *Rebel Without a Cause*, 1955, director Nicholas Ray; *East of Eden*, 1955, director Elia Kazan; Keanu Reeves – *John Wick 1 – 4*, 2014 – 2023, director Chad Stahelski; Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson – *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, 2017, director Jake Kasdan; *Free Guy*, 2021, director Shawn Levy; Tom Cruise – *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*, 2018, director Christopher McQuarrie; *Top Gun: Maverick*, 2021, director Joseph Kosinski, etc.

mainly at the mentioned group of recipients, which acquired a commercial character and reached the interest of the audience by being financially and audience-wise successful in an unprecedented way in the cinema environment. For the purpose of achieving the main goal, we choose the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021, director Jon Watts) as research material. We believe that the current North American film market operates with different communication strategies, values, meanings and signs that make a film work a worldwide, global phenomenon. We work with the fact that the media organization presents us with mass products easily processed by different groups of recipients, which fulfil their expectations from an emotional, affective, but also cognitive point of view.

The selection of research material is non-probabilistic and deliberate. We are talking about one of the most commercially successful films of 2021 (by the date of 30th June 2022 it had earned almost two billion US dollars worldwide, namely 1.9 billion US dollars). At the same time, it is one of the most profitable films in the history of cinema worldwide (it ranks sixth right after the titles *Avatar*, 2009, director James Cameron, profit of 2.8 billion US dollars; *Avengers: Endgame*, 2019, directors Anthony Russo, Joe Russo, profit 2.7 billion US dollars; *Titanic*, 1997, director James Cameron, profit of 2.2 billion US dollars; *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, 2015, director Jeffrey Jacob Abrams, profit of 2.1 billion US dollars; *Avengers: Infinity War*, 2018, directors Anthony Russo, Joe Russo, profit of 2 billion US dollars).³² The sequel of the story of the superhero named Spider-Man is also the highest-grossing film of the distribution company *Sony Pictures Releasing* and is quickly becoming one of the biggest “hits” of the entire *Marvel Cinematic Universe*. As for the qualitative level of the analysed research material, in this respect the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home* receives significantly positive responses from the target audience in the relevant film databases (the rating of 82% in the *Czech-Slovak film database* and 8.3 out of a total of 10 possible points on the *Internet Movie Database* portal). Film critics also evaluate the film extremely positively. We can mention, for example, the nomination for the *Academy Awards* in 2021 for the best visual effects.³³

We consider as children-oriented material any cinematographic material with the values, signs and meanings that are easily interpretable or understandable by this target group. In this group we include titles with a PG rating (viewing of appropriate content by younger children is possible only with the accompaniment of an adult), G rating (viewers of all ages, general audience) and PG-13 rating (not suitable for children under 13 years old). We pay special attention to the PG-13 category (pictures intended for children older than 13 years and youth between the ages of 15 and 30), which also includes the mentioned research material. A film rated in this way may contain violence, nudity or strong language, but only to a limited extent. Any nudity must be non-sexual, and all profanity must be used extremely sparingly. Violence in PG-13 movies can be intense, but not explicit. The presentation of drugs or their use is prohibited in images with this designation, and the nudity presented must not be of a sexual nature. The titles to which the PG-13 rating corresponds are also among the most economically successful cinematographic contents.³⁴ To assess the globalization tendencies of media culture, including the identification of preferred mainstream values and signs, we focused our attention precisely on films intended for (older) children and youth with the assigned designation of PG-13.

³² For more information, see: DAVIS, B.: *Ms. Marvel Season Wrap Up, MCU Casting News. Phase Zero*. Released on 13th July 2022. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://comicbook.com/marvel/news/ms-marvel-mcu-mutant-ryan-gosling-ghost-rider-sdcc-phase-zero-podcast/>>; IMDB PRO: *Box Office Mojo. Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl2869659137/>>.

³³ For more information, see: CSFD: *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.csfd.cz/film/792852-spider-man-bez-domova/prehled/>>; IMDB PRO: *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10872600/>>.

³⁴ ROCCHI, J.: *Význam hodnotenia filmu*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://sk.eferrit.com/vyznam-hodnotenia-filmu/>>.

The case study is carried out using the qualitative research method of discursive analysis. Discursive analysis is focused on a higher level than the level of individual texts. When researching discourse, files discussing a certain topic with the relationship of the given statement (text) to other statements are important. An important concept of discourse analysis are meanings - it is the kind of information that we first recall when perceiving discourse and plan before we start (or continue) speaking or writing. We are talking about a closer examination of how broader social and cultural changes manifest themselves in the changes in cultural discourse and how the very process of production or perception of texts is looked at. Within media studies, we focus on the representation and construction of relationships as simultaneous textual processes when analysing discourse, as well as on other important sociocultural dimensions of the media text.³⁵ Regarding the focus of the study and the choice of the research method of discursive analysis, we determine several analytical categories, which in our case reflect the universal mainstream film characteristics and values used in the production of commercially successful films. The analytical categories are as follows:

- genre variability, genre patterns, presence of entertainment in research material;
- the protagonist as an archetype, the motivations of the hero in the story, mythical patterns;
- cyclicity of motives, stereotype and standardization;
- mainstream film values (especially the value of sex, sexuality, violence and crime) and their occurrence in the research material regarding the assigned rating;
- level of work with graphics and CGI;
- the cult of film stars as a means of presenting a film image;
- completion of the plot line, possibilities for further continuation of the story;
- the degree of cooperation of various branches of the media industry with the research material.

Based on the formulated analytical categories, we determine research questions (RQ), the answers to which are contained in the final part of the study:

RQ1: *How does the research material work with genre hybridization, genre formulas, the element of fun, archetypes, mythic patterns, protagonist motivation, cyclical motifs, stereotypes, and the process of standardization itself?*

RQ2: *Is it possible to identify in the research material the mainstream film values connected primarily with the issues of sex and violence? If so, does their presence in the picture correspond to the assigned PG-13 rating?*

RQ3: *What is the level of work with graphics and CGI, the cult of movie stars, the possibilities of further continuation of the story and the cooperation of various branches of the media industry in connection with the research material?*

The answers to the research questions above together result in the main research question. By answering it, we will fulfil the main goal of the study, which is the reflection of the globalization tendencies of the media industry in the sense of identifying the universal features and preferred values in mainstream images intended for children and youth recipients. The main research question is as follows:

MRQ: *Based on the theoretical interpretation and the subsequent discursive analysis of the selected research material, can the values, meanings and signs be comprehensively evaluated, thanks to which a film intended for children and youth becomes a global phenomenon?*

By answering the stated main research question, we evaluate the research assumption:

H: *The stories of audio-visual mainstream content intended for children and youth reflect a set of universal features and preferred values that characterize most globally successful films today.*

³⁵ TRAMPOTA, T., VOJTĚCHOVSKÁ, M.: *Metody výzkumu médií*. Prague : Portál, 2010, p. 169-172.

3 Results

The title *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021, director Jon Watts) represents the third continuation of the story of the superhero Spider-Man with the young American actor Tom Holland in the main role (*Spider-Man: Homecoming*, 2017 and *Spider-Man: Far from Home*, 2019, director Jon Watts). As in the previous two cases, the subject is the *Spider-Man* comic book (authors Stan Lee and Steve Ditko; *Marvel Comics* publishing house). The analysed audio-visual work is the result of the creative work of the production companies *Columbia Pictures*, *Pascal Pictures* and *Marvel Studios*, while the distribution is ensured by the *Sony Pictures Releasing* corporation. Thanks to the collaboration (*Sony Pictures/Columbia* and *Disney-Marvel*), the character of Spider-Man is included in the so-called *Marvel Cinematic Universe* (abbreviated *MCU*), which expands the *MCU* to include the fictional world of *Sony's Marvel Universe* (abbreviated *SMU*), specifically *Sony's Spider-Man Universe* (abbreviated *SSU*) based on the characters of the *Marvel Comics* publishing house (e.g. Spider-Man, Venom, Morbius and many other related referents with their own dedicated films).

Spider-Man: No Way Home is considered a landmark in the Spider-Man series. For the first time in the entire film history of the *MCU* or *SSU* franchise, the identity of the protagonist, Peter Parker (Tom Holland), “an ordinary boy from the neighbourhood”, is revealed. The public revelation of the superhero’s identity fundamentally changes his everyday life. The protagonist faces public condemnation for his heroic actions, which often caused extensive material damage (Spider-Man is nicknamed “the public enemy”). In the same way, the circle of his closest friends, who supported or even helped him in his superhero activities, find themselves in a hopeless situation. We will mention, for example, Michelle “MJ” Jones (Zendaya), Edward “Ned” Leeds (Jacob Batalon), May Parker (Marisa Tomei), Happy Hogan (Jon Favreau) and many others. To restore the former life for his loved ones and for himself, he asks for the help of Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch). However, a failed spell aimed at erasing the memory of Peter Parker as Spider-Man opens several parallel worlds. Through them, several anti-heroes that Spider-Man as the comic book character has ever met, such as Otto Octavius (Alfred Molina), Electro (Jamie Foxx), Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe), Sandman (Thomas Hayden Church) and Lizard (Rhys Ifans) enter the plot. In addition to the negative referents, the incarnations of Spider-Man, originating from different parallel worlds, also appear in the story. The character of Spider-Man, portrayed by actors Andrew Garfield (*Amazing Spider-Man*, 2012; *Amazing Spider-Man 2*, 2014, director Marc Webb) and Tobey Maguire (*Spider-Man*, 2002; *Spider-Man 2*, 2004; *Spider-Man 3*, 2007, director Sam Raimi), thus creatively connects the otherwise “functioning” plot lines and the related narrative aspects of the work (primary plot, main and secondary characters, etc.) into one integrated universe.

The connection of characters, stories, plots and ideas foreshadows **the combination of several genre elements and the manipulation of predefined genre formulas**. This genre hybridization, understood as the blending of elements of different genres in one work, is typical for stories with fantasy motifs. The term “genre” itself can be characterized as a set of formal and content elements of a certain work. We identify the elements of an action film in the analysed image. The tension, which becomes dominant in this genre, is intensified by the fight of the protagonist against negative characters, or against evil. The protagonists have superhero, magical, or supernatural abilities, together enriching the action plot with a fantasy motif (e.g., the wizard Doctor Strange, the “spider man” Spider-Man). This fantastic world is confronted with reality, while scientific inventions and modern technologies play a fundamental role in the story. Through them, the protagonist and secondary characters strengthen their supernatural abilities (e.g., Spider-Man’s suit made of nanotechnology), or they try to correct these abilities with the help of science (e.g., the development of a drug to suppress the dark side of anti-heroes). In the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, we find several elements of a science fiction film, for which it is typical to implement the knowledge of contemporary science and technology into the

narrative structure of the work. There is also **an aspect of entertainment in the film**, while the given “comedic component” is mainly based on a system of primary intertextual references to popular socio-cultural activities, meanings and values of everyday life (e.g., through situational and conversational humour, dialogues or the actions of the characters themselves). In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that the genre categorization is only indicative, because by trying to classify the work into certain genre formulas, we do not sufficiently reflect its formal and content structure. We should not forget the subgenres. Their presence in the film even more points to the incoherence or unprincipled joining of diverse story elements and means of expression into one whole. For example, from the point of view of subgenre categorization, we can also label the work *Spider-Man: No Way Home* as a “marvel movie”, superhero, science-fantasy, techno-fantasy film, etc. However, “labelling” a film with different (sub)genres at the same time means losing its informative value. It should not be forgotten that it still represents an important set of information for potential viewers.

The media construct different representations of social groups by creating and reinforcing certain kinds of characters. They are made up of repeating elements (appearance, behaviour patterns). These are often archetypes that carry meanings related to the character themselves or their relationship to the environment. They are supposed to signal to the receiver how they should look at the character and how they should evaluate it. Within this problem, we refer to the works of structuralists and linguists, i.e. the categorisation of seven character types according to V. J. Propp,³⁶ the breakdown of archetypes according to a psychoanalyst C. G. Jung,³⁷ the three elementary components of the “psyche” by S. Freud³⁸ or the six basic positions of the characters within the story by A. J. Greimas.³⁹ In all cases, it is a description of the function of the referents of the story from the position of applied archetypal formulas. According to the proposed model, we assign functions to the individual characters and define the types of situations in which they occur.⁴⁰ In order to clarify **the archetype of the hero** in the presented studies, we focused exclusively on the main character of the story, on Peter Parker himself, aka Spider-Man. The assessment of the main actor of the plot from the position of the applied hero archetype represents a useful analytical aid for the investigation of the manner of speaking of the given character towards the recipients of the audio-visual work. The hero archetype is one of the most frequent and recognizable archetypes in media content. This late modern hero has various names in the 21st century cinema. It can be a superhero, an anti-hero (who is often seen as a hero of today’s popular culture⁴¹), “American Adam”, and so on. We could also include Spider-Man in the three mentioned categories – he is a person who does not stand out with some unique set of values or beliefs, but with his super heroic abilities (archetype of the superhero)

³⁶ For more information, see: PROPP, V. J.: *Morfológia rozprávky*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1969, p. 35-67; TRAMPOTA, T., VOJTĚCHOVSKÁ, M.: *Metody výzkumu médií*. Prague : Portál, 2010, p. 148.

³⁷ For more information, see: JUNG, G. C.: *Archetypy a nevědomí. Výbor z díla. II. svazek*. Brno : Nakl. Tomáše Janečka, 2003, p. 156-161; DICKEY, D. M.: *Aesthetics and Design for Game-Based Learning*. New York, Oxon : Routledge, 2015, p. 90.

³⁸ For more information, see: BERGER, A. A.: *Media Analysis Techniques*. London : Sage Publications, 2005, p. 85-87.

³⁹ For more information, see: TRIFONAS, P. P.: From Semantics to Narrative: The Semiotics of A. J. Greimas. In TRIFONAS, P. P. (eds): *International Handbook of Semiotics*. Dordrecht : Springer, 2015, p. 1099-1107.

⁴⁰ Case studies and practical applications of the archetypal patterns of V. J. Propp, C. G. Jung, and A. J. Greimas to major and minor characters in superhero stories, see: RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: Naratívna analýza a jej miesto vo vedeckom diskurze. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z. (eds.) et al.: *Empirické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 48-82; RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: Narácia v snímke Avengers: Pomstiteľia. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z. (eds.) et al.: *Empirické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 83-117.

⁴¹ See, for example: RADOŠINSKÁ, J., MAGALOVÁ, L.: Supes, Inc.: Episodic Television Drama The Boys, Antiheroism and Society of Performance. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 28-52. [online]. [2022-10-05]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MLAR_2022_No_1.pdf>.

and the typical personality characteristics of an innocent and lonely hero confronted with the harsh reality of the present (archetype of “American Adam”). He most often tends to solve problems in a violent way (in the character of Spider-Man, we find the archetype of the anti-hero, or the “shadow” of the protagonist, when he starts thinking about revenge and killing, but in the end, his friends show him “the right way”). The movie protagonist is a strongly individualistic and strongly narcissistic action hero with a specific trait – he almost never dies in the story, not even on a symbolic level. Although this “American Adam” (“Western” white-skinned heterosexual hero with obvious physical features) is presented as a brave character (trying to fight for good, justice, sacrifice for others and for higher goals), on the other hand, he is a strong individual with superhuman (spider) abilities, capable of controlling others and committing violent acts (desire to take revenge on enemies). Although some of Spider-Man’s characteristics are not strictly positive (e.g., narcissism, irresponsibility, cunning, hidden aggression), they should in any case be – and are – accepted by the majority of the audience. The conflict between the need to be an ordinary teenager with ordinary problems (applying to college, dealing with partner and friend relationships) and being an extraordinary superhero (protecting the loved ones and society by using superhuman abilities) also defines Peter Parker aka Spider-Man as the so-called “fragmented hero”.

Archetypes are fixed and have an unchanging place within the narrative determined by the logical sequence of the plot. The knowledge that every narrative has a certain narrative structure leads to the search for the universal patterns which often refer to various **mythic patterns and ideas**. According to J. Radošínská, it is blockbuster movies about superheroes that become carriers of secularized myths (myths of a non-religious nature) and various symbolic messages, that participate in the creation of pop culture (media) myths. The above applies mainly to films based on stories about extraordinary people (most often physically attractive action heroes with abilities exceeding the capabilities of a real person) and aimed mainly at young and teenage viewers.⁴² Among them, we also include the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. Myths about heroes are one of the most common in ancient history. These are mostly fictional stories of gods, demigods, ancient heroes, which are not supported by verified facts and are largely guided by the imaginations of ordinary people. Therefore, mythmaking in an altered form continues in connection with the strengthening role of the media in society. In this context, Spider-Man can also be considered a hero whose presence in media content is the result of the transformation of the originally understood “heroic myth model”. We are primarily talking about the acceptance of his superhuman abilities, as well as the belief that the hero should always triumph over his opponents.

Generally valid elements, motifs, archetypes are found not only in the referents of the work, but also in the narration itself. The universally developing plot focused on the main character of mainstream films, originating from the “West”, is collectively referred to as the “American monomyth”.⁴³ This determines **the motivations of the (super)hero on the way through the story**. One of Spider-Man’s most important decisions is to *return* to the world of supernatural phenomena with the help of Doctor Strange, with the intention of restoring the “past lives” for himself and his loved ones. With his *initiative*, the protagonist overcomes obstacles and eliminates the threat from parallel worlds with his superhuman abilities. After a series of several losses (the loss of a loved one, the threat of colonization of the Earth by aliens), Spider-Man decides to *leave* – with the help of supernatural forces, he disappears from public life and with his departure, the lost security and peace return to society and his loved ones. The protagonist’s

⁴² RADOŠÍNSKÁ, J.: *Teoretické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018, p. 13-14.

⁴³ For more information about the term „monomyth“ and „american monomyth“ and its application in audiovisual images, see: CAMPBELL, J.: *Tisíc tváří hrdiny*. Prague : Portál, 2000; LAWRENCE, J. S.: *Star Trek as American Monomyth*. In KAPPELL, M. W. (ed.): *Star Trek as Myth: Essays on Symbol and Archetype at the Final Frontier*. Jefferson : McFarland & Company, 2010, p. 93-111.

motivations are conditioned by certain social meanings, namely his desire *to fight against evil and struggle with irrational forces* (Spider-Man's fight with enemies, villains), *to struggle with one's own dark side* ("the fragmentation" of Spider-Man's personality), *to gain recognition* (Spider-Man tries to convince society that he is the "good hero" and not a "public enemy"), *to achieve the so-called "Promethean Rebellion"* (Spider-Man disobeys Doctor Strange's instructions in an effort to protect the Earth and other parallel universes from villainous rampages and "time chaos"), *to gain and keep love* (developing Spider-Man's relationship with MJ), and *to achieve justice* (Spider-Man wants to avenge the death of a loved one and restore order in society). At the same time, notice the presence of the "scapegoat" motif in the work (Spider-Man sacrifices himself with the help of a spell to return to the period, in which even those closest to him did not know about his connection with Peter Parker) and the *saviour motif* (Spider-Man, together with his versions from two different parallel universes, fights against evil).

In the analysed work, we also deal with **cyclicity, stereotyping and the degree of standardization of the film story**. Considering the applied archetypes, mythical patterns, motivations of the main character and, above all, the presence of a monomyth (universal elements and story motifs) in the work, a model story is created. This story, to some extent, determines the predictability of the storyline. From the point of view of the narrative structure of the work, we identify in the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home* a certain standardized (long-term established) exposition of the story, the so-called American three-act structure: 1. The identity of the protagonist is revealed; the public riots and Spider-Man, Peter Parker is a public enemy (incident); 2. In an effort to reclaim his old life, Peter Parker and Doctor Strange open parallel worlds, through which several well-known negative characters penetrate into reality; Spider-Man tries to "cure" the anti-heroes and give them a second chance, but loses a loved one and (temporarily) fails (confrontation); 3. Spider-Man's desire for revenge is stopped by his friends, they help him overcome his moral and personality crisis and achieve his original goal, which is the return of the other characters to parallel worlds and the restoration of "normal" life for his loved ones (resolution). At the same time, the character of Spider-Man reflects the established patterns of behaviour and actions of a superhero, but also reveals the typical character traits that every superhero should possess – he is active, professes the principles of humanism, helps the weak, protects the vulnerable, fights against evil in various forms, protects the loved ones. He is physically attractive, funny, smart, longs for love, lonely at a certain point in the plot and he is willing to sacrifice his own happiness for "higher goals". Standardization of character traits is also present in other characters. For example, Peter Parker's smart, beautiful girlfriend Michelle "MJ" Jones, his devoted friend Ned or the principled Doctor Strange. Anti-heroes are divided into two groups – those who are willing to change for the better (e.g., Otto Octavius) and those vengeful ones, consumed by evil who believe they are the right ones (e.g., Green Goblin). The motivation of the hero in the story is undoubtedly subject to standardization and stereotyping. The initial motivation of the superhero's actions is related to revealing his identity and the subsequent effort to restore the lost life, anonymity and safety for himself and his loved ones. With the coming complications and after the loss of a loved one, we observe a turnaround in the protagonist, a moral fall, and the desire for revenge becomes the "driving force" of his actions. However, in the final (resolution) part, the protagonist returns to his moral principles, overcomes his own impulses and desires. The motivation for his actions, at this point, becomes the desire to save the loved ones, friends and return to "ordinary life". However, Spider-Man (like a typical superhero) fights not only with the enemy, but also with himself. In the case of the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, the cyclicity of motifs and stories is visible and clearly "admitted" by the creators, when the characters of Spider-Man from two parallel worlds, portrayed by actors Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield, enter the plot. From mutual dialogues we learn that all representatives of Spider-Man share similar fate and overcome almost identical obstacles in life (interpersonal, intrapersonal, socio-cultural and moral conflicts).

Every mainstream film presents certain values (e.g., interest in love, sex, violence, heroism or wealth), while these reflect audience preferences. According to J. Radošínská, film heroes of the 21st century (including superheroes) often represent sets of values that are far from the former heroic ideals.⁴⁴ Within the analytical categories, we focus more closely on detecting **the presence of mainstream film values** in the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, while specifically considering the issues of sex, sexuality, violence and crime. Although sex and sexuality are extremely “popular” topics in cinematography (one could say that they are values of everyday life), their non-explicit depiction or absence in the film ultimately expands the target group of potential viewers to children, or young recipients. However, “superhero” film works (including the film analysed by us) primarily focus on depicting the values of heroism, violence and crime, but they also significantly reflect the so-called everyday values (e.g., love, friendship, desire for wealth or power). Their presence in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is evident and follows from the very genre classification of the film. The filmmakers place great emphasis on friendship, romantic love and love for family or loved ones (e.g., the inseparable friends Peter Parker, MJ and Ned, who together overcome obstacles and are the main character’s source of moral strength; the main character’s intimate relationship with his guardian, aunt May). The central idea of the film is the “fight of good against evil” and the hope that evil can be defeated or even “cured”. In connection with this idea, in addition to the above, the film also clearly points to the question of belonging and help, cooperation for a good cause or higher goals. The stated values are “transformed” into the character traits of the protagonist, who is a kind of embodiment of the positive qualities of a superhero - a teenager who has no significant negative qualities or “bad habits” (does not drink alcohol, he does not smoke, he treats other people with respect, he is an ambitious student, he works on his future). Although in the story he “falls to the moral bottom” and longs for revenge and killing, in the end (with the help of his friends), he “gets up”, suppresses his own desires, his shadow, or alter-ego, he remains true to his ideals and completes the work he started. Another characteristic of the protagonist is presented in a significant way, which is sacrifice – Spider-Man gives up his friends and love to save the world and remains a “lonely hero”.

The audio-visual work *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is rated PG-13 (*Parents Strongly Cautioned* – based on the MPAA’s rating system according to **the suitability of films for individual age categories**). The given rating indicates that the film is not suitable for children under 13 years of age and some of its components may be unsuitable for this age group. The assessment system has a preventive nature, appeals to parents and requires their cooperation. According to the rating rules (*Classification and Rating Rules – Motion Pictures Association, Inc. & National Association of Theatre Owners, Inc.*), images that depict or contain nudity (even without sexual undertones), sensuality, vulgarity but also drug use, bad language, “adult activities”, for example, are rated PG-13. A film marked with such a rating may depict violence, however, this should not be realistic, extreme or persistent. It is the same with vulgar language. If swearing appears once in the picture, the given audio-visual material can be classified as PG-13. However, if such vocabulary is repeated or used with a sexual undertone, the film is automatically included in the category “not suitable for children” and “intended for viewers over 17 years old” – R (*Restricted*).⁴⁵ In addition to the PG-13 category, the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home* also has a description of the content as follows: “*Sequences of action/violence, some language and brief suggestive comments*”.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Teoretické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018, p. 48.

⁴⁵ For more information, see: *Classification and Rating Rules*. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <https://www.filmratings.com/Content/Downloads/rating_rules.pdf>; *Ratings Posters*. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <https://www.filmratings.com/Content/Downloads/mpaa_ratings-poster-qr.pdf>.

⁴⁶ *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <<https://www.spidermannowayhome.movie/>>.

The most prominent category in the analysed image is the value of violence. At this point, the assignment of the PG-13 rating for the depicted violence is debatable. It should not be explicit, realistic, long-term, or persistent. However, in the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, violence is an “integral” part of the storyline and, although it is a sci-fi action venture, the level of violence depicted often slightly exceeds the limit determined by the PG-13 rating. For example, the protagonist takes revenge on an enemy who caused the death of a person close to him, while the blood from battle wounds is visible in the footage. The picture also directly shows the death of one of the characters (in this scene we again encounter an explicit display of blood, but with the absence of large details of lacerations and fatal wounds). Even though the depicted violence is not realistic (e.g., the heroes break through several floors of buildings, fight with supernatural forces or alien enemies), there are also scenes in which the characters attack innocent civilians, real people, which seemingly transfers the fictional violence to the real world. We also identify verbal violence in the film. It occurs in the form of threats, for example “Now you die!” (Octavius to Spider-Man); “I wanna kill him. I wanna tear him apart.” (Spider-Man talking about the enemy), etc. At this point, it is also appropriate to mention bullying as one of the forms of aggression, which is often accompanied by violence. In the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, the protagonist, his best friends and family encounter bullying after Spider-Man’s identity is revealed (e.g., the heroes are subjected to constant photography, ridicule or inappropriate comments from the people around them). However, bullying can be considered one of the central themes that the film tries to bring closer to the viewer. Violent acts related to bullying are also indicated (e.g., a stone is thrown through the window of the apartment where the main character lives, with which hateful people try to hit him). Crime connected with violence is depicted in the story primarily in the actions of anti-heroes, so we consider it an integral part of this film genre (action, adventure, sci-fi film).

Assessment of language suitability forms part of the assigned rating. We are talking about determining the suitability of the film for individual age categories from the point of view of assessing the language and expressions of the characters. In this category, we find only a few offensive or insulting terms (e.g., labelling Spider-Man as *public enemy no. 1*, labelling one of the characters as an *idiot* or *clown*, shouting “Shut up!”, etc.). Other, significantly expressive or vulgar expressions are not present in the analysed film. The film also meets the criteria for the awarded rating in the category of depicting the consumption of addictive or dangerous *substances*, while the consumption of such substances is only hinted at in the film (e.g., a man is sitting in a bar to whom an inner voice tells that he is drunk). The so-called antiserum, which the protagonist develops together with his friends as a cure for supervillains, is debatable. These antisera are placed in syringes, and in the film, we directly see their administration (injection) into the body of a specific villain.

In the context of the film’s suitability for underage viewers, specifically for older children over 13 and youth, we cannot ignore the depiction of the value of sex, sexuality and nudity in the film. There are no scenes depicting a sexual act. However, there are several scenes that we could identify as “depicting sexuality or sensuality”. In most cases, these are the passages of the film in which the protagonist kisses his girlfriend, they hold hands, confesse their love, or lie next to each other on the roof of a building and want to kiss (this shot can give the impression of sensuality or “hidden, suggestive” sexuality). Nudity is only partially depicted in the work and there is no representation of secondary genitals. We can see Peter Parker in his underwear, while his friend MJ helps him take off his Spider-Man costume. For this reason, the story sequence can be included among the parts of the film where parents of minors should “pay attention”. There is also a shot in which the audience sees the upper part of the man’s body exposed and based on the statement of this character (Electro), we learn that the man in the shot is completely naked. In general, we can say that sexuality and nudity are shown moderately and appropriately in the analysed work, regarding the PG-13 rating.

Visual side, graphic processing and special effects occupy an important place in superhero films. The challenge for filmmakers is therefore a believable portrayal of the magical, superhuman abilities of the participants in the plot, which are directly based on the genre of science fiction. For example, Spider-Man possesses acquired “spider” abilities (he defies the laws of gravity, he is fast, he has exceptional hearing) enhanced by the latest technologies (the Spider-Man’s suit created by Tony Stark’s company *Stark Industries*). Visual emphasis is placed on the depiction of fights between the protagonist and his adversaries (confrontation within the American three-act structure). In the analysed picture, these clashes are graduated by the arrival of villains from parallel universes, whose external appearance is not “human” (e.g., Lizard, Sandman), or their human body is “enhanced” by technologies, making them cyborgs (Otto Octavius). Also worthy of attention is the character of Doctor Strange, who uses his magical abilities to open portals to other worlds, bend space-time and defy the laws of physics. Dazzling visual effects, eye-catching graphics, a dynamic soundtrack and an elaborate cut-scene generally do not constitute a meaningful part of the narrative. In superhero films, however, the formal side of the audio-visual work is perceived as an equal “partner” of the content level of the image in question. Such an approach to film processing is a manifestation of spectacularity, the “embodiment” of profitability and a reflection of the expectations of a predefined audience. Therefore, the producers follow a scheme, the essence of which is the balance of two factors – a coherent narrative and a refined visual-formal aspect of the work.⁴⁷ In this context, J. Radošinská adds that the target audience segments expect an engaging and dynamic, dramaturgically uncomplicated but believable or rather convincingly portrayed story from movie stories about superheroes, which takes place in an attractive, visually imaginative environment.⁴⁸ The functionality is evidenced by the positive feedback from the audience and the evaluations of film critics, as well as the nomination of the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home* for the *Academy Awards* in the category of visual effects.

A significant feature of mainstream films is their presentation through celebrities and the cult of movie stars. The casting of actors in a specific film role is largely influenced by the age composition of the potential audience. The assigned PG-13 rating for the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home* foreshadows the target group of viewers, namely older children and youth. In addition, by setting the plot in the environment of the high school life of the most famous teenage superhero from the *MCU* world and by casting young actors in central roles, the filmmakers “strengthen” the relationship with the target group recipients even more. The viewer’s “identification” with the protagonist is also greatly contributed by his behaviour in ordinary life situations (the choice of university, graduation, but also first partner relationships or friendship). Tom Holland, as the representative of Spider-Man, “meets” the characteristics of a normal, contemporary teenager – he is lively, active, funny, ironic, he cares about love, friendship and the future, he often acts hastily and impulsively. The external character traits of the actors are also suitably adapted to the young age of their film characters, even though the actors themselves are almost a decade older than the characters they portray. The casting of actors plays an important role in this direction. In the analysed film, we identify well-known personalities with rich acting experience, while the audience knows them from other, not only superhero films (Doctor Strange – Benedict Cumberbatch, Spider-Man from a parallel world – Andrew Garfield, Norman Osborn – Willem Dafoe and others). On the other hand, film stories about superheroes open up space for the expansion of the cult of stars, which is created around this type of images, by other actors unknown to the general audience (e.g., Tom Holland or Zendaya). Actors often become famous precisely because of the character they portray, which can “pigeonhole” them in a certain way; in the case of superhero films, this is a fairly common

⁴⁷ KING, G.: *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster*. New York, London : I. B. Tauris, 2000, p. 3-4.

⁴⁸ RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Teoretické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018, p. 64.

phenomenon (e.g., Chris Hemsworth, chronically known as Thor, or Robert Downey Jr. as Iron Man). The key characters of an audio-visual work, especially superheroes, are subsequently linked to the physical appearance and acting of their representatives. We are talking about the so-called celebritization, i.e., targeted media production of celebrities.⁴⁹

The superhero with his appearance and character traits is strikingly reminiscent of the heroes of ancient fables and again, refers to the presence of the universal archetype of the hero and mythical patterns in modern audio-visual works. However, a significant difference can be seen in the completion of the storyline. While in ancient fables, the hero's journey ends in disaster (final resolution), contemporary superhero films have the advantage of an open ending, which gives the creators options to continue the story. *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is a natural continuation of the previous two parts with actor Tom Holland in the main role. From the point of view of seriality, the film is a *re-take*, a slang *sequel* (a new plot is built around the characters from the previous story – *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Spider-Man: Far from Home*) and at the same time, it is a *reboot* (the entire story of Spider-Man is told again, with a different cast and it is not a sequel to the film stories about this superhero, presented by Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield). We also talk about a *cross-over* (combining several independently successful elements into one whole – characters with superhuman abilities and the stories connected with them). At the same time, we consider the work to be the expected completion of the trilogy about Spider-Man, but it would be more appropriate to talk about the so-called *threequel* – a type of seriality characterized by hinting at the possibility of the creation of further subsequent films, to which the plot itself is adapted. It is typical for all superhero films. In this case, it may not be a direct continuation of the narrative of the superhero in the form of the creation of a fourth film, but we are rather talking about the possibility that the character of Spider-Man will also appear in other audio-visual images within the *Marvel Cinematic Universe*, or that space will be opened for the development of other related stories. This is confirmed by the presence of several references (e.g., in the credits scene) to planned audio-visual projects that should take form of a *spin-off* to the Spider-Man *threequel* (focusing on a specific character or event from the previous film that is developed in a separate story, for example on Doctor Strange, Dare Devil or Venom).

Numerous ties to various branches of the media industry enabled the later “transfer” of individual motifs and story lines of superhero comic literature (in our case, we are talking about the *Spider-Man* comic book, published by *Marvel Comics*) into an intertextually saturated, strongly episodic audio-visual form typical of contemporary mainstream film production (audio-visual images associated with Peter Parker as Spider-Man created on the basis of the mentioned comic book). The production of films about superheroes has had a significant impact on the tendencies of contemporary mainstream filmmaking aimed at **connecting literature, cinematography and other branches of the media industry** with the aim of popularization and global monetization of originally comic book stories about superheroes. The aim of the cooperation of several branches of the media industry through transmedia narratives and merchandising is to appeal to a wide spectrum of consumers, while profits from various media or distribution platforms are accumulated. Finally, it is important to add that children and teenage audiences are most interested in licensed products associated with popular films, which undoubtedly include superhero film stories.⁵⁰ Most of the so-called “film franchises” therefore consist of works primarily intended for the target groups. The commercial success of the Spider-Man stories and the character of this superhero himself, played by Tom Holland, is a clear proof of how the coexistence of film as an audio-visual medium with other branches of the media industry adds a new dimension to the globalized film industry.

⁴⁹ RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Prague : Wolters Kluwer, 2020, p. 132.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

4 Discussion

For the purposes of a more comprehensive grasp of the problem, including the correct systematization of individual analytical categories, we pose the following questions. By answering them, we will fulfil the main goal of the study, which is the reflection of the globalization tendencies of the media industry in the sense of identifying the universal features and preferred values in mainstream images intended for children and youth recipients. For these purposes, we carried out a qualitative discursive analysis of a full-length feature film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.

RQ1: *How does the research material work with genre hybridization, genre formulas, the element of fun, archetypes, mythic patterns, protagonist motivation, cyclical motifs, stereotypes, and the process of standardization itself?*

In the case of *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, we demonstrated the **hybridization of genres and genre patterns**. The defined genre categorization is only indicative, because strict inclusion in genre formulas cannot comprehensively encompass the formal and content structure of a specific work. However, in the work, it is possible to identify:

- **action movie elements** – tension as the main component of the story, tension-related action events, emphasis placed on the fight between the main character and his opponent, etc.;
- **elements of fantasy and science fiction** – supernatural, superhero abilities of characters, unrealistic environments, magical objects, time travel, strengthening of supernatural abilities with technologies, technological development, etc.;
- **comedic elements** – primary intertextual references to popular socio-cultural activities, meanings and values of everyday life, situational and conversational humour, dialogues and actions of characters;
- **several subgenres** – a “marvel-movie” (a product of the *MCU*, an audio-visual picture in which an inventive hero fights against the odds, finds themselves in bizarre and life-threatening situations, while the story ends with the victory of the main character), a superhero movie (the main and supporting characters have superhuman, even divine abilities), a science-fantasy film (a subgenre similar to science fiction, which emphasizes the implementation of supernatural elements and phenomena directly into the plot), a techno-fantasy film (a subgenre similar to science fiction, in which the presentation of spectacular technological inventions reminiscent of magic dominates) and many other associated subgenres.

Peter Parker/Spider-Man, as the main referent of the story, can be characterized from the point of view of the following **archetypal patterns**:

- **the “hero” archetype**– the main protagonist, the central character of the story with a sense of responsibility, fighting a dangerous opponent and saving the world;
- **the “superhero” archetype**– an individualistic and narcissistic action hero with superhuman superhero abilities that are enhanced by technology;
- **the “American Adam” archetype**– a lonely, brave and self-sacrificing individual, a “western” charismatic, white-skinned heterosexual hero with characteristic physical features;
- **the “shadow” and “anti-hero” archetype**– the flip side of the protagonist appearing in critical passages of the story, in which the character decides between “good and evil” and between a violent or amicable solution to the conflict;
- **the “fragmented hero” archetype** – the main character represents the conflict between the need to be an ordinary teenager with ordinary problems and the desire to be an extraordinary superhero.

Due to the limited scope of the presented study, we cannot provide a comprehensive categorization of the external and internal characteristics of the main character from the point of view of the applied archetypal patterns. In any case, however, the protagonist of the analysed picture is perceived as an individual whose characteristics refer to the **heroic mythical patterns** of the past. Under the influence of the media and applying the preferences of the majority audience, these patterns and the stories related to them are subsequently transformed into a spectacular experience aimed at achieving global success. A mainstream narrative centred around a universal hero archetype is equally standardized, with this “American monomyth” largely determining **the story’s hero’s motivations** and associated **social meanings**:

- **the decision to return** (motivation) – the protagonist’s return to the supernatural world with the help of magic, the protagonist’s effort to restore the “old” life for his loved ones and himself;
- **being initiative in overcoming obstacles** (motivation) – the protagonist’s fight with the enemy, the protagonist’s effort to eliminate the danger;
- **the decision to leave** (motivation) – the protagonist disappears from the life of his loved ones after several losses in order to protect their lives;
- **fighting against evil and struggling with irrational forces** (social meaning) – the protagonist fights against villains from parallel worlds;
- **struggling with his own dark side** (social meaning) – internal, intrapersonal conflict of the protagonist with himself;
- **gaining recognition** (social meaning) – the protagonist’s effort to change the public’s view of his person, or replace the status of a “public enemy” with the status of a “good hero”;
- **achieving the so-called Promethean rebellion** (social meaning) – the protagonist’s rebellion against a higher authority (Doctor Strange) to achieve his goal;
- **getting and keeping love** (social meaning) – the development of the protagonist’s romantic relationship with his girlfriend, a secondary character;
- **achieving justice** (social meaning) – the protagonist’s desire for revenge and his effort to establish order in society;
- **a scapegoat** (social meaning) – the protagonist “gives up” to ensure safety and a “normal” life for his loved ones and friends;
- **the saviour motif** (social meaning) – the protagonist saves the Earth and associated parallel worlds from a common enemy.

The processes of **stereotyping, standardization or the cyclic nature of motives** are closely related to the previous analytical categories. The storyline of the story is predictable to a certain extent and the structure of the work is standardized (in the sense of plotting the story according to the so-called American three-act structure). In the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, other stereotypes are similarly “established” – the character traits of the main hero (charismatic, protective, humanistic) and secondary characters (devoted, wise, principled), patterns of the hero’s behaviour and motivations for his actions (fighting against evil, achieving justice, sacrificing oneself for higher goals and the good of others) or the ongoing inner struggle of the protagonist with himself. The cyclical nature of the motifs is also identifiable.

RQ2: *Is it possible to identify in the research material the mainstream film values connected primarily with the issues of sex and violence? If so, does their presence in the picture correspond to the assigned PG-13 rating?*

Mainstream film values represent a set of values that the audience prefers, directly expects to appear in the work, and at the same time, they are the values that creators deliberately implement in audio-visual content with the aim of satisfying the audience’s needs and achieving the expected profit. Based on the carried-out analysis, we identify in *Spider-Man: No Way Home*

several core values that have an impact primarily on *Generation Z* (*Zoomers* or *Post-Millennials*, the generation born after 2000). *Generation Z*, which also becomes the target group of the image in question, most often adopts the role models and value models presented in the media. Such **mainstream film values** contained in the *Spider-Man* film include:

- **love** – building a romantic relationship, possibly emphasizing the importance of love between Spider-Man and his girlfriend (including all “versions” of these characters coming from parallel worlds);
- **the family** – the intimate and sincere relationship between the protagonist and his guardian refers to the strength and cohesion of the family in the presented story;
- **friendship** – pointing out the inseparability of friendship between the protagonist and his closest friends, while friendship becomes the source of the protagonist’s moral strength;
- **togetherness and help** – joining forces of the central characters to defeat evil, achieve “higher goals” and justice;
- **responsibility** – the protagonist’s willingness to take responsibility for his actions;
- **heroism** – the heroism of the main and secondary characters, who together save the world and establish “order” in society.

In connection with the depiction of **sex and sexuality**, which also belong to the values of everyday life, we do not find any explicitly oriented scenes in the work. There are only a few action sequences that depict sensuality (e.g., kisses, partial nudity, declaration of love through touch). Based on the above findings, we conclude that sex, sexuality and nudity are depicted decently and appropriately in the analysed film, considering the assigned PG-13 rating.

For “superhero” action films, the value of **violence and crime** is an inherent part, while in films rated PG-13, this violence should not be realistic, extreme or persistent. In *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, violence is a fixed part of the storyline. We can consider its depiction (regarding the genre classification of the film) as unrealistic, even though it is perpetrated against people (the events that take place in the film are the result of the action of supernatural forces and cannot happen in everyday reality). Scenes in which the viewer sees detailed injuries of the characters or even blood are debatable. The extremity of the violent acts depicted is similarly borderline (e.g., a furious battle with the aim of revenge), but in these sequences of the film it is clearly indicated that violence is not the right solution to the given situation neither it is the right path for the protagonist to take. In addition to physical violence, we also identify elements of verbal violence and bullying in the film (threats, signs of violent acts, harassment). In addition to the PG-13 category, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* also contains a content description– “*Sequences of action/violence, some language and brief suggestive comments*”. It is evident from the description which elements may be inappropriate for viewers under the age of 13 and it is highly recommended that minor viewers should be accompanied by a parent when watching a film with the given designation. Despite the above, we can (from the point of view of applying the values of violence and crime) consider the rating to be adequate.

RQ 3: *What is the level of work with graphics and CGI, the cult of movie stars, the possibilities of further continuation of the story and the cooperation of various branches of the media industry in connection with the research material?*

The story of *Spider-Man* turns attention to universally understandable and globally popular messages. These “links” are processed in increasingly sophisticated and graphically imaginative forms. The formal side, above all, **graphics and CGI images**, of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is therefore distinguished by the following characteristics:

- the presence of visually dynamic scenes reflecting the fate of the main character (the use of a sharp cut and its alternation in fast time sequences);

- the use of special computer-generated film effects and wide possibilities of attractive audio-visual rendering of the story, which together offer spectacular cinematographic material;
- focusing on the most realistic rendering of action sequences using technically and technologically advanced computer-generated graphics;
- through genre hybridization, the genre elements that are currently most popular with the target recipients are used (a believable depiction of the magical, superhuman abilities of the plot participants, which are based primarily on the genre of science fiction and associated subgenres);
- genre hybridization also allows visually rich formal elements to stand out, among which we include the camera, editing, digital computer-generated effects and sound;
- visually engaging messages convey to the recipient an attractive story full of action sequences and graphically imaginative scenes, resulting in balancing the two factors – content and form;
- an engaging, dynamic, dramaturgically uncomplicated, but convincingly portrayed story about Spider-Man is created, which takes place in an attractive, graphically imaginative environment (the depiction of the realities of a big city alternates with shots of time gates and parallel worlds).

The production of spectacular media content contributes to the iconization of media-known personalities in the form of creating a celebrity cult, or the **cult of movie stars** centred around the title *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. Movie actors and actresses present emotions to the audience, thus personalizing the presented media content. Their presence in the film affirms the recipients that the work is exceptional, entertaining or attractive. For this reason, great emphasis is placed on the appropriate selection of actors for a specific film role. Through a set of famous Hollywood personalities, often cast in similar or the same film roles, the viewer also can automatically assign the actor to the respective film character or characters. As an example, we mention some selected movie characters from *Spider-Man: No Way Home*:

- **Spider-Man – Tom Holland** (*Spider-Man: Homecoming*, 2017 and *Spider-Man: Far from Home*, 2019, director Jon Watts; *Captain America: Civil War*, 2016, *Avengers: Infinity War*, 2018 and *Avengers: Endgame*, 2019, director Anthony Russo, Joe Russo);
- **Spider-Man – Andrew Garfield** (*Amazing Spider-Man*, 2012 and *Amazing Spider-Man 2*, 2014, director Marc Webb);
- **Spider-Man – Tobey Maguire** (*Spider-Man*, 2002, *Spider-Man 2*, 2004 and *Spider-Man 3*, 2007, director Sam Raimi);
- **Doctor Strange – Benedict Cumberbatch** (*Doctor Strange*, 2016, director Scott Derrickson; *Thor: Ragnarok*, 2017, director Taika Waititi; *Avengers: Infinity War*, 2018 and *Avengers: Endgame*, 2019, director Anthony Russo, Joe Russo);
- **Green Goblin – Willem Dafoe** (*Spider-Man*, 2002, *Spider-Man 2*, 2004 and *Spider-Man 3*, 2007, director Sam Raimi; *Aquaman*, 2018, director James Wan; *Zack Snyder's Justice League*, 2021, director Zack Snyder);
- **Otto Octavius – Alfred Molina** (*Spider-Man 2*, 2004, director Sam Raimi; *Wonder Woman*, 2009, director Lauren Montgomery; *Justice League Dark*, 2017, director Jay Oliva; *Henchmen*, 2018, director Adam Wood).

The analysed research material is the result of a free adaptation of a comic story about a superhero named Spider-Man. Filmmakers select those elements from the literary text that have the greatest commercial potential and try to “retell” them in a way that appeals to global media audiences. The strengthening position of seriality, which opens new **possibilities for the continuation of the story**, significantly affects the overall character of the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. In addition, the commercial potential of the given title is cleverly increased by dividing the story of Spider-Man into several parts and continuously producing other sequels. The goal

is only one – to reawaken the attention of the existing base of target recipients and expand it to include additional fans not only of the title, but also of the *MCU* in general. **Completing the storyline with an open ending**, which is typical for pictures reflecting the life of superheroes, allows the creators of the described audio-visual work to apply several types of serialities:

- **a re-take, or sequel** – a new plot is built around the characters from the previous story (*Spider-Man: Homecoming*, 2017 and *Spider-Man: Far from Home*, 2019, director Jon Watts);
- **a reboot** – the story of Spider-Man is told again, in a different way, with a different cast and with no connection to previous films about this superhero (*Spider-Man*, 2002, *Spider-Man 2*, 2004 and *Spider-Man 3*, 2007, director Sam Raimi);
- **a cross-over** – combining several independently successful elements into one whole (characters of Spider-Man from parallel universes, Green Goblin, Sandman, Electra, Otto Octavius and many other referents return to the story);
- **a threequel** – indication of the possibility of the creation of other follow-up films, when the character of Spider-Man will also appear in other audio-visual films within the *MCU*, or space will be opened for the development of other related stories;
- **a spin-off** – the presence of several references to planned audio-visual projects that focus on a specific character or event based on the analysed image (e.g. *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, 2022, director Sam Raimi; *Daredevil: Born Again*, 2024, director Chris Ord, Matt Corman; *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*, 2021, director Andy Serkis).

Image creators of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* emphasize the importance of transmedia narratives, merchandising and multimedia platforms in promoting the media content. **The connection of literature, cinematography and other branches of the media industry** is more than obvious in this case, because as long as the media production is able to appeal to a wide spectrum of consumers, the profits coming from several distribution platforms are automatically multiplied. The story of Spider-Man and the very character of a superhero with spider abilities can clearly be considered as a product that has economic potential for transmedia storytelling and creation of licensed products (linking with the clothing, entertainment, music, food industry, digital game industry and other sectors of the media industry).

5 Conclusion

Based on the answers to the secondary research questions, we can answer the main research question, which is also a comprehensive summary of the studied issue. We specifically focus on a set of mainstream film values and characters in works intended for children and youth:

MRQ: *Based on the theoretical interpretation and the subsequent discursive analysis of the selected research material, is it possible to comprehensively evaluate the values, meanings and signs, thanks to which a film intended for children and youth becomes a global phenomenon?*

A globally successful mainstream picture intended for a child and young recipient should have a set of characters and values that are preferred and desired by the audience. By implementing them into the content and formal side of the work, the creators set conditions for the commercial success of the image in question and fulfil the expectations of the target audience.

Mainstream audio-visual works aimed at the child and youth audience should (and often do) feature **genre diversity, blending of genre formulas and their hybridization**. A typical feature is the coexistence of several genres in one work, as well as the presence of many subgenres

(however, it is difficult to identify their number in one work), which intertwine with each other, but together cover most of the requirements of a predefined audience. Due to the hybridization of genres and their interconnectedness, there is a situation where globally successful mainstream film works cannot be classified into a precisely defined genre formula. At the same time, we point out the presence of the aspect of entertainment in mainstream films intended for children and youth, whether in the form of situational and conversational humour, the actions of the characters, or (also) references to popular social and cultural activities of today.

The protagonist of this type of picture can usually be defined through several archetypes, which reflect his external and internal characteristics – a hero, an anti-hero, an “American Adam”, a fragmented hero and so on (based on the categorization of several authors mentioned in the theoretical part of the study). Similarly to the effort to determine the genre of these works, it is not possible to assign only one archetype to a film character when classifying the main characters into specific archetypal patterns. It means that several archetypal characters tend to intermingle. The current trend in cinematography is to build a narrative around a negative character who also becomes the central character of the story (e.g., the gangster family in the TV series *Peaky Blinders* or the character of the cunning Loki, Thor’s brother, in the TV series *Loki* of the same name). However, in audio-visual works for children and young people, the given production trend is slightly “suppressed” due to the rating evaluation of films related to this target group. The negative characteristics of the heroes are often closely connected with violent acts and more explicit expressions of sexuality that exceed the limits determined by the MPAA for the PG-13 rating.

The presence of **references to historical mythical patterns** depends on belonging to a specific film genre. In the case of films about superheroes, which are almost exclusively rated PG-13, there are frequent references to mythical patterns, but the creators adapt them to the current mainstream audience (the presence of characters with typical costumes that emphasize their masculinity, the use of computer-generated graphics, the application of open endings). Mythological elements are thus spectacularized in a certain way, they become part of the universally flowing plot in modern popular content (the so-called “American monomyth”) and are standardized in such a way as to attract the target group of viewers and fulfil their expectations.

Following the archetypal classification of the characters in the story and the inspiration of these stories in mythology, there are several identifiable **motivating factors that accompany the hero throughout the story** and influence his actions or decisions. It can be said that the structure of the storyline is stable from the point of view of the main character’s motivations – in the beginning, the main character returns to his natural environment, in which the main plot takes place, acquires the determination to fight against the “enemy” and subsequently decides to leave to protect his closest ones. In mainstream titles intended for children and young people, motivations of the protagonist and associated social meanings condition the direction of the plot and the actions of the characters (e.g., the inner struggle of the hero, the effort to introduce justice or keep love).

The constancy of the storyline predicted by the American three-act structure of the drama relates to the processes in the films intended for children and youth stereotyping, **standardizing the so called cyclicity of motives**. The mentioned processes reflect the audience’s preferences and expectations. It means that the recipients can predict what they can expect from a specific audio-visual work based on a standard plot and decide to watch the work based on that. The standardization of the plot and the cyclic nature of the motifs can be linked to the genre classification of specific films (e.g., the romantic drama genre and the corresponding way of constructing the plot through several emotionally coloured story sequences), but also with references to mythical patterns implied in these plots (the mentioned “revival”, or cyclical nature of heroic stories). Among other things, stereotyping is also manifested in the character traits of the main character and supporting characters, while the creators design these characters in such a way that the audience, in our case, older children and youth, can relate to them.

Another distinctive feature of globally successful mainstream works aimed at the given target group is the high level of work with **computer effects and the graphic side of the work**. Naturally, depending on the genre, the degree of implementation of these elements in films varies, but in general we can say that high-quality graphic processing and believable computer effects are a significant part of the 21st century cinematography. It is important to balance the content and formal aspects of the images in order to create an engaging, dynamic, convincingly rendered product taking place in an attractive, graphically imaginative environment.

The goal of the creators of most mainstream audio-visual content, not only those intended for children and youth, is to build around the images the so-called **cult of film star**. Less known or even unknown actors, or personalities working in other branches of the media industry, often appear in such works. Actors are carefully selected by the creators regarding the target audience in such a way that they fulfil the potential to build a kind of fan base around their person. The moment when the recipient identifies with the characters in the story through their actions, character traits or problems they face in the story contributes significantly to the creation of the cult.

A typical feature of the described type of images is the ending of the story with an open or partially open ending. Such an approach to the processing of the work gives production companies **possibilities for further continuation of the story** – either in the form of a continuation of the plot, or by focusing on one sub-element around which a completely new story is presented. In the case of superhero movies, especially those that come from the *MCU*, working with a given analytical category is important. In this direction, we can identify several types of serialities (*re-take*, *reboot*, *cross-over*, *threequel* or *spin-off*). They jointly participate in **connecting the audio-visual work with other branches of the media industry**. Of course, production companies choose collaborations in order to reach the chosen target group (e.g., in the case of films for children and youth, collaborations are most often created with the clothing, food industry or digital games industry).

One of the key features of globally successful films designed for the given target group is the implementation of **mainstream film values** straight into the story. These are not only the so-called values of everyday reality (love, friendship, family relationships, responsibility, belonging or heroism), but partly also the values of sex, sexuality or sensuality, violence and crime. The everyday values strengthen the recipients' perception of the need for and importance of the presented emotions and relationships, as well as the moral power that stems from them (in the story). Therefore, in mainstream films intended for children and youth, we can see self-sacrificing friendships, open and honest family relationships, romantic love, helping the weak and defenceless, but also a responsible approach to life decisions. The presentation of **values of sex and sexuality** is equally frequent. Unlike the so-called values of everyday life (although sexuality is also often considered a part of these values), the creators have to work extremely carefully with the depiction of sex and sexuality in images for minor viewers. Scenes with sexual acts and expressions rarely occur in the mentioned films. They are shown non-explicitly and the sensuality that indicates that such acts could happen is typical. In the indicated way, the content creators ensure that the title receives a "lower" rating, so that it will be intended for a wider audience (the PG-13 rating refers to films whose viewing requires parental supervision for children under 13). Similarly, filmmakers are careful with their portrayal of **violence and crime**. For a film to be rated PG-13, the violence depicted must not be explicit or realistic. The presentation of the value of violence can be considered critical, especially since in most globally popular mainstream works, the main plot is built on this value. A significant aid in deciding on the suitability of a program for a certain age category is the rating system used by the *MPAA*. Labelling audio-visual works (but also digital games – *PEGI* – *Pan European Game Information* system) makes it much easier for the parents of minor recipients to decide on the suitability of the content for the child, as well as the degree of their own involvement in receiving this

content.⁵¹ In this sense, the implementation of the so-called active parental mediation,⁵² is the coordination of the child's time spent with the media and accompanying him with media content that may be critical (e.g., in terms of depicted violence or sexuality) that is often considered the most effective tool in managing the impact of audio-visual content on children and youth.

Based on the evaluation of the main research question, we confirm the research assumption (H): *The stories of audio-visual mainstream content intended for children and youth reflect a set of universal features and preferred values that characterize most globally successful films today.* Through the realized qualitative discursive analysis, we demonstrate that the set of preferred values and signs typical of mainstream film works is also applied in films intended for children and youth recipients. The given characters and values are processed in such a way as to fulfil the needs of this target audience and preserve the ability of the audio-visual work to generate profit.

Acknowledgement: This study was supported by the Research Support Fund of the UCM: FPPV-32-2022.

Literature and Sources:

ARTZ, L.: *Global Entertainment Media. A Critical Introduction.* Malden, Oxford, Chichester : Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

BENSHOFF, M. H.: (Broke) Back to the Mainstream: Queer Theory and Queer Cinemas Today. In BUCKLAND, W. (ed.): *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies.* London, New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 192-213.

BERGER, A. A.: *Media Analysis Techniques.* London : Sage Publications, 2005.

BOLTON, K., OLSSON, J.: *Media, Popular Culture, And American Century.* Lund : Mediehistoriskt Arkiv 20, 2010.

CAMPBELL, J.: *Tisíc tvář hrdiny.* Prague : Portál, 2000.

CASETTI, F.: *Filmové Teorie 1945-1990.* Prague : Akademie múzických umění, 2008.

Classification and Rating Rules. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <https://www.filmratings.com/Content/Downloads/rating_rules.pdf>.

CSFD: *Spider-Man: No Way Home.* [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.csfd.cz/film/792852-spider-man-bez-domova/prehled/>>.

DAVIS, B.: *Ms. Marvel Season Wrap Up, MCU Casting News. Phase Zero.* Released on 13th July 2022. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://comicbook.com/marvel/news/ms-marvel-mcu-mutant-ryan-gosling-ghost-rider-sdcc-phase-zero-podcast/>>.

DE VANY, A.: *Hollywood Economics – How Extreme Uncertainty Shapes the Film Industry.* London, New York : Routledge, 2004.

DICKEY, D. M.: *Aesthetics and Design for Game-Based Learning.* New York, Oxon : Routledge, 2015.

EPSTEIN, J. E.: *Ekonomika Hollywoodu: Skrytá finanční realita v pozadí filmů.* Prague : Mladá Fronta, 2013.

⁵¹ See also: ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131-140. [online]. [2022-10-05]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MLAR_2022_No_1.pdf>.

⁵² For more information, see: IZRAEL, P.: Mediální výchova v rodine. Rodičia ako sprostredkovatelia mediálnych obsahov. In NAVRÁTILOVÁ, J. (ed.): *Mediální výchova v otvorenom priestore.* Bratislava : Ex-production, 2010, p. 61-69; HOSSOVÁ, M., HEKELJ, M.: *Mediální výchova a mediální gramotnost v kontexte televiznej tvorby pre deti a mládež.* Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018.

- FARMER, B.: *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, Gay Male Spectatorships*. London, Durham : Duke University Press, 2000.
- HOSSOVÁ, M., HEKELJ, M.: *Mediálna výchova a mediálna gramotnosť v kontexte televíznej tvorby pre deti a mládež*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018.
- HUNTINGTON, P. S.: *Střet civilizací: Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2001.
- CHRENKOVÁ, L.: Elektronická invázie amerických filmov. In *Media Literacy Student Magazine*, 2015, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 4-10. ISSN 1339-6692.
- CHRENKOVÁ, L., VALENTOVIČOVÁ, D.: Digital Media: Invasion of American Film. In MATÚŠ, J., PETRANOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: Digital Life – Part II. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2015, p. 399-414.
- IMDB PRO: *Box Office Mojo. Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl2869659137/>>.
- IMDB PRO: *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10872600/>>.
- IZRAEL, P.: Mediálna výchova v rodine. Rodičia ako sprostredkovatelia mediálnych obsahov. In NAVRÁTILOVÁ, J. (ed.): *Mediálna výchova v otvorenom priestore*. Bratislava : Ex-production, 2010, p. 61-69.
- JENKINS, H.: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York, London : New York University Press, 2006.
- JUNG, G. C.: *Archetypy a nevedomí. Výbor z díla. II. svazek*. Brno : Nakl. Tomáše Janečka, 2003.
- KING, G.: *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster*. New York, London : I. B. Tauris, 2000.
- KOCHBERG, S.: The Industrial Contexts of Film Production. In NELMES, J. (ed.): *Introduction to Film Studies*. 5th Edition. New York, London : Routledge, 2012, p. 2-40.
- LAWRENCE, J. S.: Star Trek as American Monomyth. In KAPELL, M. W. (ed.): *Star Trek as Myth: Essays on Symbol and Archetype at the Final Frontier*. Jefferson : McFarland & Company, 2010, p. 93-111.
- MAGÁL, S., VALENTOVIČOVÁ, D.: *Filmový a mediálny manažment: Filmová produkcia I*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2011.
- NELMES, J.: *Introduction to Film Studies*. Oxon. New York : Routledge, 2012.
- PLENCNER, A.: Sociálne významy v mainstreamovom filme. In MAGÁL, S., MISTRÍK, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Médiá, spoločnosť, mediálna fikcia. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava, Bratislava : FMK UCM in Trnava, Kabinet divadla a filmu SAV, 2008, p. 85-94.
- PROPP, V. J.: *Morfológia rozprávky*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1969.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Teoretické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2018.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Vývojové trendy americkej mainstreamovej filmovej produkcie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 10-27. ISSN 1338-130X.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J., MAGALOVÁ, L.: Supes, Inc.: Episodic Television Drama The Boys, Antiheroism and Society of Performance. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 28-52. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-10-05]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MLAR_2022_No_1.pdf>.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSNÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Prague : Wolters Kluwer, 2020.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne trendy v mediálnej kultúre*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2013.
- Ratings Posters*. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <https://www.filmratings.com/Content/Downloads/mpaa_ratings-poster-qr.pdf>.
- ROBERTSON, P.: *Guinnessova kniha filmových rekordů*. Prague : Cinema, 1995.
- ROCCHI, J.: *Význam hodnotenia filmu*. [online]. [2022-07-28]. Available at: <<https://sk.eferit.com/vyznam-hodnotenia-filmu/>>.

- ROLLINS, C. P.: *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past*. New York : Columbia University Press, 2003.
- RÖWEKAMP, B.: *Hollywood*. Brno : Computer Press, 2004.
- RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: The Production Mechanism of American Mainstream Film and Their Influence on the Recipient. In ČÁBYOVÁ, L., VELICKÝ, P. (eds.): *Quo Vadis Massmedia, Quo Vadis Marketing. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017, p. 131-142.
- RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: Narácia v snímke Avengers: Pomstiteľia. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z. (eds.) et al.: *Empirické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 83-117.
- RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: Naratívna analýza a jej miesto vo vedeckom diskurze. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., KVETANOVÁ, Z. (eds.) et al.: *Empirické aspekty filmov o superhrdinoch*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 48-82.
- SCHATZ, T.: New Hollywood, New Millennium. In BUCKLAND, W. (ed.): *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*. London, New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 19-46.
- Spider-Man: No Way Home*. [online]. [2022-08-11]. Available at: <<https://www.spidermannowayhome.movie/>>.
- ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131-140. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-10-05]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MLAR_2022_No_1.pdf>.
- TRAMPOTA, T., VOJTĚCHOVSKÁ, M.: *Metody výzkumu médií*. Prague : Portál, 2010.
- ZASEPA, T.: *Médiá v čase globalizácie*. Bratislava : LÚČ, 2002.
- TRIFONAS, P. P.: From Semantics to Narrative: The Semiotics of A. J. Greimas. In TRIFONAS, P. P. (eds): *International Handbook of Semiotics*. Dordrecht : Springer, 2015. p. 1099-1107.

Authors



Mgr. Lenka Rusňáková, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2,
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
lenka.rusnakova@ucm.sk

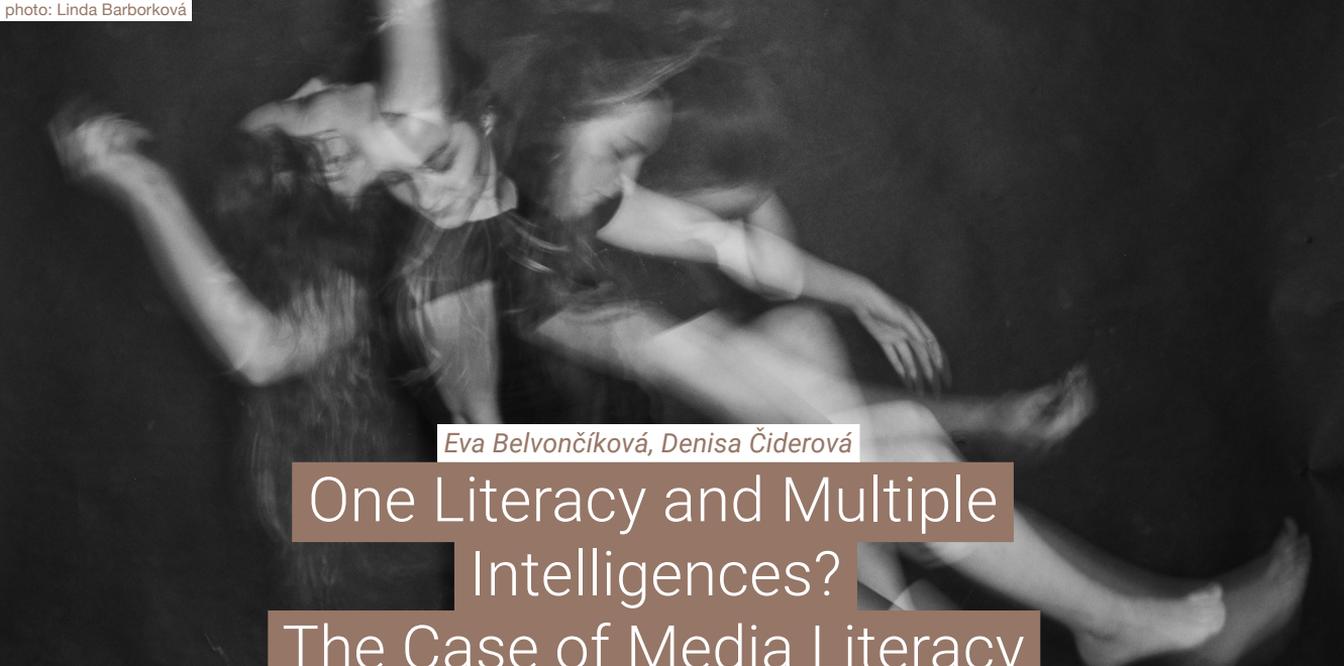
Lenka Rusňáková works at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. She deals with new trends in multimedia production and media philosophy. Her scientific specialization also includes the culture of digital games, the processes of identity formation in the virtual environment and the narratological frameworks of digital media, especially film works, music videos and digital games. She is also interested in issues of feminism in the sphere of media production, but also in heroism in the context of media culture.

Mgr. Monika Prostináková Hossová, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2,
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
monika.prostinakova.hossova@ucm.sk



Monika Prostináková Hossová is a member of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. She currently works at the Department of Media Education as an assistant professor and teaches in the Applied Media Studies program. In her research activities, she focuses on increasing media literacy, formal education in the field of media education in Slovakia and the use of new media and ICT in the educational process. She is a member of the editorial board of the Media Literacy and Academic Research journal.



Eva Belvončíková, Denisa Čiderová

One Literacy and Multiple Intelligences? The Case of Media Literacy

ABSTRACT

Acceleration of globalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution expanded opportunities for intercultural interaction, facilitated by more accessible and affordable information and communication technologies (ICT). *Media literacy* as framed by UNESCO is to be interpreted as “[u]nderstanding and using mass media in either an assertive or non-assertive way, including an informed and critical understanding of media, the techniques they employ and their effects. Also the ability to read, analyse, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of media forms” (*alias* “the ability to decode, analyse, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms”). Furthermore, *media and information literacy* “refers to the essential competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) that allow citizens to engage with media and other information”. Dynamic developments in the contemporary world brought about by the post-factual era and the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the exposure of the public to misinterpretation. Being conscious of variable and increasingly multidimensional presentation in academic literature of what it takes to be literate, in our paper we reflect on media literacy *alias* a synergy of literacy and multiple intelligences. Since on 12 April 2022 UNESCO launched a global survey “*Learning from the COVID-19 crisis to write the future: National policies and programmes for youth and adult literacy*” addressed to all 193 UNESCO Member States to fill in the gap and collect information on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on youth and adult literacy, our online questionnaire is complementary in terms of scope (media literacy) and outreach (higher education students). The aim of this paper is to investigate awareness, understanding and interpretation of literacy as such, and media literacy in particular, within the cohort of native and international students at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia. The findings revealed a higher ratio of the general understanding of communication and its role in the society, but a lower ratio of awareness about literacy and media literacy. In the context of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives our main suggestion, therefore, is to reinforce the media literacy curriculum in terms of experiential learning in line with the so-called learner-centred approach to education when the needs/aspirations of individuals are placed at the centre and focus is on the experiences they bring to the learning situation.

KEY WORDS

(Key) Competence/Competency/Competences/Competencies. Bloom’s Taxonomy. Cultural Literacy. Literacy. Media Literacy. Media Literacy Competences. Multiple Intelligences.

1 Introduction

“Through the celebration of International Literacy Day, UNESCO calls on all actors in the field of education and beyond to re-think the role of literacy.”

UNESCO: Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the Occasion of International Literacy Day, 8 September 2022

Traditionally, technological progress has been the driving force for enhancing literacy. With the acceleration of globalisation¹ up to Globalisation 3.0 in recent decades; the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, interpersonal communication has increasingly symbolised intercultural communication, and media literacy (awareness) has become a prominent issue. The point of departure for reflection in our paper is media literacy *alias* a synergy of literacy and multiple intelligences. Thus, we will dwell on the understanding and plethora of interpretations of literacy as such before pointing out the complexity of the scope of media literacy.

The *Dictionary of Pedagogy* defines *literacy*² as the ability to apply reading, writing and numerical skills as the fundamental requirement for learning and daily livelihood in society; its upgrade, the so-called *functional literacy*³ then represents applied literacy through the comprehension of texts and figures.

UNESCO views acquiring and improving *literacy* skills throughout life as an intrinsic part of the right to education: literacy is a driver for sustainable development in that it enables greater participation in the labour market; improved child and family health and nutrition; reduces poverty and expands life opportunities. The vague and very broad understanding of the term literacy is documented⁴ in studies on literacy also in Slovakia when authors endorse UNESCO's statement of constant development of the term in accordance with the development of society and recently mainly the development of technologies.

With literacy historically originating in the Latin word *litera* (i.e. the ability to read and write in the traditional sense), the social practice concept has expanded it into so-called *multiple literacies* – considering “the ways in which texts can be encrypted by electronic means”,⁵ as *The Routledge International Encyclopaedia of Education* highlights. Furthermore, the term *numeracy* *alias* “quantitative literacy” or “mathematical literacy” specifically implies “the use of mathematics for understanding, for learning and for solving problems”.⁶

Measured by standard tests, the *intelligence quotient (IQ)* score has become a point of reference with regard to one's intelligence in linguistic and logical-mathematical terms. Yet, the “*model of multiple intelligences*”, framed by Gardner,⁷ challenges the IQ tests for not being apt to measure the spatial; musical; body/kinaesthetic; interpersonal, and intrapersonal categories beyond the logical, verbal, or mathematical intelligence. In the 1990s, Goleman⁸ developed the concept of so-called *emotional intelligence*, expressed by means of the *emotional quotient (EQ)* and related to the intrapersonal dimension of intelligence.

¹ FRIEDMAN, T.: *The World is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century*. London : Penguin Books, 2006, p. 10.

² PRŮCHA, J. et al.: *Pedagogický slovník*. Prague : Portál, 2009, p. 85-86.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴ See: HRDINÁKOVÁ, L.: *Mediálna a informačná gramotnosť – úvod do problematiky*. Bratislava : UK Bratislava, 2013.

⁵ McCULLOCH, G., CROOK, D. (eds.): *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Education*. London : Routledge, 2008, p. 361.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

⁷ See: GARDNER, H.: *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York : Basic Books, 1983.

⁸ See also: GOLEMAN, D.: *Emotional Intelligence*. New York : Bantam Books, 1995.

“In a culture that greatly values literacy and numeracy, there is a tendency for the specificity of words and numbers to become confused with the diffuseness of the phenomena these describe”, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars point out, claiming that “[t]he facts” by themselves can enlighten or mislead and are vulnerable to selection. [...] We survive and prosper by communicated meanings, to which facts contribute, but for which they are no substitutes.”⁹

With the concept of IQ and its score having been contested, Peterson stresses that both the term *intelligence* and the term *culture* are subject to numerous interpretations as well as “considerable debate and controversy”.¹⁰ The definition of *culture* by Triandis rests on “unstated assumptions, standard operating procedures, ways of doing things that have been internalized to such an extent that people do not argue about them”.¹¹ For Taras and Steel *culture* is a “pervasive construct”,¹² with the word “culture” featuring as the search keyword in hundreds of thousands of scholarly articles. Over the years, the phenomenon of culture has been addressed first and foremost by anthropologists, such as Hall (“*Culture is communication and communication is culture*”).¹³ By Hall’s standards, contextual information can be perceived threefold as: (1) the language of interpersonal relationships; (2) the language of time; (3) the language of space.

Hofstede’s research and landmark publication of *Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (1980) led to a boom in the interest in cross-cultural issues across several disciplines, including international business and management, psychology, and education. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions represent one’s position on the scales of:

- power distance (high/low);
- uncertainty avoidance (high/low);
- individualism/collectivism;
- masculinity/femininity;

which were later followed by preference of long-term orientation¹⁴/flexibility, subject to interpretation. Taras and Steel formulated a number of postulates that were generally derived from Hofstede’s work and adhered to for several decades in the form of the following “*Ten Commandments of Cross-Cultural Research*”: 1) cultures are values; 2) values are cultures; 3) cultures are extremely stable; 4) culture is the cause, not an effect; 5) a cross-level analysis of culture leads to the ecological fallacy; 6) cultures cluster within geographic boundaries; 7) mean scores and ranking sufficiently quantify culture; 8) matched samples should be used to study cultural differences; 9) self-response questionnaires adequately measure culture; and 10) the Hofstedean framework is unique and the only viable framework for studying culture.¹⁵

To examine them individually would be beyond the scope of this paper, so let us now address a five-dimensional classification, similar to that of Hofstede, which was designed by Peterson as follows:

- the Equality/Hierarchy scale;
- the Direct/Indirect scale;
- the Individual/Group scale;
- the Task/Relationship scale;
- the Risk/Caution scale.¹⁶

⁹ HAMPDEN-TURNER, CH., TROMPENAARS, F.: *Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values*. New York : John Wiley & Sons, 2000, p. 128-129.

¹⁰ PETERSON, B.: *Cultural Intelligence*. Yarmouth : Intercultural Press, 2004, p. 88.

¹¹ TRIANDIS, H. C.: *Culture and Social Behavior*. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1994, p. 6.

¹² TARAS, V., STEEL, P.: *Beyond Hofstede: Challenging the Ten Commandments of Cross-Cultural Research*. In NAKATA, CH. (ed.): *Beyond Hofstede*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 40.

¹³ See: HALL, E. T.: *The Silent Language*. New York : Random House, 1959.

¹⁴ NAKATA, CH.: *Going Beyond Hofstede: Why We Need To and How*. In NAKATA, CH. (ed.): *Beyond Hofstede*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 3.

¹⁵ See: TARAS, V., STEEL, P.: *Beyond Hofstede: Challenging the Ten Commandments of Cross-Cultural Research*. In NAKATA, CH. (ed.): *Beyond Hofstede*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 41-54.

¹⁶ PETERSON, B.: *Cultural Intelligence*. Yarmouth : Intercultural Press, 2004, p. 33.

This brings us now to Peterson's compact view of *cultural intelligence* alias "the ability to engage in a set of behaviours that uses skills (i.e. language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g. tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts".¹⁷

Similarly to the relevance between literacy and intelligence in general, a link between cultural literacy and cultural intelligence specifically can be pointed out. This is documented by Pitoňáková and Augustínová, asserting "we know several types of literacy are interconnected and lead to the "complex competence" of a person enabling his/her integration into society. From the point of view of the presented topic, several types of literacy are relevant:

- *Informative* – the ability to search, summarize, process, use and store information. It is also closely related to computer (digital) literacy - the ability to use hardware and software computer equipment and other available communication and information technologies.
- *Media* – the ability to use the media correctly - to obtain, critically evaluate, create, and present media information.
- *Cultural* – the ability to actively participate in the production and interpretation of cultural values, to perceive and create cultural values. [...] Cultural literacy, as an element that favours the knowledge context needed to identify the essential aspects of any topic, comes to the fore with partial elements of "complex competence", paradoxically, such a perception of literacy is less talked about compared to other types of literacy."¹⁸

2 Methodology

An online questionnaire compiled in *Google Forms* was chosen as a suitable research tool in order to examine the opinions of university students on the topic of media literacy and the connected issues. The questions in the anonymous opinion survey were inspired by the *UNESCO Dynamic Coalition Initiative*, a founder and one of the partners of the *Open Educational Resources Dynamic Coalition* initiated as a response to the massive disruption of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions structured into two thematic blocks: introduction to media literacy; and web literacy for fact checking. Informed consent of the participant to respect GDPR rules of the *European Union* was also included. The thematic scope of this paper directly correlates to the first block of questions. Two questions, where we asked about own understanding of the terms "literacy" and specifically "media literacy" were open, the rest were closed. Open questions were analysed one by one and grouped according to the key words identified in the definitions provided by students. The closed questions were summarised and visualised in graphs by the *Google form* software and used either as text or in the format of charts and graphs. Topics in the questions were new to respondents and they were arranged from general topics to specific issues. The seminars dealt with the impact of information and communication technologies on life and on communication; the questionnaire followed these topics at the very end of the seminars.

The sample consisted of three groups of native students and one group of international students, in total 91 students at the *University of Economics in Bratislava*, Slovakia. Participants were only those students taking a course called *Communication across Cultures* taught in English. The course consists of interactive seminars with the following learning outcomes: a) introductory understanding of communication across cultures, b) multicultural, multilingual

¹⁷ PETERSON, B.: *Cultural Intelligence*. Yarmouth : Intercultural Press, 2004, p. 89.

¹⁸ PITOŇÁKOVÁ, S., AUGUSTÍNOVÁ, E.: The Present and the Prospect of Increasing Literacy in the Field of Cultural Heritage. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 117. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/6_Slavka-Pitonakova-Eva-Augustinova.pdf>.

as well as media literacy exposure and c) enhanced analytical, research and soft skills. The period of data collection was April – May 2022, the overall response rate was 83.52% (with no specification of the respective group of students to guarantee anonymity of the participants).

3 Results

The online survey was oriented on the following areas: awareness of media literacy and understanding of communication and its role in society.

Understanding of *how students perceive the term literacy* was verified in the form of open questions at the beginning. The answers vary from an elementary understanding of literacy as *“the ability to read and write”* (20% of respondents) to those that added *“the ability to read and write with understanding”*. The more complex answers also consider other competences like listening and speaking to those that include communication and making sense of the world *“Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world”*. Students also perceive that these abilities lead to knowledge and should be taught and gained through education *“the ability to read & write; being educated about sth.”* There were some also very complex and sophisticated answers *“Competence of text comprehension, linguistic ability, understanding and analysing of meaning and senses of content, familiarity with reading and books, written language and media literacy”*; *“The ability to perceive, identify, understand, analyze and interpret the information in both written and oral forms associated with different contexts”*. The most complex was *“Understanding meaning behind sentences and interpreting information in a way they were meant to be understood”*.

Then we asked students how they *understand the term media literacy*. Very extensive spectrums of interpretations appeared as the answers. Some trivial definitions such as *“human understanding of media”* and *“ability to process and react to the information we receive from different kinds of media”* were identified. Then some reactions realizing connections between literacy and media literacy appeared *“an expanded conceptualization of literacy that includes the ability to access and analyse media messages as well as create, reflect and take action, using the power of information and communication to make a difference in the world”*. One answer where a student took also into account that literacy is connected with citizenship and was very complex was the following: *“Through media and information literacy, students learn to become responsible citizens in a society marked by the multiplication and acceleration of information flows. They develop critical thinking skills and are able to act in an informed way to seek, receive, produce and disseminate information through increasingly diversified media.”*

After the question about their own interpretation of the term media literacy the students were offered a definition of whether media literacy could be also understood as follows: *“Media literacy is the ability to access media in different forms”* which was then evaluated. Almost 87% of students agreed with the statement and only 13% opted for the correct answer (I disagree). Media literacy is more than the ability to access media; it also includes more active engagement with media, such as evaluating and creating.

Figure 1 displays that 63% of students think that there is no universal media literacy for people of every age. Actually, there are some age-related issues, e.g. managing appropriate access to online content differentiated by age.

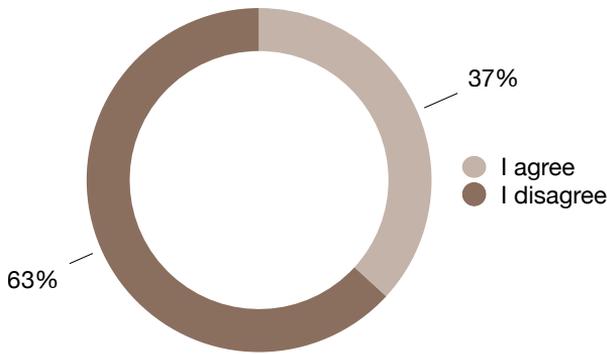


FIGURE 1: *The issues relating to media literacy are the same for everyone, regardless of age*
 Source: own processing, 2022.

The first comprehensive *definition of media literacy* comes from Northern America’s *The Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute*. We wanted to know *when* this definition came into operation. According to Figure 2, a little more than 2/3 of the students correctly stated the year 1992. More than 10% thought that it was 10 years earlier, in the year 1982, the rest opted for the beginning of the 21st century.

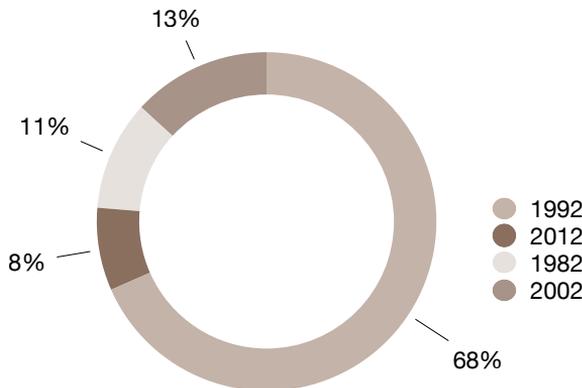


FIGURE 2: *The Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute defined media literacy as “the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms”. In which year was this definition first published?*
 Source: own processing, 2022.

As media literacy is becoming more and more important in the current information age, we were interested in the opinion of students on *which offered concepts of media literacy they would include in the expanded definition of media literacy for the 21st century by the Centre of Media Literacy*. In multiple choices offered the most marked and the correct option was that it creates adequate awareness of the media in society (slightly above 3/4 of answers). Figure 3 demonstrates that over 1/2 of respondents choose the possibility that it creates essential assumptions for active participation of young people as citizens in democracy and society. Even though many students opted for this option, it is not correct, as the media literacy definition does not claim that media literacy is relevant only to a particular age group. The least favoured answer was that it is primarily focused on evaluating news published in the media (almost 40%). Preferably, this number should be even lower since this does not provide an adequate answer. The definition applies to all sorts of messages, not just news sources. 48% of respondents correctly decided on the option that media literacy builds key assumptions for interaction and self-expression.

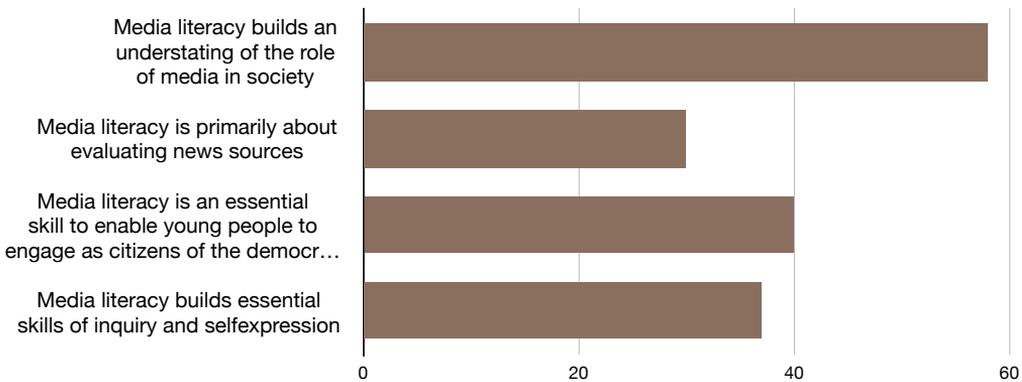


FIGURE 3: Which of the following concepts are included in the Centre for Media Literacy's expanded definition of Media Literacy for the 21st century?

Source: own processing, 2022.

Literacy and media literacy are closely connected with the issue of communication. Therefore, we were interested in opinions on communication. Communication is observed mostly (97.4% of the sample) as “an exchange of information or meaning but there are multiple different models of communication”. The result of these answers is that this is a generally perceived fact, as it is practiced in daily two-way interactions with every person we meet. Communication has many different roles in society. One of them is that it can “help to set social standards by demonstrating what is acceptable or unacceptable in the society” which also almost 95% respondents agreed with.

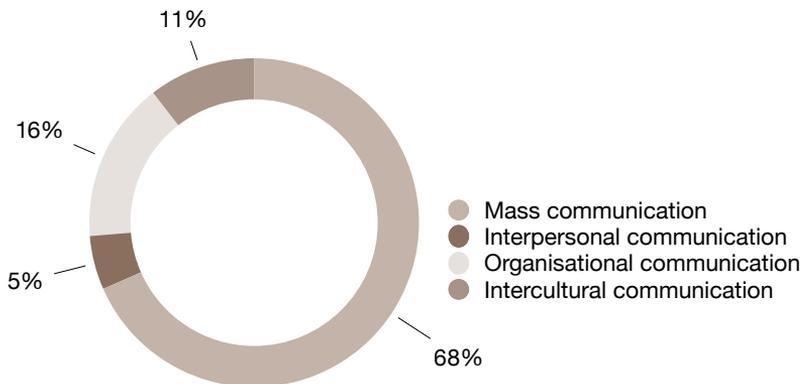


FIGURE 4: Which of the following terms is used to categorise one-to-many and many-to-many communication acts?

Source: own processing, 2022.

When asked which communication corresponds with one-to-many and many-to-many communication acts, 68% of students correctly marked mass communication. S. Livingstone agrees that both one-to-many (in the past typical mass communication) and many-to-many (communication among peers) is currently typical for mediated communication.¹⁹ Almost 30% opted incorrectly for other choices, as shown in Figure 4.

¹⁹ See: LIVINGSTONE, S.: The Challenge of Changing Audiences. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2004, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 75-86.

4 Discussion

“[I]t is projected that the COVID-19 crisis will impede literacy education on a global level for years to come, with lasting effects on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, especially Target SDG 4.6 on youth and adult literacy. [...] Adult literacy educators are central for making literacy teaching and learning meaningful. They have been at the forefront coping with disrupted teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential to promote their professionalisation, and guarantee their rights, status and decent working conditions, while providing continuous professional development opportunities, support and guidance.”

UNESCO: *International Literacy Day. Background Paper on Youth and Adult Literacy in the Time of COVID-19: Impacts and Revelations*, 8 September 2020, p. 3 and p. 8.

In our paper we have provided evidence of the multifaceted interpretation of the term “literacy”. Literacy and numeracy reflecting competence in linguistic and logical-mathematical terms, respectively, have been traditionally measured by the IQ score referred to earlier. In this regard the term “competence” comes to the fore in several respects addressed below.

“[Firstly], [p]rofessional standards carry the challenge of providing a clear definition for the term “competence”. In fact, the lack of a generally-accepted operational definition of competence is usually acknowledged.²⁰ The term “competency” is used in literature, either as a synonym of competence²¹ or as a separate concept²².”

[Secondly], [i]n the same way, the term “skills” is understood in different ways across literature. Ananiadou and Claro acknowledge that this term is sometimes used as the equivalent of competence or as a distinct term in itself.²³ Within the OECD, a “skill” is understood in a broad and complex sense and is used as a synonym for competence²⁴, Toledo-Figueroa et al. argue.²⁵ Accordingly, in terms of the focus on teacher professionalism and knowledge in qualifications frameworks and professional standards the respective OECD study distinguishes “competences” as the “on-going and progressive ability to meet complex demands in a defined context by mobilising holistic psychosocial resources (cognitive, functional, personal and ethical) as needed to accomplish these demands” on the one hand, from “competencies” as “components of [such] competence encompassing knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and attitudes” on the other.²⁶

²⁰ See: KOUWENHOVEN, W.: *Competence-Based Curriculum Development in Higher Education: A Globalised Concept?* [online]. [2022-09-23]. Available at: <https://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs/9410/InTech-Competence_based_curriculum_development_in_higher_education_a_globalised_concept.pdf>.

²¹ OECD: *Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo)*. [online]. [2022-09-23]. Available at: <<https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/41529556.pdf>>.

²² See: TEODORESCU, T.: *Competence versus Competency: What Is the Difference*. In *Performance Improvement*, 2006, Vol. 45, No. 10, p. 27-30.

²³ See: ANANIADOU, K., CLARO, M.: *21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD Countries*. *OECD Education Working Papers No. 41*. [online]. [2022-09-25]. Available at: <<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/218525261154.pdf?expires=1666540334&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=2A81D7BC18AAA07EEB387DA36F851388>>.

²⁴ See: OECD: *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2013.

²⁵ TOLEDO-FIGUEROA, D., RÉVAI, N., GUERRIERO, S.: *Teacher Professionalism and Knowledge in Qualifications Frameworks and Professional Standards*. In GUERRIERO, S. (ed.): *Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2017, p. 77.

²⁶ See: RYCHEN, D. S., SALGANIK, L. H. (eds.): *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society*. Hogrefe and Huber : OECD Publishing, 2003; See also: OECD: *The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2005.

Thirdly, the use of the term “standard” varies across policy documents and research studies, too, when “*literature often refers to the double definition of the word as both a “flag” and a “measure” in a broad sense*”.²⁷ Following Ingvarson’s view of a standard as “*the level of performance on the criterion being assessed*”,²⁸ the respective OECD study perceives standards as (sets of) documents characterised by different extensions and scope determining what is valued in a profession through a competence-based approach.

Fourthly, the term “competence framework” is applied “*in some cases as equivalent to “professional standards”, in other cases to refer to broader frameworks that can contain elements such as sets of general and professional duties for teachers, but also school improvement plans*”.²⁹

Driven by the prospect of being competent or efficacious, which is at the heart of the concept of competence by White,³⁰ a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be made. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation as the most self-determined, or autonomous, form of motivation “*underlies activities that are performed purely for the joy gained from the activities themselves*”; on the other, extrinsic motivation “*refers to the forms of regulation that underlie activities that are performed as a means to an end*”.³¹ A major failing of competence being viewed too narrowly is perceived by Grugulis et al. on the grounds of a nearly exclusive concern with measurable outcomes.³²

Having updated its 2006 Recommendation on eight key competences for lifelong learning, the *European Union*³³ frames them as follows:

- literacy competence

²⁷ TOLEDO-FIGUEROA, D., RÉVAI, N., GUERRIERO, S.: Teacher Professionalism and Knowledge in Qualifications Frameworks and Professional Standards. In GUERRIERO, S. (ed.): *Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2017, p. 77.

²⁸ INGVARSON, L.: *Development of a National Standards Framework for the Teaching Profession*. [online]. [2022-09-25]. Available at: <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=teaching_standards>.

²⁹ TOLEDO-FIGUEROA, D., RÉVAI, N., GUERRIERO, S.: Teacher Professionalism and Knowledge in Qualifications Frameworks and Professional Standards. In GUERRIERO, S. (ed.): *Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2017, p. 77; See also: OECD: *Qualification Systems: Bridges to Life-Long Learning*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2007; OECD: *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2013; See also: COLES, M.: *A Review of International and National Developments in the Use of Qualifications Frameworks*. Luxembourg : European Training Foundation, 2006; TUCK, R.: *An Introductory Guide to National Qualification Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers*. Geneva : International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Department, 2007; BÁRÁŇOVÁ-ČIDEROVÁ, D., MAYER, P.: Knowledge Transfer in Higher Education Quality Management: The Case of Germany and Slovakia. In *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia*, 2010, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 18-34; RODRÍGUEZ-PONCE, E. et al.: The Impact of the Quality Assurance System in the Service Delivered by the Private Universities in Chile. In *Ingeniare*, 2011, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 409-419; PEDRAJA-REJAS, L., RODRÍGUEZ-PONCE, E.: Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Resources on the Quality of Universities: A Quantitative Study of the Chilean Case. In *Interciencia*, 2014, Vol. 39, No. 10, p. 697-703.

³⁰ See: WHITE, R. W.: Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence. In *Psychological Review*, 1959, Vol. 66, No. 5, p. 297-333.

³¹ LEVESQUE, C. et al.: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., MCGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 618-619.

³² See: GRUGULIS, I., WARHURST, CH., KEEP, E.: What’s Happening to ‘Skill’? In WARHURST, CH., GRUGULIS, I., KEEP, E. (eds.): *The Skills that Matter*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 1-18.; See also: SHROCK, S. A., COSCARELLI, W. C.: Criterion-Referenced Measurement. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., MCGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 31-35; BROWN, A. J.: Assessment in the Workplace of Performance, Developing Expertise and Competence. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., MCGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 330-336.

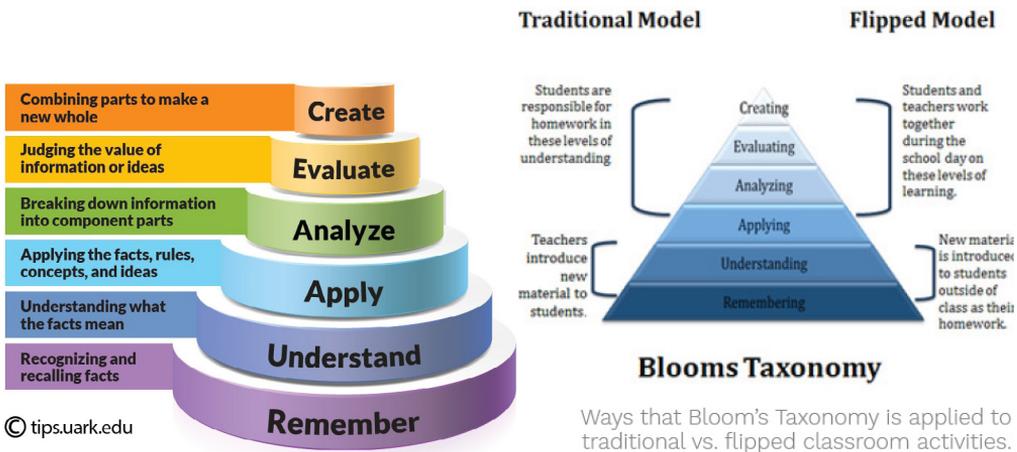
³³ See: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. In *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2006, Vol. 49, p. 5-9. [online]. [2022-09-13]. Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:FULL&from=EN>>.

- (“the ability to identify, understand, express, create and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts”);
- multilingual competence
- (“ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts according to one’s wants or needs”);
- mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- (“ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking and insight in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations; competence in science, technology and engineering involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen”);
- digital competence
- (“includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking”);
- personal, social and learning to learn competence
- (“ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one’s physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context”);
- citizenship competence
- (“ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability”);
- entrepreneurship competence
- (“founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value”);
- cultural awareness and expression competence
- (“understanding of and respect for how ideas and meaning are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms”).

The respective Council Recommendation³⁴ of 22 May 2018 setting up a common understanding of competences needed nowadays as well as in the future provides a reference tool for education and training stakeholders. Traditionally, delivery of the curriculum at higher education institutions adheres to Bloom’s taxonomy resting on the 1956 publication titled *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*³⁵ and illustrated in Picture 1 below.

³⁴ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. [online]. [2022-05-26] Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2018%3A189%3ATOC>>.

³⁵ See: BLOOM, B.: *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. New York: McKay, 1956.



PICTURE 1: Bloom's Taxonomy: The Traditional Model (left) and the Flipped Model (right)

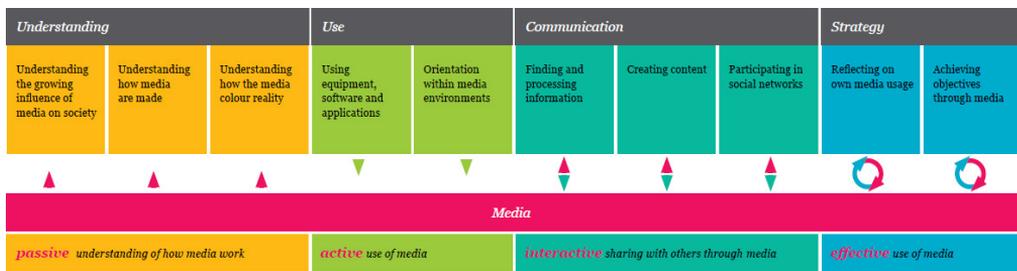
Source: University of Arkansas. Tips. [online]. [2022-05-25]. Available at: <<https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy//>>; Learning Guide on Flipping the Classroom in Adult Education. [online]. [2022-05-25]. Available at: <http://projectflip.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/iFlip_IO7_Learning-Guide-in-FTC-in-Adult-Education_EN.pdf>.

The pyramid-like principle consistently builds on previous progress from the introductory stages of recognition of facts and their comprehension through their application and analysis up to the advanced stage of their assessment and synthesis. In fact, there are two approaches to how to proceed: bottom-up; and top-down. While the first (traditional) approach necessitates the facilitator's introduction of new material to students (stages 1-2) followed by their individual completion of assignments with the ambition of addressing additional upper stage(s) of Bloom's taxonomy, the latter (Flipping The Classroom – FTC) model requires the students to familiarize themselves with the new material (stages 1-2) prior to engaging in elucidatory discussion with the facilitator (stages 3-6).

In line with the title of our paper viewing media literacy as the case of “one literacy and multiple intelligences”, let us now dwell on the interpretation of media literacy by the *National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE)*: “[M]edia literacy is seen to consist of a series of communication competencies, including the ability to ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE, and COMMUNICATE”.³⁶ Alternatively, the concept of media literacy outlined by the *Mediawijzer.net* as “[t]he set of competences you need to be able to actively and mindfully participate in the media society” is structured on the basis of the 2011 *Measuring Media Literacy Report*, which was originally produced by *EYE a.o.* and further shaped by *Mediawijzer.net* in co-operation with experts. The scale of 10 media literacy competences illustrated in Picture 2 stretches across four clusters of competences, boosting one's competence with each and every upgraded level:

- Cluster focused on Understanding: passive understanding of how media work (competence levels 1-3);
- Cluster focused on Use: active use of media (competence levels 4-5);
- Cluster focused on Communication: interactive sharing with others through media (competence levels 6-8);
- Cluster focused on Strategy: effective use of media (competence levels 9-10).

³⁶ *National Association for Media Literacy Education. Media literacy.* [online]. [2022-05-26] Available at: <<https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/what-media-literacy-namles-short-answer-and-longer-thought//>>.



PICTURE 2: 10 Media Literacy Competences

Source: *Mediawijzer.net* based on the 2011 report *Measuring Media Literacy by EYE a.o.* [online]. [2022-05-25]. Available at: <<https://netwerkmediawijshheid.nl/over-ons/about-dutch-media-literacy-network//>>.

From the Bloom's taxonomy perspective, we have considered the bottom-up; and the top-down approach. Hence, when applied to the traditional model of Bloom's taxonomy, the chronologically organized clusters above are linked to stage 2 (Understand); stage 3 (Apply); stages 4-5 (Analyse & Evaluate); and stage 6 (Create), respectively, and symbolise gradually increasing added value.

In the contemporary world accelerated by technology, the post-factual era and the COVID-19 pandemic the situation in media literacy has become increasingly multidimensional and challenging, as indicated in earlier³⁷ as well as recent³⁸ studies. Additionally, Jánošová and Sádecká highlighted that the generation to which we are able to teach media competences “*may be immune, or may ignore, classical methods of education*”.³⁹ In this regard, Vrabcem deems as a much more negative and grave finding that “*the media and their content are not a very relevant topic for a large number of teachers, but also other professionals and volunteers working with the young generation. This finding only confirms the need to transform the traditional school based on memorizing encyclopaedic knowledge to open educational models based on the development of individual key competencies and preparing young people to cope with practical life situations and skills. An important cross-cutting theme supporting this necessary trend is media education, which in the right chosen form brings a number of stimuli and background material suitable for the development of a wide range of life skills*”.⁴⁰ This necessitates the adoption of the so-called learner-centred approach to education: on the one hand, the needs/aspirations of individuals are placed at the centre of any learning process; and, on the other hand, focus is on the experiences they bring to the learning situation. Thus, the dual interpretation of Bloom's taxonomy enables adequately addressing the needs/aspirations of students with emphasis placed either on their teamwork (i.e. in upper stage(s) of Bloom's taxonomy), or on their individual learning experience (i.e. in the introductory stages of Bloom's taxonomy).

³⁷ VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a mediá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IUVENTA, 2008, p. 1-40; See also: PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N.: *Mediálna gramotnosť dospeljej populácie v SR – Výskumná správa*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2015.

³⁸ See: *Media Literacy Index Series*. [online]. [2022-09-13]. Available at: <<https://osis.bg/?p=2696&lang=en>>.

³⁹ ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 132. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7_Lucia-Skripcova.pdf>. See also: JÁNOŠOVÁ, D., SÁDECKÁ, R.: Aspects of Communication in the Digital Literacy of Generation Y in the Region. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 205-218.

⁴⁰ VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a mediá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IUVENTA, 2008, p. 34.

5 Conclusion

Nowadays in the information era with far too much information, media literacy is a very crucial competence not only for the general public, but also for higher education students in particular. This paper researched media literacy awareness and understanding of communication among university students studying in the capital city of Slovakia, Bratislava.

The findings show that without prior knowledge students have at least elementary consciousness about the term media literacy, what it stands for and since when it has been in use. However, around 1/3 of the students answered these types of questions incorrectly. Overall, the topic of communication is generally known to students as about 90% of them correctly recognised this term and its role in setting social norms in society. Similarly to the media literacy results, about 1/3 of respondents do not have a thorough understanding of the differences among mass, interpersonal, organisational and intercultural communication. Therefore, it would be desirable to include media literacy topics in more depth into the curricula across universities in Slovakia in order to understand how to deal with information and what kind of information is suitable to use in the course of studies, research and later on in the role of individuals in society.

The study presents some limitations. The survey was conducted among students at the *University of Economics in Bratislava* who are focused neither on media studies, nor on cultural studies. It could be viewed as an advantage due to identified existing awareness of the necessity of media literacy competence, which may motivate the students to further develop their current media literacy competence, on the one hand. On the other, the anonymous opinion survey does not reveal whether there are any national patterns or good practices to be replicated in other countries or higher education institutions, bearing in mind the participation of a group of international students in the survey. Additionally, the anonymity of respondents does not allow us to compare availability and the extent of initial training or instruction in the topic of media literacy at the home universities of the respective international students.

Furthermore, like other topics, literacy and its interpretations are not uniformly defined in the academic literature or identically perceived by the public. This could be considered as the main limitation of our paper, when having a dilemma if and what kind of prior training or instruction participants of such an anonymous opinion survey should be provided with immediately before taking the respective survey. To conclude, this survey could be considered as a pilot study in the respective course that will undergo adaptation in the future as a result of launching newly accredited study programmes, and the results of the respective survey will be implemented in terms of experiential learning in teams. The follow-up research will focus on assessment of the second thematic block, namely web literacy for fact checking, with the aim of formulating a set of recommendations for the students participating in the respective course in the framework of newly accredited study programmes.

Acknowledgement: This study was supported by KEGA project No. 003EU-4/2022 (2022-2023) "Content innovation of subject International Marketing in context of acceptance of latest trends in sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, as starting point for increasing their competitiveness in international business environment." The paper designed in terms of teaching skills development (in the framework of the SEDA Learning, Teaching and Assessing Award) results from the Erasmus+ project No. 2020-1-SK01-KA203-078299 Designing Holistic and Sustainable Educational Development to Improve Student Learning (HOSUED).

Literature and Sources:

- ANANIADOU, K., CLARO, M.: *21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD Countries. OECD Education Working Papers No. 41.* [online]. [2022-09-25]. Available at: <<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/218525261154.pdf?expires=1666540334&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=2A81D7BC18AAA07EEB387DA36F851388>>.
- BÁRÁŇOVÁ-ČIDEROVÁ, D., MAYER, P.: Knowledge Transfer in Higher Education Quality Management: The Case of Germany and Slovakia. In *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia*, 2010, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 18-34. ISSN 1337-7493.
- BLOOM, B.: *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals.* New York : McKay, 1956.
- BROWN, A. J.: Assessment in the Workplace of Performance, Developing Expertise and Competence. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., MCGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education.* Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 330-336.
- COLES, M.: *A Review of International and National Developments in the Use of Qualifications Frameworks.* Luxembourg : European Training Foundation, 2006.
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.* [online]. [2022-05-26]. Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2018%3A189%3ATOC>>.
- FRIEDMAN, T.: *The World is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century.* London : Penguin Books, 2006.
- GARDNER, H.: *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* New York : Basic Books, 1983.
- GOLEMAN, D.: *Emotional Intelligence.* New York : Bantam Books, 1995.
- GRUGULIS, I., WARHURST, CH., KEEP, E.: What's Happening to 'Skill'? In WARHURST, CH., GRUGULIS, I., KEEP, E. (eds.): *The Skills that Matter.* Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 1-18.
- HALL, E. T.: *The Silent Language.* New York : Random House, 1959.
- HAMPDEN-TURNER, CH., TROMPENAARS, F.: *Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values.* New York : John Wiley & Sons, 2000.
- HRDINÁKOVÁ, L.: *Mediálna a informačná gramotnosť – úvod do problematiky.* Bratislava : UK Bratislava, 2013.
- INGVARSON, L.: *Development of a National Standards Framework for the Teaching Profession.* [online]. [2022-09-25]. Available at: <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=teaching_standards>.
- JÁNOŠOVÁ, D., SÁDECKÁ, R.: Aspects of Communication in the Digital Literacy of Generation Y in the Region. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 205-218. ISSN 2585-8726.
- KOUWENHOVEN, W.: *Competence-Based Curriculum Development in Higher Education: A Globalised Concept?* [online]. [2022-09-23]. Available at: <https://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs/9410/InTech-Competence_based_curriculum_development_in_higher_education_a_globalised_concept.pdf>.
- Learning Guide on Flipping the Classroom in Adult Education.* [online]. [2022-05-25]. Available at: <http://projectiflip.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/iFlip_IO7_Learning-Guide-in-FTC-in-Adult-Education_EN.pdf>.
- LEVESQUE, C. et al.: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., MCGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education.* Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 618-623.
- LIVINGSTONE, S.: The Challenge of Changing Audiences. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2004, Vol. 19, No.1, p. 75-86. ISSN 2673-5903.
- Media Literacy Index Series.* [online]. [2022-09-13]. Available at: <<https://osis.bg/?p=2696&lang=en>>.

- Mediawijzer.net based on the 2011 Report Measuring Media Literacy by EYE a.o. [online]. [2022-05-25]. Available at: <<https://netwerkmediawijsheid.nl/over-ons/about-dutch-media-literacy-network/>>.
- McCULLOCH, G., CROOK, D. (eds.): *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Education*. London, New York : Routledge, 2008.
- NAKATA, CH.: Going Beyond Hofstede: Why We Need To and How. In NAKATA, CH. (ed.): *Beyond Hofstede*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 3-15.
- National Association for Media Literacy Education. *Media literacy*. [online]. [2022-05-26] Available at: <<https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/what-media-literacy-namles-short-answer-and-longer-thought/>>.
- OECD: *Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo)*. [online]. [2022-09-23]. Available at: <<https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/41529556.pdf>>.
- OECD: *The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2005.
- OECD: *Qualification Systems: Bridges to Life-Long Learning*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2007.
- OECD: *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2013.
- OECD: *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2013.
- PEDRAJA-REJAS, L., RODRÍGUEZ-PONCE, E.: Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Resources on the Quality of Universities: A Quantitative Study of the Chilean Case. In *Interciencia*, 2014, Vol. 39, No. 10, p. 697-703. ISSN 0378-1844.
- PETERSON, B.: *Cultural Intelligence*. Yarmouth : Intercultural Press, 2004.
- PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N.: *Mediálna gramotnosť dospeljej populácie v SR – Výskumná správa*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2015.
- PITOŇÁKOVÁ, S., AUGUSTÍNOVÁ, E.: The Present and the Prospect of Increasing Literacy in the Field of Cultural Heritage. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 116-130. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/6_Slavka-Pitonakova-Eva-Augustinova.pdf>.
- PRŮCHA, J. et al.: *Pedagogický slovník*. Prague : Portál, 2009.
- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. In *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2006, Vol. 49, p. 5-9. ISSN 1725-2555. [online]. [2022-09-13] Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:FULL&from=EN>>.
- RODRÍGUEZ-PONCE, E. et al.: The Impact of the Quality Assurance System in the Service Delivered by the Private Universities in Chile. In *Ingeniare*, 2011, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 409-419. ISSN 0718-3291.
- RYCHEN, D. S., SALGANIK, L. H. (eds.): *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society*. Hogrefe and Huber : OECD Publishing, 2003.
- SHROCK, S. A., COSCARELLI, W. C.: Criterion-Referenced Measurement. In PETERSON, P., BAKER, E., McGAW, B. (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2010, p. 31-35.
- ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131-140. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7_Lucia-Skripcova.pdf>.
- TARAS, V., STEEL, P.: Beyond Hofstede: Challenging the Ten Commandments of Cross-Cultural Research. In NAKATA, CH. (ed.): *Beyond Hofstede*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 40-60.
- TEODORESCU, T.: Competence versus Competency: What Is the Difference. In *Performance Improvement*, 2006, Vol. 45, No. 10, p. 27-30. ISSN 1090-8811.

TOLEDO-FIGUEROA, D., RÉVAI, N., GUERRIERO, S.: Teacher Professionalism and Knowledge in Qualifications Frameworks and Professional Standards. In GUERRIERO, S. (ed.): *Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2017, p. 73-95.

TRIANDIS, H. C.: *Culture and Social Behavior*. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1994.

TUCK, R.: *An Introductory Guide to National Qualification Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers*. Geneva : International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Department, 2007.

UNESCO: *International Literacy Day. Background Paper on Youth and Adult Literacy in the Time of COVID-19: Impacts and Revelations*. [online]. [2022-09-13] Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374187>>.

UNESCO: *Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the Occasion of International Literacy Day*. [online]. [2022-09-13] Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382510>>.

VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a mediá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IUVENTA, 2008.

WHITE, R. W.: Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence. In *Psychological Review*, 1959, Vol. 66, No. 5, p. 297-333. ISSN 0033-295X.

Authors



Ing. Eva Belvončíková, M.A. PhD.

University of Economics in Bratislava
Faculty of National Economy
Dolnozemska cesta 1,
852 35 Bratislava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
eva.belvonicova@euba.sk

Graduate of the University of Sussex in Brighton (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovak Republic), and the University of Economics in Bratislava (Slovak Republic), Eva Belvončíková has been recently acknowledged by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as SEDA Recognised Teacher. Eva Belvončíková works as a researcher at the Faculty of National Economy, the University of Economics in Bratislava. Her research focus is on cultural and creative industries and their location, actors and institutions. Within this area, she recently focuses on coworking spaces in Slovakia and Europe, the impact of Covid-19 on their operation and the well-being of actors in coworking spaces. Eva Belvončíková also focuses on chosen aspects of education, mainly decision-making processes within education and knowledge spillovers from universities.

Assoc. Prof. Ing. Denisa Čiderová, PhD., M.A.

University of Economics in Bratislava
Faculty of Commerce
Dolnozemska cesta 1,
852 35 Bratislava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
denisa.ciderova@euba.sk



Graduate of the University of Leicester (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, and the University of Economics in Bratislava, Denisa Čiderová has been recently acknowledged by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as SEDA Recognised Teacher. Affiliated with the Faculty of Commerce, the University of Economics in Bratislava, her academic focus on inter-/cross-cultural issues dates back to her active involvement in thematic workshops/training as well as teaching, both across the Slovak Republic and abroad. Latest engagements of Denisa Čiderová with the inter-/cross-cultural theme relate to her scholarly (multiculturalism) research-oriented tutorship of a scholarship holder from the Marmara University (Istanbul, Turkey) in terms of the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic, as well as academic interaction in the area of intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity at the Corvinus University of Budapest (Hungary).



Hana Pravdová, Zora Hudíková

Contemporary Media Culture in the Coordinates of Game Principles

ABSTRACT

The intention of the study is to highlight the interrelationships between the operation of gaming principles and contemporary media culture. The authors analyze game principles as defined and conceptualized by R. Caillois in his work. They formulate a premise according to which individual game principles can also be identified in contemporary media production, especially in cinema and digital games. They are present in the choice of preferred media topics and in the discourse of creative approaches of media creators. Gaming principles are based on fundamental human qualities that dominate during play. That is, they are an anthropological issue and have had a culture-making function. Although mimicry is the most dominant gaming principle within media production, other gaming principles, namely agon, alea, and illinx, are also found in particular genres and formats. The authors argue that contemporary media culture is shaped by the coordinates of game principles as well as by the mental settings of the people existing in the contemporary Euro-Atlantic civilizational circle. This environment creates a person craving for entertaining media genres. These provide them with enormous emotional excitement and transitions into another dimension of life, into a playful media reality.

KEY WORDS

Audiovision. Cinematography. Commercialisation. Consumer Society. Digital Games. Game Actors. Game Principles. Media Culture. Players.

1 Instead of an Introduction: Terminological Anchoring and Methodological Background

Contemporary discursive practices in the field of media production and the continuous mapping of mental structures of late modern societies testify to a paradigm shift within media production and media culture. Media production is tailored mentally to suit the human longing for perpetual gaming adventures in a simulated world of fantasy escapes. It is designed for the mental disposition of the playing man – homo ludens. The concept of homo ludens was introduced by J. Huizinga in 1944. According to him, homo ludens is the playful person to whom we owe the origin and development of culture.¹ Fourteen years later, R. Caillois is both inspired by and critically follows the work of J. Huizinga.² He defines four game principles and explains the different categories of games by them. He points out that the four game principles are present together in individual games, but only one of them is dominant. The “agon” game principle represents competition,³ the “alea” game principle represents surrender to fate,⁴ the “mimicry” game principle represents imitation⁵ and the “ilinx” or “vertigo”⁶ game principle is the patron of games dominated by the emotion of excitement.

The principles of games have always been part of media creation, as evidenced, for example, by the development of theatre from ancient Greece to the present day. The basic coordinates of the relationship between acting principles and media creation can be seen very clearly already in the Greek Dionysian theatre. However, only the era of digital communication has made the purpose and functions of these coordinates clearly visible. In our view, however, other relevant factors are also involved in the process of amplifying these coordinates and making them visible. These are, in particular, the technical-technological level of contemporary media, the digitisation of media production and the phenomenon of hedonistic consumerism, which has become a firm part of the socio-cultural environment and a significant feature of media production.

The concept of homo medialis appears in connection with the emergence of the information society, the digitalization of communication flows. The media are becoming dominant not only in leisure time, but also through mobiles, tablets, etc. They are permanently present in people's everyday activities. A person becomes a subject of simulated worlds and an object of technical-technological progress in the field of media production.⁷ Both the pragmatic entertainment logic and the playful principles of the commercial media world offer people a new, much more interesting and fascinating reality and quality. It is better than the reality of everyday life. The simulated worlds of media production offer situations, hedonistic experiences and a rich variety of fascinations. In these worlds of fascination, game principles play an important role. They offer individuals the possibility of experiencing the fates of others, a whole plethora of emotional states, exciting experiences, tension, the feeling of winning and the bitter-sweet feeling of losing.

In this study, we highlight the role of game principles in contemporary filmmaking and digital games. Based on an outline of the mind-set of contemporary hedonistic societies and the characteristics of media culture, we formulate an initial assumption. In it, we point to the fact that

¹ See: HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo Ludens*. Basel : Burg-Verlag, 1944. (HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo Ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 222.)

² See: CAILLOIS, R.: *Les Jeux et les Hommes*. Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1958. (CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrť*. Prague : Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998.)

³ The player demonstrates skill, strength, their goal is to win, to be the first among others.

⁴ The player relies on luck in the game if a good number is rolled, for example in a dice or roulette game.

⁵ Creating a new identity, playing at being someone else, like children playing pirates.

⁶ Players experience excitement based on the strong emotion of fear or euphoria of danger.

⁷ See: VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: Paralely digitálneho novinárstva a jeho rozmach v kontexte rozvoja informačných a komunikačných technológií v spoločnosti. In PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017, p. 183-272.

game principles have become relevant factors in contemporary media production, conditioning the choice of themes, narratives and visuals. Game principles, with their properties, also guarantee the popularity of a media product and its success in the media market. In the study we apply hermeneutic, phenomenological as well as causal methodological approaches. We favor an interdisciplinary oriented selection of sources. These come mainly from the fields of media and cultural studies, game studies and sociology. From this perspective and methodological background, we thematize and verify the degree of truth of the formulated premise.

2 Homo Medialis in Contemporary Consumer Society

The process of the formation of homo medialis is one of the most significant attributes and phenomena of contemporary societies in the European and global cultural and civilizational space. M. Petrušek⁸ speaks of late modern societies, which transformed the previous industrial society, denying modernity, and began to take shape around the middle of the last century. In his opinion, the term late modern society best corresponds to the development of thought and mentality of societies of this period, as well as to changes in all spheres of social practice. These societies have specific features, such as the emergence of new forms of life and pluralism of lifestyles, the development of new patterns of social behaviour resulting from the emergence of affluent societies, the influence of the media world, as a result of which man perceives two worlds – the world of everyday life and the simulated the world mediated by the mass media, the displacement of direct repression and its replacement by methods of media seduction, a significant change in value patterns indicating low level of adherence to ethical norms, the emergence of a new postmodern mentality, the rapid growth of globalisation processes, including the accompanying global risks, such as new forms of social differentiation, new stratification of society, the emergence of new social movements, etc.⁹

In the second half of the 20th century, new lifestyles, the development of communication practices, changing geopolitical conditions, and the general phenomenon of wealth in the Western civilizational circle have become the subject of reflection for many social scientists.¹⁰ As M. Petrušek very aptly notes, there has been a “naming boom”.¹¹ Authors are trying to name changing social and cultural conditions as succinctly as possible. In particular, we would like to draw attention to the phenomenon of consumer hedonism. In the past, it was practised only by a handful of people from high or bohemian society. In the second half of the last century, it became a driving force of mainstream culture with a radically different cultural habitus. It manifests itself through the exhibition of hip-rock pop culture, blasphemous humour, cynicism and violence. D. Bell points in this context to new phenomena such as “pop-hedonism”, “counterculture” and their fundamental influence on the formation of new lifestyles and dominant values.¹² However, it should be stressed that such a reversal of lifestyles is nothing new in the history of cultures. In traditional societies, the lower classes tended to imitate the lifestyles of the upper classes. The desire for an affluent life of pleasure has been an age-old motive of both the upper and lower social classes. It is clear, then, that the extreme manifestations of the 1960s pop hedonism

⁸ See: PETRUSEK, M.: *Společnosti pozdní doby*. Prague : SLON, 2006.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 23-24.

¹⁰ See for example: BELL, D.: *Kulturní rozpory kapitalizmu*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1999; BAUMAN, Z.: *Úvahy o postmoderní době*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1995; HABERMAS, J.: *Strukturální přeměna veřejnosti*. Prague : Karolinum, 2000; HUBÍK, S.: *Postmoderní kultura*. Olomouc : Mladé umění K Lidem, 1991; HUNTINGTON, P. S.: *Střet civilizací. Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2001; JAMESON, F.: *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham : Duke University Press, 1991; KELLNER, D.: *Media Spectacle*. London : Routledge, 2003; LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Hypermoderní doba. Od prožitku k úzkosti*. Prague : Prostor, 2013; etc.

¹¹ PETRUSEK, M.: *Společnosti pozdní doby*. Prague : SLON, 2006, p. 23-25.

¹² BELL, D.: *Kulturní rozpory kapitalizmu*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1999, p. 68.

followed the expansion of hedonism of the narrower, elite classes in earlier periods. The new revolutionary counterculture merely took up the ideal of hedonism, expanded it, and offered it to the broader social strata through the mass media. It manifested itself, for example, in extremes of sex, exposure of the naked human body, drug use or fanatical worship of popular music. On the other hand, the revolutionary counterculture disrupted the conformist waters of Western political elites. The hippie movement, for example, was inspired by the beatnik generation of musicians and rebelled against the values and norms of previous generations, against their religious, gender and racial stereotypes, or against the war in Vietnam.¹³ Some forty years later, however, Canadian researchers J. Heath and A. Potter, in a bold study,¹⁴ conclude the dysfunctionality of counterculture. They ask the cardinal question: Why is consumer capitalism not a threat to the system but, on the contrary, a driving force? They answer it unequivocally. The capitalist system has irreversibly dominated the revolutionaries' counterculture through the well-established mechanisms of the free market. The capitalist system has merged with the counterculture to create a new, commercially lucrative platform of pop culture that is mass-produced for the masses of enthusiastic consumers. The consumer society knew how to find a way to neutralize the counterculture revolt. It has commercialized it and dropped it into the waters of the conformist mainstream. In this way, the revolt did not become a threat to the consumer capitalist system, but on the contrary, became its driving force.

From the second half of the 20th century to the present day, a specific hedonistic lifestyle has taken shape. It is dominated by the idea of immediate gratification of all kinds of needs, a preference for experiences and emotional pleasures. According to G. Lipovetsky, its driving force is the commercialisation of all areas of social practice. It has perfected not only things and goods, but also culture, art, time, communication, procreation, life and death.¹⁵ In the sphere of media production, these tendencies are manifested by exact demonstrable indicators. They are, for example, the increase in the number of commercial media, the pursuit of high commercial turnover, and a fundamental change in the discourse of media production. Media creators offer a wide variety of genres and stories contained within them, which evoke different emotional states in the audience. The driving force behind the change in media discourse is clearly commercialisation. According to D. C. Hallin and P. Mancini have changed their priority objectives. The mission of the media is no longer to disseminate ideas and form social consensus. It is to produce entertainment and information that is sold to the consuming public. *"The rise of television and radio, together with the commercialisation of the press, contributed significantly in the 1960s to the transformation of Europe into a more individualised consumer society, and this process accelerated in the 1980s."*¹⁶ The media began to apply sophisticated marketing strategies both in the areas of production, distribution and sale of airtime and pages of periodicals and in the sale of final products. Proper market segmentation, targeting and subsequent positioning in the eyes of potential customers became the basis for the success of any media entity.¹⁷

We are currently in a phase of civilisational development under the baton of digitalization of all areas of social practice. We are shaped by the domination of digital technologies, socialized and educated through the flow of information on digital information highways. However, the media world has become fragmented, as has the social world. Traditional mass media and one-way communication are dissolving into a chaos of online communication on social networks; recipients are becoming communicating users. G. Lipovetsky talks about the birth of a new culture. It is a culture that allows people to leave the position of a passive consumer and,

¹³ See: HANÁK, O.: *Hippies. Slepé rameno mrtvé řeky*. Prague : Argo, 1992.

¹⁴ See: HEATH, J., POTTER, A.: *The Rebell Sell*. Toronto : Harper Collins Publishers, 2005.

¹⁵ LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Vláda hyperkultury: kosmopolitismus a západní civilizace*. In LIPOVETSKY, G., JUVIN, H.: *Globalizovaný západ. Polemika o planetární kultuře*. Prague : Prostor, 2012, p. 37.

¹⁶ HALLIN, C. D., MANCHINI, P.: *Systém médií v postmoderním světě*. Prague : Portál, 2008, p. 300.

¹⁷ ČABYOVÁ, L.: *Mediální marketing*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2010, p. 5.

on the contrary, to live and discuss together more. On the one hand, we are witnessing a dependence on this form of communication, on the other hand, we are seeing greater possibilities in networking.¹⁸ The fact is that the acceleration of the technical-technological platform of digital communication offers enormous communicative and creative possibilities. However, the expansion of the creative possibilities of multi-platform production also supports the rise of media hedonism.

The aesthetic impact of the synergy of sign, sound and video changes the discourse of media creation. The phenomenon of media hedonism represents in contemporary media production the preference for specific themes, modes of realisation, the emergence of new programmes, formats and the hybridisation of genres. Media creators offer recipients the pleasure of experiences full of emotions, impressive scenes. Producers mainly focus on creating media content that offers different kinds of experiences, emotions or different kinds of pleasures and satisfactions to the recipients. Hedonistic, pleasure- and experience-oriented production has become the domain of typical entertainment genres or entertainment features. They can also be traced across media production and are prominent in stories and their visualisation. At the same time, contemporary homo medialis is overwhelmed by the wide range of experiential media production. It turns out that contemporary media culture is shaped in the coordinates of gaming principles, which are conventional to the mental settings of people existing in contemporary hedonistic society. This environment creates a person desiring media experiences that saturate their physical participation in classic games and gaming entertainments of various kinds. However, some authors also point to the positive aspects of the gamification of the media environment. According to N. Vrabec, digital games should not only be perceived as a means of entertainment and relaxation but also as effective education and learning tools that “enable the successful transfer of knowledge while maintaining learner enjoyment, which is especially important for active participation during knowledge construction”.¹⁹

3 Image and Narration as a Macrocosm of Playful Audiovisual

It should be stressed that the principle of eliciting pleasure, based on the operation of game principles in media production, runs through the history of media culture like the proverbial Ariadne's thread. The dominant acting principle of mimicry is already encountered in archaic cult dances, in the celebration of the god Dionysus in the ancient Greek theatre of Dionysus, in the famous tragedies of *Aeschylus*, *Euripides* and *Sophocles*, and in the comedies of Aristophanes. The principles of mimicry and agon, with the principle of ilinx in the background, are clearly present in ancient Roman gladiatorial fights or popular horse-sled races. Scenes of legalized madness in the Middle Ages can also be classified as entertainment principles modelled on the dominant acting principle of mimicry. The popular classes of the time performed their unattainable fantasies through the staging of wild, unbridled carnival festivities. They built a worldly hierarchy “upside down”,²⁰ indulged in the bawdy humour of grotesque travelling theatres, etc.

¹⁸ LIPOVETSKY, G.: Vláda hyperkultury: kosmopolitismus a západní civilizace. In LIPOVETSKY, G., JUVIN, H.: *Globalizovaný západ. Polemika o planetární kultuře*. Prague : Prostor, 2012, p. 60-61.

¹⁹ VRABEC, N.: The Concept of Soft Skills Cluster and Descriptive Indicators in the Process of Gamification. In KUSÁ, A., ZAUŠKOVÁ, A., BUČKOVÁ, Z. (eds.): *Marketing Identity*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 999.

²⁰ Authors' note: M. Bakhtin, in the second half of the last century, discusses the role and mission of the fool within the practices of carnival culture. In the figure of the fool he identifies and describes the attributes of carnality, anti-intellectualism, down-to-earthness, inverted values, the “upside-down” world in medieval and Renaissance cultures (See: BACHTIN, M.: *François Rabelais a lidová kultura středověku a renesance*. Prague : Argo, 2007.).

The emergence of the printing press in the 15th century and the later boom of popular bestsellers of various genres such as farces, short stories, fairy tales, sagas, travelogues, ancient heroic sagas, later the novel, provided many more opportunities to exploit the entertaining elements of culture. A specific landmark in the application of entertainment elements is the emergence and development of the tabloid periodical press in the 19th century, as well as the dynamic development of electronic media in the 20th century.²¹ It can be concluded that contemporary media creators have solid prerequisites for developing the tradition of applying the entertaining game elements. The reason is simple. They have greater opportunities to offer narratives and images that are conventional to the desires of the audience. In fact, they offer their fans diverse fascinations and escapes from the daily routine of ordinary life by becoming part of the action in a simulated world. The audience is drawn into the action of diverse storylines through the experiential pleasures provided by the game principles. The appeal to the presence of game principles allows the creators to evoke sufficient tension, a range of emotions. The creators work with themes, narrative structures, means of expression and imagery in such a way as to offer them as unremarkable, infantile, trivial and sufficiently dramatic situations. At the same time, various persuasive strategies are used in this context, which are based on sophisticated forms of verbal and non-verbal influencing.²²

Game principles play an important role in this. They model characters as constructions of interesting, ingenious, comic, clever, stupid, infantile, mean, trivial, etc. actors in the plot.²³ It is important to stage an engaging media carnival, game situations in the spirit of mimicry, agon, ilinx, and often in the spirit of alea. In this context, it is important to note that N. Postman already pointed out this principle of creating a media entertainment carnival at the end of the last century. He pointed to television production in which all topics are turned into entertainment, even news. Attractive and desirable news should not burden the viewer's attention, but stimulate it with variety, novelty, action, movement. It is necessary to create visual stimulation as a substitute for thinking.²⁴ We note that these trends have intensified in the first two decades of the new millennium, and that this mode of media production is also changing the perception of the viewer. They become superficial, unfocused. They miss the context because they focus only on the visual effect. They do not think, they just take in some of the information through a series of compelling images and attractive, exciting narratives.²⁵

Also on the basis of the above facts, it can be concluded that contemporary media production has a universal character. Such a character is determined by the mental needs of the audience, the mental setting of media creators in the current hedonistic, consumerist society. However, the universal character of print, auditory and audiovisual media production is also related to the technical-technological platform of the media, to the process of digitalization, internetization, virtualization. According to M. Ciel, "*the new technologies have become part of the film image, and at the same time have begun to create it*".²⁶ The universal nature of media

²¹ See: PRAVDOVÁ, H., HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Correlation of Culture, Game Principles and Media Productions. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 4-19.

²² PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N.: *Persuázia a médiá*. Trnava : UCM in Trnava, 2013, p. 59-60.

²³ Authors' note: Such manifestations of the protagonists of the drama correspond to the mental setting of the society, its tendency to trivialization, juvenilization, narcissism, as well as the value setting of individual cultures (See: McGUIGAN, J.: *Modernity and Postmodern Culture*. Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999; BAUMAN, Z.: *Globalizace. Důsledky pro člověka*. Prague : Mladá fronta, 2000; BECK, U.: *Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus – Antworten auf Globalisierung*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 2004; LIPOVETSKÝ, G.: *Éra prázdnoty. Úvahy o současném individualismu*. Prague : Prostor, 2003; RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Mediální zábava v 21. století. Sociálně-kulturní aspekty a trendy*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2016.).

²⁴ POSTMAN, N.: *Ubavit se k smrti*. Prague : Mladá fronta, 2010, p. 113.

²⁵ See: McCHESNEY, R. W.: *Problém médií. Jak uvažovat o dnešních médiích*. Český Těšín : Grimmus, 2009.

²⁶ CIEL, M.: *Nové paradigmy, zmena systematick. In PAŠTÉKOVÁ, J.: *Súčasná filmová teória I. Nové rámce, iné problémy*. Bratislava : VŠMU, 2019, p. 11-12.*

production is also related to the availability of digital technologies, which are becoming a part of almost every individual. It can therefore be stated that media production is being democratized and liberalized. Media production has become an opportunity for every individual.

The above factors determine changes in creative practices within media production. There is a convergence of different media platforms, hybridization of genres, and the differences between different types of media break down. The media environment is being unified on the basis of rethinking old concepts and practices. The convergence of media creates space for experimentation in the field of media creation and media art. A specific aesthetic of expression of media production is developing, in which the image dominates. The image is the window into each narrative, it makes the accompanying word, music, sound, letters present. As M. Maffesoli says in an interview with M. Fischer, the image represents the macrocosm, i.e. what people actually share and what connects them.²⁷ In the periodical press, for example, the image underlines the power of the word in a dominant way. In television, the image offers a coherence of chaotic utterances in a set of interconnected genres and formats. In cinema, the general availability of digital technologies is recognisable at a glance. It manifests itself in the fact that the image is spewed with a range of submissive or provocative close-ups, dynamic cuts that make the audience dizzy in the spirit of the ilinx game principle. The playful, searching, provocative experimentation with the image, the gradation of editing, the kitsch-like colouring, make the viewer dizzy in the dimensions of the ilinx game principle. It is also indicative of an aesthetic of over-dimensioning, of a tendency towards neo-Baroque dynamism in contemporary audiovisual production.

The development of digital technologies, the change in media production strategies, the fragmentation of audiences, the emergence of fan groups and the changing nature of reception represent a significant turning point in media production following the emergence and dynamic development of digital games. D. Botler and R. Grusin introduce the concept of remediation. The term represents the embodiment of one medium in another. It is also a fundamental feature of digital media. Remediation ensures that the older medium is not abolished because the new medium remains dependent on the older one.²⁸ In the case of the development of digital media, one can point to the influence of traditional print and electronic media on the development of multiplatform media. At the same time, however, another consequence of the development of digital technologies in the field of media production is also interesting. It is the process of imitating the creative processes of dominant media. Currently, such dominant media are digital games or some audience-successful formats, such as reality shows or some film genres. M. Ciel draws attention to this moment when he points to the sources of inspiration for the structure of contemporary film. These are digital games, reality shows, video clips in terms of content and means of expression. The form and dramaturgy are changing, shortcuts and speed are preferred, the exposition is shortened, the player becomes part of the fictional world of the game. The player can enter the action of the game, the film, influence the course, shape the action.²⁹ The player of digital games can become an actor in the action by being allowed to enter the action, by taking on the role of the creator of fates, by becoming part of the identity of the protagonist. Narrative digital games have brought a new creative paradigm to perfection. Developers seek to emancipate the narrative of the story and the interaction of the actor of the plot. At the same time, however, they determine the degree of freedom they grant them. Some can enter the story environment, others are guided by the story. In this way, computer games remediate film, becoming an interactive film. But there is a difference between telling a

²⁷ FIŠEROVÁ, M.: *Obráz a moc. Rozhovory s francouzskými mysliteli*. Prague : Karolinum, 2015, p. 147.

²⁸ BOTLER, J. D., GRUSIN, R.: *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 1999, p. 45-47.

²⁹ See: CIEL, M.: *Nové paradigmy, zmena systematik*. In PAŠTÉKOVÁ, J.: *Súčasná filmová teória I. Nové rámce, iné problémy*. Bratislava : VŠMU, 2019, p. 12-17.

story in a digital game and in a film. According to C. Pearce, game designers are not primarily focused on telling a story, but on creating a compelling framework for the game. Literature and film focus primarily on telling a story. In digital games, everything comes down to player experience and skill.³⁰ An important incentive for playing digital games is the validation of skills, the overcoming of obstacles, as well as the victory metric and the players' awareness of entering and influencing the action.³¹ Players thus become characters in a cinematic narrative. They gain control over the plot as they can solve a puzzle or choose a path to an objective. The game transforms and draws the player into its distinctive world of simulacra. The condition for transforming and immersing the player in the game environment is not a reflection of reality, but a belief in the fantasy, imaginary world of the digital game.

4 Instead of the Conclusion: Contemporary Media Culture in the Coordinates of Game Principles

Despite the above mentioned differences, digital games and film also share a common characteristic. Both platforms offer their own interpretation of created reality. At the same time, they bear witness to the time and culture in which they were created, to the ideals, norms, models and morals of the time. Both platforms reflect and valorise these cultural elements in their narratives and visual representations. Digital games and film also reflect and apply the aesthetic values and artistic discourses of their time. We note that for each historical period, certain aesthetic values and artistic discourses are binding for both creators and audiences. Each period also privileges certain themes that are compelling to the target audience. Although we live in the mindset of late modern society and in an era of postmodern chaos of art forms and themes, trends in preferences of themes and genres are clearly established.³² They are in fact related to the mindset of late modern society, to contemporary tastes, as well as to advances in digital technology. J. Radošínská, Z. Kvetanová and L. Rusňáková point out an evident fact in this context, the long-term trend in the choice of film themes and genre framing in the second decade of the 21st century. Film producers prefer films that offer stories of male superheroes, biographical film portraits of personalities from different spheres of social life. Spectacular fantasy narratives are popular.³³ From this perspective, one can also point to the preferred genres in digital games. It should be underlined that genre and thematic frameworks and genre diversity are typical for both film and digital games. If digital games have influenced the discourse of contemporary cinema, cinema, comic book literature, animation, literary horror, short stories, historical narratives, science fiction, etc. have influenced the themes and narratives of the action, adventure or strategy genres of digital games. However, it is clear that digital games also have their preferred themes, heroes and complex interactive stories, but these are synchronised with the game mechanics. H. Bendová, for example, points to the conventionality of the genre field of

³⁰ PEARCE, C.: Towards a Game Theory of Game. In WARDRIP-FRUIIN, N., HARRIGAN, P. (eds.): *First Person. New Media as Story, Performance and Game*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 2004, p. 144.

³¹ KLIMMT, C., HARTMANN, T.: Effectance Self-Efficacy, and the Motivation to Play Video Games. In VORDRERE, P., BRYANT, J. (eds.): *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses, and Consequences*. New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006, p. 144.

³² Authors' note: The paradigm of postmodern art was aptly named by the cultural analyst J. Pavelka. He points to contextuality, the abolition of temporal and spatial contexts, the blurring of the boundaries between reality and fiction. He also points to the blurring of genre boundaries, to the tendencies towards mystification, which are culminated in the concept of computer virtual reality, to the preference for plurality of forms and contents, quotations, imitations, parodies, etc. (See: PAVELKA, J.: *Kultura, média & literatura*. Brno : Středoevropské centrum slovanských studií, 2004, p. 91-95.).

³³ RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Prague : Wolters Kluwer, 2020, p. 193.

digital games, to the rootedness of fantasy, science fiction, horror, fairy tales genres. According to her, this is a historically conditioned inclination towards a certain type of genres and stories. It's a mass phenomenon that suits digital developers because it offers certain clichés.³⁴ Z. Mago reflects on the iconicity and timelessness of games that offer an experience independent of time. It is precisely such games that are the most successful and popular in the digital games market. However, he points out that the concept of iconicity and timelessness of games is much more complex, as it is also possible to reach a state where a game becomes an archetype.³⁵

We think it is important to underline that both platforms – digital games and cinema – reflect culture and are reflected in creation. Both platforms are built on the basis of the operation of game principles, which are part of the psychological make-up of human beings. Game principles are embodied in storytelling, in the phases of dramatic action, in the visual representation of a situation. We consider the acting principle of mimicry to be the primary one, because it is the basis for the emergence and development of media culture. The actors of plays change their identity, play their stage roles, perform in costumes with the identity of other beings. The symbols of masks and the metamorphosis of identity are the fetish of the game principle of mimicry. According to E. Fink, since the cradle of cultures, since archaic times, the mask has fascinated; through the mask, man wants to appear to himself in different ways.³⁶ An archaic shaman used it to resemble demons, an actor in an ancient drama resembled gods and mythological heroes, an actor on the movie screen identifies with the character of the character being played, a player of digital games puts their mind, abilities and emotions into their avatar. The gaming principle of mimicry is a way to visualize the real world and imagine a fictional world, because it is part of a person's mental makeup. This fact was noted by Aristotle when he attributed the emergence of art to man's innate ability to imitate creatively.³⁷ Thanks to this innate ability, man imitates the patterns of the social world, looks up to fictional heroes, identifies with fantasy, mythical characters. Imitation and identification with heroes allows people to transport themselves into other, imaginary worlds and to enjoy the feeling of being reincarnated into a new social role. The game principle of agon ensures that people experience sufficient tension at each stage of the dramatic action. In dramatic acting, they often rely on fate, luck or chance. This is promised to them by the presence of the alea acting principle. However, both the spectator and the player also expect a large dose of adrenaline from their reincarnation or identification with the hero of the story. Theilinx game principle will take care of that. It evokes enough emotion for the game participants to enjoy the giddiness, chills or feelings of delight from the dramatic scenes. Based on the above facts and arguments, it is obvious and unquestionable that media culture has been shaped by the action of game principles since its inception. In contemporary media culture, however, these principles are much more impressive and intense.

Acknowledgement: This contribution is a partial result of the project VEGA 1/0078/18 Aspects of marketing communication in the management processes of the circular economy.

Literature and Sources:

ARISTOTELÉS: *Poetika*. Prague : Oikoymenh, 2008.

BACHTIN, M.: *François Rabelais a lidová kultura středoveku a renesance*. Prague : Argo, 2007.

BAUMAN, Z.: *Globalizace. Důsledky pro člověka*. Prague : Mladá fronta, 2000.

³⁴ BENDOŮVÁ, H.: *Umění počítačových her*. Prague : Akademie múzických umění, 2016, p. 163-164.

³⁵ MAGO, Z.: The Concept of Timelessness Applied to Advergaming. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 20.

³⁶ FINK, E.: *Hra ako symbol světa*. Prague : Český spisovatel, 1993, p. 177.

³⁷ See: ARISTOTELÉS: *Poetika*. Prague : Oikoymenh, 2008.

- BAUMAN, Z.: *Úvahy o postmoderní době*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1995.
- BECK, U.: *Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus – Antworten auf Globalisierung*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 2004.
- BELL, D.: *Kulturní rozpory kapitalizmu*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1999.
- BENDOVIÁ, H.: *Umění počítačových her*. Prague : Akademie múzických umění, 2016.
- BOTLER, J. D., GRUSIN, R.: *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 1999.
- CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrť*. Prague : Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998.
- CAILLOIS, R.: *Les Jeux et les Hommes*. Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1958.
- CIEL, M.: Nové paradigmy, zmena systematik. In PAŠTÉKOVÁ, J.: *Súčasné filmové teórie I. Nové rámce, iné problémy*. Bratislava : VŠMU, 2019, p. 12-17.
- ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: *Mediálny marketing*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2010.
- FINK, E.: *Hra ako symbol sveta*. Prague : Český spisovatel, 1993.
- FIŠEROVÁ, M.: *Obráz a moc. Rozhovory s francouzskými mysliteli*. Prague : Karolinum, 2015.
- HABERMAS, J.: *Strukturální přeměna veřejnosti*. Prague : Karolinum, 2000.
- HALLIN, C. D., MANCHINI, P.: *Systém médií v postmoderním světe. Tři modely médií a politiky*. Prague : Portál, 2008.
- HANÁK, O.: *Hippies Slepé rameno mrtvé řeky*. Prague : Argo, 1992.
- HEATH, J., POTTER, A.: *Kup si svou revoltu!* Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2012.
- HEATH, J., POTTER, A.: *The Rebell Sell*. Toronto : Harper Collins Publishers, 2005.
- HUBÍK, S.: *Postmoderní kultura*. Olomouc : Mladé umění k lidem, 1991.
- HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo Ludens*. Basel : Burg-Verlag, 1944.
- HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo Ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990.
- HUNTINGTON, P. S.: *Střet civilizací. Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2001.
- JAMESON, F.: *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham : Duke University Press, 1991.
- KELLNER, D.: *Media Spectacle*. London : Routledge, 2003.
- KLIMMT, C., HARTMANN, T.: Effectance Self-Efficacy, and the Motivation to Play Video Games. In VORDRERE, P., BRYANT, J. (eds.): *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses, and Consequences*. New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006, p. 133-145.
- LIPOVETSKY, G., JUVIN, H.: *Globalizovaný západ. Polemika o planetární kultuře*. Prague : Prostor, 2012.
- LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Paradoxní štěstí. Esej o hyperkonzumní společnosti*. Prague : Prostor, 2007.
- LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Éra prázdnoty. Úvahy o současném individualismu*. Prague : Prostor, 2003.
- LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Hypermoderní doba. Od prožitku k úzkosti*. Prague : Prostor, 2013.
- MAGO, Z.: The Concept of Timelessness Applied to Advergaming. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 18-33. ISSN 2585-8599.
- McGUIGAN, J.: *Modernity and Postmodern Culture*. Buckingham : Open University Press, 1999.
- McCHESNEY, R. W.: *Problém médií. Jak uvažovat o dnešních médiích*. Český Těšín : Grimmus, 2009.
- PAŠTÉKOVÁ, J.: *Súčasné filmové teórie I. Nové rámce, iné problémy*. Bratislava : VŠMU, 2019.
- PAVELKA, J.: *Kultura, média & literatura*. Brno : Středoevropské centrum slovanských studií, 2004.
- PEARCE, C.: Towards a Game Theory of Game. In WARDRIP-FRUIIN, N., HARRIGAN, P. (eds.): *First Person. New Media as Story, Performance and Game*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 2004.
- PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N.: *Persuázia a médiá*. Trnava : UCM in Trnava, 2013.
- PETRUSEK, M.: *Společnosti pozdní doby*. Prague : SLON, 2006.
- POSTMAN, N.: *Ubavit se k smrti*. Prague : Mladá Fronta, 2010.
- PRAVDOVÁ, H., HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Correlation of Culture, Game Principles and Media Productions. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 4-19. ISSN 1338-130X.

PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017.

RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Prague : Wolters Kluwer, 2020.

RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Mediálna zábava v 21. storočí. Socionálno-kultúrne aspekty a trendy*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2016.

VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: Paralely digitálneho novinárstva a jeho rozmach v kontexte rozvoja informačných a komunikačných technológií v spoločnosti. In PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017, p. 183-272.

VORDRERE, P., BRYANT, J. (eds.): *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses, and Consequences*. New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006.

VRABEC, N.: The Concept of Soft Skills Cluster and Descriptive Indicators in the Process of Gamification. In KUSÁ, A., ZAUŠKOVÁ, A., BUČKOVÁ, Z. (eds.): *Marketing Identity*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2019, p. 998-1013.

Authors



Prof. PhDr. Hana Pravdová, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
hp.kaplna@gmail.com

Hana Pravdová is a Professor at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the UCM in Trnava and the Head of the Department of Language Communication. She specialises in media, communication and cultural studies. She works as a professor and pedagogical researcher in the field of media studies. Her research and teaching activities focus on the areas of media culture, games and gaming principles in cultural history, the media and cultural industries, globalisation and media localization, journalistic genres, multiplatform journalism and editorial systems in the media.

Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Zora Hudíková, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
zorahudikova@gmail.com



Zora Hudíková is an associate professor at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the UCM in Trnava and the head of the Department of Artistic Communication. She specializes in media psychology and media and communication studies. Her research and teaching activities include topics such as media psychology, the personality of the creator and the personality of the percipient, cognitive processing of media content, creativity in media and artistic production, the effects of media production, management of creative teams, radio and television journalism, sociocultural aspects of the market environment and media performance.



Igor Kanižaj, Boris Beck, Stela Lechpammer, Igor Weidlich

Disappointed and Dissatisfied – the Impact of Clickbait Headlines on Public Perceptions of Credibility of Media in Croatia

ABSTRACT

The existing literature devoted to the area of clickbait lays emphasis mostly on content analysis as used by the authors to explore the basic features of published media texts. The market background of clickbait production conditioned by the need to collect clicks and, consequently, to increase online monetization, greatly influences the editing and design of headings, headlines, sub-headlines and sub-headings as media texts. From a narratological point of view, clickbait is a peritext that entices readers instead of informing them. Rhetorically, it does so by announcement and allusion. If a clickbait is successful, it encourages readers to imagine that clicking on a given hyperlink is likely to enable them to bridge the information gap. However, as clickbait leads to uninteresting and worthless content, the users feel betrayed and disappointed. This is exactly what can have an impact on the perception of media credibility. In this paper, we present the results of the first Croatian representative research study (N=1,009) that investigates public attitudes about the reception of clickbait content and places special emphasis on researching satisfaction and disappointment, i.e., the readers' experience of the content of published headlines that have elements of clickbait, as well as the possible impact of clickbait on media credibility.

KEY WORDS

Clickbait. Audience Attitudes. Credibility. Croatian Media. Survey. Emotional and Linguistic Techniques.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to research the public perception of headlines that can be characterized as clickbait and to determine to what extent these types of headlines are noticed in the media, whether they can be recognized and how readers feel when they discover that a headline was actually a clickbait. In addition, it will explore whether clickbait entices readers to click on hyperlinks and whether this practice affects their perception of media quality.

Apart from the importance of credibility of media content and the connection between market and editorial principles based on clickbait, we will explain the paratextual nature of headlines in general and the rhetorical effects of clickbait in particular. Headlines are invariably supposed to attract readers by indicating the content, without revealing it at the same time. Yet, clickbait is characterized by a number of unfair practices. Readers form their own expectations about the content of the text on the basis of the headline itself. Consequently, a failure to meet these expectations may cause disappointment, which can subsequently be reflected in a reader's perception of the entire medium. The curiosity that encourages the reader to click on the article, in the hope of crossing the information gap, results in a sense of betrayal.

Since the two fundamental features of headlines in online media are indicating the topic of an article and targeting the reader's attention to the article, this paper will try to determine whether the reader is disappointed and loses confidence in the media if clickbait is used as the headline, i.e., if behind the headline there is an article whose content does not correspond to what the headline suggests.

In the first part of the paper, the theoretical framework and features of headlines and clickbait, that is, the specifics of headlines that attract the audience to the content, will be explained. The basic hypothesis is that clickbait exploits the curiosity and encourages emotional engagement of the reader in order to make the reader click on this kind of hyperlink. Such an experience leaves the reader with a new spectrum of emotions, such as distrust and disappointment. Therefore, the central part of our paper addresses the perspective of the reader who is viewed as a sort of "victim" of clickbait in the media space.

Nowadays, clickbait is almost inevitable due to the nature of business models of media companies, whose profit is highly dependent on the number of readers, that is, the number of clicks on hyperlinks on their media channels. In this view, it is important to observe, research and understand the position and behaviour of readers who are exposed to clickbait. More specifically, the business success or failure of a media outlet is based on the reader's reaction (click), but also on the seconds spent on a given text. By using clickbait, the media falsely create a perception of higher value for lower quality information, with the aim of maintaining and encouraging greater readership. Therefore, it is important to explore what happens when the audience does not receive complete information, when they receive information that does not correspond to what is announced in the headline, often being an irrelevant piece of information or false information.

The empirical research is based on a representative survey in which we examined the extent to which readers autonomously identify clickbait headlines; how they perceive them and whether they are willing to click on them; whether they get disappointed after reading the content concealed behind this kind of headlines, and whether clickbait headlines affect their perception of media credibility. The research will also provide results that will indicate how often, in specific types of media, the audience comes across news and information that, in their view, misrepresent reality or are false. Furthermore, the research will show how often the audience that is informed via Internet portals on a daily basis recognizes clickbait headlines, in contrast to the audience that is informed on Internet portals less frequently. Finally, the results of a survey on the feelings experienced by the audience after consuming the content 'hidden' behind clickbait headlines will be presented.

2 Theoretical Frame

Previous research on the presence of clickbait headlines in the media focused primarily on the content analysis¹, evaluation and categorization², to a lesser extent on more detailed linguistic analysis³, but also on researching the relationship between clickbait and news credibility. In this paper, our starting point is the question as to how paratextuality and rhetoric of clickbait, while in the service of media content monetization, will influence the assessment of media credibility by users and consumers of media content.

Contemporary research on credibility is based on three main approaches, namely (1) research on the credibility of media content, (2) research on the audience's perception of media credibility, and (3) research on media workers' perception of media credibility. This research is based on another approach that is closely related to trust in the media and has its roots in the uses and gratifications theory⁴. While the correct use of stylistic figures and linguistic techniques can potentially improve the quality and access to reporting, linguistic techniques in the service of monetization can also have a negative impact on the perception and understanding of media credibility.

Headlines that particularly lure the reader are referred to as clickbait headlines, and are created because contemporary media "rely heavily on the revenues generated from the clicks made by their readers", and due to considerable competition media, "often come up with catchy headlines accompanying the article links, which lure the readers to click on the link"⁵; it is also noticed that stories with clickbait headlines are "of lower quality and lower credibility."⁶ Beck et al. offered a definition of clickbait as a kind of headline on portals that "leads the reader to open a hyperlink to uninteresting and unworthy content", and the way it does so is by arousing "curiosity by concealing true information about that content."⁷

A headline is a part of a media text, but its position is specific as it is the first and possibly the only part of the text that is exposed to the audience. Paratextual is any element "associated with but distinct from the main body of a text"⁸, and the role of a headline in journalistic practice is to be a bridge between the reader and the news story. More accurately, the reader in question is only a potential reader, because the headline is often the only part of the text that is read at all. The importance of headlines is also noticeable in a definition given by Ciboci et al. in which

¹ See: BAZACO, A. et al.: Clickbait as a Strategy of Viral Journalism: Conceptualisation and Methods. In *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 2019, No. 74, p. 94-115. Available at: <<https://www.revistalatinacs.org/074paper/1323/06en.html>>.

² See: ALVES, L. et al.: Click Bait: You Won't Believe What Happens Next. In *Fronteiras: Journal of Social, Technological and Environmental Science*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 196-213.

³ See: MOLEK-KOZAKOWSKA, K.: Towards a Pragma-linguistic Framework for the Study of Sensationalism in News Headlines. In *Discourse & Communication*, 2013, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 173-197; CHEN, Y. et al.: Misleading Online Content: Recognizing Clickbait as "False News". In ABOULENIEN, M. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 2015 ACM on Workshop on Multimodal Deception Detection*. Washington, USA : Association for Computing Machinery New York NY United States, 2015, p. 15-19.

⁴ FISHER, C.: The Trouble with 'Trust' in News Media. In *Communication Research and Practice*, 2016, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 452.

⁵ CHAKRABORTY, A. et al.: Stop Clickbait: Detecting and Preventing Clickbaits in Online News Media. In ROKNE, J. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*. Davis, CA, USA : IEEE Press, 2016, p. 9.

⁶ MOLYNEUX, L., CODDINGTON, M.: Aggregation, Clickbait and Their Effect on Perceptions of Journalistic Credibility and Quality. In *Journalism Practice*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 429.

⁷ BECK, B. et al.: Clickbait/mamilica: Deset Načina Manipulacije Kontekstom. In JURIŠIĆ, J., HRNJIĆ KUDUZOVIĆ, Z. (eds.): *Medijska agenda 2020 – 2030. Zbornik radova 10. regionalne znanstvene konferencije Vjerodostojnost medija*. Zagreb : Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu and Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 2021, p. 90.

⁸ *Oxford Language*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <https://www.google.com/search?q=paratext+meaning>>.

it is claimed that the front pages represent the most important part of a newspaper “because the headlines mostly influence the reader’s decision to buy the newspaper”⁹, and the same can be concluded for web portals. The role of a headline is, therefore, twofold - to “concisely, interestingly and intelligently draw attention to the main idea of the following article”, but also to “attract the reader’s attention.”¹⁰

The problem of informing without being comprehensive, and of luring without disclosing was noticed in classical rhetoric, where means of arousing interest of interlocutors are described. Linguistic techniques have become the very centre of clickbait headlines. One way to entice attention without explication is called preterition, which is a figure of style by “which one affirms to pass over in silence something which one nevertheless speaks about”¹¹; it is also called apophasis, which refers to “raising of an issue by claiming not to mention it.”¹² Preterition generally claims that one “will not talk about a person, phenomenon or topic” just to induce interest, and then “present some, often all, information.”¹³ Clickbait is the exact opposite – it claims it will present relevant information, yet it fails to do so.

Another classical figure that uses uncertainty is aposiopesis, which is “the device of suddenly breaking off in speech.”¹⁴ It is marked by “abrupt interruption of statements, at the very moment when the sentence needs to be completed and the main thought expressed”¹⁵; that is precisely the “modus operandi” of clickbait. A subtype of aposiopesis is reticence, which also abruptly interrupts the statement and deliberately silences the thought, but still “encourages the recipient to guess what is left unsaid”¹⁶; the refusal to complete the statement may be interpreted as a “form of creating tension.”¹⁷ Clickbait, like the preterition, hides key information. Nevertheless, in contrast, it just announces that some amazing and shocking detail will follow. Although clickbait acts differently, what the two devices have in common is attracting attention, using “discursive formulas that are well known to all members of the language community.”¹⁸ Aposiopesis and reticence, as well as clickbait, create tension. Yet, clickbait has a huge defect compared to aposiopesis because “it is left to the interlocutor or the reader to assume on the basis of the context what has been silenced and to complete the statement.”¹⁹ In case of clickbait, everything is clear after one click on the hyperlink.

Elevating the expectations, yet without fulfilling them, may lead to disappointment, the state or emotion of being “defeated in expectation or hope.”²⁰ Hence, news headlines, due to their brevity, incorporate “density of contained information” and they “often appeal to a reader’s emotions.”²¹ Emotions are crucial for headlines because their task is to “break the

⁹ CIBOCI, L. et al.: Djeca u Dnevnim Novinama: Analiza Izvještavanja o Djeci u 2010. In CIBOCI, L., KANIŽAJ, I., LABAŠ, D. (eds): *Djeca Medija. Od Marginalizacije do Senzacije*. Zagreb : Matica Hrvatska, 2011, p. 134.

¹⁰ HUDEČEK, L., MIHALJEVIĆ, M.: *Jezik Medija – Publicistički Funkcionalni Stil*. Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2009, p. 188.

¹¹ *Etudes Littéraires*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.etudes-litteraires.com/figures-de-style/preterition.php>>.

¹² *Merriam-Webster*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apophasis>>.

¹³ BAGIĆ, K.: *Rječnik stilskih figura*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 2012, p. 262.

¹⁴ *Aposiopesis*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.google.com/search?q=aposiopesis>>.

¹⁵ BAGIĆ, K.: *Rječnik stilskih figura*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 2012, p. 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁰ *Merriam-Webster*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disillusion>>.

²¹ BOSTAN, L. et al.: GoodNewsEveryone: A Corpus of News Headlines Annotated with Emotions, Semantic Roles, and Reader Perception. In CALZOLARI, N., BÉCHET, F., BLACHE, P. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 12th Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation Conference*. Marseille, France : European Language Resources Association, 2020, p. 1554.

chronic readers' inattention", and that is why it is necessary to "activate receivers' feelings."²² One of the most common feelings is that of "uncertainty and fear" released "in the presence of sensationalized half-truths."²³ However, other emotions may also be analysed, e.g., "joy, sadness, anger, fear, trust, disgust, anticipation and surprise."²⁴

Surprise may be also negative, and trust may turn into distrust. Curiosity is defined by Loewenstein as an urge to bridge the „information gap“ that stretches between "what one knows and what one wants to know"²⁵, taking into account that existing knowledge is relatively objective, unlike desired knowledge which is highly subjective. Curiosity "arises when one's informational reference point in a particular domain becomes elevated above one's current level of knowledge"²⁶. Without knowing exactly what it is that one wants to know, the reader is in danger of being lured into a trap of clickbait, and some of the typical media strategies are to conceal the place or the time of the event and to mislead the reader of the true identity of the participants in the event in the headline, using polysemy, annomination, metaphorization, hyperbolizing and even plain lie.²⁷ The reader is encouraged "to construct new conceptual files based on the terms used in the headline" and is driven "to click on the associated link with the expectation that the article will contain relevant information with which he can enhance his conceptual files", but finds out there is no "reward with cognitive effects."²⁸

3 Methodology

The empirical part of the research of this study was carried out as part of the project "Journalism Research Lab: Innovative Storytelling Practices to Engage New Audiences"²⁹ which is carried out at the Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University. In December 2020, as part of the project, a survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1,009 respondents. The survey examined media habits of the audience in Croatia, the level of their trust in the media, the public's attitudes towards the journalistic profession, as well as the perception of media freedom in Croatia. Moreover, the respondents' expectations from media content, their attitudes towards truthfulness of information and towards fake news, and the reasons for news avoidance were examined.

One set of questions in the aforementioned survey examined the attitudes towards clickbait headlines. The results obtained by means of this group of questions are presented and analysed in this study. They provide the answer to the research question: *What feelings and reactions do clickbait headlines evoke in readers?*

²² WAINBERG, J. A.: Headlines, Emotions and Utopia. In *Intercom Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, 2015, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 195.

²³ ASLAM, F. et al.: Sentiments and Emotions Evoked by News Headlines of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak. In *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 2022, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 7.

²⁴ BOSTAN, L. et al.: GoodNewsEveryone: A Corpus of News Headlines Annotated with Emotions, Semantic Roles, and Reader Perception. In CALZOLARI, N., BÉCHET, F., BLACHE, P. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 12th Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation Conference*. Marseille, France : European Language Resources Association, 2020, p. 1554.

²⁵ LOEWENSTEIN, G.: The Psychology of Curiosity: A Review and Reinterpretation. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 1994, Vol. 116, No. 1, p. 87.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁷ See: BECK, B. et al.: Clickbait/mamilica: Deset Načina Manipulacije Kontekstom. In JURISIĆ, J., HRNJIĆ KUDUZOVIC, Z. (eds.): *Medijska agenda 2020 – 2030. Zbornik radova 10. regionalne znanstvene konferencije Vjerodostojnost medija*. Zagreb : Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu and Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 2021, p. 90.

²⁸ SCOTT, K.: You Won't Believe What's in this Paper! Clickbait, Relevance and the Curiosity Gap. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2021, Vol. 175, p. 53.

²⁹ The project "Journalism Research Lab: Innovative Storytelling Practices to Engage New Audiences" (JOURLAB) is funded by The Croatian Science Foundation, IP-2019-04-6331, led by Professor Tena Perišin.

In order to elicit answers to the research question, respondents were shown eight examples³⁰ of clickbait headlines to ensure that they were able to identify the types of headlines they were being questioned about. Subsequently, they had to answer the questions related to them, i.e., determine to what extent the following statements were applicable to them:

- I often notice these types of headlines in the media.
- I can recognize when the headline of an article is actually a clickbait headline.
- I am displeased when I realize that a headline is actually a clickbait headline.
- The use of clickbait headlines makes the medium less credible.
- The use of clickbait headlines deceives the reader.
- Clickbait headlines encourage me to click on an article.
- When I click on a clickbait headline, I am usually disappointed, because I realize that it was not the content that had been announced.

The aim of this research is to determine the audience's attitudes towards clickbait headlines and to investigate the main characteristics of their reactions to the content of clickbait headlines.

4 Results

4.1 Getting Informed via Internet Portals

The results of the research from which this study derives show that the majority of respondents are informed via Internet portals on a daily basis or several times a week,³¹ which is important in this context, since recent analyses of the content of the Croatian media³² show that clickbait headlines do not appear at all or almost at all in printed publications. In reality, their use is a common practice of online newsrooms, and the results of this survey show that 48.1% of citizens are informed through Internet portals. 14% of citizens do it often, that is, several times a week, and 9.7% occasionally, that is, several times a month. 5.1% of the respondents answered that they get information through Internet portals rarely, that is, several times a year, while 23% answered that they never do. At this point, it should be emphasised that, out of the 232 people who stated that they never get information through Internet portals, 166 of them (71.5%) are over 60 years old.

The survey³³ also examined how often the audience comes across news and information that they believe misrepresent reality or are even false – in specific types of the media – in newspapers, on the radio, on the public service (HRT), on commercial television (Nova TV,

³⁰ "Pogledajte kako su ovom paru ukrali auto tek nekoliko sekundi nakon parkiranja" (Eng. "Look how this couple's car was stolen seconds after parking"); "Preokret kakvom se nitko nije nadao – Pep Guardioala dao Lionelu Messiju savjet koji je iznenadio sve" (Eng. "A twist no one expected – Pep Guardiola gave Lionel Messi a tip that surprised everyone"); "Njemačka upozorava: Ne putujte u ovo hrvatsko odredište" (Eng. "Germany warns: Do not travel to this Croatian destination"); "Odani pas dva mjeseca čekao da se vlasnici vrate po njega i onda se dogodilo ovo" (Eng. "The loyal dog waits two months for the owners to come back for him and then this happens"); "Kuhar: Nećete vjerovati koje jelo kraljica nikada nije željela probati" (Eng. "Chef: You won't believe what dish the queen never wanted to try"); "U centru Zagreba osvanuli ogromni crveni križevi, evo o čemu se radi" (Eng. "Huge red crosses have appeared in the centre of Zagreb, this is what it's all about"); "Stavio je fotku svog psa na Twitter, a onda je o njemu otkrio nešto neočekivano" (Eng. "He puts a photo of his dog on Twitter, and then he discovers something unexpected about him"); "Severina slavi poseban dan: Objavila novu fotku, a svi su odmah komentirali jednu stvar" (Eng. "Severina celebrates a special day: She publishes a new photo, and everyone immediately comments on one thing").

³¹ *Hrvatska zaklada za znanost*. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://hrzz.hr/wp-content/uploads/Jourlab-Sto-publika-zeli-Anketa.pdf>>.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

RTL and others), on Internet portals and social networks. When the results are compared, it can be concluded that the audience most often comes across this type of content among the content of Internet portals and social networks. On the other hand, the respondents believe that the most accurate news and the least amount of fake news can be listened to on the radio or read in newspapers.

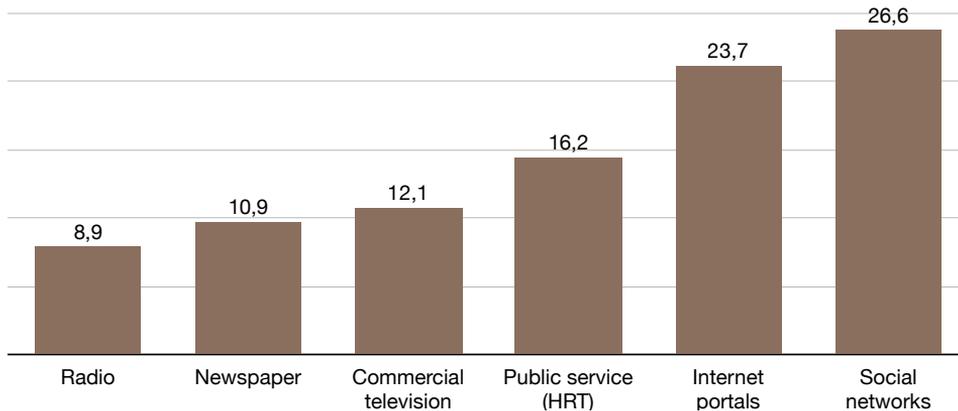


FIGURE 1: *In which medium do respondents come across news that they believe misrepresents reality or is even wrong? (n=1,009)*

Source: own processing, 2022.

Although the results show that the majority of the respondents get their information on Internet portals, almost a quarter of them (23.7%) admit that it is on these same portals that they come across news every day that they believe misrepresent reality or are even false. Other 18.5% of the respondents claim that they find such news on Internet portals at least once a week, 17.3% several times a month, 8.9% several times a year, and only 4.8% believe that they never come across wrong information on portals³⁴.

4.2 Attitudes Towards Clickbait Headlines

After the respondents were shown examples of clickbait headlines from the Croatian media as part of the survey, the majority of them said that they often notice this type of headline in the media (63.9%). It should also be mentioned that approximately one-fifth of the respondents did not recognize, or could not evaluate, the examples shown, which coincides with the figure of 23% of the respondents who never use Internet portals for information.

This is confirmed by a detailed analysis, in which only the answers of those respondents who use Internet portals for information on a daily basis or several times a week were analysed. These results, in fact, show that this is an audience that almost constantly comes across clickbait headlines. Moreover, only 2.1% of those who get information on portals every day and 1.4% of those who do so several times a week claim that they never notice clickbait headlines.

³⁴ Hrvatska zaklada za znanost. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://hrzz.hr/wp-content/uploads/Jourlab-Sto-publika-zeli-Anketa.pdf>>.

	I often notice these types of headlines in the media					
	Does not apply at all	Mostly does not apply	Neither applies, nor disapplies	Mostly does not apply	Entirely applies	I cannot judge
I get informed through Internet portals on a daily basis N=485	2.1%	6.4%	9.9%	34.4%	44.3%	2.9%
I often (several times a week) get informed through Internet portals N=141	1.4%	6.4%	21.3%	36.2%	31.9%	2.8%

TABLE 1: How often clickbait headlines are noticed by respondents who get information through Internet portals on a daily basis or often

Source: own processing, 2022.

Furthermore, those who get informed via Internet portals on a daily basis claim that, in as many as 74.5% of cases, they think they can recognize when the headline of an article is actually clickbait. This also applies in 59.6% of cases to those who consume news via portals several times a week, and even in 58.1% of cases to those who only occasionally get information via Internet portals. And what does this mean for readers and their relationship with the media?

The central part of the clickbait questionnaire was focused on, among other things, the reaction of the audience to the consumption of content with a clickbait headline. Thus, as many as 72.6% of the respondents claim that it applies to them entirely or mostly and that they are dissatisfied when they realize that a headline is actually a clickbait. Only 2.3% of the respondents disagree with the statement that clickbait headlines do not cause them dissatisfaction.

It has also been shown that, in addition to dissatisfaction, readers also feel a great deal of disappointment when they click on an article with a clickbait headline and when they realize that they are not presented with the content as announced. This is how 66.5% of readers feel (either entirely or mostly), while only 3% of readers do not associate the feeling of disappointment with clickbait headlines.

Furthermore, as many as 74.8% of the respondents believe that the use of clickbait makes the media less credible, and even more, that is, 77.8% of readers completely or mostly believe that the media use clickbait to actually mislead readers. It is also important to note the fact that out of the total number of those who completely agree that the use of clickbait headlines makes the media less credible, almost half are young people aged 18 to 29 and those who fall into the age group of 30 to 39.

To what extent does the statement “Clickbait headlines make me click on the article” apply to you? (N=1,009)					
Does not apply at all	Mostly does not apply	Neither applies nor disapplies	Mostly applies	Entirely applies	I cannot judge
10.3%	10.7%	20.1%	26.6%	18%	14.3%

TABLE 2: Do clickbait headlines encourage the audience to click on the article?

Source: own processing, 2022.

Given that the desire for “clicks” is mentioned in the literature as one of the reasons for the use of clickbait headlines by the media, it is interesting to see the answers to the questions about whether clickbait headlines fulfil this purpose. At the same time, the answers are quite divided, so a fifth of all respondents claim that such headlines will not attract them at all in most cases. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents still admit that generally they will click on clickbait articles.

5 Discussion

When a reader clicks on a clickbait headline hoping to cross an information gap, and finds that he or she has been led astray, a “significant gap between clicks and user satisfaction” arises as a result of the fact that “the user finds the actual content of the clicked item disappointing.”³⁵ Crossing the information gap is connected with the expectation of gaining new cognition of certain matter but clickbait headlines “trick the readers into clicking” and “don’t live up to the expectation of the readers”, which means they “leave them disappointed.”³⁶ Following the research by Wang et al., as well by Chakraborty et al., we have introduced the representative research from the Croatian perspective and thus confirmed that being exposed to clickbait headlines can lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction. The paradox consists in the fact that, while the usage of preterition, aposiopesis, reticence, emotions, attention, polysemy, annomination, metaphorization and hyperbolizing in contemporary literature can lead to a writer’s excellence, our research suggests that the use of these figures in journalism for production of clickbait headlines can have serious side effects for media credibility. This has been confirmed by our research as 72.6% of the respondents point out that they are completely or mostly dissatisfied when they realize that a headline is actually clickbait. Along with the feeling of dissatisfaction, most of the respondents claim that they also experience a feeling of disappointment.

Among other things, the empirical research presented in this study showed that the majority of citizens are informed through Internet portals. On the other hand, the conducted survey showed that citizens believe that the news and information that they think misrepresent reality or that are even false can be found precisely on Internet portals and social networks. Therefore, they have the least confidence in these two types of media. The result of the research is also indicative of the fact that the majority of surveyed citizens notice clickbait headlines in the media, that is, they know how to clearly recognize them. This applies particularly to those who get informed via Internet portals on a daily basis.

The results of the research indicated that 74.8% of the respondents believe that the use of clickbait headlines makes the media less credible, and as many as 77.8% of readers completely or mostly believe that the media use clickbait to deceive readers. Deception is obviously a card played by clickbait creators, yet this approach has never contributed to the quality and professionalism of work in the history of news journalism. On the contrary, it seems that it is an approach that causes immeasurable damage to journalism as a public good.

Based upon the findings of our research we see a need for a long-term public opinion research on the attitudes towards clickbait headlines in media. At the same time, it is necessary to constantly monitor and evaluate new media practices and investigate to what extent new ways of presenting media content, such as the use of clickbait, encourage the placement of trivial, manipulative, or even false content in the media. Here, we have to emphasize the importance of empowering critical thinking among the audience, but also their media literacy skills and competences in order to be able to recognize and to understand these types of media content. Kanižaj and Lechpammer even note that in one of the most cited definitions of media literacy, the one proposed by Patricia Aufderheide, “critical autonomy in relationship to all media” is noted as fundamental objective of media literacy³⁷.

³⁵ WANG, W. et al.: Clicks can be Cheating: Counterfactual Recommendation for Mitigating Clickbait Issue. In DIAZ, F., SHAH, CH., SUEL, T. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 44th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval*. New York, NY, United States : Association for Computing Machinery, 2022, p. 1288.

³⁶ CHAKRABORTY, A. et al.: Stop Clickbait: Detecting and Preventing Clickbaits in Online News Media. In ROKNE, J. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*. Davis, CA, USA : IEEE Press, 2016, p. 9.

³⁷ KANIŽAJ, I., LECHPAMMER, S.: The Role of Organisations of Journalists in Promoting Media Literacy – Building Credibility and Trust. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 27.

It is evident that a large part of the audience consciously recognizes clickbait headlines, but an equally large part of the audience admits that they are ready to click on them notwithstanding. There is an obvious disproportion in the behaviour of the audience who, although aware of exposure to such content, continues to consume it anyway. What is more, the audience feels and can clearly define their own disappointment due to the disproportion between the headline and the content, just as a previous research, which described the emotions felt by consumers, such as “*fear, joy, anger, disgust, sadness and surprise*”,³⁸ suggested.

6 Conclusion

The specificity of clickbait headlines, as explained in this paper, is that they influence curiosity and interest in certain content that is concealed behind the headline, so that the audience clicks on the hyperlink to reach content that does not have the value presented in the headline itself, or the content does not correspond to what has been announced in the headline, or sometimes it is entirely false. By emotionally conditioning the reader to click on a hyperlink, stimulating curiosity and expectations in the reader before clicking on a certain hyperlink, after seeing the content that does not match the expectations, the medium causes a big change in the reader on an emotional level.

In this study we have provided evidence and arguments that this also affects the readers' attitude towards the credibility of the media. Furthermore, we researched the correlation between readers' emotional reactions and their exposure to clickbait headlines. Our research also emphasized a new role of linguistic techniques when used in the media by journalists and editors as a new method to attract audiences in relation to increasing commercialization of the media content. The limitation of this research paper is the fact that it did not focus on a psychological perspective in relation to emotional reactions. We believe that a broader interdisciplinary holistic approach could provide a better insight into the reasons as well as psychologically more elaborate explanations of the behaviour of the public that consumes clickbait headlines on a daily basis. This study provided a detailed insight into the Croatian context. Yet, we believe that our research model could be replicated for comparative research on a global scale. Moreover, our research has opened some new questions.

Is curiosity created by the media through the use of clickbait headlines strong enough to overcome the feeling of disappointment and mistrust? Or maybe the systematic clickbait bombardment has lowered the audience's expectations to the point that they no longer expect high-quality media content, and the continuation of that trend only feeds a further pattern of behaviour that puts both the audience and journalism as a profession in great danger? The answers to these questions should definitely be sought in future research.

Acknowledgement: The research was conducted as part of the research project “Journalism Research Lab: Innovative Storytelling Practices to Engage New Audiences” (JOURLAB) which is funded by The Croatian Science Foundation, IP-2019-04-6331, led by Professor Tena Perišin.

Literature and Sources:

ALVES, L. et al.: Click Bait: You Won't Believe What Happens Next. In *Fronteiras: Journal of Social, Technological and Environmental Science*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 196-213. ISSN 2238-8869.

³⁸ BURGET, R. et al.: Recognition of Emotions in Czech Newspaper Headlines. In *Radioengineering*, 2011, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 39.

Aposiopesis. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.google.com/search?q=aposiopesis>>.

ASLAM, F. et al.: Sentiments and Emotions Evoked by News Headlines of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak. In *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2020, p. 1-9. ISSN 26629992.

BAGIĆ, K.: *Rječnik stilskih figura*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 2012.

BAZACO, A. et al.: Clickbait as a Strategy of Viral Journalism: Conceptualisation and Methods. In *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 2019, No. 74, p. 94-115. Available at: <<https://www.revistalatinacs.org/074paper/1323/06en.html>>. ISSN 1138-5820.

BECK, B. et al.: Clickbait/mamilica: Deset Načina Manipulacije Kontekstom. In JURISIĆ, J., HRNJIĆ KUDUZOVIĆ, Z. (eds): *Medijska agenda 2020 – 2030. Zbornik radova 10. regionalne znanstvene konferencije Vjerodostojnost medija*. Zagreb : Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu and Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 2021, p. 89-102.

BOSTAN, L. et al.: GoodNewsEveryone: A Corpus of News Headlines Annotated with Emotions, Semantic Roles, and Reader Perception. In CALZOLARI, N., BÉCHET, F., BLACHE, P. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 12th Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation Conference*. Marseille, France : European Language Resources Association, 2020, p. 1554-1566.

BURGET, R. et al.: Recognition of Emotions in Czech Newspaper Headlines. In *Radioengineering*, 2011, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 39-47. ISSN 12102512.

CHEN, Y. et al.: Misleading Online Content: Recognizing Clickbait as “False News”. In ABOUELENIEN, M. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 2015 ACM on Workshop on Multimodal Deception Detection*. Washington, USA : Association for Computing Machinery New York NY United States, 2015, p. 15-19.

CHAKRABORTY, A. et al.: Stop Clickbait: Detecting and Preventing Clickbaits in Online News Media. In ROKNE, J. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*. Davis, CA, USA : IEEE Press, 2016, p. 9-16.

CIBOCI, L. et al.: Djeca u Dnevnim Novinama: Analiza Izvještavanja o Djeci u 2010. In CIBOCI, L., KANIŽAJ, I., LABAŠ, D. (eds): *Djeca Medija. Od Marginalizacije do Senzacije*. Zagreb : Matica Hrvatska, 2011, p. 103-169.

Etudes Littéraires. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.etudes-litteraires.com/figures-de-style/preterition.php>>.

FISHER, C.: The Trouble with ‘Trust’ in News Media. In *Communication Research and Practice*, 2016, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 451-465. ISSN 22063374.

HUDEČEK, L., MIHALJEVIĆ, M.: *Jezik Medija – Publicistički Funkcionalni Stil*. Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2009.

Hrvatska zaklada za znanost. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://hrzz.hr/wp-content/uploads/Jourlab-Sto-publika-zeli-Anketa.pdf>>.

KANIŽAJ, I., LECHPAMMER, S.: The Role of Organisations of Journalists in Promoting Media Literacy–Building Credibility and Trust. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 24-37. ISSN 2585-9188.

LOEWENSTEIN, G.: The Psychology of Curiosity: A Review and Reinterpretation. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 1994, Vol. 116, No. 1, p. 75-98. ISSN 0033-2909.

Merriam-Webster. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apophasis>>.

Merriam-Webster. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disillusion>>.

MOLEK-KOZAKOWSKA, K.: Towards a Pragma-linguistic Framework for the Study of Sensationalism in News Headlines. In *Discourse & Communication*, 2013, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 173-197. ISSN 1750-4821.

MOLYNEUX, L., CODDINGTON, M.: Aggregation, Clickbait and Their Effect on Perceptions of Journalistic Credibility and Quality. In *Journalism Practice*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 429-446. ISSN 17512786.

Oxford Language. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.google.com/search?q=aposiopesis>>.

Oxford Language. [online]. [2022-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.google.com/search?q=paratext+meaning>>.

SCOTT, K.: You Won't Believe What's in this Paper! Clickbait, Relevance and the Curiosity Gap. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2021, Vol. 175, p. 53-66. ISSN 0378-2166.

WAINBERG, J. A.: Headlines, Emotions and Utopia. In *Intercom Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, 2015, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 191-211. ISSN 1980-3508.

WANG, W. et al.: Clicks can be Cheating: Counterfactual Recommendation for Mitigating Clickbait Issue. In DIAZ, F., SHAH, CH., SUEL, T. et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 44th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval*. New York, NY, United States : Association for Computing Machinery, 2022, p. 1288-1297.

Authors



Assoc. Prof. Igor Kanižaj, PhD.

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Political Science
Lepušićeva 6
10000 Zagreb
CROATIA
ikanizaj@fpzg.hr

Igor Kanižaj, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Media Production at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. From 2010 he has been teaching journalism and in last ten years his field of interest is media education and media literacy. He is also Vice president of the Association for Communication and Media Culture (DKMK). Together with his associates he is coordinating the project Djeca medija, the biggest media education project in Croatia This project was awarded with Evens Foundation Special Jury Prize for media education in 2017. He is the co-author of the first public opinion research on Media Literacy in Croatia and coauthor of Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in Digital Era (UNESCO).

Boris Beck, PhD.

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Political Science
Lepušićeva 6
10000 Zagreb
CROATIA
boris.beck@fpzg.hr



Boris Beck, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism and Media Production at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. He teaches media language, journalist stylistics and rhetoric and his other interests include bible and animal studies. For the last two years, he was an editor at the journalistic project of inclusion through culture. He published eleven books of academic, essayistic and fictional prose and is also the language stylist of the new translation of the Bible into Croatian.



Stela Lechpammer, M.A.

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Political Science
Lepušićeva 6
10000 Zagreb
CROATIA
stela.lechpammer@fpzg.hr

Stela Lechpammer, M.J., is a Teaching and Research Assistant at the Department of Journalism and Media Production at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. She teaches print and online journalism, and she has been mentor-editor at student newspaper Global. She enrolled in a PhD study in 2018 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and since 2020, she has been an associate on the project of the Croatian Science Foundation "JOURNALISM RESEARCH LAB: Innovative Storytelling Practices to Engage New Audiences". She is also a technical editor of the interdisciplinary scientific journal "Media Studies", published by the Faculty of Political Science. For the last eight years, she also has been working as a journalist and editor in a Croatian daily newspaper Večernji list, and since 2022 she is an executive editor of Večernji list.

Igor Weidlich, M.A.

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Political Science
Lepušićeva 6
10000 Zagreb
CROATIA
igor.weidlich@fpzg.hr



Igor Weidlich, M.J., is a Lecturer at the Department of Journalism and Media Production at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. As well as teaching journalism, he has been an Editor-In-Chief of the student newspaper and online portal Global, published by the Faculty of Political Science. He also teaches journalism at the VERN' University in Zagreb. In his career, he worked as a journalist and an editor in daily newspaper Vjesnik for seven years until 2012, and after that he worked in public relations and as a freelance journalist. He is also an acknowledged playwright.



Katarína Fichnová, Zdenko Mago, Patrik Lenghart

Perception of the Higher Education in Digital Games by Slovak High School Students

ABSTRACT

The gaming sector is currently, with about 3 billion gamers worldwide, one of the best developing segments in society, not negatively affected even by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the interest in working in this sector increases, so does the interest in higher education in this field. Although the first steps in establishing game studies on the academic grounds date back to the 1980s, this study field institutionalization beginnings can be talked about since 2000 with occurring the ludology definition and the emergence of the first game-oriented scientific journals. Despite the difficult start, in the present, studying digital games is not so limited, partial as well as full degree study programs appear at universities all around the world, but high school graduates are often not aware of these options, even in their nearest surroundings. The study aims to identify the level of awareness of the possibilities within higher education in the field of digital game studies and to determine the attitudes of potential future university students to this field of education in Slovakia that in recent years has significantly eliminated the gap between the level of the Slovak and the Western (or world) gaming sector after the fall of the Iron Curtain. In the study, the authors respond to the three main problems via research completed with a representative sample of respondents. Data show that the level of awareness about these study options if is insufficient, but not lower than the awareness about other study programs. The discovered attitudes are of little consistence and their valency tends from neutral to slightly negative. However, statistics show that respondents perceive the study program of digital gaming as potentially pleasant and at the same time, there is a significant correlation between playing digital games and displaying positive attitudes towards potential studying of the field in the target group.

KEY WORDS

Attitudes. Digital Games. Game Studies. High School Students. Higher Education. Perception.

1 Introduction

Although the first forms of what is now called digital games began to appear in the early 1960s (*Spacewar!*¹ from 1962 is considered the first “digital” game), the study of games started to frame much later, in the 1980s, within other academic disciplines. The author of the first dissertation focused on computer games (entitled “What Makes Things Fun to Learn? A Study of Intrinsically Motivating Computer Games”) from 1980 was the student of psychology.² The possibility of the game studies existence as a field of humanities was predetermined by the first conference focused on games, “Video Games and Human Development”, which took place at Harvard University in 1983.³ In the following period, authors tried to explain the theory of digital games based on the research of other media (e.g., drama, theatre, film), which led to a dispute between game scholars and narratologists regarding the study of games only through a scope of methodological approaches of narratology.⁴ In 1999, G. Frasca used the term *ludology* to describe the multidisciplinary discipline of studying games and playing separately from narratology but partially utilizing its approaches.⁵ According to M.-L. Ryan, the creation of ludology did not mean to ignore narratology in the context of games study and research, but the creation of a discipline that required “to expand the catalog of narrative modalities beyond the diegetic and the dramatic, by adding a phenomenological category tailor-made for games”.⁶

Game studies, more commonly used term for ludology, as a viable academic field were considered since 2001 when the first international scholarly conference was held in Copenhagen, and universities started to offer graduate programs in game studies for the first time.⁷ F. Mäyrä defines current game studies as “a new academic field and interdisciplinary field of learning, which focuses on games, playing and related phenomena. Its recent rise is linked with the emergence of digital games as a cultural force, but it is not restricted to any technology or medium”.⁸ However, the establishment of game studies in academia has been slow and very unequal in individual parts of the world because different geopolitical conditions have influenced the level of the gaming sector development as well as the overall cultural perception of digital games. Regarding Slovakia, then Czechoslovakia, it was a part of the Eastern Bloc, as a socialist country behind the Iron Curtain, until 1989, which slowed down the development of the gaming sector in this region. While the neighboring countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic managed to reach back the level of the Western world in this regard faster, in Slovakia, the development of the gaming sector started to escalate more significantly only in 2007 with newly established game developer companies (e.g., Pixel Federation).⁹ At present, the level of the Slovak gaming sector is notably closer to the general standard, and also many attractive job opportunities for young people related to it.

¹ RUSSELL, S.: *Spacewar!*. [digital game]. Cambridge, MA : S. Russell, 1962.

² AARSETH, E.: Meta-Game Studies. In *Game Studies*, 2015, Vol. 15, No. 1. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/editorial>>.

³ MAGO, Z.: Úvod do štúdia digitálnych hier I. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 10.

⁴ For more information, see: AARSETH, E.: *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, MD : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.; FRASCA, G.: Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology. In WOLF, M. J. P., BERNARD, P. (eds.): *The Video Game Theory Reader*. London, New York, NY : Routledge, 2003, p. 222-225.

⁵ FRASCA, G.: Simulation Versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology. In WOLF, M. J. P., BERNARD, P. (eds.): *The Video Game Theory Reader*. London, New York, NY : Routledge, 2003, p. 336

⁶ RYAN, M.-L.: Beyond Myth and Metaphor – The Case of Narrative in Digital Media. In *Game Studies*, 2001, Vol. 1, No. 1. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/0101/ryan/>>.

⁷ AARSETH, E.: Computer Game Studies, Year One. In *Game Studies*, 2001, Vol. 1, No. 1. [online]. [2022-07-23]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/0101/editorial.html>>.

⁸ MÄYRÄ, F.: *An Introduction to Game Studies: Games in Culture*. London : SAGE Publications, 2008, p. 11.

⁹ MAGO, Z.: Úvod do štúdia digitálnych hier I. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 38; For a more historical background of the development of the gaming sector in Slovakia, see: ŠVELCH, J.: *Gaming the Iron Curtain: How Teenagers and Amateurs in Communist Czechoslovakia Claimed the Medium of Computer Games*. Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 2018.; KABÁT, M. et al.: Pen & Paper & Xerox: Early History of Tabletop RPGs in Czechoslovakia. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 102-117.

The number of gamers all over the world is increasing at a dizzying pace. While in 2015, when the first accredited study program in the field of digital games, or game studies in general, was established in Slovakia, there were less than two billion players worldwide, by 2022, their number rose to 3.2 billion, with a total value of the global game market of almost 200 billion USD.¹⁰ A society, in which new entities of digital game development have been rapidly established, including countless independent game developers, must respond to these facts in several spheres, one of which is the higher education. Particularly, when university education in game studies is now more available and nearer than ever, even in Slovakia.

Besides mentioned fully accredited study program at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (and opportunities to study relevant fields, programs or subjects abroad), there are more recently created games-oriented bachelor programs at the Academy of Performing Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, and the game design laboratory GAMElab at the University of Žilina.¹¹ The question is, if interested in applying in the gaming sector in the future, to what extent are high school students aware of their options to actually study the field of digital games within higher education at all, and not just commonly known related fields, like programming at the computer science study programs, and what are their attitudes towards it, especially if relevant education has never been a condition to apply in the gaming sector? The study, therefore, aims to identify the level of high school students' awareness of the possibilities within higher education in the field of digital game studies and to determine their attitudes to this field of education in Slovakia.

2 Methodology

2.1 Objectives and Research Problems

Inspired by the facts described in the text, we set the following research aims: To identify the level of awareness in the target group about the options of acquiring qualification in the frame of higher education in the field of digital gaming¹² and to discover the attitudes¹³ of potential future university students toward this study field in Slovakia. Consequently, we formulated the following research problems (RPs):

RP1: How high is the level of awareness about the options of acquiring of qualification in the frame of higher education of digital gaming studies in potential future university students (respectively, the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies) in Slovakia?

¹⁰ WIJMAN, T.: *The Games Market Will Show Strong Resilience in 2022, Growing by 2.1% to Reach \$196.8 Billion*. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/the-games-market-will-show-strong-resilience-in-2022>>.

¹¹ *Ako na Slovensku študovať tvorbu videohier? Tu nájdete odpoveď*. [online]. [2022-07-25]. Available at: <<https://sgda.sk/education/>>; Digital competences of teachers are discussed in: GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: On Perspectives of Teacher Training and Understanding of Their Digital Competencies as Determinants of Digital Education. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 119-130.

¹² Regarding the fact that during the time of realization of this research, there was only one registered and accredited study program in the field of digital gaming, all of our data is narrowed to the study program of *Theory of Digital Games* at University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.

¹³ We depart from the tripartite perspective of attitude valency: *actional* (behavior), *informational* (cognitive), and *emotional* (affective). See, e.g. SMITH, M. B.: The Personal Setting of Public Opinions: A Study of Attitudes Toward Russia. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1947, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 507-523.; KATZ, D., STOTLAND, E.: A Preliminary Statement to a Theory of Attitude Structure and Change. In KOCH, S. (ed.): *Psychology: A Study of a Science: Vol. 3 Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*. New York, NY, Toronto, London : McGraw-Hill, 1959, p. 423-475.; ROSENBERG, M. J., HOVLAND, C. I.: Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Components of Attitudes. In ROSENBERG M. et al. (eds.): *Attitude Organization and Change*. New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, 1960, p. 1-14.

RP2: What are the attitudes towards the options of higher education in the field of digital gaming and game design in potential university students (respectively, the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies) in Slovakia?

RP2.1: Are the attitudes consistent in all their aspects? (As in, are there no significant differences between the investigated aspects of an attitude – actional, emotional and informational?)

RP3: Is there a significant positive correlation between the attitude towards playing digital games and the attitude towards potentially studying a related field in students of the last three years of high schools in Slovakia?

2.2 Research Sample, Strategy and Methods

The basic sample (population) for our research, in regard to the formulated research problems, were students of high school study programs with a secondary school leaving examination (respectively, the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies – usually aged 17, 18 and 19 years old) in Slovakia. Size of the basic sample of was set based on available data, as presented in the Table 1.

	17 years old	18 years old	19 years old	summary
number	51602	49794	51480	152876

TABLE 1: Number of high school students in Slovakia, structured by age

Source: own processing, 2022, according to: HALL, R. et al.: *Analyzy zistení o stave školstva: To dá rozum*. Bratislava : MESA10, 2020, p. 1120. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <<https://analyza.todarozum.sk/analyza-zisteni-o-stave-skolstva-na-slovensku.pdf>>.

Calculation of the necessary selected sample was based on the level of reliability set to 95%, with the reliability interval of 5. The calculated sample size for the set parameters equals $N=383$. Respondents for the selected sample were recruited via a commercial panel of respondents with a condition to make the sample representative, with regard to the population, age, type of study, diversity of both sexes and their residence (by regions). Between authors, there has been no real consensus about size of selected sample, with discussions primarily regarding the criteria with which these decisions must be made. Some (see P. Mareš et al.,¹⁴ J. E. Bartlett et al.¹⁵) insist that besides the sample size, the type of data (for example different approaches towards sample setting, for which sometimes nominal variable should be set, and sometimes interval variables should be set). N. Radley¹⁶ proposes that the sample size should be attributed to the type of research. Larger sample sizes are not necessarily a guarantee for higher quality of data. The classicist author G. Gallup¹⁷ points out that a well-selected sample of smaller size is preferable to an inadequately-selected sample size of larger size. Regarding the fact that not even the commercial companies focused on recruitment of respondents were not able to provide the required research size of respondents, we had to proceed with a limited number of respondents. The utilized sized, however, did fulfill the criteria for representativeness.

Altogether, 76 respondents took part in our research. The average age was 18 years (220 months) and 00 months (standard deviation = 7.28). The oldest respondent was 19.66 years old, the youngest was 17.08 years old. 52.6% of our respondents were female, 47.4% were

¹⁴ See: MAREŠ, P., RABUŠIČ, L., SOUKUP, P.: *Analyza sociálněvědních dat (nejen) v SPSS*. Brno : MUNI Press, 2015.

¹⁵ See: BARTLETT, J. E., KOTRLIK, J. W., HIGGINS, J. C.: Organizational Research: Determining Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research. In *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 2001, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 43-50.

¹⁶ See: BRADLEY, N.: *Marketing Research. Tools and Techniques*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013.

¹⁷ See: GALLUP, G.: *Průvodce po výzkumu veřejného mínění*. Prague : Orbis, 1948.

male, which respects the representation of sexes in population. All of the respondents were high school students studying programs with a secondary school leaving examination, or just very recently passed their secondary school leaving exam. All regions of Slovakia were sufficiently represented. From the points of time invested in digital gaming, it is notable that the sample was heterogeneous with the average time spent playing digital games set at 92.17 minutes, median 60 minutes (standard deviation=113,91) and while it is not a normal dataset for population (value of the K-S test statistic (D) is .20767 and the p -value is .00236), we tend to believe that the data acquired by our survey could be used as an orientational guide for creation of an image of variables set in the formulated research problems. 72.4% of our respondents noted that they play digital games at some frequency (from occasional playing through regular playing to spending most of the free time by playing).

An online combination survey was utilized in our research, with aspects of scaling survey. Distribution and collection were completed electronically. The survey is a part of a wider research project, and therefore included 23 items divided into two groups: items focused on the topics of the research problems, and items focused on the sample's data. Not all items are subjects of this study. The items varied, some were open-ended and some were closed-ended, the latter were scaled by verbal specification on a 7-points scale (in some cases a 5-points scale, depending on the item's nature), with the option to choose a neutral answer. The demographic data was accessed by items with optional answers (region of residence, sex, age) or by open-ended items in the survey (school of study).

Data analysis was realized through statistical approaches of descriptive and inductive statistics, using the Microsoft Excel software and the SPSS software. The attitude scaling and scaling items were addressed in unison with other authors¹⁸ as interval variables, while we are aware that some authors¹⁹ propose that scaled data should be processed as ordinal data.

3 Results

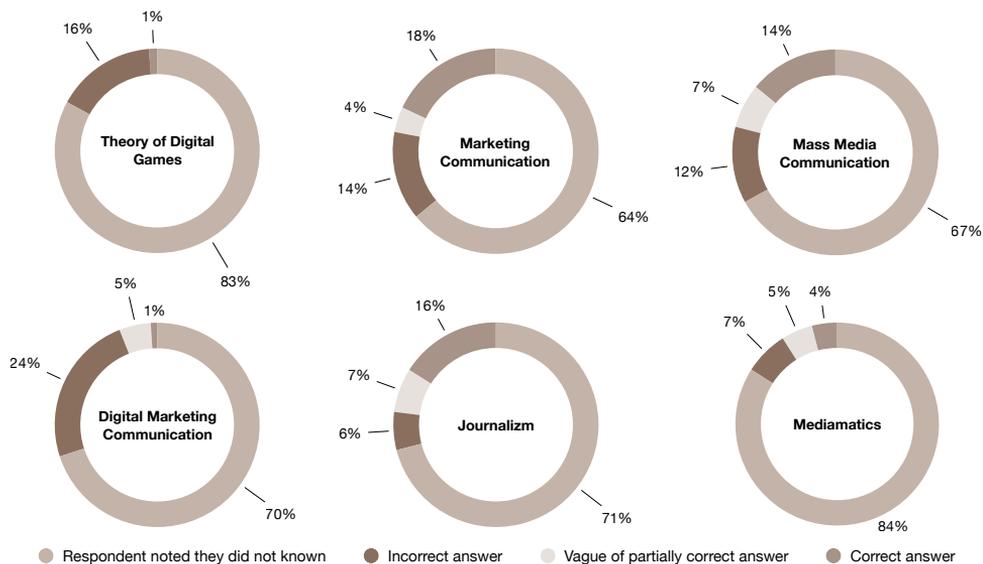
3.1 The Level of Awareness of Higher Education Options in the Field of Digital Gaming in Slovakia

The first research problem (RP1) was focused on the level of awareness about options of acquiring of qualification in the frame of higher education in the field of digital gaming and gaming design in potential future university students – the students of the last three years of high school studies in Slovakia. Of all the respondents, 47.37% wish to study (any study program) in Slovakia, while 25% would like to study abroad. A relatively sizable part of the respondents still did not have a plan after their secondary school leaving exam (10.5%). 2.6% respondents chose a different answer – enterprise, dual study etc. 14.5% of the respondents planned on getting employed after their secondary school leaving exam. Only minimum of respondents (1.32%) knew, which universities offer study programs focused on digital games. The rest answered they did not know or answered incorrectly.

¹⁸ For more information, see: KERLINGER, F. N. *Základy výzkumu chování*. Prague : Akademia, 1972.; LEONG, F. T. L., AUSTIN, J. T.: *The Psychology Research Handbook: A Guide for Graduate Students and Research Assistants*. Thousand Oaks, CA, London, New Delhi : Sage, 2006.; KAČÁNIOVÁ, M.: *Implicit Association Test and its Application in Research of Consumer Preferences*. In *Dot.comm*, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 1-2, p. 7-13.; WOJCIECHOWSKI, Ł.: *Ambientná reklama a jej percepcia generáciou Y*. [Habilitation Thesis]. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019.; MIKULÁŠ, P., WOJCIECHOWSKI, Ł.: *Celebrity Necromarketing: Nonliving Celebrities in Media Communication*. In *Marketing Identity: Digital Life – part I*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2015, p. 192-207.

¹⁹ See: GRAVETTER, F. J., WALLNAU, L. B.: *Essentials of Statistics for Behavioral Science*. Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2008.; MCBURNEY, D. H., WHITE, T. L.: *Research Methods*. Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010.

These figures are shown on the Graph 1. The numbers of respondents who knew, where it is possible to study the field of digital gaming theory, and who did not know or chose an incorrect answer, are significantly different (The Chi² value is 114.38. The *p*-value is < .00001. The result is significant at *p* < .001). The most frequently presented incorrect answer was the University of Žilina (the respondents did not choose from a selection of options, the item of the survey was open-ended).



GRAPH 1: Distribution of answers of the research sample on the item regarding information about options, where it is possible to study the theory of digital gaming and other programs from the field of media and communication studies in Slovakia

Source: own processing, 2022.

Most of the respondents also perceive their own information about the university study program of the theory of digital gaming as insufficient, as is shown in the Table 2.

The range of information about the theory of digital gaming field by a respondent:		Self-evaluation of the respondents– how much information do they have about the theory of digital gaming study program		Assumption that the respondent will look up more information about the study program of theory of digital gaming.	
Absolutely insufficient (1)	35.5%	Much less than the others (1)	42.1%	Definitely wrong (1)	23.7%
Insufficient (2)	15.8%	Less than the others (2)	9.2%	Wrong (2)	19.7%
Rather insufficient (3)	15.8%	Probably less than the others (3)	22.4%	Probably wrong (3)	13.2%
Nor sufficient, neither insufficient (4)	18.4%	As much as the others (4)	18.4%	Nor wrong, neither correct (4)	21.1%
Rather sufficient (5)	9.2%	Probably more than the others (5)	3.9%	Probably correct (5)	10.5%
Sufficient (6)	0.0%	More than the others (6)	1.3%	Correct (6)	5.3%
Absolutely sufficient (7)	5.3%	Much more than the others (7)	2.6%	Definitely correct (7)	6.6%
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%		100.0%

TABLE 2: Information about the university study program of the digital gaming theory in the research sample – the students of the last three years of high school studies with a secondary school leaving exam in Slovakia

Source: own processing, 2022.

As opposed to this data, the level of awareness about related study programs in the field of media and communication studies in the target group is higher, with exceptions of mediamatics and digital marketing communication, in which only minimum of respondents were able to localize the programs correctly (1.32% for digital marketing communication and 3.95% for mediamatics). Especially notable level of awareness was present for marketing communication, mass-media communication and journalism. For example, 18.42% of the respondents were able to correctly answer where is it possible to study marketing communication (this figure was at only 1.32% for digital gaming), while 64.47% mentioned they did not know (this figure was at 82.89% for digital gaming), and finally 14.47% of the respondents answered incorrectly, while 3.95% answered partially correctly (for example including multiple answers with some correct ones among them). Institutions of higher education offering the mass-media communication study program were correctly named by 14.47% of the respondents, incorrectly named by 11.84% respondents and partially correctly by 6.58% of the respondents, while 67.11% answered they did not know, which institutions offer this study program. The differences in the data about identification of study options for the investigated study programs at the concrete colleges and universities were statistically significant (absolute values calculated) (The χ^2 value is 52.025. The p -value is $< .0000056$. The result is significant at $p < .001$; with regard to some of the lower counts we chose to implement the Yates' correction, and the results are: Yates' chi-square 42.803, Yates' p -value is 0.00016893. The result is significant at $p < .001$).

To answer the RP1 we are therefore able to generalize, that the level of awareness about the options of acquiring qualification in the frame of higher education in the field digital gaming in potential future university students (the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies) in Slovakia is rather low, while the level of awareness about the study programs in the field of media and communication studies is significantly different, hugely disadvantaging digital gaming and mediamatics, but not significantly different from the level of awareness about other study programs from various fields.

3.2 Attitudes of Youth in Slovakia Towards Possibilities of Acquiring Higher Education in the Field of Digital Gaming

The identified attitudes towards possibilities of acquiring higher education in the field of digital gaming in potential future university students (the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies) showed, that these attitudes tend to have neutral to negative valency (RP2.1) while also showing a slight inconsistency. Specific data is included in the Table 3.

Information aspect	AM*	sd			
	2,59	1,43			
	Actional aspect	2,62			1,47
Emotional aspect	4,01	1,48	Legend: - - - = center, blue = resulting profile		
T value		P value			
Actional vs. emotional	6.209416	3,52762E-08 *** Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***			
Actional vs. informational	0.42487	0,911269 n.s. Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***			
Informational vs. emotional	6.204536	1,36085E-08 *** Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***			
correlation	Informational	actional	emotional		
	0.1358 p 0.242 n.s. Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***	0.2391 p 0.037 * Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***	0.4138 p 0.002 *** Bonfer. Cor. 0.000***		

Note: data was transposed to the scale of 1-7 for the purposes of the research
 Legend: *** = The value of p is < .001, * = The value of p is < .05, significant, n.p. = not significant, Bonfer. Cor. = Bonferroni correction

TABLE 3: Aspects of attitudes and significance of differences between the attitude aspects towards the theory of digital gaming study program in the research sample – the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies in Slovakia

Source: own processing, 2022.

While the emotional aspect oscillates around the neutral position with a slightly positive tendency, the actional and informational aspects are saturated minimally – the respondents did not have information and declared low activity in the attitude. The aforementioned differences are also highly statistically significant (RP2.2). Furthermore, it was identified that a minority of the respondents see the theory of digital gaming study program as socially beneficial (26.95%), while 40.79% perceive it as non-beneficial, and 30.3% did not take a stand on this topic. This data is cumulated from a 7-point scale and the results were also confronted with the discovered aspects of the attitudes (Picture 1 – below). The results confirmed that perceived social benefit of the study program correlates with the researched aspects of the attitudes. With a well-aimed campaign, it should be possible to increase positive emotional response and attitude, while also increasing the actional and informational saturation of the attitudes towards the study program, after which we could expect an increase in the perceived social benefit of the study program. The campaign mechanisms themselves, however, could not be identified solely with the data from this research.

3.3 Correlation Between Playing Digital Games and Intentions Towards University Study of the Digital Gaming Studies Study Program

We present the basic information for the RP3 in the Table 4 and Table 5. This data shows, that the respondents of the research sample comprise a relatively heterogenous sample in the relationship to playing digital gaming, but the intensity was mostly leaning towards occasional playing, sometimes regular playing, for entertainment purposes. Strong gamers, who spent most of their free time by playing video games, were represented by 7.9% of the respondents. Professional gamers were not in the research sample (0%). Similar results are connected to

the experienced Flow – value 2.51 suggests rather limited experience with the aforementioned phenomenon in the research sample (52.72% of the respondents have not engaged with the game to an extent, in which they would stop paying attention to their surroundings). A relatively high level of the standard deviation (sd=2.26), however, suggests, that there are respondents in the research sample (32%) who had noted the phenomenon, and 9.1% of them even agrees with the said statement totally.

	Self-evaluation in digital gaming		Chosen aspects of the attitudes towards the theory of digital gaming study program			
	Playing digital games ^I	the Flow experience while gaming ^{II}	Interest in the digital gaming study program ^{III}	Suitability of the study program for the respondent ^{IV}	Prediction-anticipation of pleasantness/unpleasantness of the program ^V	Probability of choosing the study program ^{VI}
AM	1.11	2.51	2.82	2.45	4.01	2.07
sd	0.90	2.26	2.01	1.92	1.48	1.53

Legend – see the footnotes²⁰

TABLE 4: Average score and standard deviations in the investigated variables in the research sample – the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies in Slovakia

Source: own processing, 2022.

The digital gaming theory study program appeals to youth relatively similarly to other study programs, while during the interpretation of this data it is necessary to take into account the extensive list of various offered study programs from various fields (currently, there are 48 fields included in the guideline of the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport).²¹ It also important to note the not entirely sufficient size of the research sample (N=76), which would theoretically appropriate about 1.5 respondent for every single study program, if these

²⁰ I The score displays the measure of intensity scaling from 0 to 4, while the 0 marks the respondents who do not play digital games, and the 1 marks the respondents who play digital games occasionally. The final value is 4, which would mark the professional gamer. Respondents were also presented with the option to choose 'other', but none have chosen this option.

II The Flow experience marks such a measure of engagement while playing a digital game, that the player stops paying attention to their surroundings. The 0 marks the respondents who do not play digital games, the 1 marks the respondents who report the Flow experience is not a precise description for their experiences, while 2 is not correct, 3 less than correct, 4 nor correct, neither incorrect, 5 somehow correct, 6 correct, 7 absolutely correct.

III The respondents answered how interesting is the digital gaming theory study program for them – the score was attributed in accordance with the 1-7 scale, in which the 1 marks the respondent for whom the study program is absolutely uninteresting, while the 7 marks the respondent for whom the study program is absolutely interesting. The respondents who did not know of the program were attributed with the score 0.

IV The respondent answered how suitable is the digital gaming theory study program for them – the score was attributed in accordance with the 1-7 scale, in which the 1 marks the respondent for whom the study program is absolutely unsuitable, while the 7 marks the respondent for whom the study program is absolutely suitable. The respondents who did not know of the program were attributed with the score 0.

V The respondents presented their anticipated measure of pleasantness, respectively unpleasantness of the study program on the 1-7 scale, in which the 1 marks the respondent for whom the study programs seem absolutely unpleasant, while the 7 marks the respondent for whom the study program seems absolutely pleasant. The respondents who did not know of the program were attributed with the score 0.

VI The respondents answered an item about the probability of them choosing the digital gaming study program for their university study, and received score on the 1-7 scale, in which the 1 marks the respondent with an extremely low probability to choose the program, while the 7 marks the respondent with an extreme probability to choose the program.

²¹ Študijné odbory, v ktorých môžu vysoké školy v Slovenskej republike poskytovať vysokoškolské vzdelávanie. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/prilohy/SK/ZZ/2019/244/20190901_5173916-2.pdf>.

respondents were to be divided accordingly. Taking this division into consideration, the fact that 2.6% respondents noted that the digital gaming field is absolutely interesting for them. The average measured value is 2.82, but the high standard deviation value also points at some of the youth with a high measure of declared interest.

This data also suggests, that the respondents consider the study program as potentially pleasant to study (40.8% vs. 28.0% of those, who see it as potentially unpleasant to study). 30.3% of the respondents took a neutral position on the scale. The correlation coefficients are also included in the Table 4.

Chosen aspects of the attitudes towards the theory of digital gaming study program				
	interest in the digital gaming study program	suitability of the student program for the respondent	Prediction – anticipation of pleasantness / unpleasantness of the study program	probability to choose the study program
playing digital games	R = 0.3338 P-Value = 0.003211 ** Bonf. Cor. 0.00040	R = 0.2799 P-Value= 0.014332 * Bonf. Cor. 0.00179	R = 0.3474 P-Value = 0.002107 ** Bonf. Cor. 0.00026	R = 0.3142 P-Value = 0.005708 ** Bonf. Cor. 0.00071
the Flow experience	R = 0.1795 P-Value = 0.120772 n.s. Bonf. Cor. 0.01510	R = 0.3242 P-Value = 0.004276 ** Bonf. Cor. 0.00053	R = 0.2486 P-Value = 0.030354 * Bonf. Cor. 0.00379	R = 0.2878 P-Value = 0.011703 * Bonf. Cor. 0.00146

Note: Statistically significant correlation even before corrections are marked with bold, * = The value of $p < .05$; ** = The value of $p < .01$; The value of n.s. = not significant, Bonf. Cor. = Bonferroni correction

TABLE 5: Identified levels of correlation between playing digital games and shown aspects of attitudes towards potential study of the theory of digital gaming study program in the research sample - the students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies in Slovakia

Source: own processing, 2022.

Since we completed repeated confrontation of the data via the correlation coefficient, the final values of significance were finally submitted to the Bonferroni's correction (Table 4, marked as 'Bonf. Cor.'). The data confirmed that the interest in digital gaming as a hobby significantly correlates to the interest of studying the field of the theory of digital gaming study program, which these respondents could choose for their university study. Similarly, those who play digital games perceive their probability to choose this field as higher. For the RP3 we can therefore conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between playing digital games and the declared attitudes towards the potential study of such a field in the students of the last three years of high school study in Slovakia. It is, however, necessary to submit these finding to further similar analysis in the future, as these identified correlations do not have to necessarily stem from a causality between the investigated variables.

4 Discussion and Limits

The presented data and results need to be perceived as indicators, as the research sample used in this study was relatively small (N=76). Further limits of this study stem from the chosen method of an online survey, for which more variables not originally noted in the study, might be important (motivation of the respondents, their interests and hobbies, personal characteristics, types of factors they would consider when choosing a study field, family context connected to higher education et cetera). These results also reflect on the image of colleges, universities and faculties as well as on the situational variables, such as the current presentation of some of these institutions in connection with other topics.

Despite the aforementioned limits, it is possible to conclude that the information gathered in the study bring specific indicator not only for further research, but also for the interested subject. The question of insufficient information about university studies, respectively the fact that high school students do not have access to this information, which our study suggests, was probably one of the main reasons why the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport supported a study by the Armstrong Company.²² Among other information, this material brings insight and manuals. After extensive research, the study also pointed out that 54% of university absolvents would today make a different decision about their university education, of which 36% would choose a different university and 41% a different study program. In the material, the authors make a note that satisfaction with studying is closely connected to the prospects of future employment after completion of the study program. The correlation between satisfaction with the study program and access to sufficient information about it were further affirmed in a study by M. Bílik.²³

The digital gaming field is currently evolving rather dynamically, as is proven by the fact that in a relatively short time, various subjects and study programs connected to the field have been emerging, and not only in the context of colleges and universities, but also in the context of high school studies – which is generally a context of the last two years. Comparatively, in the Czech Republic and Poland, in which Slovak students are able to study without significant language barriers, the situation in the field of digital gaming with a calculation to the population size seems very similar.²⁴ Even further, this emergence of new study programs focused on the field even at high schools also proves the growing interest in the field, opening new perspectives for preparation of future candidates for future university studies.

Our findings correspond with the earlier research submitted by the aforementioned Armstrong company, which noted that the main benefit of higher education is perceived by the youth as a way for their own personal development.

5 Conclusion

Establishing game studies in academia as a part of humanities has overcome a difficult journey since 2001. Nowadays, a study in this field is much more accessible even in countries where the development of the overall game sector has been slowed down due to geopolitical conditions, like Slovakia. The issue is that young people in those countries interested in working in the gaming sector in the future often do not even know about existing opportunities to study digital games also within higher education.

Results of the research show, that:

- a huge majority of students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies with a secondary school leaving examination does not know where it is possible in our conditions to study a study program focused on digital gaming; these results are confirmed by a statistical significance;
- majority of respondents testify that the range of information they have about the study program focused in digital gaming is insufficient; and majority of respondents tends to believe that they themselves are less informed than their peers; most of them, however, will probably not look for more information about the topic;

²² *Fakty a údaje pre uchádzačov o vysokoškolské štúdium. Materiál o zdrojoch informácií a ich vhodnom použití v rámci rozhodovania o vysokoškolskom štúdiu.* [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6545_fakty-a-udaje-pre-uchadzacov-o-vysokosk_studium.pdf>.

²³ BÍLIK, M.: *Výsledky prieskumu – Dopad COVID-19 na študentov.* Released on 23rd July 2020. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <<https://srvs.eu/2020/07/23/vysledky-prieskumu-dopad-covid-19-na-studentov/>>.

²⁴ See: *Kształcenie dla Branży Gier.* [online]. [2022-07-30]. Available at: <<https://polskigamedev.pl/ksztalcenie-dla-branzy-gier/>>; BOJNANSKÁ, K.: *Kde v Česku studovat počítačové hry? (AKTUALIZOVÁNO 2021).* Released on 15th March 2021. [online]. [2022-07-30]. Available at: <<https://visiongame.cz/kde-v-cesku-studovat-pocitacove-hry/>>.

- attitudes of respondents regarding higher education in the digital gaming field show a slight inconsistency between the emotional, actional and informational aspects;
- the results were identified in a selected research sample consisting of youth, while we discovered a significant positive correlation between playing digital games and declaring positive attitudes towards the study program by students of the last three years of high school and grammar school studies with a secondary school leaving examination, implying that with growing frequency and intensity of playing digital games, the interest in studying a study program in such a field also tends to be higher, deeming it more interesting, potentially pleasant and generally suitable; the positive intention itself, however, must be approached with a certain level of skepticism, as these respondents had originally declared different intentions in the introductory part of the survey, implying that the survey itself might have risen the respondents' awareness of the field and study programs, possibly positively increasing saturation of the actional and informational aspects of the respondents' attitudes towards the study program;
- the frequency of playing digital games moderates several areas of attitudes towards the study program, as opposed to the Flow experience, which seems to be of very little significance when it comes to perceiving the study program as interesting.

Based on the results, we recommend:

- to increase the intensity of information campaigns about the possibilities of studying the field of digital gaming, respectively the theory of digital gaming study program, at high schools with secondary leaving exam, underlining the specific steps required for commencing the study – the topics of submitting applications, realization of the study, effects of the study and prospects of future employment for absolvents (which could support the informational and actional aspects of the attitudes);²⁵
- to also use the campaigns to improve the general image of the study program, underlining its importance for the society and other positive advantages of the field, in order to saturate context for improvement of the emotional and informational aspects of the attitudes;
- to intentionally target gamers and to recruit future students especially from the pool of young people who actively play digital games in their free time.

While the presented study presents points about various mediators of attitudes towards the university study in the field of digital gaming, it does not reflect on the structures of motivation and on the measure of conversion for the identified intentions by the youth. These phenomena will be included in future research activities of the authors, as well as other set variables, which could potentially intervene in current and future findings. We positively perceive the confirmation, that there is a correlation between interest in a field and the prospect of future employment in the youth, as this would make their path to self-development and self-realization easier. These phenomena, however, pass the boundaries of our field and point at the need to move this topic into an interdisciplinary context, in order to fulfill the ambition of addressing the topic in a more complex fashion.

Acknowledgement: The study is a partial outcome of the scientific project supported by Cultural and Educational Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (KEGA) No. 023UCM-4/2020, titled 'The development of digital game studies and design'.

²⁵ Media literacy related to digital games is analysed, e.g., by L. Škripcová. See: ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 132-138. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7_Lucia-Skripcova.pdf>.

Literature and Sources:

- AARSETH, E.: Meta-Game Studies. In *Game Studies*, 2015, Vol. 15, No. 1. ISSN 1604-7982. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/editorial>>.
- AARSETH, E.: Computer Game Studies, Year One. In *Game Studies*, 2001, Vol. 1, No. 1. ISSN 1604-7982. [online]. [2022-07-23]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/0101/editorial.html>>.
- AARSETH, E.: *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, MD : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Ako na Slovensku študovať tvorbu videohier? Tu nájdete odpoveď. [online]. [2022-07-25]. Available at: <<https://sgda.sk/education/>>.
- BARTLETT, J. E., KOTRLIK, J. W., HIGGINS, J. C.: Organizational Research: Determining Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research. In *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 2001, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 43-50. ISSN 1535-1556.
- BÍLIK, M.: *Výsledky prieskumu – Dopad COVID-19 na študentov*. Released on 23rd July 2020. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <<https://srvs.eu/2020/07/23/vysledky-prieskumu-dopad-covid-19-na-studentov/>>.
- BOJNANSKÁ, K.: *Kde v Česku studovat počítačové hry? (AKTUALIZOVÁNO 2021)*. Released on 15th March 2021. [online]. [2022-07-30]. Available at: <<https://visiongame.cz/kde-v-cesku-studovat-pocitacove-hry/>>.
- Fakty a údaje pre uchádzačov o vysokoškolské štúdium. Materiál o zdrojoch informácií a ich vhodnom použití v rámci rozhodovania o vysokoškolskom štúdiu. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6545_fakty-a-udaje-pre-uchadzacov-o-vysokosk-studium.pdf>.
- FRASCA, G.: Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology. In WOLF, M. J. P., BERNARD, P. (eds.): *The Video Game Theory Reader*. London, New York, NY : Routledge, 2003, p. 222-225.
- GALLUP, G.: *Průvodce po výzkumu veřejného mínění*. Prague : Orbis, 1948.
- GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: On Perspectives of Teacher Training and Understanding of Their Digital Competencies as Determinants of Digital Education. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 118-133. ISSN 2585-9188.
- GRAVETTER, F. J., WALLNAU, L. B.: *Essentials of Statistics for the Behavioral Science*. Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2008.
- HAPALOVÁ, M., HALL, R.: *Analýzy zistení o stave školstva. Demografické východiská úvah o stave školstva* (Tabuľa T_P1.11). Bratislava : MESA10, 2020, [online]. [Date of access, 2022-10-01]. Available at: <<https://analyza.todarozum.sk/docs/19061818140001xfj1/>>.
- KABÁT, M. et al.: Pen & Paper & Xerox: Early History of Tabletop RPGs in Czechoslovakia. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 102-117. ISSN 2585-8599.
- KAČÁNIOVÁ, M.: Implicit Association Test and its Application in Research of Consumer Preferences. In *Dot.comm*, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 1-2, p. 7-13. ISSN 1339-5181.
- KATZ, D., STOTLAND, E.: A Preliminary Statement to a Theory of Attitude Structure and Change. In KOCH, S. (ed.): *Psychology: A Study of a Science: Vol. 3 Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*. New York, NY, Toronto, London : McGraw-Hill, 1959, p. 423-475.
- KERLINGER, F. N.: *Základy výzkumu chování*. Prague : Akademia, 1972.
- Kształcenie dla Branży Gier. [online]. [2022-07-30]. Available at: <<https://polskigamedev.pl/ksztalcenie-dla-branzy-gier/>>.
- LEONG, F. T. L., AUSTIN, J. T.: *The Psychology Research Handbook: A Guide for Graduate Students and Research Assistants*. Thousand Oaks, CA, London, New Delhi : Sage, 2006.
- MAGO, Z.: *Úvod do štúdia digitálnych hier I*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020.
- MÄYRÄ, F.: *An Introduction to Game Studies: Games in Culture*. London : SAGE Publications, 2008.

- McBURNEY, D. H., WHITE, T. L.: *Research Methods*. Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010.
- MIKULÁŠ, P., WOJCIECHOWSKI, Ł.: Celebrity Necromarketing: Nonliving Celebrities in Media Communication. In *Marketing Identity: Digital Life – part I*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2015, p. 192-207.
- ROSENBERG, M. J., HOVLAND, C. I.: Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Components of Attitudes. In ROSENBERG, M. et al. (eds.): *Attitude Organization and Change*. New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, 1960, p. 1-14.
- RUSSELL, S.: *Spacewar!*. [digital game]. Cambridge, MA : S. Russell, 1962.
- RYAN, M.-L.: Beyond Myth and Metaphor – The Case of Narrative in Digital Media. In *Game Studies*, 2001, Vol. 1, No. 1. ISSN 1604-7982. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<http://gamestudies.org/0101/ryan/>>.
- SMITH, M. B.: The Personal Setting of Public Opinions: A Study of Attitudes Toward Russia. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1947, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 507-523. ISSN 0033-362X.
- ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131-140. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7_Lucia-Skripcova.pdf>.
- Študijné odbory, v ktorých môžu vysoké školy v Slovenskej republike poskytovať vysokoškolské vzdelávanie. [online]. [2022-10-01]. Available at: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/prilohy/SK/ZZ/2019/244/20190901_5173916-2.pdf>.
- ŠVELCH, J.: *Gaming the Iron Curtain: How Teenagers and Amateurs in Communist Czechoslovakia Claimed the Medium of Computer Games*. Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 2018.
- WIJMAN, T.: *The Games Market Will Show Strong Resilience in 2022, Growing by 2.1% to Reach \$196.8 Billion*. [online]. [2022-07-22]. Available at: <<https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/the-games-market-will-show-strong-resilience-in-2022>>.
- WOJCIECHOWSKI, Ł.: *Ambientná reklama a jej percepcia generáciou Y*. [Habilitation Thesis]. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019, 141 p.

Authors



Prof. Mgr. Katarína Fichnová, PhD.

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Faculty of Arts
Tr. A. Hlinku 1
949 01 Nitra
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
kfichnova@ukf.sk

Katarína Fichnová – a university pedagogue, Department of Mass Media Communication and Marketing at the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher's University in Nitra (SR). Long-term researcher focused on the topics of creativity and its effectivity, creative potential of marketing-communication agencies, creative process, social-psychological phenomenon and their application in mass media and marketing, ambient and guerilla marketing communication, digital game studies, and on new trends in media and marketing communication. A laureate of several accolades (rectors' honors, deans' honors, the deans' bronze medal and others).

Mgr. Zdenko Mago, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
zdenko.mago@ucm.sk



Zdenko Mago is an associate professor at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. He particularly focuses on interconnections between digital game studies, marketing communication and popular culture. Among others, he is the author of the monograph *World of Advergaming: Digitálne hry ako nástroje reklamy* [World of Advergaming: Digital Games as Advertising Tools] and the textbook *Dizajn reklamnej hry (nielen) pre nezávislých vývojárov* [Advergame Design (not only) for Independent Developers]. In 2014, 2017 and 2022, he was a program committee member of the international scientific conference Central and Eastern European Games Studies (CEEGS). He has been the Editor-in-Chief of the academic journal *Acta Ludologica* since 2018.



PhDr. Patrik Lenghart, PhD.

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Faculty of Arts
Tr. A. Hlinku 1
949 01 Nitra
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
patrik.lenghart@ukf.sk

Patrik Lenghart is a young researcher who has just recently started his post-doctoral work at the Department of Mass Media Communication and Marketing at the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher's University in Nitra (SR). His dissertation titled *Mediálne behaviorálne vzorce slovenskej generácie Z v sociálnych médiách* [Media behavioral patterns of the Slovak Generation Z in social media] is his latest academic work focused on the Generation Z's attitudes towards the world of mass-media communication.

Tijana Vukić

On the Threshold of a Journalism Education Studies Terminology

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this theoretical research is to open a scholarly discussion on the topic of journalism education studies terminology. The research is based upon the paradigm of sustainable journalism education and innovation, an important tool for the development of journalism education as an independent scientific discipline. It is applied to identify not yet detected or resolved problems regarding the nature and practice of the discipline which hinder its stronger progress. This article brings a synthesis of a critically analysed discipline's body of knowledge and highlights key shortcomings of that particular field of study, pointing out the urgent additional work that needs to be done – in terminology. The lack of terminological support, particularly in the context of the reference literature, turned out to be one of the key impediments. It could be, for instance, remedied by creating a glossary. However, due to the discipline's three-dimensionality (journalism, education, journalism education), this project will not be an easy endeavour, which is why the respective challenges are discussed in this paper starting from the epistemological need to internationally publish the rare attempts of unambiguously defining the fundamental terms of the discipline. Furthermore, the author proposes the central term of a future glossary, "*journalism education*", as the first entry, and therefore provides the initial review of its definitions. Due to the fact that the proposed glossary would be the first attempt to create an official terminology and given the dynamic environment in which journalism education studies and related professions are manifested, a flexible approach to the reference book's keeping up with the times is recommended.

KEY WORDS

Glossary. Innovation. Journalism Education. Reference Book. Reference Literature. Sustainable Journalism Education. Terminology.

1 Introduction

Scholars and practitioners dealing with and discussing journalism education for more than a century have compiled a substantial body of knowledge. While its roots could be traced back to formal teaching's beginnings,¹ public dialogue about the circumstances and perspective of the education of journalists in the USA and Croatia, for example, started long before.²

However, the key topic has not been problematized yet. Like other scholars, those dedicated to the research of journalism education use specific lexicon and terminology. Still, in most cases it remains on the level of an individual research context and particular understanding of concepts due to the non-existing reference literature in this specific field of study, despite the long history of educating journalists in teaching, research and media production. On the one hand, this could be the result of insufficient direct attention to the research domain from both journalistic and educational perspectives, as well as from a joint one. On the other, it is possibly due to a series of challenges that will undoubtedly accompany the realization of such a publication. Either way, such a void results in severe consequences for the discipline, which is why a shared codified language and tools for its understanding, study and reflection are not a need any more but rather a demand. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to make an initial step towards creating journalism education studies terminology by starting a scholarly conversation on this important topic.

It can be assumed that this novel, systematic, extensive and demanding scientific-professional work will become of long-term added value to the discipline. The article is, therefore, positioned as part of the discourse on journalism education sustainability, and grounded on the understanding of journalism education as an independent scholarly field of study.³ From the point of view of sustainable development, journalism education sustainability could be observed not just from systematic-educational perspective,⁴ but also concerning the sustainability of the discipline itself. One of the significant instruments for attaining sustainability is by innovation⁵ which has been seen as “an important development mechanism”⁶. The core meaning of “innovation” as a concept closely connects to the term “creativity” because it is understood from a psychological point of view as an outcome of the human creative process. Boslaugh defines it as “a new way of doing something, whether the enterprise is

¹ See: NASH, V. et al.: What is Taught in Schools of Journalism: An Analysis of the Curricula of the Members of the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism. In *University of Missouri Bulletin*, 1928, Vol. 29, No. 45, p. 4-77.

² See: GRLOVIĆ, M., 1877, as cited in LIPOVČAN, S.: *Mediji-druga zbilja? Rasprave, ogledi i interpretacija*. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006, p. 125.; APPLLEGATE, E.: *The Development of Advertising and Marketing Education: The First 75 Years*, 2008, p. 3. [online]. [2020-06-21]. Available at: <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502731.pdf>>; PULITZER, J.: The College of Journalism. In *The North American Review*, 1904, Vol. 178, No. 570, p. 641-680.

³ See: DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 19. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>; VUKIĆ, T.: Sustainable Journalism Education - The Only Possible Way Towards the Future. In *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. Sp. Ed. 1, p. 260. [online]. [2020-09-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/229379>>.

⁴ See: VUKIĆ, T. Sustainable Journalism Education - The Only Possible Way Towards the Future. In *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. Sp. Ed. 1., p. 253-279. [online]. [2020-09-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/229379>>.

⁵ See: ADAMS, R. et al.: Sustainability-oriented Innovation: A Systematic Review. In *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 2016, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 180-205. [online]. [2022-04-17]. Available at: <https://dspace.lib.cranfield.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1826/12638/Sustainability-oriented_innovation.pdf;jsessionid=3F9B9EA34E26C92B2709CE66BBEC2A21?sequence=1>.

⁶ KUZMA, E. et al.: The Relationship Between Innovation and Sustainability: A Meta-analytic Study. In *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 2020, Vol. 259, p. 1. [online]. [2020-07-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339634522_The_relationship_between_innovation_and_sustainability_A_meta-analytic_study>.

concrete (e.g. the development of a new product) or abstract (e.g. the development of a new philosophy or theoretical approach to a problem)⁷. The same author differentiates scientific innovation from innovation within an organization, as well as from industrial and technological innovation.

All of the mentioned innovation types have traditionally been noted in the rich literature on journalism education. When it comes to scientific research of journalism education, novelties are regularly found in at least ten main approaches defined by Deuze: motivation, paradigm, mission, orientation, direction, contextualization, education, curriculum, method, as well as management and organization.⁸ The pioneering work of making a journalism education studies terminology can be described as abstract novelty.

As a part of the broad theoretical discussion, this paper shows how a transformation of habitual ideas can result in innovation within the field. It also reminds us of the importance of thinking about the future of journalism (education) studies by analysing its current state. Acknowledging previous research and synthesizing the discipline's body of knowledge, the article aims to bring new insight by describing the main research problems of the discipline and pointing out the additional work that needs to be done – terminological, detecting possible obstacles and suggesting where to start on that challenging path. If it would induce future applied terminological research, that could contribute not only to the development of journalism education studies but also to journalism studies in general. The initiative could hopefully result over time in at least one reference literature title of journalism education studies as well.

2 Problems in the Research of Journalism Education

There are a number of sustainability issues connected to journalism education scientific research. Various general flaws, so far observed and recorded, can be considered as obstacles to accelerating the innovation process of the discipline. The most important are briefly discussed below.

(I.) The idea of unique journalism education is stated as one of the discipline's key challenges. There are conceptual proposals of a general approach to the research⁹ mostly originating from the idea that journalism education faces similar changes and challenges worldwide¹⁰. Although global application of unique model curricula would be an appropriate solution to many academic and professional problems from the teaching perspective, scholars in general object to such proposals because it is impossible to apply them as a whole. For example, the Western-democratic origin of the UNESCO model curricula¹¹ was resented the most by critics after various practical obstacles in the realization of such an ideal had been reported, such as those connected to form and content regarding institutional needs and potential, along with the specifics of social and other circumstances conditioning journalistic work

⁷ BOSLAUGH, S. E.: *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [online]. [2020-05-17]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/innovation-creativity>>.

⁸ DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 23. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>.

⁹ See: NOWAK, E.: *Qualitätsmodell für die Journalistenausbildung: Kompetenzen, Ausbildungswege, Fachdidaktik*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Germany : Universität Dortmund, 2007. 290 p. [online]. [2020-06-07]. Available at: <<https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/bitstream/2003/24721/2/Dissertation.pdf>>.

¹⁰ DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 20. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>.

¹¹ See: *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209>>.

in the mass media.¹² Differences that preclude a global approach to journalism education are best noticed in the catalogues of national case studies and historical reviews of journalism education and training.¹³

(II.) Another objection is that “*the education and training of journalists is a subject much debated – but only rarely researched*”¹⁴, which is explained by its specificity or generality as a product of teachers’ scholarly activities. Furthermore, journalism education research in general is characterized as too normative and descriptive, lacking empirical research.¹⁵

(III.) The lack of applied research in journalism education has also been noted by Machado and Teixeira who argue that the main reason for it is that “*the current teaching model, based on the simple reproduction of techniques and theories, can be replicated without any need for research as a point of departure for learning*”¹⁶.

(IV.) Another problem is the fact that the outcomes of scientific research on journalism education too often do not reach the key stakeholders – journalists, their superiors and the leadership of journalism education institutions – and consequently do not find application in teaching and media practice. Thus, the research becomes mostly a purpose unto itself or to an academic polemic. There are at least three potential causes of this situation. Firstly, the frequent, systematic and planned dialogue on the topic between media industry representatives, teachers and scientists is still missing in many countries although there are examples of good practice.¹⁷ Furthermore, in spite of the existing new scientific insights into journalism education, they are applied in teaching practice unevenly, too slowly and insufficiently, thus hindering the development of the field, education and profession.¹⁸ As far as the academic journalism education system is concerned, one of the main obstacles is its inertness, generally the feature of the formal education system. Therefore, such interventions mostly depend on teachers’ enthusiasm to create new courses and teaching methods, or update old ones. Beyond that it is up to the designers of the study programs who either aim at institutional excellence or regard it merely as a result of the regular study program’s audit. Most often, it is not a wide strategic issue; rather, it is about cosmetic changes whose integration is mostly forced by the development of technology and the media. It manifests as a trend of adapting study program content by changing curricula according to new phenomena in journalism or new journalistic

¹² See: FREEDMAN, E., SHAFER, R.: Ambitious in Theory but Unlikely in Practice: A Critique of UNESCO’s Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies. In *Journal of Third World Studies*, 2010, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 135-153. [online]. [2020-06-07]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290592563_Ambitious_in_theory_but_unlikely_in_practice_A_critique_of_unesco’s_model_curricula_for_journalism_education_for_developing_countries_and_emerging_democracies>.

¹³ See also: DERNBACH, B., ILLG, B.: *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries*. Manipal : Manipal Universal Press, 2019.; GOODMAN, R. S., STEIN, E.: *Global Journalism Education in the 21st Century: Challenges & Innovations*. Austin : University of Texas, 2017.; JUSIĆ, T., DEDOVIĆ, M. (eds.): *Education of Journalists in South-East Europe: A Step Toward Profession*. Sarajevo : Media Online Selections, 2002.; TERZIS, G. (ed.): *European Journalism Education*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect Books, The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

¹⁴ DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 19. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ MACHADO, E., TEIXEIRA, T.: Innovation as an Essential Part of Journalism Education in Contemporary Societies. In *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 106. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294120743_Innovation_as_an_essential_part_of_journalism_education_in_contemporary_societies>.

¹⁷ GOODMAN, R. S.: WJEC’s Paris Syndicate Program: Discussions Advance Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 2020, Vol. 75, No. 1, p. 4. [online]. [2021-01-28]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695820901940>>.

¹⁸ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing - Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 23.

and media formats.¹⁹ Last but not least, the media industry has a different starting position in understanding journalistic proficiency, which consequently leads to a conflict of the media industry's values and those which educated journalists bring from the academy.

However, the fundamental problems of journalism education studies regard its core and the environment in which it is manifested. Considering the importance of those problems, it is surprising that the following interconnected issues have not yet been scientifically articulated.

(V.) The first difficulty is limited availability and poor visibility of journalism education scientific research due to at least three reasons which make it internationally inaccessible, thus reducing the quality of new research in the discipline. To begin with, there is a large body of literature, which the international community has no or only partial insight into because these works are written and published in languages not common in international scientific communication, such as Spanish²⁰, Portuguese²¹, Russian²², Croatian²³, German²⁴, etc. This shortcoming relates to journalism education literature in general and particularly to those titles dealing with terminology, thus bringing key scientific contributions to the discipline. Therefore, such works need to be translated in order to make them internationally accessible. This also applies to books and proceedings about journalism education, of which only a small number are translated into English and in such a way made available to international scholars and professionals. Besides, key journals which publish articles from the journalism education discipline put out a definite number of papers close to their scope of interests and based on their specific understanding of what a quality paper should be. Lastly, many journals still operate in a traditional way, not following Open Access principles. Considering all that has been said, it can be concluded that for now it is up to scholars and other readers to access and study the literature in different languages.

¹⁹ See: KOTHARI, A., HICKERSON, A.: Challenges for Journalism Education in the Era of Automation. In *Media Practice and Education*, 2020, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 212-228. [online]. [2021-02-08]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343092763_Challenges_for_journalism_education_in_the_era_of_automation>; VUKIĆ, T.: Journalism Education and Fake News: A Literature Review. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2020, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 77-99. [online]. [2020-04-12]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/250789>>.

²⁰ See also: ROVEDA HOYOS, A.: ¿Es posible la formación de un pensamiento estratégico en las escuelas de comunicación y de periodismo? In *Signo y Pensamiento*, Vol. 26, No. 51, p. 98-107. [online]. [2020-07-22]. Available at: <<http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/signo/n51/n51a09.pdf>>; SÁNCHEZ-GARCÍA, P., CAMPOSDOMÍNGUEZ, E.: La formación de los periodistas en nuevas tecnologías antes y después del EEES: El caso español. In *Trípodos*, 2016, No. 38, p. 161-179. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.tripodos.com/index.php/Facultad_Comunicacion_Blanquerna/article/view/299>.

²¹ See also: DA SILVA GALARCA, S. L.: Jornalismo e educação. Interfaces possíveis. In *Revista ECCOM*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 20, p. 191-204. [online]. [2020-07-22]. Available at: <<http://unifatea.com.br/seer3/index.php/ECCOM/article/view/1070>>; PATRÃO, C. S. R.: *A educação de uma nova geração de jornalistas: Do Moodle ao Facebook*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Portugal : Universidade de Coimbra, 2014. 290 p.

²² See also: KORKONOSENKO, S. G.: Журналистское образование: потребность в педагогической концептуализации. In *Международный журнал экспериментального образования*, 2013, Vol. 1, p. 38-41. [online]. [2022-03-12]. Available at: <<https://www.academia.edu/40119325>>; KROYCHIK, L. E.: Ресурсы публицистического творчества и журналистское образование. In *Век информации*, 2016, Vol. 2, p. 322-325. [online]. [2021-03-12]. Available at: <<https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=25933004>>.

²³ See also: NAJBAR AGIĆIĆ, M.: Journalists' Education for the Future of the Media: Ideas and Origins of the Institutionalized Training of Journalists in Croatia. In *Povijest u nastavi*, 2017, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 43-52. [online]. [2021-12-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/199983>>; PERIŠIN, T., MLAČIĆ, P.: Journalism Studies: Digital Curriculum for Digital Journalism. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 25-43. [online]. [2020-07-25]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/126388>>; VUKIĆ, T.: *Od novinara do novinarstva. Studija novinarskih vještina*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing-Tehnička knjiga, 2017.

²⁴ See also: DERNBACH, B.: Ausbildung für Journalismus. In LÖFFELHOLZ, M., ROTHENBERGER, L. (eds.): *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*. Wiesbaden : Springer VS, 2016, p. 475-487.; HÖMBERG, W.: Journalistenausbildung an Hochschulen – eine Erfolgsgeschichte? Eine Textcollage aus vier Jahrzehnten und ein Resümee. In EBERWEIN, T., MÜLLER, D. (eds.): *Journalismus und Öffentlichkeit. Eine Profession und ihr gesellschaftlicher Auftrag*. Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, 2010, p. 283-312.

(VI.) The second problem is conceptual, that is, the lack of unambiguous definitions of basic terms relating to journalism education (studies) foremost caused, as it seems, by scarce attempts. Namely, the authors of papers intended for the international scientific audience do not deal with terminology much; thereby a whole range of concepts and terms remains vague. This situation can consequently be described as twofold. Firstly, as there is no common ground about the use of basic definitions, the authors use either different terms as synonyms or the same concepts with diverse meanings or in opposed contexts. That often delegitimizes the research in journalism education, both theoretical and empirical. Regarding empirical research, there is an additional, practical need for the clarification of terminology prior to operationalize the research variables. This is exactly how the problem was detected about ten years ago, during the research of journalistic skills, which was the subject of a doctoral dissertation.²⁵ Since only a few definitions of key terms from the pedagogical point of view could be found at the time of writing the thesis,²⁶ the author had to consult literature from other fields to determine the rest. The situation has not significantly changed to date. Secondly, this state can be seen as part of a larger problem pertaining to the lack of clarity of many concepts in communication sciences overall, and especially in journalism studies. It can be explained from a broader perspective as a reflection of the dual theoretical crisis of journalism²⁷: crisis of the journalistic profession²⁸ and crisis of terminology in journalism (education) studies²⁹. The stated duality is already evident with the central term, “journalism”, as countless respective definitions, approaches and contexts can be found.³⁰

(VII.) The third complication is the lack of reference literature, which arises from the previous difficulty. Namely, there is no official reference book such as glossary, dictionary, lexicon, or encyclopaedia of journalism education studies which justifies the need for the enhanced focus on the discussion and research of this important topic. If developing such a publication is to be contextualized taking into consideration all the above-presented problems, it also means addressing a whole series of specific controversies in the discipline itself.

²⁵ See: VUKIĆ, T.: *Novinarske vještine u hrvatskim visokoškolskim programima za obrazovanje novinara*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2014, 378 p.

²⁶ See: BOŽIČEVIĆ, I.: *Sustavna metoda projektiranja modela obrazovanja za medije*. [Master of Science Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2007, 201 p.; NOWAK, E.: *Qualitätsmodell für die Journalistenausbildung: Kompetenzen, Ausbildungswege, Fachdidaktik*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Germany : Universität Dortmund, 2007, 286 p. [online]. [2021-04-08]. Available at: <<https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/handle/2003/24721>>; NOWAK, E.: *Press Freedom and Pluralism on the Micro Level: Journalistic Qualifications and Professionalization*. In CZEPEK, A., HELLVIG, M., NOWAK, E. (eds.): *Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe. Concepts and Conditions*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect, 2009.; *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209>>; *Model Curricula for Journalism Education. A Compendium of New Syllabi*. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221199.page=103>>.

²⁷ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 16.

²⁸ POLER KOVAČIĆ, M.: *The Crisis of Journalism as the Crisis of Ethics: Who is the Journalistic Subject?* In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2001, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 26. [online]. [2021-05-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/23362>>.

²⁹ See: JURISIĆ, J.: *Definiranje masovnih medija tisk i internet*. In MATAUŠIĆ, M. (ed.): *Komunikacijske znanosti; Znanstvene grane i nazivlje. Zbornik radova znanstvenog kolokvija*, Zagreb : Hrvatski studiji Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2007, p. 97.; MALOVIĆ, S.: *Masovno komuniciranje*. In MALOVIĆ, S. (ed.): *Masovno komuniciranje*. Zagreb : Golden marketing-Tehnička knjiga, Sveučilište Sjever, 2014, p. 109.; VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli – Golden Marketing Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 190-191.

³⁰ See: LOOSEN, W. et al.: *'X Journalism': Exploring Journalism's Diverse Meanings Through the Names We Give It*. In *Journalism*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 39-58. [online]. [2020-10-06]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343613221_X_Journalism_Exploring_journalism_s_diverse_meanings_through_the_names_we_give_it>; ZELIZER, B.: *Definitions of Journalism*. In OVERHOLSER, G., JAMIESON, KH. (eds.): *Institutions of American Democracy: The Press*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 66-80.

3 Challenges in the Creation of a Journalism Education Studies Terminology

The lack of joint terminology produces confusion in the scientific discourse of journalism education studies and disables discussion on equal ground. From the perspective of innovation, it could be assumed that this gap could be bridged, for start, by making a glossary. It is defined as “a list of technical or special words, especially those in a particular text, explaining their meanings”³¹ or “an alphabetical list, with meanings, of the words or phrases in a text that are difficult to understand”³². In such reference literature the focus is on the definition of terms and explanations of concepts in a particular domain of knowledge, field of study or activity.

Usually, a glossary is a book appendix that includes new, uncommon, technical or specialized terms, generally short and reduced in range, accompanying textbooks³³ and scientific monographs³⁴, those which are part of website contents³⁵, then those which are results of scientific or other projects³⁶. There are also extensive glossaries in the form of a single volume, such as those structured as lexicons³⁷, along with other diverse types of material that could in a way be connected to journalism education³⁸.

Therefore, there are two ways one could think about glossaries in the context of journalism education’s body of knowledge – as a glossary *in* journalism education aiming to inform and educate in a specific topic context, and as a glossary *of* journalism education listing key terms of the discipline. The creation of the latter requires thinking about the discipline in its entirety and defining its taxonomic and non-taxonomic relations. That is why all previous knowledge regarding journalism education, like its history, approaches, aspects, principles, didactics, research methods, tools, etc., needs to be mapped in advance.

However, the project will certainly not be as easy as it may seem. One has to wonder about the lack of effort to define the fundamental terms of journalism education studies, first of all because there are indicators that journalism education has been established as a distinct field of study³⁹,

³¹ WEHMEIER, S. (ed.): *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*. 6th Edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 546.

³² *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. [online]. [2020-04-07]. Available at: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/glossary>>.

³³ See: MCQUAIL, D.: *Mass Communication Theory*. 5th Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi : SAGE Publications, 2005, p. 547-569.; MENCHER, M.: *Melvin Mencher’s News Reporting and Writing*. 12th Edition. New York : McGraw and Hill, 2011, p. 570-577.; SHERIDAN BURNS, L., MATTHEWS, B. J.: *Understanding Journalism*. 3rd Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore : SAGE Publications, 2018, p. 238-242.

³⁴ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 303-304.; ZGRABLJIĆ ROTAR, N.: *Radio – Mit i informacija, dijalog i demokracija*. Zagreb : Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2007, p. 251-254.

³⁵ LEE, J. 8.: *Digital Journalist Survival Guide: A Glossary of Tech Terms You Should Know*. [online]. [2021-04-21]. Available at: <<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2010/digital-journalist-survival-guide-a-glossary-of-tech-terms-you-should-know>>.

³⁶ See: *Glossary*. [online]. [2020-04-03]. Available at: <https://newsreel.pte.hu/terms_of_glossary>; AZGIN, B. et al. (eds.): *Words That Matter: A Glossary for Journalism in Cyprus*. Nicosia : Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2018. [online]. [2021-06-13]. Available at: <<https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/387269>>.

³⁷ See: GRBELJA, J., SAPUNAR, M.: *Novinarstvo*. Zagreb : MGC, 1993.

³⁸ *Glossary of Curriculum Terminology*. [online]. [2020-04-03]. Available at: <<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology>>.

³⁹ See: DEUZE. M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 19. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>; VUKIĆ, T.: Sustainable Journalism Education – The Only Possible Way Towards the Future. In *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. Sp. Ed. 1, p. 253-279. ISSN 1848-5197. [online]. [2020-09-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/229379>>.

and then especially because similar titles from closely related study fields exist: *A Dictionary of Journalism*⁴⁰, *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*⁴¹, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*⁴², *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*⁴³, etc. Is it because those terms seem too simple to define (for instance, one can find the explanation of the term *competency* in every dictionary)? Moreover, is the interconnection of journalism and education too complex? Is that work for (a) multidisciplinary group(s)? Is the reason for postponing such actions a tacitly accepted understanding of certain concepts? Alternatively, is it due to numerous approaches to journalism and journalism education teaching practice which do not guarantee theoretical unity?

These questions can be answered with regard to anticipating such work in practice: demanding above all, as there are issues that could make the process difficult, but not insurmountable. Foremost, there are a number of challenges in the creation of any glossary; then there are those so specific and dependent on the context of journalism education one might even regard them as obstacles. Whichever the case, they should be discussed in advance in order to take a clear starting position.

The central controversy arises from the very foundation of the journalism education field and its three-dimensionality – journalism, education and journalism education – which raises the question of achieving a terminological consensus. That is why it is vital to elaborate the interconnected issues of the content approach, structure and form beforehand.

(I.) Firstly, from a journalism/ mass media point of view, in order to present different insights into that field of study, fundamental theories ought to be included. Furthermore, if we talk about journalism as an occupation, a firm and direct connection of a certain political system to other societal systems shapes and defines the media industry landscape⁴⁴. For instance, there is a huge difference in journalism education in totalitarian regimes and that of democratic environments. In that sense, regardless of the country or circumstances, “journalistic courage”⁴⁵ is a term that cannot be bypassed because journalistic work in the media and in the field presumes it. Equally, journalism education is described differently in countries where it is a legalised profession and in those where this is not the case. To that effect, “journalistic ethics” has become one of the central terms, especially because of two things: the conduct of journalists and value and honour in journalism as a profession in general, already regarded as part of media deontology⁴⁶; secondly, the proven, significant influence of academic education on future journalists’ values and moral compass⁴⁷. Journalistic activities

⁴⁰ See: HARCUP, T.: *A Dictionary of Journalism*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁴¹ See: VOS, T. P., HANUSCH, F. (eds.): *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*. Massachusetts : Wiley-Blackwell, 2019.

⁴² See: NUSSBAUM, J. (ed.): *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. [online]. [2020-05-17]. Available at: <<https://oxfordre.com/communication/>>.

⁴³ See: CHANDLER, D., MUNDAY, R.: *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*. 3rd Edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2020.

⁴⁴ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 20-21.

⁴⁵ See: GILES, R., SNYDER, R. W., DELISLE, L.: *Profiles in Journalistic Courage*. Abingdon, New York : Routledge, 2001.; LUDTKE, M. (ed.): Journalists: On the Subject of Courage. In *Nieman Report*, 2006, Vol. 60, No. 2, p. 1-120. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <<https://niemanreports.org/issues/summer-2006/>>.

⁴⁶ See: MATEUS, S.: New Media, New Deontology – Ethical Constraints of Online Journalism. In *Revista de Comunicação, Jornalismo e Espaço Público*, 2019, No. 9, p. 1-15. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339310783_New_Media_New_Deontology_Ethical_constraints_of_online_journalism>.

⁴⁷ See: SLATTERY, K. L.: Let’s Not Forget Education: Owning Journalism Ethics. In *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 255-259. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1522637920947722>>.

further require different aspects of “journalistic imagination”⁴⁸ and “journalistic awareness”⁴⁹. Different classifications of journalism (and media) should also be considered, such as citizen journalism and participatory journalism⁵⁰, alternative journalism⁵¹, community journalism⁵², social journalism⁵³, activist journalism⁵⁴, etc. Furthermore, journalism and mass media develop along with technology, so numerous new journalistic formats evolved such as multimedia journalism⁵⁵, online journalism⁵⁶, digital journalism⁵⁷, data journalism⁵⁸, drone journalism⁵⁹, mobile journalism⁶⁰,

⁴⁸ See: KEEBLE, R. L., TULLOCH, J.: *Global Literary Journalism. Exploring the Journalistic Imagination*. New York : Peter Lang, 2012.

⁴⁹ See: WEISCHENBERG, S.: Journalismus lehren. In WEISCHENBERG, S. (ed.): *Journalismus und Kompetenz. Qualifizierung und Rekrutierung für Medienberufe*. Opladen : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990, p. 213-228.

⁵⁰ See also: CAMPBELL, V. P.: Citizen Journalism and Active Citizenship. In PRICE, S., SANZ SABIDO, R. (eds.): *Contemporary Protest and the Legacy of Dissent*. London, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, p. 207-222.; PAPACHARISSI, Z. (ed.): *Journalism and Citizenship: New Agendas in Communication*. London : Routledge, 2009.; SINGER J. et al. (eds.): *Participatory Journalism: Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers*. West Sussex : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

⁵¹ See also: ATTON, C.: What is ‘alternative’ Journalism? In *Journalism*, 2003, Vol. 4. No. 3, p. 267-272.; ATTON, C., HAMILTON, J. F.: *Alternative Journalism*. London : SAGE, 2008.

⁵² See also: LAUTERER, J.: *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*. Chapel Hill : The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.; READER, B., HATCHER, J. A.: *Foundations of Community Journalism*. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2012.

⁵³ See also: SINGER, J. B.: The Ethics of Social Journalism. In *Australian Journalism Review*, 2012, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 3-16. [online]. [2021-03-17]. Available at: < <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/3478/7/The%20Ethics%20of%20Social%20Journalism.pdf> >.

⁵⁴ See also: GINOSAR, A., REICH, Z.: Obsessive-activist Journalists: A New Model of Journalism? In *Journalism Practice*, 2020, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 660-680. [online]. [2021-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344794146_Obsessive-Activist_Journalists_A_New_Model_of_Journalism>; OLESEN, T.: Activist Journalism? In *Journalism Practice*, 2008, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 245-263. [online]. [2021-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233471261_ACTIVIST_JOURNALISM>.

⁵⁵ See also: DEUZE, M.: What is Multimedia Journalism? In *Journalism Studies*, 2004, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 139-152. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238688450_What_is_multimedia_journalism1>.

⁵⁶ See also: HILL, S., LASHMAR, P.: *Online Journalism: The Essential Guide*. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2014.

⁵⁷ See also: DUFFY, A., ANG, P. H.: Digital Journalism: Defined, Refined, or Re-defined. In *Digital Journalism*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 378-385. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <<https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10356/88998/1/Digital%20Journalism%20defined%20-%20DIGITAL%20JOURNALISM%20-%20Final.pdf>>; WAISBORD, S.: The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism. In *Digital Journalism*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 3, 351-358. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332959060_The_5Ws_and_1H_of_Digital_Journalism>.

⁵⁸ See also: BRADSHAW, P.: *Data Journalism Heist*. Lean Publishing, 2013.; BRADSHAW, P.: Data Journalism Teaching, Fast and Slow. In *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 55-66. [online]. [2021-02-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324876728_Data_Journalism_Teaching_Fast_and_Slow>; CODDINGTON, M.: Clarifying Journalism’s Quantitative Turn. In *Digital Journalism*, 2015, Vol. 3 No. 3, p. 331-348. [online]. [2021-04-21]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.976400>>; GRAY, J., BOUNEGRU, L., CHAMBERS, L.: *The Data Journalism Handbook. How Journalist Can Use Data to Improve the News*. Sebastopol : O’Reilly Media, 2012.; SHERIDAN BURNS, L., MATTHEWS, B. J.: First Things First: Teaching Data Journalism as a Core Skill. In *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 91-105. [online]. [2021-02-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325899894_First_Things_First_Teaching_Data_Journalism_as_a_Core_Skill>.

⁵⁹ See also: CHAMBERLAIN, P.: *Drones and Journalism: How the Media is Making Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*. Oxon, New York : Routledge, 2017.; GYNNILD, A., USKALI, T. (eds.): *Responsible Drone Journalism*. London : Routledge, 2018.; NTALAKAS, A. et al.: Drone Journalism: Generating Immersive Experiences. In *Journal of Media Critiques*, 2017, Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 187-199. [online]. [2021-02-07]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319707325_Drone_Journalism_Generating_Immersive_Experiences>.

⁶⁰ See also: BUI, M. N., MORAN, R. E.: Making the 21st Century Mobile Journalist: Examining Definitions and Conceptualizations of Mobility and Mobile Journalism within Journalism Education. In *Digital Journalism*, 2020, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 145-163. [online]. [2021-03-02]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335869743_Making_the_21st_Century_Mobile_Journalist_Examining_Definitions_and_Conceptualizations_of_Mobility_and_Mobile_Journalism_within_Journalism_Education>.

etc. All of it dictates approaches to and demands of journalism education, at the same time referring primarily to educational content and consequently to the lists of competencies, educational outcomes and qualifications. Educational requirements concerning journalistic work also differ depending on the type of journalistic (media) specialization (press, broadcasting, agencies) as well as, for example, the type of media ownership (public, non-governmental or private). The disparity of social functions of the mass media in connection to journalistic education should be incorporated as well.

(II.) From an educational point of view in general, educational policies condition a whole range of educational environments, goals, forms, types, degrees, etc. For instance, there is an obvious difference in journalistic education between high schools, colleges, universities, that held in newsrooms, at media internal academies, or journalistic lifelong learning and professional training.⁶¹ Even college or university journalistic education is understood and set up as a part of various academic fields: from media studies, liberal arts and literature studies, political studies, to technical studies and interdisciplinary education,⁶² which presupposes different curricular orientations.⁶³ That is why it is important to diversify the list of purposes of journalistic education in general and those school-related. Moreover, the effort of, for example, the rich German pedagogical tradition⁶⁴ of providing various materials in the teaching practice (books, handbooks, case studies, etc.) should be noted as well. Increased attention should likewise be put on the heterogeneous participants in the educational process because each category of actors has a different take on the subject, both on the ideational and practical plane. Those are scientists, teachers/instructors, journalists, media experts, experts from other fields and professions, students, professional organizations, etc.

(III.) From the point of view of the journalism education discipline, the main question is the theoretical point of departure because there is also a lack of consensus on the term *theory*, from both the perspectives of definition and teaching.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the differentiation in definitions of the central term “journalism education” and the paradigms that underlie the explanations of other terms in the journalism education discipline should also be considered. In general, the discussion about terminology in the field of journalism education can be articulated from at least two starting points – functionalist and constructivist. The first is the job-centred paradigm deeply rooted in traditional thinking and from which the vast majority of journalism education research is conducted. Its starting position is to define the demands of the journalistic profession. Catalogues and lists of journalistic competencies are most often the result of dealing with this query.⁶⁶ Nowak, for instance, determined several key terms such as “journalistic role”, “journalistic qualifications”, “journalistic competence” and “journalistic action” while conceptualizing the

⁶¹ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrića u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 155-163.

⁶² See: BRIGHT, A.: Journalism Curriculum Frameworks Shift Toward Skills, Interdisciplinarity. In *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 1-7. [online]. [2022-06-28]. Available at: <<https://aejmc.us/spig/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2020/06/TJMC-10.1-Bright-Journalism-Curriculum-Frameworks.pdf>>.

⁶³ See: KLIEBARD, H. M.: *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893–1958*. 3rd Edition. New York : Routledge, 2004.

⁶⁴ See: DERNBACH, B., LOOSEN, W.: *Didaktik der Journalistik. Konzepte, Methoden und Beispiele aus der Journalistenausbildung*. Wiesbaden : Springer, 2012.; WEISCHENBERG, S.: Journalismus lehren. In: WEISCHENBERG, S. (ed.): *Journalismus und Kompetenz. Qualifizierung und Rekrutierung für Medienberufe*, Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990, p. 213-228.

⁶⁵ See: DERVIN, B., BANISTER, M.: 'Theory' Has Many Definitions in Journalism Education. In *The Journalism Educator*, 1976, Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 10-44.

⁶⁶ See: OPGENHAFFEN, M., D'HAENENS, L., CORTEN, M.: Journalistic Tools of The Trade in Flanders. In *Journalism Practice*, 2013, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 127-144. [online]. [2021-08-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243962999_Journalistic_tools_of_the_trade_in_Flanders_Is_there_a_fit_between_journalism_education_and_professional_practice>; *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209>>.

competence model for journalism training and inspecting its quality indicators.⁶⁷ Another, wider determination of the notion “journalism competency” is offered by Butyrina.⁶⁸ Even though those definitions originate from the student-centred learning idea, they are still oriented to journalism as an occupation. Conversely, the constructivist-humanistic pedagogical approach centres on journalists/students and poses a question of who a journalist is or is supposed to be, making it the starting point of journalism education.⁶⁹ That is, in fact, the advanced reflection about the journalistic identity since, in comparison, previous ideas relied primarily on functionalist thinking⁷⁰, which makes them deficient because they left out the carrier of identity from their focus. That new, holistic approach primarily deals with the subject of education. Thoughts about journalism education in the context of holism exist in earlier literature as well,⁷¹ but they also mostly relate to the idea of upgrading the profession. For now, only a systematic holistic approach to academic journalism education is directed to the development of “journalistic personality”, aiming at integral education with learning outcomes encompassing the synergy of the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic and spiritual aspects of a person, and as such presenting a potential remedy to contemporary media issues.⁷² The “Journalistic personality model”⁷³ is an example of such reflection on the new conceptualization of education of journalists in a sustainable way.⁷⁴ As its central feature, long-lasting and comprehensive education of whole and balanced journalistic personalities presents a direct investment into the quality of their qualification, and consequently in journalism (and society) in general, because deliberation about journalistic personality starts with studying personal characteristics. The key terms and definitions which arose from that model are: “journalistic ability”, “journalistic autonomy”, “journalistic competence”, “journalistic creativity”, “journalistic education”, “journalistic giftedness”, “journalistic identity”, “journalistic intelligence”, “journalism, journalistic knowledge”, “journalistic learning”, “journalistic nature”, “journalists’ other personal characteristics”, “journalistic personality”, “journalistic qualification”, “journalistic responsibility”, “journalistic skill” and

⁶⁷ See: NOWAK, E.: Press Freedom and Pluralism on The Micro Level: Journalistic Qualifications and Professionalization. In CZEPEK, A., HELLVIG, M., NOWAK, E. (eds.): *Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe. Concepts and Conditions*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect, 2009, p. 91-100. [online]. [2021-07-08]. Available at: <<http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/28917/1/44.pdf.pdf#page=92>>.

⁶⁸ See: BUTYRYNA, M. V.: Competency Based Approach to Journalism Education: Western Experience and Ukrainian Practice. In *Communications and Communicative Technologies*, 2020, Vol. 20, p. 13-18. [online]. [2021-04-13]. Available at: <<https://cct.dp.ua/index.php/journal/article/view/160>>.

⁶⁹ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 190-191.

⁷⁰ See: LAUK, E.: Estonian Journalist in Search of New Professional Identity. In *Javnost - The Public*, 1996, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 93-106. [online]. [2020-11-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292036491_Estonian_Journalists_in_Search_of_New_Professional_Identity>.

⁷¹ See: BACON, W.: An Innovative Direction in Academic Journalism. In *Pacific Journalism Review*, 2012, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 91-103. [online]. [2021-03-09]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v18i2.270>>; BARDOEL, J., DEUZE, M.: Network Journalism: Converging Competences of Media Professionals and Professionalism. In *Australian Journalism Review*, 2001, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 1-19. [online]. [2021-04-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267969191_Network_Journalism_Converging_competences_of_old_and_new_media_professionals>.

⁷² See: VUKIĆ, T.: *Novinarske vještine u hrvatskim visokoškolsim programima za obrazovanje novinara*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2014, 378 p.; VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017.; VUKIĆ, T.: Holistic Journalism Education as a Remedy for Contemporary Media Issues. In *The Book of Abstracts from the 11th International Conference: The Bridges of Media Education 2019*, Novi Sad : Faculty of Philosophy, 2019, p. 28.

⁷³ VUKIĆ, T.: *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017, p. 233-244.

⁷⁴ See: VUKIĆ, T. Sustainable Journalism Education - The Only Possible Way Towards the Future. In *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. Sp. Ed. 1. p. 253-279. [online]. [2020-09-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/229379>>.

“journalistic talent”.⁷⁵ Further, the efforts of professional associations, bodies and other organizations, as well as journals and publishers concerned with journalism education around the world should be included, since they are doing so much to expand its horizons. Last but not least, the fact remains that a multitude of definitions connected directly to journalism education are neither easily accessible nor translated into English, which requires additional effort in finding and translating them.

Therefore, a reference book with a combination of the glossary, dictionary and encyclopaedia features offering current theories, concepts and technical terms with extensive cross-references could be one of possible suitable forms of the publication. The inspiration, for instance, can be drawn from examples of good practice such as *Keywords in News and Journalism Studies*⁷⁶, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*⁷⁷, *The Language of Science Education: An Expanded Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts in Science Teaching and Learning*⁷⁸ or *Historical Dictionary of Journalism*⁷⁹.

As this is going to be the first internationally considered attempt of the sort, it should be in English in order to make it accessible and comprehensible to all potential users. Since journalism and education are influenced by many diverse social and cultural contexts, the glossary content would ideally consist of comprehensive designations of terminology, in other words, explanations would include all available or the most important reflection on the topic. Those three aspects will however be difficult to separate strictly because they are firmly intertwined, as briefly discussed above. Perhaps this should no longer be seen as an obstacle but simply a specificity of the discipline, a uniqueness adding to its value.

4 The First Step in Making a Glossary of Journalism Education Studies

Given the number of issues to consider, deciding where to begin is challenging. The insight into different cognitions of the education of journalists could be a fruitful starting point. Namely, the terminology work process of a specific discipline often begins with its ontological perspective, which in this case means explaining its very title. Therefore, what follows is a first brief overview attempt of the central term “journalism education” selected definitions. Even though it will additionally confirm the complexity of making a comprehensive journalism education studies terminology, the review is intentionally presented as an entry in order to demonstrate what it might look like and encourage those who will decide to do the work.

⁷⁵ Those terms origin from the long-term interdisciplinary research conducted for the doctoral thesis *Journalistic skills within Croatian higher education programs for journalists* (Vukić, T. 2014) updated in the research monograph *From Journalist to Journalism. A Study of Journalistic Skills* as a part of the book chapter titled *Journalistic education glossary of concepts* (Vukić, T. 2017), and most of them are available only in Croatian. In their construction, literature on communication, journalism and journalism education studies was used in combination with knowledge from other disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, politics and law, as well as with a variety of other documents, e.g. those dealing with the European/Croatian Qualification Framework. So far, only a few terms have been translated into English for the purpose of the scientific article *Sustainable Journalism Education - The Only Possible Way Towards the Future* (Vukić, T. 2019).

⁷⁶ See: ZELIZER, B., ALLAN, S.: *Keywords in News and Journalism Studies*. Maidenhead, New York : Open University Press, McGraw-Hill, 2010.

⁷⁷ See: CHANDLER, D., MUNDAY, R.: *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*. 3rd Edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2020.

⁷⁸ See: MCCOMAS, W. F.: *The Language of Science Education: An Expanded Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts in Science Teaching and Learning*. Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei : Sense Publishers, 2013.

⁷⁹ See: EAMAN, R.: *Historical Dictionary of Journalism*. Lanham : The Scarecrow Press, 2009.

Journalism education. 1. Education somehow organized (formal, nonformal, informal) for those who already or/and are going to work in journalism. (a). It has multiple linguistic constructions in different language(s) that arise from various understandings which are not all synonyms. For instance, there are at least three sets of English expressions associated to **journalism** – “journalism education”⁸⁰; “journalism training”⁸¹; “education in journalism”⁸²; “education for journalism”⁸³; “professional journalism education”⁸⁴; **journalists** – “education for journalists”⁸⁵; “journalists’ education”⁸⁶; “education of journalists”⁸⁷ and **its double-meanings** like “journalistic education”⁸⁸, “journalistic training”⁸⁹, etc. (b). The explanation of the concept is quite controversial because its definitions are disparate in nature and in their core meaning. There are at least eight possible contexts from which it is derived. **System.** The systemic approach is the most common. Kovalevskii and Zasurskii explain it ideologically neutrally as “the system for training contributors to news, magazines, radio and television, as well as editors of literature for mass audiences”⁹⁰. Fateeva goes further and represents it from a broader social context as “a direction of the study of sustainable forms of organization and regulation of social life”, claiming journalism education is “a social institution set up to achieve certain socially significant goals and objectives. As with any social institution, journalism is in the interests of a particular social group (in this case, a professional group) and serves to satisfy its interests”⁹¹. On the other hand, Shesterkina classifies journalism education as a part of the journalism system concluding that it “represents a system of organizations and institutions, which ensures the reproduction and improves human resources of journalism as a practice”⁹².

⁸⁰ JOSEPHI, B.: Journalism education. In HANITZSCH, T., WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. (eds.): *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 42.

⁸¹ FRÖHLICH, R., HOLTZ-BACHA, C.: Structures of Inhomogeneity – Dilemmas of Journalism Training in Europe. In *The International Association of Mass Communication Research Conference*. Seoul, 1994, p.1-16. [online]. <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED377537.pdf>>

⁸² BISWAS, M., IZARD, R.: Assessment of the Status of Diversity Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Programs. In *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 2009, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 382. [online]. [2020-07-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254116847_2009_Assessment_of_the_Status_of_Diversity_Education_in_Journalism_and_Mass_Communication_Programs>.

⁸³ DUGNAN, B. (ed.): *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [online]. [2021-04-11]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/journalism>>.

⁸⁴ FATEEVA, I.A., 2008, as cited in DADAKHONOV, A. O.: Journalism Education as a Basis for the Development of Journalism Sphere. In *Science and Education*, 2020. Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 624. [online]. [2021-03-06]. Available at: <<http://opencience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/299>>.

⁸⁵ JOHNSON, J. T.: New Education for Journalists. In PHELPS, R. H. (ed.): *Nieman Reports*, 1995, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 67. [online]. [2020-06-17]. Available at: <https://niemanreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Fall-1995_150.pdf>.

⁸⁶ CARVALHO ALVES, K. et al.: Collaborative Learning in Digital Journalism. In *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 238. [online]. [2020-05-13]. Available at: <<https://bjr.sbpjor.org.br/bjr/article/view/633>>.

⁸⁷ ADAM, G. S.: The Education of Journalists. In *Journalism*, 2001, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 315. [online]. [2020-07-24]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490100200309>>.

⁸⁸ See: KHUBETSOVA, Z., KORKONosenko, S., BLOKHIN, I.: Journalistic Education: Conceptualization and Media Competences. In *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 107. [online]. [2022-04-02]. Available at: <<https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/6658>>.

⁸⁹ NOWAK, E.: Press Freedom and Pluralism on The Micro Level: Journalistic Qualifications and Professionalization. In CZEPEK, A., HELLVIG, M., NOWAK, E. (eds.): *Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe. Concepts and Conditions*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect, 2009, p. 93. [online]. [2021-07-08]. Available at: <<http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/28917/1/44.pdf.pdf#page=92>>.

⁹⁰ KOVALEVSKII, K. A., ZASURSKII, I. A.: *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 1970-1979. 3rd Edition. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Journalism+Education>>.

⁹¹ FATEEVA, I.A., 2008, as cited in DADAKHONOV, A. O.: Journalism Education as a Basis for the Development of Journalism Sphere. In *Science and Education*, 2020. Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 624. [online]. [2021-03-06]. Available at: <<http://opencience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/299>>.

⁹² SHESTERKINA, L. P., 2012, as cited in VLADIMIROVA, T. N., FEFELKINA, A. V.: Systematic Analysis of Formation of Journalism Education. In *Life Science Journal*, 2014, Vol. 11, No. 10, p. 461-462. [online]. [2020-03-17]. Available at: <http://www.lifesciencesite.com/lj/life1110s/088_25665life1110s14_461_464.pdf>.

Education process. A *Lexicon of the Radio and Television* Galić defines it as a formal “process of institutionalized acquisition of the journalistic knowledge and skills”⁹³ while neglecting all other forms of journalistic learning such as nonformal and informal and their types. **Form of communication.** An explanation of journalistic education as “an organized and sustainable communication for the purpose of journalistic learning”⁹⁴ includes all the formerly mentioned. **Value.** Most definitions are drawn from or emphasised in the same framework – the quality of teaching or performance. Examining quality indicators in journalistic education, Nowak starts from Ruß-Mohl’s statement that “the most important contribution to preventive quality assurance in journalism is undoubtedly made by a good journalist education”⁹⁵. Thereby Nowak emphasizes “quality as a transformative value” for which the “institution in the broadest sense, the teachers and the learners”⁹⁶ are most responsible in particular due to the interests of a democratic society. Starting from the premise that it has a mission to teach (gaining abilities and competencies), train (developing skills) and prepare students for the media industry’s demands, the proposal of the model curricula for formal journalism education and training by UNESCO is an example of the elaboration of such content of journalism education which presupposes quality.⁹⁷ From the same perspective, Josephi correctly aims at the strong connection between journalists and journalism pointing out “journalism education is seen as improving the quality of journalism by improving the quality of journalists”⁹⁸. **Study program for journalism teachers.** There is also an understanding of journalism education solely from a teacher’s perspective, so Yagle defines it as “journalism courses aimed at educating college students to become future journalism teachers-publications advisers”⁹⁹. **Form of media education.** Authors within another scientific forum relate journalism education to “media education”, e.g. Fateeva who explains that “journalism education is the professional special media education active type, intended for the training of journalists and existing in step after-school training”¹⁰⁰, and to “media literacy”, such as Berger and Foot who stated: “the quality of journalistic education is thought to have an impact on the quality of life and the quality of society. Journalism education also educates not only practitioners, but also the public in general. This goal is to ensure that journalism educators properly serve and promote media literacy that serves the interests of the media industry, which has a great goal of serving the public”¹⁰¹. **Professionals’ training.** Nosova turns to the surroundings in which the praxis is conducted, emphasizing that “journalism education should train professionals who will be able to work in the decentralized communities”¹⁰². It is a continuation of the long tradition

⁹³ See: GALIĆ, M. (ed.): *Leksikon radija i televizije*. Zagreb : Hrvatska radio-televizija, 2016.

⁹⁴ VUKIĆ, T.: *Novinarske vještine u hrvatskim visokoškolskim programima za obrazovanje novinara*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2014, p. 303.

⁹⁵ NOWAK, E.: *Qualitätsmodell für die Journalistenausbildung: Kompetenzen, Ausbildungswege, Fachdidaktik*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Germany : Universität Dortmund, 2007, p. 1. [online]. [2021-04-08]. Available at: <<https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/handle/2003/24721>>.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, p. 221.

⁹⁷ See: *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*, 2007. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209>>.

⁹⁸ JOSEPHI, B.: Journalism Education. In HANITZSCH, T., WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. (eds): *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 42.

⁹⁹ YAGLE, P.: *Journalism Teaching – Advising Courses at West Virginia University and 103 Other Schools*. [Master of Science Thesis]. USA : West Virginia University, 1975, p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ FATEEVA, I. A.: 2007, as cited in VLADIMIROVA, T. N., FEFELKINA, A. V.: Systematic Analysis of Formation of Journalism Education. In *Life Science Journal*, 2014, Vol. 11, No. 10, p. 92. [online]. [2021-03-06]. Available at: <http://www.lifesciencesite.com/ljsj/life1110s/088_25665life1110s14_461_464.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ BERGER, G., FOOT, J. 2013, as cited in DADAKHONOV, A. O.: Journalism Education as a Basis for the Development of Journalism Sphere. In *Science and Education*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 627-628. [online]. [2021-03-07]. Available at: <<http://opencscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/299>>.

¹⁰² NOSOVA, B. M., 2019, as cited in BUTYRYNA, M. V.: Competency Based Approach to Journalism Education: Western Experience and Ukrainian Practice. In *Communications and Communicative Technologies*, 2020, Vol. 20, p. 14. [online]. [2021-03-17]. Available at: <<https://cct.dp.ua/index.php/journal/article/view/160>>.

of considering journalism education in terms of the professionalization of journalism.¹⁰³ More precisely, “specialized education for journalism”¹⁰⁴ is determined as one of the crucial parameters of the discussion in that sense. **Specific field of pedagogy.** Dadakhonov places journalism education as a field of specialized pedagogy naming it “pedagogy of journalism”, stating it is “*the study of issues that have arisen in the period of journalism and pedagogical sciences, training of journalists and determining the professional and cultural identity of journalism. On the other hand, it is a type of professional media training aimed at training specialists in journalism*”¹⁰⁵. **2. (Journalism education studies)** An academic field of enquiry dealing with at least ten main approaches defined by Deuze such as motivation, paradigm, mission, orientation, direction, contextualization, education, curriculum, method, management and organization.¹⁰⁶ It is usually part of the information and/or communication scientific field, or/and branches such as media studies, communication studies and journalism studies. It is often researched as one of the journalism studies topics, therefore the subject can be found in numerous articles published in top-ranked peer-reviewed international journals such as *Journalism*, *Journalism studies*, etc., as well as in forms of chapters in publications like *The Handbook of Journalism studies*.¹⁰⁷ Kunczik and Zipfel consider it a part of media and communication studies answering the question of who the communicator is by studying ‘persons and organizations participating in creation and dissemination of media content. It deals, for example, with their training ...’.¹⁰⁸ **3. (Journalism Education)** An international peer-reviewed journal of the Association for Journalism Education (ISSN: 2050-3903) of higher journalism education educators in the UK and Ireland. It helps promoting and developing ‘analysis and understanding of journalism education and of journalism, particularly when that is related to journalism education’. The journal publishes original research articles, reviews and commentaries. The first issue dates from April 2012, while so far 18 issues were released (ending in 2021).

5 Conclusion

Hence, how to proceed? Given the amount of literature about the education of journalists from all the above-mentioned directions, and the fact that it will be the first contribution to the discipline’s reference literature, each chosen path is a good one and any attempt should be welcomed. A glossary could be a reasonable start which can be followed for example, by

¹⁰³ See also: MALOVIĆ, S.: Educating Journalists; Universal Ignoramuses or Highly-educated Specialists? In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 1998, No. 35, Vol. 5, p. 221-232. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/32134>>; MALOVIĆ, S.: Knowledge and Skills – Guarantee for Professionalism. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2000, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 97-100. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/26304>>; MALOVIĆ, S.: Croatia’s Bitter-sweet Experiences: Education of Journalists in Croatia. In JUSIĆ, T., DEDOVIĆ, M. (eds.): *Education of Journalists in South-East Europe. A Step Closer to Professionalism*. Sarajevo : Media Online Selections, 2002, p. 58-72.; VILOVIĆ, G.: Journalistic Workshop. In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 1999, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 204-227. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/32073>>.

¹⁰⁴ DUGNAN, B. (ed.): *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [online]. [2021-04-11]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/journalism>>.

¹⁰⁵ DADAKHONOV, A. O.: Journalism Education as a Basis for the Development of Journalism Sphere. In *Science and Education*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 624. [online]. [2021-03-06]. Available at: <<http://openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/299>>.

¹⁰⁶ DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 19. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>.

¹⁰⁷ See: JOSEPHI, B.: Journalism Education. In HANITZSCH, T., WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. (eds): *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York : Routledge, 2009, p. 42-58.

¹⁰⁸ KUNCZIK, M., ZIPFEL, A.: *Uvod u znanost o medijima i komunikologiju*. Zagreb : Zaklada Freidrich Ebert, 2006, p. 5.

extensive terminology work for the (encyclopaedic) dictionary. Namely, the work of integrating all available definitions, understandings, contexts and concepts must not end with publishing a glossary. It should be a dynamic, on-going work process considering the fact that the discipline's terms and their meanings are constantly evolving, as well as the related professions. Therefore, a flexible approach, keeping up with the times is recommended.

To sum up, regardless of the numerous potential challenges in the realisation of a such publication, a reference book is decisive for the sustainability of the journalism education discipline, making the endeavour of compiling a glossary an urgent need. Bearing that in mind, and the fact this could be considered as a first step in such thinking, contributions by other scientists would be highly appreciated.

Literature and Sources:

ADAM, G. S.: The Education of Journalists. In *Journalism*, 2001, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 315-339. ISSN 1741-3001. [online]. [2020-07-24]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490100200309>>.

ADAMS, R. et al.: Sustainability-oriented Innovation: A Systematic Review. In *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 2016, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 180-205. ISSN 1468-2370. [online]. [2022-04-17]. Available at: <https://dspace.lib.cranfield.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1826/12638/Sustainability-oriented_innovation.pdf;jsessionid=3F9B9EA34E26C92B2709CE66BBEC2A21?sequence=1>.

APPLEGATE, E.: The Development of Advertising and Marketing Education: The First 75 Years, 2008, p. 1-12. [online]. [2020-06-21]. Available at: <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502731.pdf>>

ATTON, C.: What Is 'Alternative' Journalism? In *Journalism*, 2003, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 267-272. ISSN 1741-3001. [online]. [2021-05-06]. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/14648849030043001>>.

ATTON, C., HAMILTON, J. F.: *Alternative Journalism*. London : SAGE, 2008.

AZGIN, B. et al. (eds.): *Words That Matter: A Glossary for Journalism in Cyprus*. Nicosia : Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2018, p. 5-88. [online]. [2021-06-13]. Available at: <<https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/387269>>.

BACON, W.: An Innovative Direction in Academic Journalism. In *Pacific Journalism Review*, 2012, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 91-103. ISSN 324-2035. [online]. [2021-03-09]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v18i2.270>>.

BARDOEL, J., DEUZE, M.: Network Journalism: Converging Competences of Media Professionals and Professionalism. In *Australian Journalism Review*, 2001, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 1-19. ISSN 2517-620X. [online]. [2021-04-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267969191_Network_Journalism_Converging_competences_of_old_and_new_media_professionals>.

BISWAS, M., IZARD, R.: Assessment of the Status of Diversity Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Programs. In *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 2009, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 378-394. ISSN 1077-6958. [online]. [2020-07-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254116847_2009_Assessment_of_the_Status_of_Diversity_Education_in_Journalism_and_Mass_Communication_Programs>.

BOSLAUGH, S. E.: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2016. [online]. [2020-05-17]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/innovation-creativity>>.

BOŽIČEVIĆ, I.: *Sustavna metoda projektiranja modela obrazovanja za medije*. [Master of Science Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2007, 201 p.

BRADSHAW, P.: *Data Journalism Heist*. Lean Publishing, 2013.

BRADSHAW, P.: Data Journalism Teaching, Fast and Slow. In *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 55-66. ISSN 1326-365X. [online]. [2021-02-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324876728_Data_Journalism_Teaching_Fast_and_Slow>.

- BRIGHT, A.: Journalism Curriculum Frameworks Shift Toward Skills, Interdisciplinarity. In *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 1-7. ISSN 1077-6958. [online]. [2022-06-28]. Available at: <<https://aejmc.us/spig/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2020/06/TJMC-10.1-Bright-Journalism-Curriculum-Frameworks.pdf/>>.
- BUI, M. N., MORAN, R. E.: Making the 21st Century Mobile Journalist: Examining Definitions and Conceptualizations of Mobility and Mobile Journalism within Journalism Education. In *Digital Journalism*, 2020, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 145-163. ISSN 2167-082X. [online]. [2021-03-02]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335869743_Making_the_21st_Century_Mobile_Journalist_Examining_Definitions_and_Conceptualizations_of_Mobility_and_Mobile_Journalism_within_Journalism_Education>.
- BUTYRYNA, M. V.: Competency Based Approach to Journalism Education: Western Experience and Ukrainian Practice. In *Communications and Communicative Technologies*, 2020, Vol. 20, p. 13-18. ISSN 2617-1821. [online]. [2021-04-13]. Available at: <<https://cct.dp.ua/index.php/journal/article/view/160>>.
- CAMPBELL, V. P.: Citizen Journalism and Active Citizenship. In PRICE, S., SANZ SABIDO, R. (eds.): *Contemporary Protest and the Legacy of Dissent*. London, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, p. 207-222.
- CARVALHO ALVES, K. et al.: Collaborative Learning in Digital Journalism. In *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 238-259. [online]. [2020-05-13]. Available at: <<https://bjr.sbpjor.org.br/bjr/article/view/633>>.
- CHAMBERLAIN, P.: *Drones and Journalism: How the Media is Making Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*. Oxon, New York : Routledge, 2017.
- CHANDLER, D., MUNDAY, R.: *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*. 3rd Edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2020.
- CODDINGTON, M.: Clarifying Journalism's Quantitative Turn. In *Digital Journalism*, 2015, Vol. 3 No. 3, p. 331-348. [online]. ISSN 2167-082X. [2021-04-21]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.976400>>
- DADAKHONOV, A. O.: Journalism Education as a Basis for the Development of Journalism Sphere. In *Science and Education*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 623-631. [online]. [2021-03-06]. Available at: <<http://openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/299>>.
- DA SILVA GALARCA, S. L.: Jornalismo e educação. Interfaces possíveis. In *Revista ECCOM*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 20, p. 191-204. ISSN 2177-5087. [online]. [2020-07-22]. Available at: <<http://unifatea.com.br/seer3/index.php/ECCOM/article/view/1070>>.
- DERNBACH, B.: Ausbildung für Journalismus. In LÖFFELHOLZ, M., ROTHENBERGER, L. (eds.): *Handbuch Journalismustheorien*. Wiesbaden : Springer VS, 2016, p. 475-487.
- DERNBACH, B., ILLG, B.: *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries*. Manipal : Manipal Universal Press, 2019.
- DERNBACH, B., LOOSEN, W.: *Didaktik der Journalistik. Konzepte, Methoden und Beispiele aus der Journalistenausbildung*. Wiesbaden : Springer, 2012.
- DERVIN, B., BANISTER, M.: 'Theory' Has Many Definitions in Journalism Education. In *The Journalism Educator*, 1976, Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 10-44. ISSN 1077-6958.
- DEUZE, M.: What is Multimedia Journalism? In *Journalism Studies*, 2004, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 139-152. ISSN 1461-670X. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238688450_What_is_multimedia_journalism1>.
- DEUZE, M.: Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism Studies*, 2006, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 19-34. ISSN 1461-670X. [online]. [2020-05-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233298381_GLOBAL_JOURNALISM_EDUCATION>.
- DUFFY, A., ANG, P. H.: Digital Journalism: Defined, Refined, or Re-defined. In *Digital Journalism*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 378-385. ISSN 2167-082X. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <<https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10356/88998/1/Digital%20Journalism%20defined%20-%20DIGITAL%20JOURNALISM%20-%20Final.pdf>>.

- DUIGNAN, B. (ed.): *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [online]. [2021-04-11]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/journalism>>.
- EAMAN, R.: *Historical Dictionary of Journalism*. Lanham : The Scarecrow Press, 2009.
- FREEDMAN, E., SHAFER, R.: Ambitious in Theory but Unlikely in Practice: A Critique of UNESCO's Model Curricula for Journalism Education for Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies. In *Journal of Third World Studies*, 2010, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 135-153. ISSN 8755-3449.I [online]. [2020-06-07]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290592563_Ambitious_in_theory_but_unlikely_in_practice_A_critique_of_unesco's_model_curricula_for_journalism_education_for_developing_countries_and_emerging_democracies>.
- FRÖHLICH, R., HOLTZ-BACHA, C.: Structures of Inhomogeneity – Dilemmas of Journalism Training in Europe. *The International Association of Mass Communication Research Conference*. Seoul, 1994, p. 1-16. [online]. <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED377537.pdf>>.
- GALIĆ, M. (ed.): *Leksikon radija i televizije*. Zagreb : Hrvatska radio-televizija, 2016.
- GILES, R., SNYDER, R. W., DELISLE, L.: *Profiles in Journalistic Courage*. Abingdon, New York : Routledge, 2001.
- GINOSAR, A., REICH, Z.: Obsessive-activist Journalists: A New Model of Journalism? In *Journalism Practice*, 2020, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 660-680. ISSN 1751-2794. [online]. [2021-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344794146_Obsessive-Activist_Journalists_A_New_Model_of_Journalism>.
- Glossary*, 2017. [online]. [2020-04-03]. Available at: <https://newsreel.pt.e.hu/terms_of_glossary>.
- Glossary of Curriculum Terminology*, 2013. [online]. [2020-04-03]. Available at: <<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology>>.
- Glossary*. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2020. [online]. [2020-04-07]. Available at: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/glossary>>.
- GOODMAN, R. S., STEIN, E.: *Global Journalism Education in the 21st Century: Challenges & Innovations*. Austin : University of Texas, 2017.
- GOODMAN, R. S.: WJEC's Paris Syndicate Program: Discussions Advance Global Journalism Education. In *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 2020, Vol. 75, No. 1, p. 3-8. ISSN 2161-4326. [online]. [2021-01-28]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695820901940>>.
- GRAY, J., BOUNEGRU, L., CHAMBERS, L.: *The Data Journalism Handbook. How Journalist Can Use Data to Improve the News*. Sebastopol : O'Reilly Media, 2012.
- GRBELJA, J., SAPUNAR, M.: *Novinarstvo*. Zagreb : MGC, 1993.
- GYNNILD, A., USKALI, T. (eds.): *Responsible Drone Journalism*. London : Routledge, 2018.
- HARCUP, T.: *A Dictionary of Journalism*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014.
- HILL, S., LASHMAR, P.: *Online Journalism: The Essential Guide*. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2014.
- HÖMBERG, W.: Journalistenausbildung an Hochschulen – eine Erfolgsgeschichte? Eine Textcollage aus vier Jahrzehnten und ein Resümee. In EBERWEIN, T., MÜLLER, D. (eds.): *Journalismus und Öffentlichkeit. Eine Profession und ihr gesellschaftlicher Auftrag*. Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, 2010, p. 283-312.
- JOHNSON, J. T.: New Education for Journalists. In PHELPS, R. H. (ed.): *Nieman Reports*, 1995, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 67-70. [online]. [2020-06-17]. Available at: <https://niemanreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Fall-1995_150.pdf>.
- JOSEPHI, B.: Journalism Education. In HANITZSCH, T., WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. (eds.): *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York : Routledge, 2009, p.45–56.
- JURIŠIĆ, J.: Definiranje masovnih medija tisak i internet. In MATAUŠIĆ, M. (ed.): *Komunikacijske znanosti; Znanstvene grane i nazivlje. Zbornik radova znanstvenog kolokvija*. Zagreb : Hrvatski studiji Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2007, p. 9-36.
- JUSIĆ, T., DEDOVIĆ, M. (eds.): *Education of Journalists in South-East Europe: A Step Toward Profession*. Sarajevo : Media Online Selections, 2002, p. 5-150.

- KEEBLE, R. L., TULLOCH, J.: *Global Literary Journalism. Exploring the Journalistic Imagination*. Vol. 2. New York : Peter Lang, 2012.
- KHUBETSOVA, Z., KORKONOSENKO, S., BLOKHIN, I.: Journalistic Education: Conceptualization and Media Competences. In *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 107-117. ISSN 2039-9340. [online]. [2022-04-02]. Available at: <<https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/6658>>.
- KLIEBARD, H. M.: *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893–1958*. 3rd Edition. New York : Routledge, 2004.
- KORKONOSENKO, S. G.: Журналистское образование: потребность в педагогической концептуализации. In *Международный журнал экспериментального образования*, 2013, Vol. 1, p. 38-41. ISSN 1996-3947. [online]. [2022-03-12]. Available at: <<https://www.academia.edu/40119325>>;
- KOTHARI, A., HICKERSON, A.: Challenges for Journalism Education in the Era of Automation. In *Media Practice and Education*, 2020, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 212-228. ISSN 2574-1136. [online]. [2021-02-08]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343092763_Challenges_for_journalism_education_in_the_era_of_automation>.
- KOVALEVSKII, K. A., ZASURSKII, I. A.: *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 1970-1979. 3rd Edition. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Journalism+Education>>.
- KROYCHIK, L. E.: Ресурсы публицистического творчества и журналистское образование. In *Век информации*, 2016, Vol. 2, p. 322-325. ISSN 2306-417X. [online]. [2021-03-12]. Available at: <<https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=25933004>>.
- KUNCZIK, M., ZIPFEL, A.: *Uvod u znanost o medijima i komunikologiju*. Zagreb : Zaklada Freidrich Ebert, 2006.
- KUZMA, E. et al.: The Relationship Between Innovation and Sustainability: A Meta-analytic Study. In *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 2020, Vol. 259, p. 1-10. ISSN 0959-6526. [online]. [2020-07-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339634522_The_relationship_between_innovation_and_sustainability_A_meta-analytic_study>.
- LAUK, E.: Estonian Journalist in Search of New Professional Identity. In *Javnost - The Public*, 1996, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 93-106. ISSN 1854-8377. [online]. [2020-11-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292036491_Estonian_Journalists_in_Search_of_New_Professional_Identity>.
- LAUTERER, J.: *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*. Chapel Hill : The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- LEE, J. 8.: *Digital Journalist Survival Guide: A Glossary of Tech Terms You Should Know*, 2010. [online]. [2021-04-21]. Available at: <<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2010/digital-journalist-survival-guide-a-glossary-of-tech-terms-you-should-know>>.
- LIPOVČAN, S.: *Mediji-druga zbilja? Rasprave, ogledi i interpretacija*. Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006.
- LOOSEN, W. et al.: 'X Journalism'. Exploring Journalism's Diverse Meanings Through the Names We Give It. In *Journalism*, 2020, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 39-58. ISSN 1741-3001. [online]. [2020-10-06]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343613221_'X_Journalism'_Exploring_journalism's_diverse_meanings_through_the_names_we_give_it>.
- LUDTKE, M. (ed.): Journalists: On the Subject of Courage. In *Nieman Reports*, 2006, Vol. 60, No. 2, p. 1-120. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <<https://niemanreports.org/issues/summer-2006/>>.
- MACHADO, E., TEIXEIRA, T.: Innovation as an Essential Part of Journalism Education in Contemporary Societies. In *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 103-116. ISSN 2049-9531. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294120743_Innovation_as_an_essential_part_of_journalism_education_in_contemporary_societies>.

- MALOVIĆ, S.: Educating Journalists; Universal Ignoramuses or Highly-educated Specialists? In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 1998, No. 35, Vol. 5, p. 221-232. ISSN 1846-8721. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/32134>>.
- MALOVIĆ, S.: Knowledge and Skills – Guarantee for Professionalism. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2000, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 97-100. ISSN 1846-6605. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/26304>>.
- MALOVIĆ, S.: Croatia's Bitter-sweet Experiences: Education of Journalists in Croatia. In JUSIĆ, T., DEDOVIĆ, M. (eds.): *Education of Journalists in South-East Europe. A Step Closer to Professionalism*. Sarajevo : Media Online Selections, 2002, No. 2, p. 58-72.
- MALOVIĆ, S.: Masovno komuniciranje. In MALOVIĆ, S. (ed.): *Masovno komuniciranje*. Zagreb : Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, Sveučilište Sjever, 2014, p. 43-132.
- MATEUS, S.: New Media, New Deontology – Ethical Constraints of Online Journalism. In *Revista de Comunicação, Jornalismo e Espaço Público*, 2019, No. 9, p. 1-15. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339310783_New_Media_New_Deontology_Ethical_constraints_of_online_journalism>.
- MCCOMAS, W. F.: *The Language of Science Education: An Expanded Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts in Science Teaching and Learning*. Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei : Sense Publishers, 2013.
- MCQUAIL, D.: *Mass Communication Theory*. 5th Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi : SAGE Publications, 2005.
- MENCHER, M.: *Melvin Mencher's News Reporting and Writing*. 12th Edition. New York : McGraw and Hill, 2011.
- Model Curricula for Journalism Education*, 2007. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209>>.
- Model Curricula for Journalism Education. A Compendium of New Syllabi*, 2013. [online]. [2020-05-26]. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221199.page=103>>.
- NAJBAR AGIČIĆ, M.: Journalists' Education for the Future of the Media: Ideas and Origins of the Institutionalized Training of Journalists in Croatia. In *Povijest u nastavi*, 2017, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 43-52. ISSN 1849-1480. [online]. [2021-12-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/199983>>.
- NASH, V. et al.: What is Taught in Schools of Journalism: An Analysis of the Curricula of the Members of the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism. In *University of Missouri Bulletin*, 1928, Vol. 29, No. 45, p. 4-77.
- NOWAK, E.: *Qualitätsmodell für die Journalistenausbildung: Kompetenzen, Ausbildungswege, Fachdidaktik*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Germany : Universität Dortmund, 2007, 286 p. [online]. [2020-06-07]. Available at: <<https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/bitstream/2003/24721/2/Dissertation.pdf>>.
- NOWAK, E.: Press Freedom and Pluralism on The Micro Level: Journalistic Qualifications and Professionalization. In CZEPEK, A., HELLVIG, M., NOWAK, E. (eds.): *Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe. Concepts and Conditions*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect, 2009, p. 91-100. [online]. [2021-07-08]. Available at: <<http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/28917/1/44.pdf.pdf#page=92>>.
- NTALAKAS, A. et al.: Drone Journalism: Generating Immersive Experiences. In *Journal of Media Critiques*, 2017, Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 187-199. ISSN 2056-9793. [online]. [2021-02-07]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319707325_Drone_Journalism_Generating_Immersive_Experiences>.
- NUSSBAUM, J. (ed.): *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, 2016. [online]. [2020-05-17]. Available at: <<https://oxfordre.com/communication/>>.
- OLESEN, T.: Activist Journalism? In *Journalism Practice*, 2008, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 245-263. ISSN 1751-2794. [online]. [2021-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233471261_ACTIVIST_JOURNALISM>.
- OPGENHAFFEN, M., D'HAENENS, L., CORTEN, M.: Journalistic Tools of The Trade in Flanders. In *Journalism Practice*, 2013, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 127-144. ISSN 1751-2794. [online]. [2021-08-17]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243962999_Journalistic_tools_of_the_trade_in_Flanders_Is_there_a_fit_between_journalism_education_and_professional_practice>.

- PAPACHARISSI, Z. (ed.): *Journalism and Citizenship: New Agendas in Communication*. London : Routledge, 2009.
- PATRÃO, C. S. R.: *A educação de uma nova geração de jornalistas: Do Moodle ao Facebook*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Portugal : Universidade de Coimbra, 2014, 290 p.
- PERIŠIN, T., MLAČIĆ, P.: Journalism Studies: Digital Curriculum for Digital Journalism. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2014, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 25-43. ISSN 1846-6605. [online]. [2020-07-25]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/126388>>.
- POLER KOVAČIĆ, M.: The Crisis of Journalism as the Crisis of Ethics: Who is the Journalistic Subject? In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2001, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 25-44. ISSN 1846-6605. [online]. [2021-05-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/23362>>.
- PULITZER, J.: The College of Journalism. In *The North American Review*, 1904, Vol. 178, No. 570, p. 4-77. ISSN 0029-2397.
- READER, B., HATCHER, J. A.: *Foundations of Community Journalism*. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2012.
- ROVEDA HOYOS, A.: ¿Es posible la formación de un pensamiento estratégico en las escuelas de comunicación y de periodismo? In *Signo y Pensamiento*, 2007, Vol. 26, No. 51, p. 98-107. [online]. [2020-07-22]. Available at: <<http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/signo/n51/n51a09.pdf>>.
- SÁNCHEZ-GARCÍA, P., CAMPOS-DOMÍNGUEZ, E.: La formación de los periodistas en nuevas tecnologías antes y después del EEES: El caso español. In *Tripodos*, 2016, No. 38, p. 161-179. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.tripodos.com/index.php/Facultat_Comunicacio_Blanquerna/article/view/299>.
- SHERIDAN BURNS, L., MATTHEWS, B. J.: First Things First: Teaching Data Journalism as a Core Skill. In *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 91-105. ISSN 1326-365X. [online]. [2021-02-04]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325899894_First_Things_First_Teaching_Data_Journalism_as_a_Core_Skill>.
- SHERIDAN BURNS, L., MATTHEWS, B. J.: *Understanding Journalism*. 3rd Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore : SAGE Publications, 2018.
- SINGER, J. B.: The Ethics of Social Journalism. In *Australian Journalism Review*, 2012, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 3-16. ISSN 2517-620X. [online]. [2021-03-17]. Available at: <<https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/3478/7/The%20Ethics%20of%20Social%20Journalism.pdf>>.
- SINGER J. et al. (eds.): *Participatory Journalism: Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers*. West Sussex : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- SLATTERY, K. L.: Let's Not Forget Education: Owning Journalism Ethics. In *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 255-259. ISSN 2161-4342. [online]. [2021-03-22]. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1522637920947722>>.
- TERZIS, G. (ed.): *European Journalism Education*. Bristol, Chicago : Intellect Books, The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- VILOVIĆ, G.: Journalistic Workshop. In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 1999, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 204-227. ISSN 1846-8721. [online]. [2020-04-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/32073>>.
- VLADIMIROVA, T. N., FEFELKINA, A. V.: Systematic Analysis of Formation of Journalism Education. In *Life Science Journal*, 2014, Vol. 11, No. 10, p. 461-464. ISSN 1097-8135. [online]. [2020-03-17]. Available at: <http://www.lifesciencesite.com/lj/life1110s/088_25665life1110s14_461_464.pdf>.
- VOS, T. P., HANUSCH, F. (eds.): *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*. Massachusetts : Wiley-Blackwell, 2019.
- VUKIĆ, T.: *Novinarske vještine u hrvatskim visokoškolskim programima za obrazovanje novinara*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Croatia : University of Zadar, 2014, 378 p.
- VUKIĆ, T.: *Od novinara do novinarstva. Studija novinarskih vještina*. Zagreb, Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2017.

- VUKIĆ, T.: Holistic Journalism Education as a Remedy for Contemporary Media Issues. In *The Book of Abstracts from the 11th International Conference: The Bridges of Media Education 2019*. Novi Sad : Faculty of Philosophy, 2019, p. 28.
- VUKIĆ, T. Sustainable Journalism Education - The Only Possible Way Towards the Future. In *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. Sp. Ed. 1. p. 253-279. ISSN 1848-5197. [online]. [2020-09-17]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/229379>>.
- VUKIĆ, T.: Journalism Education and Fake News: A Literature Review. In *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 2020, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 77-99. ISSN 1846-6605. [online]. [2020-04-12]. Available at: <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/250789>>.
- YAGLE, P.: *Journalism Teaching – Advising Courses at West Virginia University and 103 Other Schools*. [Master of Science Thesis]. USA : West Virginia University, 1975, 197 p.
- ZELIZER, B.: Definitions of Journalism. In OVERHOLSER, G., JAMIESON, K. H. (eds.): *Institutions of American Democracy: The Press*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 66-80.
- WAISBORD, S.: The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism. In *Digital Journalism*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 3, 351-358. [online]. [2021-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332959060_The_5Ws_and_1H_of_Digital_Journalism>.
- WEHMEIER, S. (ed.): *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*. 6th Edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000.
- WEISCHENBERG, S.: Journalismus lehren. In WEISCHENBERG, S. (ed.): *Journalismus and Kompetenz. Qualifizierung und Rekrutierung für Medienberufe*. Opladen : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990, p. 213-228.
- ZELIZER, B., ALLAN, S.: *Keywords in News and Journalism Studies*. Maidenhead, New York : Open University Press, McGraw-Hill, 2010.
- ZGRABLJIĆ ROTAR, N.: *Radio-Mit i informacija, dijalog i demokracija*. Zagreb : Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2007.

Author



Tijana Vukić, PhD.

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula
Faculty of Humanities
Ivana Matetića Ronjgova 1,
52 100 Pula
CROATIA
tijana.vukic@unipu.hr

Assistant professor in communication studies Tijana Vukić, PhD graduated in Croatian language and literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2002 at the University of Zagreb where she also studied Journalism at the Faculty of Political Sciences. She has worked as a teacher in primary and secondary schools and for ten years as a journalist and editor in national, regional and local print and electronic media. She got her PhD on the topic of the journalistic skills in study programmes that educate journalists in Croatia. From 2008 she works at Juraj Dobrila University of Pula (Croatia) where she is currently the head of the Chair for Media and Communication at the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Croatian language and literature. Her core scientific interest is in journalism education; she devised the concept of sustainable journalism education which strongly promotes, in particular since publishing first scientific monograph on journalism education in Croatia *From Journalist to Journalism: A study of journalistic skills* in 2017. Further, she researches media education, intercultural communication, media content, media and democracy, higher education and distance learning. From September 2021 she is a chair of the Temporary Working Group Journalism and Communication Education of European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).



Sonja Bacher

The Role of Digital Media in the Russian Language Classroom and Teacher Education Programmes

ABSTRACT

The present study exemplifies the role digital media used to play in 2019-2020 in the Russian language classroom at secondary schools in Austria, Germany and South Tyrol (Italy) before the *COVID-19*-pandemic hit, whereby on which also current digitisation efforts are focused. The empirical baseline study aims at investigating the types of digital media and how frequently these are employed as well as the specific purposes they are used for in the Russian language classroom. Aside from addressing the positive effects that arise from working with digital media in classroom settings, also challenges that Russian language teachers face when implementing digital technologies are discussed. The data were collected in a mixed-methods procedure: quantitative data from online-questionnaires and qualitative data from face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The data represent the teachers' perspective on the one hand and that of the pupils on the other. The data from the online surveys were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics, those from the interviews with qualitative content analysis whereby also individual case studies were conducted. This paper presents major study results and closes with implications for teacher training programmes as well as for future research.

KEY WORDS

Digital Media. Digital Media Literacy. Teacher Education Programmes. Russian Language Classroom.

1 Introduction

Nowadays digital media are ubiquitous and form an integral part of everyday life. Especially younger generations cannot imagine a life without smartphones, *TikTok*, *Twitter*, *Instagram* or *YouTube*. We use digital technologies in our free time, at work and at school, e.g. we buy e-tickets, shop and order goods online, read e-books, video chat with our friends and family, browse the web for needed answers, look up words in online dictionaries etc. The importance of digital media in classroom settings and ways of successfully implementing them have been widely discussed in academic research.¹ The rapid growth in prominence of digital technologies is lastly also due to the *COVID-19* pandemic during which schools all over the world had to switch to distance learning quasi overnight.

The constantly increasing significance of goal-oriented digital media use is also reflected in various European educational documents that have been published over recent years. The *Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu)* describes by means of can-do statements and six levels ranging from awareness (A1) to innovation (C2) the competencies educators need to acquire in the course of their pre- and in-service teacher training.² The can-do descriptors are grouped under six competence areas, namely *Professional Engagement*, *Digital Resources*, *Teaching and Learning*, *Assessment*, *Empowering Learners* and *Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence*. On the one hand, teachers should be able to critically select, modify and create digital resources for classroom use.³ On the other, they are required to empower their students to independently apply and produce digital media thereby guiding the pupils to respect netiquette as well as copyright regulations, to protect their privacy and to solve arising problems.⁴

In reference to the pre-service language teacher training in Austria, Swertz concludes in his quantitative content analysis of four university curricula still in force that digital competence objectives appear to be marginalised.⁵ The development of digital media skills is mostly limited to facultative courses that teacher trainees may or may not attend. In addition, media literacy is frequently only referred to, amongst numerous other competencies, in brackets that indicates its low status.⁶ The above-mentioned curricula are currently being revised whereby a greater emphasis will be laid on the digital media literacy of future teachers.⁷ In their qualitative case study conducted in 2018, Goertz and Baeßler highlight that many teacher training centres in Germany are still in their infancy concerning digital education.⁸

¹ See, e.g.: BITKOM: *Digitale Schule – vernetztes Lernen: Ergebnisse repräsentativer Schüler- und Lehrerbefragungen zum Einsatz digitaler Medien im Schulunterricht*. Berlin : BITKOM Research, 2015; EICKELMANN, B. et al.: *Computer- und informationsbezogene Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im zweiten internationalen Vergleich und Kompetenzen im Bereich Computational Thinking*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2019; LORENZ, R. et al.: *Schule digital – der Länderindikator 2017: Schulische Medienbildung in der Sekundarstufe I mit besonderem Fokus auf MINT-Fächer im Bundesländervergleich*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2017.

² See: REEDECKER, CH., PUNIE, Y.: *The European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu)*. Luxembourg : Publications Office of the European Union, 2017. [online]. [2022-09-06]. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC107466/pdf_digcomedu_a4_final.pdf>.

³ Ibid., p. 24.

⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵ See: SWERTZ, CH.: *Medien im Lehramtsstudium für die Sekundarstufe in Österreich: Eine quantitativ-inhaltsanalytische Lehrplananalyse von vier Curricula*. In *Medienimpulse: Beiträge zur Medienpädagogik*, 2015, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 1-8. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://journals.univie.ac.at/index.php/mp/article/view/mi890/1008>>.

⁶ Ibid., p. 6-41.

⁷ This piece of information can be provided since I used to be a member of the curricula commission from 2021 to 2022. The new curricula are to be published in 2023 or 2024.

⁸ GOERTZ, L., BAEßLER, B.: *Überblicksstudie zum Thema Digitalisierung in der Lehrerbildung*. Essen : Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, mmb Institut, 2018, p. 10. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://zenodo.org/record/2592010#.YwiplXZBxPY>>.

Coming back to European documents that focus on digital media literacy skills, the *Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.1)* as well as the *Companion Volume of the European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* are to be mentioned.⁹ *DigComp 2.1* aims at describing the competencies each EU citizen should have to be able to cope with today's digitalised world. As this in fact also applies to students, the Austrian competence model *DigComp 2.2 AT* for secondary schools was created based on *DigComp 2.1* whereby only slight adaptations were made.¹⁰ Here, constantly increasing task complexity and learner autonomy as well as cognitive processing are seen as vital regarding the development of media literacy in pupils.¹¹ Beginning with the school year 2022/2023, the *Digitale Grundbildung (Basic Digital Literacy)* will be established as a compulsory subject at lower secondary schools in Austria. The *Basic Digital Literacy* encompasses one lesson per week for four school years during which pupils need to be empowered to analyse and critically reflect on societal aspects of media change and digitalisation, to responsibly handle data and information systems, to communicate and cooperate with others via digital technologies and to produce and publish media resources as well as create algorithms.¹² Aside from this, as stated in the Austrian *Grundsatzterlass zur Medienerziehung (Decree on Media Education)*, each educator is required to subject-specifically integrate digital technologies into their teaching to enhance the overall learning process.¹³ The aforementioned *CEFR Companion Volume*, more precisely the newly added section on *Online Interaction* as well as the updated scales provide foreign language teachers with a certain framework of what media-based language teaching might aim at while considering different competence levels (A1-C2). It is to be noted that the development of digital media literacy skills and inter-/transcultural language learning appear to be closely intertwined. This does not only become evident from the *Companion Volume* but is also referred to in Austrian, German and South Tyrolean (Italian) school syllabi or decrees for foreign / Russian language education.¹⁴ A *CEFR*-descriptor on *Online Conversation and Discussion* referring to level B2 reads as follows, thereby highlighting the interconnectedness of language, cultural and media-assisted language learning: “*Can engage in online exchanges, linking his/her contributions to previous ones in the thread, understanding cultural implications and reacting appropriately.*”¹⁵

⁹ See: CARRETERO, S., VUORIKARI, R., PUNIE, Y.: *DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with Eight Proficiency Levels and Examples of Use*. Luxembourg : Publications Office of the European Union, 2017. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC106281/web-digcomp2.1pdf_%28online%29.pdf>; NORTH, B., GOODIER, T., PICCARDO, E.: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Strasbourg : Council of Europe, 2018. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>>.

¹⁰ See also: BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR DIGITALISIERUNG UND WIRTSCHAFTSSTANDORT (BMDW): *Digitales Kompetenzmodell für Österreich: DigComp 2.2 AT*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bmdw.gv.at/dam/jcr:54bbe103-7164-494e-bb30-cd152d9e9b33/DigComp2.2_V33-barrierefrei.pdf>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

¹² BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG, WISSENSCHAFT UND FORSCHUNG (BMBWF): *Lehrplan Pflichtgegenstand Digitale Grundbildung*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2022_IL_267/BGBLA_2022_IL_267.pdf>.

¹³ See: BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND FRAUEN: *Unterrichtsprinzip Medienerziehung – Grundsatzterlass*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:f874e171-83ea-4e51-902b-48b373b3a187/2012_04.pdf>.

¹⁴ See also, e.g.: KULTUSMINISTERIUM (KMK): *Fachlehrplan Sekundarschule Russisch (Sachsen-Anhalt)*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bildung-lsa.de/pool/RRL_Lehrplaene/Endfassungen/lp_sks_russ.pdf>; SENATSWERALTUNG FÜR BILDUNG, JUGEND UND FAMILIE (SenBJF): *Rahmenlehrplan für den Unterricht in der gymnasialen Oberstufe: Gymnasien, integrierte Sekundarschulen mit gymnasialer Oberstufe, berufliche Gymnasien, Kollegs, Abendgymnasien. Russisch*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/unterricht/faecher-rahmenlehrplaene/rahmenlehrplaene/anhoe_russisch_sek_2.pdf>; AUTONOME PROVINZ BOZEN – SÜDTIROL: *Rahmenrichtlinien für die Gymnasien in Südtirol*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <[https://www.provinz.bz.it/bildung-sprache/didaktik-beratung/downloads/582072_Rahmenrichtlinien-Gymnasien_web_\(2\).pdf](https://www.provinz.bz.it/bildung-sprache/didaktik-beratung/downloads/582072_Rahmenrichtlinien-Gymnasien_web_(2).pdf)>.

¹⁵ NORTH, B., GOODIER, T., PICCARDO, E.: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Strasbourg : Council of Europe, 2018, p. 97. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>>.

In view of the school subject Russian, the major aim of the present study is to investigate whether and how the requirements specified in educational decrees, digital competence models for learners and teachers as well as school syllabi actually inform teaching practice and teacher training. In this context, specific challenges that teachers and learners of Russian encounter when applying digital media in class will also be focused on. More precisely, the objectives of this empirical baseline study are to point out what types of digital media are employed in the Russian language classroom as well as how frequently and for what learning purposes digital technologies are implemented. At the same time, this also entails the question why certain digital media are not used or specific digital learning objectives appear to be neglected, the multifaceted reasons of which will be elaborated on in the chapters to follow.

2 Methodology and Study Subjects

The data for this study were collected in 2019-2020 by triangulating quantitative and qualitative research methods (*between-method triangulation*).¹⁶ The concurrent mixed-methods design aims at enhancing the reliability and validity of the data as well as gaining deeper insights into the interrelatedness or interdependence of different influence factors, teacher and learner beliefs as well as the media literacy skills of the study participants.¹⁷ In order to research the questions raised above, on the one hand online questionnaires primarily containing closed answer formats such as multiple choice, Likert and rating scale questions were employed. On the other, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with secondary school teachers and adolescent learners of Russian from Austria, Germany and South Tyrol were conducted. The online-survey data were analysed in *SPSS 25* with descriptive and inferential statistics (non-parametric significance tests), the interview transcripts with qualitative content analysis.¹⁸ To gain further insights, 15 individual case studies were carried out.

The online-surveys were accessible for several months. Altogether 158 teachers and 411 learners of Russian participated in them; of those, 65.2% of the teachers (N° 103) and 76.4% of the pupils (N° 314) finished the questionnaire. Due to possible result distortions, only fully completed questionnaires were considered in the analysis. As regards the Russian language teachers, different sampling strategies, more precisely convenience and snowball sampling, were applied. A true simple random sampling could not be achieved, because of coverage problems (e.g. non-functioning e-mail addresses), nonresponse, missing values, and the relatively high drop-out rate which amounted to over one third.¹⁹ Reasons for the latter may lie with the length of the online questionnaire (31 questions incl. demographic data), loss of interest or internet connection problems.²⁰ Concerning the place of residence, 55 Russian language teachers from Austria, 41 from Germany and six from South Tyrol took part in the online-survey, their average age being 41.7. The majority of all federal Austrian and German countries are represented in the sample. The learner-questionnaire consists of 19 questions. Altogether 142 pupils from

¹⁶ See: CASPARI, D. et al.: *Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik: ein Handbuch*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempo, 2016. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.14220/odaf.2016.32.2.128>>.

¹⁷ See also: KELLE, U.: Mixed Methods. In BAUR, N., BLASIUS, J. (eds.): *Handbuch der empirischen Sozialforschung*. Berlin : Springer VS, 2014, p. 153-166. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18939-0_8>.

¹⁸ See: RAAB-STEINER, E., BENESCH, M.: *Der Fragebogen: Von der Forschungsidee zur SPSS-Auswertung*. Vienna : Facultas, 2012; See also: MAYRING, P. H.: *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*. Weinheim, Basel : Beltz, 2015.

¹⁹ See: BAUR, N., FLORIAN, M.: Stichprobenprobleme bei Online-Umfragen. In JACKOB, N., SCHOEN, H., ZERBACK, T. H. (eds.): *Sozialforschung im Internet: Methodologie und Praxis der Online-Befragung*. Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009, p. 126.

²⁰ See also: GRÄF, L.: *Online-Befragung: Eine praktische Einführung für Anfänger*. Münster : LIT, 2010, p. 62-68.

Austria, 119 from South Tyrol and 47 from Germany completed the questionnaire. With regard to German students, the access to the field played a decisive role. The comparably low number of participants from Germany was caused by the lengthy and complicated process of obtaining permission from the authorities to conduct a study with pupils. In terms of sampling, the cluster sampling being a form of multistage random sampling was employed. More precisely, Russian language teachers functioned as gatekeepers and randomly chose different classes, i.e. clusters in which they conducted the online survey.²¹

Parallel to the online surveys, seven teacher and eight learner interviews were held which were audio-recorded, transcribed and coded by means of MAXQDA. In the interviews, Russian language teachers and pupils from Austria, Germany and South Tyrol relate personal viewpoints and experiences concerning the use or non-use of digital technologies in class. The average length of the teacher interviews amounts to approximately 35 minutes, and that of the learners to less than 20 minutes. The interviews allow deeper insights in teacher and learner beliefs as well as influence factors that either foster or hinder the implementation of digital media into the Russian language classroom.

One of the key aspects of this study is that the findings do not only reflect the teachers' viewpoints, which is frequently the case in other studies, but also the learners' opinions, and thus provide a broader and more balanced perspective on digital media use in the Russian language classroom. Additionally, the focus, the range and transnational character of this study are unique in the sense that there does not exist a similar survey in the field of media-based Russian language teaching.

3 Results

Nowadays a vast amount of different learning apps and digital tools are often freely available and eligible for classroom use. The question is not, as Roche puts it, whether digital technologies should be implemented into classroom settings, but rather how this could be done to provide added value to the learning process.²² With regard to successful and sustainable digital media use, different factors such as the technical equipment of schools, the digital media literacy of teachers and learners, available support systems and financial resources have been found to play a decisive role. This will be illustrated by means of selected study results in the subsections to follow.

3.1 Implementation of Digital Media

Firstly, the focus will be on what types of digital media are (not) implemented into the Russian language classroom whereby specific reasons based on the study results will be provided. Secondly, the findings demonstrate for what learning purposes teachers and pupils primarily use digital technologies.

Table 1 represents the teacher as well as the learner perspective. Furthermore, it shows the mean, mode and standard derivation that provide insight into the frequency of use. High standard derivation values indicate school-type specific differences in the available hard- and software as well as individual preferences, a conclusion that is also supported by the interview and further results from the online questionnaires. In terms of country-specific differences, study findings suggest that Austrian teachers and learners rate the technical equipment at their schools better than the South Tyrolean and German study participants (*H test*, teachers:

²¹ See: RAAB-STEINER, E., BENESCH, M.: *Der Fragebogen: Von der Forschungsidee zur SPSS-Auswertung*. Vienna : Facultas, 2012, p. 20; See also: MAYER, H.: *Interview und schriftliche Befragung: Grundlagen und Methoden empirischer Sozialforschung*. Munich : Oldenbourg, 2013, p. 63.

²² See: ROCHE, J.: *Mediendidaktik Fremdsprachen*. Ismaning : Huber, 2008, p. 60.

$P < 0.010$, mean ranks: Austria 58.32, South Tyrol 44.58, Germany 42.29; pupils: $P < 0.013$, mean ranks: Austria 167.79, South Tyrol 148.49, Germany 129.57). According to the study results, Austrian secondary vocational schools are digitally the best equipped. Coming back to Table 1, it is to say that the answers teachers and learners could choose from in the online surveys were *often* which was coded as 3, *sometimes* coded as 2, *rarely* (1) and *never* (0). The lines highlighted in green refer to a comparably frequent implementation of a specific tool, whereby the red sections show rare or non-use. Remarkably, the teacher and learner perspectives mostly coincide. It follows that online Russian dictionaries, search engines, presentation programmes, video platforms such as *YouTube*, digital textbook components and online reference books are most frequently employed whereas social networking sites, collaborative writing pads, blogs, webquests or online videoconferencing tools appear to be neglected in the Russian language classroom. As regards the latter, it must be emphasised that the results refer to pre-*COVID-19* data. When the *COVID-19* pandemic hit, most schools resorted to distance learning vastly using video conferencing tools such as *Zoom*, *BigBlueButton* as well as learning platforms such as *GoogleClassroom* that inevitably accelerated long overdue and necessary digitisation efforts. The reasons for the rare or non-use of digital writing tools (e.g. collaborative writing pads, blogs) lie – as was repeatedly stated in the interviews by teachers and pupils alike – with either non-functioning Russian keyboards or difficulties pupils experience when using those. According to some teachers, this leads to a preventable loss of precious teaching time. There appears to be a circular cause, since the avoidance of such writing tools leads to less practice in typing in Russian and consequently, to a fossilisation or degradation of typing skills. As regards M-textbooks for Russian, their non-use can be explained by their non-existence.

		Teacher perspective			Learner perspective		
		mean	mode	standard derivation	mean	mode	standard derivation
1.	M-textbooks	.76	0	.995	.18	0	.550
2.	Digital textbook components	1.70	2	1.083	.67	0	.982
3.	Learning platforms	.75	0	.997	.50	0	.912
4.	Online Russian dictionaries	1.65	2	1,026	1.34	0	1.186
5.	Online reference books	1.49	1	.938	.66	0	.858
6.	Search engines	1.86	2	.950	1.19	1	1.008
7.	Presentation programmes	1.54	2	.937	.92	0	.944
8.	Video platforms	1.97	2	.845	1.30	1	.799
9.	Podcasts	.53	0	.861	1.11	0	1.003
10.	Social networking sites	.28	0	.584	.16	0	.464
11.	Collaborative writing pads	.19	0	.525	.26	0	.561
12.	Chat programmes	.60	0	.974	.50	0	.843
13.	Blogs	.14	0	.486	.18	0	.490
14.	Digital pin boards	.14	0	.444	.09	0	.381
15.	Webquests	.14	0	.465	.11	0	.388
16.	Online videoconferencing tools	.15	0	.452	.12	0	.410
17.	Learning apps	1.06	0	1.018	.88	0	1.006
18.	Online mind mapping tools	.31	0	.642	.06	0	.269
19.	Online tests / exercises	.73	0	.819	.45	0	.774
20.	e-texts	.79	0	.882	.25	0	.587

TABLE 1: Types of digital media (not) used

Source: own processing, 2020.

As study results illustrate, digital media are mostly used for improving the pupils' audiovisual or listening skills (e.g. by means of *YouTube*) and their vocabulary range (e.g. through online dictionaries, learning apps), for developing their inter-/transcultural competences, for online research on different topics, for the mere transmission of knowledge (e.g. with the help of *PowerPoint*) as well as for motivational purposes. In the online survey, two thirds of the pupils confirm that the use of digital media motivates them whereas the others feel motivated only to a certain extent or not at all. In the interview, one student repeatedly states that she prefers working with traditional media. Another student relates that she favours writing Russian texts on her laptop, since this sparks her imagination and provides her with the opportunity to quickly resort to online dictionaries. Hence, individual learning preferences play an important role when it comes to digital media use. Other learning objectives such as media-assisted personalisation and differentiation as well as developing the pupils' critical digital media literacy often remain unconsidered. Although in the online survey as well as in the interviews, teachers emphasise the importance of these learning goals, they still have difficulties in putting them into practice, which is partly attributed to a lack of skill. Moreover, digital tools such as social networking sites, webquests, online pin boards or collaborative writing pads that help foster an action-oriented approach to teaching Russian are rarely used. As interview data suggest, the reasons for this lie with the teacher belief that setting up and conducting action-based digital learning scenarios is a rather complex and time-consuming task. In the interviews, three out of seven teachers specify that they only once or twice embedded a bigger task-based digital learning scenario such as an e-tandem with a partner school or programming language games for other groups of pupils by means of *SCRATCH*. One teacher explicitly states that she stopped integrating e-tandems due to time constraints, new requirements regarding the standardised school leaving exams in Austria and a slight loss in teacher motivation. Furthermore, some of the teachers feel that they lack certain competencies that would help them successfully integrate action-based online activities into their teaching. Data from the questionnaires support this fact, as we will see in the next subchapter.

3.2 Digital Media Literacy of Teachers and Learners

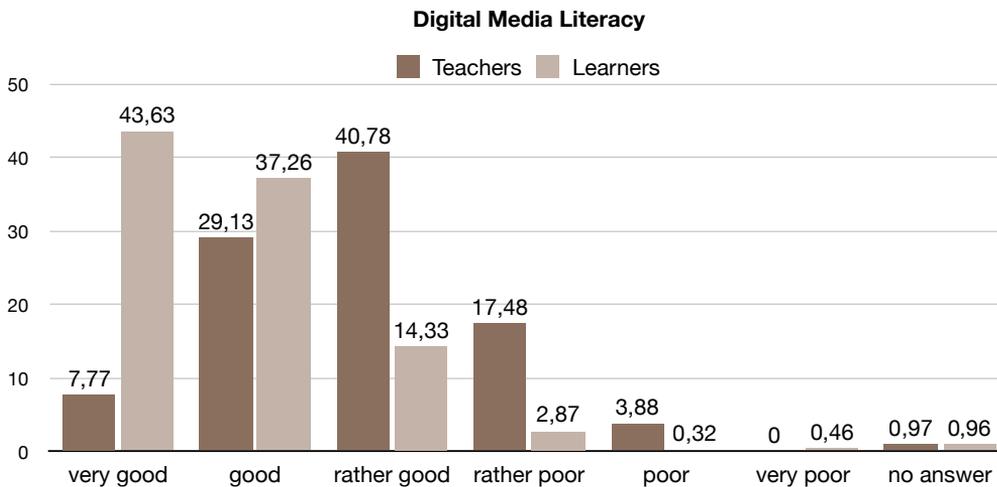
Aside from functioning and easily available hard- and software at schools, the digital media literacy of teachers and learners appears to be one of the most important prerequisites for efficacious digital learning and teaching.²³ Nowadays pupils tend to think of themselves as digital natives, a term originally coined by Prensky.²⁴ In the interviews, five out of seven teachers acknowledge the existing digital divide between their and the learners' competences. Nonetheless, the teachers tend to conceive of this fact as something positive in the sense that they can learn and profit from one another's strengths and knowledge. Here, mutual support mechanisms and collaborative learning seem to be foregrounded. The above-mentioned also has its parallels in the students' answers. In the interviews, three out of eight respondents mention that teachers lack certain digital skills that sometimes leads to the non-use of specific digital devices or tools. One of the Austrian interviewees remarks that her Russian teacher could not handle the interactive whiteboard wherefore the teacher ultimately stopped using it. Apart from this, a Russian language teacher from South Tyrol emphasises that, since there apparently was some money left, her school purchased two interactive whiteboards. According to her, the teachers did not receive any training which was why the smartboards were mostly

²³ EICKELMANN, B. et al.: *Computer- und informationsbezogene Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im zweiten internationalen Vergleich und Kompetenzen im Bereich Computational Thinking*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2019, p.14.

²⁴ See: PRENSKY, M.: Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. In *On the Horizon*, 2001, Vol. 9, No. 5, p. 1-6.

left unused. This underlines the importance of constant, hands-on and high-quality pre- and in-service teacher training. As regards teacher education in the field of digital media, study results suggest a general lack in practice-oriented as well as of subject-specific training measures. Online survey data show that less than half of the teachers (N° 43) are satisfied with the teacher education they received. Hence, improvements in the teacher training sector seem necessary. The findings also suggest that the more satisfied teachers are with existing teacher training measures, the greater their willingness to attend those (*U test*, *P* 0.000; *Spearman's rank correlation coefficient*, *R* 0.386).

Graph 1 illustrates how teachers and learners of Russian holistically assess their digital media literacy. Over 80% of the pupils refer to their digital skills as being *very good* or *good*. In contrast, about one third of the teachers conceive of their digital competences as *very good* or *good*, over 20% describe them as being (*rather*) *poor*. Concerning their assessment, the *Mann-Whitney U test* did not show any statistically significant differences between male and female teachers. Interestingly, male learners rated themselves better than females (*U test*, *P* 0.005). This does not necessarily reflect their actual competencies, since girls – as Eickelmann et al. state – tend to downplay their skills.²⁵ In terms of countries, no statistically significant differences could be extracted from the teacher survey (*H test*, *P* 0.770). In contrast to this, Austrian pupils assessed their skills best, followed by German and South Tyrolean students (*H test*, *P* 0.000; mean ranks: Austria 176.59, Germany 143.72, South Tyrol 131.29). Moreover, there is a statistically significant correlation between the age of the Russian language teachers and their digital competencies (*H Test*, *P* 0.000; *Spearman's rank correlation coefficient*, *R* -0.491). This means, the older the teachers the less developed their digital media literacy. The reason for this lies with pre-service teacher education programmes then in force, again the average age of the interviewed teachers being 41.7. More than twenty years ago, modern digital technologies were just evolving. In the interviews, some of the teachers conceive of the increasingly fast-pace of media change as problematic. For them it seems difficult to permanently keep updated.



GRAPH 1: The digital media literacy of teachers and learners of Russian

Source: own processing, 2020.

²⁵ See: EICKELMANN, B. et al.: *Computer- und informationsbezogene Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im zweiten internationalen Vergleich und Kompetenzen im Bereich Computational Thinking*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2019, p. 20-24, p. 278-279.

Besides the holistic assessment, an analytic evaluation was also conducted by means of can-do statements that were grouped under the categories *Technical and User Skills*, *Critical Digital Media Literacy* as well as *Participation and Media Production*. The basis for these three competence areas and descriptors respectively, are the European models referred to in the introduction. Each of these categories consists of five to six can-do descriptors. Table 2 illustrates selected study results of how teachers assess specific digital media skills whereby the emphasis is on competencies that entail some difficulties within the teaching process. In the online-questionnaire, teachers could choose from the answers *applies* coded as 4, *rather applies* (3), *rather does not apply* (2), *does not apply* (1).²⁶ Additionally, Table 3 provides the response distribution in numbers and percentages. As regards item 3 in the section *Technical and User Skills*, 32 teachers feel that they (rather) cannot flexibly react to technical problems occurring during lessons. Some teachers (N° 15 and N° 17, respectively) have difficulties in making pupils aware of certain dangers or helping them observe so-called netiquette when using the internet or interacting with others online. Considering the student perspective, some of the respondents feel insecure when it comes to copyright restrictions, data protection, privacy settings and health issues.²⁷ These aspects need to be dealt with in teacher training as in the interviews some teachers refer to their insufficient knowledge of legal concerns regarding internet use. For Russian teachers, the category *Participation and Media Production* seems to be the most challenging, as shown in Table 2 and Table 3. The overall mean of this question battery amounts to 2.83, i.e. *rather applies* or *rather does not apply*. Twenty one to 52 teachers out of 103 admit difficulties with their own digital media adaptation and production skills as well as with the protection of legal interests. Remarkably, over 50% of the study subjects cannot apply digital media to foster a task-based approach to teaching Russian.

Teachers				
Technical and User Skills				
Items	mean	mode	med.	
Item 3	2.89	3	3.00	I can react flexibly to technical problems arising during lessons.
Critical Digital Media Literacy				
Items	mean	mode	med.	
Item 9	3.22	3	3.00	I can make my pupils aware of possible dangers (e.g. cyberbullying, privacy concerns) when using digital media.
Item 10	3.21	4	3.00	I can guide my pupils to observe appropriate rules of conduct (netiquette) when using digital media.
Participation and Media Production				
Items	mean	mode	med.	
Item 12	3.15	3	3.00	I can adapt existing digital learning tools for my own purposes.
Item 13	2.48	3	3.00	I can create appropriate learning materials or activities (e.g. webquests, learning apps) using digital media.
Item 14	2.68	3	2.00	I can use digital media to foster a task-based approach to learning Russian.

²⁶ In retrospective, it would have been more logical to code the answer *does not apply* as 0 etc.

²⁷ See also: BITKOM: *Digitale Schule – vernetztes Lernen: Ergebnisse repräsentativer Schüler- und Lehrerbefragungen zum Einsatz digitaler Medien im Schulunterricht*. Berlin : BITKOM Research, 2015, p. 22-47. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://www.bitkom.org/sites/default/files/file/import/BITKOM-Studie-Digitale-Schule-2015.pdf>>.

Item 15	2.97	3	3.00	I can help my students to create their own media products (e.g. presentations, videos or podcasts).
Item 16	2.91	3	3.00	I can protect legal interests (e.g. copyright, privacy) when participating in the digital world.
Mean	2.83			

TABLE 2: Analytical assessment of digital media literacy by teachers (selected study results)

Source: own processing, 2020.

Item	Answer options (N° 103)							
	applies		rather applies		rather does not apply		does not apply	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Item 3	25	24.27	46	44.66	28	27.18	4	3.88
Item 9	40	38.83	47	45.63	15	14.56	1	0.97
Item 10	45	43.69	38	36.89	17	16.50	3	2.91
Item 12	39	37.86	43	41.75	18	17.48	3	2.91
Item 13	19	18.45	32	31.07	31	30.10	21	20.39
Item 14	17	16.50	45	43.69	32	31.07	9	8.74
Item 15	30	29.13	45	43.69	23	22.33	5	4.85
Item 16	25	24.27	49	47.57	24	23.30	5	4.85

TABLE 3: Response distribution in numbers and percentages regarding the analytical teacher assessment

Source: own processing, 2020.

3.3 Advantages and Challenges of Digital Media Use

Unquestionably, digital media – when used sensibly – have their benefits as they facilitate communication and help us throughout our day, be it at school or at work. The study results presented in this subchapter highlight positive aspects and further challenges teachers and learners of Russian encounter when applying digital technologies.

In the interviews, six out of seven teachers and all eight pupils emphasise the fact that using digital media in class provides for variety. This finding also has its parallels in the online surveys. Here, 86.4% of the teachers and 77.6% of the pupils (strongly) agree with the statement that digital tools render lessons more varied. In this context, the fun-factor and motivational purposes are referred to by almost all interviewees. In view of geographically distant languages such as Russian, five respondents each consider it especially beneficial that by means of the internet, authentic language use and real-life situations within Russian speaking communities can be experienced. In turn, as stated by several interview participants, this again motivates pupils to study harder. Further positive aspects of digital media use mentioned by the majority of the interviewees are the facilitation of organisational and work processes (e.g. administering school trips or homework assignments) as well as multimodal learning. Some of the study subjects emphasise that the multimodality that comes with digital media use helps students better memorise specific linguistic patterns. Additionally, it facilitates the learners' inter-/ transcultural competences as they experience certain cultural features with more than one of their senses when interacting with target language users online (e.g. by means of e-tandems).

Some of the problem areas of digital media such as non-functioning devices, time constraints, the digital divide and lack of skill have already been addressed. Besides this, study results suggest that current educational policies as well as the question of added value pose further challenges to Russian language teachers. In reference to the latter, five out

of seven teachers state that it sometimes just does not pay to integrate digital media as it is too time-consuming. Instead, they prefer using traditional tools. As study results show, this is due to several causes. Amongst them are technical problems, missing or broken digital devices, and insufficient media literacy skills. In addition to that, the small amount and the often poor quality of available digital learning materials for the school subject Russian pose a problem. In the interviews, several Russian language teachers point out that they need to create digital resources for teaching purposes themselves which again is labour-intensive. This is not the case with regard to other school subjects such as English, as some of the respondents highlight. In the interviews, teachers and learners alike state that they favour a healthy mix of traditional and digital tools. Coming back to current educational policies, some of the study subjects feel pressured by the authorities to instantly digitise each and every step they take. According to several teachers and learners, this is tantamount to a digitalisation mania. In the interviews, four teachers point out that there is a gap between the digitalisation objectives stipulated in school syllabi or educational decrees and the prevalent school reality. This entails a certain media scepticism and loss in teacher motivation. Multifaceted causes are held responsible for the existing gap. Evidently, some schools lack financial and human resources such as IT admins or data protection consultants. Missing support mechanisms, be they technical or pedagogical-didactic, lead to frustration among teachers. As stated in the interviews, some teachers feel left alone in their endeavours, and in view of their workload find it difficult to cope with constantly changing or newly added educational duties.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the *COVID-19* pandemic and the necessary shift to distance learning have accelerated the digitalisation of the education system. Since teachers and pupils were somewhat forced to quickly comply with the new digital school reality, their overall media literacy can be said to have inevitably improved, although this might not be true for everybody. During the *COVID-19* pandemic, the Austrian ministry of education made efforts to more quickly supply schools, teachers and pupils with digital devices and learning platforms. So did the German and South Tyrolean authorities. As the presented study results show, the technical equipment is only one of many prerequisites that are responsible for efficacious digital language learning and teaching. The aforementioned gap between educational policy requirements and teaching practice – as Mehlhorn points out – will still exist in the near future. Structural changes such as the implementation of pedagogical-didactic support systems or the realignment of pre- and in-service teacher training oftentimes take years. Consequently, this gap cannot be closed instantaneously or even cost-neutrally just by relying on the voluntary commitment of teachers. Based on the study results, possible ways of diminishing the existing divide will be discussed in this chapter.

As regards pre-service teacher training, current university curricula need to be adapted to better prepare educators for their digital and related educational duties. Mandatory scientific-academic as well as pedagogical-didactic courses focusing on the meaningful implementation of digital media into teaching must be installed. Thus, it can be guaranteed that each future language or Russian teacher possesses research-based knowledge and a certain set of digital hands-on skills. Study results indicate that greater prominence in teacher education needs to be given to production-based and participatory media competencies. With regard to *DigCompEdu*, the competence areas that need to be more profoundly focused on are *Digital Resources*, *Teaching and Learning* as well as *Empowering Learners*. The latter advocates a learner-centred classroom in which pupils function as social agents and work autonomously. Therefore, (Russian) language teachers must be enabled to efficiently integrate action-oriented digital learning scenarios into their teaching to better fulfil the requirements set in educational

decrees and school syllabi, respectively. On the one hand, this can be realised by simulating sample scenarios in subject-specific didactic courses. On the other, action-based digital media use needs to be practiced during school placements. Further subject areas to be dealt with in teacher training are legal issues and the sustainability of media usage (e.g. copyright restrictions, *Creative Commons* licenses, protection of the environment, one's health and privacy). In terms of *DigComp 2.1*, these topics correlate with the competence area *Digital Content Creation* in conjunction with *Safety*. Specialists in the aforementioned fields such as legal advisors, psychosocial consultants and data protection officers should be available to teacher trainees as well as to in-service teachers and pupils. Hence, additional expert staff needs to be hired to support (future) teachers in putting educational duties into practice. Thus, teachers would cease to feel left alone in their endeavours to make the most of their lessons and the teacher motivation could be maintained.

Study results point to another field of action, being the development of additional high-quality, action-oriented digital language learning materials and M-books. Some Russian textbooks currently on the market, although also available as PDF-versions, appear to be outdated in view of digital educational standards (e.g. *Most neu A1-A2* and *Most neu B1*). Apart from online vocabulary trainers, MP3-files and supplementary behaviouristic pattern-drill exercises primarily focusing on grammar, they – except for the *Dialog* series – have little to offer. As regards textbook development, there seems to be a divide between target group orientation and financial feasibility. As Russian is a minor subject in German-speaking areas, the sales market for textbooks and other learning materials is comparably small. In order to counterbalance this trend, ministries of education should also provide financial means for the professional, research-based development of online learning materials and, importantly, for concomitant quality management. In doing so, the successful implementation of digital media can be promoted and the workload of teachers reduced.

In summary, mutually interdependent factors such as better technical equipment and teacher training, freely available high-quality digital resources as well as practice-oriented educational policies on digitalisation in conjunction with pedagogical-didactic and psychosocial support are held responsible for the efficacious integration of digital tools into the foreign language classroom.

The study results also have implications for future research. As they represent pre-COVID-19 data, a similar follow-up study investigating aspects of digital media use that have substantially and sustainably changed needs to be conducted. Moreover, classroom observations should be carried out. Thus in addition to subjective teacher and learner beliefs, the data would also provide an external perspective on the actual implementation of digital media into language teaching. In doing so, an answer to the question of what digitalisation measures initiated during the *COVID-19* pandemic have indeed proven successful and realistic within the existing framework could be found. In conclusion and in reference to the concept of *Balanced Teaching*, an integrative use of both, digital and traditional tools is to be advocated. Thus, different learning preferences could be met and learner motivation maintained.

Literature and Sources:

AUTONOME PROVINZ BOZEN – SÜDTIROL: *Rahmenrichtlinien für die Gymnasien in Südtirol*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <[https://www.provinz.bz.it/bildung-sprache/didaktik-beratung/downloads/582072_Rahmenrichtlinien-Gymnasien_web_\(2\).pdf](https://www.provinz.bz.it/bildung-sprache/didaktik-beratung/downloads/582072_Rahmenrichtlinien-Gymnasien_web_(2).pdf)>.

AUTONOME PROVINZ BOZEN – SÜDTIROL: *Südtirol digital 2020: Leitlinien für die digitale Entwicklung in Südtirol*. [online]. [2022-09-05]. Available at: <https://www.provinz.bz.it/politik-recht-aussenbeziehungen/europa/downloads/SUEDTIROL_DIGITAL_2020.pdf>.

- BÄR, M.: Fremdsprachenlehren und -lernen in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels: Chancen und Herausforderungen aus fremdsprachendidaktischer Sicht. In BURWITZ-MELZER, E., RIEMER, C., SCHMELTER, L. (eds.): *Das Lehren und Lernen von Fremd- und Zweitsprachen im digitalen Wandel: Arbeitspapiere der 39. Frühjahrskonferenz zur Erforschung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2019, p. 12-23.
- BAUR, N., FLORIAN, M.: Stichprobenprobleme bei Online-Umfragen. In JACKOB, N., SCHOEN, H., ZERBACK, T. H. (eds.): *Sozialforschung im Internet: Methodologie und Praxis der Online-Befragung*. Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009, p. 109-128.
- BITKOM: *Digitale Schule – vernetztes Lernen: Ergebnisse repräsentativer Schüler- und Lehrerbefragungen zum Einsatz digitaler Medien im Schulunterricht*. Berlin : BITKOM Research, 2015.
- BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND FORSCHUNG (BMBF): *DigitalPakt Schule: Das smarte Klassenzimmer*. [online]. [2022-09-05]. Available at: <https://www.das-macht-schule.net/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2020/01/DigitalPakt_Schule-Das_smart-Klassenzimmer.pdf>.
- BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND FRAUEN: *Unterrichtsprinzip Medienerziehung – Grundsatzterlass*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:f874e171-83ea-4e51-902b-48b373b3a187/2012_04.pdf>.
- BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR DIGITALISIERUNG UND WIRTSCHAFTSSTANDORT (BMDW): *Digitales Kompetenzmodell für Österreich: DigComp 2.2 AT*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bmdw.gv.at/dam/jcr:54bbe103-7164-494e-bb30-cd152d9e9b33/DigComp2.2_V33-barrierefrei.pdf>.
- BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG, WISSENSCHAFT UND FORSCHUNG (BMBWF): *Lehrplan Pflichtgegenstand Digitale Grundbildung*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2022_II_267/BGBLA_2022_II_267.pdfsig>.
- CARRETERO, S., VUORIKARI, R., PUNIE, Y.: *DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with Eight Proficiency Levels and Examples of Use*. Luxembourg : Publications Office of the European Union, 2017. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC106281/web-digcomp2.1pdf_%28online%29.pdf>.
- CASPARI, D. et al.: *Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik: ein Handbuch*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2016. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.14220/odaf.2016.32.2.128>>.
- EICKELMANN, B. et al.: *Computer- und informationsbezogene Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im zweiten internationalen Vergleich und Kompetenzen im Bereich Computational Thinking*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2019.
- GOERTZ, L., BAEBLER, B.: *Überblicksstudie zum Thema Digitalisierung in der Lehrerbildung*. Essen : Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, mmb Institut, 2018. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://zenodo.org/record/2592010#.YwipIXZBxPY>>.
- GRÄF, L.: *Online-Befragung: Eine praktische Einführung für Anfänger*. Münster : LIT, 2010.
- HILLMAYR, D., REINHOLD, F., ZIERNWALD, L., REISS, K.: *Digitale Medien im mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlichen Unterricht der Sekundarstufe: Einsatzmöglichkeiten, Umsetzung und Wirksamkeit*. Münster : Waxmann, 2017.
- KELLE, U.: Mixed Methods. In BAUR, N., BLASIUS, J. (eds.): *Handbuch der empirischen Sozialforschung*. Berlin : Springer VS, 2014, p. 153-166. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18939-0_8>.
- KULTUSMINISTERIUM (KMK): *Fachlehrplan Sekundarschule Russisch (Sachsen-Anhalt)*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.bildung-lsa.de/pool/RRL_Lehrplaene/Endfassungen/lp_sks_russ.pdf>.
- KURTZ, J.: Lehrwerkgestütztes Fremdsprachenlernen im digitalen Wandel. In BURWITZ-MELZER, E., RIEMER, C., SCHMELTER, L. (eds.): *Das Lehren und Lernen von Fremd- und Zweitsprachen im digitalen Wandel: Arbeitspapiere der 39. Frühjahrskonferenz zur Erforschung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2019, p. 114-125.

- LORENZ, R. et al.: *Schule digital – der Länderindikator 2017: Schulische Medienbildung in der Sekundarstufe I mit besonderem Fokus auf MINT-Fächer im Bundesländervergleich*. Münster, New York : Waxmann, 2017.
- MELZER, E., RIEMER, C., SCHMELTER, L.: *Das Lehren und Lernen von Fremd- und Zweitsprachen im digitalen Wandel: Arbeitspapiere der 39. Frühjahrskonferenz zur Erforschung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2019.
- MAYER, H.: *Interview und schriftliche Befragung: Grundlagen und Methoden empirischer Sozialforschung*. Munich : Oldenbourg, 2013.
- MAYRING, P. H.: *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*. Weinheim, Basel : Beltz, 2015.
- MEHLHORN, G.: Digitaler Wandel und Medienkompetenz: Implikationen für die Russischlehrerausbildung. In BURWITZ-MELZER, E., RIEMER, C., SCHMELTER, L. (eds.): *Das Lehren und Lernen von Fremd- und Zweitsprachen im digitalen Wandel: Arbeitspapiere der 39. Frühjahrskonferenz zur Erforschung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2019, p. 173-184.
- NORTH, B., GOODIER, T., PICCARDO, E.: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Strasbourg : Council of Europe, 2018. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>>.
- ORF: *Laptop- und Tabletinitiative an Schulen soll verbessert werden*. [online]. [2022-09-02]. Available at: <<https://orf.at/stories/3248258/>>.
- PRENSKY, M.: Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. In *On the Horizon*, 2001, Vol. 9, No. 5, p. 1-6. ISSN 1074-8121.
- RAAB-STEINER, E., BENESCH, M.: *Der Fragebogen: Von der Forschungsidee zur SPSS-Auswertung*. Vienna : Facultas, 2012.
- REEDECKER, CH., PUNIE, Y.: *The European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu)*. Luxembourg : Publications Office of the European Union, 2017. [online]. [2022-09-06]. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC107466/pdf_digcomedu_a4_final.pdf>.
- ROCHE, J.: *Mediendidaktik Fremdsprachen*. Ismaning : Huber, 2008.
- RÖSLER, D.: Prinzipien der Entwicklung und Evaluation von Lernmaterialien und Medien. In BURWITZ-MELZER, E. et al.: *Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht: Sechste, völlig überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2016, p. 471-476.
- SCHMIDT, T.: Digitally Empowered Teaching and Learning: Kompetente Fremdsprachenlehrkräfte und intelligente Technologie. In BURWITZ-MELZER, E., RIEMER, C., SCHMELTER, L. (eds.): *Das Lehren und Lernen von Fremd- und Zweitsprachen im digitalen Wandel: Arbeitspapiere der 39. Frühjahrskonferenz zur Erforschung des Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Tübingen : Narr Francke Attempto, 2019, p. 228-236.
- SENATSWERWALTUNG FÜR BILDUNG, JUGEND UND FAMILIE (SenBJF): *Rahmenlehrplan für den Unterricht in der gymnasialen Oberstufe: Gymnasien, integrierte Sekundarschulen mit gymnasialer Oberstufe, berufliche Gymnasien, Kollegs, Abendgymnasien. Russisch*. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/unterricht/faecher-rahmenlehrplaene/rahmenlehrplaene/anhoe_russisch_sek_2.pdf>.
- SWERTZ, CH.: Medien im Lehramtsstudium für die Sekundarstufe in Österreich: Eine quantitativ-inhaltsanalytische Lehrplananalyse von vier Curricula. In *Medienimpulse: Beiträge zur Medienpädagogik*, 2015, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 1-71. ISSN 2307-3187. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <<https://journals.univie.ac.at/index.php/mp/article/view/mi890/1008>>.
- THALER, E.: *Lernerfolg durch Balanced Teaching: Offene Lernarrangements, aufgabenorientiert, spielorientiert, medienorientiert*. Berlin : Cornelsen Scriptor, 2010.
- TULODZIECKI, G., HERZIG, B., GRAFE, S.: *Medienbildung in Schule und Unterricht*. Bad Heilbrunn : Julius Klinkhardt, 2019.

Author



Mag. Mag. Sonja Bacher, PhD.

Innsbruck University

Department of Slavonic Studies and department of Foreign Language
Teacher Education

Innrain 52d, 6020 Innsbruck

AUSTRIA

sonja.bacher@uibk.ac.at

Sonja Bacher holds a degree in Slavonic, English and American Studies, in teaching Russian and English as well as a PhD in Foreign Language Education. She is currently working as a senior lecturer at the department of Slavonic Studies and the department of Teacher Education at Innsbruck University. She is one of the founding and editorial board members of the *DiSlaw*-journal (*Didaktik slawischer Sprachen*). Her major research interests are digital media in the foreign language classroom, media literacy and media-based inter-/transcultural language learning.



Ludmila Čábyová, Viktória Hudáková

Social Media Use and Adolescents' Levels of Advertising Literacy

ABSTRACT

Advertising literacy is a set of knowledge, abilities and skills enabling one to identify and comprehend advertised messages. The theoretical part of the paper brings various points of view on advertising literacy (which we comprehend to be an element of media literacy), its classification and basic levels. The aim of the paper is to identify the level of advertising literacy among adolescents. The research has been conducted on a sample of 348 youngsters aged 13 to 17 years old. The authors of the paper investigated the influence of age on advertising literacy in the process of identifying intent of advertisement on the social network *Instagram* utilising new formats of digital communication such as reels, stories and memes. The authors of the paper tend to admit that the age of respondents may have an influence on adolescents' advertising literacy but to finally claim so, further research with respondents from larger age groups would have to be conducted.

KEY WORDS

Adolescents. Media Literacy. Advertising. Advertising Literacy. Marketing Communication. Advertising. Native Advertising. Groundswell. Critical Thinking. Online and Offline Communication. Social Media.

Introduction

The main part of the study aims at the analysis of the advertising literacy of adolescents, focusing especially on advertising literacy on social networks. Apart from having a look at related literature, we examined the knowledge, abilities and skills of adolescents related to advertising on the Internet and how adolescents deal with advertisements on social networks, especially those on Instagram. We linked our research to that of Vrabec whom examined the advertising literacy of our generation back in 2007. Vrabec's research was oriented on offline media, mainly advertising in print and on TV. In the past 15 years, the influence of social media has been on the rise, becoming more and more influential. Strategies and tactics being used by social media are more elaborate than ever before. Adolescents regularly come into contact with targeted advertising which matches their hobbies and characteristics and also responds to their buying behaviour.

The tracking, profiling and targeting practices that enable personalisation are sophisticated and opaque, and as such, can inhibit adolescents' ability to understand these commercial practices, or make critical decisions about their privacy and personal.¹ We examined the level of advertising literacy of adolescents related to new digital formats on Instagram. We examined adolescents' ability to identify and comprehend advertising. We also investigated if adolescents pay attention to photos on Instagram and if so, how much. Then we investigated whether they are able to differentiate between paid and unpaid content on social networks. We also focused our attention on native advertising in cases of which it is extremely difficult to identify the hidden advertising message.

Statistics from the company *Meta* show² that in January 2022, there were 1.55 million users of in Slovakia. The figure shows that 28.4% of the total Slovak population is impacted by Instagram's advertising. As Instagram limits usage of the platform by age and its users must be aged 13 years and older, it is useful to acknowledge that the previously mentioned figure represents 32.8% of entitled users in Slovakia. Another important piece of information to be mentioned is that at the beginning of 2022, the advertising impact of Instagram in Slovakia was represented by 31.5% of local internet users' base (irrespective of age). At the beginning of 2022, the ratio of advertising audience was represented by 54.2% of men as opposed to 45.8% of women. 72% of adolescents are users of the social network Instagram.

1 Theoretical Background to Advertising Literacy Focusing on Advertising Literacy among Adolescents

Advertising literacy is one of the basic elements in the entire set of media literacy package. Advertising literacy is viewed as the ability to comprehend advertising content, to identify it and unveil its intent as well as the ability to resist it. The aim of the communication strategies of companies is to communicate in a way in which advertising is not recognised or identified. Especially in the digital environment, advertising literacy may be significantly limited. According to Verdoordt³ the commercial intent of digital advertising is often unclear because the advertising message is fully embedded in the entertaining content.

¹ VERDOODT, V., LIEVENS, E.: Targeting Children with Personalised Advertising. In VERMEULEN, G., LIEVENS, E. (eds.): *Data Protection and Privacy under Pressure, Transatlantic Tensions, EU Surveillance, and Big Data*. Antwerp, Apeldoorn, Portland : Maklu, 2017, p. 330.

² Digital 2022: Slovakia. [online]. [2022-08-10]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-slovakia>>.

³ VERDOODT, V.: *Children's Rights and Advertising Literacy in the Digital Era: Towards an Empowering Regulatory Framework for Commercial Communication*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Ghent : Ghent University, 2018, p. 12.

Native advertising, visually as well as functionally embedded in the Internet environment, is often such a case. The advertiser buys and uses the distribution channel of third party - media, platforms and social networks.⁴ Native advertising in the online environment may be in the form of PR articles, interviews, blogs and podcasts. According to Hudáková⁵, the promotion of a trademark by means of influencers is the most popular native advertising. Three important characteristics of these new advertising formats are the following: longer exposure time to commercial content, integration of commercial content into the media content and interactive engagement of the user with the advertising content.⁶

The most common native advertising in the offline environment comes in form of product placement, sponsoring or paid advertisements and paid interviews in the press.

The boundaries between commercial and non-commercial online content (e.g. information or entertainment are blurred⁷). Naturally, the lowest level of advertising literacy is attributed to children and seniors.

The main concern is that if consumers do not recognise the commercial intent of advertising, they are unlikely to activate their advertising literacy (i.e., their general understanding of advertising's persuasive intent and their skeptical attitude towards advertising). Activation of advertising literacy is important when processing an advertisement because it can help the consumers to critically evaluate and cope with these types of advertising messages.⁸ Various studies have already shown that new advertising formats can generate more positive brand attitudes and purchase requests compared to traditional formats, especially in the case of children and teenagers.⁹

A great amount of non-formal outcomes, especially online, cannot be managed by the selling company itself. As the influence of social media is always on the rise, well-deserved attention should be paid to these non-formal outcomes as these have become important players having great influence on buying behaviour and decision-making. It is even more difficult to identify and comprehend the content of this type of advertising. According to Čábyová¹⁰,

⁴ KUNA, F. et al.: *Obsah, ktorý ľudia milujú*. Bratislava : Združenie pre internetovú reklamu IAB Slovakia, 2018, p. 13. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://prirucka.iabslovakia.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/prirucka_nativnej_reklamy.pdf>.

⁵ See: HUDÁKOVÁ, V.: Reklamná gramotnosť generácie Z. In *QUAERE 2022*, Hradec Králové : Magnanimitas, 2022, p. 67-76.

⁶ See: ROZENDAAL, E., BUIJZEN, M., VALKENBURG, P. M.: Think-aloud Process Superior to Thought-listing in Increasing Children's Critical Processing of Advertising. In *Human Communication Research*, 2012, Vol. 38, No. 2, p. 200-203, p. 199-221.

⁷ See: WOJDYNSKI, B. W., EVANS, N. J.: Going Native: Effects of Disclosure Position and Language on the Recognition and Evaluation of Online Native Advertising. In *Journal of Advertising*, 2016, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2016, p. 158.; CAMPBELL, C., EVANS, N. J.: The Role of a Companion Banner and Sponsorship Transparency in Recognizing and Evaluating Article-style Native Advertising. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2018, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 18.

⁸ See: WRIGHT, P., FRIESTAD, M., BOUSH, D. M.: The Development of Marketplace Persuasion Knowledge in Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults. In *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 2005, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 224.; ZABUZHANSKA, I., MARTOVIČ, M., HEKELJ, M.: Audiobranding in American and Slovak Telecommunications Advertising: A Linguistic Standpoint. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2022, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 267-304.

⁹ HUDDERS, L. et al.: Children's Advertising Literacy for New Advertising Formats: The Mediating Impact of Advertising Literacy on the (Un)Intended Effects of Advergaming and Advertising Funded Programs. In VERLEGH, P., VOORVELD, H., EISEND, M. (eds.): *Advances in Advertising Research. European Advertising Academy*. Springer Gabler : Wiesbaden, 2015, Vol. 6, p. 18.; See also: SALIM, N. A. M., ABDULLAH, M. Y.: Measuring Reliability and Validity of Instrument: The Dimensions of Advertising Literacy in Determining the Advertising Literacy Index. In *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 2017, Vol. 33, No. 1, p. 285.; PASHANK, N., TABIBI, S. J., A., FARHANGI, A. A.: Defining Factors Influencing Advertising Literacy of Iranian Visual Media Directors. In *Communication Research*, 2018, Vol. 25, No. 93, p. 108.

¹⁰ ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: The Role of Blogs in the Communication of Ecological Topics. In ČÁBYOVÁ, L., BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., MADLEŇÁK, A. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: New Changers, New Challenges*: Conference Proceedings from the International Scientific Conference 9th November 2021 online. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 88.

non-formal outcomes are all the references to a company in comments sections as well as in discussion forums, blogs and reviews. Posting videos, parodies of commercial spots on YouTube or podcasts are also types of non-formal outcomes. This phenomenon is not a novelty, though. Unregulated and uncontrolled flows of information have been present in advertising ever since or even before the invention of the Internet in the form of oral advertising, rumours or gossips. Word of mouth (WOM) is defined by Blackwell as “the informal transmission of ideas, comments, opinions, and information between two people, neither one of which is a marketer.”¹¹ Nowadays, the flow of information has been displaced into the online environment, namely social media, where it is a lot quicker to spread information that reaches bigger numbers of potential customers. Li and Bernoff named these communication tools the “groundswell”.¹²

Advertising literacy is a set of knowledge, abilities and skills of an individual enabling them to comprehend an advertisement, its content and intent.¹³ Friestad and Wright¹⁴ differentiate between factual and procedural knowledge. Factual knowledge (also known as declarative) relates to knowing the content of advertising communication. Procedural knowledge is derived from existing factual knowledge and relates to the ability of comprehending the way by means of which the advertising message is delivered. Most of the studies related to research of the advertising literacy of adolescents rarely differentiate between the above mentioned 2 types of knowledge. Therefore it is needed to take into consideration up-to-date outcomes of research related to the advertising literacy of children which is above all focused on the importance of understanding the difference in knowledge classification. Waiguny, Nelson and Terlutter¹⁵ explicitly differentiate between dispositional (factual knowledge) and situational (procedural knowledge) advertising literacy.

Rozendaal et al. proposed a three-dimensional concept of advertising literacy. As such, each dimension consists of several sub-dimensions.¹⁶ The first dimension corresponds to conceptual advertising literacy (both the ability to identify an advertisement and to comprehend advertised messages); the second is admitting advertising literacy (the critical attitude towards advertisement belongs here) and the third dimension is literacy performance (which stands for the ability to utilise conceptual advertising knowledge while being confronted with advertisement. To put it straight, it refers to the way we use our knowledge about advertising while the advertising is active and we are its recipient).

Hudder et al.¹⁷ speak of three general dimensions of advertising literacy: cognitive advertising literacy, affective advertising literacy and moral advertising literacy. Cognitive advertising literacy comprises the ability to identify an advertisement, to comprehend the selling and persuasive intent as well as to be able to differentiate persuasive technique, to identify the advertiser (as the source of advertising) and identify the target group of such an advertisement. Affective advertising literacy is then viewed as the ability to withhold an effective attitude towards advertisement and individual advertising formats. Moral advertising

¹¹ BLACKWELL, R. D., MINIARD, P. W., ENGEL, J. F.: *Consumer Behavior*. Mason, OH : South-Western, 2001, p. 404.

¹² LI, CH., BERNOFF, J.: *Spodná vlna*. Bratislava : Eastone Books, 2008, p. 11.

¹³ BOUSH, D. M., FRIESTAD, M., ROSE, G. M: Adolescent Skepticism Toward TV Advertising and Knowledge of Advertiser Tactics. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1994, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 168.

¹⁴ FRIESTAD, M., WRIGHT, P.: The Persuasion Knowledge Model – How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1994, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 19.

¹⁵ See: WAIGUNY, M. K. J., NELSON, M. R., TERLUTTER, R.: Entertainment Matters! The Relationship Between Challenge and Persuasiveness of an Advergame for Children. In *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 2012, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 72-73.

¹⁶ See: ROZENDAAL, E., LAPIERRE, M. A., VAN REIJMERSDAL, E. A., BUIJZEN, M.: Reconsidering Advertising Literacy as a Defense Against Advertising Effects. In *Media Psychology*, 2011, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 335-336.

¹⁷ HUDDERS, L. et al.: Children's Advertising Literacy in a New Media Environment: An Introduction to the AdLit Research Project. In *Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschappen 2015, Proceedings*. Antwerp : Universiteit Gent, 2015, p. 116.

literacy stands for the process of moral (ethical) examination of advertising formats, tactics and advertising messages. Legislative knowledge from media and advertising backgrounds, knowledge of consumer law, as well as evaluation of values, norms (such as manipulation, fair play, rightness) are part of this dimension, too.

Malmelin works with the four dimensional concept of advertising literacy.¹⁸ He perceives information literacy, promotional literacy, aesthetic (visual) literacy and rhetorical literacy to be the main parts forming one's advertising literacy. Information literacy is the ability to find and process information, judge its rightness, be able to identify false news and misinformation. Promotional literacy stands for the art of being able to attract one's attention, to sell, to persuade and to enthuse over the product and its ownership. This literacy helps a person to critically evaluate the influence of advertising, its functions, content, and objectivity and to unveil pressure tactics in communication. Aesthetic literacy comprises the ability to appreciate art, to comprehend beauty, to perceive it by means of various senses and to understand the concept of images. Aesthetic illiteracy is then understood as the inability to interpret visual images. Rhetorical literacy is linked in marketing communication to the art of persuasion, argumentation and presentation.

Even though in Slovakia the topic of media literacy is processed in detail and enough attention is paid to it, the topic of advertising literacy is not processed so well and research is lacking. Advertising literacy is processed in the work of Vrabec¹⁹ who examined the ability of adolescents to recognise manipulative elements in advertising. The author of the paper from 2008 found that adolescents have issues in differentiating between reality and illusion in advertisements. Vrabec claims that individuals had trouble identifying that advertisements do not depict reality but illusion and that various manipulative techniques and strategies are used. Vrabec's research proved that *"young people naturally have certain level of resistance to manipulative elements used in media communication however they cannot, in its complexity, critically analyse strategies and techniques used to gain viewer's attention and buying behaviour"*.²⁰ Petranová²¹ deals with media literacy in her research and examines the ability to identify the influence of advertising, hidden advertisement, product placement and knowledge of rules and norms regulating advertisements.²²

Báčová a Holevová²³ examine advertising literacy in terms of how knowledge of advertising influences subsequent evaluation of advertisements. Advertising literacy is in these terms understood as the ability to critically evaluate a commercial, judge its individual functions, the ability to unveil negative impacts of commercials and to resist them. According to the authors, critical thinking is the most basic element of advertising literacy. Dzurová et al.²⁴, as well as Korčoková²⁵ examine advertising literacy from the consumer's literacy perspective. Generally speaking, advertising literacy is rather a borderline topic of media literacy.

¹⁸ MALMELIN, N.: What Is Advertising Literacy? Exploring the Dimensions of Advertising Literacy. In *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 2010, Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 132.

¹⁹ See: VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a média – mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže, 2008, p. 13-25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²¹ PETRANOVÁ, D.: Úroveň mediálnej gramotnosti slovenských seniorov. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 73.

²² Compare with: ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 136-138.; CHELLASAMY, A. et al.: Social Media Disengagement Among Gen Y and Gen Z: a Quantitative Investigation. In *Media Literacy Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No.1, p. 233-234.

²³ See: BAČOVÁ, V., HOLEVOVÁ, B.: Zvyšovanie citlivosti na pôsobenie reklamy. In HUMPOLÍČEK, P., SVOBODA, M., BLATNÝ M. (eds.): *Sociální procesy a osobnost 2007*. Brno : MSD, 2007, p. 20-21.

²⁴ DZUROVÁ, M. et al.: *Gramotný spotrebiteľ. Zborník vedeckých štúdií*. Bratislava : EUBA, 2016, p. 198.

²⁵ KORČOKOVÁ, M.: Gramotný spotrebiteľ. In *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia*, 2017, p. 158. [online]. [2022-05-17]. Available at: <https://of.euba.sk/www_write/files/veda-vyskum/scb/vydane-cisla/2017-02/scb0217-korcokova.pdf>.

This study and related research is aimed at adolescents aged 13 to 17. There are two reasons for choosing this age group sample. First, we suppose that these adolescents are somewhere in the final stage of their cognitive development and are still learning cognitive skills which may influence their behaviour.²⁶ This implies that socialisation of consumers and related skills in advertising literacy can be developed even during their adolescence.²⁷ That would be in direct opposition to the research of Rozendaal et al.²⁸ who supposed that advertising literacy develops only between the ages of 8 to 12. The research has been doubted by Verhellenom et al.²⁹ who suggested that older age groups should also be examined.

Second, advertising aimed at adolescents takes place in the online environment in which advertising overlaps with entertainment. This strong integration of advertisements can make it difficult for adolescents to comprehend the intent of advertising³⁰ compared to more traditional forms of commercials.

Even though there has been conducted quite a profound research related to media literacy of children and adolescents, there still remain unanswered questions related to the advertising literacy of adolescents confronted with digital interactive advertising formats and how adolescents react to advertising tactics hidden in various formats of advertised messages.

In the profound research of Vrabec,³¹ the author dealt with the advertising literacy of children at primary and secondary schools and at universities. Vrabec exposed all the young people to the text of a fictional advertisement. 88% of high school students and 82% of elementary school students detected the communication intent of the advertisement. University students, being exposed to a more complicated assignment and more challenging tasks could not unveil the real intent of the advertisement. Only 24% of university students managed to identify the intent of the advertisement compared to 76% who were wrong. It is also important to note that 60% of respondents understood that advertisements are not a true mirror to reality and that the commercial creators utilise various strategies to influence the consumer. Being able to identify advertising strategies became one of the main components of advertising literacy. The research showed that more than half of youngsters in Slovakia had reached basic advertising literacy.

De Jans, Hudders and Cauberghe³² conducted research in which they pointed out that young people suppose that they are advertising literate, however, young people are not as advertising literate as they believe. In their research aimed at advertising literacy, the authors also confirmed that advertising literacy increases with people's age. This means that the most vulnerable groups are children, subsequently teenagers and young people. The authors also claim that with increasing age, a person's resentment towards advertising increases, too, and that they feel the need to avoid it. The research has also shown that cognitive advertising literacy among young people is quite high, reaching 50%.

²⁶ BLAKEMORE, S. J., CHOUDHURY, S.: Development of the Adolescent Brain: Implications for Executive Function and Social Cognition. In *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2006, Vol. 47, No. 3-4, p. 297.

²⁷ See: MOSES, L. J., BALDWIN, D. A.: What Can the Study of Cognitive Development Reveal about Children's Ability to Appreciate and Cope with Advertising? In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2005, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 186-201.

²⁸ See: ROZENDAAL, E., BUIJZEN, M., VALKENBURG, P.: Comparing Children's and Adults' Cognitive Advertising Competences in the Netherlands. In *Journal of Children and Media*, 2010, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 78-80.

²⁹ See: VERHELLEN, Y., OATES, C., DE PELSMACKER, P., DENS, N.: Children's Responses to Traditional Versus Hybrid Advertising Formats: The Moderating Role of Persuasion Knowledge. In *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 2014, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 235-255.

³⁰ See: VERHELLEN, Y., OATES, C., DE PELSMACKER, P., DENS, N.: Children's Responses to Traditional Versus Hybrid Advertising Formats: The Moderating Role of Persuasion Knowledge. In *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 2014, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 235-255.

³¹ See: VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a médiá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava: IUVENTA, 2008, p. 30-31.

³² See: DE JANS, S., HUDDERS, L., CAUBERGHE, V.: Adolescents' Self-reported Level of Dispositional Advertising Literacy: How Do Adolescents Resist Advertising in the Current Commercial Media Environment? In *Young Consumers*, 2018, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 402-420.

Van Reijmersdal et al. examined how adolescents comprehend advertisements. They focused their attention especially on sponsoring in TV, whether adolescents pay attention to tagging the sponsors on TV and if they comprehend that they become subjects of advertising. The research in 2017 comprised 221 students and the results were compared with those of adults. After all, advertising literacy of adolescents (young people) became the subject of the research, too, as a side outcome. The research has proven that young people, in comparison to adults, pay more attention to tags of sponsors or products in programmes. On the other hand, even though young people acknowledged the presence of sponsoring in a programme, they do not tend to be more critical towards the commercial. Unlike adults, who are more cautious.³³ This statement supports the authors De Jans, Hudders and Cauberghe who believe that with increasing age, advertising literacy also increases.

Advertising literacy has also been examined in some detail by Dutch academics. They examined native advertising and activation of advertising literacy while watching vlogs. This topic is very important as adolescents spend most of their free time on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or YouTube and they watch videos of their favourite influencers. The behaviour of young people is a well-known topic of businesses, too, as they try to present their products by means of influencers and influencers' YT channels. In March 2020, research was conducted on a sample of 251 young people (teenagers). The results of the research showed that young people watching vlogs do not pay attention to the sponsor's tags. These tags do not initiate critical thinking in connection with such a commercial. Even if their critical thinking mode is not activated, teenagers easily identify the sponsored product. This proved that in order to activate advertising literacy, young people do not need to be notified of a commercial upfront as they are able to identify it while watching Internet content. The study also managed to find that once the intent of the research was unveiled, the respondents succeeded to identify the advertisement straight forwardly. This finding proves that schooling and education in advertising and marketing may lead to increased levels of advertising literacy. In attitudinal advertising literacy, the research showed that increases in advertising literacy lead to negative attitudes towards the brand.³⁴ This corresponds with the outcomes of De Jans, Hudders and Cauberghe's research.

Swaney et al.³⁵ executed a qualitative study on the sample of 29 adolescents aged 15 to 17. They wanted to examine the moral advertising literacy of the participants, in specific, how they evaluate if the marketing influencer is fair and if the commercial is appropriate. The findings suggest that even though the respondents were critical and skeptical towards influencers in general (corresponding with respondents' dispositional advertising literacy), they were positive towards the specific advertising content (corresponding with situational literacy), mostly thanks to the parasocial relationship between an influencer and their follower. As such, this research implies the difference between moral advertising literacy of adolescents in general influencers' marketing context on one side, and corresponding willingness to apply this critical reflection on popular influencers on the other. The results of the research confirmed Van Dam and Van Reijmersdal's outcomes³⁶ that teenagers can perceive strong parasocial relationships with influencers, frequently regarding them as being akin to a friend.

³³ See: VAN REIJMERSDAL, E. A. et al.: This Is Advertising! Effects of Disclosing Television Brand Placement on Adolescents. In *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 2017, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 328-342.

³⁴ HOEK, R. W. et al: Testing the Effectiveness of a Disclosure in Activating Children's Advertising Literacy in the Context of Embedded Advertising in Vlogs. In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 10.

³⁵ See: SWEENEY, E., LAWLOR, M. A., BRADY, M.: Teenagers' Moral Advertising Literacy in an Influencer Marketing Context. In *International Journal of Advertising*, 2021, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 54-77.

³⁶ See: VAN REIJMERSDAL, E., VAN DAM, S.: How Age and Disclosures of Sponsored Influencer Videos Affect Adolescents' Knowledge of Persuasion and Persuasion. In *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 2020, Vol. 49, No. 7, p. 1531-1544.

2 Supporting Material and Methodology

The article focuses on the advertising literacy of adolescents, more precisely on adolescents' ability to identify and comprehend advertisements in online environments, especially on the social network Instagram. The main aim of the article is to identify the level of advertising literacy of adolescents. Based on this targeted aim, primary as well as secondary sources were used. The secondary sources were applied in the process of gathering theoretical data from both Slovak and foreign literature. The most helpful were the studies of the following authors: Rozendaal, Campbell and Swanay. Of the Slovak authors, Vrabec was the most influential. As the topic of advertising literacy does not resonate much in academic databases, we considered gathering our own data on the topic and its subsequent evaluation to be the best approach. Our primary source was research executed by means of an electronic survey, so-called CAWI – computer assisted web interviewing.

Having in mind a targeted age group of adolescents from 13 to 17, we considered an electronic survey to be the most effective way of questioning as well as the most attractive, simple and natural for the chosen age group. An electronic survey was created and distributed via the platform Survio. Survio is a tool created to measure consumers' satisfaction, to evaluate company's employees, to run marketing research or other surveys and polls.

In the survey, there were specific images of the most popular formats on Instagram at present: Reels, meme and stories.³⁷ The images were chosen from those already published on Instagram and our respondents might have already seen them. We wanted to use images and videos that would be attractive for our respondents.

The survey was launched on the 7th of June 2022 and lasted until the 6th of July 2022, an overall period of 30 days. The survey was presented to students of two primary schools, one secondary school and a high school. To remain objective in the process of evaluation of adolescents' advertising literacy in Slovakia, we chose schools from various geographical locations. The chosen schools represented the western, central and eastern regions of Slovakia.

The survey was executed on a sample of 348 respondents aged 13 to 17 from various regions of Slovakia. 63.2% of respondents were women and 33% men, 3.8% of respondents were not willing to claim their sex or ticked their sex as "Other". The respondents' age structure was as follows: 13.8% respondents were aged 13 years, 17.5% aged 14, 24.7% aged 15, the biggest group – 31.9% of respondents aged 16 years and the least numerous group aged 17 years, 12.1%. Taking into account the set goal (to acknowledge the level of advertising literacy of adolescents), we created a set of questions accompanied by real post images to examine respondents' ability to identify and comprehend an advertisement.

Thanks to the practical examples in the questions we examined:

- respondent's ability to differentiate commercials from common content on the social network Instagram,
- respondent's ability to comprehend the message advertised by the advertiser in the advertisement.

In the course of evaluation of survey results, we consulted the work of Petranová³⁸ who had examined media literacy of seniors. Similarly to Petranová, we attributed points to individuals for responses to questions asked in the survey. If the respondent chose the right answer,

³⁷ Note of the authors: Reels is a fun format of short videos that use music, effects or stickers. By reels, companies can creatively present themselves to their customers. A meme is a viral format, usually humorous, in which authors try to make a strong point. A meme picture is most often created from a funny picture, which the author completes with his own text. An Instagram story is a 24-hour post on an Instagram profile that can take the form of a picture, video, or thought. If users highlight it, it will not disappear after the whole day, but will remain visible in the profile.

³⁸ PETRANOVÁ, D.: Úroveň mediálnej gramotnosti slovenských seniorov. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 73.

identified the commercial and comprehended it well, the adolescent was attributed 1 point. If the commercial was not identified or the message was not comprehended, the respondent was attributed 0 points. A detailed list of all questions asked may be found in the following chapter dealing with survey results.

The final evaluation consisted of adding up the points and counting an arithmetic median which resulted in the specification of the level of advertising literacy among the questioned adolescents. We also evaluated the level of advertising literacy for each surveyed age group separately: 13 years old, 14, 15, 16 and 17 year old adolescents. We applied the same approach to the evaluation of separate age groups as we did to the evaluation of adolescents as a general group of youngsters.

The final level of advertising literacy was divided into 3 groups, similar to Petranová's research:

- Basic level – an individual reaches a basic knowledge of advertising, knows basic forms of advertising (e.g. TV commercials, promotion or billboards) and they know how to differentiate one from the other. A person having a basic level of advertising literacy does not think of advertising furthermore, they neither read the texts of the post nor pay attention to the advertising tags.
- Medium level – an individual has at their disposal competencies at the medium level of advertising literacy, such as being able to recognise a commercial, to comprehend an advertising message but not on all occasions and not always in the right way. More complex advertising formats, such as native advertisements, are not easy to be identified by the respondent who also pays little attention to advertising tags.
- Advanced level – an individual has enough knowledge and abilities about advertising strategies, they know various forms of advertisements and that makes it easy for the respondent to differentiate between them and comprehend it in the right way. The respondent is interested in the content they see and they pay attention to advertising tags. Buying behaviour of the respondent is not significantly influenced by commercials as they can evaluate all factors.

If the adolescents scored from 0 to 3 points, they have a basic level of advertising literacy, from 4 to 6 points they have a medium level and from 7 to 8 the respondents have an advanced level of advertising literacy. For greater clarity, the levels are illustrated in the chart below.

Basic level of media literacy	0 – 3 points
Medium level of media literacy	4 – 6 points
Advanced level of media literacy	7 – 8 points

TABLE 1: Level of advertising literacy

Source: author's own processing, 2022

3 Results and Discussion

We examined if the respondents read tags under photograph/video posts on social networks. Available were the following possible answers: Yes (3), Mostly yes (2), Mostly no (1), No (0). As advertising always has to be tagged, the advertising notice on the social network Instagram is usually in the description of the photo/video. Respondents were asked to express their attitude towards descriptions of pictures/videos on social networks. The most common answer was *yes* (38.8%) which represents people who read the description of posts on social media. Other 35.1% of respondents usually read the descriptions (option *mostly yes*). 19.3% usually do not read the descriptions (*mostly no*) and 6.9% do not read them at all (*No*). The 17 year old age group are those respondents who prefer to read the description, followed by 14 year olds, then 15 year

olds, 16 years and finally 13 year old adolescents who tend not to read the post description texts. Many previous studies had shown that increasing age is a factor having an impact on an increasing level of advertising literacy, however, in our case, interest in knowing information (and as such increasing one's level of advertising literacy) does not increase with higher age.

One sign of advertising literacy is the ability to comprehend commercials in the right way. By means of the following advertising picture, we tried to find if the respondents comprehended the advertiser's message in the right way. The list of possible answers to/ meanings of the advertisement was as follows: The picture's intent is (0) to motivate ecological thinking, (1) to suggest that an ecological lifestyle is expensive, (2) to motivate the purchase of glass food containers.



PICTURE 1: Sponsored meme post

Source: EMEFKA sponsored post. [online]. [2022-10-02]. Available at: <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CZHomarMgkx/>>.

Keeping in mind that the post is tagged as sponsoring, with the text: “Sponsored by @klarsteinslovensko“, the right answer for the question was 2) to motivate to purchase glass food containers as the company Klarstein sells these. This is a good example of native advertising in which the advertiser's intent is difficult to be comprehended and these commercials influence consumers on a subconscious level. Advertising literacy examines not only if we can correctly identify advertising but also whether we are able to comprehend it in the right way. The message of the above mentioned image commercial was understood correctly only by 29% of respondents. The majority, 53.7% of respondents ticked the option (0) to motivate ecological thinking. The remaining 17.2% ticked option (1) to suggest that an ecological lifestyle is expensive. Taking into account the age of respondents, the most successful age group were adolescents aged 13, subsequently those aged 17, 14 and 15. The least successful were 16 year old respondents. This result proved that age is not a factor having an influence on the level of a person's advertising literacy.

In our research, we also used a picture that implies its commercial purpose, though, in fact, it is not a commercial. Respondents were once again asked to identify the advertiser's intent. The following answers/ meanings were suggested: (0) to entertain, (1) to increase the viewership of games of the Slovak hockey team during the Winter Olympic Games, (2) to bring attention to the main advertising sponsor of the Winter Olympic Games.



PICTURE 2: *Non-sponsored meme post*

Source: EMEFKA sponsored post. [online]. [2022-10-02]. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaHCA_Rs4ca/>.

In this case, the respondents were successful as 71% ticked option (0) *to entertain*. Option 1) *to increase the viewership of games of the Slovak hockey team during the Winter Olympic Games* was ticked by 6% of respondents and the other 23% ticked option (2) *to bring attention to the main advertising sponsor of the Winter Olympic Games*. Referring to the respondents' age, the most successful age group were the 15 year old respondents, then 14 year olds and subsequently 16, 17 and 13 year old respondents. Summarizing the most common answers in both cases of image commercials we found that adolescents do not expect posts on social media to be of advertising character. They primarily count on their value as images for entertainment. This is a well-known fact and the advertisers rely on it and they more and more often use native advertising in the form of memes to address young people on the Internet. This is also a primary reason why we consider continuously increasing the level of advertising literacy to be just as important as increasing the level of media, financial, digital or any other literacy.

Nowadays, the most popular format of Instagram is Reels, supported by algorithms, too, and for this reason we examined if respondents could differentiate if the Reels are commercial (sponsored) one or not. The respondents might have chosen from the following answers: Yes (1), No (0), *I do not know* (0). The respondents watched a minute long video which simulated the regular Reels section video queue. The video consisted of multiple Instagram videos – the first depicted cats in funny situations, the second showed 5 places in Europe worth visiting and the third was a commercial. In fact, the last video was a commercial promoting the game Beatstar. The post was tagged as “Sponsored” and in the lower part of the video there was a link prompting the viewer to download the game. Subsequently, the last / fourth video was an entertaining one about a new music trend. 70.4% (245) respondents recognised the commercial in between other Reels. 10.1% of respondents did not realise that there was a commercial Reel and 19.5% rather choose the option “*I do not know*”. The additional question related to unveiling the commercial video was “*Which product was promoted in the Reels?*” was responded to by 245 respondents and their answer was mostly correct. The respondents' answers varied from “a game, a mobile phone game, Beatstar to a game about rhythm”. 7 respondents, though, incorrectly believed that the commercial Reels was promoting European countries and other 5 respondents named both, Beatstar video and the one about European countries.

In order to verify the advertising literacy of adolescents, we chose a more complicated Reels available on Instagram. Similar to the previous question, the following answers were possible: Yes (1), No (0), I do not know (0).

The video named "Teachers' talks" was a funny video showing situations at school such as writing a test, undergoing an oral exam or a talk on how to choose a university. In the end of the video spot, Pan-European University in Bratislava and benefits that they provide to their students were mentioned. The video was tagged as 'commercial'. Compared to other Reels, in this case, the respondents mostly did not realise that it was a commercial spot which created a paradox. 67% of respondents did not even realise there was a commercial included, 15.8% did not know and only 17.2% of respondents were correct and identified the advertisement. The additional question related to the video: "What was the product promoted in the video?" showed that 21 respondents did not know and 38 respondents identified correctly that the video was a promotion for a university, in fact for Pan-European University. One respondent answered that it simply was an "education related advertisement" and the answer could not have been evaluated as correct as the spot was not created in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and it did not promote 'education' in general, rather only one university.

Instagram Stories is the last form of advertisement the respondents see in the online environment. We decided to add to our research a video that showed Instagram Stories and the respondents were asked to identify what was the main idea behind its creation. The following answers were offered: To entertain (0), To motivate to e-sport(0), To motivate to 'usual' sport (0), To motivate to play games (0), To invite the followers to the gamers' festival Unicup (1).

The Stories we chose promoted gamers' festival Unicup. The video shows two girls, one of them is playing a game on her laptop. She says to the other girl that she does sport on the computer, and she is training for Unicup. The Stories promoted Unicup, a gamers' festival that takes place every year in Trnava. 26.4% of respondents were successful and answered correctly that the main idea of the video was to invite the followers to Unicup. 30.5% of respondents marked that the video wanted to entertain the viewers, 32.2% marked the answer 'To motivate to e-sport', 8% marked 'To motivate to 'usual' sport and the remaining 2.9% thought the video wanted to motivate viewers to practice games. From the sample of 348 respondents, 92 adolescents were successful.

Once again, in the same way as in the case of the previous videos, this Instagram Reels confirmed that young people expect social networks to entertain them and they do not realise how much the native advertising there is focused on them and how such commercials influence their buying behaviour.

Final Level of Advertising Literacy

The following chart was created to gather average levels (in points) for each separately asked question in relation to the age of respondents. The last column shows the overall average level of advertising literacy for each separate age group (separate points are added up and then averaged). Here is an example of the interpretation of results to ensure the chart is comprehended correctly: 13 year old respondents scored on average 1.93 points on the first question, 0.35 points on the second question, 0.6 on the third question, etc. The overall level of advertising literacy of 13 year old adolescents reached a medium level (according to this classification: 0-3= basic level, 4-6= medium level, 7-8 advanced level) as the overall average of all questions scorings and their subsequent division reached 3.85 points. The final number 3.85 was a result of averaging all points from all the respondents' answers.

Age	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	Level of advertising literacy
13 yo	1.93	0.35	0.60	0.70	0.06	0.18	3.85 – medium level
14 yo	2.16	0.32	0.76	0.72	0.16	0.27	4.40 – medium level
15 yo	2.10	0.25	0.77	0.84	0.17	0.24	4.40 – medium level
16 yo	1.95	0.25	0.70	0.64	0.16	0.33	4.05 – medium level
17 yo	2.21	0.33	0.61	0.52	0.33	0.19	4.21 – medium level
Overall level of advertising literacy of adolescents							4.18 – medium level

TABLE 2: Final level of advertising literacy

Source: author's own processing, 2022

Averaging all points from all age groups of respondents showed that adolescents, in general, scored 4.18 points which means they reached a medium level of advertising literacy. This means that adolescents have certain competencies specific to advertising. They were nearly always able to identify the commercial and comprehend its message. More complex formats, such as native advertisements, were more troublesome to be identified. This was proven in our research with the video promoting Pan-European University. The fact is that social networks, where adolescents spend most of their time, are clogged with advertisements of native character which means that adolescents are always in the flow of commercials, even though they do not always realise it. This is also the reason why advertisers are more and more often using native marketing for promotion, e.g. by means of influencers and Instagram formats such as Stories, trendy memes or Reels which were examined in our research. As previously mentioned, new formats popular on the Internet, such as vlogs, had already been examined by Dutch academics. Their results corresponded with our results and show that young adolescents have a certain level of advertising literacy. The level and the way it was evaluated are different from the Dutch research and as such we cannot clearly state the level of advertising literacy of the studied group. Even though some researchers³⁹ tried to calculate the level of advertising literacy, most academics do not perform a rigid calculation. Here we see a challenge to unify the calculation and create a simple system of calculation of advertising literacy which could be used by all researchers and would unify the results of all research in the field of advertising literacy.

Continuous changes on social networks such as Facebook and TikTok and new format introduction made us propose the need of further investigation in the field. As yet uninvestigated and newly born formats prompt the advertisers to more creative content creation and easier ways to influence users of social networks that, after all, reflects the level of advertising literacy not only of adolescents but also generally of all social network users of various age groups.

Even though the identification and comprehension of advertisements by adolescents is not always at a high level (it only reaches medium level), the adolescents realise when there is an advertisement (proven by Dutch academics' researching advertising literacy on vlogs). Not only did we gather information on the topic from other research but we also added information from our own research. Our research has shown that adolescents are interested in information, they read texts of posts on social networks which also proves that their level of advertising literacy can be increased.

As shown in the chart above, there is no relation between increasing levels of advertising literacy and the increasing age of respondents which, however, is not consistent with the results of other foreign researchers; unlike De Jans, Hudders and Cauberghe who found in their research that the level of advertising literacy increases with the increasing age of respondents. They also pointed out that resistance towards advertising increases with age. We acknowledged that this might be the limit of our research as we did not further investigate affective advertising literacy as one part of advertising literacy. Adolescents aged 16 years achieved fewer points than adolescents aged 14, 15 or 17 years. Overall, 16 year old respondents have low levels

³⁹ Note of the authors: Such as Eva A. van Reijmersdal et al., Mira Lee and Ronald J. Faber.

of advertising literacy, even though they represented the most numerous age group in our research (31.9%). The least successful were 13 year old respondents. While comparing 13 year old respondents with 17 year olds, we perceive a significant increase in level of advertising literacy which may mean that age might have an influence on advertising literacy. To be able to proclaim so, we suggest executing research on respondents of more varied age groups.

As our research has shown, advertising literacy is not a well-discussed topic among Slovak academics which means that there is a wide range of directions for further research. Examination of advertising literacy of adolescents or other age groups is, though, not enough. There is a way to increase advertising literacy and educate youngsters (as well as older people) and that is by means of change in the education curriculum. Education in this field would lead to an increase in the overall literacy of Slovak consumers.

4 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to examine advertising literacy of adolescents, specifically on social networks. To comprehend the topic well enough, first of all, we gathered information from home and foreign literature related to advertising literacy. We studied opinions of foreign and local authors and the results of their research related to respondents' ability to identify and comprehend advertisements. The main part of our study was our research executed on 348 respondents aged from 13 to 17 years old. The research dealt with the social network Instagram and published commercial content that the respondents commonly see on Instagram.

We decided to study advertising literacy in relation to social networks posts as young people spend most of their time on social networks and advertisers use social networks for self-promotion now more than ever, as they may easily mask their commercial intents there. Our research was a continuation of the work of Dutch researchers who had studied advertising literacy in relation to vlogs. At the same time, we continue the work of Vrabec, who is one of the few Slovak academics dealing with advertising literacy in offline environments.

The research results show that the chosen age group of adolescents has at their disposal medium levels of advertising literacy which means that they can identify a commercial, but not always. The research has also shown that adolescents are interested in information and they want to be well-oriented in posts or commercials on the Internet.

Unlike other researchers, we realised that research into the advertising literacy of the population should be effected on individuals of bigger age groups. The difference in advertising literacy of 13 year old adolescents compared to their 14 year old counterparts was not significant at all. In the case of the comparison of 13 year old respondents with their 17 year old counterparts, there was an immense increase in advertising literacy.

Advertising literacy is a considerably wide topic and it requires more detailed research, especially as in the Slovak academic background not much attention has been paid to such research. There are many spheres where further research of online environments would be a good idea, such as articles published in popular online lifestyle magazines targeted at adolescents. Last, but not least, the outcome of such research should be the correct interpretation of research outcomes and to suggest solutions to improve advertising literacy of adolescents, but not only them; children and seniors should not be excluded.

Acknowledgement: The research was supported by the Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (VEGA, No. 1/0458/21) under the project entitled "Management of the "groundswell" concept by business entities in promotion of environmentally-friendly products in times of technology interference".

Literature and Sources:

- BAČOVÁ, V., HOLEVOVÁ, B.: Zvyšovanie citlivosti na pôsobenie reklamy. In HUMPOLÍČEK, P., SVOBODA, M., BLATNÝ M. (eds.): *Sociální procesy a osobnost 2007*. Brno : MSD, 2007. p. 20-21.
- BLACKWELL, R. D., MINIARD, P. W., ENGEL, J. F.: *Consumer Behavior*. Mason, OH : South-Western, 2001.
- BLAKEMORE, S. J., CHOUDHURY, S.: Development of the Adolescent Brain: Implications for Executive Function and Social Cognition. In *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2006, Vol. 47, No. 3-4, p. 296-312. ISSN 0021-9630.
- BOUSH, D. M., FRIESTAD, M., ROSE, G. M.: Adolescent Skepticism Toward TV Advertising and Knowledge of Advertiser Tactics. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1994, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 165-175. ISSN 0093-5301.
- CAMPBELL, C., EVANS, N. J.: The Role of a Companion Banner and Sponsorship Transparency in Recognizing and Evaluating Article-style Native Advertising. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2018, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 17-32. ISSN 1520-6653.
- CHELLASAMY, A. et al.: Social Media Disengagement Among Gen Y and Gen Z: A Quantitative Investigation. In *Media Literacy Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No.1, p. 230-252. ISSN 2585-8726.
- ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: The Role of Blogs in the Communication of Ecological Topics In ČÁBYOVÁ, L., BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., MADLEŇÁK, A. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: New Changers, New Challenges: Conference Proceedings from the International Scientific Conference 9th November 2021 online*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 88-97.
- Digital 2022: *Slovakia*. [online]. [2022-08-10]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-slovakia>>.
- DE JANS, S., HUDDERS, L., CAUBERGHE, V.: Adolescents' Self-reported Level of Dispositional Advertising Literacy: How Do Adolescents Resist Advertising in the Current Commercial Media Environment? In *Young Consumers*, 2018, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 402-420. ISSN 1747-3616.
- DZUROVÁ, M. et al.: *Gramotný spotrebiteľ. Zborník vedeckých štúdií*. Bratislava : EUBA, 2016.
- FRIESTAD, M., WRIGHT, P.: The Persuasion Knowledge Model – How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1994, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 1-31. ISSN 0093-5301.
- HUDÁKOVÁ, V.: Reklamná gramotnosť generácie Z. In *QUAERE 2022*, Hradec Králové : Magnanimitas, 2022, p. 67-76.
- HUDDERS, L. et al.: Children's Advertising Literacy in a New Media Environment: An Introduction to the AdLit Research Project. In *Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschappen 2015, Proceedings*. Antwerp : Universiteit Gent, 2015.
- HUDDERS, L. et al.: Children's Advertising Literacy for New Advertising Formats: The Mediating Impact of Advertising Literacy on the (Un)Intended Effects of Advergaming and Advertising Funded Programs. In VERLEGH, P., VOORVELD, H., EISEND, M. (eds.): *Advances in Advertising Research. European Advertising Academy*. Springer Gabler : Wiesbaden, 2015, Vol. 6, p. 241-252.
- KORČOKOVÁ, M.: Gramotnosť spotrebiteľa. In *Studia commercialia Bratislavensia*, 2017, p. 158. [online]. [2022-05-17]. Available at: <https://of.euba.sk/www_write/files/veda-vyskum/scb/vydane-cisla/2017-02/scb0217-korcokova.pdf>.
- KUNA, F. et al.: *Obsah, ktorý ľudia milujú*. Bratislava : Združenie pre internetovú reklamu IAB Slovakia, 2018. [online]. [2022-09-01]. Available at: <https://prirucka.iabslovakia.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/prirucka_nativnej_reklamy.pdf>.
- LI, CH., BERNOFF, J.: *Spodná vlna*. Bratislava : Eastone Books, 2008.
- MALMELIN, N.: What Is Advertising Literacy? Exploring the Dimensions of Advertising Literacy. In *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 2010, Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 129-142. ISSN 1051-144X.

- MOSES, L. J., BALDWIN, D. A.: What Can the Study of Cognitive Development Reveal about Children's Ability to Appreciate and Cope with Advertising? In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2005, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 186-201. ISSN 0743-9156.
- PASHANK, N., TABIBI, S. J., FARHANGI, A. A.: Defining Factors Influencing Advertising Literacy of Iranian Visual Media Directors. In *Communication Research*, 2018, Vol. 25, No. 93, p. 105-128. ISSN 0093-6502.
- PETRANOVÁ, D.: Úroveň mediálnej gramotnosti slovenských seniorov. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p.71-84. ISSN 1338-130X.
- ROZENDAAL, E., BUIJZEN, M., VALKENBURG, P.: Comparing Children's and Adults' Cognitive Advertising Competences in the Netherlands. In *Journal of Children and Media*, 2010, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 77-89. ISSN 1748-279.
- ROZENDAAL, E., LAPIERRE, M. A., VAN REIJMERSDAL, E. A., BUIJZEN, M.: Reconsidering Advertising Literacy as a Defense Against Advertising Effects. In *Media Psychology*, 2011, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 333- 354. ISSN 1532-785X.
- ROZENDAAL, E., BUIJZEN, M., VALKENBURG, P. M.: Think-aloud Process Superior to Thought-listing in Increasing Children's Critical Processing of Advertising. In *Human Communication Research*, 2012, Vol. 38, No. 2, p. 199-221. ISSN 0360-3989.
- SALIM, N. A. M., ABDULLAH, M. Y.: Measuring Reliability and Validity of Instrument: The Dimensions of Advertising Literacy in Determining the Advertising Literacy Index. In *Journal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 2017, Vol. 33, No.1, p. 280-293. ISSN 2289-1528.
- ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 131-140. ISSN 2585-8726.
- VAN REIJMERSDAL, E. A. et al.: This Is Advertising! Effects of Disclosing Television Brand Placement on Adolescents. In *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 2017, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 328-342. ISSN 0047-2891.
- VERDOODT, V.: *Children's Rights and Advertising Literacy in the Digital Era: Towards An Empowering Regulatory Framework for Commercial Communication*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Ghent : Ghent University, 2018, 332 p.
- VERDOODT, V., LIEVENS, E.: Targeting Children with Personalised Advertising. In VERMEULEN, G., LIEVENS, E. (eds.): *Data Protection and Privacy under Pressure, Transatlantic Tensions, EU Surveillance, and Big Data*. Antwerp, Apeldoorn, Portland : Maklu, 2017, p. 313-341.
- VERHELLEN, Y., OATES, C., DE PELSMACKER, P., DENS, N.: Children's Responses to Traditional Versus Hybrid Advertising Formats : The Moderating Role of Persuasion Knowledge. In *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 2014, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 235-255. ISSN 0168-7034.
- VRABEC, N.: *Mládež a médiá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IUVENTA, 2008.
- WAIGUNY, MARTIN K.J., NELSON, M.R., TERLUTTER, R.: Entertainment Matters! The Relationship Between Challenge and Persuasiveness of an Advergame for Children. In *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 2012, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 69-89. ISSN 1352-7266.
- WOJDYNSKI, B. W., EVANS, N. J.: Going Native: Effects of Disclosure Position and Language on the Recognition and Evaluation of Online Native Advertising. In *Journal of Advertising*, 2016, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2016, p. 157-168. ISSN 0265-0487.
- WRIGHT, P., FRIESTAD, M., BOUSH, D. M.: The Development of Marketplace Persuasion Knowledge in Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults. In *Journal of Public. Policy and Marketing*, 2005, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 222-233. ISSN 0743-9156.
- ZABUZHANSKA, I., MARTOVIČ, M., HEKELJ, M.: Audiobranding in American and Slovak Telecommunications Advertising: A Linguistic Standpoint. In *Lege artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2022, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 267-304. ISSN 2453-8035.

Authors



Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Ľudmila Čábyová, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2,
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
ludmila.cabyova@ucm.sk

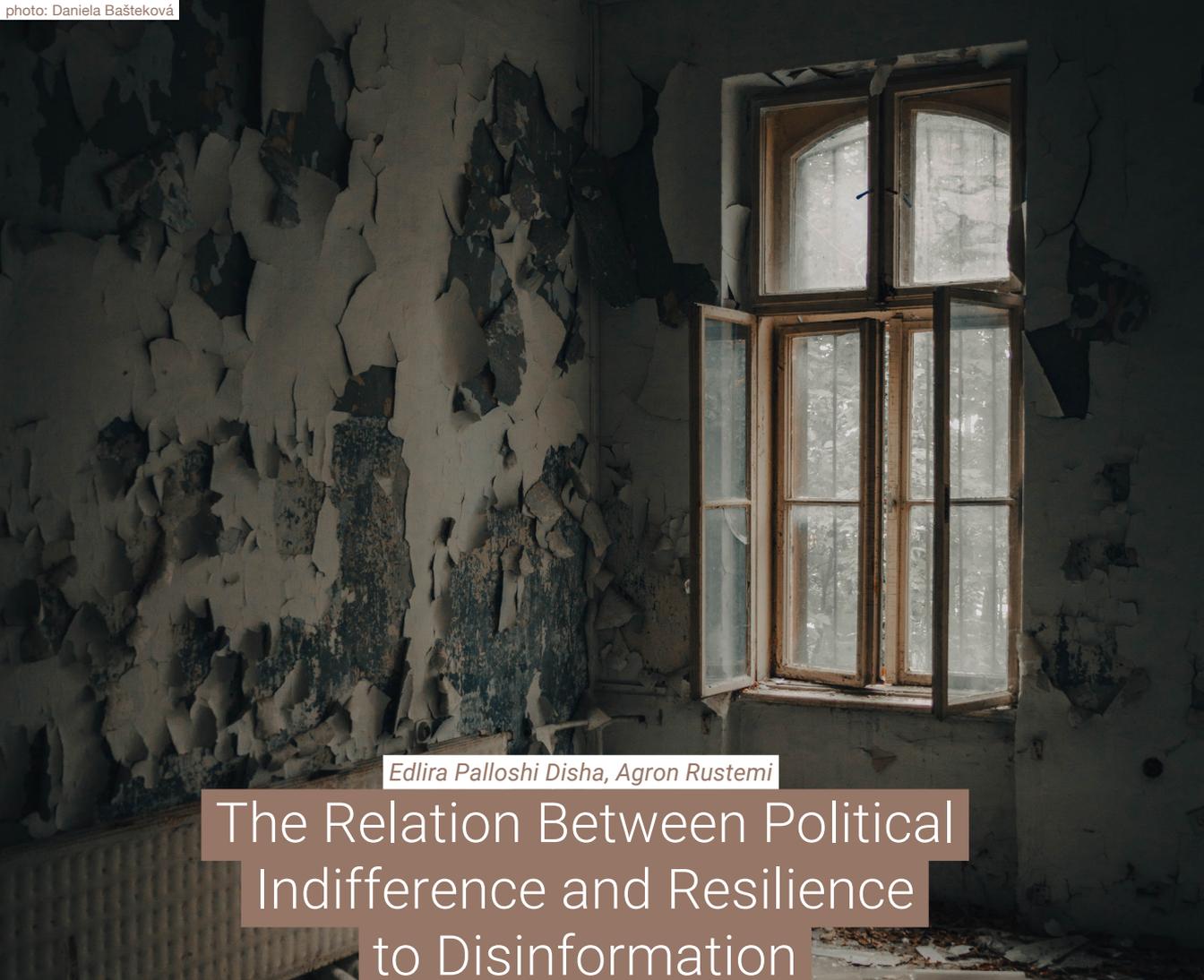
Ľudmila Čábyová works at the Department of Marketing Communication, where she deals with the topic of media marketing and media monitoring. She is the author and co-author of 4 monographs, 3 textbooks, more than 60 scientific articles, scientific papers and studies. She records more than 500 citations for her works; in the WOS and SCOPUS databases she has 23 outputs and 41 citations. She is a member of the Scientific Board of FMK UCM, the Scientific Board, UCM, the Scientific Board of the Faculty of Management, SUA in Nitra and the Faculty of Humanities, ŽU. For the publication Marketing and Marketing Communication in the Media, she received the Literary Fund Award – the most cited publication. She is a member of several editorial boards of journals – e.g. Communication Today (WOS, Scopus), EJMAP (Scopus), IJMIL (Scopus) and a member of several international organizations – e.g. the Polish Communication Association, the International Association for media and education, the Digital marketing institute, and a Czech marketing company. She is one of the founders and organizers of the international conference Marketing Identity (original opinion New trends in marketing), which the faculty has been organizing since 2002. The conference is a prestigious international event, the outputs of which are registered in WOS. She currently works as the Dean of the faculty.

Mgr. Viktória Hudáková

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2,
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
hudakova2@ucm.sk



Viktória Hudáková has been working at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication since 2016. She has completed both levels of university studies in the field of marketing communication. In her scientific activity, she mainly deals with the issue of media marketing and advertising literacy. She gained experience in marketing in a PR agency. In addition, she is also actively interested in radio work, PR and social media.



Edlira Palloshi Disha, Agron Rustemi

The Relation Between Political Indifference and Resilience to Disinformation

ABSTRACT

The well-informed citizen in a society is a predisposition for the empowerment of democratic government, respectively democratic society where the rule of law, freedom of media, and expression are an outcome. This study tries to analyze the relationship between politically active/inactive citizens and their susceptibility to disinformation, by age group. The methodology used is qualitative and quantitative. The theoretical overview is supplemented by an analysis of the existing data at the state level that represents the citizens' trust in the country's institutions and their trust in the media. Furthermore, as a quantitative method, the questionnaire tries to rank citizens' activity/interest in politics by age group and see how susceptible these age groups are to disinformation. The study aims to highlight that the most productive age group of citizens (31 – 45) are indifferent to politics and to reflect on the consequences that a society striving for democratization, such as North Macedonia, might have. Furthermore, the study recommends that media education be extended to different age groups of society, and media education should adjust to the characteristics of one society and reflect on the sense of national identity that, above all, impacts the success of media education in one country.

KEY WORDS

Disinformation. National Identity. North Macedonia. Media Education. Politically In/Active Citizen.

1 Introduction: A Critical Overview

One of the conditions of democracy is the availability of choice and the citizens' ability to exercise that rationally. Democracy is valid only when it includes the participation of a well-informed reasonable electorate, as Brian McNair remarks.¹ The educated, well-informed citizens' involvement in decision-making is more than necessary in a pluralistic democracy. The right to vote is an elementary human right that must be applied and valued. Political indifference or apathy prevents the processes of a society striving for democratization. According to Norberto Bobbio, the most prominent failure of the democratic liberal system is to raise an educated, rational voter. And this is reflected in political apathy.²

In a democratic society, the media has a role in educating and informing citizens through objective, unbiased, critical, and fact-based news/information that enables a healthy environment for discussion and the formation of public opinion. With technological development, the media landscape has changed information modalities. The sensationalism and click-bait culture of information has seized the public sphere, where providing a space for pluralistic ideas and forming a public opinion is no longer an attempt. Now, the 'Engineering Consent' of Walter Lipman is more applicable, adding low cost, shorter time, and colossal influence using micro-targeting tools of social psychology. Information Disorder influences democracies and has long-term implications for sowing mistrust and confusion. The framework of Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakshan has identified three types of this disorder: *Disinformation*, *Misinformation*, and *Malinformation*.³

Using disinformation through computational propaganda – algorithms, automation, and artificial intelligence, the democratic processes of a country are influenced, especially during the decision-making process, such as elections. A report showed that manipulation campaigns were present in 70 countries worldwide and were used to shape public attitudes, suppress fundamental human rights, discredit political opponents, and obscure opposing opinions.⁴ Moreover, when it comes to elections, disinformation campaigns are increasing their activity to deliberately confuse voters, decrease participation, and undermine trust in democratic values and democratic systems.

With these endeavours in mind, how can we be sure, and how can we say that we have well-informed citizens ready to make rational choices in the next ballot? Furthermore, there are many legitimate questions to pose to democratic governments when the turnout rate is never near maximum.

Many scholars have tried to understand the predictors of turnout, from individual motives to social conditions and educational status, that might encourage a person to vote or abstain. This research tries to find the relation between the persons who abstained in the last elections in the country and their susceptibility to disinformation. Are they more prone to disinformation or more resilient to disinformation? Adding to this, their trust in online media news and how all these conditions correlate.

Trust in a country's institutions and trust in the media are predominant factors for one society to feel secure and have active citizens by participating in political, social, economic, and cultural activities in its surroundings.

¹ MCNAIR, B.: *An Introduction to Political Communication*. New York, London : Routledge, 2007, p. 31.

² BOBBIO, N.: *The Future of Democracy*. Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 1987, p. 37.

³ See: DERAKSHAN, H., WARDLE, C.: *Information Disorder: Definitions. Understanding and Addressing the Disinformation Ecosystem*. PA, USA : Annenberg School for Communication, 2017, p. 5-17.

⁴ BRADSHAW, S., HOWARD, P. N.: *The Global Disinformation Order 2019: Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation*. [online]. [2022-08-13]. Available at: <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1209&context=scholcom>>.

1.2 Country Overview

North Macedonia is a former Yugoslav country with a history of inter-ethnic conflict and inherited identity contests from neighbouring countries (Greece and Bulgaria). North Macedonia won its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, but has known itself as Macedonia since the time of the Ottoman Empire in 1903 and through the Revolution named 'The Kusevo Republic'. As described by Dimitar Bechev, Macedonia was a term that was supposed to include Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Vlachs, Albanians, Serbs, Jews, etc.⁵ All these ethnic groups lived in the geographic area, fighting for autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. North Macedonia, as a multiethnic and independent country from 1991, played the role of a mono-ethnic state that brought the ethnic conflict in 2001 and ended with the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*, which guarantees minority rights.⁶ Its identity was propagated as Ancient Macedonians, Bulgari, or Slavs.⁷ The government's propaganda often incited the reaction of neighboring countries. From 2006 until 2016, during Nikola Gruevski's authoritarian regime, the country was pro-Russia oriented, with interethnic divisions, and recognized for nationalistic attitudes. The new government promised a contemporary pluralistic democratic society pro-NATO and pro-EU integration. North Macedonia became a full member of the NATO Alliance in 2020 and started EU accession talks in 2022. NATO membership and EU integration have cost North Macedonia a lot.⁸ Nevertheless, in North Macedonia, identity issues arise at decisive times for the country, attacking the government for selling the national interest. Thus, in the consultative referendum for the name change of the country and accession to the EU and NATO membership in 2018, the turnout was only thirty-seven percent, with 94 percent voting in favour.

Each year, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia are confronted by local, parliamentary, presidential, or referendum elections. Thus, from 2016 until 2021, elections were held each year. The voter turnout is always near the minimum, except in 2016 when citizens' awareness of overthrowing the authoritarian regime increased. History has shown that when a national cause unites them, North Macedonian citizens are sensitized to make their decision. Similarly, the highest voter turnout rate North Macedonia was experienced during the first democratic parliamentary elections in 1994 with 77.6%.⁹ The figure below shows the voter turnout for elections from 2016 until 2021. The data given are from the first round of each election. The first round always has the highest turnout rate as well as Parliamentary elections, compared to local ones. The data analyzed used State Election Commission official results.

⁵ See: BECHEV, D.: *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia*. Maryland, US : Scarecrow Press, 2009.

⁶ *Ohrid Framework Agreement*. [online]. [2022-08-13]. Available at: <<https://www.osce.org/skopje/100622>>.

⁷ See: IBÁÑEZ, F. M.: *North Macedonia's Quest for Its Own National Identity*. [online]. [2022-09-12]. Available at: <<https://www.nationalia.info/new/11298/north-macedonias-quest-for-its-own-national-identity>>.

⁸ See: ŽIVKOVIĆ, V.: *North Macedonia's NATO Membership: Decades-long Ambition Finally Becomes a Reality*. [online]. [2022-09-26]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/03/26/north-macedonias-nato-membership-decades-long-ambition-finally-becomes-a-reality/>>; See also: POPOVIĆ, S.: *Opening Accession Negotiations for North Macedonia: A Symbolic Step Forward with Many Worries*. [online]. [2022-07-26]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/07/26/opening-accession-negotiations-for-north-macedonia-a-symbolic-step-forward-with-many-worries/>>.

⁹ KRECI, V., JUSUFI, I.: North Macedonia: Local Elections and Parliamentary Political Dynamics. In GENDŹWIŁŁ, A., KJAER, U., STEYVERS, K. (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Local Elections and Voting in Europe*. London : Routledge, 2022, p. 445.

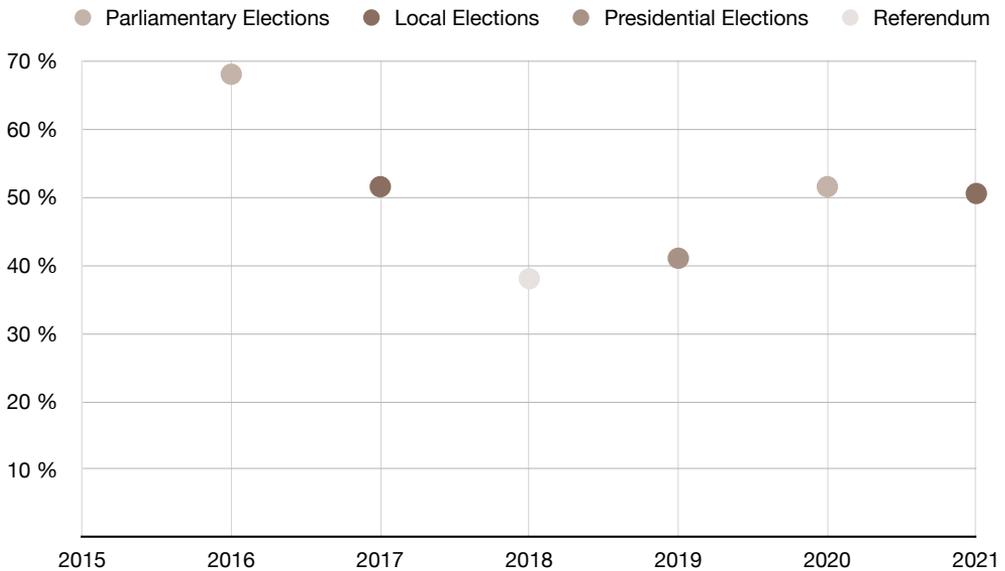


FIGURE 1: Voter Turnout in Republic of North Macedonia from 2015 to 2021

Source: own processing, data obtained from State Election Commission

After the liberalization of the authoritarian regime, the media system in North Macedonia started a new era of independence. The World Press Freedom index in 2017 ranked North Macedonia in 111th place, while in 2022, North Macedonia climbed to 57th place with the best regional score.¹⁰ In the 2021 Freedom House report, North Macedonia finally earned the status of partly free, leaving the category of states with a hybrid regime.¹¹ Even though media are free to exercise their profession, the political environment is strongly polarized, and media outlets can suffer from pressure from authorities, politicians, and business people. The lack of professional journalism is still evident, and the social media environment is often a battlespace of disinformation campaigns. Narratives in the disinformation campaigns usually use the most sensitive issues for the state. They are related to identity issues and inter-ethnic divisions to incite conflict or distort North Macedonia's path to EU integration.

Of the total population of 2.08 million in North Macedonia, there are 1.75 million internet users, from which 1.35 million are social media users.¹² Posts on social media are the primary source of information about political news and events in North Macedonia for the young generation, and television is the primary source of information among the oldest. Here we must acknowledge that each portal has its profiles on social media. Among newspapers, news agencies, television, and internet portals, statistics at the national level show that internet portals have the most complaints regarding the violation of ethical standards in North Macedonia. The most significant number of complaints are subject to Article 1 of the Code of Ethics (54%): Incorrect and unchecked information, absence of a second source of information, and the lack of at least two mutually unrelated sources.¹³

¹⁰ ŠEMIĆ, A.: *New Methodology, Old Problems: Western Balkans on the 2022 World Press Freedom Index*. [online]. [2022-09-17]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/05/17/new-methodology-old-problems-western-balkans-on-the-2022-world-press-freedom-index/>>.

¹¹ *Freedom House*. [online]. [2022-09-03]. Available at: <<https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2021>>.

¹² *Datareportal*. [online]. [2022-09-16]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-north-macedonia>>.

¹³ *Council of Media Ethics in Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-09-30]. Available at: <<https://semm.mk/en/komisija-za-zalbi-3/statistical-findings>>.

Media education is more and more present in North Macedonia. It began with non-formal education and fact-check agencies and has now widened to the educational system. Media literacy and critical thinking are included as a part of curricula in different courses but not yet as separate courses through in-depth developed content.¹⁴

The trust in the country's institutions is poor, as well as in the media. The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCMS) research in 2021 revealed that 51.5% of citizens don't have confidence in the actual government, whereas 42% have confidence in the government, from whom 61.8% are ethnic Albanians. The opinion poll treated questions of political and institutional citizens' trust in the country and marked the opinion differences among the ethnic and political lines of the citizens.¹⁵ On the other hand, the high rate of non-trusted institutions in the country is also: judiciary with 58% and politicians with 68%.¹⁶ Trust in online media and social networks is the lowest among citizens in North Macedonia. Thus, the percentage of the citizens who do not trust online media in North Macedonia is 41%, and for social networks is 47% (using four scale measurement). The main reasons the citizens distrust the specific media are that they think that the media are under political influence and that the media spread disinformation.¹⁷

The median age of the population in North Macedonia is 39.9, respectively; the age group, 35 – 44, represents the highest percentage of the age group living in North Macedonia (with 15.5%), followed by the age group of 25 – 34, considered in 14.6%.¹⁸

2 Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a mixed method. The qualitative research method and also the quantitative method are used. The critical overview represents the theoretical overview of the subjects treated in this paper. The collection of opinion poll results at the national level and the country's socio-demographic statistics were used to analyze the general indications of the thesis questioned. In addition, reports for North Macedonia's current state are used to best interpret the actual situation. State Election Commission official voter turnout results were analyzed through the years and were used to complement the overview of the country.

A designed questionnaire represents the quantitative method to assess the percentage of the citizen's interest in politics and their participation in voting. The questionnaire was designed to measure the susceptibility to disinformation by age groups and political affiliation or non-affiliation in North Macedonia citizens. The questionnaire included ten questions and was organized within two thematic blocks: A) Political affiliation and voting behaviour; B) Perception of disinformation during the election campaign in NRM. The results from two thematic blocks were then analyzed and cross-matched through the SPSS software for Windows and Microsoft Office for Windows (Word and Excel) that is used to create various reports, graphs, and tables. The questionnaire was distributed randomly, and the questions

¹⁴ See more: SHOPAR, V., DZIGAL, S.: *Media Literacy in the University Study Programs in the Republic of North Macedonia*. Skopje : Institute of Communication Studies, 2022, p. 20.

¹⁵ JAKOVLESKA, G., IVANOVSKA, F.: *Confidence in the Government and Local Elections*. [online]. [2022-09-07]. Available at: <<https://mcms.mk/mk/za-nasata-rabota/istrazuvana-i-publikacii/lista-na-istrazuvana-i-publikacii/2308-doverba-vo-vladata-i-lokalni-izbori.html>>.

¹⁶ BIEBER, F., NECHEV, Z.: *Media Briefing – Public Opinion Analysis on Citizens' Perception about the European Union, External Actors and Trust: Focus on North Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-10-14]. Available at: <<https://biepag.eu/publication/policy-brief-outta-trust-post-pandemic-trust-and-democratic-resilience-in-the-western-balkans/>>.

¹⁷ *Trust in the Media – North Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-09-15]. Available at: <<https://seenpm.org/north-macedonia-opinion-poll-results-on-media-trust-and-media-gender-issues/>>.

¹⁸ *Datareportal*. [online]. [2022-09-16]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-north-macedonia>>.

were structural: dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions, and scaling questions: liker scale questions and semantic differential scale -findings and results regarding the principle of transparency, participation, and efficiency. The participants were of mixed age groups, education, and ethnicities. The respondents were also from the political party affiliation diverse group. The age target was divided into five groups (> 18, 18 – 30, 31 – 45, 46 – 59, 60 <). For the online creation of the questionnaire, Google Forms was used, and the dissemination was done through group email and social media. Results were generated from 150 citizens of North Macedonia.

The limitations of this study: the research would benefit in the future if approximately 1067 citizens responded as a representative sample to this questionnaire and included an equal percentage of socio-demographic and age groups. Also, including other elements (questions) for assessing the disinformation susceptibility of the politically non-affiliated individuals would strengthen the hypothesis raised.

3 Results

As a quantitative method, the questionnaire was disseminated to all the ethnic groups living in North Macedonia (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, etc.). We received the highest response rate from Albanian citizens, followed by the Macedonian ethnic group. The questionnaire has the highest response rate from the citizens with high-level education – university degrees, with almost 77%. In addition, of the five age groups, the 31 – 45 ages responded in highest numbers to the questionnaire, nearly 56%.

The first thematic block, A) Political affiliation and voting behaviour, asked questions where the respondents mainly answered concerning their interest in politics, political party affiliation, and voting behaviour.

Thus, in the fourth scale measurement question of their political interest, most of the respondents are not very interested in politics, with 42.8% or not at all, with 13.8%.

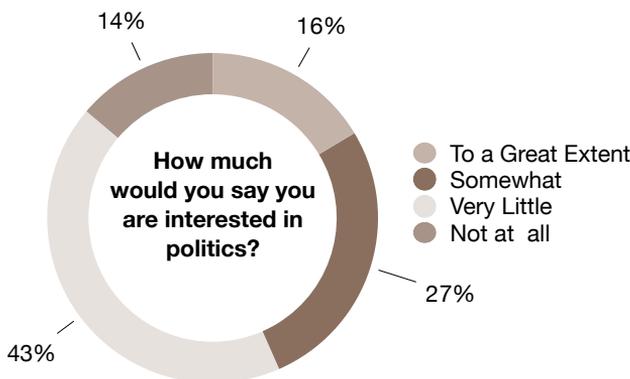


FIGURE 2: Interest in Politics

Source: own processing, 2022

The results of the respondent's interest in politics are cross-matched with five age groups. Figure 3 shows that the highest score for very little interest in politics is in the age group 31 – 45, with 48.9% and not at all with 12.2%.

How much would you say you are interested in politics?

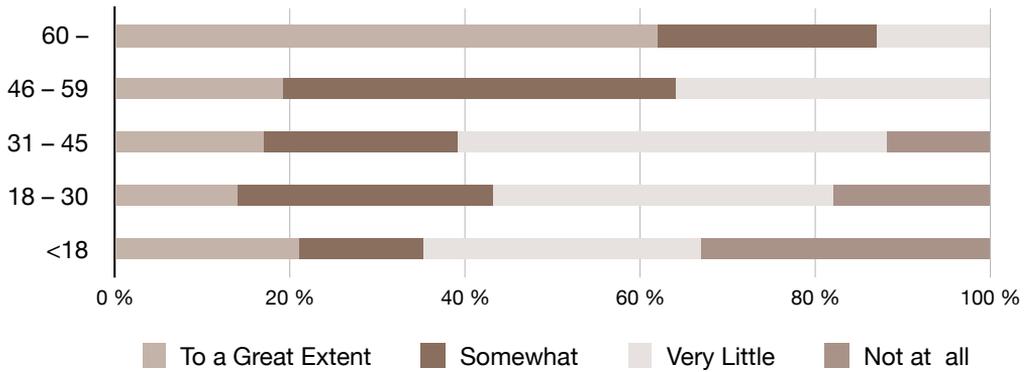


FIGURE 3: Interest in Politics by Age-groups

Source: own processing, 2022

The fourth figure presents the voter turnout of the respondents in the last Parliamentary Elections held in 2020 in North Macedonia.

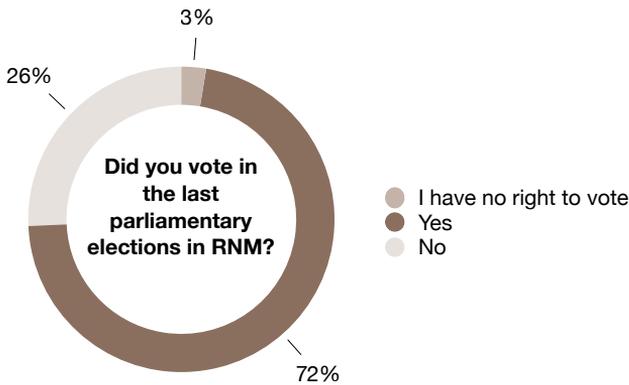


FIGURE 4: Respondents' Voter Turnout

Source: own processing, 2022

If we analyze these results within the age groups, we will see that a high percentage of the age group 31 – 45 did not vote in the last parliamentary elections.

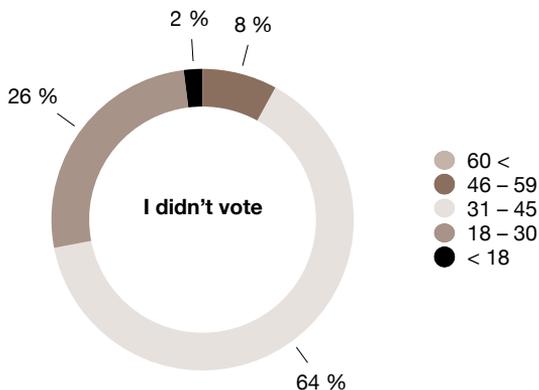


FIGURE 5: Non-voters by Age-groups

Source: own processing, 2022

In the second thematic block, B) Perception of disinformation during the Election Campaign in RNM, questions were asked about their perception of disinformation going online during election campaigns in RNM, concerning their ability to distinguish the truth from false news. In addition, this thematic block included one question with eight fake news stories about four main political parties in North Macedonia that were actually published during elections and asked the respondents to evaluate their validity with TRUE or FALSE.

In the question, how much do the respondents think there was fake news and intentionally manipulative information shared on social media during the 2020 election campaign in RNM, most of the respondents were aware that there is much fake news circulating online during election campaigns, 52%. The figure below shows the results:

How much fake news do you think was shared on social media during the 2020 election campaign?

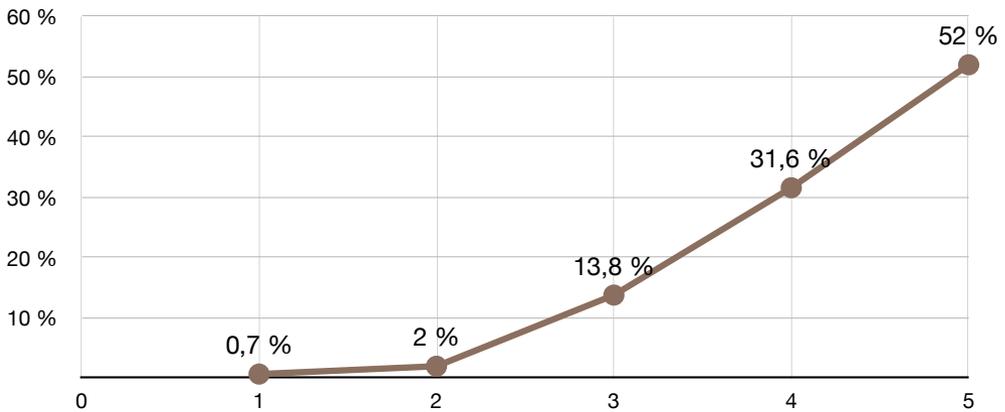


FIGURE 6: Fake News during Election Campaigns in RNM

Source: own processing, 2022

Most age groups think there was much false news circulating during the election campaign in 2020 in North Macedonia. Figure shows the age groups and their perception ranked from 1-less to 5-much.

The next question was added to see the perception of their confidence in distinguishing true from false information on social media regarding political news. At a higher rate, the respondents are confident in their ability to distinguish true from incorrect political information, with 37% wholly confident and 21% very confident.

How confident are you in your own ability to distinguish true from false information online for political news?

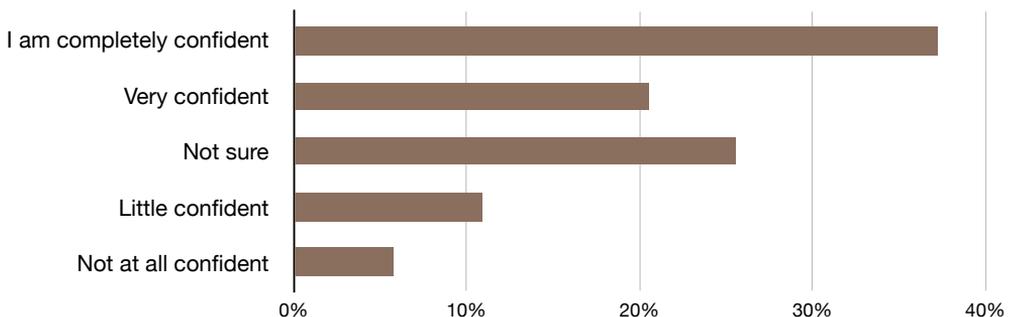


FIGURE 7: Perception of Ability to Distinguish True from False Political Information

Source: own processing, 2022

We can see that the older the age group, the higher the percentage of their confidence to distinguish True from False news. Thus, in the eighth figure, the age group of more than 60 years old has the highest rate of the answer completely confident. See the results in the figure below for each age group. Their perception of being able to recognize false news might not be parallel with their vulnerability to disinformation (see: Figure no. 10).

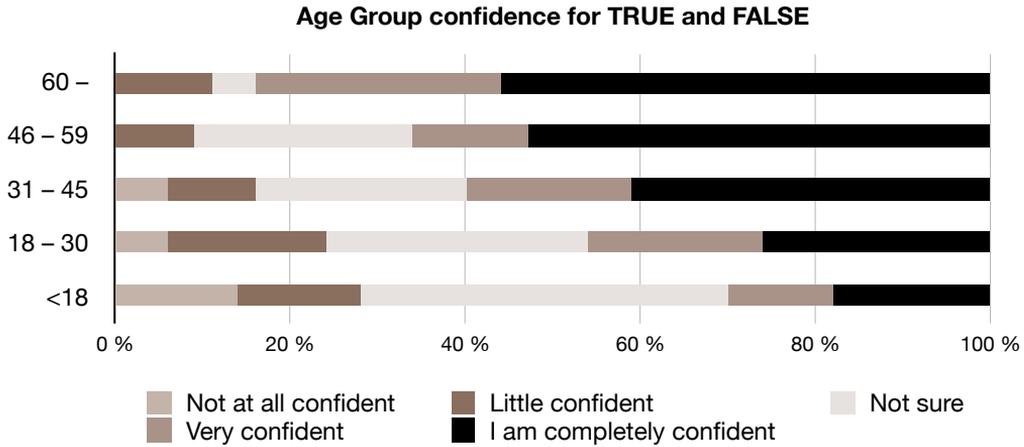


FIGURE 8: Perception of Ability to Distinguish True from False Political Information by Age Groups

Source: own processing, 2022

The following figure represents the respondents' ability to evaluate the news as false or true. Eight pieces of information for four main political parties circulated online during the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in North Macedonia are given. All of the presented news are false. We can see that none of the eight pieces of information was wholly identified as fraudulent.

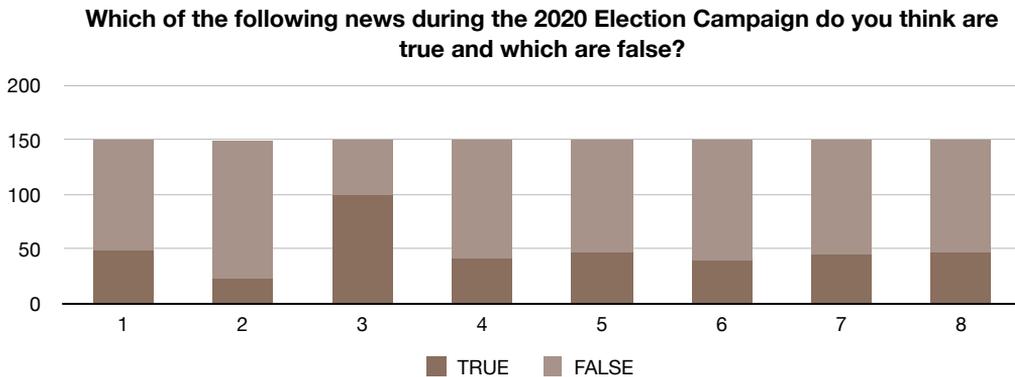


FIGURE 9: True or False Chart

Source: own processing, 2022

The percentage of the respondents who ranked the eight news as accurate information is shown below, differentiated by age group, where the highest rate has the oldest age group (60 <, and 46 - 59), and the lowest percentage has the 31 - 45 age group.

Identification of political disinformation by age

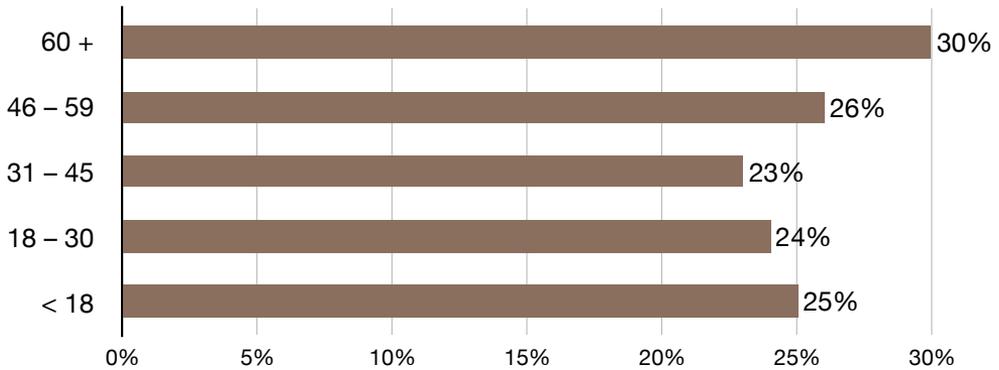


FIGURE 10: Identification of Political Disinformation by Age

Source: own processing, 2022

We have chosen to consider the respondents who voted in the elections for politically affiliated individuals. Thus, non-affiliated is the percentage of those who did not vote in the polls. The following figure is indicative to show that the non-affiliated individuals in the lower percent identified the given false information as accurate. In contrast, politically affiliated individuals, at a higher rate, identified given incorrect information as accurate.

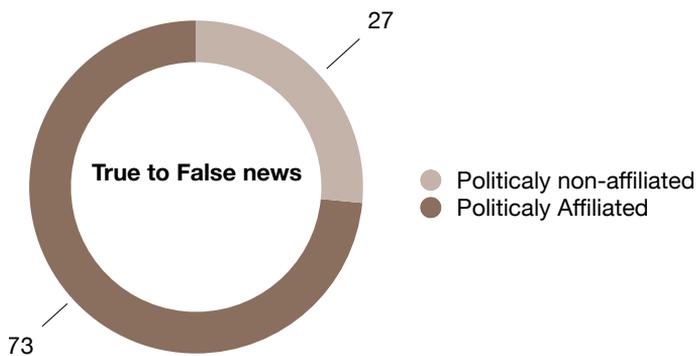


FIGURE 11: Identification of Political Disinformation by Political Affiliation or Non-affiliation

Source: own processing, 2022

When we compare the interest in politics of the Politically non-affiliated and Politically affiliated individuals, surprisingly, there is a slight difference in the percentage showing no significant difference in non-politically affiliated individuals' non-interest in politics as we expected to see. See the following figure for comparison.

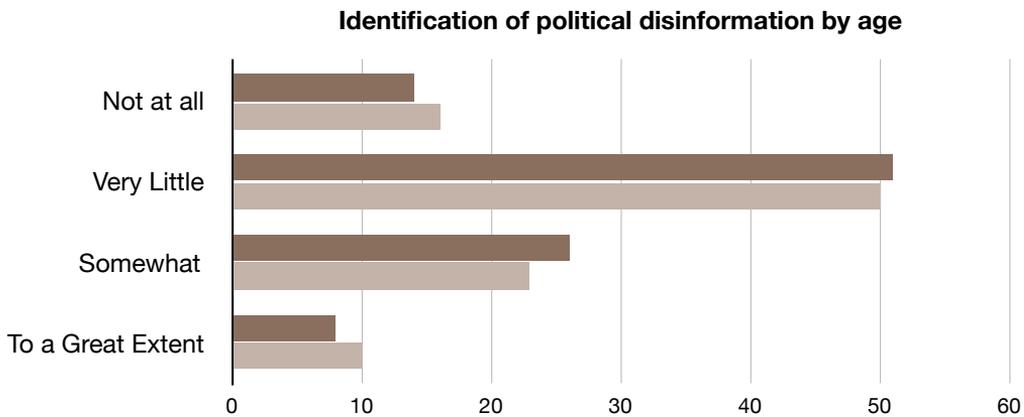


FIGURE 12: Interest in Politics by Politically Non-affiliation and Politically Affiliated Individuals

Source: own processing, 2022

4 Discussion

The purposeful use of manipulative information with the intent to deceive and harm is one of the concepts of defining disinformation campaigns. In North Macedonia, this concept finds a suitable landscape to function. The information space reflects the complexity of society, where the demand side plays a vital role in multiplication and dissemination. The low trust in the country's institutions and media predisposes the country to be vulnerable to disinformation. The lack of professional journalism and genuine media education at all levels of the educational system leaves a vacuum for enhancing a resilient citizen that embraces democratic values and participates in a country's development toward democratization. A participatory common sense of the citizens in one society strengthens institutions and raises an accountable and responsible government overall. The analysis of voter turnout in the last six years showed a low percentage of citizen participation. Many factors contribute to this in North Macedonia, but North Macedonia has made great steps to turn its orientation and is continuously attempting democratization. Even though the highest number of citizens in this research voted in the last parliamentary elections, their interest in politics is low. When the median age in a country such as North Macedonia is 39.9, and results show that the 31 – 45 age group has the highest percentage of respondents that did not vote in the last elections, one could assume the percentage of political abstention in a country level by this age group. Their interest in politics at a lower rate is indicative when 35 – 44 represents the highest percentage of age group living in North Macedonia.

During election campaigns, North Macedonia's online information environment becomes a battlespace of disinformation. Online media outlets have a crucial role here, where narratives with nationalistic sentiments, discrediting a public figure, or inter-ethnic incitement try to undermine the democratic values and the country's path to the EU. Additionally, it decreases trust in the media and institutions. Most citizens in this research know that much manipulative information is circulating during election campaigns in RNM. Still, in NM, the primary source of information for political news is online media, especially among the young generation.

There is much effort to include media education in all instances of society, from non-formal education to school curricula. But it is essential to mention that these endeavours must engage critical thinking as a concept of the functioning of the educational system at all levels and not only as a single course during a project timeline. Moreover, it is surprising that most of the citizens in this research are confident about their ability to distinguish true from false information, especially the older generations. This confirms the strengthening of attitude with age. On the other hand, age groups, confident about their ability to distinguish true from false information

at a higher rate, could not identify the incorrect information given for political parties (see figure no. 10). These age groups were revealed to be more susceptible to disinformation. In contrast, the 31 – 45 age group, which had the highest rate of abstention during the last elections, was revealed to have the lowest rate of identifying the given false political information as accurate. For this research, this age group turned out to be the most resilient to disinformation.

Additionally, politically active citizens in this research were shown to be more susceptible to disinformation because of a higher rate of identified political false information as accurate. This reminds us of the confirmation bias concept, which explains that politically affiliated individuals are more prone to disinformation because they engage and believe in narratives that confirm their prior beliefs. In contrast, non-politically affiliated individuals could identify a higher rate of false political information as false, which makes them more resilient to disinformation. Comparing their interest in politics, the research showed that there is no considerable difference between politically affiliated and non-affiliated individuals, with a slight difference in the percentage of non-affiliated individuals with less interest in politics, which is pretty much expected.

5 Conclusion

As a sensitive and fragile multiethnic society, North Macedonia has failed to unite its citizens around a common goal. It has not been able to create a strong national feeling that would represent all citizens equally and form social cohesion. The cultural and ethnic mindsets differ, and there is no common challenge to unite them. From this perspective, the educational system encounters difficulties adapting its curricula to new trends and the EU. Still, it has failed to make substantial changes that should enable the growth of the responsible citizen who cherishes their own culture and history, respects others, and becomes an active citizen, resilient, and ready to contribute to society. Critical thinking should be a norm in primary schools and not a lesson for classical teaching.

If the most active age group of citizens abstains from elections, how can we ensure that the next government will be democratic? The political apathy of the most productive age group in one society leaves the government in lethargy, confident that it will win the next elections with no efforts to democratization processes and to improve the living standard of the citizens. The democratization process means accountability, transparency, and responsibility. The greater political participation of citizens forces the government to win the sympathy of the more significant majority instead of only its partisanship electorate.

When speaking of foreign influences and disinformation campaigns, one should remember that their power relies on the society's generated suitable environment for them to take form and generate meaning. Meanwhile, resilience to the disinformation of non-politically affiliated individuals who, after all, are interested in politics, opens the door to political parties and politicians for reflection and action on how to mobilize this passive electorate. Simultaneously, researchers might study socio-economic and education factors when referring to this group's abstention and their resilience to disinformation.

Literature and Sources:

BECHEV, D.: *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia*. Maryland, US : Scarecrow Press, 2009.

BIEBER, F., NECHEV, Z.: *Media Briefing – Public Opinion Analysis on Citizens' Perception about the European Union, External Actors, and Trust: Focus on North Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-10-14]. Available at: <<https://biepag.eu/publication/policy-brief-outta-trust-post-pandemic-trust-and-democratic-resilience-in-the-western-balkans/>>.

- BOBBIO, N.: *The Future of Democracy*. Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 1987.
- BRADSHAW, S., HOWARD, P. N.: *The Global Disinformation Order 2019: Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation*. [online]. [2022-08-13]. Available at: <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1209&context=scholcom>>.
- Council of Media Ethics in Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-09-30]. Available at: <<https://semm.mk/en/komisija-za-zalbi-3/statistical-findings>>.
- Dataportal*. [online]. [2022-09-16]. Available at: <<https://dataportal.com/reports/digital-2022-north-macedonia>>.
- DERAKSHAN, H., WARDLE, C.: *Information Disorder: Definitions. Understanding and Addressing the Disinformation Ecosystem*. PA, USA : Annenberg School for Communication, 2017.
- Ohrid Framework Agreement*. [online]. [2022-08-13]. Available at: <<https://www.osce.org/skopje/10062>>.
- Freedom House*. [online]. [2022-09-03]. Available at: <<https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2021>>.
- IBÁÑEZ, F. M.: *North Macedonia's Quest for Its Own National Identity*. [online]. [2022-09-12]. Available at: <<https://www.nationalia.info/new/11298/north-macedonias-quest-for-its-own-national-identity>>.
- JAKOVLESKA, G., IVANOVSKA, F.: *Confidence in the Government and Local Elections*. [online]. [2022-09-07]. Available at: <<https://mcms.mk/mk/za-nasata-rabota/istrazuvana-i-publikacii/lista-na-istrazuvana-i-publikacii/2308-doverba-vo-vladata-i-lokalni-izbori.html>>.
- KRECI, V., JUSUFI, I.: North Macedonia: Local Elections and Parliamentary Political Dynamics. In GENDŹWIŁ, A., KJAER, U., STEYVERS, K. (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Local Elections and Voting in Europe*. London : Routledge, 2022, p. 441-452.
- MCNAIR, B.: *An Introduction to Political Communication*. New York, London : Routledge, 2007.
- POPOVIĆ, S.: *Opening Accession Negotiations for North Macedonia: A Symbolic Step Forward with Many Worries*. [online]. [2022-07-26]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/07/26/opening-accession-negotiations-for-north-macedonia-a-symbolic-step-forward-with-many-worries/>>.
- SHOPAR, V., DZIGAL, S.: *Media Literacy in the University Study Programs in the Republic of North Macedonia*. Skopje : Institute of Communication Studies, 2022.
- ŠEMIĆ, A.: *New Methodology, Old Problems: Western Balkans on the 2022 World Press Freedom Index*. [online]. [2022-09-17]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/05/17/new-methodology-old-problems-western-balkans-on-the-2022-world-press-freedom-index/>>.
- Trust in the Media – North Macedonia*. [online]. [2022-09-15]. Available at: <<https://seenpm.org/north-macedonia-opinion-poll-results-on-media-trust-and-media-gender-issues/>>.
- ŽIVKOVIĆ, V.: *North Macedonia's NATO Membership: Decades-long Ambition Finally Becomes a Reality*. [online]. [2022-09-26]. Available at: <<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/03/26/north-macedonias-nato-membership-decades-long-ambition-finally-becomes-a-reality/>>.

Authors



Res. Asst. Edlira Palloshi Disha

South East European University
Max van Der Stoel Institute
Ilindenska, n.335,
1200, Tetovo
REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
e.pallosi@seeu.edu.mk

Edlira Palloshi Disha is a researcher on the Erasmus+ project ‘*Fakespotting*’ and ‘*SEE U Students 5.0: Media and Information Literacy in the Age of Disinformation*’ as a part of ‘You think’ activities IREX project and funded by USAID. She is a member of the Media Literacy & Disinformation Research Cluster within the Max van der Stoel Institute at South East European University (SEEU). She also serves as Deputy/Managing Editor at the University journal SEEU Review, published by De Gruyter. Palloshi Disha graduated in Communication Sciences at SEEU and has a Master’s in Diplomacy studies at the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences at SEEU. She has defended her master’s thesis on disinformation as a tool in political campaigns and how the audience perceives disinformation in North Macedonia. Palloshi Disha has many years of experience in media monitoring and analysis in different research projects for media reporting, such as political pluralism and political-party representation during elections, ethnical, gender, children, and human rights representation. Her recent publications are DISHA, P. E., BAJRAMI, D., RUSTEMI, A.: The Online Media Landscape in the Focus of Disinformation Campaigns in the Western Balkans: Albania, Kosova, and North Macedonia. In *Prizren Social Science Journal*, 2021, Vol. 5. No. 3, p. 77-85. ISSN 2616-387X; BAJRAMI, D., HALILI, A., DISHA, P. E., IBRAHIMI, S. H.: Media Literacy Education at the University Level: A Case Study of the South East European University (SEEU). In *Kairos: Media and Communications Review*, 2022, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 56-68.

Assoc. Prof. Agron Rustemi, Ph.D.

South East European University
Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences
Ilindenska, n.335,
1200, Tetovo
REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
a.rustemi@seeu.edu.mk



Agron Rustemi is an Associated Professor at the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences at South East European University, Tetovo. His scholarly interests include social politics, research methodology, public policy, and career development. Considering his academic and professional background, he has been engaged in different projects as a consultant and expert. He graduated from the Philosophical Faculty Department of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of “St. Cyril and Methodius” Skopje and finished his master’s and defended master’s theses “The influence of the approach of Bismarck and Beveridge on creating and reforming of Social States in Europe” in the Philosophical Faculty at University of “St. Cyril and Methodius” Skopje. Rustemi finished doctoral studies in the Philosophical Faculty at the University of “St. Cyril and Methodius” Skopje with the doctoral thesis “Comparative analysis of the models of the welfare state in the UK and Germany”, and obtained the title of Ph.D. in social work and social policy. He also has a specialization in Social Policy and Social Work which he has gained in Faculty Katolische Fachhochschule Nordrhein-Westfalen, Paderborn, Germany.



Lucia Spálová, Ľubica Račeková

Coverage of Migration in the Most Visited Slovak Online Medium in the First Half of 2021

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the presentation of migration as a theme on the most visited Slovak media website *aktuality.sk* during the first half of 2021. Through qualitative and quantitative content analysis of texts and photographs, it determines the frequency of information, names the topics and analyzes the content that the medium presented from January 2021 to the end of June 2021. Because of the smaller volume of news and politicians addressing the topic, it may seem that migration has disappeared. However, the number of valid stays of third-country nationals in Slovakia in June 2021 was not way below average since 2015 when the so-called migration crisis began. This article summarizes the migration discourses that have been promulgated in Slovakia since 2015. At the same time, the analysis focuses on covering the topic of migration at present, we determine how much space the selected medium devoted to migration and what topics it reported on. In terms of identified discourses, in the analysis of 2021, we noted the persistence of cultural threat discourse, security risk discourse and more discourse of effective solidarity. It turns out that the overall setting of the media sentiment of the migration discourse in the Slovak Republic is relatively stable in the long run, inclined to the negative connotation of the terms migrant, refugee and the migration process itself, with a significantly weak representation of positive sentiment.

KEY WORDS

Discourse. Media. Migration. Politics.

1 Introduction

The process of media framing (which contributes to how the recipients evaluate a particular problem and understand the facts) is closely related to the conventionalization or standardization of image and text content, which the media use to portray various rare topics and problems, including the phenomenon of migration.¹ The media debate on migration has been taking shape since 2015 when more than a million migrants arrived in the European Union and the media and political discourse on migration was transformed significantly.² “Migration has not been intensely debated as a topic in Slovakia unlike in some other countries of the European Union. This is certainly also due to the incomparably lower number of migrants and people with a migrant background.”³ The migration issue moved from the periphery to the center of public and political discussions in 2015.⁴ The media all over Europe were keenly following the topic of migration in 2015, and the frequency of journalistic contributions on this topic was high especially after the crisis in the Mediterranean.⁵

In this context, the issue of migration is framed in various media discourses, which have changed and developed over time in the media and political discourse from the initial and outright negative security risks and cultural threats associated in particular with the framework of Muslim invasion and crime⁶ to the more positive discourse, such as “we are all migrants”.⁷ “In the first migration wave (2015) the security risks and cultural threats were a dominant communication strategy, in the second wave (2016, 2017) the discourse on migration management was highly relevant, and in the third period (2018), an alternative concept of “effective solidarity” emerged – this idea was first presented in 2016 during the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council.”⁸

¹ GREENWOOD, K., SMITH, C. Z.: How the World Looks to Us: International News in Award-winning Photographs from the Pictures of the Year, 1943-2003. In *Journalism Practice* 1, 2007, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 84.

² LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020, p. 7.

³ ANDROVIČOVÁ, J.: Sekuritizácia migrantov na Slovensku – analýza diskurzu. In *Sociológia*, 2015, Vol. 47, No. 4, p. 319. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.sav.sk/journals/uploads/08190914Androvicova%20-%20OK.pdf>>.

⁴ KUCHARCZYK, J., MESEŽNIKOV, G.: Migration Debate in Central Europe: Between Real Challenges and Imaginary Threats. In *Phantom Menace the Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe*. Bratislava : Institute for Public Affairs, 2018, p. 9.

⁵ LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020, p. 26.

⁶ See: GREUSSING, E., BOOMGAARDEN, H. G.: *Shifting the Refugee Narrative? An Automated Frame Analysis of Europe's 2015 Refugee Crisis*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1282813>>; BUSUTIL, R. O., MARQUEZ, Y. P.: The Migration Crisis in the Mediterranean and the European Union: Main Politics and Measures Anti-immigrants. In *Novedades en Poblacion*, 2017, Vol. 13, No. 26, p. 7.; TKÁČOVÁ, H. et al.: “Media Invasion” Against Islam in The Context of the Slovak Republic. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 165-179.

⁷ See: SPÁLOVÁ, L., PETROVÁ, E., BALÁŽIOVÁ, I.: Humanization of Migration Through Art - Discursive Contexts of Digitization, Participation and Solidarity: (WE ALL ARE MIGRANTS). In *IJournals: International Journal of Social Relevance & Concern*, 2020, Vol. 8, No. 7, p. 56.; SPÁLOVÁ, L., SZABÓOVÁ, V.: Migration as an Insight in the Creative Marketing Campaigns. In COSTA, M., CEROVIC, L. (eds.): *Rethinking Management in the Digital Era: Challenges from Industry 4.0 to Retail Management*. Varazdin : Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency, 2019, p. 219-229.

⁸ SPÁLOVÁ, L.: *Politický branding*. Bratislava : Európska Akadémia Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médii, 2021, p. 127.

2 Media Discourse on Migrants/Migration under the Conditions of the Slovak Republic

2.1 Media Discourses as a Mediation of Rare Topics

Despite the fact that we marked no considerable interest of foreigners to move to Slovakia and the arrival of more than one million migrants to Europe did not affect Slovakia, the public debate on migration since 2015 can be evaluated as very heated. One of the consequences is the polarization of society,⁹ which has persisted, and is still manifested in many spheres of society “both in the lay and professional circles, and in political and media discourses.”¹⁰ G. Mesežnikov concludes that the so-called migrant crisis did not manifest itself by an increased number of refugees in Slovakia, but by the strengthening of pathogenic phenomena in our society, such as radicalism and xenophobia.¹¹ Hate speech is mainly based on fear of the unknown and the lack of knowledge and personal experience. Negative public attitudes towards migrants have been present in the Slovak and Czech public for a long time. The public opinion surveys carried out during the period of the so-called first and second wave of migration (2015/2017) suggest that most Slovak citizens are rather afraid of refugees and do not support their arrival in Slovakia.¹² The above is also supported by the *Focus Agency* survey from June 2020 showed that almost every second citizen of the Slovak Republic does not personally know any foreigners living in Slovakia. Thus, a large portion of the population forms their opinion on foreigners based on mediated personal and media content.¹³ According to the Milan Šimečka Foundation survey from the 2020, these opinions are, for example, formed by information from friends and acquaintances, or from sources such as the media.¹⁴ The above testifies to the critical importance of the media in providing an objective coverage of topics in the field of social exclusion, discrimination and human rights.

Based on the results of her survey, E. Gallo Kriglerová et al. noted a slight increase in the number of respondents (14.1% in 2009 and 17% in 2021) who have had a personal experience with migration in 2021.¹⁵ However, public opinion is still largely formed by factors such as the media or political discourse on migration, as well as by indirect experience with migration or possible meetings and contact with foreigners.¹⁶ In light of the above, there is a need for high-quality journalistic outputs in terms of truthfulness and objectivity. The importance of the media for society is unquestionable and their power is significant. Ideally, the media should employ and observe ethical principles, be impartial and provide balanced and objective information.¹⁷ In the case of tabloid media, the conditions for quality journalism often vary. Editors in the tabloid media often add positive or negative assessments to their news reports, for example, by using expressive

⁹ LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020, p. 8.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ MESEŽNIKOV, G., BÚTOROVÁ, Z.: Refugee Crisis in Europe: Public Opinion, State Institutions and Party Politics in Slovakia. In KUCHARCZYK, J., MESEŽNIKOV, G. (eds.): *Phantom Menace the Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe*. Bratislava : Institute for Public Affairs, 2018, p. 53.

¹² GAŽIOVÁ, I., RAPOŠOVÁ, T.: *Protipól k strachu: občianske aktivity na pomoc utečencom*. [online]. [2012-02-23]. Available at: <<http://cvek.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Protipol-k-strachu-1.pdf>>; See also: CORBU, N. et al.: Fake News Going Viral: The Mediating Effect of Negative Emotions. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 58-87.

¹³ RAPOŠ BOŽIČ, I.: *Cudzinci žijúci na Slovensku – do akej miery sa od nich dišancujeme?* [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://fjuzn.sk/cudzinci-zijuci-na-slovensku-do-akej-miery-sa-od-nich-distancujeme/>>.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ GALLO KRIGLEROVÁ, E. et al.: *Cudzie nechceme, svoje si nedáme*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <http://cvek.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cudzie_nehceme_Analyza_final_edited.pdf>.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020, p. 63.

linguistic means and devices, simplicity of expression, action in the topics etc.¹⁸ It is well known that the tabloid media are characterized by sensationalism, human disasters, natural disasters and other phenomena that easily attract the recipient's attention. However, it is not only the tabloids that have the ability to influence the recipients of their content. *"Even in the case of serious news outlets that use a notional dictionary without emotionalizations and drama, journalists can influence the perception of events in their percipients, whether through the selection of the news, information arrangement, use of verbal expressions, etc. When presenting various social groups, especially the minorities with real or perceived cultural differences, the media can create or reinforce a stereotypical view. This doesn't necessarily have to be an intentional act by the journalists or a reflection of their own prejudice, but rather the philosophy of the medium, the need to create symbols and simplify information."*¹⁹ There can be many intentions, and the journalists must be extremely rigorous and adhere to the journalistic code in case of sensitive and lesser-known topics in society. The above can also be documented by older research by M. Vašečka who used semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of public policy, state administration experts in the field of migration, as well as experts from the non-governmental and academic environment to study the public attitudes towards foreigners and foreign migration in the Slovak Republic. The failure of the media in the migration discourse was attributed to the tabloidization of the media, lack of interest in the topic and its complexity. They also blamed it on the absence of pressure from the professional public in the media space.²⁰ Very similar reasons persist in the migration discourse in the media a decade later. As stated by T. Freidingerová, P. Ivanič and P. Chalupková, the media play an important role in creating and maintaining the frameworks in which we perceive the phenomenon of migration.²¹ These authors give examples of media framing from the theoretical meta-analysis of the research findings of Tkaczyk, Kriglerová and Chudžíková, Nolan and Walker, and Price. They use the Hungarian pro-government media (in 2019 they accounted for up to four-fifths of the local media market) as an example, which among other things received a manual on how to cover the topic of migration, what vocabulary or photographs to use, and how to frame the news. By presenting the refugees and migrants as a danger or threat in their outputs – at the government's request – the media could have contributed to Viktor Orbán's victory in the 2018 elections.²²

*"The discursive field of migration encompasses a wide range of actors, such as politicians and civil servants, the media and various experts on migration, representatives of non-governmental organizations and, of course, the migrants themselves."*²³ It is a large number of people who create a discourse on a complicated topic such as migration with their opinions and attitudes, which also directly concerns unknown people. Therefore, the discourse on migrants disseminated by the media is important *"in the creation of implicit attitudes to them by members of the general public, and may adversely affect the integration process of the refugees in the EU and contribute to the increasing prejudices against them."*²⁴

¹⁸ VEVERKOVÁ, V.: *Bulvár a bulvarizácia dennej tlače*. Ljubljana : KUD Apokalypsa, 2014, p. 79-81.

¹⁹ LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020, p. 63.

²⁰ VAŠEČKA, M.: *Postoje verejnosti k cudzincom a zahraničnej migrácii v Slovenskej republike*. Bratislava : IOM, 2009, p. 92.

²¹ FREIDINGEROVÁ, T., IVANIČ, P., CHALUPKOVÁ, P.: *Ludia medzi riadkami: Príručka o migrácii (nielen) pre budúcich novinárov*. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <https://slovakaid.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Ludia_medzi_riadkami_WEB.pdf>; See also: WIDERA, W.: Attracting and Pre-integrating Migrants Using Digital Media in the Local Labour Market. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 28-42.

²² NOLAN, D., WALKER, S.: *Hungarian Journalists Admit Role in Forging Anti-migrant 'Atmosphere of Fear'*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/13/hungary-journalists-state-tv-network-migrants-viktor-orban-government>>.

²³ ANDROVIČOVÁ, J.: *Sekuritizácia migrantov na Slovensku – analýza diskurzu*. In *Sociológia*, 2015, Vol. 47, No. 4, p. 320. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.sav.sk/journals/uploads/08190914Androvicova%20-%200K.pdf>>.

²⁴ SPÁLOVÁ, L.: *Politický branding*. Bratislava : Európska Akadémia Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médii, 2021, p. 125.

2.2 Changes in the Frequency and Sentiment of the Media Reports on Migration in 2015-2020

Compared to 2015 when the topic of migration significantly affected the public, political and media discourse, we are currently observing a quantitative drop of interest in this topic, but the phenomenon is ongoing. Two years after the outbreak of the so-called migration crisis, it has dropped by about a half. In an unsorted media monitoring, 33,264 news reports were recorded in 2017, 63,451 in 2016 and 61,908 in 2015. The monitoring also included some marginal or irrelevant reports.²⁵ In 2018, the topic continued to feature in the media.

In 2018, the Slovak migration discourse was still gaining traction. *“In 2018, the topic of migration of third-country nationals was again part of the political, media and social debate in Slovakia.”*²⁶ In the political sphere, there were topics such as labour migration of people from third countries to our territory and cooperation of the V4 countries on this issue. In 2018, Slovakia adopted the *UN Global Framework for Refugees*, however, the *UN Global Framework for Safe Managed Legal Migration* was not adopted. The growing extremism and violence of Slovaks against foreigners, but also labour migration, were some of the hot topics that appeared in the media. Based on the results of the *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Seekers in the Slovak Republic for 2018*, we conclude that the journalists specialize in clarifying disinformation, hoaxes and myths about migration in their contributions. Before the municipal elections, some media informed the foreigners about the possibility of active participation.²⁷

In the 2020 publication *Slovak Elections 2020 in the Information Space*, the apolitical non-governmental organization GLOBSEC created a ranking of the *top topics in the mainstream media* based on the cumulative number of articles on the following websites: *Aktuality*, *Denník N*, *Hospodárske noviny*, *Nový Čas*, *Pluska*, *Pravda*, *SME* and *Topky*. Based on the data, migration ranked seventh. In the *Top topics on the disinformation websites* ranking, in which the authors included *Hlavné správy* and *Hlavný denník*, migration ranked sixth.²⁸ Although the topic was not dominant, it was still among frequent electoral topics. In general, the topic of labour migration from third countries to our country and mixed migration prevailed in the media.²⁹ *“The issue of increasing migration is still a topic after years of international efforts to solve and stabilize the socio-economic increase in migration in the European context (in 2018 it was partially overshadowed by the dominant media topic of climate change, and in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic).”*³⁰ The pandemic has affected many of the processes that were common and prevalent up to that time, including the area of migration management. *“For this reason, various changes and measures related to e.g. the opening hours at the foreign police departments, simplification of acts related to processing the applications for residence and visas and handling of foreigners in person at the foreign police departments or embassies of the Slovak Republic, permits for the entry into the territory of Slovak Republic or border management, have been adopted.”*³¹

²⁵ MĚSZÁROSOVÁ, S., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2018*. [online]. [2022-02-17]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyročne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2551_9ac3898beaccf74a754d91fcc6045517.html>.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ KLINGOVÁ, K. et al.: *Slovenské voľby 2020 v informačnom priestore*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Slovenske-volby-2020.pdf>>.

²⁹ MĚSZÁROSOVÁ, S., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2018*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyročne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2551_9ac3898beaccf74a754d91fcc6045517.html>.

³⁰ SPÁLOVÁ, L.: *Politický branding*. Bratislava: Európska Akadémia Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médií, 2021, p. 125.

³¹ BEHŮŇOVÁ, K., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2020*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyročne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2865_fbbf50a0506edf17e0ba8476496cb864.html>.

The global pandemic has had a significant impact on the mobility of people in Europe. Due to the containment of the Covid-19 virus, many countries have significantly reduced national, cross-border and international travel. Since mid-June 2020, 25% of land border crossings have been closed.³² *The Frontex Agency* noted the lowest numbers of illegal migration since 2013. As a result, the media interest in migration has subsided. Analyst Milazzo reports that over the period from January to October 2020, only half of the main broadcasting time in Italy was devoted to migration compared to 2019 and 2018.³³ Due to the above decrease in illegal migration, we considered it relevant to mention the specific number of valid stays of third-country nationals in Slovakia. We present these numbers to illustrate how migration has affected the Slovak Republic since the summer of 2015. In the below table, we have only listed those third-country nationals who were mentioned several times in the text, and were most often present in the migration discourse.³⁴

Year	Number of valid statuses for third-country nationals (30.6. of the specific year)	Year	Number of valid statuses for third-country nationals (30.6. of the specific year)	Comparison
Jun 2015	31.043	Jun 2016	37.217	increase of 6,174
Jun 2016	37.217	Jun 2017	44.747	increase of 7,530
Jun 2017	44.747	Jun 2018	54.293	increase of 9,546
Jun 2018	54.293	Jun 2019	73.870	increase of 19,577
Jun 2019	73.870	Jun 2020	88.245	increase of 14,375
Jun 2020	88.245	Jun 2021	97.020	increase of 8,775

TABLE 1: *Number of valid stays of third-country nationals in Slovakia*³⁵

Source: own processing, 2022, according to: *Ročenky*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?rocenky>>.

The analysis of the sentiments on migration in the Slovak digital media during the period 2018-2020 (the data from digital media analysis was processed by *Monitora s.r.o.*) showed that sentiment polarity is relatively stable, and a slight increase in both negative and positive sentiment (neutral sentiment decreased) can be observed.³⁶ The period under review was preceded by a predominantly negative media discourse on migration. Despite a drop in media outlets compared to the years 2015 and 2016, the Slovak media still dedicated a considerable amount of attention to the topic of migration of third-country nationals even in 2017. In addition to the continuing mixed and irregular migration into the EU and the EU measures in this area, the Slovak media were vocal in 2017 about relocations to Slovakia, formation of common positions of the V4 countries on migration issues, and the so-called global compacts on migration and refugees. The media also echoed the theme of labour migration to Slovakia from third countries, mainly concerning the citizens of Serbia and their working conditions, the situation at the Foreign Police Department in Bratislava, and the case of detained smugglers with a larger group of migrants. Some media outlets have focused on busting myths, misinformation and hoaxes

³² BEHŮŇOVÁ, K., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2020*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2865_fbbf50a0506edf17e0ba8476496cb864.html>.

³³ ALIU, M.: *Migrations, Media, and the Pandemic*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Migrations-media-and-the-pandemic-208911>>.

³⁴ A third-country national is any person who is not a Slovak or EU citizen (a third-country national also means a stateless person) (for more information, see: Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration in the Slovak Republic).

³⁵ The average number of stays after rounding is 11,000. The situation in Slovakia was well above the average in the year from 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2019. Also from June 2019 to the end of June 2020. Period until the end of June 2021, which is also the period we analyzed, is the 4th highest among the years and is about 3000 stays below average.

³⁶ SPÁLOVÁ, L. et al.: *Media – Migration – Politics*. Berlin : Peter Lang, 2022, p. 175.

in relation to various migration issues.³⁷ This could have been reflected by the relatively high proportion of neutral sentiment in the media discourse in the period under review. “Although the Slovak outlets news did not provide much space to the voice of migrants, they focused to a significant extent on the people and their fate (human interest frame) and provided neutral news.”³⁸

Development of digital media outputs on the topic of migration by sentiment, Slovakia, 2018-2020

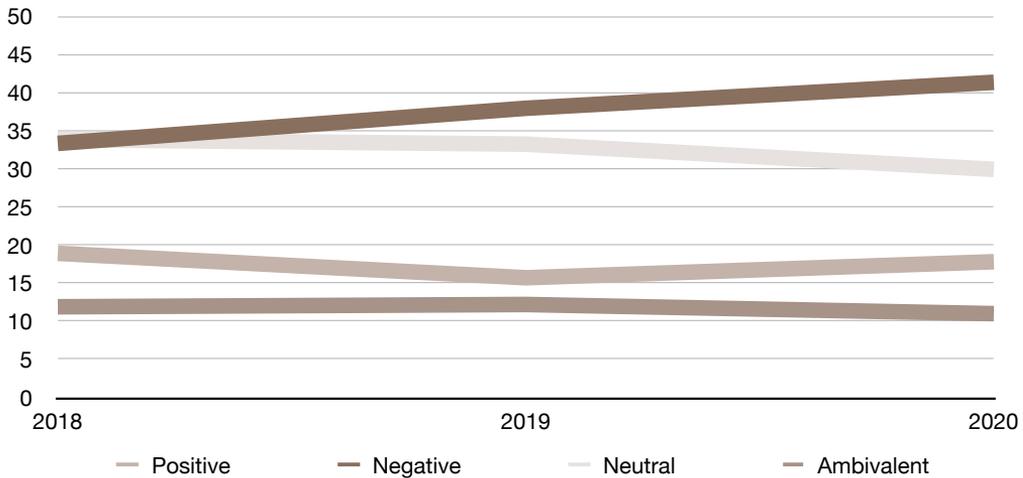


TABLE 2: *Topic of migration by sentiment*

Source: SPÁLOVÁ, L. et al.: *Media – Migration – Politics*. Berlin : Peter Lang, 2022, p. 183.

The results of sentiment analysis may have several reasons, one of them being the currently most protracted global issue of public policies. While migration was undoubtedly an issue in 2015 and 2016, climate crisis became a dominant theme in 2018, followed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and the war in Ukraine in 2022. It is interesting to see that the topics discussed in the media also contain a certain degree of threat to the population and the planet. The “danger” discourse remains, but the “threat” theme has been replaced by a new and current one, which displaced older topics from the media discourse.³⁹

3 Identification of the Media Discourse in the Online News Outlet *aktuality.sk* in the First Half of 2021

3.1 Research Problem

The media-driven discourse has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the issue of migration/migrants and its perception and evaluation by the receiving end of the media content. Media discourse is shaping public opinion, it activates and positions political mobilization and legal

³⁷ MĚSZÁROSOVÁ, S., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2018*. [online]. [2022-02-17]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocnne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2551_9ac3898beaccf74a754d91fcc6045517.html>.

³⁸ POSPĚCH, P. et al.: *Ve středu pozornosti. Mediální pokrytí tématu migrace v České Republice, Estonsku a na Slovensku*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.clovektisni.cz/ve-stredu-pozornosti-mediální-pokrytí-tematu-migrace-v-ceske-republice-estonsku-a-na-slovensku-1320pub>>.

³⁹ SPÁLOVÁ, L. et al.: *Media – Migration – Politics*. Berlin : Peter Lang, 2022, p. 183.

aid by providing specific interpretive perspectives, in which offers a cognitive shortcut for the recipients of media content.⁴⁰ Based on the theoretical meta-analysis of the research findings in the Slovak context, which continue to emphasize the prevailing negative media sentiment when presenting the media content on migration, we were interested in the discourse in the Slovak media space even after the media interest in the topic faded away. We have defined our research goal as an effort to identify the media discourse on migration in the most visited Slovak online medium *aktuality.sk* in the first half of 2021.

3.2 Research Method and Research Material

When analyzing the text published in the media on the topic of migration, we relied on the theoretical and methodological concept of discourse analysis by N. Fairclough, M. Foucault and J. Potter.⁴¹ We understand discourse more widely within both approaches – interactive and socio-political – social knowledge is created and maintained through social interaction, but at the same time it leads to social interaction; the texts/discourse (in this context, even an image/ photograph is considered to be text) also exhibits the abuse and misuse of power in various political and social situations. In our analysis, we used qualitative research and a bottom-up approach, with the aim of identifying/unmasking the discourse strategies related to migration. In our research, we used the case study method. A case study belongs to the methods of qualitative research.⁴² It differs from other types of studies (biographical, phenomenological, ethnographic) in that it includes an intensive analysis and description of a separate unit or system bounded by time and space. As recommended we used a so-called collective case study, which is a case study of multiple cases, aimed at exploring the similarities and differences between several instrumental cases.⁴³

The research material consisted of media texts (including photographs) published on the <https://www.aktuality.sk/> website in the period under review (from 1.1.2021 to 30.6.2021). The medium was selected based on the fact that *aktuality.sk* has been the most visited Slovak website for several years.⁴⁴ Additionally, *aktuality.sk* is identified as a news medium, which was a relevant prerequisite for us in terms of objectivity.⁴⁵

We have searched for the units of analysis by means of the following keywords: migrant, migrants, refugee, refugees and migration. Subsequently, we filtered the selection based on the selected time interval (see the results in Table 3).

⁴⁰ GREUSSING, E., BOOMGAARDEN, H. G.: *Shifting the Refugee Narrative? An Automated Frame Analysis of Europe's 2015 Refugee Crisis*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1282813>>.

⁴¹ See: FAIRCLOUGH, N.: *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysing for Social Research*. London : Routledge, 2003, p. 35; FOUCAULT, M.: *Archeologie věděni*. Prague : Herrmann & synové, 2016, p. 128; POTTER, J.: *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. Loughborough University, UK : Sage Publication, 1996.

⁴² See: HANCOCK, D. R., ALGOZZINE, B.: *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2006.

⁴³ YIN, R. K.: *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage, 2009, p. 219.

⁴⁴ KARPELOVÁ, D.: *Koľko Slovákov je online a koľko z nich chodí na slovenské stránky?* [online]. [2022-02-26]. Available at: <<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/blogy/2328009-aka-bola-navstevnost-slovenskeho-internetu-v-roku-2020>>.

⁴⁵ BARTOŠEK, J., TUŠER, A.: Teoreticko-praktické východiská mediálnej tvorby. In TUŠER, A. et al.: *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby*. Bratislava : Bratislavská vysoká škola práva, 2010, p. 30.

	Date	Keyword	Media text title	Genre	Relevance
1.	1/20/2021	Migrants	<i>Young People May Be Vaccinated Earlier, Says Krajčí</i>	News report	Yes
2.	1/24/2021	Refugee	<i>Some Remember Compulsory Military Service with Nostalgia. Others Have Resorted to Desperate Actions.</i>	News report	No
3.	1/27/2021	Migrants	<i>The MPs of Do-Gooder Pellegrini Showed Their True Colours about Soros</i>	Commentary	Yes
4.	1/31/2021	migration, migrants	<i>An Iron Monster, Destroyed Nature and a Wall that Isn't. Why the Trump's Project Never Made Sense</i>	News report	Yes
5.	5/25/2021	migration	<i>The Doctor Was Vaccinated Twice, and One Vaccination Record Is Missing in the State Certificate</i>	News report	No
6.	6/11/2021	migration	<i>The Legends of the Alternative Music Scene Will Play at Počúvadlo</i>	News report	Yes
7.	6/17/2021	migration	<i>Following Russia, Orban Used Gay People Yet Again. He Is Driving them Out of Television and Links Them with Paedophiles</i>	News report	Yes
8.	6/18/2021	refugees	<i>Coronavirus ONLINE: The Medical Council Issued Travel Recommendations to Prevent the Spread of the Delta Variant</i>	News report	Yes
9.	6/19/2021	refugees	<i>Refugees from Auschwitz Vrba and Wetzler Will Have a Memorial Room in Žilina Where They Have Written Their Testimony</i>	News report	No
10.	6/29/2021	migrant	<i>The Murder of a 13-year-old Girl in Vienna Unleashed Passions against Migrants</i>	News report	Yes

TABLE 3: Analyzed journalist texts

Source: own processing, 2022

3.3 Results

Article 1 titled “*Young People May Be Vaccinated Earlier, Says Krajčí*” was published on January 20, 2021. It is a summary of the pandemic situation in several cities. A rather long overview is complemented by numerous statements, such as statements by the President, government information on unemployment, or the fact more vaccines will be imported to Slovakia. The information related to migration is mentioned in a short paragraph. The news report was about the Czech police who started to check compliance with quarantine measures at certain border crossings. One of the reasons was increased illegal migration.⁴⁶ It is the only mention of migration in the information feed from this day. The actual numbers, increase in the percentage or specific persons are not mentioned in the news report. The information in this particular case is counter to the European statistics on the decline of illegal migration during the pandemic. There is no cover photograph in the article, the text is accompanied by graphics informing about the possibilities of testing in individual cities and about the side effects of the vaccine and the Covid-19 disease.

⁴⁶ VÝBEROVÁ, P., KOVÁČIKOVÁ, J.: *Koronavírus: Mladých možno začnú očkovať skôr, pripustil Krajčí*. [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/857281/koronavirus-online-slovensko-20-januar-2021/>>.

Article 2 “Some Remember Compulsory Military Service with Nostalgia. Others Have Resorted to Desperate Action” written by editor I. Hečková on 24.1.2021. The word “refugee” in the text is used in connection with a military trainee who deserted the army with a machine gun.⁴⁷ This article is therefore irrelevant for our study.

Article 3 is dated January 27, 2021, and it is a write-up by Editor-in-Chief of *aktuality.sk* Peter Bárďy with the title: “The MPs of Do-Gooder Pellegrini Showed Their True Colours about Soros.”⁴⁸ In the introduction, the author briefly mentioned how Robert Fico referred to Peter Pellegrini as a do-gooder. In Fico’s parlance, this term means: “someone stupid, naive, welcoming migrants and a threat to Christianity and European values, a dirty thing.”⁴⁹ He even assigned them roles: Fico is a bad policeman and Pellegrini is a good one. However, the dispute between the two politicians is not the main point of the write-up; it is rather the vote in favour of the new head of the Migration Office. According to Bárďy, Robert Fico views the candidate as an anti-Slovak, and links it to his pro-migration views and experience as a boss of the *Open Society Foundation* (NGO) for several years. “He then arranged a vote because of his concerns about the nomination of Ján Orlovský, and all that because of Soros and the do-gooder. Together with Fico, even the vast majority of Kotleba’s and Pellegrini’s MPs voted in favour of this resolution...”⁵⁰ Bárďy admits that Peter Pellegrini was not present at the vote, but thinks that Fico’s subjects showed their faithfulness into the future. In the conclusion of his write-up, Bárďy is guessing the motives behind the split of Smer. He is also cracking jokes and asking whether Pellegrini suffers from Stockholm syndrome, or whether it is Pellegrini himself who is afraid to vote in favour of migration. Nothing is said about migration in the last paragraph; it only deals with the calculation and strength of Robert Fico, including his low preferences at that time.



PICTURE 1: Comentry by Peter Bárďy

Source: BÁRDY, P.: *Komentár Petra Bárďyho: Poslanci „slniečkara” Pellegriniho sa pri Sorosovi vyfarbili.* [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/859399/komentar-petra-bardyho-slnieckar-pellegrini-sa-pri-sorosovi-vyfarbil/>>.

The photograph to the commentary is illustrative, and it shows the face of Peter Pellegrini and his party colleague Richard Raši who left Smer-SD. Pellegrini brandished a T-shirt with the logo of the party he currently presides over. It is probably a photo from a presser because there are microphones in front of Pellegrini and he is staring somewhere into the crowd. This photo is probably just further proof that Peter Pellegrini is not in Robert Fico’s party. Richard Raši is

⁴⁷ HEČKOVÁ, I.: *Niektorí na povinnú vojenčinu spomínajú s nostalgiou. Iných dohnala k zúfalým činom.* [online]. [2022-02-24]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/858066/niektori-na-povinnu-vojencinu-spominaju-s-nostalgiou-inych-dohnala-k-zufalym-cinom/>>.

⁴⁸ BÁRDY, P.: *Komentár Petra Bárďyho: Poslanci „slniečkara” Pellegriniho sa pri Sorosovi vyfarbili.* [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/859399/komentar-petra-bardyho-slnieckar-pellegrini-sa-pri-sorosovi-vyfarbil/>>.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

standing in the background, and is also looking into the crowd, probably at the journalists. He makes no other contribution to the photograph, and is rather a reminder that Peter Pellegrini did not switch parties alone. The photograph itself does not evoke any attitudes of the politicians to migration or the candidate in question who was put to the vote. Peter Pellegrini's lips are tight and Richard Raši is frowning; this body language could mean that they have been asked a direct question but we cannot verify it, and the body language of politicians may also mean that they are focused on the questions themselves.

The last contribution from January 2021 is Article 4 with the title *"An Iron Monster, Destroyed Nature and a Wall that Isn't. Why the Trump's Project Never Made Sense"* about the wall on the border between US and Mexico, which helped Donald Trump win the elections.⁵¹ It contains much information, including historical, about whose idea it was to build the wall and how Trump changed the original idea of the wall. The idea was to clearly demarcate the border, and from the onset of Trump, the former President of the United States of America, it has nationalist and anti-migratory connotations. Some sections of the article dealing with migration discuss how this wall helped Trump win the elections. This strategy, which was automatically linked to migrants, helped him talk about migration and take firm action. The topic of migrants was used by President Trump in the debate on migration into the United States, especially from Muslim countries.⁵²



PICTURE 2: *The wall that divided America*

Source: ŠTRBA, P.: *Železné monštrum, zničená príroda a múr, ktorý neexistuje. Prečo Trumpov projekt nemal nikdy zmysel.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/860697/usa-trump-mur-mexiko/>>.

In the next two paragraphs devoted to Trump and his attitude to migration, the author of the article mentions the opinion of an activist: *"It is unlikely that the wall as such will have any fundamental effects on (migration),"* says David Donatti. *"The government is building it at places where it is easier to build. Instead of building it where people cross the border."*⁵³ The author also added that the wall had no impact on the migration of drug cartels.⁵⁴ The article is information-based and it does not defend Trump, but quite the opposite. It uses several citations that degrade Trump's idea. The wall is a symbol of division and polarization. The photo on the first page shows the wall built from high steel columns that resemble bars. There are several men in the photo who are probably responsible for the construction. The photo is documentary and does not express any views on the wall shown in the photo. The description reads as follows: *"The wall on the border with Mexico is in fact huge bars."*⁵⁵

⁵¹ ŠTRBA, P.: *Železné monštrum, zničená príroda a múr, ktorý neexistuje. Prečo Trumpov projekt nemal nikdy zmysel.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/860697/usa-trump-mur-mexiko/>>.

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

Article 6 of June 11, 2021 “*The Legends of the Alternative Music Scene Will Play at Počúvadlo*” is a notice that the multi-genre festival will also host public debates. One of these was a debate focused on the subject of our study, i.e. the topic “*Migrants and refugees, or facts on migration*”.⁵⁶ Four experts on migration and integration of foreigners were participating in the debate. In this case, it was a way to promote the festival and we appreciate the reference to the debate with experts. This is mainly because migration is a difficult topic, as we have mentioned above. We do not provide the cover photo in this case because it only shows the names of the bands, the festival and the date of the event.⁵⁷ The photo is therefore a promotional poster for a particular festival, and is therefore irrelevant for our contribution.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stands at the heart of Article 7 by P. Štrba titled “*Following Russia, Orbán Used Gay People Yet Again. He is Driving Them Out of Television and Links Them with Paedophiles*.”⁵⁸ The article contains political actions by the Prime Minister of Hungary for whom homosexuals have become the main topic after migrants. “*Last elections were about migrants, these elections will be about homosexuals. This is how some analysts assess the current tactic of Viktor Orbán before the Hungarians elect a new Parliament*.”⁵⁹ The parliamentary elections in Hungary should be held by no later than 2022. In addition to the mention above, migration is not further developed on in the text. The article informs about Viktor Orbán’s policy. The author is objective in the text and does not defend the minorities.



PICTURE 3: LGBTQ+ in Hungary

Source: ŠTRBA, P.: *Orbán po vzore Ruska opäť vytiahol homosexuálov. Vyháňa ich z televízie a spája s pedofilmi*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900360/orban-po-vzore-ruska-opat-vytiahol-homosexualov-vyhana-ich-zo-skol-aj-z-televizii/>>.

As stated in the caption, the cover photo shows a crowd of people protesting against the law against homosexuals. People are holding LGBTQ+ flags, including gay flags, which Orbán and the Hungarian Parliament speak against.

In Article 8 of June 18, 2021, “*Coronavirus ONLINE: The Medical Council Issued Travel Recommendations to Prevent the Spread of the Delta Variant*”, the authors summarized the most important events of the day in the countries of Europe and in Slovakia.⁶⁰ Migration is mentioned in a short snippet at 9.23 AM: “– *REFUGEES: The number of displaced persons and refugees has increased again despite the pandemic. (TASR) “refugees”,*” is the only part

⁵⁶ Na Počúvadle odznejú legendy alternatívnej hudobnej scény. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/898770/na-pocuvadle-odzneju-legendy-alternativnej-hudobnej-sceny/>>.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ ŠTRBA, P.: *Orbán po vzore Ruska opäť vytiahol homosexuálov. Vyháňa ich z televízie a spája s pedofilmi*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900360/orban-po-vzore-ruska-opat-vytiahol-homosexualov-vyhana-ich-zo-skol-aj-z-televizii/>>.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ DEBNÁR, J., VÝBEROVÁ, P.: *Coronavirus ONLINE: Koronavírus ONLINE: Konzílium vydalo cestovné odporúčania, aby sa zamedzilo šíreniu delta variantu*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900596/koronavirus-online-slovensko-18-jun-2021/>>.

of the Article which could be linked with migration.⁶¹ The reference from the snippet in the article – a quick news item of informative value – is that migration didn't stop with the pandemic. This is similar to quick news from January 20.

Although Article 9 “*Refugees from Auschwitz Vrba and Wetzler Will Have a Memorial Room in Žilina Where They Have Written Their Testimony*” of June 19, 2021 reports on the refugees, it is the refugees who managed to escape from Auschwitz. These two refugees, as the author of the Article calls them, will have a memorial room in Žilina. They wrote about their experience from the concentration camp.⁶² Although the report contains one of the key words, it does not concern migration in the sense of our study.

The last news article 10 is dated June 29, 2021. The report deals with an extremely violent act and two Afghan suspects.⁶³ The report is taken from the Slovak Press Agency, and it reads: “*The Murder of a 13-year-old Girl in Vienna Has Launched a Sharp Political Debate in Austria on Asylum Seekers. Two young Afghans are the key suspects in this act, APA agency informed on Tuesday.*”⁶⁴ The report cites Austrian Chancellor Kurz who promised that the perpetrators would be punished. At the same time, the report presents Kurz's position that it is unacceptable that: “*people come to us, seek protection and commit such cruel and barbaric crimes.*”⁶⁵



PICTURE 4: Murder in Vienna

Source: WÁCLAV, B.: *Vražda 13-ročného dievčaťa vo Viedni rozpútala vášne proti migrantom*. [online]. [2021-06-31]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/903981/vrazda-13-rocneho-dievcata-vo-viedni-rozputala-vasne-proti-migrantom/>>.

The Article mentions a number of positions of the political parties which have expressed their support for stepping up the expulsion of asylum seekers, and some call for a complete abolition of asylum applications and a revocation of the asylum status of the prosecuted.⁶⁶ The report is informative and it starts with the act that was committed. It then mentions the statements of political parties but does not touch on migration in Austria. The cover photo is illustrative and it shows an Austrian police officer in a uniform with a gun standing next to a police car. The photo serves as a reminder that a crime has been committed but does not evoke any emotions or anti-migratory moods.

⁶¹ DEBNÁR, J., VÝBEROVÁ, P.: *Coronavirus ONLINE: Koronavírus ONLINE: Konzílium vydalo cestovné odporúčania, aby sa zamedzilo šíreniu delta variantu*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900596/koronavirus-online-slovensko-18-jun-2021/>>.

⁶² PALÚCHOVÁ, M.: *Utečenci z Auschwitzu Vrba a Wetzler budú mať v Žiline, kde písali svedectvo, pamätnú izbu*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900628/utecenci-z-osviencimu-vrba-a-wetzler-budu-mat-v-ziline-kde-ich-ukryvali-pamatnu-izbu/>>.

⁶³ WÁCLAV, B.: *Vražda 13-ročného dievčaťa vo Viedni rozpútala vášne proti migrantom*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/903981/vrazda-13-rocneho-dievcata-vo-viedni-rozputala-vasne-proti-migrantom/>>.

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

3.4 Discussion

Based on our analysis, we conclude that we have not identified the establishment of the above agenda in the observed medium in the first half of 2021. The migration topic was approached in various ways. Out of a total of 10 news report searches on aktuality.sk through Google in the period January-June 2021, 7 media texts were relevant to our research study. The photographs used in the news reports did not give a tabloidized impression and did not directly refer to any prejudices or myths about migration. The journalist articles did not carry any elements of sensation or dramatization of events. All this despite the fact that in the last news report dealing with the murder of a 13-year-old girl, or the article about the wall on the border of Mexico and the United States, or the increasing number of illegal border crossings, the journalists could have used a different and more drastic and anti-migratory tone in the photo attached to the report. The photographs were of an illustrative nature and they were only used to paint an additional picture about the subject. The quick news items, i.e. short news in real time, were not accompanied by cover photos. This wasn't the case in the expert debate on migration either – the author of the article used a poster instead of a photograph. The single comment, and thus the journalistic genre among the news, preserved the notional character of the photograph. The depiction of two politicians was nothing specific or prominent. Of the seven relevant reports, four had cover photographs.

Most of the texts belonged to the news category and the values of this category were preserved. The analyzed media texts maintained their informative and objective character. The aktuality.sk daily did not advocate for migration, criticize it, nor did it explain the phenomena related to it. Two reports reported increased numbers related to the migration of persons. However, in this case, these were the articles from January and June 2021, which were only an overview of the events from the day. The information on migration was very brief. The news reports did not mention the reasons for migration, specific migrants or refugees. The political report on Orbán's campaigns in the past was only a brief reminder of his anti-immigration campaigns. It did not explain Viktor Orbán's position or migration itself. The mention of the festival was rather a publicity article, but we emphasize the reference to the discussion on migration. Due to the way the media elaborated on this rare topic; such information is relevant in the available medium. Thematically, the seven relevant media reports on migration/migrants could be divided into political topics,⁶⁷ news about pandemic migration,⁶⁸ educational topics on migration⁶⁹ and criminal law topics.⁷⁰ The low frequency of the topic in the daily under review is surprising despite our assumption that the topic of migration would be marginalized in the media in the period under review. From the point of view of discourses identified in our sample, we noted a persistent occurrence of the following discourses: cultural threats, security

⁶⁷ See: BÁRDY, P.: *Komentár Petra Bárdyho: Poslanci „slniečkara“ Pellegriniho sa pri Sorosovi vyfarbili.* [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/859399/komentar-petra-bardyho-slnieckar-pellegrini-sa-pri-sorosovi-vyfarbil/>>; ŠTRBA, P.: *Železné monštrum, zničená príroda a múr, ktorý neexistuje. Prečo Trumpov projekt nemá nikdy zmysel.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/860697/usa-trump-mur-mexiko/>>; ŠTRBA, P.: *Orbán po vzore Ruska opäť vytiahol homosexuálov. Vyháňa ich z televízie a spája s pedofilmi.* [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900360/orban-po-vzore-ruska-opat-vytiahol-homosexualov-vyhana-ich-zo-skol-aj-z-televizii/>>.

⁶⁸ See: VÝBEROVÁ, P., KOVÁČIKOVÁ, J.: *Koronavírus: Mladých možno začnú očkovať skôr, pripustil Krajčí.* [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/857281/koronavirus-online-slovensko-20-januar-2021/>>; DEBNÁR, J., VÝBEROVÁ, P.: *Koronavírus ONLINE: Konzílium vydalo cestovné odporúčania, aby sa zamedzilo šíreniu delta variantu.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900596/koronavirus-online-slovensko-18-jun-2021/>>.

⁶⁹ *Na Počúvadle odznejú legendy alternatívnej hudobnej scény.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/898770/na-pocuvadle-odzneju-legendy-alternativnej-hudobnej-sceny/>>.

⁷⁰ WÁCLAV, B.: *Vražda 13-ročného dievčaťa vo Viedni rozptala vášne proti migrantom.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/903981/vrazda-13-rocneho-dievcata-vo-viedni-rozptalavasne-proti-migrantom/>>.

discourse and effective solidarity. The latter, however, only concerned the promotion of debates with the migration experts at the festival. The other two can be described as dominant given the low number of contributions.

4 Conclusion

The media debate on migration has been taking shape since 2015 when more than a million migrants arrived in the European Union and the media and political discourse on migration was transformed more significantly. In the first migration wave (2015) the security risk and cultural threats were the dominant communication strategy, in the second wave (2016, 2017) the discourse on migration management was highly relevant, and in the third period (2018), an alternative concept of “effective solidarity” emerged – this idea was first presented in 2016 during the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council.⁷¹ Migration was one of the main topics of the parliamentary election campaigns in 2016, and its media coverage was much more frequent. There were no electoral campaigns in the first half of 2021. Migration is a common feature of political agendas and campaigns in which political parties present their plans to address migration.⁷² The topic had been alive in Slovakia for six years, and no shocking events had occurred that could have been attributed to migrants or refugees. Based on the identified news reports, the depiction of migration in the half-year of 2021 on *aktuality.sk* was rather inconsistent. It did not have regular coverage or matching topics that the medium would address, for example, through continuous coverage.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the top 10 migration problems in 2021 were: uneven opening of the borders due to the various variants of Covid-19, broadening of the protection of countries in South America and the Caribbean for Venezuelans, vaccination as a travel pass, crises around the world that deepen the humanitarian crisis, the new president of the United States who corrected the restrictions imposed by the previous president Trump, the situation in Afghanistan, Belarus and the refugees and the migration flows across the Western hemisphere, the focus of the United States and Europe on the causes of migration, and rising numbers of remittances despite the pandemic.⁷³ These topics were absent in the analyzed news reports. Quite the opposite should be the case as the topic of migration is still a rare topic and “*the media are the key area where one can meet refugees and migrants in Europe.*”⁷⁴ At the same time, however, it seems that the overall media sentiment in the migration discourse is relatively stable in the long run, with prevalent negative connotations of the concepts such as “migrant”, “refugee” and the migration process itself, and with a significantly weak representation of positive sentiment.

In 2022, we expect the rather rare topic of migration to be more current due to the arrival of war refugees from Ukraine, increased solidarity of the Slovak population and the implicit changes in the attitude towards migration and positive sentiments.

Acknowledgement: The research study is a partial output of the project KEGA 041UKF-4/2021 Digital influencers - educational levels of critical thinking development and engagement of the Z generation.

⁷¹ SPÁLOVÁ, L.: *Politický branding*. Bratislava : Európska Akadémia Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médií, 2021, p. 127.

⁷² NOVÁK, M., KOHOUTEK, J. et al.: *Politická kultura mocenských elit v éře globalizace*. Kolín : Nezávislé centrum pro studium politiky, 2012, p. 62.

⁷³ *Top 10 Migration Issues of 2021*. [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2021>>.

⁷⁴ CHOULIARAKI, L.: *The European “Migration Crisis” and the Media*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/projects/media-and-migration/Migration-and-media-report-FINAL-June17.pdf>>.

Literature and Sources:

- ALIU, M.: *Migrations, Media, and the Pandemic*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Migrations-media-and-the-pandemic-208911>>.
- ANDROVIČOVÁ, J.: Sekuritizácia migrantov na Slovensku – analýza diskurzu. In *Sociológia*, 2015, Vol. 47, No. 4, p. 319-339. ISSN 2644-5980. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.sav.sk/journals/uploads/08190914Androvicova%20-%20OK.pdf>>.
- BARTOŠEK, J., TUŠER, A.: Teoreticko-praktické východiská mediálnej tvorby. In TUŠER, A. et al.: *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby*. Bratislava : Bratislavská vysoká škola práva, 2010, p. 9-56.
- BEHÚŇOVÁ, K., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej Republike za rok 2020*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2865_fbbf50a0506edf17e0ba8476496cb864.html>.
- BUSUTIL, R. O., MARQUEZ, Y. P.: The Migration Crisis in the Mediterranean and the European Union: Main Politics and Measures Anti-immigrants. In *Novedades en Poblacion*, 2017, Vol. 13, No. 26, p. 1-9. ISSN 1817-4078.
- CORBU, N. et al.: Fake News Going Viral: The Mediating Effect of Negative Emotions. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 58-87. ISSN 2585-9188.
- FAIRCLOUGH, N.: *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysing for Social Reseach*. London : Routledge, 2003.
- FOUCAULT, M.: *Archeologie vědění*. Prague : Herrmann & synové, 2016.
- FREIDINGEROVÁ, T., IVANIČ, P., CHALUPKOVÁ, P.: *Ludia medzi riadkami: Príručka o migrácii (nielen) pre budúcich novinárov*. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <https://slovakaid.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Ludia_medzi_riadkami_WEB.pdf>.
- GALLO KRIGLEROVÁ, E. et al.: *Cudzie nechceme, svoje si nedáme*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <http://cvek.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cudzie_nehceme_Analyza_final_edited.pdf>.
- GAŽIOVÁ, I., RAPOŠOVÁ, T.: *Protipól k strachu: občianske aktivity na pomoc utečencom*. [online]. [2022-2-23]. Available at: <<http://cvek.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Protipol-k-strachu-1.pdf>>.
- GREENWOOD, K., SMITH, C. Z.: How the World Looks to Us: International News in Award-winning Photographs from the Pictures of the Year, 1943-2003. In *Journalism Practice 1*, 2007, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 82-101. ISSN 1751-2786.
- GREUSSING, E., BOOMGAARDEN, H. G.: *Shifting the Refugee Narrative? An Automated Frame Analysis of Europe's 2015 Refugee Crisis*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1282813>>.
- HANCOCK, D. R., ALGOZZINE, B.: *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2006.
- CHOULIARAKI, L.: *The European "Migration Crisis" and the Media*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/projects/media-and-migration/Migration-and-media-report-FINAL-June17.pdf>>.
- KARPELOVÁ, D.: *Koľko Slovákov je online a koľko z nich chodí na slovenské stránky?* [online]. [2022-02-26]. Available at: <<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/blogy/2328009-aka-bola-navstevnost-slovenskeho-internetu-v-roku-2020>>.
- KLINGOVÁ, K. et al.: *Slovenské voľby 2020 v informačnom priestore*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Slovenske-volby-2020.pdf>>.
- KUCHARCZYK, J., MESEŽNIKOV, G.: Migration Debate in Central Europe: Between Real Challenges and Imaginary Threats. In KUCHARCZYK, J., MESEŽNIKOV, G. (eds.): *Phantom Menace the Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe*. Bratislava : Institute for Public Affairs, 2018, p. 9-14.
- LETAVAJOVÁ, S. et al.: *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2020.
- MESEŽNIKOV, G., BÚTOROVÁ, Z.: Refugee Crisis in Europe: Public Opinion, State Institutions and Party Politics in Slovakia. In KUCHARCZYK, J., MESEŽNIKOV, G. (eds.): *Phantom Menace The Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe*. Bratislava : Institute for Public Affairs, 2018, p. 53-79.

- MÉSZÁROSOVÁ, S., OBOŇOVÁ, S.: *Výročná správa o migrácii a azyle v Slovenskej republike za rok 2018*. [online]. [2022-02-17]. Available at: <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/download/2551_9ac3898beaccf74a754d91fcc6045517.html>.
- NOLAN, D., WALKER, S.: *Hungarian Journalists Admit Role in Forging Anti-migrant 'Atmosphere of Fear'*. [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/13/hungary-journalists-state-tv-network-migrants-viktor-orban-government>>.
- NOVÁK, M., KOHOUTEK, J. et al.: *Politická kultura mocenských elit v éře globalizace*. Kolín : Nezávislé centrum pro studium politiky, 2012.
- POSPĚCH, P. et al.: *Ve středu pozornosti. Mediální pokrytí tématu Migrace v České Republice, Estonku a na Slovensku*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/ve-stredu-pozornosti-medialni-pokryti-tematu-migrace-v-ceske-republice-estonsku-a-na-slovensku-1320pub>>.
- POTTER, J.: *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. Loughborough University, UK : Sage Publication, 1996.
- RAPOŠ BOŽIČ, I.: *Cudzinci žijúci na Slovensku – do akej miery sa od nich dištancujeme?* [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://fjuzn.sk/cudzinci-zijuci-na-slovensku-do-akej-miery-sa-od-nich-distancujeme/>>.
- Ročenky*. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?rocenky>>.
- SPÁLOVÁ, L. et al.: *Media – Migration – Politics*. Berlin : Peter Lang, 2022.
- SPÁLOVÁ, L., PETROVÁ, E., BALÁŽIOVÁ, I.: Humanization of Migration Through Art - Discursive Contexts of Digitization, Participation and Solidarity: (WE ALL ARE MIGRANTS). In *IJournals: International Journal of Social Relevance & Concern*, 2020, Vol. 8, No. 7, p. 55-65. ISSN 2347-9698.
- SPÁLOVÁ, L., SZABÓOVÁ, V.: Migration As an Insight in the Creative Marketing Campaigns. In COSTA, M., CEROVIC, L. (eds.): *Rethinking Management in the Digital Era: Challenges from Industry 4.0 to Retail Management*. Varazdin : Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency, 2019, p. 219-229.
- SPÁLOVÁ, L.: *Politický branding*. Bratislava : Európska Akadémia Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médii, 2021.
- TKÁČOVÁ, H. et al.: "Media Invasion" Against Islam In The Context Of The Slovak Republic. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 165-179. ISSN 2585-8726.
- Top 10 Migration Issues of 2021*. [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2021>>.
- VAŠEČKA, M.: *Postoje verejnosti k cudzincom a zahraničnej migrácii v Slovenskej republike*. Bratislava : IOM, 2009.
- VEVERKOVÁ, V.: *Bulvár a bulvarizácia dennej tlače*. Ljubljana : KUD Apokalypsa, 2014.
- WIDERA, W.: Attracting and Pre-integrating Migrants Using Digital Media in the Local Labour Market. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 28-42. ISSN 1338-130X.
- YIN, R. K.: *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage, 2009, p. 219.

Sources from the Analysis:

- BÁRDY, P.: *Komentár Petra Bárdyho: Poslanci „slniečkara“ Pellegriniho sa pri Sorosovi vyfarbili*. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/859399/komentar-petra-bardyho-slnieckar-pellegrini-sa-pri-sorosovi-vyfarbil/>>.
- DEBNÁR, J., VÝBEROVÁ, P.: *Koronavirus ONLINE: Konzílium vydalo cestovné odporúčania, aby sa zamedzilo šíreniu delta variantu*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900596/koronavirus-online-slovensko-18-jun-2021/>>.
- HEČKOVÁ, I.: *Niektorí na povinnú vojencinu spomínajú s nostalgiou. Iných dohnala k zúfalým činom*. [online]. [2022-02-24]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/858066/niektori-na-povinnu-vojencinu-spominaju-s-nostalgiou-nych-dohnala-k-zufalym-cinom/>>.

Na počúvadle odznejú legendy alternatívnej hudobnej scény. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/898770/na-pocuvadle-odzneju-legendy-alternativnej-hudobnej-sceny/>>.

PALÚCHOVÁ, M.: *Utečenci z Auschwitzu Vrba a Wetzler budú mať v Žiline, kde písali svedectvo, pamätnú izbu.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900628/utecenci-z-osviencimu-vrba-a-wetzler-budu-mat-v-ziline-kde-ich-ukryvali-pamatnu-izbu/>>.

ŠTRBA, P.: *Železné monštrum, zničená príroda a múr, ktorý neexistuje. Prečo Trumpov projekt nemal nikdy zmysel.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/860697/usa-trump-mur-mexiko/>>.

ŠTRBA, P.: *Orbán po vzore Ruska opäť vytiahol homosexuálov. Vyháňa ich z televízie a spája s pedofílmami.* [online]. [2022-02-20]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/900360/orban-po-vzore-ruska-opat-vytiahol-homosexualov-vyhana-ich-zo-skol-aj-z-televizii/>>.

VÝBEROVÁ, P., KOVÁČIKOVÁ, J.: *Koronavírus: Mladých možno začnú očkovať skôr, pripustil Krajčí.* [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/857281/koronavirus-online-slovensko-20-januar-2021/>>.

WÁCLAV, B.: *Vražda 13-ročného dievčaťa vo Viedni rozpútala vášne proti migrantom.* [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/903981/vrazda-13-rocneho-dievcata-vo-viedni-rozputala-vasne-proti-migrantom/>>.

Authors



Assoc. Prof. Mgr. Lucia Spálová, PhD.

Constantine the Philosopher University
Faculty of Arts
Dražovská 4,
949 74 Nitra
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
lspalova@ukf.sk

Lucia Spálová regards the transdisciplinary nature of the research anchored in the social sciences, in critical social psychology and in discursive linguistics. The main topic of this research in the field of media and communication studies is the social responsibility of media discrimination in the media, media portrayals of stereotypes, ethnocentrism and depiction of different sexual orientation, and the effectivity of persuasion techniques in digital communication.

Mgr. Ľubica Račeková

Constantine the Philosopher University
Faculty of Arts
Dražovská 4,
949 74 Nitra
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
lubi.racekova@gmail.com



Ľubica Račeková is a PhD student at the Department of Mass Media Communication and Advertising at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra in the field of Media and Communication Studies. The author deals with the field of migration discourse, especially in the media space. During her PhD studies, she completed an internship twice at the Multicultural Center in Prague and participated in several study projects that focused on disinformation, hoaxes and multiculturalism. She currently works as a participant in the Teach for Slovakia program and teaches students from marginalized backgrounds.

Akwasi Bosompem Boateng

New Media Literacy Education in Communication Training in Ghana: Evidence from Two Public Universities

ABSTRACT

New media technologies have become important devices that are changing activities in diverse human endeavours. The advent of the Internet has come with many digital technologies, platforms and networks. There is a plethora of new media such as social networking, gaming, blogging, picture sharing, iPhones, iPods, Tik-Tok, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, and Academia, among others, which have become common vernacular across the world. Given the rapid spread of new media, education on the use of these technologies and platforms has become necessary. Key among institutions that could promote new media literacy and the use of these applications and platforms are higher education institutions, especially public universities that provide training in communication and media studies to students. While there has been several studies on new media literacy in the Western context, relatively little has been done on how higher education institutions in Africa especially Ghana have promoted digital media literacy among students. This study addresses this gap by exploring how two communication and media education institutions in Ghana promote new media literacy among students. The study is hinged on the new media literacy framework to discuss how knowledge, skills and attitudes toward new media can encourage students to access, understand and create digital communication using technologies and applications in academic and other activities. Using a qualitative research approach and case study design, this study conducts interviews with lecturers in communication and media studies for data to analyse how the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism are using, teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes in the education and learning of students. The study found that students in the two selected communication and media education institutions are not adequately exposed to course contents that are specifically related to new media literacy and usage among students, even though some courses are related generally to ICT, which are run by the public universities with the aim of promoting new media literacy. It is important for new media literacy instructions to be embedded in the courses that are provided in communication and media education in public universities in Ghana.

KEY WORDS

Communication Education. Ghana. Media. New Media Literacy. Public Universities.

1 Introduction

People traditionally watch television, listen to radio, and view web pages.¹ However, there is the emergence of new forms of communication and media technologies, especially through online platforms with the support of the Internet. With the advent of the Internet and many new media technologies, particularly social media such as *LinkedIn*, *Research Gate*, *Academia*, *Facebook* and *Twitter* that have millions of users across the world, the promotion of networking and interactions has been enhanced.² The receiving and sending of information have also increased as new media technologies and platforms continue to spread. These support the assertions that traditional and old media, new and mobile media have become all embracing, which are now unavoidable in daily lives in the modern world.³ The emergence of digital technologies has enabled the convergence of different forms of media that have democratised information production and circulation.⁴ Individuals now require multiple competencies to be able to succeed in the constantly changing global environment.⁵ Given this, it has become important for media, especially new media literacy education to be provided to help individuals, especially students, to develop competences in new media appropriation to actively participate in the modern world.⁶ This is against the backdrop that the concept of literacy has transformed from spoken and written applications into different and wider contexts and forms of meaning creation including new media literacy.⁷ Media literacy involves developing and possessing the ability by individuals to “access, analyse, evaluate, and communicate” messages in different forms.⁸

Media and the contents of the media influence the beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals, as well as democratic processes and participation.⁹ Therefore, learning about such issues is important for individuals across the world. This includes gaining the competences and skills in new media, which is needed by individuals to “understand, appreciate and participate in social life” in the world of technological advancement. The convergence of the media entails the engagement and participation of individuals who create, share and search for new information, form social affiliation, express themselves, collaborate to solve problems and circulate information.¹⁰ New media literacy has become necessary, given the large numbers of people, especially youth’s usage of platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *WhatsApp*, *YouTube* and *Instagram*, among others. New media literacy refers to how people access different media, understand the content of the media and create message.¹¹ Key among institutions that promote new media literacy and the use of these applications and platforms are higher education institutions, especially public universities that provide training in communication and media studies to students.

¹ *What Consumers Watch: Nielsen’s Q1 2010 Three Screen Report*. [online]. [2022-09-03]. Available at: <<https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2010/what-consumers-watch-nielsens-q1-2010-three-screen-report/>>.

² ARORA, A. et al.: *Measuring Social Media Influencer Index: Insights from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram*. In *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2019, Vol. 49, p. 90

³ LUNDBY, K.: *Mediatization as Key*. In LUNDBY, K. (ed.): *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*. New York : Peter Lang, 2009, p. 2.

⁴ BATISTUTA, A. P.: *Teaching Media and Information Literacy in Philippine Senior High Schools: Strategies Used and Challenges Faced by Selected Teachers*. In *Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education*, 2021, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 23.

⁵ BROWN, J.: *Media Literacy Perspectives*. In *Journal of Communication*, 1998, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 45.

⁶ JENKINS, H.: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006, p. 3.

⁷ SCHMIDT, H. C.: *Media Literacy Education at the University Level*. In *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 64

⁸ AUFDERHEIDE, P.: *Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Washington, DC : Aspen Institute, 1993, p. 6.

⁹ *Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States*. [online]. [2022-08-28]. Available at: <<https://namle.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Namle-Core-Principles-of-MLE-in-the-United-States.pdf>>.

¹⁰ SCHMIDT, H. C.: *Media Literacy Education at the University Level*. In *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 65.

¹¹ BUCKINGHAM, D. et al.: *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People*. London: Ofcom, 2005, p. 6.

These new media are socio-cultural platforms that provide users the opportunity to create and share contents. As Moore and Redmond noted, in the current competition, it is no longer sufficient for individuals just to learn reading and writing.¹² However, people need to be empowered with the knowledge and understanding of media and information systems to produce and consume them responsibly.¹³ To be able to make use of new media, individuals require some skills referred to as new media literacy that involves technical and critical thinking competences.¹⁴ Despite the significance of new media literacy, research on the education and empowerment of individuals with new media literacy skills, especially in the context of Ghana, is limited. While there have been some studies on new media literacy in the Western context, relatively little has been done on how higher education institutions in African countries such as Ghana have promoted digital and new media literacy among students. For example, the few studies in the area that have been conducted have focused on media literacy and education,¹⁵ as well as new media practices,¹⁶ among others, who found that new media are used for different purposes despite its limited access in Ghana.

However, no studies have examined how new media literacy education in public communication and media training universities in Ghana are providing students with the skills to appropriate these new technologies and platforms. Given this, it has become necessary to study new media literacy and its concomitant issues associated with communication and media studies in Ghana to address this gap by exploring how two of its public universities promote, teach and implement new media literacy programmes. The study is hinged on the new media literacy theory to discuss how knowledge and skills provided by lecturers could influence the attitudes of students toward new media to access, understand and create digital communication content using new media technologies and applications in academic and other activities. The study conducted qualitative interviews with participants at the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism to report how lecturers in these institutions are imparting knowledge and skills in new media literacy in the training of students in communication and media studies. To achieve the purpose of this study, the following objectives are addressed:

Research Objectives

1. To describe the current state of new media literacy education in communication and media studies in the selected public universities in Ghana.
2. To interrogate the instructional strategies and materials used in teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes in communication and media education in the selected public universities in Ghana.
3. To identify the challenges to new media literacy education in communication and media studies in the selected public universities in Ghana.

Research Questions

1. What is the current state of new media literacy education in communication and media studies in the selected public universities in Ghana?
2. What are the new media instructional strategies and materials used in teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes in communication and media education in the selected public universities?
3. What are the challenges to new media literacy education in communication and media studies in the selected public universities in Ghana?

¹² MOORE, D., C., REDMOND, T.: Media at the Core: How Media Literacy Strategies Strengthen Teaching with Common Core. In *Voices from the Middle*, 2014, Vol. 4, p. 10.

¹³ BATISTUTA, A. P.: Teaching Media and Information Literacy in Philippine Senior High Schools: Strategies Used and Challenges Faced by Selected Teachers. In *Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education*, 2021, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 23.

¹⁴ CELIK, I. et al.: A Model for Understanding New Media Literacy: Epistemological Beliefs and Social Media Use. In *Library and Information Science Research*, 2021, Vol. 43, p. 1.

¹⁵ DIEDONG, A. L., TUUROSONG, D.: Establishing the Rationale for Media Education for Students in Ghana. In *Journal of Communication, Media and Society*, 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 84.

¹⁶ SEY, A.: New Media Practices. In *International Journal of Communications*, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 382.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Media Literacy

The advent of the Internet and its proliferation have generated debates on how to use digital technologies and new media applications for teaching and learning activities, resulting in several studies on how these platforms provide opportunities not only to teachers but also students at various levels of education.¹⁷ As part of these studies, research has focused on how people make use of new media technologies.¹⁸ There have been various approaches for spearheading the teaching and usage of these new media applications and platforms by educators and students in academic institutions. However, Graber and Mendoza cite several reasons for the failure of the new media technologies to transform education, which among others include the lack of adequate infrastructure, training of teachers and technical support, strict adherence to traditional methods of instruction, lack of time and excessive focus on drill and practice programmes.¹⁹ Oppenheimer suggests that educational institutions need to change their systems and transform students from becoming passive viewers into active participants in the interactive culture.²⁰

The changing digital environment has changed ideas about the best ways to teach and educate students about new media technologies and applications. As many people are already using new media, it has become necessary for institutions and educators to teach young people including students in universities to make proficient use of these new communication tools and platforms. This is especially important as Jenkins, Purushotma, Clinton, Weigel and Robison reiterate the need for educating students by providing media literacy and social skills that are required for the participation of individuals in the new world of consumption, production and participation including simulation, play, appropriation, performance, multitasking, collective intelligence, judgement, networking, negotiation, distributed cognition and trans-media navigation, among others.²¹ Considering the skills for participation, an important goal of media education should be to promote and encourage young people to reflect about their use and ethical values as they participate and communicate and the effects they have in the process.²²

However, few training institutions provide new (media) literacy in the subject contents in communication and media studies.²³ Educators including lecturers in higher education institutions in media literacy use formal and informal approaches based on their individual expertise. Some of these teachers are given skills through workshops, consultations, partnerships, mentoring and seminars, among others, which are supported by collaboration and networking among educators who are interested in media literacy education.²⁴ In many cases, the teaching of new (media) is driven by passion rather than expertise with individuals teaching the subject as a hobby.²⁵ Several approaches including self-taught, staff development training, curriculum based approaches, university course work, mentoring and partnerships are used for educating teachers of media literacy to equip them with the competences and competencies to impart knowledge

¹⁷ GRABER, D., MENDOZA, K.: New Media Literacy Education: A Developmental Approach. In *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2012, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 83.

¹⁸ OHLER, J.: *Digital Community. Digital Citizen*. Thousand Oaks, California : Corwin, 2010, p. 19.

¹⁹ GRABER, D., MENDOZA, K.: New Media Literacy Education: A Developmental Approach. In *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2012, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 83.

²⁰ OPPENHEIMER, T.: *The Flickering Mind: The False Promise of Technology in the Classroom and How Learners Can Be Saved*. New York : Random House, 2003, p. 25.

²¹ JENKINS, H. et al.: *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/jenkins_white_paper.pdf>.

²² Ibidem.

²³ HOBBS, R.: *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2010, p. 21.

²⁴ HOBBS, R.: *Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2007, p. 130.

²⁵ HOBBS, R. et al.: How Media Educators Reclaimed Copyright and Fair Use. In *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 34.

to students.²⁶ While some educators who teach and implement media literacy programmes are self-taught and have no formal educational training in the area and subject but have read books and taught themselves about media studies and literacy to deliver courses to students.

Staff development training is a dominant practice used in empowering educators in media literacy through workshops, short courses and other development programmes to introduce them to media literacy and the various approaches to analysing and producing media content.²⁷ In mentoring and partnership programmes, scholars and advocates who have interests in media literacy are involved in long-term collaborations to enable teachers to acquire skills in teaching new media literacy with in-class support from experienced partners and mentors.²⁸ Given the interdisciplinary nature of communication, media and education, media literacy has struggled to establish itself in higher education. Until recently, only a few universities across the world, particularly in Africa including Ghana offered formal undergraduate and postgraduate level coursework in the area of media literacy. However, there are rising numbers of courses in media literacy in communication and media studies, as well as education programmes.²⁹ In line with this, Diedong and Tuurosong noted that there have been several efforts to impart digital and new media skills in media education in Ghana through various courses run by institutions.³⁰ Curriculum based approaches have also been adopted, where educators are given curriculum materials, audios, videos and other resources that are used in media literacy education.³¹ In the curriculum based approach, curricula with models for use by educators can be adopted in the teaching and implementation of new media literacy programmes, where students could be made to conduct projects and interviews, write scripts and produce videos, among other tasks.³² The selection of any of the approaches is dependent on the availability of expertise, which makes the teaching and implementation of new media literacy programmes uneven around the world.³³ According to Hobbs, the effects of media literacy education are several, which include the promotion of increased motivation and engagements, quality of teacher-student relationships, comprehension and analysis of texts and citizenship skills,³⁴ among others.

2.2 New Media Literacy

This study is underpinned by the new media literacy framework. As noted by Buckingham, media literacy entails how people access, understand and create media content.³⁵ While traditional media literacy focuses on individual habits in the use and consumption of media content, it

²⁶ HOBBS, R. et al.: How Media Educators Reclaimed Copyright and Fair Use. In *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 43.

²⁷ HOBBS, R.: *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. Washington, DC : Aspen Institute, 2010, p. 37.

²⁸ HOBBS, R. et al.: How Media Educators Reclaimed Copyright and Fair Use. In *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 35.

²⁹ KEEN, V.: Media Literacy for Teachers: Motivation and Methods. In CRAWFORD, C., PRICE, J., WEBER, R. (eds.): *Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference*. Waynesville, NC USA : Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, 2003, p. 1929.

³⁰ DIEDONG, A. L., TUUROSONG, D.: Establishing the Rationale for Media Education for Students in Ghana. In *Journal of Communication, Media and Society*, 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 81.

³¹ HOBBS, R. et al.: How Media Educators Reclaimed Copyright and Fair Use. In *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 35.

³² HOBBS, R.: *Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2007, p. 51.

³³ HOBBS, R.: A Review of School-Based Initiatives in Media Literacy Education. In *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 2004, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 44.

³⁴ HOBBS, R.: Understanding Teachers' Experiences with New Media Literacy in the Classroom. In DUNCAN, B., TYNER, K. (eds.): *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education*. Madison, Wisconsin: National Telemedia Council, 2003, p. 107.

³⁵ BUCKINGHAM, D.: Media Education Goes Digital: An Introduction. In *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2007, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 111.

is limited in terms of active production and sharing of media content.³⁶ However, new media literacy focuses on how individuals produce contents instead of concentrating largely on consumption. Given this, new media literacy has been used as a theoretical framework by several scholars including Lin, Li, Deng and Lee to explain how individuals have become producers and consumers of content through digital and new media technologies and applications.³⁷ As there are no generally accepted standard guidelines of which kinds of proficiencies individuals need to possess to become new media literate, various scholars such as Koc and Barat, Lin, Jadallah, Anderson, Baker, Nguyen-Jahiel, Kim, Kuo, Miller, Dong and Wu (2015), and Tugtekin and Koc have conceptualised new media literacy skills that individuals should have to be able to function and participate in the digital era.³⁸ Using new media literacy as the framework for participatory culture, Lin et al. enumerated various competences promoted by the applications such as understanding and consuming skills, which include the technical skills and ability of individuals to grasp the consumption of media content.³⁹

The indicators also include synthesis and analysis skills, which consist of the ability to deconstruct, reconstruct and remix the content of media with the integration of diverse viewpoints.⁴⁰ Others include evaluation, which is the ability of individuals to criticise and assess the trustworthiness of the contents of media, as well as the prosuming, distribution, production and time of playing games or having fun.⁴¹ The use of new media in education has attracted the attention of researchers who consider these applications and platforms as relevant and useful for students and teachers.⁴² This framework guides this study in exploring and reporting how teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes in higher education are encouraging students of communication and media studies at the University of Education, Winneba and Ghana Institute of Journalism to use, produce content and consume new media for different purposes in their academic activities and other endeavours.

3 Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach to achieve the objectives and address research questions. Qualitative research entails collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand the experiences and opinions of people.⁴³ The qualitative approach as a form of social inquiry enabled this study to conduct interviews with participants to understand the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of individuals by collecting in-depth information about a particular phenomenon (new media literacy) to make meaning through interpretation. Qualitative research methods

³⁶ KARA, N. et al.: Social Media Habits Through a New Media Literacy Perspective: A Case of Gifted Students. In *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communication*, 2020, Vol. 6, p. 192.

³⁷ LIN, T. et al.: Understanding New Media Literacy: An Explorative Theoretical Framework. In *Educational Technology and Society*, 2013, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 165.

³⁸ See: KOC, M., BARAT, E.: Development and Validation of New Media Literacy Scale for University Students. In *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 2016, Vol. 63, p. 835; See also: TUGTEKIN, E. B., KOC, M.: Understanding the Relationship Between New Literacy, Communication Skills and Democratic Tendency: Model Development and Testing. In *New Media and Society*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 10, p. 4.

³⁹ LIN, T. et al.: Understanding New Media Literacy: An Explorative Theoretical Framework. In *Educational Technology and Society*, 2013, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 164.

⁴⁰ LIN, T. et al.: Less is More: Teachers' Influence During Peer Collaboration. In *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 2015, Vol. 107, No. 2, p. 612.

⁴¹ TUGTEKIN, E. B., KOC, M.: Understanding the Relationship Between New Literacy, Communication Skills and Democratic Tendency: Model Development and Testing. In *New Media and Society*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 10, p. 2.

⁴² CELIK, I. et al.: A Model for Understanding New Media Literacy: Epistemological Beliefs and Social Media Use. In *Library and Information Science Research*, 2021, Vol. 43, No. 4, p. 2.

⁴³ CRESWELL, J. W.: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California : Sage, 2013, p. 39.

include interviews, focus group discussions, observation and secondary data research.⁴⁴ This study adopted a case study design to gather in-depth and multifaceted understanding of complex issues in their real life contexts through interviews with lecturers in communication and media studies on new media literacy education in public universities in Ghana. A case study involves the detailed study of a particular subject, organisation, phenomenon, group or event.⁴⁵ Given this, this study focuses on the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism to collect data for analysis. The study used the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism as a case study of public universities that provide training in communication and media studies in Ghana. Participants in the two selected institutions were purposively sampled to provide responses to research questions through in-depth interviews for analysis.

The participants in this study were recruited from the Schools and Departments of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism. These two public universities are among the leading institutions in Ghana that train students in communication and media studies, which could be teaching new media literacy as part of their programmes and courses. Data was collected from interviews with lecturers in communication and media studies who were purposively selected from the two public universities and analysed through the lens of new media literacy education. The participants include lecturers in the various programmes in communication and media studies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism. Eight participants were selected from the two public universities: four from the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism, respectively. The selected participants are lecturers who have extensive experience in teaching in higher education with different backgrounds and degrees (Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy) in communication, media, culture, journalism, arts, public relations and advertising, among others.

Using an interview guide, the study collected primary data for the study through in-depth interviews with the eight participants selected from the two public universities in Ghana for this research. While the first section of the interviews focused on the profile of selected respondents, the following part deals with their basic knowledge and understanding of new media literacy education. This includes the concept and definitions of new media literacy and competencies that students need to acquire from the perspectives of respondents. The study also questioned interviewees on strategies and methods employed in educating students on new media literacy. The challenges in their efforts to make students new media literate are also explored to understand how they cope with situations.

Data collected from respondents were analysed thematically. As Braun and Clarke note, thematic analysis is a method of systematically identifying, organising and providing insight into the patterns of meanings (themes) across data.⁴⁶ In other words, thematic analysis is a way of identifying things that are common to the way topics are written or talked about, and making sense of the common themes.⁴⁷ The thematic analysis is conducted to obtain answers to research question to achieve objectives. Thematic analysis is conducted using six approaches which include: becoming familiarised with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing potential themes; defining and naming themes; and producing

⁴⁴ CRESWELL, J. W., POTH, C.: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. London: Sage, 2017, p. 133.

⁴⁵ YIN, R. K.: *Case Study Research Design Method*. London : Sage, 2009, p. 3.

⁴⁶ BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V.: Thematic Analysis. In COOPER, H., CAMIC, P. M. (eds.): *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology. Vol. 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*. Washington, DC : American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 58.

⁴⁷ BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V.: Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. In *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 58.

the report.⁴⁸ In conducting the thematic analysis, this study organised the data collected from the interviews and immersed into the data through extensive interviews with respondents to have a wider and better understanding of the responses, as well as thorough reading of interview transcripts several times. The study generated initial codes to the data for recurring themes and categories to be defined, which allowed the researcher to make interpretations and understanding, and report findings.

4 Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how lecturers in communication and media studies educate and implement new media literacy programmes in two selected public universities in Ghana. Three key themes were evident as they recurred in the data collected and analysed. These themes include: the state of new media literacy education; the strategies and materials deployed in new media literacy education; and the challenges encountered in new media literacy education in communication and media studies in public universities in Ghana, which are analysed in details in the subsequent sections.

4.1 State of New Media Literacy Education

New media literacy education in communication and media studies in public universities in Ghana is steadily growing, especially with the emergence of many different technologies and platforms. Public universities such as the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism, among others, have been investing in the provision of technological infrastructure to promote access to the Internet and other equipment as a way of encouraging students to take advantage of the numerous new media technologies and platforms available, as well as the opportunities they present. In addition to improving access to technology, efforts at new media literacy education are also present in the pedagogies of the public universities at different levels. Generally, all undergraduate students at the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism are offered courses in information and communication technology (ICT), which encompasses new media as forms of technology. For example, participant 2 expressed that *“at the School of Communication and Media Studies in the University of Education, Winneba, our undergraduate students are educated on these new forms of media by offering courses such as Introduction to Information Technology, which generally introduce students to new communication tools and platforms”*. This assertion is not different from participant 6, who also reported that there is a *“similar course in Information and Communication Technology at the Ghana Institute of Journalism that introduces all students in the undergraduate programmes to these new media and communication technologies so that they can use them in their daily activities”*.

These findings are consistent with the assertion by Diedong and Tuurosong that courses such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are provided by universities with the aim of promoting new media literacy.⁴⁹ These courses in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) according to the participants in the study are offered to undergraduate students to provide them with the basic knowledge and skills to use information and communication

⁴⁸ BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V.: Thematic Analysis. In COOPER, H., CAMIC, P. M. (eds.): *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology. Vol. 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*. Washington, DC : American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 60.

⁴⁹ DIEDONG, A. L., TUUROSONG, D.: Establishing the Rationale for Media Education for Students in Ghana. In *Journal of Communication, Media and Society*, 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 81.

technologies, which include new media applications and platforms. Buttressing these assertions, participants 2, 4 and 5 added that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a course of study is offered by their respective universities to students in undergraduate programmes in all disciplines to equip them with the knowledge and ability to use new technologies. In addition to these general courses in information and communication technology that are run in the two universities, undergraduate students who specialise in communication and media studies are offered New Media as a course to promote literacy in the use of the applications of these technologies and their appropriation among students. For example, participant 8 indicated that *“because we are a communication and media training school, we provide a particular course in Winneba, that is, New Media and Technology in our undergraduate programmes to expose students to digital technologies and new media”*. This is similar to what participants 2 and 5 reported, who indicated that there is a course titled *“Online and Digital Journalism”* that is offered to undergraduate students who are specialising in journalism and media studies at the University of Education, Winneba.

However, the situation with respect to postgraduate studies is different in the two universities selected for this study. There were no specific courses in new media literacy in the postgraduate programmes in communication and media studies at the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism. However, graduate students in the communication and media programmes at the University of Education, Winneba are offered courses in Computer Applications in Education and Instructional Technology, which aim at promoting new media literacy and equipping students with some knowledge and skills to engage with new forms of digital and communication technologies. In respect of this finding, participant 1 explained: *“At the Ghana Institute of Journalism we do not have any particular course(s) in new media literacy for our graduate students, but they come into discussions in other courses that we teach them in our communication and media programmes at that level. Sometimes, we direct and refer these (new) media technologies and platforms to students to look for information from there, or submit their assignments through those applications and platforms. We also use them in our research and teaching to promote learning activities, and deliver messages, while students also use them to connect and share knowledge and information among themselves.”*

The respondent asserts that his institution does not provide specialised education in new media literacy at the postgraduate level, but lecturers encourage students to make use of new media technologies by integrating them in teaching, learning and assessing students. On the other hand, participant 8 said: *“For us here at the School of Communication and Media Studies in the University of Education, Winneba, we make sure that our students use new media by encouraging them to access our teaching and learning materials, among others on new media and especially ITS, which allows students to use these platforms to undertake many activities, such as registering for courses, accessing assignments from lecturers and checking examination results. By doing so, our graduate students are challenged and compelled to be new media literate because they will be lagging behind if they do not learn how to work with these new media technologies, applications and platforms to access any information they may require from lecturers and the university.”*

The assertions by the different respondents indicate that the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism, as well as lecturers in communication and media recognise the importance of digital and new media literacy in teaching and learning activities in their programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Given this, both universities in Ghana run some courses as an attempt to impart students with some competences and competencies in new media literacy to be able to appropriate these applications and platforms for their individual purposes.

4.2 Strategies and Materials Deployed in New Media Literacy Education

The study found that lecturers in communication and media studies in the two selected public universities used different instructional strategies in educating and implementing new media literacy programmes to students. These include the use of small group discussions; whole group; critical thinking; and production. These are consistent with the strategies provided by Lin et al., Tugtekin and Koc, and Lin, Jadallah, Anderson, Baker, Nguyen-Jahiel, Kim, Kuo, Miller, Dong and Wu, who recommended several proficiencies and skills in literature as useful in promoting new (media) literacy.⁵⁰ Despite this, the common strategy mentioned in the responses provided by participants in this study highlighted the whole group instruction. The whole group instruction involved the use of lectures and discussions, which were mostly used by lecturers in communication and media studies for imparting knowledge and skills to undergraduate students. To make new media literacy interesting to students, lecturers mixed practical activities with lectures and discussions about the subject. In the two public universities, that is, the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism, all the participants concurred that whole group instruction was appropriate in educating students about new media for literacy because of the large numbers of students in undergraduate programmes and classes. For example, Participants 1 and 3 indicated that they educated their students on new media technologies (platforms) in their traditional lectures, especially in New Media and Technology, as well as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Online and Digital Journalism courses. *“Though undergraduate classes are bigger, we try to deliver the lectures by engaging with students in discussions to make it interactive and interesting for students to follow, learn and use new media literacy skills in the process”*, participant 3 said.

In addition to giving lectures to whole groups, small group discussions were other strategies that lecturers used in new media literacy education. Students in large groups are also grouped into smaller groups to brainstorm and discuss topics in new media that are assigned to them to make presentations to their peers as part of assessing them for grades in these courses. This is especially evident in postgraduate studies as many of the lectures in the advanced programmes have smaller classes compared to the undergraduate programmes. Participants 2 and 5 indicated that they deliberately put their assignments on new media technologies and platforms, and encourage postgraduate students to conduct further research to make *PowerPoint* presentations of the ideas that they put together about a topic regarding new media technologies and applications. Participant 5 stressed: *“I refer my students to readings and other materials on new media and online platforms to provide them with information and contents for presentations in class.”* On the other hand, participants 2, 4 and 5 who teach in the graduate programmes said they used seminars and round table discussions in educating students about new media technologies, which enable the students to engage in critical thinking and articulate their divergent views on the topic(s) under discussion. This also allowed students to answer research questions and discuss their opinions on various aspects of new media with their peers. In addition to these strategies which seek to improve critical thinking and new media literacy, postgraduate and undergraduate students are made to experiment, produce and share content as a way of making them to practice with these tools, applications and platforms.

These findings show that the strategies adopted by lecturers in making students new media literate fit into the perspectives of constructivists because all the participants from the two selected public universities in Ghana for this study see new media literacy education as an active process, which enabled students at different levels to derive meanings from their experiences with these technologies and platforms. Different materials were used in teaching, learning and delivering new media literacy programmes and appropriation among students.

⁵⁰ TUGTEKIN, E. B., KOC, M.: Understanding the Relationship Between New Literacy, Communication Skills and Democratic Tendency. Model Development and Testing. In *New Media and Society*, 2020, Vol. 22, p. 4.

Lecturers used *PowerPoint* presentations, books, hand-outs and journal articles in new media literacy education. Some of the books used in promoting new media literacy education are found in the libraries of the selected universities, while others could be obtained from the Internet. Undergraduate students were in many cases given books and hand-outs, as well as *PowerPoint* presentations by lecturers to students in making the subject more practical and conversant with discussions of new media in the classroom. On the other hand, graduate students were in most cases given journal articles on the subject of new media to read. Lecturers referred students to websites, databases and repositories where they could find information about topics on new media for presentations, which are supplemented with books in some cases.

The choice of materials for educating students on new media literacy was at the discretion of individual lecturers who determine what they think students need to know about new media, as there are no standard guidelines in public universities on the kinds of proficiencies students need to possess to become literate and skilful in the use of new media. For example, participants 8 and 3 highlighted that they preferred to use new media and online sources because books on new media literacy were not easily available in the libraries of their universities. However, participants 1, 4 and 5 relied on particular new media literacy books that they believed could be easy for students to understand, which according to lecturers could be aligned with national and international requirements. Other participants also referred to the Internet for materials to use in teaching and delivering new media literacy programmes even though some were unable to identify the specific online sources and sites of materials that they relied upon. Other lecturers obtained materials from colleagues in other institutions because they had difficulties looking for and finding relevant reference materials. Given this, lecturers could be trained and guided to identify materials and websites that provide resources and information to help them improve the competences and competencies in new media literacy education for students in communication and media studies in public universities in Ghana.

4.3 Challenges in New Media Literacy Education

Several challenges were discussed by participants in the education and implementation of new media literacy programmes in the two selected public universities. These challenges include issues regarding curriculum and materials for teaching new media literacy, among others. Curriculum issues depended on the knowledge and competency of lecturers. Three participants pointed out their difficulty in teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes because they were not familiar with these new forms of communication technologies, as well as the required content prescribed in the curriculum design for new media literacy at higher education institutions in Ghana. Participant 3 indicated: *"We know that students need skills for content creation, text construction and deconstruction, and online safety, among others. However, the challenge is that some of us are not too abreast with these new media technologies and applications. I have not had so many encounters with these new tools and platforms, so I find it difficult trying to educate or promote and integrate them into the teaching and learning activities in my classes. As you may know it is not easy to promote or teach subjects that someone is not very familiar with the content."*

Two participants highlighted their challenges with respect to the curriculum and support. Participant 7, for example, described new media literacy education as difficult especially without adequate guidance on the curriculum provided for the task. This concretises the assertion by Hobbs that educators in new (media) literacy require certain skills so that the various approaches discussed in literature can effectively impart new (media) knowledge and skills into students, especially in communication and media studies.⁵¹ Participant 2 opined that since there is no

⁵¹ HOBBS, R.: *Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2007, p. 130.

standard curriculum provided for new media literacy in public universities in Ghana, it makes it challenging to understand and promote new media literacy, especially for lecturers who teach or seek to promote the subject for the first time or perhaps are not very conversant with the knowledge and skills in new media usage. Participants 4, 6 and 8 lamented the lack of resources including personnel to guide lecturers on how to educate and implement new media literacy programmes. This contrasts with the notion by Hobbs that educators and teachers in new (media) literacy need to be equipped with the competences and competencies to be able to effectively impart knowledge and skills into students to enable them to appropriate these new technologies in their academic and other activities.⁵² *“It is easier if you are trained, and there are available resources and experts to support you in your efforts to make your students new media literate”*, participant 8 stressed.

The participants in the study also highlighted the need for the public universities to identify themselves and recruit persons with the right qualifications and competence to teach and implement new media literacy programmes and training. Participant 6 narrated: *“I think if lecturers who have no enough knowledge, understanding and skills in new media literacy are assigned to teach or train students in this regard; it is likely they cannot deliver effectively. Therefore, it is important for the universities to provide proper and enough training to lecturers to grasp these new technologies and their literacy to be able to educate and empower students in communication and media studies with their knowledge and expertise in this area.”*

Participants 3, 5 and 7 concurred on the need to carefully identify lecturers who are eligible to handle new media and promote literacy among students. In line with this, participant 8 opined that only lecturers with communication and media background should be allowed to teach new media literacy in the public universities in Ghana. This was coupled with the challenges in the conceptualisation of new media literacy strategies and activities to achieve objectives and impart such skills to students. For example, participants 2 and 5 lamented the difficulty in developing relevant and appropriate tasks or activities for students to enhance their new media literacy skills that will make them competent in the use of these new forms of communication technologies, applications and platforms. There is the need for more exposure to develop extensive understanding of the various strategies and instructional materials that could be used by lecturers while educating and implementing new media literacy programmes in universities in Ghana.

The issue of time was also another issue in the findings of the study given that lecturers need to prepare well to educate and implement new media literacy programmes because there are many topics in the courses that need to be covered in the classroom. Against this backdrop, participants 1 and 5 complained that it was not possible for them to deal with all the new media technologies and learning competencies if lecturers have to make the teaching and learning activities student-centred. For example, participant 6 stated that she could not finish the discussion of topics in the subject of new media because there are many of them which could not be covered within the time provided for the duration of classes. The participants in the study stressed that in addition to struggling with time, it was also challenging for them to use instructional materials as some of them do not align with the content of the curriculum on new media literacy for students. There are no standard text books for new media literacy education and delivery in the public universities, and therefore teaching does not follow any set of recommended guidelines (participant 4 and 8). Three participants shared that in their attempts to ensure that their students are on par with other students in other communication and media education institutions regarding new media literacy, lecturers consult their colleagues in other universities to analyse their course outlines and content of new media literacy programmes to edit their offerings to ensure that their students acquire similar knowledge and skills in uniform contexts of teaching and learning (participants 2, 7, and 3).

⁵² HOBBS, R.: *Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2007, p. 130.

Participants were also not happy about the limited instructional materials and technologies for promoting new media literacy education and delivery of programmes. For example, participants 4, 5 and 6 noted that though there are many new media literacy materials on the Internet, such materials have not been prepared and designed for Ghanaian students and the local context. Therefore, lecturers in communication and media studies in public universities in Ghana have to try as much as possible to locate and search for materials that could be suitable for the Ghanaian context. Most of the participants in the study situated new media literacy in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), as they indicated that new media literacy is promoted using computers and other technologies such as mobile phones, among others. Participants acknowledged that technology is important in the teaching and promotion of new media literacy because many computer related topics are also taught in new media literacy, which is consistent with the assertion by Diedong and Tuurosong that courses such as Information and Communication Technology seek to promote new media literacy in higher education in Ghana.⁵³

5 Conclusions

This study sought to explore how lecturers promote new media literacy and implement programmes in communication and media education in public universities in Ghana. From the findings of this study, the participants in the study require additional training on the pedagogy of new media literacy as an important subject in communication and media education, and generally in other disciplines in public universities. There is a lack of adequate materials for media literacy education in communication and media studies in Ghana. As a result of inadequate materials including digital infrastructure, applications and books, among others, lecturers are challenged in new media literacy education and programme implementation in public universities. This has compelled lecturers in communication and media in public universities to rely on the Internet to search for materials as there are no standardised prescriptions of how new media literacy programmes, content and practices in higher education institutions such as the University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism could be promoted.

Lecturers in communication and media studies in the public universities used traditional strategies in teaching and implementing new media literacy programmes, such as lectures, practicum and group assignments, among others to encourage the development of collaborative skills that are necessary for participation in the digital economy. Despite the many instructional strategies in new media literacy education, participants only identified a few pedagogical approaches to imparting knowledge and skills regarding these new forms of communication technologies. Other challenges faced by lecturers in new media literacy education in communication and media training institutions include lack of competency to teach and implement new media literacy programmes. Despite the lack of competence and adequate skills, lecturers were still willing and open to educate and implement new media programmes. This indicates the recognition of the relevance and significance of such new media literacy skills for communication and media students when adequate materials and adequate training and support are provided for teaching new media and its concomitant skills in public universities in Ghana.

The findings of this study showed that although lecturers in communication and media studies were aware of the needs of students in new media literacy, which include skills for content creation, text deconstruction and online safety, among others, many of them have not grasped the appropriation of the new media phenomenon in the teaching of students at both

⁵³ DIEDONG, A. L., TUUROSONG, D.: Establishing the Rationale for Media Education for Students in Ghana. In *Journal of Communication, Media and Society*, 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 81.

undergraduate and postgraduate levels in communication and media studies in the public universities. The provision of communication and media training in public universities in Ghana should be reviewed to ensure that their curricula prioritise and improve new media literacy education to enable students to use these technologies and applications for their purposes in academic activities and other endeavours. However, the findings suggest that students in the two selected communication and media training institutions (University of Education, Winneba and the Ghana Institute of Journalism) are not adequately exposed to more course contents that are related to new media literacy and production among students in the public universities, even though some course contents are generally related to Information and Communication Technology, which are run by the universities with the aim of promoting new media usage among students. Given this, it is important for new media literacy instructions to be embedded in the programmes and courses that are provided in communication and media education in public universities in Ghana.

Literature and Sources:

ARORA, A. et al.: Measuring Social Media Influencer Index: Insights from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2019, Vol. 49, p. 86-101. ISSN 1873-1384.

AUFDERHEIDE, P.: *Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Washington, DC : Aspen Institute, 1993.

BATISTUTA, A. P.: Teaching Media and Information Literacy in Philippine Senior High Schools: Strategies Used and Challenges Faced by Selected Teachers. In *Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education*, 2021, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 22-33. ISSN 2799-1296.

BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V.: Thematic Analysis. In COOPER, H., CAMIC, P. M. (eds.): *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology. Vol. 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*. Washington, DC : American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 57-71.

BRAUN, V., CLARKE, V.: Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. In *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887.

BROWN, J.: Media Literacy Perspectives. In *Journal of Communication*, 1998, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 44-57. ISSN 0021-9916.

BUCKINGHAM, D.: Media Education Goes Digital: An Introduction. In *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2007, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 111-119. ISSN 1743-9884.

BUCKINGHAM, D. et al.: *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People*. London : Ofcom, 2005.

CELIK, I. et al.: A Model for Understanding New Media Literacy: Epistemological Beliefs and Social Media Use. In *Library and Information Science Research*, 2021, Vol. 43, p. 1-9. ISSN 0740-8188.

Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States. [online]. [2022-08-28]. Available at: <<https://namle.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Namle-Core-Principles-of-MLE-in-the-United-States.pdf>>.

CRESWELL, J. W.: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California : Sage, 2013.

CRESWELL, J. W., POT, C.: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. London : Sage, 2017.

DIEDONG, A. L., TUUROSONG, D.: Establishing the Rationale for Media Education for Students in Ghana. In *Journal of Communication, Media and Society*, 2018, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 80-98. ISSN 2026-5131.

- GRABER, D., MENDOZA, K.: New Media Literacy Education: A Developmental Approach. In *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2012, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 82-92. ISSN 2167-8715.
- HOBBS, R.: *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. Washington, DC : Aspen Institute, 2010.
- HOBBS, R.: *Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York : Teachers College Press, 2007.
- HOBBS, R.: A Review of School-Based Initiatives in Media Literacy Education. In *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 2004, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 42-59. ISSN 0002-7642.
- HOBBS, R.: Understanding Teachers' Experiences with New Media Literacy in the Classroom. In DUNCAN, B., TYNER, K. (eds.): *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education*. Madison, Wisconsin : National Telemedia Council, 2003, p. 100-108.
- HOBBS, R. et al.: How Media Educators Reclaimed Copyright and Fair Use. In *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 33-48. ISSN 1943-6068.
- JENKINS, H.: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York : New York University Press, 2006.
- JENKINS, H. et al.: *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/jenkins_white_paper.pdf>.
- KARA, N. et al.: Social Media Habits Through a New Media Literacy Perspective: A Case of Gifted Students. In *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communication*, 2020, Vol. 6, p. 191-208. ISSN 2407-9499.
- KEEN, V.: Media Literacy for Teachers: Motivation and Methods. In CRAWFORD, C., PRICE, J., WEBER, R. (eds.): *Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference*. Waynesville, NC USA : Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, 2003, p. 1928-1931.
- KOC, M., BARAT, E.: Development and Validation of New Media Literacy Scale for University Students. In *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 2016, Vol. 63, p. 834-843. ISSN 0747-5632.
- LIN, T. et al.: Understanding New Media Literacy: An Explorative Theoretical Framework. In *Educational Technology and Society*, 2013, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 160-170. ISSN 1436-4522.
- LIN, T. et al.: Less is More: Teachers' Influence During Peer Collaboration. In *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 2015, Vol. 107, No. 2, p. 609-629. ISSN 0022-0663.
- LUNDBY, K.: Mediatisation as Key. In LUNDBY, K. (ed.): *Mediatisation: Concept, Changes, Consequences* (p. 1-18). New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
- MOORE, D., C., REDMOND, T.: Media at the Core: How Media Literacy Strategies Strengthen Teaching with Common Core. In *Voices from the Middle*, 2014, Vol. 4, p. 10-15.
- OHLE, J.: *Digital Community. Digital Citizen*. Thousand Oaks, California : Corwin, 2010.
- OPPENHEIMER, T.: *The Flickering Mind: The False Promise of Technology in the Classroom and How Learners Can Be Saved*. New York : Random House, 2003.
- SEY, A.: New Media Practices. In *International Journal of Communications*, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 380-405. ISSN 1932-8036.
- SCHMIDT, H. C.: Media Literacy Education at the University Level. In *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 1. p. 64-77.
- TUGTEKIN, E. B., KOC, M.: Understanding the Relationship Between New Literacy, Communication Skills and Democratic Tendency: Model Development and Testing. In *New Media and Society*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 10, p. 1922-1941. ISSN 1461-4448.
- YIN, R. K.: *Case Study Research Design Method*. London : Sage, 2009.
- What Consumers Watch: Nielsen's Q1 2010 Three Screen Report*. [online]. [2022-09-03]. Available at: <<https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2010/what-consumers-watch-nielsens-q1-2010-three-screen-report/>>.

Author



Dr. Akwasi Bosompem Boateng, PhD., CPRP

University of Education, Winneba
School of Communication and Media Studies
P. O. Box 25, Winneba
GHANA
abboateng@uew.edu.gh,
beebeeboateng@gmail.com

Dr. Akwasi Bosompem Boateng is a Cultural, Communication and Media Scholar. He is a Lecturer at the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. Dr. Boateng did his Postdoctoral Fellowship at the School of Communication Studies, North-West University, South Africa before joining the University of Education, Winneba. Prior to his postdoctoral fellowship, he lectured at Durban University of Technology (DUT), South Africa. Dr. Boateng received his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Cultural and Media Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in International Studies from Rhodes University, South Africa. Akwasi had his Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Administration; Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education; and Master of Arts (MA) degrees from the University of Education, Winneba. He has received awards and grants from various institutions for research and conferences. Dr. Boateng publishes and reviews articles in books, conferences and scholarly journals including the Journal of African Media Studies, Social Dynamics and Contemporary Journal of African Studies, among others. Dr. Boateng is member of several academic and professional bodies including the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA), the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA), Nigeria, the African Studies Centre in Leiden (ASCL), the Collaborative Research Group (CRG) African History, Leiden, the Communication Educators Association of Ghana (CEAG), the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), and the African Network of Researchers on Inequality in Science (ANRIS). Akwasi has consulted, supervised research and taught courses in communication and media studies in universities in South Africa and Ghana. He is also the Executive Director of the Centre for Digital Media and Communication (CDMC), a communication and media think tank in Ghana that performs research and consultancy in digital and new media communication, political public relations, education and training.



Peter Krajčovič

The Media in Times of the Pandemic – Comparing Viewing Figures and Interactions of Serious, Tabloid and Conspiracy Media on Facebook During the Covid-19 Pandemic

ABSTRACT

The pandemic of the novel coronavirus attracted media attention which brought daily news about the number of active cases as well as hospitalised patients and deaths. The media also communicated information about measures against the spread of the coronavirus and covered the situation in other countries and around the world. Besides news, media launched broadcasts in traditional media (TV and radio) and so-called special broadcasts on both the TV and the radio starring epidemiologists, virologists as well as experts in diagnostics or prevention against COVID-19. These were especially the online media which provided large coverage and mainly news portals forming specific sections dealing with the coronavirus topic. The paper analyses viewing figures of selected serious, tabloid and conspiracy media on Facebook during the COVID-19 pandemic in Slovakia. It analyses and compares the number of followers, posts and comments which were published, their sharing as well as the total number of interactions of specific media. The author also verifies the impact of three outbreaks of COVID-19 on the number of interactions in serious, tabloid and conspiracy media.

KEY WORDS

Conspiracy Media. COVID-19. Facebook. Serious Media. Tabloids.

1 Introduction

Media have always played a key role in society. Since their beginning, they have represented a significant source of information and knowledge. Their main purpose was to inform on current events and communicate information from various spheres of cultural and social life. Later they took on the entertaining and relaxing functions as well. Mughal emphasises that people need news/information for other reasons than stated above.¹ On the one hand, it can be used for the purpose of public relations and on the other, for taking decisions and forming one's own opinions. Media help us to not only obtain essential information but also form our own opinion. However, this must involve a certain level of media literacy as well as the ability to identify various forms of media and understand the messages they send.²

Media can be categorised according to various criteria. Looking back through history, the oldest forms of media include newspapers, radio and television which are often referred to as "traditional". They are often called mass media thanks to their ability to appeal to a wide spectrum of audience. Nowadays, new forms of so-called online or social media have emerged. There are also non-traditional or specialised media that can be defined as the combination of traditional and new media focusing on a specific field.³

Regarding methods of informing, message content and the manner of their processing, media can be split into two basic groups – serious and tabloid. A new group of media spreading false news, hoaxes, propaganda, and intentionally misrepresenting information has also entered the market – often referred to as conspiracy media.⁴

Brennen et al. emphasize that for COVID-19, misinformation has been documented on several topics, including official governmental and medical organization actions, how the virus spreads, ways to prevent or treat infection (including vaccines), and the virus' origins.⁵ According to Grandi and Piovan we have to face the current COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by a relative type of self-developed "infodemic", i.e., "the dissemination of a huge amount of information from different sources and from the often-unverifiable basis".⁶ Bhatta et al. outline, that infodemic, a plethora of information, some authentic some not, make it even harder for general people to receive factual and trustworthy information when required, has grown to be a major risk to public health with social media developing as a trendy platform for this infodemic.⁷

¹ MUGHAL, M. A.: *Mass Media and Its Influence on Society*. *The Daily Journalist*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<http://thedailyjournalist.com/pen-and-pad/mass-media-and-its-influence-on-society>>.

² See: KRAJČOVIČ, P., URMÍNOVÁ, M.: Media at the Time of Pandemic. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., MADLEŇÁK, A. (eds.): *Marketing Identity COVID-2.0*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 290-299.

³ See: KRAJČOVIČ, P., ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: *Mediálny trh a možnosti jeho inovácií*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 17-19.

⁴ See also: CORBU, N. et al.: Fake News Going Viral: The Mediating Effect of Negative Emotions. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 58-87.; MORAVČÍKOVÁ, E.: Media Manipulation and Propaganda in the Post-Truth Era. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 23-37.

⁵ BRENNEN, J. S. et al.: *Types, Sources, and Claims of COVID-19 Misinformation*. Reuters Institute, 2020. [online]. [2020-04-07]. Available at: <<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation>>; BRENNEN, J. S., SIMON, F. M., NIELSEN, R. K.: Beyond (Mis)representation: Visuals in COVID-19 Misinformation. In *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2021, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 298.

⁶ GRANDI, N., PIOVAN, A.: *I pericoli dell'infodemia. La Comunicazione ai Tempi del Coronavirus*. March 26, 2020. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <http://temi.repubblica.it/micromega-online/i-pericoli-dell%e2%80%99infodemia-la-comunicazione-ai-tempi-del-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2vM6O5pmm3Uw7AyK1ibGNJnggQ_HVhcW_E5KoXqWC_hqTsatiqGKloObE#.XoELShOwIJM.facebook>.

⁷ BHATTA, J. et al.: Infodemic Monikers In Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic. In *Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 511.

Although news media is generally expected to be a reliable conduit of information, transmitting information from health experts to the public⁸, mainstream news can amplify misinformation⁹, and may be a more frequent source of misinformation for most people than social media¹⁰.

The common thread of all the above-mentioned groups of media is the informational purpose, even though the intent, goals and means of informing often vary. Whereas serious media fulfill an informational function, tabloids serve for entertaining. Tabloids tend to deliberately exaggerate reality, emphasise negative content and communicate shocking news while conspiracy media aim at deliberate manipulation to deceive, negatively affect public opinion or break the loyalty of the public with regard to state authorities or officially presented information. At first sight, these media are presented as standard, and most users are unable to differentiate them from regular (traditional) media. Therefore, conspiracy media are often confronted with the question of media literacy and critical thinking.

The novel coronavirus pandemic, spreading across the world since the end of 2019, has attracted considerable attention of the media which used to provide hot news about the number of active cases as well as hospitalised patients and the death toll. Media have informed people about the measures and restrictions taken across the globe in the fight against the spread of the coronavirus as well as the situation in neighbouring countries and indeed globally. Besides TV news, media have created special journals, panel discussions and broadcasts. In Slovakia, we were able to follow discussions and debates on traditional media (TV and radio) as well as special broadcasts on both the TV and the radio. They all gave room to epidemiologists, virologists as well as experts in diagnostics and prevention. As emphasised by Panasenکو et al., coronavirus was not only attractive for the media, which was trying to inform the public about the current situation, but also for the audience, readers and listeners who became interested in this information.¹¹

Not only serious media, but also tabloids and conspiracy media have dealt with the coronavirus pandemic. These conspiracy media and social sites have mainly contributed to occurrence of false news, hoaxes and disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

When informing the public about the above events, the media attempted to be the first to bring the news to prove or strengthen their position as market leaders. This aspect of competitiveness can be perceived across all media spectrums. For this reason, almost all media have used social sites to spread news immediately and share it with large audiences. According to Bhatta et al. social media has played a paramount role during pandemics such as COVID-19 and unveiled itself as a crucial means to communicate between sources and individuals.¹³

⁸ See: DE CONINCK, D., D'HAENENS, L., MATTHIJS, K.: Forgotten Key Players in Public Health: News Media as Agents of Information and Persuasion During the COVID-19 Pandemic. In *Public Health*, 2020, Vol. 183, p. 65-66.

⁹ See: MARWICK, A., LEWIS, R.: *Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://datasociety.net/library/media-manipulation-and-disinfo-online>>; PAPAKYRIAKOPOULOS, O., SERRANO, J. C. M., HEGELICH, S.: The Spread of COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories on Social Media and the Effect of Content Moderation. In *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9cbb/e218ed66f13cb9c588351b99cc4ab7f5015b.pdf>>.

¹⁰ TSFATI, Y. et al: Causes and Consequences of Mainstream Media Dissemination of Fake News: Literature Review and Synthesis. In *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 2020, Vol. 44, No. 2, p. 172.

¹¹ PANASENKO, N. et al.: Lege Artis Covid-19 As A Media-Cum-Language Event: Cognitive, Communicative, And Cross-Cultural Aspects. In *Lege Artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 125.

¹² See also: GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNÁIOVÁ, S., GÁLIK, S.: Epistemic and Ethical Risks of Media Reporting in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as Challenges for the Development of Journalistic Practice. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 76-94. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/4_Sabina-Galikova-Tolnaiova-Slavomir-Galik.pdf>.

¹³ BHATTA, J. et al.: Infodemic Monikers In Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic. In *Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 505.

The results of previous research and analyses¹⁴ demonstrate that more than 407,000 posts were published last year in Slovak media on COVID-19 and coronavirus topics. Most posts were published online (355,356), followed by print media (28,402) and agency news (13,199). TV channels broadcast 7,835 reports while 2,642 reports were published on the radio. In contrast to 2020, we reported a sharp decrease in the number of published reports. In 2021, the media published 110,000 fewer posts than before. The overall media impact dropped by almost 20%. Most posts were published in January after which the number of media outputs gradually dropped. We can also observe a slight decrease in the number of interactions on social sites. Whereas during 2020 could see almost 34 million, this number reached almost 24.5 million in 2021.

2 Methodology

The media have been split into three groups – serious, tabloid and conspiracy. For each group the three most popular media with the highest number of followers on Facebook have been selected. Website traffic was measured by means of data from IAB monitor.¹⁵

The number of followers was obtained from media profiles on Facebook. As for conspiracy media, we investigated the public database of websites with non-serious, false, deceiving, conspiracy or propagandist content from where we selected the media with the highest index.¹⁶

The analysed data were acquired by means of the analytical tool CrowdTangle from Facebook. As for the analysis, we used the descriptive statistics and the analysis of dispersion of various categorised variables. The data referred to the first case of COVID-19 to have been confirmed in Slovakia (6th March 2020) until 31st December 2021. The period of outbreaks was set according to the number of daily cases of COVID-19 and implemented or eased restrictions against the spread of the disease.

3 Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis show that tabloids have the most followers, e.g. *cas.sk* (*Nový čas*) and *topky.sk* (*Topky*). Serious media such as *aktuality.sk* (*Aktuality*) and *dennikn.sk* (*Denník N*) follow with a wider gap. The numbers of followers of the tabloid *pluska.sk* (*Plus jeden deň*) and the serious newspaper *sme.sk* (*SME*) were almost the same. Whereas a continuous growth could be observed in case of these web portals, conspiracy media report stagnation or only a slight increase in the number of followers, serious media and tabloids reported a significant growth after the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Slovakia (6th March 2020). It can be assumed that Internet users prefer tabloids and serious media to conspiracy media. The review of the number of followers of the specific portals is shown in Figure 1 below.

¹⁴ See: KRAJČOVIČ, P.: Pandémia COVID-19 v médiách a na internete v rokoch 2020 – 2021. In *Analýza a výskum v marketingovej komunikácii*, 2022. [In Press].

¹⁵ *Dáta IAB monitor online*. [online]. [2022-02-03]. Available at: <<https://monitor.iabslovakia.sk>>.

¹⁶ *Zoznam konšpiračných webov*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://konspiratori.sk/zoznam-stranok>>.

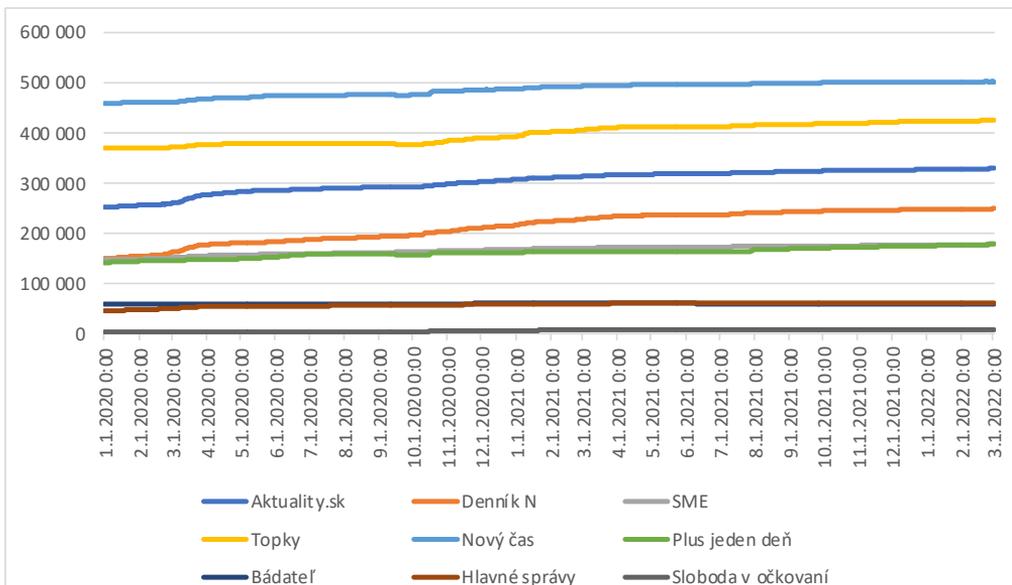


FIGURE 1: Review of the numbers of followers on specific portals for the period from 1 January 2020 to 3 February 2022

Source: own sources, 2022 (data: CrowdTangle®).

When it comes to website traffic on these portals, the highest traffic was reported in the case of *aktuality.sk* (*Aktuality*), followed by *sme.sk* (*SME*), *pluska.sk* (*Plus jeden deň*) and *topky.sk* (*Topky*). More details are shown in Table 1.

	Real users		Page views		Time (seconds)	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
<i>aktuality.sk</i>	3,117,848	2,883,791	123,197,791	146,605,921	8,335,419,396	10,795,476,244
<i>sme.sk</i>	2,675,639	2,593,006	98,772,043	118,174,416	6,484,286,786	8,447,983,221
<i>pluska.sk</i>	2,503,945	2,380,940	428,335,052	374,176,513	5,485,083,806	6,768,234,770
<i>topky.sk</i>	2,185,196	1,979,270	103,669,385	122,551,589	6,344,208,636	8,402,377,797
<i>cas.sk</i>	2,060,419	2,192,144	112,674,242	162,506,406	5,741,100,493	9,414,180,357
<i>dennikn.sk</i>	1,633,804	1,560,447	27,457,843	37,902,956	3,083,144,146	4,430,443,780

TABLE 1: Comparing the number of real website users of serious and tabloid media, the number of their views and traffic for the December 2020 and 2021

Source: own sources, 2022 (data: IAB Monitor®).

The above results show that the number of real users reported a slight increase in 2021 in contrast to 2020 (except for *cas.sk*) whereas the number of views and overall traffic declined.

Most posts were published by tabloids but they varied in the intensity and the number of posts to have been published in particular fields. It is interesting to see that conspiracy portals used to publish fewer posts in contrast to serious media and tabloids. The number of posts of the web portal *hlavnespravysk* (*Hlavné správy*) was much lower after the outbreak of the pandemic than before. The portal *badatel.net* (*Bádateľ*) did not publish almost any posts during the first six months of 2021 and *slobodavockovani.sk* (*Sloboda v očkovaní*) published most posts from December 2020 when Slovakia launched vaccinations against COVID-19. More details are shown in Figure 2 below.

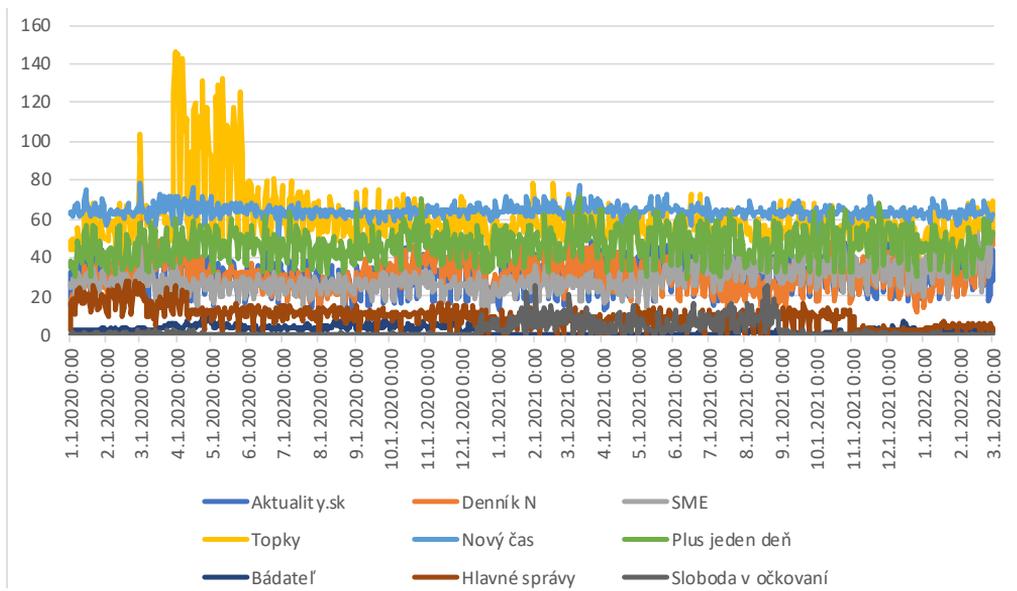


FIGURE 2: Review of the numbers of posts on specific portals for the period from 1st January 2020 to 3rd February 2022

Source: own sources, 2022 (data: CrowdTangle@).

Tabloids reported the most comments and posts. However, we can also observe significant differences between time periods and the numbers of comments. Details are shown in Figure 3.

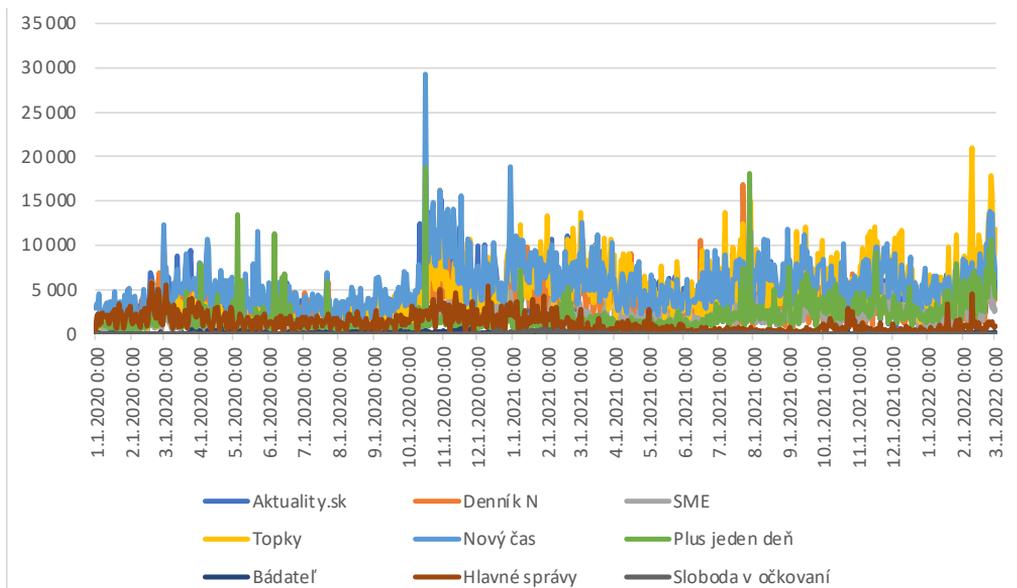


FIGURE 3: Review of the numbers of comments on specific portals for the period from 1st January 2020 to 3rd February 2022

Source: own sources, 2022 (data: CrowdTangle@).

The number of shares is also worth mentioning. The results of the analysis show that in case of post sharing, tabloids are not as prevalent as in the case of the number of comments and published posts. When it comes to conspiracy media, especially badatel.net (*Bádateľ*) reports a rather intense number of shares, mainly at the beginning of the pandemic and later. We could

also observe a considerable drop and subsequent increase during the second outbreak. It is also interesting to observe the number of shares of the tabloid topky.sk (*Topky*) which reported a significant drop in comparison with the numbers of comments and posts. More details are shown in Figure 4 below.

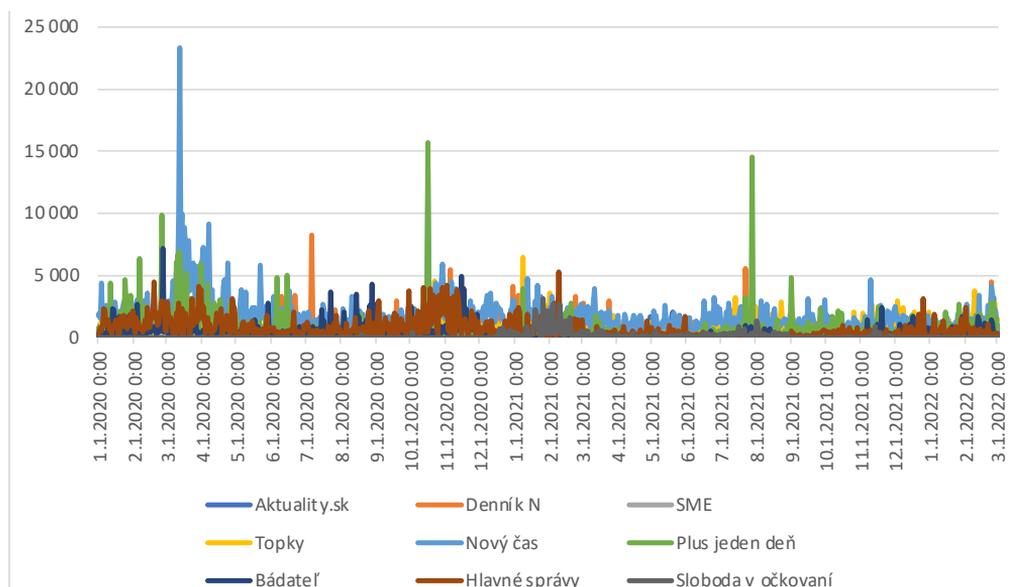


FIGURE 4: Review of the numbers of sharing of posts on specific portals for the period from 1st January 2020 to 3rd February 2022

Source: own sources, 2022 (data: CrowdTangle®).

The number of comments, shares and clicks per post reflect the activity of the public. In comparison with the number of followers, these are so-called active data. Regarding the algorithm of displaying posts on Facebook, they represent a key factor for displaying the posts to other users on social sites. Within the given analysis, we compared the overall interaction of specific web portals. The number of interactions was observed during three different outbreaks of the coronavirus pandemic (1st outbreak from 6th March to 14 June 2020; 2nd outbreak from 1st October 2020 to 21st June 2021; 3rd outbreak from 1st September to 31st December 2021). By means of the analysis of dispersion, we managed to verify whether the number of interactions of posts within the period varies or whether the factor “the pandemic times” has a significant impact on the number of interactions on social sites. The following hypotheses were determined as valid for serious media, tabloids and conspiracy media:

H_0 : Average number of interactions within the time period is the same.

H_1 : Average number of interactions is not the same, the number of interactions is significant for two months at least.

Results of the analysis are shown in Tables 2 – 4 below.

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
1 st outbreak	101	2853361	28251,09901	198895352,3
2 nd outbreak	264	9428327	35713,35985	189813351,8
3 rd outbreak	99	3217422	32499,21212	124517568,5

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	4170786190	2	2085393095	11,72209579	1,08238E-05	3,015284156
Within Groups	82013168482	461	177902751,6			
Total	86183954672	463				

TABLE 2: Results of the one-factor analysis of dispersion for serious media

Anova: Single Factor

Source: own sources, 2022

SUMMARY				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
1 st outbreak	101	3392536	33589,46535	195778350,9
2 nd outbreak	264	10614095	40204,9053	270980021
3 rd outbreak	99	4796364	48448,12121	224637542,8

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	11100123672	2	5550061836	22,67036284	4,06428E-10	3,015284156
Within Groups	1,1286E+11	461	244815748			
Total	1,2396E+11	463				

TABLE 3: Results of the one-factor analysis of dispersion for tabloids

Anova: Single Factor

Source: own sources, 2022

SUMMARY				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
1 st outbreak	101	764408	7568,39604	17670333,34
2 nd outbreak	264	1923729	7286,852273	38326147,23
3 rd outbreak	99	299558	3025,838384	2874754,014

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1471923944	2	735961972,1	27,97357163	3,41765E-12	3,015284156
Within Groups	12128535949	461	26309188,61			
Total	13600459893	463				

TABLE 4: Results of the one-factor analysis of dispersion for tabloids

Anova: Single Factor

Source: own sources, 2022

Based on the results of the analysis we rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) in all three cases, as $p \leq 0,05$. In general, it can be assumed that the average number of interactions within particular time periods is not the same for serious media, tabloids and conspiracy media.

In another part we observed the impact on the number of interactions in case of serious media, tabloids and conspiracy media during the first 99 days of each of the COVID-19 outbreaks where the following hypotheses were determined:

H_0 : factor A does not affect the dependent variable Y

H_0 : factor B does not affect the dependent variable Y

Alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H_{1_1} : at least one level of factor A affects the dependent variable Y

H_{1_2} : at least one level of factor B affects the dependent variable Y

Results of the analysis are shown in Table 5 below.

SUMMARY	serious	tablouds	conspiracy	Total
<i>1st outbreak</i>				
Count	99	99	99	297
Sum	2825197	3327960	758270	6911427
Average	28537,34343	33615,75758	7659,292929	23270,79798
Variance	198771257,3	199666123,7	17526260,41	264301828

SUMMARY	serious	tablouds	conspiracy	Total
<i>2nd outbreak</i>				
Count	99	99	99	297
Sum	3875721	4251191	1148004	9274916
Average	39148,69697	42941,32323	11596	31228,6734
Variance	234511213,7	425843194,8	44337220,63	429087517,8

SUMMARY	serious	tablouds	conspiracy	Total
<i>3rd outbreak</i>				
Count	99	99	99	297
Sum	3217422	4796364	299558	8313344
Average	32499,21212	48448,12121	3025,838384	27991,05724
Variance	124517568,5	224637542,8	2874754,014	471772154,2

SUMMARY	serious	tablouds	conspiracy	Total
<i>Total</i>				
Count	297	297	297	297
Sum	9918340	12375515	2205832	9274916
Average	33395,08418	41668,40067	7427,043771	31228,6734
Variance	203909894,5	319070820	33743299,83	429087517,8

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Sample	9512987923	2	4756493961	29,06829478	5,94857E-13	3,005930423
Columns	1,8961E+11	2	94805241836	579,3819438	2,153E-161	3,005930423
Interaction	10954177026	4	2738544256	16,73602708	3,12735E-13	2,382024348
Within	1,44323E+11	882	163631681,8			
Total	3,54401E+11	890				

TABLE 5: Results of the multiple factor analysis of dispersion

Anova: Two-Factor With Replication

Source: own sources, 2022

The results of the analysis confirmed that we had rejected all three null hypotheses, as $p \leq 0,05$. The pandemic times have had no effect on the number of interactions, the number of interactions has had no effect on pandemic times and the interaction between the pandemic period and media types has had no effect on the number of interactions.

4 Conclusion

The results of the analyses we performed pointed to a rather interesting trend. The most followed media on Facebook in pandemic times included tabloids, namely *cas.sk* (*Nový čas*) and *topky.sk* (*Topky*) which also reported the highest growth rate of followers. These media also published most posts. However, it is interesting to find that of individual websites, the most popular are the serious media *aktuality.sk* (*Aktuality*) and *sme.sk* (*SME*) which came behind tabloids in terms of the number of followers.

The analysis also showed that tabloids reported higher viewing figures on social sites. There were some positive findings as well. We reported a continuous growth in the number of followers in the case of serious media and therefore it can be assumed that the interest of users is not only in tabloids but also serious news. The number of followers on conspiracy web portals did not grow that much, thus saying that users on social sites did not tend to search for information on these websites. Serious media and tabloids reported a much higher increase in followers after the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Slovakia. The results proved that Internet users preferred tabloids and serious media to conspiracy media. In terms of sharing, tabloids did not achieve such predominance as in the case of comments and published posts. The results of the analysis also underlined a variable intensity and the number of published posts during various time periods. The analysis of conspiracy portals also brought some interesting findings – these portals used to publish fewer posts in contrast to serious and conspiracy media but reported significant sharing of some of their posts. Overall, they reported the smallest number of interactions and the lowest number of total interactions over the given time period.

The results of the analysis point to the danger of spreading false news and hoaxes, mainly by social sites and conspiracy media. Despite a relatively low number of followers, thanks to the algorithm of social sites these media can spread their content on a large scale and target much bigger audiences than they really cover. This trend can be observed in the number of shares and the total number of interactions. The results of the analysis also demonstrate the tendency for a gradual decline in the number of shares and comments as well as in the total number of interactions during the pandemic in the case of conspiracy media, even though the number of posts by these media did not decrease accordingly. Nevertheless, some conspiracy media still reported an increase in the number of published posts. The highest number of shares, comments and interactions of conspiracy media could be seen during the second COVID-19 outbreak. This temporary growth could also be observed at the beginning of the fourth outbreak.

False news started to be spread immediately after the coronavirus outbreak, especially on social sites and the Internet. According to Bento et al.¹⁷ and Rovetta et al.¹⁸ globally, the Internet is an increasingly valuable forum for acquiring information on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. False news mainly focused on the use of drugs, the origin of the coronavirus, the lockdown in the capital city of Slovakia, information about various preventive measures and ways to protect against the virus, news about school openings or the return of dolphins to Venice. This news spread on social sites through sharing in private groups, among friends or by means of private messages. Users discussed them, commented on their content and spread them further, whether deliberately or not.

According to the results of former research carried out by the author¹⁹, 80% of respondents came across hoaxes or false news during the first coronavirus outbreak, with 52% of them able to identify hoaxes immediately. Almost 38% were not able to identify a hoax but they found its

¹⁷ See: BENTO, A. I. et al.: Evidence from Internet Search Datasets Information-seeking Responses to News of Local COVID-19 Cases. In *Economic Science*, 2020, Vol. 117, No. 21, p. 11220-11222.

¹⁸ See: ROVETTA, A., BHAGAVATHULA, A. S.: Global Infodemiology of COVID-19: Focus on Google Web Searches and Instagram Hashtags. In *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 8, e20673.

¹⁹ See: KRAJČOVIČ, P.: Dezinformácie a médiá v čase pandémie. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., GRACA, M. (eds.): *Megatrendy a médiá 2020: On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020. p. 56-61.

content questionable. The rest of the respondents (10%) were not able to identify false news and realised it only later. Almost a half (47%) of those who came across hoaxes became worried. A fifth of them (20.6%) started to doubt the legitimacy of the measures and steps implemented by the state authorities in their fight against the coronavirus.

In our research carried out from 29th March to 20th April 2020 on the sample of 429 respondents aged 15 to 65, it was found that 83.3% of respondents came across false news regarding the coronavirus. More than 51% were able to recognise a hoax, which made 47.9% of them concerned and 20.8% of respondents started to doubt the legitimacy of the steps which the state authorities took in the fight against the coronavirus. 41.4% of respondents tried to verify the information from at least one other source, 16.4% verified information from social sites, 15.2% verified the information on the website of the Ministry of Health or Public Health Authority, 12.7% did not verify the information and 12.5% verified only the information obtained from tabloids. In their opinion, the most reliable sources of information included official sources (average value of 4.07) and news portals (average value of 3.5). On the contrary, social sites were regarded as the least reliable sources (average value of 2.45).²⁰

Data about the number of followers, published posts, interaction and reaction rate to these posts represent the very first stage of the complex research on the public and its media behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite certain limitations, they provide us an essential overview about the trends and preferences of the public when it comes to following sources and specific media. At the same time, they point to interesting trends emerging around the given topic. Another key point that is worth observing in terms of media behaviour of Internet and social site users is the method of distributing information on the pandemic. As this research is underway in Slovakia, only partial and limited data are available for the moment. There is also the possibility to research emoticons as a way of attitude expression. According to Pellert et al. emotion dynamics are different in crisis times and individual emotional expressions decay very fast.²¹

Acknowledgement: The paper was written under the project named "Addressing social threats due to the COVID-19 Pandemic", 311000 – Operational Programme - Integrated Infrastructure.

Literature and Sources:

BENTO, A. I. et al.: Evidence from Internet Search Datashows Information-seeking Responses to News of Local COVID-19 cases. In *Economic Science*, 2020, Vol. 117, No. 21, p. 11220-11222. ISSN 2072-0858.

BHATTA, J. et al.: Infodemic Monikers In Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic. In *Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 503-513. ISSN 1833-3818

BRENNEN, J. S., SIMON, F. M., NIELSEN, R. K.: Beyond (Mis)representation: Visuals in COVID-19 Misinformation. In *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2021, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 277-299. ISSN 1940-1612.

BRENNEN, J. S. et al.: *Types, Sources, and Claims of COVID-19 Misinformation*. Reuters Institute, 2020. [online]. [2020-04-07]. Available at: <<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation>>.

²⁰ KRAJČOVIČ, P., URMÍNOVÁ, M.: Media at the Time of Pandemic. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., MADLEŇÁK, A. (eds.): *Marketing Identity COVID-2.0*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 295-297.

²¹ PELLERT, M. et al.: Dashboard of Sentiment in Austrian Social Media During COVID-19. In *Frontiers in Big Data*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 32, p. 21.; PELLERT, M., SCHWEIGHOFER, S., GARCIA, D.: The Individual Dynamics of Affective Expression on Social Media. In *EPJ Data Sci.*, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 13.

- CORBU, N. et al.: Fake News Going Viral: The Mediating Effect of Negative Emotions. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 58-87. ISSN 2585-9188. *Dáta IABmonitor online*. [online]. [2022-02-03]. Available at: <<https://monitor.iabslovakia.sk>>.
- DE CONINCK, D., D'HAENENS, L., MATTHIJS, K.: Forgotten Key Players in Public Health: News Media as Agents of Information and Persuasion During the COVID-19 Pandemic. In *Public Health*, 2020, Vol. 183, p. 65-66. ISSN 0033-3506.
- GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S., GÁLIK, S.: Epistemic and Ethical Risks of Media Reporting in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as Challenges for the Development of Journalistic Practice. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 76-94. ISSN 2585-9188. [online]. [2022-12-13]. Available at: <https://www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/4_Sabina-Galikova-Tolnaiova-Slavomir-Galik.pdf>.
- GRANDI, N., PIOVAN, A.: *I pericoli Dell'infodemia. La comunicazione ai Tempi del Coronavirus. March 26, 2020*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <http://temi.repubblica.it/micromega-online/i-pericoli-dell%e2%80%99infodemia-la-comunicazione-ai-tempi-del-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2vM6O5pmm3Uw7AyK1ibGNJnggQ_HVhcW_E5KoXqWC_hqTsqtiqGkloObE#.XoELShOwIJM.facebook>.
- KRAJČOVIČ, P. Dezinformácie a médiá v čase pandémie. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., GRACA, M. (eds.): *Megatrendy a médiá 2020: On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020. p. 56-61.
- KRAJČOVIČ, P.: Pandémia COVID-19 v médiách a na internete v rokoch 2020 – 2021. In *Analýza a výskum v marketingovej komunikácii*, 2022. [In Press].
- KRAJČOVIČ, P., ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: *Mediálny trh a možnosti jeho inovácií*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016.
- KRAJČOVIČ, P., URMÍNOVÁ, M.: Media at the Time of Pandemic. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., MADLEŇÁK, A. (eds.): *Marketing Identity COVID-2.0*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 290-299.
- MARWICK, A., LEWIS, R.: *Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://datasociety.net/library/media-manipulation-and-disinfo-online>>.
- MORAČÍKOVÁ, E.: Media Manipulation and Propaganda in the Post-Truth Era. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 23-37. ISSN 2585-9188.
- MUGHAL, M. A.: *Mass Media and Its Influence on Society. The Daily Journalist*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<http://thedailyjournalist.com/pen-and-pad/mass-media-and-its-influence-on-society>>.
- PANASENKO, N. et al.: Lege Artis Covid-19 As A Media-Cum-Language Event: Cognitive, Communicative, And Cross-Cultural Aspects. In *Lege Artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 122-210. ISSN 2453-8035.
- PAPAKYRIAKOPOULOS, O., SERRANO, J. C. M., HEGELICH, S.: The Spread of COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories on Social Media and the Effect of Content Moderation. In *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9cbb/e218ed66f13cb9c588351b99cc4ab7f5015b.pdf>>.
- PELLERT, M. et al.: Dashboard of Sentiment in Austrian Social Media During COVID-19. In *Frontiers in Big Data*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 32, p. 1-23. ISSN 2624-909X.
- PELLERT, M., SCHWEIGHOFER, S., GARCIA, D.: The Individual Dynamics of Affective Expression on Social Media. In *EPJ Data Sci.*, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 1-14. ISSN 2193-1127.
- ROVETTA, A., BHAGAVATHULA, A. S.: Global Infodemiology of COVID-19: Focus on Google web searches and Instagram hashtags. In *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 2020, Vol. 22, No. 8, e20673.
- TSFATI, Y. et al.: Causes and Consequences of Mainstream Media Dissemination of Fake News: Literature Review and Synthesis. In *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 2020, Vol. 44, No. 2, p. 157-173. ISSN 2380-8985.
- Zoznam konšpiračných webov*. [online]. [2020-04-01]. Available at: <<https://konspiratori.sk/zoznam-stranok>>.

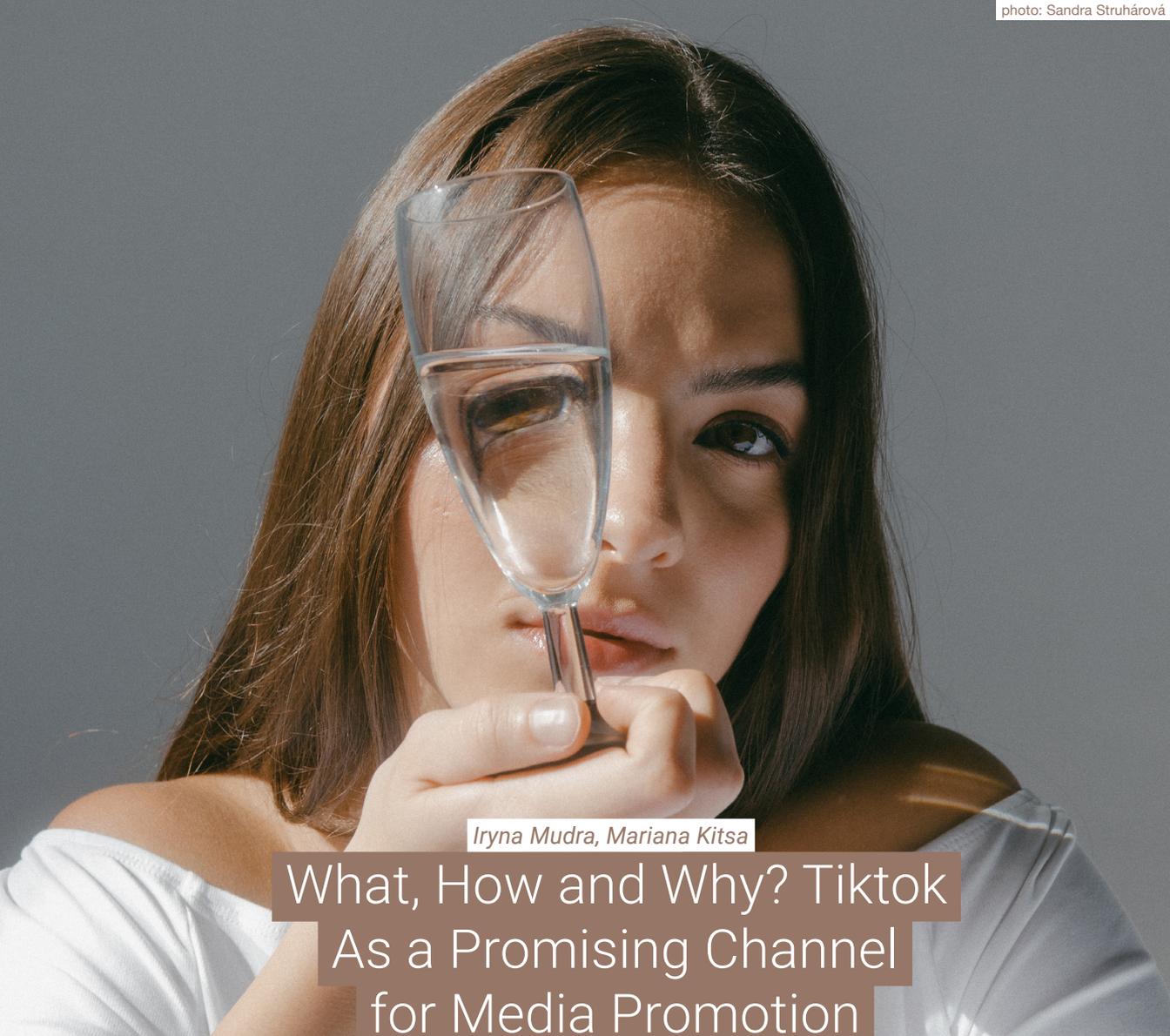
Author



Mgr. Peter Krajčovič, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2,
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
peter.krajcovic@ucm.sk

Peter Krajčovič is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. His research is aimed at media research, the use of traditional and new media in marketing communications, especially in the field of eco-innovation and media relations. During COVID-19 pandemic he studied the use of media, media behaviour, and the spread of false news and hoaxes.



Iryna Mudra, Mariana Kitsa

What, How and Why? Tiktok As a Promising Channel for Media Promotion

ABSTRACT

In the article we examined the role of the social network TikTok (for the global news media The use of TikTok by the top 50 global news media was analysed. We found that only 14 of them had verified accounts on this social network and that only 13 of 50 were in actual usage. In the research the amount of videos on TikTok was outlined, their themes, their aims as well as their strategies. It was investigated that in order to be successful and to have a large amount of revisions and comments, media should create specific videos, which are unique and authentic, especially for this social network. The means and elements of the videos which were suitable for TikTok were examined. In particular, such important means are music, speakers, subtitles, as well as themes, mood and graphics. It was concluded that TikTok is a perspective platform for popularization of the content of media, attracting new audiences and explaining complicated themes for young people.

KEY WORDS

Audience. Content. Media. Popularization. Themes. TikTok. Video.

1 Introduction

Social networks have, for a long time, been a popular platform for engaging audiences, keeping them interested in content, increasing traffic to media sites, and communicating with viewers / listeners / readers. Currently, the media market is fiercely competitive. Therefore, the media actively monitor the development of the market of social platforms and look for those that will help them to promote media content. Today on social platforms there exists a potential audience for mass media. Those media, which work effectively on it, attract recipients and increase traffic to their sites.

But every year it becomes more and more difficult for the media to work on social networks, because each social network has its own algorithms for covering published content. Social networks are aimed at making money from advertising, so they are tightening the algorithms for displaying posts from the media and other commercial pages. In turn, media outlets do not always want to pay for advertising on such sites. Therefore, they are constantly studying changes in the algorithms of social networks and monitor the emergence of new and promising platforms to promote their content. Today you will not surprise anyone, because almost each media outlet distributes its content on several social networks and messengers. But for media outlets, this creates an additional burden.

After all, the same content is not suitable for publication on different social networks. Content needs to be created for each social network separately. Moreover, the active audience of the media is now registered on several social networks. Accordingly, recipients are not interested in consuming the same content and with the same presentation of information on different social networks. The user comes to each network for a certain type of content. On *Twitter*, the audience wants to read briefly about the most important things and receive verified information from authorities and politicians. On *Facebook* users come to find more serious content while on *YouTube* – to see the development of events with their own eyes. And on *Instagram* the aim of the audience is to look at good photos, see graphics and consume light content. But *TikTok* is now conquering a niche, where with the help of video you can easily, quickly, pretty and in simple words tell about events, even if they are complex and boring.

The TikTok social network is rapidly becoming popular not only among the young, but among older people as well. Previously unknown bloggers began to gain popularity and have millions of subscribers on this social network. Also, many TikTok videos are shared by users on other social networks and messengers. And it is all thanks to the algorithms of the social network and methods of presenting content. Accordingly, this social network should be of interest to media outlets and become an important tool for the promotion and the popularization of media content. Therefore, in this study we will find the advantages of the social network TikTok, whether media outlets have their own account on it and what content they post.

According to data published in the *Digital Global Overview Report 2022* in the partnership with *We Are Social* and *Hootsuite* there are 7.91 billion people worldwide, of which 4.95 billion are Internet users. Among them 4.62 billion use social networks. That is, almost everyone who has access to the Internet is registered on social networks and consume information from them. Social network users spend an average of 2 hours and 27 minutes per day on social media. TikTok's audience is 1 billion users, of which 884.9 million are 18+.¹ The main audience of this social network is young people under 35, but the number of older users is also growing. More than 167 million videos are watched in TikTok² every minute.

¹ KEMP, S.: *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report*. [online]. [2022-03-04]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>>.

² POHRYBNAIA, Y.: "Goldfields" TikTok: Who and How Earns Millions on the Web. [online]. [2022-01-07]. Available at: <<https://enovosty.com/society/full/2312-zoloty-priiski-tiktok-kto-i-kak-zarabatyvaet-milliony-v-seti>>.

Such a large audience makes this social network interesting for the media to distribute their content. It is also worth noting that the audience and content of this social network is changing. Two or three years ago, mostly teenagers and students used this application, and the main content they distributed was music and dance. But now the data shows that more and more older people are interested in the content they create and distribute on this social network. Accordingly, the arrival of a more mature audience has affected the content itself. After all, such an audience led to the fact that many large companies and small businesses wanted to sell their products to them. Therefore, now in TikTok you can meet doctors, lawyers, masseurs, MPs, hairdressers, furniture manufacturers and others. And accordingly, the content has changed, so now, along with entertainment content, you can find a lot of serious and important, but sometimes even boring videos. Therefore, in a short period of time, the social network has transformed from purely entertaining and frivolous to one where it is easy, short, accessible, sometimes with humour, and possible to communicate about important and necessary things. It makes this application promising for media outlets.

Analyzing the activities of the media on TikTok, we see that there already are editors who understand that this social network is becoming more popular every year, and need to work for the future and gain a young audience. TikTok is also starting to pay for unique content, which also makes it promising for the media.

1.1 A Short History of TikTok

In 2016, Zhang Ying, a young Chinese businessman and owner of *ByteDance*, released a new Douyin app for sharing music videos. Initially, the program was intended only for residents of China. However, the application gained popularity and later developed an analogue of Douyin for an international audience – TikTok. The successful launch of the new social network on the international market was facilitated by the purchase of the service *Musical.ly* – an application for teenagers, where they sang famous songs to the soundtrack and recorded videos. After the acquisition of *Musical.ly*, its multimillion-dollar audience actually shifted to TikTok, which had broader functionality and its own system of recommendations based on artificial intelligence. It is often called one of the keys to the success of TikTok.³ Thus, the audience of TikTok at the end of 2018 amounted to more than 800 million users in 150 countries. Bloomberg estimated TikTok at \$75 billion and named it the world's most expensive startup.⁴ But with the development and popularity of TikTok, Douyin has not disappeared. TikTok and Douyin are similar programs from *ByteDance*. The difference between the applications is first of all, geography. Due to Chinese censorship, users outside China cannot fully use the social network.⁵ Douyin is actively implementing a system of automatic face recognition and analysis of user behaviour.⁶ Blogger profiles that are popular on the Chinese Internet have virtually no subscribers outside of China, and conversely, accounts that are popular in Europe, America, or the CIS have no subscribers in China.

³ SAVCHENKO, H.: *TikTok. How He Conquers the World and Where It All Began*. [online]. [2022-01-11]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-52576277>>.

⁴ MYKHAILOVA, A.: *Douyin's Popularity and Opportunities for Brand Promotion in China*. [online]. [2022-01-12]. Available at: <<https://as-pacific.com/blog/populyarnost-douyin-i-vozmozhnosti-dlya-marketinga/>>.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *TikTok or Douyin. What Is the Difference?* [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <<https://senior.ua/articles/tiktok-ili-douyin-v-chem-raznica>>.

1.2 How Does It Work?

This application differs from YouTube and other popular social networks because it allows you to create viral flash mobs, record short videos, streams (online broadcasts). It also has a built-in lightweight and convenient video editor that allows you to speed up or slow down frames, apply different colour filters to videos, apply effects, use masks and AR objects, as well as add music from the service library. After that, you can publish the clip directly on your page or on another social network. Challenges are very common in TikTok - videos where users perform various tasks and offer to repeat them.⁷ Also, this social network attracts the media with its algorithms. It's easier to get on TikTok than on YouTube. Unlike Facebook, which recommends content based on the activity of your friends, TikTok analyzes the behaviour of users in the application to find out their tastes.⁸ By creating the right content, the media can get millions of views. After all, the algorithms of the application show users what they want to see. So even if no one subscribes to the media account, the video can go viral and be seen by millions.⁹ Now the duration of the video is up to 3 minutes, but in 2020 the video on this social network was allowed for up to 60 seconds.

New content monetization opportunities are constantly appearing on TikTok. In 2021, the social network made it possible to monetize those accounts that have more than a thousand subscribers. In particular, you can conduct live broadcasts and receive stickers on them, which are the domestic currency of this social network. To receive coins, you need to share really interesting information live: give a variety of advice and recommendations, entertain the audience or share personal experiences. The second is to involve the viewer, ask questions, answer their comments. Also, some TikTokers perform tasks for donations.

Like every social network, TikTok needs content. But not one that has already been created for other social networks. These are the features of this platform. When the media can create one video for Facebook, Instagram and/or YouTube, such a video is unlikely to get enough audience involvement in TikTok. And it's not just the fact that the audience comes to each social network for new content, not only to limit the duration of the video, but the fact is that the style of information in TikTok is different from other social networks. After all, the emphasis in TikTok is usually on the person, the blogger, who becomes recognizable. They talk about important events, things, while using the available tools of the application (masks, music). The content is varied, both humorous and serious, but presented in an easy, concise and accessible way. The rating of the account is also affected by battles and live broadcasts.

2 Methods

To study the distribution of products by the media we took the world's highest-ranked media. To do this, we used a list published by *Similarweb*.¹⁰ Among the 50 media outlets on the list, only 13 have TikTok accounts. Mentions of the use of mass media were first searched on the website of Similarweb in the section "Social Network Traffic", and then on the media site

⁷ KOROLCHUK, M.: *TikTok, Likee, Kwai: Secrets of Popularity and Hidden Dangers*. [online]. [2022-02-13]. Available at: <<https://learning.ua/blog/202009/tiktok-likee-kwai-sekrety-populiarnosti-ta-prykhovani-nebezpeky/>>.

⁸ SHOU, D.: *TikTok Stars. Who Are They and How Much Do They Earn?* [online]. [2022-02-11]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51856011>>.

⁹ KOROLCHUK, M.: *TikTok, Likee, Kwai: Secrets of Popularity and Hidden Dangers*. [online]. [2022-02-13]. Available at: <<https://learning.ua/blog/202009/tiktok-likee-kwai-sekrety-populiarnosti-ta-prykhovani-nebezpeky/>>.

¹⁰ *Top Website Ranking*. [online]. [2022-03-13]. Available at: <<https://www.similarweb.com/ru/top-websites/category/news-and-media/>>.

itself. There we were looking for information if the media content can be viewed / monitored by TikTok media. During these two stages of the search, it was impossible to find information that at least one media outlet from the list has an official TikTok account. In our opinion, this may be explained as the usual inattention of the media management, or due to the fact that society still believes that TikTok is not serious and the media does not want to advertise their activities on this social network.

Therefore, in the third stage searching media using the Similarweb rating we used a search on the site of TikTok itself. The search was carried out in two directions – in the search bar we entered the name of the media, then, if this method did not work, we entered the web address. For the study, only those pages were selected that contained several important elements by which the media could be identified, in particular:

- avatar media logo;
- in the head of the profile it was stated that this is the official page of the media;
- the official web address of the media was indicated in the profile header;
- there was a blue circle with a white tick next to the name of the media. This TikTok icon indicates official verified accounts. Among the media which were selected for the study, only *Timesofindia.com* did not have such a badge, but having analyzed the media site and the account of the same name, we can declare that this is the official media page in TikTok.

So, out of the 50 most rated global media, 14 have accounts on TikTok. But for the purposes of the study were taken only 13, because one of the media, *T-online.de*, posted only 3 videos in 2020, while the subject of the study were those accounts that are regularly updated, so this media on TikTok was not taken for research. During the search we also found several thematic TikTok accounts of the *BBC*, namely *bbcspport*, *bbcnewsjapan*, *bbcbiteseize*, but only a page called *bbc* was selected for the study, because on this account it is declared that this is the Official BBC TikTok account.

The next stage of the research was a detailed analysis of the media account and the content it publishes. 13 media on TikTok were selected for analysis, namely: *bbc.co.uk*, *cnn.com*, *dailymail.co.uk*, *hurriyet.com.tr*, *infobae.com*, *compass.com*, *detik.com*, *washingtonpost.com*, *cnbc.com*, *vnexpress.net*, *tribunnews.com*, *timesofindia.com* and *republika.it* (Table 1).

We outlined the following research questions:

RQ1 Which media from the top-50 have their accounts on TikTok?

RQ2 What are the forms of presenting content by media on TikTok?

RQ3 What strategies are used by media on TikTok?

3 Results

Analyzing the content of the media on TikTok, we noticed that the media works in two directions: creating videos specifically for this application or simply posting content that has already been distributed on other social networks.

Most often, the studied media work on this principle. Sometimes you can see that videos which are posted on TikTok are also available on Instagram. A striking example is Dailymail, where many videos have been seen on both TikTok and Instagram. It seemed that one video content was created specifically for two platforms. But when analyzing the Instagram page, we have got the impression that they run it better. We also looked for the same media content not only on Instagram, but also on Facebook and YouTube. And we found out that some TikTok content was duplicated on Instagram and YouTube. This can be explained by the fact that Instagram also allows the publication of short videos and the audience enters this social network mainly for interesting, bright, beautiful and easy and entertaining content (Table 1).

Name of media in Tik Tok	Country	Amount of followers	Approximately frequency of new videos	Total amount of videos
BBC	U.K.	1.1 M	1-2 a day	619
CNN	USA	39 K	Every day	86
Daily mail	U.K.	3.5 M	2-6 a day	More than 2K
Hurriyetcomtr	Turkey	11.5 K	1 a day	103
Infobae	Argentina	700 K	3-4 a day	675
Kompascom	Indonesia	1.9 M	4-7 a day	More than 2K
Detikcom	Indonesia	1.2 M	5-7 a day	More than 2K
Washingtonpost	USA	1.2 M	2-3 a day	More than 2K
CNBC	USA	1700	1 a day	37
VnExpress.net	Vietnam	1.8 M	1-2 a day	More than 3K
Tribunnews	Indonesia	2.4 M	7-9 a day	More than 5K
Times Of India	India	47 K	1 a month	49
La.repubblica	Italy	43 K	2-3 a month	155

TABLE 1: Quantitative Indicators of the Analyzed Media Accounts in TikTok

Source: own processing, 2022

Analyzing many media outlets sometimes the impression is given that the page in TikTok is only for ticks, media follow it on a residual basis and do not try to adapt to its format. Therefore, the user does not attract the attention of such media content in the general feed and does not arouse interest. This is how the BBC, CNN, Infobae, Cnbc, Kompas, Detik, Vnexpress distribute their content. These media outlets distribute mostly light and entertaining content, but sometimes serious videos are published, such as excerpts from government speeches. Infobae posted a video about the Auschwitz concentration camp. They also post announcements of their programs. These media outlets focus mainly on young people, as there are many videos about the stars.

A *Tribunnews* posts mostly serious content that is aimed at older people. This is the only one among the researched media that focuses on the distribution of serious content on important topics. Although such content does not quite fit into the style of videos posted on TikTok, after all, people come to this social network for bright, easy and entertaining content.

Hürriyet publishes many excerpts from its program *Özel Röportajlar* on its TikTok page, thus popularizing them. Full versions of the video program are available on the YouTube media channel. But the views of such videos in TikTok are not great.

There are different forms of conducting content for TikTok. In the first case, media create a video specifically for the application and only for it. Videos are created in up to three minutes and fully meet the specifics of TikTok and the main thing is that such content will not be found anywhere else. Each social network has its own content. And among the researched and analyzed media in TikTok only the *Washington Post* fully adheres to this rule. And accordingly, it offends (?) the views, which are high. The content is fun, interesting and original. There are videos that advertise the newspaper itself, but there are only few of them. You can find all the trendy video formats in this account. In addition, the media does not just promote its product – now it is a full-fledged blog with sketches, challenges and humorous video content. For example, during quarantine, a new video on the topic of self-isolation and remote work¹¹ appears in the account every day. They also present themes on coronavirus and vaccination, laughing at American politicians and more, and even tell the story of Britney Spears' imprisonment.

¹¹ SALDAN, H.: *Why Does Your Media Need a TikTok Account*. [online]. [2022-03-12]. Available at: <<https://medialab.online/news/tiktok/>>.

The *Washington Post* responds quickly to breaking news and publishes new videos almost daily.¹² In comparison to most of the media which we have analyzed, only in the *Washington Post* all information is told or demonstrated by presenters. There are no fragments of plots or programs. Hyperlinks to the site are also missing. There is only video recorded by presenters. And it fits harmoniously into the application format. After all, in TikTok the main characters or faces of the page are presenters or as they are now called – TikTokers. They sing, dance, tell and show, host live broadcasts and battles. This is the format the audience is used to in this application. And in our subjective opinion, ordinary videos in the “Recommendations” or “Follow-up” tapes are not as eye-catching and do not fit into the format of the application, they are not so effective in the news feed of the social media Tik Tok, where in each video there is a blogger (bloggers) who shares its problem or history using a variety of tools offered by this social network.

Media outlets such as *Republica and Dailymail*, in addition to posting excerpts from various videos, post content which is already shot for TikTok, where there is a presenter who narrates the available news.

3.1 Strategies

Based on the analyzed pages of the media on TikTok, we highlighted the strategies used by the media in this application (Table 2).

1. Promotion of programs and other media products on the social network. *Hürriyet* applies this strategy to the program *Özel Röportajlar*, the application contains short excerpts from the program.
2. Increase traffic to the site. Media outlets such as *Infobae*, *Compas* and *Tribunnews* post hyperlinks to their TikTok videos on a media site where you can read the text to the video.
3. Informing the audience. TikTok media simply tell and show important and interesting information to their audience. This strategy is followed by the *BBC*, *CNN*, *Detik*, *CNBC*, *Vnexpress*.
4. Clarification of important topics. Media such as the *Washington Post*, *Republica*, *Daily Mail* not only provide information about what had happened, but also with the help of infographics, funny pictures, cartoons, illustrations explain important topics, analyze trends and prospects. Thus, they contribute to the audience's understanding of current affairs.
5. **Audience.** The vast majority of researched mass media create and distribute content that is intended for young audiences. However, media outlets such as *Times of India* and *Tribunnews* distribute content aimed at older audiences.

Themes and content. Topics on the pages of the media on TikTok are diverse, you can find sports, political, environmental, cultural, social and other topics. But in the vast majority of the studied media, the content is light and entertaining, which shows different interests, nature, countries, lives of stars, different humorous situations etc.

Media recognition. The main elements of media recognition on TikTok are the presenter, who is the face of the media and/or the logo of the media, which is located in the videos. Media outlets such as *Republica*, *Daily Mail* and the *Washington Post* engage presenters to maintain a page on TikTok. And *Tribunnews*, *VnExpress*, *Detik*, *Compas*, *Infobae* and *Hürriyet* can be easily identified on video, because there is the media logo. And in *Times of India*, on top of each video with a red background is the name of the media.

¹² *How the Media are Conquering TikTok. The Best and Non-Standard Examples (from Belarus Too)*. [online]. [2022-01-17]. Available at: <<https://press-club.by/dosved/kak-media-zatiktok-luchshie-i-nestandartnyepri>>.

Video design and decoration. Most of the analyzed media in TikTok do not care about the design of their page on this social network. Going to the pages of such media as the *BBC*, *CNN*, *Dailymail*, *Infobae*, *Detik*, *Washington Post* and *CNBC*, it is noticeable that the editors constantly use different fonts and colours, as well as templates for video design. On the page, these videos do not look harmonious and are unattractive, and the page is no longer tidy. Interestingly, some of these media on their other social networks follow the same design and colour scheme. For example, such media as *Infobae*, *Detik*, *Washington Post* and *CNBC* adhere to the colour scheme and style of design in Instagram.

Mass media such as *Hurriyet*, *Compas*, *Tribunnews*, *Repubblica*, *VnExpress* and *Times of India* are trying to follow a single style in design. The page of *Hürriyet* on TikTok is decorated in more attractive way, there are just portrait photos of different people and no captions. It looks interesting and harmonious.

The *Compas* page on TikTok shows that each video has text in several colours – white and yellow. The font of the text is the same everywhere and looks neat. *Tribunnews* also adds captions in white font on a blue background. *Repubblica* also follows the same style in the decorated videos – on a white background with captions in black font. And *VnExpress* uses the same template for the design of the video – a pink background with a sprig of sakura and it is written in white letters.

One more method for attracting audience is subtitles. They are used in most videos of *BBC*, *Infobae*, *Washington Post*, *CNBC*, *Tribunnews* and in some videos of *CNN* and *Times of India*. Posts with subtitles facilitate the perception of information. Especially, it is important when the record is not of high quality and when the voices of people are slightly heard in the video. Also, posts with subtitles are convenient for people who have hearing problems, or when it there is no opportunity to turn on the sound, so videos with subtitles can attract wider audiences.

Name of media in Tik Tok	Topics of the videos	Type of the video	Uniqueness, compared to other social networks	Strategy (aim)
BBC	Social, medical, nature	Entertainment, humorous	Unique	Informing the audience
CNN	Social, sport, investigations	Informative, with a journalist in the frame	Unique	Informing the audience
Daily mail	Nature, animals, social	Video-instructions, entertainment, humorous	Some videos are duplicated on Youtube	Explanation of important topics
Hurriyetcomtr	Politics, show-biz, social	Fragment of the interview show	The whole interviews are posted on Youtube	Popularization of own programs
Infobae	Current affairs, recreation	Informative,	3-4 a day	675
without narration	Unique	Increasing the visitors of the web-site	4-7 a day	More than 2K
Kompascom	Current affairs, weather, medical	Video-instructions, informative	Unique	Increasing the visitors of the web-site
Detikcom	Current affairs.	Informative, entertainment, humorous	Some videos are duplicated on Youtube and Instagram	Informing the audience
Washingtonpost	Current affairs, climate changes, COVID-19	Humorous videos in the format of the role scenes	Unique	Explanation of important topics

CNBC	Current affairs	Short humorous videos with questions to followers	Some videos are duplicated in Instagram	Informing the audience
VnExpress.net	Social	Informative, without narration	Some videos are duplicated on Youtube	Informing the audience
Tribunnews	Current affairs	Informative, without narration	Unique	Increasing the visitors of the web-site
Times Of India	Current affairs	Short informative videos	Unique	Informing the audience
La.repubblica	Current affairs, social, medical	Informative, with a journalist in the frame	Unique	Explanation of important topics

TABLE 2: Qualitative Indicators of the Analyzed Media Accounts on TikTok

Source: own processing, 2022

So, of the 50 most popular media outlets, only 13 media outlets have TikTok accounts. The media in different ways run their pages in this application. Some media try to adapt their content to the social network format and gain an audience, while others simply post videos and are not aimed at getting large views, and sometimes distribute videos from the social network Instagram or YouTube to TikTok.

4 Discussion

As far as we have examined, 13 of 50 popular media have their own accounts on TikTok and more of the them create a unique content for this social network. Promoting media through Tik Tok has its advantages. One of the most important is that *“the content of the TikTok is very active, with a lot of activities online and offline, targeting young people with imagination and curiosity”*.¹³ For media it is an opportunity to attract young audiences. Moreover, as we have seen in the results of our researching, some media use TikTok to explain important current affairs, climate problems, medical issues etc. Our research proved the point of Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M. C., & López-García, X., who say that *“the popularity of this social network invites news outlets to address a young audience on a platform characterized by visual and short content and dynamics defined by algorithmic recommendations, trending hashtags and challenges”*.¹⁴ Despite the variety of themes which are depicted on TikTok, it has comfortable navigation. Additionally, the use of identification hashtags on TikTok allows users to post multiple videos in succession on the same topic resulting in a thread of related posts. This creates a series of “on-demand” videos for users and an opportunity for spaced repetition learning.¹⁵ Media began to use TikTok for behavioural purposes. For example, Egtesadi & Florea declare that one of the most popular videos that arose amid the COVID-19 outbreak contributed to the rising fame of the following song from Vietnam promoting preventive measures: *“Do not touch your face. Wash your hands. When you greet your friend, do the namaste.”*¹⁶ Gotlieb and Dyer accent that

¹³ See: XU, L. et al.: Research on the Causes of the “TikTok” App Becoming Popular and the Existing Problems. In *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 59-63.

¹⁴ See: VÁZQUEZ-HERRERO, J. et al.: Let’s Dance the News! How the News Media are Adapting to the Logic of TikTok. In *Journalism*, 2022, Vol. 23, No. 8, p. 1. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1464884920969092>>.

¹⁵ See: COMP, G. et al.: Is TikTok the Next Social Media Frontier for Medicine? In *AEM Education and Training*, 2021, Vol. 5, No. 3. No pagination.

¹⁶ EGHTEADI, M., FLOREA, A.: Facebook, Instagram, Reddit and TikTok: A Proposal for Health Authorities to Integrate Popular Social Media Platforms in Contingency Planning Amid a Global Pandemic Outbreak. In *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 2020, Vol. 111, No. 3, p. 389-391.

social media can allow for virtual celebrities and influencers (both medical and nonmedical) to have a significant influence on information spread due to their number of followers, regardless of the accuracy of their information.¹⁷ However, they warn that fast spreading of information through social networks can be harmful because there is a threat of the promotion of incorrect information and disinformation. So it is one more reason why media should have their own accounts on TikTok – they ought to be promoters of truthful, important information for young audiences. Moreover, according to the research of Basch et al., TikTok has the potential, not only to convey important health information, but to address different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well.¹⁸ It means that it is TikTok, who can reach the young audiences by its short videos on important themes. There are different thoughts about the age of the audience of this social network, while Basch et al. say that TikTok is especially popular among those who are 13–24 years of age. Shutsko declares that comedy videos and musical performances turned out to be the most popular and the most frequent categories among both male and female performers on TikTok.¹⁹ Our research proved this thesis, because, as we have noticed, the most popular and commented videos on this social network are humorous, entertainment and comedy. It is worth mentioning, that media often use such entertainment formats for informing audiences about important issues. Sidorenko-Bautista et al. explain one more fact, why TikTok is so popular. It is about technologies. Emerging audiences, especially Generation Z, spend their time in digital environments that do not support this type of content. As a consequence, their interactions and multimedia behaviour focus on vertical, ephemeral content, rendering TikTok as an innovative alternative with a significant growth trend.²⁰ Not each media which we have analyzed, uses all the opportunities of this social media. Some of them just post pieces of their content to popularize the site of the media. One more thing, which is important in videos on TikTok is music. Because of this feature, the user's choice of background music often serves as an alien indicator of the video's content and meaning: song clips become imbued with specific and widely recognized meanings as users pull music from other videos with the same message and incorporate it into their own videos.²¹ Each media which we have investigated, used original music for their videos on TikTok. It doesn't matter if there is a journalist in the frame or not. It is useful for media to include subtitles in their videos. Post hoc analyses showed that subtitles were predominately used in news and oral speech videos. In addition, videos with subtitles received more shares than those without subtitles. This may be because subtitle enables viewers to have a better understanding of video content, which may promote content sharing. In contrast, TikTok videos with only spoken language attracted fewer comments and shares than those without spoken language.²² Only a few media accounts on TikTok had subtitles but most of them use spoken language.

¹⁷ GOTTLIEB, M., DYER, S.: Information and Disinformation: Social Media in the COVID-19 Crisis. In *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 2020, Vol. 27, No. 7, p. 640-641. [online]. [2022-01-22]. Available at: <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/acem.14036>>.

¹⁸ See: BASCH, C. H. et al.: COVID-19 on TikTok: Harnessing an Emerging Social Media Platform to Convey Important Public Health Messages. In *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 2020, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 367-369. [online]. [2022-04-07]. Available at: <<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ijamh-2020-0111/html>>.

¹⁹ See: SHUTSKO, A.: User-Generated Short Video Content in Social Media. A Case Study of TikTok. In MEISELWITZ, G. (ed.): *Social Computing and Social Media*. Copenhagen : Springer, 2020, p. 108-125.

²⁰ See: SIDORENKO-BAUTISTA, P. et al.: Use of New Narratives for COVID-19 Reporting: From 360° Videos to Ephemeral TikTok Videos in Online Media. In *Tripodos*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 47, p. 105-122.

²¹ SACHS, J. et al.: *The TikTok Self: Music, Signaling, and Identity on Social Media*. [online]. [2022-02-17]. Available at: <<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/2rx46/>>.

²² See: LI, Y. et al.: Communicating COVID-19 Information on TikTok: A Content Analysis of TikTok Videos from Official Accounts Featured in the COVID-19 Information Hub. In *Health Education Research*, 2021, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 261-271.

5 Conclusion

Social networks are rapidly developing and conquering humanity. The media should be able to use perspective and popular social networks to promote their content, increase website traffic and build a media brand. A media account is a means for popularization of its content, informing the audience and explaining important themes.

One of the perspective social networks is TikTok, which is rapidly increasing its audience. But not each well-known and leading media uses this social network to promote the media and its content. Of the world's 50 highest-rated media outlets, only 13 run their pages on TikTok. And there is an explanation for this, because TikTok requires additional knowledge, skills and tools in order to attract audiences and receive views. Some of the media have chosen an easier way - to post ready-made journalistic videos or publish excerpts from programs. Thus, through the media account on TikTok to attract new users to the media site or to YouTube, which contains full video programs or interviews. However, this approach is not always justified, because the audience that switches from TikTok to other media resources will focus on the platform where the full content is posted.

According to our research, the most views and comments were from videos created specifically for TikTok, in the humorous genre, with additional illustrations, appropriate music and a light style of presentation. TikTok's audience comes for unique, creative, interesting content, and the media is not always ready to offer such content. However, this does not mean that only social content should be presented on this social network. In the example of the *Washington Post* we have noticed that in interesting, funny videos, journalists talk about important events, explain and clarify, thus forming a picture of the world for young audiences. Also, TikTok should be used to promote important ideas in medical topics. In particular, the topic of vaccination, rules of public places, hygiene recommendations, presented in a short, bright, creative form, can have a much greater effect and impact on young audiences than official speeches by the WHO. In order to properly present on the TikTok network, the media need to find specialists who would be able to create unique content for this social network, which correspond to the style and algorithms of this application.

5.1 Limitations and Further Research

Our research has limitations regarding the amount and types of media, which we have analyzed. Our sample was based on the results of Similar Web ratings of the most rating world media. We took into account 50 media of this rating, but there are other quality popular media which have their own accounts on TikTok, for example, *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* etc. It would be useful to include in the further research the sample of quality media from all over the world and analyze their strategies of using TikTok.

Notes on contributors/Disclosure statement: The author(s) declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Literature and Sources:

BASCH, C. H. et al.: COVID-19 on TikTok: Harnessing an Emerging Social Media Platform to Convey Important Public Health Messages. In *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 2022, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 367-369. [online]. [2022-04-07]. Available at: <<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ijamh-2020-0111/html>>.

COMP, G. et al.: Is TikTok the Next Social Media Frontier for Medicine? In *AEM Education and Training*, 2021, Vol. 5, No. 3. No pagination. ISSN 2472-5390.

EGHTESADI, M., FLOREA, A.: Facebook, Instagram, Reddit and TikTok: A Proposal for Health Authorities to Integrate Popular Social Media Platforms in Contingency Planning Amid a Global Pandemic Outbreak. In *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 2020, Vol. 111, No. 3, p. 389-391. ISSN 0319-2652.

GOTTLIEB, M., DYER, S.: Information and Disinformation: Social Media in the COVID-19 Crisis. In *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 2020, Vol. 27, No. 7, p. 640-641. ISSN 1553-2712. [online]. [2022-01-22]. Available at: <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/acem.14036>>.

How the Media are Conquering TikTok. The Best and Non-Standard Examples (from Belarus Too). [online]. [2022-01-17]. Available at: <<https://press-club.by/dosved/kak-media-zatiktok-luchshie-i-nestandartnye-pri>>.

KEMP, S.: *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report*. [online]. [2022-03-04]. Available at: <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>>.

KOROLCHUK, M.: *TikTok, Likee, Kwai: Secrets of Popularity and Hidden Dangers*. [online]. [2022-02-13]. Available at: <<https://learning.ua/blog/202009/tiktok-likee-kwai-sekrety-populiarnosti-ta-prykhovani-nebezpeky/>>.

LI, Y. et al.: Communicating COVID-19 Information on TikTok: A Content Analysis of TikTok Videos from Official Accounts Featured in the COVID-19 Information Hub. In *Health Education Research*, 2021, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 261-271. ISSN 1465-3648.

MYKHAILOVA, A.: *Douyin's Popularity and Opportunities for Brand Promotion in China*. [online]. [2022-01-12]. Available at: <<https://as-pacific.com/blog/populyarnost-douyin-i-vozmozhnosti-dlya-marketinga/>>.

POHRYBNAIA, Y.: "Goldfields" TikTok: Who and How Earns Millions on the Web. [online]. [2022-01-07]. Available at: <<https://enovosty.com/society/full/2312-zolotye-priiski-tiktok-kt-i-kak-zarabatyvaet-millions-v-seti>>.

SACHS, J. et al.: *The TikTok Self: Music, Signaling, and Identity on Social Media*. [online]. [2022-02-17]. Available at: <<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/2rx46/>>.

SALDAN, H.: *Why Does Your Media Need a TikTok Account*. [online]. [2022-03-12]. Available at: <<https://medialab.online/news/tiktok/>>.

SAVCHENKO, H.: *TikTok. How He Conquers the World and Where It All Began*. [online]. [2022-01-11]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-52576277>>.

SHOU, D.: *TikTok Stars. Who Are They and How Much Do They Earn?* [online]. [2022-02-11]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51856011>>.

SHUTSKO, A.: User-Generated Short Video Content in Social Media. A Case Study of TikTok. In MEISELWITZ, G. (ed.): *Social Computing and Social Media*. Copenhagen : Springer, 2020, p. 108-125.

SIDORENKO-BAUTISTA, P. et al.: Use of New Narratives for COVID-19 Reporting: From 360° Videos to Ephemeral TikTok Videos in Online Media. In *Tripodos*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 47, p. 105-122. ISSN 1138-3305.

TikTok or Douyin. What Is the Difference? [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <<https://senior.ua/articles/tiktok-ili-douyin-v-chem-raznica>>.

Top Website Ranking. [online]. [2022-03-13]. Available at: <<https://www.similarweb.com/ru/top-websites/category/news-and-media/>>.

VÁZQUEZ-HERRERO, J. et al.: Let's Dance the News! How the News Media are Adapting to the Logic of TikTok. In *Journalism*, 2022, Vol. 23, No. 8, p. 1717-1735. ISSN 1464-8849. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1464884920969092>>.

XU, L. et al.: Research on the Causes of the "TikTok" App Becoming Popular and the Existing Problems. In *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 59-63. ISSN 2168-0787.

Authors



Assoc. Prof. Iryna Mudra

National University “Lviv Polytechnic”
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Lviv, 1-3 Kniazia Romana St.
UKRAINE
iryna.m.mudra@lpnu.com

Iryna Mudra is an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the National University, Lviv Polytechnic. Her research interests are management and marketing in mass media, public relations, modern press, and fashion and body image in mass media. She has published a monograph entitled *Marketing Strategies of the Modern Social-Political Newspapers in the Ukraine*.

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Kitsa

National University “Lviv Polytechnic”
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Lviv, 1-3 Kniazia Romana St.
UKRAINE
mariana.o.kitsa@lpnu.ua



Mariana Kitsa is an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the National University, Lviv Polytechnic. Her research interests include inequality advertising in Ukrainian printed media, gender representation in mass media, social networks and online media, information warfare. She is an author of a monograph entitled *Pathogenic Advertising in the Ukrainian Print Media* and 2 chapters in collective monographs. Mariana Kitsa has written more than 60 scientific articles.



Sunita Kumar, Shivi Khanna

The Relevance of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in the Consumer Buying Process in the Context of Persuasive Advertising

ABSTRACT

The understanding of the consumer's psyche has always been at the epicentre for targeted, niche-specific marketing. The marketers have used the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) framework to identify the "route" (central or peripheral) for advertising various products and services. This research tries to understand the ELM from multifactorial perspectives. The diverse responses of 300 respondents have been fed to Python 3.8.8 and various analyses have been carried out (Exploratory analysis, ANOVA, Co-relation) to understand the impacts. The outcomes show that gender and place of residence significantly affect the "route" taken by consumers. The analyses have identified and segregated the product and advertisement features that influence consumers taking either "route" while also finding that the ELM holds even in cases where respondents were exposed to persuasive advertising. The study results can help marketers understand their consumers' psyche and develop more appropriate advertising strategies.

KEY WORDS

Elaboration Likelihood Model. Consumer Buying Process. Central Route. Peripheral Route. Informative Advertising. Persuasive Advertising.

1 Introduction

When studying or attempting to predict consumer behaviour, individual traits can be a variable that may distinguish a person from the next while at the same time also allowing for grouping of persons with the same personality trait. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, studies of personality traits are particularly sizeable contributors in cases where they correlate with the aspect of consumer behaviour being studied.¹ Of these traits, two – the need for cognition and, contrastingly, the need for affect – are perhaps the traits that can tell most about consumer behaviour.² While persons with a need for cognition take joy in the act of engaging in deliberation and evaluation, those with a need for affect rely on the processing of emotions and feelings.

The different pathways that a consumer of a product/service may take in making a purchasing decision were established as part of the study undertaken by Cacioppo and Petty in 1986. They dubbed these types “routes” and used them to categorize customer preferences. The findings were used to divide purchasing behaviour into two categories: the “central route” taken by those who exhibit a high degree of elaboration likelihood and the “peripheral route” taken by those showing low degrees of elaboration likelihood.

Over the years, researchers have been working to decode buying behaviour and the thought process of making a purchasing choice. Marketers use this knowledge to understand better how their customers think and tailor their marketing strategies accordingly. The Elaboration Likelihood Model has been used to deduce the buyers’ thought process when purchasing. The research, however, is focused on evidence and scenarios from the 1980s and does not investigate whether demographic characteristics influence the response. The study does not highlight the features of products and advertisements preferred by users who take the central route over those who take the peripheral route. Furthermore, this study aims to see if ELM holds when customers are subjected to persuasive advertising.

2 Review of Literature

Cognitive Necessities vs Need for Affect

A potential relationship was investigated³ between people’s personality traits and their preferred medium of processing information, verbal or visual. Processing information might be similar on some level for all persons; however, the strategies, previous experience, and skills used to process data can be widely different from person to person.⁴ Some find it easier to process verbal information, like words and phrases, while some prefer visual information, like pictures. According to earlier research, some respond to and retain knowledge from stimuli better when exposed to such stimuli

¹ BURTON, S., et al.: A Scale for Measuring Attitude Toward Private Label Products and an Examination of Its Psychological and Behavioral Correlates. In *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1998, Vol. 26, No. 4, p. 293. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246926654_A_Scale_for_Measuring_Attitude_Toward_Private_Label_Products_and_an_Examination_of_Its_Psychological_and_Behavioral_Correlates>.

² HAUGTVEDT, C. P., PETTY, R. E., CACIOPPO, J. T.: Need for Cognition and Advertising: Understanding the Role of Personality Variables in Consumer Behavior. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1992, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 239. [online]. [2022-02-10]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223653300_Need_for_Cognition_and_Advertising_Understanding_the_Role_of_Personality_Variables_in_Consumer_Behavior>.

³ SOJKA, J. Z., GIESE, J. L.: The Influence of Personality Traits on the Processing of Visual and Verbal Information. In *Marketing Letters*, 2001, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 91. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226484036_The_Influence_of_Personality_Traits_on_the_Processing_of_Visual_and_Verbal_Information>.

⁴ MANTEL, S. P., KARDES, F. R.: The Role of Direction of Comparison, Attribute-Based Processing, and Attitude-Based Processing in Consumer Preference. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1999, Vol. 25, No. 4, p. 335. [online]. [2022-02-10]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24099014_The_Role_of_Direction_of_Comparison_Attribute-Based_Processing_and_Attitude-Based_Processing_in_Consumer_Preference>.

individually than as part of a group.⁵ Depending on the person in question, the message processing abilities differ and may even be swayed by factors like perceived value and pre-existing notions⁶, the quantity and quality of arguments regarding the stimuli⁷, the degree of distractions embedded in the environment⁸, knowledgeability⁹, and any recurrence of the stimuli in question.¹⁰ A relationship between personality traits and the preference for information processing can be helpful in advertising and in helping a brand communicate better with its consumers.¹¹ If brands can assess whether their audience processes verbal or visual cues or a combination of both, they can target the advertisements by tailoring them to the consumers' preferences. However, understanding whether a person takes in verbal or visual information is quite a task and not in the purview of marketers. Brands know their consumer's personality traits, whether they harbour a need for cognition or affect. Since the elements of advertisements that have no direct relation to the brand itself are dismissed as secondary cues, a relationship between these traits and the mode of processing information will aid brands in studying their customers and their potential customers better.¹²

Consumer behaviour is based on thoroughly understanding how people make choices.¹³ Motivation and ability are vital influencers, but information processing can also determine whether consumers react positively or negatively to specific messages. Messages that hold particular relevance in the minds of the receiver tend to be perceived better and are retained in memory for much longer than those that fail to establish any personal relevance¹⁴. Quite a few attempts have been made to design models that successfully categorize and, perhaps even,

⁵ PETTY, R. E., HARKINS, S. G., WILLIAMS, K. D.: The Effects of Group Diffusion of Cognitive Effort on Attitudes: An Information-processing View. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1980, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 81. [online]. [2022-03-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232509963_The_effects_of_group_diffusion_of_cognitive_effort_on_attitudes_An_information-processing_view>.

⁶ BURTON, S., BISWAS, A., NETEMEYER, R.: Effects of Alternative Nutrition Label Formats and Nutrition Reference Information on Consumer Perceptions, Comprehension, and Product Evaluations. In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 1994, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 36. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344877565_Effects_of_Alternative_Nutrition_Label_Formats_and_Nutrition_Reference_Information_on_Consumer_Perceptions_Comprehension_and_Product_Evaluations>.

⁷ PETTY, R. E., CACIOPPO, J. T.: The Effects of Involvement on Responses to Argument Quantity and Quality: Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1984, Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 69. [online]. [2022-01-28]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232578958_The_effects_of_involvement_on_responses_to_argument_quantity_and_quality_Central_and_peripheral_routes_to_persuasion>.

⁸ PETTY, R. E., WELLS, G. L., BROCK, T. C.: Distraction Can Enhance or Reduce Yielding to Propaganda: Thought Disruption Versus Effort Justification. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1976, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 874. [online]. [2022-02-25]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232546200_Distraction_Can_Enhance_or_Reduce_Yielding_to_Propaganda_Thought_Disruption_Versus_Effort_Justification>.

⁹ RHODES, N., WOOD, W.: Self-esteem and Intelligence Affect Influenceability: The Mediating Role of Message Reception. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 1992, Vol. 111, No. 1, p. 156. [online]. [2022-02-09]. Available at: <<https://www.gwern.net/docs/iq/1992-rhodes.pdf>>.

¹⁰ CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E.: Effects of Message Repetition and Position on Cognitive Response, Recall, and Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1979, Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 97. [online]. [2022-03-03]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232572343_Effects_of_message_repetition_and_position_on_cognitive_response_recall_and_persuasion>.

¹¹ CACIOPPO, J. T., GARDNER, W. L., BERNTSON, G. G.: The Affect System Has Parallel and Integrative Processing Components: Form Follows Function. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1999, Vol. 76, No. 5, p. 839. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232564098_The_Affect_System_Has_Parallel_and_Integrative_Processing_Components>.

¹² MCQUARRIE, E. F., MICK, D. G.: On Resonance: A Critical Pluralistic Inquiry into Advertising Rhetoric. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1992, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 180. [online]. [2022-02-16]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24098733_On_Resonance_A_Critical_Pluralistic_Inquiry_Into_Advertising_Rhetoric>.

¹³ WEGENER, D. T., CHIEN, Y. W.: Elaboration and Choice. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2013, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 543. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259142367_Elaboration_and_choice>.

¹⁴ STAFFORD, T. F.: Unintended thought, edited by James S. Uleman and John A. Bargh. The Guilford Press, New York, 1989. In *Psychology and Marketing*, 1994, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 85. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246866229_Unintended_thought_edited_by_James_S_Uleman_and_John_A_Bargh_The_Guilford_Press_New_York_1989>.

predict human behaviour. Evaluative decision-making processes were studied, and a model was developed with a framework involving judgment based on a dual-system approach.¹⁵ Instant gratification was also incorporated to perceive motivational behaviour in subjects who formed positive associations with objects or events that involved rewards.¹⁶

The need to communicate with consumers and do so effectively was pondered upon, and it was suggested that the audience's elaboration levels should be considered. The message characteristics should be altered accordingly to make information processing easier¹⁷. This can be determined by understanding whether the target audience needs cognition or it is driven by a need for affect. Once that is determined, based on the relationship established by¹⁸, the message can contain either a majority of words or images, respectively.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The study of a possible relationship between attitudes and consecutively resulting behaviours was first introduced in the field of social psychology,¹⁹ post which it was extensively worked on²⁰ and further refined as more studies were conducted on elements of the human psyche and its effect on human behaviour.²¹

As a part of a study, the various paths were identified that a consumer of a product/service might take in reaching a purchase decision.²² They termed these modes as "routes". They used them to categorize consumers' attitudes, using the results to organize purchase behaviour into two routes – the "central route" and the "peripheral route". Factors on the lines of consumer's motivation were considered to understand and learn about the features of a product/service and their ability to deduce the potential merits or demerits that the product/service would have on them.

When these conditions prove to be optimum, consumer motivation and their ability to engage in fruitful deduction are high. This is a situation where the authors suggest that the degree of "elaboration likelihood" of said consumer is also high. A high degree of elaboration likelihood

¹⁵ DHAR, R., GORLIN, M.: A Dual-system Framework to Understand Preference Construction Processes in Choice. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2013, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 528. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259142366_A_dual-system_framework_to_understand_preference_construction_processes_in_choice>.

¹⁶ AARTS, H., CUSTERS, R., MARIEN, H.: Preparing and Motivating Behavior Outside of Awareness. In *Science*, 2008, Vol. 319, No. 5870, p. 1639. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5494983_Preparing_and_Motivating_Behavior_Outside_of_Awareness>.

¹⁷ See: RUCKER, D. D., PETTY, R. E.: Increasing the Effectiveness of Communications to Consumers: Recommendations Based on Elaboration Likelihood and Attitude Certainty Perspectives. In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2006, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 39-52. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247837464_Increasing_the_Effectiveness_of_Communications_to_Consumers_Recommendations_Based_on_Elaboration_Likelihood_and_Attitude_Certainty_Perspectives>.

¹⁸ GIESE, J., SOJKA, J.: The Relationship Between Processing Styles and Self-Control Behavioral Characteristics. In *Marketing Letters*, 1998, Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 371. [online]. [2022-02-16]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226164361_The_Relationship_between_Processing_Styles_and_Self-Control_Behavioral_Characteristics>.

¹⁹ ROSS, E. A.: *Social Psychology*. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Ross/Ross_1919/Ross_1919_toc.html>.

²⁰ WICKER, A. W.: An Examination of the "Other Variables" Explanation of Attitude-behavior Inconsistency. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1971, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 18. [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232571670_An_Explanation_of_the_Other_Variables_of_explanation_of_Attitude-Behavior_Inconsistency>.

²¹ HIMMELFARB, S., EAGLY, A. H.: *Readings in Attitude Change*. New York : John Wiley & Sons, 1974. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232544066_Readings_in_attitude_change>; SHERMAN, S. J., FAZIO, R. H.: Parallels Between Attitudes and Traits as Predictors of Behaviour. In *Journal of Personality*, 1983, Vol. 51, No. 3, p. 308. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229735647_Parallals_between_attitudes_and_traits_as_predictors_of_behavior>.

²² CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E.: The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 1986, Vol. 19, p. 123. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270271600_The_Elaboration_Likelihood_Model_of_Persuasion>.

means that the consumer is engaged in heedful deliberation of what a product/service has to put forward and considers the cost of that product/service and whether it offers value for money. These consumers take what is termed as the “central route” in making their purchase decision. On the other end of the spectrum, if the conditions are such where they fail to induce any given consumer’s motivation or ability to engage in careful deliberation for the product/service, the authors claim that the degree of “elaboration likelihood” is low. A low degree of elaboration likelihood is associated with those consumers who base their decisions on external factors since they do not possess the motivation or the ability to be attentive to all product features. The route taken by them in their purchasing process has been called the “peripheral route”.²³

Specific implications can be drawn from both the routes helpful to marketers and businesspersons alike, since these provide a view into the consumer psyche, and the best way to advertise to them. Consumers taking the central route are motivated to learn and attempt to formulate associations between what is shown to them and what they remember from experience. These associations are then utilized to analyze the product/service; the conclusions drawn from past experiences, the associations formed, and the information obtained from the analysis are then conjointly studied to ascertain the consumer’s attitude or notion regarding the said product/service. Central routes tend to be long-standing in the consumer’s psyche since they are based upon past experiences, which are then associated with new inferences drawn by the consumer. Such conditions prove to be optimum in predicting consumer behaviour, especially if the associations are reiterated and are used to instil a sense of confidence in the consumer’s pre-existing notions. Those inclined to follow the peripheral route have minimal motivation to learn about the product/service offered and are thus more likely to avoid putting effort into thinking and reviewing their needs before deciding to make a purchase. These consumers do not attempt to form associations based on prior knowledge. Instead, they found their opinions and judgments on external cues, whether positive or negative, shown to them and drew superficial inferences based upon persuasive stimuli.

Cacioppo and Petty emphasized that the two routes, central and peripheral, are not two ends of a spectrum that can distinctly categorize consumers into mutually exclusive groups. Instead, the elaboration likelihood exists on a continuous dimension and depends on how a given consumer intercepts a message. This is furthered by studies wherein the levels of cognition of persons and the scores’ correlation with the beliefs formed and the attitudes perceived by said individuals were examined, finding the relationship to be positive.²⁴

Persuasive Advertising – How, What, and Why?

A dichotomy existed between two modes of advertising – informational and persuasive – wherein the infamous opinion was that informational advertising was helpful to consumers and was well accepted by the significant populace. Still, persuasive advertising was viewed to be manipulative and controlling²⁵. It was concluded by other researchers²⁶ that such a distinction was illogical, and the dichotomy was annulled with the claims that even informational advertisements were,

²³ CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E., MORRIS, K. J.: Effects of Need for Cognition on Message Evaluation, Recall, and Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1983, Vol. 45, No. 4, p. 805. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200772918_Effects_of_need_for_cognition_on_message_evaluation_recall_and_persuasion>.

²⁴ HAUGTVEDT, C. P., PETTY, R. E.: Personality and Persuasion: Need for Cognition Moderates the Persistence and Resistance of Attitude Changes. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1992, Vol. 63, No. 2, p. 308. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/211387425_Personality_and_Persuasion_Need_for_Cognition_Moderates_the_Persistence_and_Resistance_of_Attitude_Changes>.

²⁵ See: KOPALLE, P. K. et al.: The Effects of Advertised Quality Emphasis and Objective Quality on Sales. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2017, Vol. 81, No. 2, p. 114-126. [online]. [2022-01-01]. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2929012>.

²⁶ HUNT, S. D.: Informational vs. Persuasive Advertising: An Appraisal. In *Journal of Advertising*, 1976, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 5. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271944658_Informational_vs_Persuasive_Advertising_An_Appraisal>.

to some extent, persuasive since they provide the information to convince a buyer to make a purchase. So, if informative advertisements were so widely accepted, but were persuasive, then primarily, the purpose of all advertisements was to persuade essentially. Another significant conclusion is that there is no relation between the quantum of information and an advertisement's relevance or practical nature. The method to process information is different among people, so when viewed by other individuals, the same ad will be perceived to be different in informational quantity. Thus, informative and persuasive advertisements do not form a dichotomy but rather a continuum where one complements the other.

Even in the purview of persuasive advertising, it has been long argued that differentiation amidst products while advertising them sets two competitive products apart. This relationship was studied in industries where product differentiation is seemingly low but persuasive advertising is at its peak²⁷. Since the products are almost identical and have minimal differentiation in their features and benefits, persuasive advertising becomes the distinguishing element that sets the two products/services apart²⁸. Similarly, the advertisements turn informative when the case is for highly differentiated products and clearly distinguishing features. They also found a positive relationship between exposure to persuasive advertising and the consumer's readiness to pay. The correlation between product differentiation and persuasive advertising was further elaborated²⁹ by researchers in recent years, and finding that differentiation affects a firm's advertising choices. They take the study a step further by finding that, in a situation where a product/service sees an increase in its valuation, a firm is most likely to hike up the persuasive advertising owing to the subsequent hike in the marginal profit that the firm sees through its advertising efforts. It is established that the cost of advertising spent in attracting new consumers can be considered equal to any value over the marginal cost of the product/service in question. It was first discerned that a relationship in the form of an inverted U-shaped curve existed between the intensity of persuasive advertising and the market share³⁰. The model has been studied further and still holds, giving meaning to the fact that persuasive advertising and relative market share reach a peak that the firm should determine, or they can risk burnout and lose that share of the market. Reverse causality was established³¹ and further elaborated on, claiming that market share can also be impacted by the marginal costs involved in advertising³². When that increases, the perceived quality of advertisements goes down, thus giving way to a market that is more competitive in its make.

²⁷ VON DER FEHR, N. H. M., STEVIK, K.: Persuasive Advertising and Product Differentiation. In *Southern Economic Journal*, 1998, Vol. 65, No. 1, p. 113. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46568626_Persuasive_Advertising_and_Product_Differentiation>.

²⁸ SCHERER, F. M., ROSS, D. R.: *Industrial market structure and economic performance*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990, p. 25. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311718167_Industrial_Market_Structure_and_Economic_Performance>.

²⁹ JIANG, B., SRINIVASAN, K.: Pricing and Persuasive Advertising in a Differentiated Market. In *Marketing Letters*, 2015, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 579. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2592837>.

³⁰ See: KALDOR, N., SILVERMAN, R.: *A Statistical Analysis of Advertising Expenditure and of the Revenue of the Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948, p. 32. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://books.google.co.in/books?id=DUG7AAAAIAAJ&pg=PR3&lpg=PR3&dq=A+statistical+analysis+of+advertising+expenditure+and+of+the+revenue+of+the+press.+Cambridge+University+Press,+1948&source=bl&ots=SrWuSeJHOK&sig=ACfU3U0JSpjDyyNaQopT1ZJkWyo2IPvhdA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjCz67y-4H7AhV6TmwGHQ1YAUUQ6AF6BAGVEAM#v=onepage&q=A%20statistical%20analysis%20of%20advertising%20expenditure%20and%20of%20the%20revenue%20of%20the%20press.%20Cambridge%20University%20Press%2C1948&f=false>>.

³¹ See: BAKHTAWAR, B., LATIF, F., KAMAL, A.: An Analysis of Competition and Displacement of Business Among Media Forms in the Advertising Media Market of Pakistan. In *Lahore Journal of Business*, 2021, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 121-147. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357477704_An_Analysis_of_Competition_and_Displacement_of_Business_Among_Media_Forms_in_the_Advertising_Media_Market_of_Pakistan>.

³² HÄCKNER, J., NYBERG, S.: *Price Competition, Advertising and Media Market Concentration*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247240509_Price_Competition_Advertising_and_Media_Market_Concentration>.

It was found that scepticism towards persuasive advertising, or even advertising in general, has been around in the minds of consumers for a sizeable amount of time now, some consumer interest groups and policymakers even believe that scepticism is a healthy practice that keeps marketers in check and ensures that no one gets manipulated by any messages³³. This ideology was challenged with findings that consumer scepticism can turn especially harmful when consumers begin to be dubious of direct advertising³⁴. It leads to the consumer assuming that truthful, persuasive advertising is simply “too good to be true” and results in a cynical thought process that plagues the entire audience.

3 Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- To establish a relationship between the routes identified in the ELM and consumer demographics.
- To identify which aspects of persuasive advertising appeal to consumers' need for cognition versus their need for affect.
- To analyze the route opted for by consumers when exposed to persuasive advertising.

Statements of Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant difference in the route taken among male and female consumers.

H₂: There is a significant difference between the route taken by consumers in different age groups.

H₃: There is a significant difference in the route taken by consumers in urban areas and consumers in rural areas.

H₄: There is a significant difference in the route taken among consumers with varying income levels.

H₅: There is a relationship between consumers' level of cognition and the product features they find influential.

H₆: There is a relationship between consumers' level of cognition and the advertisement features they find influential.

H₇: There is a significant difference in the route taken by consumers who prefer informative advertising and consumers who prefer persuasive advertising.

Sampling Size, Sampling Technique, and Data Collection

The study included 300 participants as its sample. The participants were diverse, identifying to different genders, of varying ages, living in other cities, towns, and villages, and having dissimilar monthly incomes. A diversified sample was chosen for the study since the levels of cognition were to be studied in the context of varied demographic characteristics. The sampling technique used for the analysis was convenience sampling since the responses were meant to be diverse and not limited to a specific group of persons. The study is limited to India, although participants were from various cities, towns, and villages.

The study relies on primary data collected through a questionnaire that was disseminated among the participants. The questionnaire included five sections that the participants were asked to answer – demographics, 18-NCS, product features, advertisement features,

³³ BERMEJO BERROS, J.: The New Persuasive Advertising Strategies through Induction Levels of Psychological Processing. In *Mediterranean Journal of Communication*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 217. [online]. [2022-02-23]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354998141_The_new_persuasive_advertising_strategies_through_induction_levels_of_psychological_processing>.

³⁴ POLLAY, R. W., MITTAL, B.: Here's the Beef: Factors, Determinants, and Segments in Consumer Criticism of Advertising. In *Journal of Marketing*, 1973, Vol. 57, No. 3, p. 99. [online]. [2022-02-23]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329447112_Here%27s_the_Beef_Factors_Determinants_and_Segments_in_Consumer_Criticism_of_Advertising>.

and advertisement appeal. The questionnaire was a mix of option-based replies as well as responses on a 5-point scale. The 18-NCS included eighteen statements, nine of which were positively worded while nine were negatively worded. Reverse coding was performed post the collection to streamline all responses.

4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data and Hypotheses mapping

Question	Routes	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7
Gender.	NA	1						
Age.	NA		1					
Residence.	NA			1				
Income level per month.	NA				1			
I prefer complex to simple problems.	18-NCS scores. Aggregate below 54 - Peripheral route; above 54 - Central route	1	1	1	1			
I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires much thinking.		1	1	1	1			
Thinking is not my idea of fun.		1	1	1	1			
I would instead do something that requires little thought than something sure to challenge my thinking abilities.		1	1	1	1			
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is likely a chance I will have to think in-depth about something.		1	1	1	1			
I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.		1	1	1	1			
I only think as hard as I have to.		1	1	1	1			
I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones.		1	1	1	1			
I like tasks that require little thought once I've learned them.		1	1	1	1			
The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.		1	1	1	1			
I enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.		1	1	1	1			
Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.		1	1	1	1			
I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.		1	1	1	1			
The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.		1	1	1	1			
I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.		1	1	1	1			
I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that requires much mental effort.		1	1	1	1			
It's enough for me that something gets the job done; I don't care how or why it works.		1	1	1	1			
I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.		1	1	1	1			
My purchase decisions are influenced by the features offered (Price, Range of features, Personal benefit)	Central					1		
My purchase decisions are influenced by my inferences from the advertisements I see (Look-and-feel, Brand credibility, Celebrity endorsements, Word-of-mouth)	Peripheral						1	

Informational value (need for cognition)	Central	1
Degree of personalization (need for cognition)	Central	1
Differentiation from competitor's products (need for cognition)	Central	1
Emotional appeal (need for affect)	Peripheral	1
Storytelling ability (need for affect)	Peripheral	1
Advertisement theme and style of editing (need for affect)	Peripheral	1
Informative Advertisement 1 (Image shown)	Central	1
Persuasive Advertisement 1 (Image shown)	Peripheral	1
Informative Advertisement 2 (Image shown)	Central	1
Persuasive Advertisement 2 (Image shown)	Peripheral	1
Informative Advertisement 3 (Image shown)	Central	1
Persuasive Advertisement 3 (Image shown)	Peripheral	1

TABLE 1: Mapping of the Hypothesis with the Data Collected

Source: own processing, 2022

Feature engineering: For analysis, a new feature, 'NCS_SCORE', has been derived by aggregating 18-NCS scores. The values below 54 suggest the Peripheral route and above 54 suggest the Central route.

Technology and Techniques: Python (3.8.8) has been used for analysis of multiple techniques – Exploratory analysis, ANOVA, Co-relations.

High-level analysis of 'NCS_SCORE': The following figure shows the distribution along with the cut-off vertical line drawn at 54. The maximum number of respondents, 192 (64%), have taken the Central route, and 108 (36%) have taken the Peripheral route (see fig. 1).

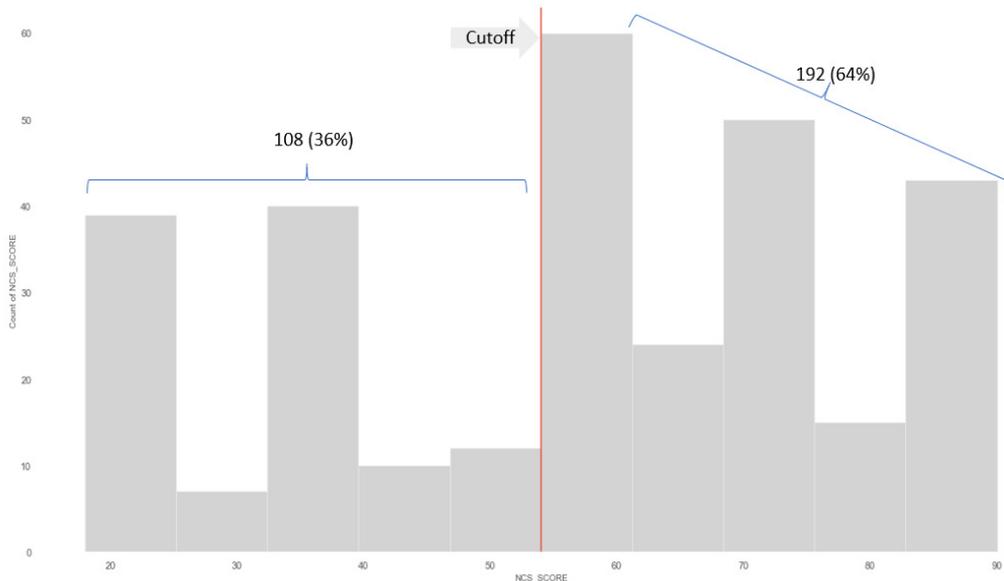


FIGURE 1: Population Distribution

Source: own processing, 2022

Testing Hypothesis 1: The total number of participants is almost equal across both female and male groups. The average score of the female group is aligned with the Central route and the average score of the male group is aligned with the Peripheral route (see fig. 2).

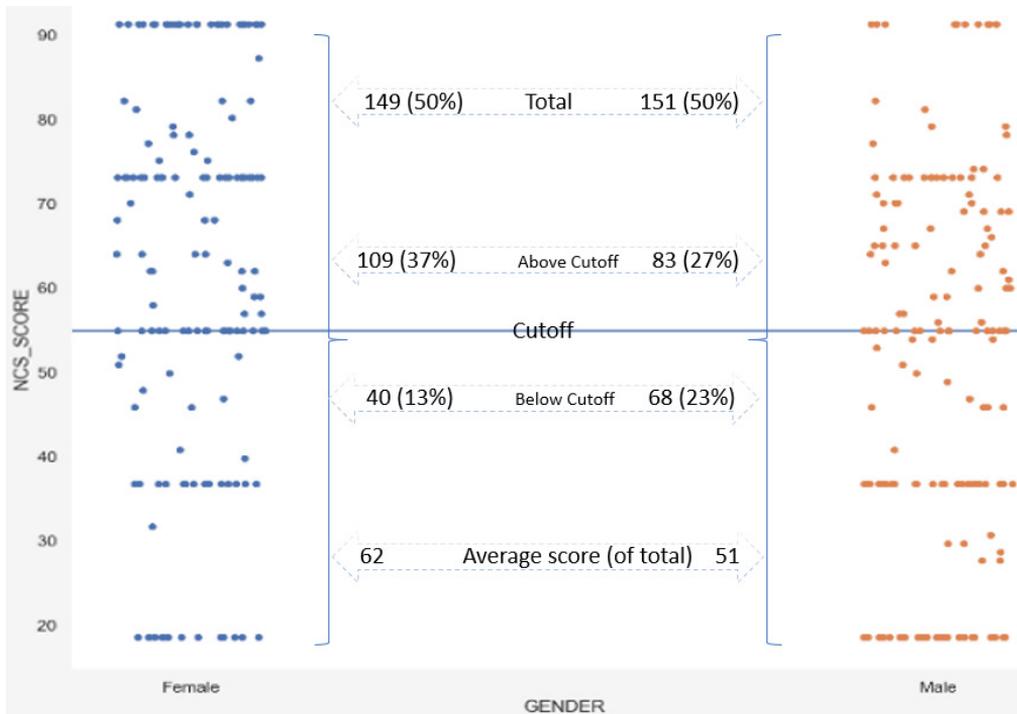


FIGURE 2: Population Distribution – Gender

Source: own processing, 2022

The descriptive analysis suggests a difference between both groups. This can be seen in the following ANOVA table with a p value=0.00.

Overall model F (1, 298) = 17.53, p = 0.00				
	sum_sq	df	F	PR(>F)
C(GENDER)	8404.28	1.0	17.53	3.73e-05
Residual	142900.29	298.0	NaN	NaN

TABLE 2: : Hypothesis 1 – ANOVA

Source: own processing, 2022

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and H1 is accepted. **In business terms, gender does matter for the route taken.**

Testing Hypothesis 2: The maximum participants are for the ‘18-25’ age group, minimum for the ‘30-40’ age group, and almost equal across other groups. The average score of all groups is near the Peripheral and Central route boundary with a deviation of -1 to +4 (see fig. 3). It looks like the age groups do not matter for the route taken.



FIGURE 3: Population Distribution – Age Groups

Source: own processing, 2022

Overall model $F(4, 295) = 0.50, p = 0.74$

	sum_sq	df	F	PR(>F)
C(GENDER)	1019.87	4.0	0.5	0.74
Residual	150284.70	295.0	NaN	NaN

TABLE 3: Hypothesis 2 – ANOVA

Source: own processing, 2022

The following ANOVA table with a p-value of 0.74 suggests non-difference among groups with a p-value greater than 0.05. **Hence the null hypothesis is accepted, and H2 is rejected.**

Testing Hypothesis 3: The total number of participants is dominated by the urban group. The average score of the urban group leans towards the Central route and the average score of the rural group is towards the Peripheral route (see fig. 4).

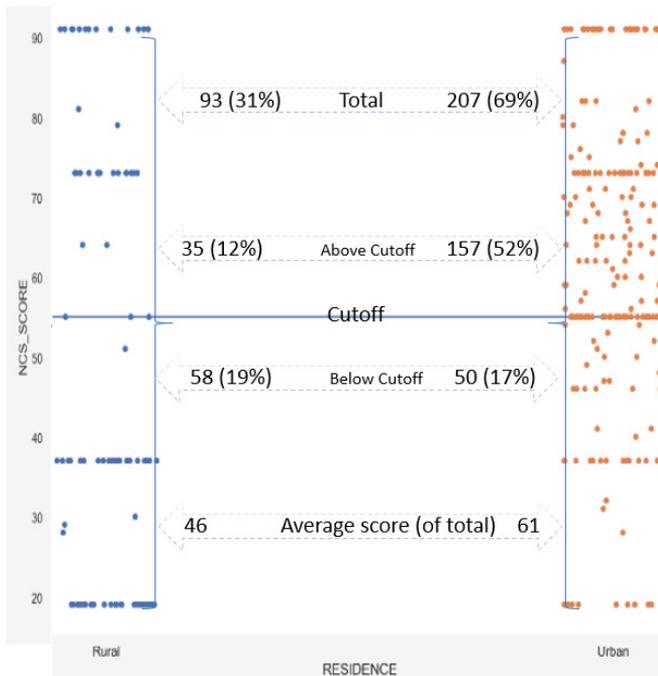


FIGURE 4: Population Distribution – Place of Residence

Source: own processing, 2022

Overall model $F(1, 298) = 31.62, p = 0.00$

	sum_sq	df	F	PR(>F)
C(GENDER)	14515.75	1.0	31.62	4.31e-08
Residual	136788.82	298.0	NaN	NaN

TABLE 4: Hypothesis 3 – ANOVA

Source: own processing, 2022

The descriptive analysis suggests a difference between both groups. The following ANOVA table with a p-value of 0.00 indicates a difference between both groups. **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and H3 is accepted.**

Testing Hypothesis 4: The maximum participants are for the '< ₹ 30,000' income group, minimum for '₹60,000 - ₹ 90,000' income group, and almost equal across other groups. The average score of all groups is near the Peripheral and Central route boundary with a deviation of -3 to +8 (see fig. 5).

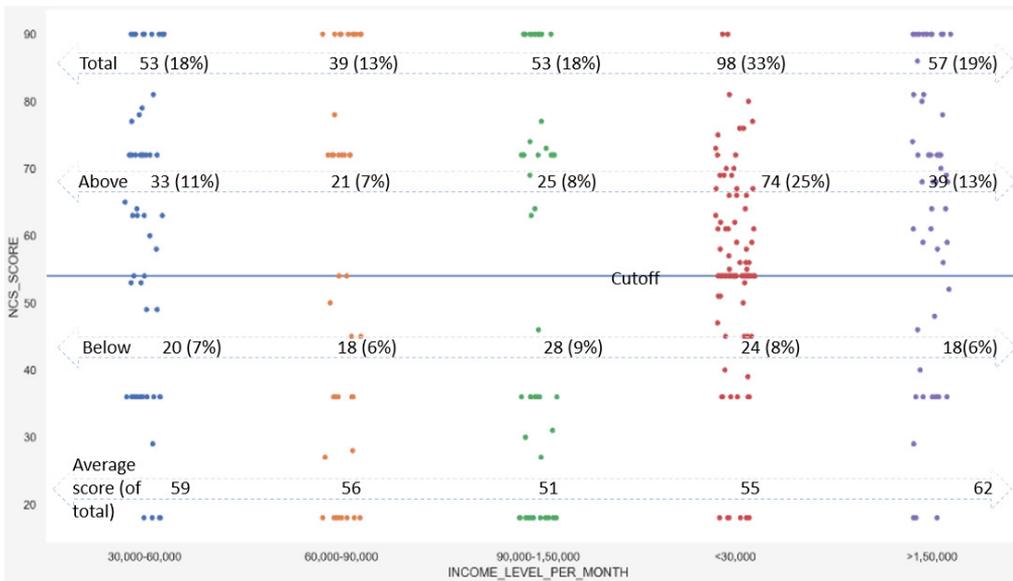


FIGURE 5: Population Distribution – Income Level

Source: own processing, 2022

Overall model $F(4, 295) = 2.10, p = 0.08$

	sum_sq	df	F	PR(>F)
C(GENDER)	4184.13	4.0	2.1	0.08
Residual	147120.44	295.0	NaN	NaN

TABLE 5: Hypothesis 4 – ANOVA

Source: own processing, 2022

The following ANOVA table with a p-value of 0.08 suggests a non-difference among groups with a p-value greater than 0.05. **Hence the null hypothesis is accepted, and H4 is rejected.**

Product feature	Pearson correlation	p-value
Price	0.83	0.00
Range of features	0.87	0.00
Personal benefit	0.86	0.00
Look-and-feel	-0.76	0.00
Brand credibility	-0.78	0.00
Celebrity endorsements	-0.84	0.00
Word-of-mouth	-0.78	0.00

TABLE 6: Hypothesis 5 – correlation

Source: own processing, 2022

Testing Hypothesis 5: As per mapping shown in table 1, cognition (NCS_SCORE) and product features have been tested for correlations as follows.

The results show a high degree of positive correlation between the NCS_SCORE and product features like price, range of features, and personal benefit. Therefore, the higher a respondent scored (higher cognition), the more influential they found “informative” product features mentioned above. Meanwhile, there is a high degree of negative correlation between the NCS_SCORE and product features like look-and-feel, brand credibility, celebrity endorsements,

and word-of-mouth. Therefore, respondents with a low score (lower cognition) found those mentioned above “external cues” more influential. Taken together, these results clearly show that there exists a relation between consumers’ level of cognition and the product features they find meaningful. **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and H5 is accepted.**

Advertisement feature	Pearson correlation	p-value
Informational value	0.86	0.00
Degree of personalization	0.85	0.00
Differentiation from competitor’s products	0.85	0.00
Emotional appeal	-0.76	0.00
Storytelling ability	-0.81	0.00
Advertisement theme and style of editing	-0.77	0.00

TABLE 7: Hypothesis 6 – correlation

Source: own processing, 2022

Testing Hypothesis 6: As per mapping shown in table 1, cognition (NCS_SCORE) and advertisement features have been tested for correlations as follows.

The results show a high degree of positive correlation between the NCS_SCORE and advertisement features like informational value, degree of personalization, and differentiation. Therefore, the higher a respondent scored (higher cognition), the more influential they found “informative” advertisement features mentioned above. Meanwhile, there is a high degree of negative correlation between the NCS_SCORE and advertisement features like emotional appeal, storytelling ability, and advertisement theme and editing style. Therefore, respondents with a low score (lower cognition) found those mentioned above “external cues” more influential. Taken together, these results clearly show that there exists a relation between consumers’ level of cognition and the advertisement features they find effective. **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and H6 is accepted.**

Product feature	Pearson correlation	p-value
	0.81	0.00
	0.83	0.00
	0.82	0.00
	-0.77	0.00
	-0.77	0.00

	-0.79	0.00
---	-------	------

TABLE 8: Hypothesis 7 product mapping – correlation

Source: own processing, 2022

Testing Hypothesis 7: As per mapping shown in table 1, cognition (NCS_SCORE) with informative and persuasive advertising have been tested for correlations as follows.

The results show a high degree of positive correlation between the NCS_SCORE and the informative advertisements. Therefore, the higher a respondent scored (higher cognition), the more appealing they found the informative advertisements. Meanwhile, there is a high degree of negative correlation between the NCS_SCORE and the persuasive advertisements. Therefore, respondents with a low score (lower cognition) found persuasive advertisements more influential. Taken together, these results clearly show that there exists a relation between consumers' level of cognition and the type of advertisement they find appealing. **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and H7 is accepted.**

Objective	Hypothesis	Test result
Objective 1	Hypothesis 1	Accepted
	Hypothesis 2	Rejected
	Hypothesis 3	Accepted
	Hypothesis 4	Rejected
Objective 2	Hypothesis 5	Accepted
	Hypothesis 6	Accepted
Objective 3	Hypothesis 7	Accepted

TABLE 9: Objectives and Results of Corresponding Hypotheses

Source: own processing, 2022

5 Summary of Findings

The 18-NCS test for cognition assessed the participants' level of cognition and allowed the understanding of the participants' overall psyche. Out of the entire sample, 192 (64%) had the predisposition to take the central route, highlighting that the sample had a relatively high need for cognition rather than a need for affect. Consumer demographics allowed for further insight into the characteristics that might or might not affect their need for cognition versus their need for affect. The analysis showed that the route taken by consumers had seemingly no difference in the context of the age and income levels of the respondents. This is an unanticipated result since these are the two foremost identifying characteristics when consumer demographics are considered. Gender and place of residence seem to cause a difference in the route taken by consumers. Females tended to lean towards the central route, while males tended to take the peripheral route. Likewise, urban consumers have a relatively higher need for cognition when compared to their rural counterparts.

The study further analyzed the elements of products and advertisements that intrigue a given consumer's need for cognition versus those elements that appeal to their need for affect. The analysis found that factors, such as price, range of features, personal benefit, informational value, degree of personalization, and differentiation from consumers' products were positively correlated to the total score. Therefore, the higher the NCS_SCORE (need for cognition, central

route), the more favoured these elements were in the minds of the consumers; those who had low scores (need for affect, peripheral route) tended to overlook these elements. It was also found that look-and-feel, brand credibility, celebrity endorsements, word-of-mouth, emotional appeal, storytelling ability, and advertisement theme and style of editing were negatively related to the NCS_SCORE. Hence, those consumers who scored low (need for affect, peripheral route) favoured these elements more; those with high scores (need for cognition, central route) tended to overlook these elements.

Finally, the research aimed to test the potency of persuasive advertising. This section showed that scores on the 18-NCS had a positive correlation with informative advertisements and a negative correlation with persuasive advertisements. This means that consumers with a need for cognition favoured informative advertisements while those with a need for affect leaned towards persuasive advertisements. Therefore, exposure to persuasive advertisements did not compel consumers with a need for cognition to take the peripheral route rather than the central route.

5.1 Limitations and Future Scope

The Elaboration Likelihood Model is qualitative and depends on variables like “motivation” and “ability to determine the level of elaboration required” and, therefore, the “route” taken. The responses are based on consumers’ opinions of their purchase behaviour and are void of basis or proof. Persuasive advertising is subjective and might not have the same mental effect on all viewers. Hence, the responses for rating its influence are subjective and based entirely upon the discretion of the consumers. The responses were collected through the online medium, and interaction with respondents was minimal. This could affect the reliability of the answers.

Future studies can be conducted on a broader scale and focus on responses from outside of India. Emphasis can be placed on qualitative demographics analysis to determine why the route taken does not differ for age and gender but the place of residence and monthly income. Persuasive advertising can be delved deeper into to assess how those with high cognition can also be swayed from their perspective. The method of content creation may be broken down and analyzed strata-wise for this purpose.

6 Conclusion

The Elaboration Likelihood Model helped to understand the consumer buying process and formulate a relevant marketing strategy as follows:

- For the two routes, age and income level did not play a significant role. The gender and place of residence were found to be particularly tied to consumers’ level of cognition.
- Aspects of products and advertising that appeal to consumers’ need for cognition (price, range of features, personal benefit, informational value, degree of personalization, and differentiation from consumers’ products) versus their need for affect (look-and-feel, brand credibility, celebrity endorsements, word-of-mouth, emotional appeal, storytelling ability, and advertisement theme and style of editing) were successfully identified.
- The consumers with a need for cognition did not change their perception even after they were exposed to persuasive advertising.

It can thus be concluded that the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) does have significant relevance in the consumer buying process today. This holds even in the case of exposure to persuasive advertising. Preferred product and advertisement features can be identified according to the route chosen by consumers, and the proper advertising format can also be determined through ELM.

Literature and Sources:

AARTS, H., CUSTERS, R., MARIEN, H.: Preparing and Motivating Behavior Outside of Awareness. In *Science*, 2008, Vol. 319, No. 5870, p. 1639. ISSN 0036-8075. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5494983_Preparing_and_Motivating_Behavior_Outside_of_Awareness>.

AJZEN, I., FISHBEIN, M.: Attitudes and Normative Beliefs as Factors Influencing Behavioral Intentions. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1972, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 1-9. ISSN 1939-1315. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232529355_Attitudes_and_Normative_Beliefs_as_Factors_Influencing_Behavioral_Intentions>.

BAKHTAWAR, B., LATIF, F., KAMAL, A.: An Analysis of Competition and Displacement of Business Among Media Forms in the Advertising Media Market of Pakistan. In *Lahore Journal of Business*, 2021, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 121-147. ISSN 2223-0025. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357477704_An_Analysis_of_Competition_and_Displacement_of_Business_Among_Media_Forms_in_the_Advertising_Media_Market_of_Pakistan>.

BERMEJO BERROS, J.: The New Persuasive Advertising Strategies through Induction Levels of Psychological Processing. In *Mediterranean Journal of Communication*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 217-239. ISSN 1989-872X. [online]. [2022-02-23]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354998141_The_new_persuasive_advertising_strategies_through_induction_levels_of_psychological_processing>.

BURTON, S., BISWAS, A., NETEMEYER, R.: Effects of Alternative Nutrition Label Formats and Nutrition Reference Information on Consumer Perceptions, Comprehension, and Product Evaluations. In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 1994, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 36-47. ISSN 0748-6766. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344877565_Effects_of_Alternative_Nutrition_Label_Formats_and_Nutrition_Reference_Information_on_Consumer_Perceptions_Comprehension_and_Product_Evaluations>.

BURTON, S. et al.: A Scale for Measuring Attitude Toward Private Label Products and an Examination of its Psychological and Behavioral Correlates. In *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1998, Vol. 26, No. 4, p. 293-306. ISSN 1552-7824. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246926654_A_Scale_for_Measuring_Attitude_Toward_Private_Label_Products_and_an_Examination_of_Its_Psychological_and_Behavioral_Correlate>.

CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E.: Effects of Message Repetition and Position on Cognitive Response, Recall, and Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1979, Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 97-109. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-03-03]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232572343_Effects_of_message_repetition_and_position_on_cognitive_response_recall_and_persuasion>.

CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E.: The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 1986, Vol. 19, p. 123-205. ISSN 0065-2601. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270271600_The_Elaboration_Likelihood_Model_of_Persuasion>.

CACIOPPO, J. T., GARDNER, W. L., BERNTSON, G. G.: The Affect System Has Parallel and Integrative Processing Components: Form Follows Function. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1999, Vol. 76, No. 5, p. 839-855. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232564098_The_Affect_System_Has_Parallel_and_Integrative_Processing_Components>.

CACIOPPO, J. T., PETTY, R. E., MORRIS, K. J.: Effects of Need for Cognition on Message Evaluation, Recall, and Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1983, Vol. 45, No. 4, p. 805-818. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200772918_Effects_of_need_for_cognition_on_message_evaluation_recall_and_persuasion>.

- DHAR, R., GORLIN, M.: A Dual-system Framework to Understand Preference Construction Processes in Choice. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2013, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 528-542. ISSN 1532-7663. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259142366_A_dual-system_framework_to_understand_preference_construction_processes_in_choice>.
- GIESE, J., SOJKA, J.: The Relationship Between Processing Styles and Self-Control Behavioral Characteristics. In *Marketing Letters*, 1998, Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 371-382. ISSN 1573-059X. [online]. [2022-02-16]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226164361_The_Relationship_between_Processing_Styles_and_Self-Control_Behavioral_Characteristics>.
- HÄCKNER, J., NYBERG, S.: *Price Competition, Advertising and Media Market Concentration*. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247240509_Price_Competition_Advertising_and_Media_Market_Concentration>.
- HAUGTVEDT, C. P., PETTY, R. E.: Personality and Persuasion: Need for Cognition Moderates the Persistence and Resistance of Attitude Changes. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1992, Vol. 63, No. 2, p. 308-319. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/211387425_Personality_and_Persuasion_Need_for_Cognition_Moderates_the_Persistence_and_Resistance_of_Attitude_Changes>.
- HAUGTVEDT, C. P., PETTY, R. E., CACIOPPO, J. T.: Need for Cognition and Advertising: Understanding the Role of Personality Variables in Consumer Behavior. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1992, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 239-260. ISSN 1532-7663. [online]. [2022-02-10]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223653300_Need_for_Cognition_and_Advertising_Understanding_the_Role_of_Personality_Variables_in_Consumer_Behavior>.
- HIMMELFARB, S., EAGLY, A. H.: *Readings in Attitude Change*. New York : John Wiley & Sons, 1974. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232544066_Readings_in_attitude_change>.
- HUNT, S. D.: Informational vs. Persuasive Advertising: An Appraisal. In *Journal of Advertising*, 1976, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 5-8. ISSN 1557-7805. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271944658_Informational_vs_Persuasive_Advertising_An_Appraisal>.
- JIANG, B., SRINIVASAN, K.: Pricing and Persuasive Advertising in a Differentiated Market. In *Marketing Letters*, 2015, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 579-588. ISSN 0923-0645. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2592837>.
- KALDOR, N., SILVERMAN, R.: *A Statistical Analysis of Advertising Expenditure and of the Revenue of the Press*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1948. [online]. [2022-02-22]. Available at: <<https://books.google.co.in/books?id=DUg7AAAAIAAJ&pg=PR3&lpg=PR3&dq=A+statistical+analysis+of+advertising+expenditure+and+of+the+revenue+of+the+press.+Cambridge+University+Press,1948&source=bl&ots=SrWuSeJHOk&sig=ACfU3U0JSpjDyyNaQopT1ZJkWyo2IPvhda&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjCz67y-4H7AhV6TmwGHQ1YAuUQ6AF6BAGVEAM#v=onepage&q=A%20statistical%20analysis%20of%20advertising%20expenditure%20and%20of%20the%20revenue%20of%20the%20press.%20Cambridge%20University%20Press%2C1948&f=false>>.
- KOPALLE, P. K. et al.: The Effects of Advertised Quality Emphasis and Objective Quality on Sales. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2017, Vol. 81, No. 2, p. 114-126. ISSN 1547-7185. [online]. [2022-01-01]. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2929012>.
- MANTEL, S. P., KARDES, F. R.: The Role of Direction of Comparison, Attribute-Based Processing, and Attitude-Based Processing in Consumer Preference. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1999, Vol. 25, No. 4, p. 335-352. ISSN 0093-5301. [online]. [2022-02-10]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24099014_The_Role_of_Direction_of_Comparison_Attribute-Based_Processing_and_Attitude-Based_Processing_in_Consumer_Preference>.

MCQUARRIE, E. F., MICK, D. G.: On Resonance: A Critical Pluralistic Inquiry into Advertising Rhetoric. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1992, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 180-197. ISSN 1537-5277. [online]. [2022-02-16]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24098733_On_Resonance_A_Critical_Pluralistic_Inquiry_Into_Advertising_Rhetoric>.

PETTY, R. E., CACIOPPO, J. T.: The Effects of Involvement on Responses to Argument Quantity and Quality: Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1984, Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 69-81. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-01-28]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232578958_The_effects_of_involvement_on_responses_to_argument_quantity_and_quality_Central_and_peripheral_routes_to_persuasion>.

PETTY, R. E., HARKINS, S. G., WILLIAMS, K. D.: The Effects of Group Diffusion of Cognitive Effort on Attitudes: An Information-processing View. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1980, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 81-92. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-03-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232509963_The_effects_of_group_diffusion_of_cognitive_effort_on_attitudes_An_information-processing_view>.

PETTY, R. E., WELLS, G. L., BROCK, T. C.: Distraction Can Enhance or Reduce Yielding to Propaganda: Thought Disruption versus Effort Justification. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1976, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 874-884. ISSN 0022-3514. [online]. [2022-02-25]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232546200_Distraction_Can_Enhance_or_Reduce_Yielding_to_Propaganda_Thought_Disruption_Versus_Effort_Justification>.

POLLAY, R. W., MITTAL, B.: Here's the Beef: Factors, Determinants, and Segments in Consumer Criticism of Advertising. In *Journal of Marketing*, 1973, Vol. 57, No. 3, p. 99-114. ISSN 0022-2429. [online]. [2022-02-23]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329447112_Here%27s_the_Beef_Factors_Determinants_and_Segments_in_Consumer_Criticism_of_Advertising>.

RHODES, N., WOOD, W.: Self-esteem and Intelligence Affect Influenceability: The Mediating Role of Message Reception. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 1992, Vol. 111, No. 1, p. 156-171. ISSN 1939-1455. [online]. [2022-02-09]. Available at: <<https://www.gwern.net/docs/iq/1992-rhodes.pdf>>.

ROSS, E. A.: *Social Psychology*. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Ross/Ross_1919/Ross_1919_toc.html>.

RUCKER, D. D., PETTY, R. E.: Increasing the Effectiveness of Communications to Consumers: Recommendations Based on Elaboration Likelihood and Attitude Certainty Perspectives. In *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2006, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 39-52. ISSN 0743-9156. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247837464_Increasing_the_Effectiveness_of_Communications_to_Consumers_Recommendations_Based_on_Elaboration_Likelihood_and_Attitude_Certainty_Perspectives>.

SCHERER, F. M., ROSS, D. R.: *Industrial market structure and economic performance*. Boston, Massachusetts : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311718167_Industrial_Market_Structure_and_Economic_Performance>.

SHERMAN, S. J., FAZIO, R. H.: Parallels Between Attitudes and Traits as Predictors of Behaviour. In *Journal of Personality*, 1983, Vol. 51, No. 3, p. 308-345. ISSN 1467-6494. [online]. [2022-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229735647_Parallals_between_attitudes_and_traits_as_predictors_of_behavior>.

SOJKA, J. Z., GIESE, J. L.: The Influence of Personality Traits on the Processing of Visual and Verbal Information. In *Marketing Letters*, 2002, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 91-106. ISSN 1573-059X. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226484036_The_Influence_of_Personality_Traits_on_the_Processing_of_Visual_and_Verbal_Information>.

STAFFORD, T. F.: Unintended thought, edited by James S. Uleman and John A. Bargh. The Guilford Press, New York, 1989. In *Psychology and Marketing*, 1994, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 85-89. [online]. [2022-02-14]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246866229_Unintended_thought_edited_by_James_S_Uleman_and_John_A_Bargh_The_Guilford_Press_New_York_1989>.

VON DER FEHR, N. H. M., STEVIK, K.: Persuasive Advertising and Product Differentiation. In *Southern Economic Journal*, 1998, Vol. 65, No. 1, p. 113-126. ISSN 2325-8012. [online]. [2022-02-19]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46568626_Persuasive_Advertising_and_Product_Differentiation>.

WEGENER, D. T., CHIEN, Y. W.: Elaboration and Choice. In *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2013, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 543-551. ISSN 1532-7663. [online]. [2022-02-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259142367_Elaboration_and_choice>.

WICKER, A. W.: An Examination of the "Other Variables" Explanation of Attitude-behavior Inconsistency. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1971, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 18-30. ISSN 1939-1315. [online]. [2022-02-15]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232571670_An_Explanation_of_the_Other_Variables_of_explanation_of_Attitude-Behavior_Inconsistency>.

Authors



Assoc. Prof. Sunita Kumar

Christ University,
School of Business and Management,
Bannerghatta Campus,
Karnataka, 560076
INDIA
sunita.kumar@christuniversity.in

Dr. Sunita Kumar is an Associate Professor in School of Business and Management at Christ University, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore, India. Her doctoral thesis was on brand strategies in retail marketing. She has published articles in various international and national refereed journals. Her areas of research interests include social media marketing, branding, advertising and neuromarketing. She has chaired various international conferences and was a keynote speaker.

Assoc. Prof. Shivi Khanna

Christ University,
School of Business and Management,
Bannerghatta Campus,
Karnataka, 560076
INDIA
shivi.khanna@christuniversity.in



Shivi Khanna is an Associate Professor in the School of Business and Management at Christ University, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore, India. She has completed her PhD in corporate structure determinants in Indian companies. She has published articles in various international and national refereed journals. Her areas of research interest include Corporate Finance, environmental sustainability and social media usage.



Martin Uhlík, Jaroslav Bednárik, Martin Solík, Juliána Mináriková

The Use of Communication Tools in Human Resources Marketing and the Role of Critical Thinking in This Process

ABSTRACT

The study deals with the issue of using communication tools in HR marketing for effective human resource management. The aim of the study is to outline a practical view of the possibilities of application of individual communication tools that can be used by HR managers in achieving the set goal, which is to have a sufficient amount of quality and a qualified workforce. The study also aims to highlight the importance of critical thinking by employees in conjunction with recognition of their work, a tool that helps to increase employee loyalty and thus create an enterprise that has a firmer foundation in human resources. The study also emphasises the comparison of HR communication tools used before and after the Corona crisis. This comparison is a logical outcome of the situation that has arisen in the labour market. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, HR managers were faced with the question of how to deal with the shortage of quality and skilled labour and the historically low unemployment rate, as opposed to the current situation where they are faced with the problem of reducing certain job positions. We are currently witnessing a situation of declining sales, in which HR departments are having to deal with the issue of surplus labour and their subsequent redundancies. This situation gives us the opportunity to compare the different communication tools used before and after the Corona crisis. This comparison is beneficial for a better understanding of both the theoretical and methodological, but above all practical, insights into the effective use of communication tools in HR marketing in conjunction with critical thinking and recognition.

KEY WORDS

Communication Tools. Critical Thinking. Human Resources. Personal Marketing. Recognition.

1 Introduction: Personal Marketing and Its Link to Critical Thinking and Recognition

Employees are the most valuable asset a company has and it is due to this growing importance that the need to pay adequate attention to human resources, their effective management and development has come into play. The current situation on the labour market, where certain industrial segments are experiencing an acute shortage of the required workforce, also plays a role in this issue. In order to respond flexibly to these demands, it is no longer enough to obtain a sufficient number of educated and capable people from the labour market, but it is necessary to continuously educate and develop their skills. It is also necessary to ensure sufficient numbers and to prevent, as far as possible, possible turnover as a new phenomenon on the labour market. HRM integrates knowledge from many professional disciplines. Theories of management, economics, management, andragogy, ethics and various psychological and sociological disciplines are intertwined.¹ Among other things, emphasis is placed on a strategically oriented and integrated system of approach to employees.

Strategic human capital management and personnel management as such can also combat employee turnover by paying more attention to the critical thinking of job applicants in the conditions of entry into employment. An employee with a critical mindset is better able to assess the situation inside the company and externally, and is thus able to better manage a team of people and work in a more responsible and value-oriented way. The historical development of the concept of value goes back to ancient Greece where the term “axia” (value), “ethos” (habit) or “time” (evaluation) was used. Axiology (the doctrine of values) was a philosophical discipline concerned with the definition, system and hierarchy of values and their relationship to society and the individual. The first coherent ideas for the study of values appeared at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Hermann Lotze and Franz Brantano are credited with the emergence of axiology as a new scientific discipline. According to Lotze, values touch the whole of human perception and cognition.² However, different disciplines must be taken into account, since, for example, ethics looks at values from the point of view of morality, aesthetics from the point of view of aesthetic experience, and so on. The concept of value is a broad concept. The values that a person recognises and follows reflect their character and their overall mindset. *“By the concept of value we express the characteristic of the relation of objective reality to our needs and interests; by it we appreciate reality in terms of whether and how it is capable of satisfying our natural or social needs and interests.”*³ For this reason, too, it is necessary to look at HR marketing not only in terms of the communication tools it contains, but also through the greater loyalty of employees who, through critical thinking, are able to take the employer to the next level. Another attribute is the notion of recognition.⁴ The notion of work has its historical roots in

¹ KOČIANOVÁ, R.: *Personální činnosti a metody personální práce*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2010, p. 9-15.

² ČAKIRPALOĞLU, P.: *Psychologie hodnot*. Prague : Votobia, 2004, p. 15-16.

³ BROŽÍK, V.: *Hodnoty a významy*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1985, p. 242.

⁴ See also: RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today's Media Industries. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 4-21.; SOLÍK, M.: *Uznanie ako problém spravodlivosti a jeho mediálna reflexia*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2021.; CHLEBCOVÁ HEČKOVÁ, A.: *RESpublika: Politická komunikácia v mediálnej spoločnosti*. Nitra : Constantine the Philosopher University, 2015.; PRAVDOVÁ, H., HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Correlations of Culture, Game Principles and Media Productions. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 4-19.; RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Omnivore vs Univore: A Reflection on the Current Knowledge on Cultural Taste and Cultural Consumption. In *European Journal of Media, Art & Photography*, 2018, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 98-109.; RADOŠINSKÁ, J. et al.: Politainment: Reflecting on Political Affairs Via Audiovisual Media Entertainment. In *European Journal of Transformation Studies*, 2021, Vol. 9, No 2, p. 72-90.; PAVELEKOVÁ, J., ČÁBYOVÁ, L., HRUŠKOVÁ, A.: Reading Behaviour in the Digital Age: Impact of COVID-19 on Consumer Behaviour. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 25-41.; PITOŇÁKOVÁ, S.: *Úvod do štúdia mediálnych produktov*. Žilina : Žilinská univerzita, 2021.; MURA, L., FÓTHY, N., PÁSZTÓOVÁ, V.: State Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Pandemic Period: Evidence from Slovakia. In *Vadyba / Journal of Management*, 2022, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 37-44.

philosophy as well. Hegel, in the concept of recognition, uses the so-called dialectic of “master and slave”, where the slave shapes the objects they work with, changing them as they rationally controls nature. Their ability to overcome and manage obstacles gives them a kind of freedom to win and lose in their own eyes.⁵ More topical, however, is the trichotomy of recognition in Axel Honneth, who distinguishes three forms of recognition: love, right, and solidarity. It is the third form of mutual recognition that is gained by participating in a human community and contributing to a way of life where all are positively valued. It is a type of social appreciation of the particular traits and abilities of individuals. Honneth, like Charles Taylor, emphasizes that this form of recognition can only be achieved in communities that share certain substantive values with each other and recognize the irreplaceable importance or contribution of each individual to the lives of others. It is in this form of mutual recognition that a practical relationship to self in the form of self-esteem emerges.⁶ In contrast to the environment in which the second type of mutual recognition (law) emerges, this community differs in its values and goals from other social groups. It is not a universal recognition of equal statuses, as in the case of law, but a solidarity with a particular community. Self-respect is not related to the anonymity and fungibility of individuals of the same kind as subjects of legal relations. On the contrary, it is about a sense of uniqueness and irreplaceability of the self as someone who contributes to a common value horizon, collective identity and common projects. *“However, this mode of self-understanding cannot be based on a set of trivial or negative characteristics. What distinguishes a person from others must be something of value from the perspective of others.”*⁷ This type of recognition, however, poses some problems.

If some type of work is perceived as a meaningless element to society, then those who do such work lose the possibility of self-esteem. By situating esteem within the horizon of the values of a particular culture, Axel Honneth and Charles Taylor open up the possibility of interpreting the conditions for self-esteem as a space of contestation and cultural struggle for the recognition of previously disparaged or disregarded social values.⁸ For this reason, too, it is necessary to view work through critical thinking, since employees possessing this attribute are an asset to the employer, as they represent a solid and conscious part of society. Therefore, HR marketing is also changing under the influence of events and will continue to evolve towards qualitative aspects that take into account not only the performance within the company but also the value attributes of employees.

2 Anchoring the Issue of Personnel Marketing

HR marketing represents a relatively new area of theory and practice in the field of HR activities in corporate and entrepreneurial practice. In terms of its content and theoretical focus, it was formed as a separate discipline reflecting the needs of trends or changes in the economy brought about by globalisation, the emergence of world markets, internationalisation or hypercompetition.

⁵ Compare to: SOLÍK, M.: *Uznanie ako problém spravodlivosti a jeho mediálna reflexia*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2021.; MURÁNSKY, M.: *Sebapoznanie ako uznanie iného*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <http://www.noveslovo.sk/c/20879/Sebapoznanie_ako_uznanie_ineho>.

⁶ HONNETH, A.: *The Struggle for Recognition : Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, 1996, p. 129.

⁷ PALOVIČOVÁ, Z.: Normatívnosť pojmu uznania. In *Filozofia*, 2007, Vol. 62, No. 8, p. 661.

⁸ See also: SOLÍK, M., LALUHOVÁ, J.: Reflections on Solidarity in Global and Transnational Environment: Issue of Social Recognition in the Context of the Potential and Limitations of the Media. In *Human Affairs*, 2014, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 481-491.; SOLÍK, M., MINÁRIKOVÁ, J.: Sociálne uznanie v globálnom priestore: možnosti a limity mediálnej reflexie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 20-31.; SOLÍK, M.: Problém uznania a jeho ukotvenie. In SOLÍK, M. (ed.): *Rozpory a alternativity globálneho kapitalizmu (Polemika)*. Prague : FILOSOFIA, Nakladatelství Filosofického ústavu AV ČR, VEDA, vydavatelstvo SAV, 2015, p. 153-167.

Its basic objective is the acquisition of a workforce of the required quality and structure to fill vacancies in the enterprise is also named by Bednárík and Gubrická *"It is the integration of human resource management with the strategic objectives of the enterprise through the activities of strategic human resource management: philosophy, policy, programs, practices, personnel management."*⁹ Personnel marketing is an inherently still new concept in the field of human resource management. It is a discipline that builds on the knowledge apparatus of economic management, marketing and personnel management, which now offers a range of methods and practices aimed at finding qualified manpower suitable to fill the jobs that the enterprise needs to achieve its stated economic goals. Currently, most authors define personnel marketing as a certain superstructure of personnel management, or as a long-term process that provides the company with long-term human resources within the framework of personnel planning. At the same time, it represents an extension of the tasks, functions and tools of marketing into the field of personnel management, where it serves to implement a specific plan in the personnel strategy of the enterprise. With the help of personnel research, it forms the information base for personnel management and at the same time communicates with target groups with the intention of increasing the attractiveness of the employer. Personnel marketing can also be seen as a certain superstructure of personnel management, or as a long-term process that ensures the company a sufficient amount of quality and qualified workforce. At the same time, however, certain tasks and tools of personnel marketing are brought into the field of human resources management, where they serve to implement a specific personnel plan and, with the help of personnel research, form the information base for personnel management. Borsíková defines personnel marketing as *"a part of new trends in marketing and a form of using marketing communication in individual components of human resources management. Personnel marketing is not a substitute for human resource management or otherwise personnel management, we understand personnel marketing as a new dimension of working with people, expressing the level of corporate culture in order to attract and retain the most suitable employees."*¹⁰

Bednárík and Málíková characterize the issue of human capital management and personnel marketing as shifting the focus of the enterprise to the employer primarily "outward", to the labour market, where it seeks to use marketing tools to attract new human resources, which will then be managed "inside" the enterprise through management control.¹¹ It follows that personnel marketing forms a separate part of marketing, within which it represents a specific link and application of the concept, functions and tools of marketing to the conditions of personnel management, while its subject of study is the issue of optimising the process of supply and sale of jobs. Personnel marketing as an effort to attract and retain new human resources does not mean suppression or exclusion of personnel work, but rather the opposite, it represents an important role in fulfilling the functions of personnel management in the enterprise. It is a form of cooperation, i.e. firstly, it is necessary to attract suitable employees through the application of marketing tools and only then to take care of the stabilisation of these employees through personnel management.

The definition and application of HR marketing is an integral part of corporate strategies and a company's philosophy of existence. We can say that it is a part of corporate culture, which is the result of the interrelations and interaction of individual structures within a company, while it is also influenced by the external environment (system) in which the company operates. Also due to the complexity that needs to be applied in defining corporate culture, it is not entirely possible to define this concept firmly. The controversy about the exact meaning of this concept is also led by Brooks in his publication, who, inspired by several theorists, also

⁹ BEDNÁRIK, J., GUBRICKÁ, I.: *Personálny manažment v kontexte trvalo udržateľného rozvoja*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2013, p. 194.

¹⁰ BORSÍKOVÁ, B.: *Riadenie ľudských zdrojov a personálny marketing*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2012, p. 129.

¹¹ BEDNÁRIK, J., MÁLIKOVÁ, I.: *Ľudské zdroje a personálny marketing v podnikateľskej praxi*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 108.

gives a characterization of this concept along the lines of the influence of strong cultures, which provide a system of informal rules that instruct employees and motivate people to feel better about what they do.¹² At the same time, we also encounter the distinction of cultures with respect to the size of the company into the so-called power culture, functional culture, task culture and personal culture. As per I. Brooks quoting of other theorists - power culture is found in small business organizations where informal communication prevails and people who accept the attitudes and norms of the source of central power will be valued and trusted. Power cultures place significant demands on staff in particular. Functional cultures have higher levels of bureaucracy and formality. In this type of culture, rules, procedures and job descriptions are the norm and work is divided into clear functions and areas of specialisation. A functional culture provides employees with a sense of security. A task culture is common in organizations where employees routinely have two or more lines of authority and management, and a team culture exists alongside corporate self-management. Expertise comes to the fore over status. The last culture mentioned by I. Brooks is personal culture in which the individual is the most important. There is no formal management and individual goals prevail in controlling such an organisation, there is little or no formal structure.¹³

None of the above cultures could function effectively without the most important pillar, which is the employee. At the same time, the employee is a key element of HR marketing in the context of corporate culture. Every organisation is made up of more or less individuals - employees - who, through their individual dispositions and interactions with each other, influence the running of the company at the group, managerial and corporate culture levels.¹⁴ Once an employee enters the employment relationship, he or she provides the employer with his or her personality, the traits of which determine his or her future behaviour. These traits are: willingness to cooperate; openness to new experiences; whether the employee is an extrovert or an introvert; awareness of responsibility and emotional stability.¹⁵ Understandably, we encounter different personality settings in each employee, but HR marketing is an area that should be able to effectively eliminate individual differences or tensions that may arise in the workplace over time.

One of the most important tools, without the use of which there would be no quality personnel marketing and corporate culture, is communication - communication within the company - internal and communication in relation to the public - external. According to Bednárik and Szkuráková, internal communication is a form of communication that takes place inside the company and is one of the basic prerequisites for its proper functioning. The authors further add that intra-enterprise communication flows usually replicate its organisational structure and can be formal or informal in nature.¹⁶ Internal communication tools include: formal communication (work directives, instructions); vertical communication (bottom-up - initiative, or employee results); horizontal and diagonal communication (entities of equal status); informal communication (outside formal organisational channels) and intra-organisational communication, which uses: meetings and meetings, seminars, bulletin boards and bulletin boards, directives and written regulations, the Internet and e-mail, the intranet, informal events.

The importance of internal communication is underlined by the fact that 'poor communication' has become the third most common reason out of ten why employees leave their jobs. "Poor communication" in this case primarily means a lack of openness of information, communication noise between departments, misunderstandings with the human resources department, etc.¹⁷ Setting the right internal communication also determines the external representation of the

¹² BROOKS, I.: *Firemní kultura*. Brno : Computer Press, 2003, p. 219.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 220-223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

¹⁶ BEDNÁRIK, J., SZKURÁKOVÁ, L.: *Možnosti internej komunikácie v riadení ľudských zdrojov pri aplikácii CSR*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019, p. 33-48.

¹⁷ BRANHAM, L.: *7 skrytých dôvodů proč změstnanci odcházejí z firem*. Prague : Grada, 2009, p. 34.

company. Branham gives the example of a company in the USA where, after introducing a new plan to eliminate employee turnover, they tried to communicate with different groups of employees differently, which not only helped them to reduce turnover, but at the same time the company was able to appropriately set up advertisements promoting job offers.¹⁸

Thus, the communication tools of HR marketing are becoming increasingly important, both in terms of retention and recruitment. Personnel marketing is the process of recruiting labour from external and internal environments. It is for this reason that we divide HR marketing into internal and external. The activities in the above areas target different roles and groups of employees, and based on these criteria, different communication tools are used, which we divide into offline and online.

2.1 Off-line Communication Tools

Off-line personal marketing tools refer to any promotion that is carried out using traditional off-line media such as television, billboards or radio advertisements. Unlike online marketing, which uses media channels found on the Internet, offline media do not necessarily need an online connection to successfully execute a campaign.¹⁹ This is still one of the reasons why offline communication tools have not lost their popularity and effectiveness over the years, as according to recent studies, as much as 48 percent of the population does not have access to the Internet. In Slovakia, however, this proportion is much higher. According to Eurostat, up to 82 per cent of Slovaks have an Internet connection, but the actual use of the Internet is worse. The data indicate one or more logins per week.²⁰ The media still move the world, and many people make decisions based on what they see on television or read in the press. Some of the main advantages of offline personal communication tools include:

- Well-targeted off-line HR tools are proven to massively increase the possibility of interest in potential employees.
- Within offline marketing tools, there is not just one method that clearly paves the way to success. The ideal option is a tailored HR mix to reach potential job candidates without an internet connection, i.e. TV commercials, direct mail, billboards and many more.

These are personal and impersonal offline forms of communication. The role of these tools is to inform potential as well as current employees through off-line means:

- advertising and promotion,
- billboard,
- public relations.

Advertising and Promotion

Promotion or presentation of the job offer on the labour market is a tool of the personnel marketing mix. It is a specific, clear and comprehensible offer of a vacancy, which is intended to motivate and arouse sufficient interest among applicants. The methods a company may use to advertise an offer depend on various factors such as the attractiveness of the profession, the importance of the job in the company, the resources of potential candidates and so on. The prerequisites for an effective presentation of a job offer are comprehensive information for the potential employee and the company's willingness to communicate. This information may

¹⁸ BRANHAM, L.: *7 skrytých důvodů proč zaměstnanci odcházejí z firem*. Prague : Grada, 2009, p. 212.

¹⁹ *Offline marketing*. [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.marketingevolution.com/knowledge-center/the-role-of-offline-media-in-the-future-of-marketing>>.

²⁰ *Koľko Slovákov má pripojenie na internet?* [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://techpit.sk/internet-na-slovensku/>>.

include the title of the position offered in the company, a brief description of the activities, the skills the job requires, and the educational, qualification or experience requirements. It is also advisable to include a brief specification of the working conditions and the positive features of the company offered, such as quality of working life, training and development opportunities. In order to attract, form and stabilise a sufficient number of quality and skilled workers, the company must disclose a realistic idea of its characteristics, conditions and requirements of the job on offer. It is a process of shaping potential candidates, as well as current employees, so that they receive the maximum amount of information about the company and are able to focus the development of their knowledge, skills and abilities in terms of both the current and future needs of the company.

Billboard

A billboard can influence a person only when it goes through the process of reception - that is, it is perceived and the process of processing it is understood, classified and sorted. This means that a person forms an internal mental picture of the information on the billboard. A poster will only have a positive effect on a person if this image, linking the current message with past experience and past perception, has a motivational quality. As a whole, it then becomes an incentive to vote for the advertised party - in the best possible case. The billboard first goes through the process of sensory perception and later moves into cognitive perception, which is the next stage of processing the information, sorting it, putting it into the right categories and thus enriching the previous experience. This second stage is also handled by memory, attention, imagery, thinking, decision-making and speech. Cognition abstracts and generalizes, allowing deeper knowledge of connections and relationships. Both parts of perception are active processes. Thus, a person's own activity determines what he or she chooses as an object of cognition. It is thus about the selectivity of perception. A person processes only those stimuli that are situationally important to them, what are their value orientations, needs, interests, goals, experiences, etc.²¹ Although it is known from several expert studies that the effectiveness of billboard campaigns is ineffective in relation to the resources spent, this method of communication is still a very popular and used tool in Slovakia and most HR departments have not crossed the threshold of this communication tool to this day.

Public Relations

*"Public relations is a communication tool. It is used to promote the reputation of a company, an organization - its aim is to build and maintain good relations, reputation, understanding, sympathy with target groups, the public, stakeholders. It is an activity that aims to bridge how the company/organisation is perceived by the public and how the public would like to be perceived by the company/organisation itself."*²² PR is a set of activities and techniques aimed at influencing public opinion. It is the systematic and long-term creation of good relationships with current as well as potential employees, and the intention of public relations is to create and maintain a positive image of the company for these two target groups. Depending on whether the focus of communication is "inward" or "outward", we can characterize the two most important communication tools. For communication towards the inside of the company, it is the building of the company's culture. The main task is to create support between the owners and managers of the company and its employees in order to achieve common goals in a way that everyone can share in achieving the goals. Corporate culture shows how people in a company behave with each other, how they communicate information to each other, but also how they resolve potential conflicts. A well-established and functioning company culture

²¹ *Vnímanie billboardovej kempagne.* [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Slancova2/subor/brunckova.pdf>>.

²² CHUDINOVÁ, E.: *Public relation I.* Bratislava : FF UK in Bratislava, 2019, p. 13.

creates the assumption that a company can largely prevent possible employee turnover by this communication tool. Employer branding is one of the most important and most widely used communication tools aimed at building a company's reputation outwards. Employer branding is the definition, differentiation and all-round promotion of the 'signals' that a company sends out to current, and especially potential, future employees. It means a marketing technique of building a "brand", image or goodwill of the enterprise in the implementation of personnel work. Employer Branding translates into the individual tools of personnel marketing and means for example: creating a "brand" of a well marketed job, talking about the pay advantages of the job, translating into a suitable way of communication with potential "customers" as well as creating the image of the company through massive and well targeted communication on the market. As already mentioned, the basic tool of personnel marketing is to build a good employer reputation, so a lot of emphasis is put on the creation of specific activities of the company aimed at strengthening its status as an "employer of choice".²³

2.2 Online Communication Tools

Since almost half of the world's population is now on the Internet and new technological tools are emerging every day, online communication tools in HR marketing are more or less a necessity for every recruiter. *"The world of digital media, through which marketing communication is experiencing an unprecedented boom, operates on the basis of a common virtual space. Today, the Internet is no longer thought of as a new technology, but as a networked infrastructure whose accessibility is now taken as a human right."*²⁴ Through these new tools, it is thus possible to disseminate information more quickly and reach a wider group of potential or existing employees. It is thanks to today's digital age that it is much easier to find and target a potential target group. Online marketing tools bring with them a number of benefits such as:

- efficiency - you can reach a target audience in multiple ways and at different stages of enquiry, making it more likely to be successful,
- measurability of success - unlike offline marketing, online marketing personal communication tools provide much more data, making it much easier to analyse the reasons for any failure and then correct them,
- individual approach - thanks to social networks or email marketing, one can be closer to potential and current employees than ever before,
- new opportunities - one can adapt to the constantly evolving and changing personnel market in real time and change the offer according to the current situation on the labour market,
- global reach – it is no longer necessary to do HR marketing locally, but thanks to the internet there exists regional or national reach,
- 24/7 availability - all marketing activities on the Internet are 24/7,
- lower costs - when comparing costs and success rates, it is usually found that online personal marketing tools are disproportionately cheaper and, in most cases, more effective than offline communication tools.

The most used and effective online communication tools today include:

- social networks,
- websites,
- email personal marketing.

²³ KLIMENTOVÁ, L.: *Personálny marketing podniku v čase hospodárskej krízy*. Brno : Masaryk University, 2009, p. 47.

²⁴ JÁNOŠOVÁ, D.: *Možnosti inovatívnych foriem marketingovej komunikácie v regionálnom marketingu*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2018, p. 81.

Social Networks

Social networks are characterised as websites or applications that offer services such as: creating a public profile, contacting, interacting and connecting with other users, publishing content and at the same time following content created by other users within the same system, the server operator interacts only very rarely. Some of the best known and most used social networks of today include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, Twitter, Reddit, LinkedIn, Skype, Snapchat, Pinterest and many others. Any company can have a profile page on a social network. Depending on the subject of the business, the opportunities to which this type of marketing can be applied vary. A business or organization can use social networking sites mainly to achieve goals like:

- PR and reputation building,
- creating a community of supporters,
- active communication with supporters,
- a space to publish content,
- advertising campaigns with precise targeting.²⁵

Social networks can be privately or professionally oriented. On social networks, relationships are established between users through personal profiles, who are further connected in groups. The interconnections between users and groups create a network of users' needs, relationships and associated interests, which are very important for online HR marketing. In practice, this means, for example, to narrowly and very precisely target advertising specifically to selected interests or other recorded user parameters. Properly set formats and creative, well-targeted online advertising is therefore a very powerful and valuable part of internet marketing.

Website

A website is usually the foundation of everything in online personal marketing. It is both the presentation and the sales channel of an online business. Both offline and online tools in staffing marketing have one rule in common. For a website to be able to fulfill its purpose of having a sufficient quality and qualified workforce, it needs to be both visible and seen, visited and present itself in a professional and credible manner, both in terms of communication and in terms of your services and logistics. A quality website is not just about design, although that will also matter. Much more important is a sound website structure and well set up SEO (Search engine optimization) and performance marketing. SEO is created based on a keyword analysis performed by an SOE specialist. Furthermore, a quality website should meet the parameters that are the basis for further building of online marketing. Whether it is a presentation website or an advertising website, these parameters are non-negotiable. A website suitable for online marketing should be user-friendly, responsive and fast.

Email Personal Marketing

Emailing is one of the tools of direct marketing, it is a targeted sending of commercial and non-commercial messages to a well-defined list of email addresses. In order for companies to send emails to a given email address, they must have the recipients' consent to do so. For this reason, email marketing is one of the most effective tools for building one-to-one communication. By sending regular emails, a company keeps itself in the awareness of its recipients and builds its brand. Email marketing falls into the fastest growing form of online communication.²⁶ Email marketing is an important part of online personal tools. It is a form that uses email as a way of

²⁵ *Marketing na sociálnych sieťach*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <<http://marketing.krea.sk/clanky/socialne-siete/>>.

²⁶ *Online marketing a jeho nástroje* [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.digitalmag.sk/online-marketing-nastroje/>>.

communicating with potential job seekers. Most often, it aims to inform about jobs on offer. It is still confirmed that email marketing is one of the best generators of employee selection, as recruiters create a database of unsuccessful candidates from previous interviews with whom, or CVs with which they have already come into contact in the past. A properly set strategy combined with good email handling brings a number of benefits:

- promotion of the job offer at a relatively low cost,
- developing relationships with potential employees,
- effectively reminding people who have not been successful in other recruitment procedures,
- is incomparably less costly in terms of funds and time than other offline marketing channels,
- enables accurate evaluations and analytical capabilities.

3 Conclusion

When chosen and used correctly, HR marketing communication tools help companies and businesses to fill vacant positions. It is particularly important to recognise that the business sector is in a situation of social and economic transformation in the context of the globalisation of production activities and the emergence of a knowledge-based society or economy. Employers are also reacting to these changes, for whom the importance of the personal characteristics of the employee, which has been less relevant so far, is coming to the centre of attention. This fact is also highlighted by the study by Štefánik, which reflects the labour market requirements for employees in the environment of a knowledge-based society. Within the framework of the study, we have identified the personality attributes that an employee provides to the employer by concluding an employment contract. However, it turns out that 9 characteristics of workers that are highly desirable in the labour market come to the fore and they are: thoroughness, performance orientation, responsibility, flexibility, situation orientation, expertise, intelligence, quick reaction and self-confidence, across all types of occupations.²⁷ Even though the study was conducted several years ago, this is timeless data and the research results are confirmed by the 2019 data when the most common requirements that companies are asking for in 2019 (for positions with a high school education) are: responsible attitude, communication skills, experience, autonomy.²⁸

The values evolve over time, i.e. they are variable. From a young age we learn how to behave, what is appropriate and what is not - we adopt value patterns. The family gives us love and we learn humanity. Values are related to our nature, but their true meaning is formed only in the environment itself. Although we receive our character and nature "in the womb", we learn values gradually. *"In philosophy, values are generally understood as the meaning we attach to a thing or action on the basis that we can satisfy our needs."*²⁹

Psychology takes a different approach to values. Its task is to uncover psychological phenomena, which includes the processes, properties and states that condition or facilitate the formation, transformation or change of values. Psychological theories start from the assumption that value arises from some focusing of the mental state of the subject who enters into a value relationship. Value is closely related to interests, attitudes and needs. While interest implies value, value can exist without interest. Value can be expressed through positive or negative attitudes towards things or phenomena of the external or internal world to which a person attaches some meaning or value.

²⁷ ŠTEFÁNIK, M.: *Požiadavky trhu práce na zamestnancov v prostredí znalostnej spoločnosti*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <<https://www.iz.sk/download-files/sk/poziadavky-na-zamestnancov-v-znalostnej-spolocnosti.pdf>>.

²⁸ Trh práce v roku 2019: *Firmy sa bijú o zamestnancov s mäkkými zručnosťami*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <<https://www.podnikajte.sk/zamestnanci-a-hr/trh-prace-2019-makke-zrucnosti>>.

²⁹ GRÁC, J.: *Pohľady do psychológie hodnotovej orientácie mládeže*. Bratislava : SPN, 1979, p. 16.

Sociology divides values into life values and cultural values. “Basic life values are considered to be health, well-being, recognition, family happiness, interesting work, etc.”³⁰ Life values are very subjective and change from case to case. A hierarchy of life values is created during an individual’s lifetime based on his or her experiences and is shaped by the society in which the individual moves or the environment in which the values may be cultivated. According to Tugarin, “The objective basis of the classification of values then emerges quite naturally in accordance with the basic spheres of contemporary social life, which he considers to be the material (socio-economic), socio-political, spiritual, and everyday life spheres.”³¹

The world is an empty space that we have filled with everyday layers of meaning, and man emerges from it as a product of society. We inhabit constructs and contexts and in doing so we socialize. According to Berger and Luckmann, human socialization is never completely consistent, and they argue that it is therefore important for any functioning society to establish procedures for maintaining reality (which would ensure a certain symmetry between objective and subjective reality).³² “An individual’s everyday life can be viewed as the constant operation of a conversational apparatus that continually maintains, transforms, and reconstructs the individual’s subjective reality.”³³

In a sense, personal marketing is communication like any other, and thus it is precisely the realization that it works with human capital, and thus with the human being, who has needs and is referred to anchoring in values. In spite of the tools that must be observed in personnel marketing, it should not be forgotten that the techniques that have been developed in this field are in a sense abstracted from human characteristics and have been developed more on a technical level for a long time. However, the recent situation shows that it is also necessary to emphasise the critical thinking and loyalty of the employees, who will thus help the employer to build a consistent and coherent whole in which the individual processes work, which cannot always be set up in a purely technical framework, but above all in a human framework.

Acknowledgement: The study was elaborated within the national research project supported by the Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (VEGA) No. 1/0283/20, titled ‘Synergy of the Media Industry Segments in the Context of Critical Political Economy of Media’.

Literature and Sources:

- BEDNÁRIK, J., GUBRICKÁ, I.: *Personálny manažment v kontexte trvalo udržateľného rozvoja*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2013.
- BEDNÁRIK, J., MÁLIKOVÁ, I.: *Ľudské zdroje a personálny marketing v podnikateľskej praxi*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016.
- BEDNÁRIK, J., SZKURÁKOVÁ, L.: *Možnosti internej komunikácie v riadení ľudských zdrojov pri aplikácii CSR*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019.
- BERGER, P. L., LUCKMANN, T.: *Sociální konstrukce reality: Pojednání o sociologii vědění*. Brno : Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 1999.
- BORSÍKOVÁ, B.: *Riadenie ľudských zdrojov a personálny marketing*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2012.
- BRANHAM, L.: *7 skrytých dôvodů proč změstnanci odcházejí z firem*. Prague : Grada, 2009.

³⁰ GRÁC, J.: *Pohľady do psychológie hodnotovej orientácie mládeže*. Bratislava : SPN, 1979, p. 20.

³¹ SVĚTLÝ, J.: *Hodnoty a hodnocení*. Prague : Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1978, p. 172.

³² BERGER, P. L., LUCKMANN, T.: *Sociální konstrukce reality: Pojednání o sociologii vědění*. Brno : Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 1999, p. 144-145.

³³ Ibid., p. 150.

- BROOKS, I.: *Firemní kultura*. Brno : Computer Press, 2003.
- BROŽÍK, V.: *Hodnoty a významy*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1985.
- CAKIRPALOGLU, P.: *Psychologie hodnot*. Prague : Votobia, 2004.
- CHLEBCOVÁ HEČKOVÁ, A.: *RESpublika: Politická komunikácia v mediálnej spoločnosti*. Nitra : Constantine the Philosopher University, 2015.
- CHUDINOVÁ, E.: *Public relation I*. Bratislava : FF UK in Bratislava, 2019.
- GRÁC, J.: *Pohľady do psychológie hodnotovej orientácie mládeže*. Bratislava : SPN, 1979.
- HONNETH, A.: *The Struggle for Recognition: Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, 1996.
- JÁNOŠOVÁ, D.: *Možnosti inovatívnych foriem marketingovej komunikácie v regionálnom marketingu*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2018.
- KLIMENTOVÁ, L.: *Personálny marketing podniku v čase hospodárskej krízy*. Brno : Masaryk University, 2009.
- KOCIANOVÁ, R.: *Personální činnosti a metody personální práce*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2010.
- Koľko Slovákov má pripojenie na internet?* [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://techpit.sk/internet-na-slovensku/>>.
- Marketing na sociálnych sieťach*. [online]. [2022-02-18]. Available at: <<http://marketing.krea.sk/clanky/socialne-siete/>>.
- MURA, L., FÓTHY, N., PÁSZTÓOVÁ, V.: State Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Pandemic Period: Evidence from Slovakia. In *Vadyba / Journal of Management*, 2022, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 37-44. ISSN 1648-7974.
- MURÁNSKY, M.: *Sebapoznanie ako uznanie iného*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <http://www.noveslovo.sk/c/20879/Sebapoznanie_ako_uznanie_ineho>.
- Offline marketing*. [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.marketingevolution.com/knowledge-center/the-role-of-offline-media-in-the-future-of-marketing>>.
- Online marketing a jeho nástroje* [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.digitalmag.sk/online-marketing-nastroje/>>.
- PALOVIČOVÁ, Z.: Normatívnosť pojmu uznania. In *Filozofia*, 2007, Vol. 62, No. 8, p. 658-667. ISSN 0046-385X.
- PAVELEKOVÁ, J., ČÁBYOVÁ, L., HRUŠKOVÁ, A.: Reading Behaviour in the Digital Age: Impact of COVID-19 on Consumer Behaviour. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 25-41. ISSN 2585-8726.
- PITOŇÁKOVÁ, S.: *Úvod do štúdia mediálnych produktov*. Žilina : Žilinská univerzita, 2021.
- PRAVDOVÁ, H., HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Correlations of Culture, Game Principles and Media Productions. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 4-19. ISSN 1338-130X.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Omnivore vs Univore: A Reflection on the Current Knowledge on Cultural Taste and Cultural Consumption. In *European Journal of Media, Art & Photography*, 2018, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 98-109. ISSN 1339-4940.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today's Media Industries. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 4-21. ISSN 1338-130X.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J. et al.: Politainment: Reflecting on Political Affairs Via Audiovisual Media Entertainment. In *European Journal of Transformation Studies*, 2021, Vol. 9, No 2, p. 72-90. ISSN 2298-0997.
- SOLÍK, M.: Problém uznania a jeho ukotvenie. In SOLÍK, M. (ed.): *Rozpory a alternativity globálneho kapitalizmu (Polemika)*. Prague : FILOSOFIA, Nakladatelství Filosofického ústavu AV ČR, VEDA, vydavatelstvo SAV, 2015, p. 153-167.
- SOLÍK, M.: *Uznanie ako problém spravodlivosti a jeho mediálna reflexia*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2021.
- SOLÍK, M., LALUHOVÁ, J.: Reflections on Solidarity in Global and Transnational Environment: Issue of Social Recognition in the Context of the Potential and Limitations of the Media. In *Human Affairs*, 2014, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 481-491. ISSN 1337-401X.

SOLÍK, M., MINÁRIKOVÁ, J.: Sociálne uznanie v globálnom priestore: možnosti a limity mediálnej reflexie. In *Communication Today*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 20-31. ISSN 1338-130X.

SVĚTLÝ, J.: *Hodnoty a hodnocení*. Prague : Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1978.

ŠTEFÁNIK, M.: *Požiadavky trhu práce na zamestnancov v prostredí znalostnej spoločnosti*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <<https://www.iz.sk/download-files/sk/poziadavky-na-zamestnancov-v-znalostnej-spolocnosti.pdf>>.

Trh práce v roku 2019: *Firmy sa bijú o zamestnancov s mäkkými zručnosťami*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <<https://www.podnikajte.sk/zamestnanci-a-hr/trh-prace-2019-makke-zrucnosti>>.

Vnímanie billboardovej kempagne. [online]. [2022-08-18]. Available at: <<https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Slancova2/subor/brunckova.pdf>>.

Authors



Mgr. Martin Uhlík

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
uhlik1@ucm.sk

Martin Uhlík is currently a PhD. student at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. He graduated at FMK UCM in Trnava, department of marketing communication. He focuses on the topic of personal marketing and the implementation of personal marketing mix in practice.

Assoc. Prof. Ing. Jaroslav Bednárík, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
jaroslav.bednarik@ucm.sk



Jaroslav Bednárík works at FMK UCM in Trnava as an Associate Professor. He graduated from the Faculty of Materials Science and Technology of the Slovak University of Technology in Trnava. In 2009, he obtained a PhD. degree at the same university. Since 1997, he has worked as a lecturer at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, becoming Associate Professor in 2012. He deals with issues of personal management, sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. He favours teamwork, efficient communication and solid presentation skills.



JUDr. PhDr. Martin Solík, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
martinsolik@gmail.com

Martin Solík is the Editor-in-Chief of the scholarly journal *Communication Today*. He works at FMK UCM in Trnava as an Associate Professor. His research focuses on contemporary moral, social and political philosophy with a focus on the concept of recognition in local and transnational contexts. In his articles he develops in particular the problem of social recognition and its media reflection, the media image of marginalised groups, the problem of identity in the context of different versions of reality and the impact of media and digital technologies on human cognitive processes. He is a member of the Scientific Council of the Centre for Arts Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and a member of the Slovak Philosophical Association. He was the head of the organising and programme committee of the annual international scientific conference Megatrends and Media.

Mgr. Juliána Mináriková, PhD.

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
Nám. J. Herdu 2
917 01 Trnava
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
juliana.minarikova@ucm.sk



Juliána Mináriková is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Mass Media Communication and Vice-Dean for Educational Activities at FMK UCM in Trnava. She deals with the conditions of the media system and current trends in broadcasting of traditional television and radio broadcasters in the Slovak Republic and abroad. Within her research activities she focuses on normative media theories and social responsibility in contemporary media production. She is a member of the Scientific Council of FMK UCM in Trnava and actively participated in the organising and programme committee of the annual international scientific conference Megatrends and Media.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Media Literacy and Academic Research's Editorial Board offers a possibility of publishing original theoretical or research studies, reviews of monographs or text books and other articles related to the focus of the journal, which have not been publicly published yet. Media Literacy and Academic Research journal consists of the following sections:

- **Studies:** Theoretical articles in the extent of 21,600-54,000 signs (12-30 author pages)
- **News:** News related to media communication and academic research (profiles of scientific events, projects, profiles of scholars, etc.) in the extent of 3,600 signs (1-2 author pages)
- **Reviews:** Reviews of monographs and textbooks from the fields of media studies which are not older than one year, in the extent of 5,400-9,000 signs (3-5 author pages)
- **Interview**

LANGUAGE OF THE SUBMITTED MANUSCRIPTS

- all manuscripts must be written in English language

Text format (unless specific do the wise in brackets below):

- Font type: Times New Roman
- Font size: 12 pt
- Alignment: justified
- Spacing: 1
- All margins: 2,5 cm
- Do not divide words
- Quotations and referenced passages: use numbered footnotes on the relevant page (not at the end of the manuscript)

CONTENT ARRANGEMENT OF THE MANUSCRIPT

- Title of the text in English (16 pt, bold, align centre)
- Name(s) and surname(s) of the author(s) (13 pt, align centre)
- Abstract in English – from 150 to 200 words (10 pt)
- Key words in English (10 pt)
- Titles of individual chapters (14 pt, bold)
- References (in form – KELLNER, D.: Media Spectacle. New York, London : Routledge, 2003.) The citation rules are available at www.mlar.sk/citationrules.
- Contact data: name and surname of the author(s) with full academic degrees, full address of the institution, e-mail, short bio and portrait photo of the author(s).

WE RECOMMEND TO ALL AUTHORS TO APPLY THE FOLLOWING STRUCTURE OF THE MANUSCRIPT:

- Introduction
- Results
- Conclusions
- Methods
- Discussion
- Literature and Sources

Please e-mail your article to: mlar@ucm.sk in the Microsoft Word text editor. We accept most word processing formats, but MS Word is preferred. Please use templates available at <https://www.mlar.sk/templates-to-download/>.

Each received study will undergo a double-blind peer review process and the editorial board will decide whether to accept or reject the text for publication on the basis of the elaborated reviews. The Editorial Board may accept the text conditionally and require correction of the text by author(s) according to the remarks or suggestions of the reviewers.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Media Literacy and Academic Research is a scientific journal focused on the academic reflection of media and information literacy issues, media education, critical thinking, digital media and new trends in related areas of media and communication studies. The journal is devoted to addressing contemporary issues and future developments related to the interdisciplinary academic discussion, the results of empirical research and the mutual interaction of expertise in media and information studies, media education as well as their sociological, psychological, political, linguistic and technological aspects.

Media Literacy and Academic Research is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal published twice a year by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (FMK UCM). The journal is international and interdisciplinary, inviting contributions from across the globe and from various academic disciplines of social sciences. It focuses on theoretical and empirical studies, research results, as well as papers related to the new trends, practices and other academic a research areas. Also encouraged are literature reviews, innovative initiatives, best practices in online teaching, institutional policies, standards and assessment. The Journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence.

The authors and co-authors publishing their work in Media Literacy and Academic Research are, as a general rule, academics, scholars, researchers and media professionals. The author(s) of the texts – yet unpublished but already approved and prepared for publication in Media Literacy and Academic Research – have the right to present their findings or other related research outcomes by attending domestic, foreign and international scientific conferences and workshops as well as within their pedagogical or artistic activities. The editorial board expects authors to submit the final to-be-published texts with regard to the set formal criteria, i.e. consistent and correct spelling, grammar, stylistics and formalities in accordance with Guidelines for Authors and Citation Rules. It is necessary to use the template available on the journal's website: <https://www.mlar.sk/>.

If a published text (or manuscript intended for publication) violates the ethical principles or, eventually, if the entire texts or their parts are proven to be plagiarisms or consist of texts already published in the past or simultaneously in several other specialised publications, the authors and co-authors take on full responsibility. However, the authors are given opportunity to react to such allegations.

Any fundamental changes to authorship of already submitted final texts (e.g. amendment of co-authors, change in the order of authors, copyright interests in the text) are liable to the prior consent of the editorial board. The author(s) or co-author(s) must ask for a change in the copyright data or modification of their order on the basis of a formal, written request sent to the following e-mail address: mlar@ucm.sk.

The complete version of Media Literacy and Academic Research's Editorial Policy is available online at: <https://www.mlar.sk/editorial-policy/>.

SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS



Communication Today

Scientific journal of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia

Communication Today is a scientific journal from the mass media and marketing communication field. The journal contains professional scientific reflections on the media, media competencies; it also offers academic discourses on the limits of reality, media thinking, new media, marketing and media relations, new trends in marketing including their types and specifics, psychology and sociology of marketing communication, as well as new knowledge about the structure of media contents, marketing strategies and communication sciences. The professional public is offered an interdisciplinary, focused, targeted discussion in these pages. Communication Today is a double-blind peer reviewed journal published twice a year. It focuses on theoretical studies, theoretical and empirical studies, research results and their implementation into practice, as well as professional publication reviews. The members of the journal's editorial board are members of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). Communication

Today is indexed in these databases: Cabell's Directories, CEJSH, EBSCO, CEEOL, ProQuest, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Index Copernicus, ERIH PLUS, SCOPUS and (ESCI) – Web of Science Core Collection.

Lege Artis Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Journal „Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow” is a scholarly journal issued periodically by De Gruyter Open twice a year, in June and December. Contributors are invited to the mainstream linguistic studies and secondary subfields of linguistics included: *Cognitive linguistics, Cognitive poetics, Comparative-historical linguistics, Culture studies, Discourse analysis, Folklore studies, Grammar History of the language, Historical phonology and morphology, Historical semantics, Lexicology, Phonetics/Phonology, Psycholinguistics, Stylistics, Text linguistics and Cognitive semiotics*. „Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow” is indexed in these databases: Web of Science, EBSCO, Clarivate Analytics – Emerging Sources Citation Index – Web of Science Core Collection, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory/ulrichsweb.



European Journal of Media, Art & Photography

European Journal of Media, Art & Photography (EJMAP) is an academic journal published biannually by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (FMK UCM). The journal is dedicated to publishing photographic collections, works of art and scholarly texts which deal with professional scientific reflection on media, culture, journalism photography, philosophy, literature and theatrical art. European Journal of Media, Art & Photography is indexed in CEEOL and Web of Sciences ESCI.

Acta Ludologica

Acta Ludologica is a scientific journal in the field of digital games. The journal contains professional scientific reflections on digital games; it also offers academic discourses on games, especially media and digital competencies, creation, design, marketing, research, development, psychology, sociology, history and the future of digital games. Acta Ludologica is a double-blind peer reviewed journal published twice a year. It focuses on theoretical studies, theoretical and empirical studies, research results and their implementation into practice, as well as professional publication reviews. The members of the journal's editorial board are members of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, the only faculty in Central Europe which has registered three scientific journals in Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters) Web of Science.



Media
Literacy *and*
Academic
Research

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Faculty of Mass Media Communication

Vol. 5 || No. 2 || December 2022

ISSN: 2585-9188