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Educational and Scientific Institute of Journalism

Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка
Навчально-науковий інститут журналістики

CURRENT ISSUES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПИТАННЯ МАСОВОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

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"Current Issues of Mass Communication" is a professional scientific publication of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Journalism, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The journal publishes original, completed contributions in the field of mass communication, reflecting current trends in this domain in Ukraine and the world, patterns, processes, structures, and forms of mass communication relations. Priority is given to the studies of mass communication trends in technological development, media, journalism, publishing, advertising, public relations, social informatics, document science, library science, etc., which is relevant for the Ukrainian and world audience.

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Discussions (contains scholarly and journalistic columns or comments of the editorial board, editor-in-chief, members of the editorial board regarding results of research that have not been reviewed but are of interest. These publications are not scientific articles).

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List of reviewers of the issue

Актуальні питання масової комунікації, Випуск 33, 2023 р.

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«Актуальні питання масової комунікації» – фахове наукове видання Навчально-наукового інституту журналістики Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Журнал публікує оригінальні, закінчені роботи за результатами досліджень із масової комунікації, що відображають сучасні тенденції розвитку галузі в Україні та світі, закономірності, процеси, структури та форми масовокомунікаційних відносин. Пріоритет надається актуальним для української та світової аудиторії дослідженням масовокомунікаційних трендів у розвитку технологій, медіа, журналістики, видавничої справи, реклами, зв'язків з громадськістю, соціальної інформатики, документознавства, бібліотекознавства тощо.

Наш журнал має такі рубрики:

Дискусії та обговорення (друк науково-публіцистичних виступів, позицій редакції, головного редактора, членів редколегії, результатів досліджень, які не пройшли рецензування, але становлять інтерес. Ці публікації не є науковими статтями).

Огляди (друк оглядів наукової літератури з того чи іншого питання. Огляди є видом наукової статті. У нашому журналі друкуються огляди, у яких використано метод мета-аналізу).

Дослідницькі статті (друк результатів наукових досліджень, що відповідають профілю журналу, пройшли рецензування і схвалені до друку як наукові статті).

Міждисциплінарні дослідження (друк наукових статей, що пройшли рецензування, подають оригінальні результати досліджень, але виходять за межі вузького профілю журналу, а їхні автори є ученими з інших галузей. Проте такі наукові статті повинні бути хоч частково пов'язані з питаннями масової комунікації).

Рецензії (друк рецензій на різні наукові видання у галузі масової комунікації, включаючи рецензії на наукові статті, відгуки опонентів на дисертації).

Аудиторія журналу включає науковців, викладачів, студентів, професіоналів у галузі медіа та комунікацій, а також широке коло читачів, які цікавляться сучасними тенденціями розвитку комунікаційного простору.

Журнал включено до «Переліку наукових фахових видань України, в яких можуть публікуватися результати дисертаційних робіт на здобуття наукових ступенів доктора наук, кандидата наук і доктора філософії». Категорія «Б».

Рекомендовано до друку вченою радою Навчально-наукового інституту журналістики Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка (протокол № 12 від 12 червня 2023 р.).

Актуальні питання масової комунікації : науковий журнал / голов. ред. В. В. Різун; Навчально-науковий інститут журналістики КНУ імені Тараса Шевченка. Київ, 2023. Вип. 33. 74 с.

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Редакція журналу дотримується визнаних у світовій науковій спільноті принципів організації публікаційної справи на засадах прозорості, відкритості та передової практики у сфері оприлюднення результатів досліджень, розроблених Міжнародним комітетом з етики наукових публікацій (Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in

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Процедура рецензування може тривати до 8 тижнів, залежно від завантаженості експертів та складності тематики статті. Редакція інформує автора про зауваження експертів та рішення про прийняття матеріалу до друку або відмову в публікації.

У разі позитивного рішення Редколегії, автор вносить відповідні правки та надсилає до редакції остаточний варіант матеріалу. При затвердженні змісту номеру журналу редколегія керується датою надходження останнього варіанту статті.

Від потенційних рецензентів ми очікуємо дотримання принципів публікаційної етики, розуміння конфлікту інтересів, дотримання конфіденційності та своєчасності.

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Зміст

Current Issues of Mass Communication, Issue 33 (2023)

R E S E A R C H   A R T I C L E S

Waves of disinformation in the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian War

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ABSTRACT

This article presents research results into waves of disinformation — massive torrents of false information directed at various audiences during the Russian-Ukrainian war in May — July 2022, intending to elicit specific communication effects (manipulation, misleading, intimidation, demoralization, etc.). It was found that waves of disinformation are characterized by narrative and intensity. Based on the Telegram statistics of the "Perevirka" bot ("Check") developed by the Gwara Media organization, we formed a sample of the most resonant messages (298 units), which were subject to informal (traditional) document analysis, as well as classification, narrative, and comparative analysis. We identified 24 primary waves of disinformation, among which the most powerful were the following: 1) "The Armed Forces of Ukraine and those who back them are criminals"; 2) "Ukraine will lose the war"; 3) "The West does not need Ukraine as a state"; 4) "Ukraine is a country of chaos and extremists." The recorded waves testify to the aggressiveness and multi-directionality of Russian rhetoric, which encourages the development of a productive system of information countermeasures in Ukraine and the world and the development of media literacy among the population. Based on the analysis of waves of Russian disinformation, we provided recommendations for the audience on dealing with actual and potential propaganda messages.

РЕЗЮМЕ

У статті викладено результати дослідження хвиль дезінформації — масованих потоків неправдивої інформації, що спрямовувалася на різні аудиторії під час російсько-української війни в період травня — липня 2022 р. з метою отримання певних комунікаційних ефектів (маніпулювання, введення в оману, залякування, деморалізація тощо). З'ясовано, що хвилі дезінформації характеризуються наративністю та інтенсивністю. На основі телеграм-статистики боту «Перевірка» організації Gwara Media сформовано вибірку найбільш резонансних повідомлень (298 одиниць), які підлягали неформалізованому (традиційному) аналізу документів, а також класифікації, наративному та порівняльному аналізу. Виявлено 24 основні хвилі дезінформації, з-поміж яких найпотужніші такі: 1) «ЗСУ й ті, хто на їхньому боці,— злочинці»; 2) «Україна програє війну»; 3) «Україна не потрібна Заходу як держава»; 4) «Україна — країна хаосу і радикалів». Зафіксовані хвилі засвідчують агресивність та різноспрямованість російської риторики, що спонукає до розвитку продуктивної системи інформаційної протидії в Україні та світі, а також розвитку медіаграмотності населення. На підставі аналізу хвиль російської дезінформації надано рекомендації для аудиторії щодо того, як взаємодіяти з реальними або потенційними повідомленнями пропаганди.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: гібридна війна, політичний дискурс, хвилі дезінформації, фейкові наративи.

Introduction

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine began on 24 February 2022 and became the greatest threat to humanity since World War II. Many world leaders gave this assessment to the events: "The war in Ukraine is the most dangerous period for Europe since the Second World War" (NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg); "This crisis is the closest to a nuclear disaster in the last sixty years" (US President Joe Biden); "this war shows the state of the world we are in... a dangerous time when the old stability is being called into question, and the new one has not yet arrived" (French President Emmanuel Macron).

At the same time, politicians, political experts, and communication experts emphasize that it is a hybrid war in which disinformation is used as a weapon. As a result, the boundaries between peace and war are erased through discourses, actual roles, facts, and meanings are distorted, and values are attacked.

According to our observations, disinformation spreads in themed message flows — waves. Therefore, understanding the origin and spread of disinformation waves is vital for international crisis management — for systematic prevention, countermeasures, and consistently expanding media criticality in various audiences.

This study aims to identify and describe the waves of disinformation in the period 01.05–31.07.22, which became the drivers of the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war.

Research objectives:

1) based on Telegram analytics of the fact-checking bot "Perevirka" - "Check" (Gwara Media) to identify massive themed flows of messages in the media discourse;

2) analyze the qualitative and quantitative parameters of the detected waves of disinformation;

3) articulate conclusions and develop recommendations for the audience.

Literature review

The first theoretical pillar of our research is the theory of hybrid warfare.

Magda defines this phenomenon as follows: "Hybrid war is the desire of one state to impose its political will on another (others) through a complex of measures of a political, economic, informational nature and without declaring war in accordance with the norms of international law" (Magda, 2015, p. 4).

Hoffman, one of the founders of the theory of hybrid warfare, warned in 2007 about "unique combinations and hybrid threats": "Instead of separate opponents with fundamentally different approaches (traditional, irregular or terrorist), we can expect to face competitors, which will use all forms of warfare and tactics, perhaps simultaneously" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 7). The quoted work was about the USA, but the mentioned challenges were also faced by other countries worldwide, particularly Ukraine. Hoffman pointed out: in hybrid wars, military and non-military methods and means are used, and conventional forms of warfare are combined with criminal elements, terrorism, and the latest technologies.

Bachmann added that conflicts arise due to an "asymmetric situation/war" and are formed "with the use of digital communication technologies." At the same time, "the main purpose of protection is to preserve one's own sovereignty" (Bachmann, 2020).

Denning, a well-known expert in computer security, specifies the complex of cyber threats: "computer hacking, fraud, terrorism, espionage, piracy, theft of personal data" (Denning, 1988). All these are tools of hybrid warfare.

The hybrid war in Ukraine is already reflected in previous research. Pohl notes that in the digitalized world,

> authorship can be masked even better, and propaganda can be spread faster. It can take the form of disinformation, fake news, manipulation, and propaganda through social media/networks, hacking of critical infrastructure, or even cyberwarfare. The conflict in Ukraine is considered an example of a hybrid war par excellence since it is about the orchestration of different means (Pohl, 2022, p. 4).

The second theoretical pillar of our study is a subject-based investigation into the nature of disinformation. According to Kuklinski et al.,

> being misinformed differs from being uninformed when one has no factual beliefs about the topic under investigation. Therefore, misinformed people are firmly convinced that they fully comprehend a certain situation and at the same time are guided by false beliefs (Kuklinski et al., 2000, p. 792).

In our investigation, we support the concept of "post-truth." Lewandowsky and co-authors analyzed the origin of this phenomenon: "The post-truth world has emerged as a result of such social megatrends as the reduction of social capital, the growth of economic inequality, the strengthening of polarization, the decline of trust in science, and an increasingly fractionalized media landscape..." (Lewandowsky S. et al., 2017).

Jerit and Zhao, in their work "Political misinformation," distinguish disinformation from other forms — and not only from "misinformation" or "manipulation": "Disinformation differs from such pathologies as belief in rumors and conspiracy thinking" (Jerit & Zhao, 2020). Conspiracy theories explain political or historical events by referring to the 'craftiness of powerful people' (Sunstein & Vermeule, 2009, p. 205; Muirhead & Rosenblum, 2019). In the meantime, disinformation may elicit within a person, e.g., the desire to adhere to beliefs that correspond to his or her worldview (Kuklinski et al., 2000).

Notably, world elites have already recognized disinformation as a global threat. Thus, the mechanics of spreading disinformation became "one of the key topics of Davos-2021" (Gulievska & Adashis, 2021, p. 51).

The third theoretical pillar of our research is the theory of narrative (narratology). We are close to its "concept of plot and action, the figure of the narrator, the structure of the story," storytelling, in which "in the presence of an innumerable number of stories, all of them have a sufficiently established structure that can be modified in certain aspects" (Batsevych & Sazonova, 2020, p. 273).

Researchers emphasize the interpretability and ambiguity of the narrative. Lyotard writes with a certain bitterness: "Narratives are fables, myths, legends suitable only for women and children. At best, attempts are made to add a ray of light to this obscurantism with an attempt to civilize, enlighten, and develop" (Lyotard, 1995, p. 25). The wording is harsh, but it contains a valid conclusion about the "necessary" profanation of reality in narratives for their accessibility and digestibility.

In post-classical narratology, one of the central ones is the concept of "possible worlds" (Bell, 2019), which Bell, Alice, and Marie-Laure appeal to, particularly Ryan. They write about the nature of fiction as opposed to the real world.

No less attractive heuristic direction in modern narratology is also

> "mnemonic narrative" (mnemonic or memory narrative), which is understood as narrative texts united by the theme of memory or memories, which is used as a narrative strategy. Mnemonic narrative is constructed based on one's own experience and involves a subjective assessment of the events described by the narrator, a significant time distance between the events, and the moment of their fixation (Veshchykova, 2020, p. 26).

In recent years, Ukrainian and foreign scientists (Murray, Mansoor, Renz, Chivvis, Zykun, Parakhonskyi, Yavorska) have been investigating the use of narratives and hybrid warfare tools. Milchenko concluded about the logic of the spread of Russian narratives and the construction of propaganda discourse:

> The analysis of the Russian mass media … shows that the content of the narratives does not change, they do not disappear; on the contrary, they are supplemented with new messages to strengthen them, and the priority of messages also varies. This, in particular, happens when informational occasions inside our country allow propagandists to broadcast information that reinforces a certain Kremlin narrative. Moreover, if there is a lack of information sources, they are created by spreading false information (fakes) (Milchenko, 2021, p. 9).

Thus, foreign and Ukrainian researchers have already been studying the problem of disinformation (including narratives of Russian propaganda). At the same time, the wave-like nature of this propaganda, the spread of these waves through narratives, has yet to be investigated. This testifies to the innovative nature of the proposed intelligence. The available theoretical background makes it possible to analyze the collected empirical data and deepen the formed understanding of the disinformation dynamics in hybrid Russian aggression.

Method

The empirical research is based on the monitoring and analysis of media reports received by the fact-checking bot "Pereverika" (@perevir_bot) of the organization "Gwara Media" (https://gwaramedia.com/).

The organization's fact-checkers conducted the research: Tetiana Krainikova, Dasha Lobanok, Serhii Prokopenko, Oleksandr Tolmachov, Yuliana Topolnyk, Alesya Yashchenko (Tolmachov et al., 2022).

The period of media monitoring is three months, from 1 May to 31 July 2022.

The research was organized in three stages:

1) We constructed a theoretical base at the conceptualization stage (January — April 2022). To this end, the primary research approaches were examined: the theory of hybrid war, the theory of discourse, and the theory of narrative. In addition, scientific views were to be compared and systematized.

At the conceptualization stage, the "Methodology of fact-checking in the editorial office of Gwara Media and the Verification bot" (Methodology of fact-checking, 2022) was also developed, while the Code and principles of the IFCN (International Fact-Checking Network, which is a division of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies) were taken as a guide.

2) In the period from 1 May to 31 July 2022, the "Perevirka" bot (@perevir_bot) received 16,598 requests to verify information from users; on average, 185 requests per day, with a peak daily load of 300–500 requests.

Based on fact-checking conclusions, the most popular and influential false materials were selected daily based on Telegram analytics. From them, selections of "Feikotnya" ("fake mass") were formed, which were published in the Gwara Media Telegram channel (https://t.me/gwaramedia).

Therefore, in the second stage of the research, we carried out media monitoring, collected empirical data, and established a list of the most vibrant pieces of content. Based on the monitoring, we put together a sample of media documents — a total of 298 items.

3) At the third research stage (August — September 2022), we analyzed collected data and revealed waves of disinformation. For this, the research team applied the methods of informal (traditional) document analysis and classification, narrative analysis, and comparative analysis.

A set of criteria has been developed for document examination:
• Main narratives;
• Audiences targeted by disinformation;
• Protagonists of propaganda stories;
• Dominant types of disinformation;
• People and organizations are the most active producers of false messages;
• Dynamics of disinformation;
• Expected effects that producers of disinformation tried to achieve.

The collected and analyzed data made it possible to draw conclusions. At the same time, we compared our data with the research data of the "Detector Media" (research of Telegram channels, January — August 2022) and the Institute of Mass Information (research of professional standards, July — September 2022).

Based on the study's results, we also developed recommendations for the audience regarding behavior in the conditions of the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war.

Results and Discussion

General characteristics of disinformation waves

The collected data and its analysis proved that disinformation spreads through waves — intensified false messages directed at different audiences to achieve specific communication effects (misleading, manipulation, intimidation, demoralization).

Waves of disinformation have two main characteristics:

1) narrative — waves are formed from purposefully broadcasted messages that thematically focus on particular topics/stories/characters and form a current agenda for the audience, and thus a general picture of the world;

2) intensity — the power of the waves depends on the number of messages of similar or compatible content distributed by various media and the coverage and ratings of the specific media.

To understand the nature and dynamics of disinformation, we focused on relevant qualitative and quantitative characteristics. We emphasize that specific analyzed messages are carriers of not one but several narratives, and these narratives have different intensities, coexisting and reinforcing each other. In addition, the narratives acquire certain thematic accents — we tried to capture them while monitoring the intensity.

During the analysis of 298 sample units, 24 significant disinformation waves were revealed:

1) "The Armed Forces of Ukraine and those who back them are criminals";

2) "Ukraine will lose the war";

3) "Ukraine is not needed by the West as a state";

4) "Ukraine is a country of chaos and extremists";

5) "Russia wants peace / Putin will liberate everyone";

6) "There is reason to fear for your children";

7) "Ukraine is a mess";

8) "The West is an enemy that wants to destroy Russia";

9) "Ukrainian authorities do not care about the citizens who remained in the temporarily occupied territories";

10) "Ukrainian authorities do not need their own citizens; they are like cannon fodder";

11) "Nazis are in power in Ukraine and pro-government structures";

12) "NATO is fighting in Ukraine";

13) "Russophobic Ukraine";

14) "People abroad support the Russian Federation, although their authorities are against it";

15) "The Armed Forces of Ukraine is only a proxy army used for war; the West supplies weapons to Ukraine in order to prolong the conflict";

16) "The West/USA does not trust the government of Ukraine";

17) "Ukrainians do not know how to handle weapons/The Army of Ukraine is not capable of fighting";

18) "AZOV are Nazis";

19) "Ukrainians need a new government";

20) "Sanctions do not function";

21) "Ukrainian government makes money from the war";

22) "To finish the war, Ukraine must cede its territories";

23) "If Russia had not started a special operation, Ukraine would have attacked first";

24) "Legitimization of L/DNR".

Disinformation was spread primarily through Internet platforms and television (TASS, RIA Novosti, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Izvestia, Vzglyad, RBC, NTV, Zvezda, website of the Russian Orthodox Church). Social media, in particular Telegram channels, played the role of the most active "ventilators" that spread waves of disinformation. However, propaganda did not abandon the form of a traditional printed newspaper for a loyal audience.

Information waves as carriers of narratives

Groups of narratives. The identified waves of disinformation are ideologically and thematically grouped into four groups of narratives:

1) military-strategic: "Ukraine will lose the war," "If Russia had not launched a special operation, Ukraine would have attacked first," "AZOV are Nazis";

2) political: "Russia wants peace / Putin will liberate everyone," "The West does not need Ukraine as a state," "People abroad support the Russian Federation, although their authorities are against it," "In order to end the war, Ukraine must cede its territories";

3) socio-economic: "Sanctions do not function," "Ukrainian authorities do not take care of citizens who remained in the temporarily occupied territories";

4) cultural: "Russophobic Ukraine" and others.

Narrative analysis confirms Russian rhetoric's aggressiveness, manifested in military-strategic and political narratives. The leadership of the Russian Federation does not demonstrate

readiness for political dialogue and constructive cooperation. Russia is not interested in diplomacy but in war and establishing a new model of the world order centered in Moscow. At the same time, Moscow's rhetoric ranges from a "special operation" to a systemic conflict with the West. In addition, Russian propagandists are nostalgic for the USSR, trying to resuscitate it in the new "Greater Russia" model.

Social narratives are thematically focused. They relate to creating a depressed image of Ukraine as a failed state (inability to earn money to provide oneself and one's family with basic resources). Moreover, one of them concerns extremely sensitive realities — children and parenthood; here, disinformation reveals its cynical essence in an obvious way: under the shell of care, propagandists sew up messages which generate fear, panic, readiness to act rashly and to the detriment of one's children.

On the one hand, the cultural narratives of Russian propaganda are associated with the traditional mantra of Nazi policy, the persecution of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine. However, on the other hand, they aimed to contrast the "Russian world" with the Western world, which, they say, imposes its values on everyone.

Protagonists of propaganda stories. In 61% of cases, Ukrainian military personnel, state, and political figures (Volodymyr Zelenskyi, Kolomoiskyi, Stefanchuk, Bakanov, Venediktova, Medvedchuk, Poroshenko), state institutions (Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, State Migration Service, Ukrposhta – state post service, Vinnytsia Blood Transfusion Center), financial institutions became the protagonists of disinformation in 61% of cases and commercial companies (PrivatBank, Zaporizhzhia Oblenergo), charitable foundations, volunteer organizations and volunteers (Charity Fund of Sergii Prytula). Images of historical and cultural figures (Bandera, Petliura, Khrushchev, Taras Shevchenko) were also involved; new ones were created (Banderomobile).

Ukraine's Western partners are in second place (16%). Among them are famous politicians (President of France Macron, President of Poland Duda), experts – "friends of Putin" (Frank Cohen), and ordinary citizens.

The heroes of 13% of the messages were Russian state and political figures (Zhyrinovsky, Putin, Lavrov, Shoigu, Leonidchenko), representatives of show business (Gazmanov), children of Russian officials, and ordinary citizens (a resident of Pskov). In addition, Russian armed formations (Russian special services, the army of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Belarusian saboteurs).

Among the heroes of the propaganda stories are also citizens and politicians of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine (leaders of the L/DNR, collaborators, the occupation authorities of Kherson, Volodymyr Rogov and Oleksiy Chernyak).

Messages (approximately 4%) focused on foreign armed units fighting on the territory of Ukraine (Belorussian Kalynovsky regiment, Georgian Legion, Libyan terrorists, mobilized Hungarians) were also discovered.

Dominant types of disinformation. A variety of forms characterize disinformation. Including:

• denial of the truth — statement of disagreement with someone or something, refusing to admit facts.

• fake — wholly fabricated, misleading, often sensational, emotionally charged information.

• manipulation — directed distribution of wholly or partially false data, which purposefully forms the desired opinion of the audience, inclines the audience to one's side, and programs the expected reactions in the audience.

• provocation — deliberate actions against individuals, organizations, and states aimed at pushing them into decisions and actions harmful to them.

• labeling, stereotypic judgments — the spread of simplified, established, often exaggerated, or one-sided ideas that do not stem from one's own experience.

• fraud/cybercrime — cunning deception aimed at obtaining some benefit, for example, misappropriation of funds.

Audiences targeted by disinformation. Disinformation is very resilient in terms of audience setting. Producers targeted it both precisely (e.g., local audiences) and broadly (national target audience, global TA); also combined different settings (e.g., Russian and Moldovan TA).

In addition, the cases were identified that were aimed at several audiences at once, e.g., Russian and Ukrainian at the same time. Thus, the report about the "successes" of the Russian army implies the elevation of the spirit of the Russian TA and the demoralization of the Ukrainian one.

Most of the disinformation was directed at different segments and combinations of segments of the Ukrainian audience. Moreover, the narrow targeting of messages was adjusted according to various criteria: geographically — residents of specific regions (primarily Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions); gender (male/female); professional field or interests (e.g., an audience interested in cultural issues).

The programmed effects that the disinformation producers were trying to achieve. Disinformation was spread to achieve several effects in different audiences (domestic Russian TA, Ukrainian mass and local TA, and international TA). At the same time, the expected results were diverse, depending on the specifics of the audience segment.

For the Russian audience, disinformation aimed at achieving the following effects:

1) glorification of the Russian military, which commits crimes in Ukraine;

2) support of the Russian Federation's military-political leadership and the tasks of "special operations" (demilitarization, denazification, change of the country's leadership).

Ironically, Russian propaganda interprets the situation so that Russia is the victim of Ukraine and the West's encroachments.

For the Ukrainian audience, disinformation was aimed at achieving the following effects:

1) spread of fears, panic moods;

2) mistrust, anger at the Ukrainian authorities, discord, and disputes in society;

3) uncertainty about the future, inability to support a family;

4) consumer panic;

5) disorientation, inability to separate truth from fiction, the spread of useless expectations, rumors, and gossip;

6) moral support and motivation of Ukrainians (a case of Ukrainian disinformation).

In the international arena, disinformation was aimed at producing the following effects:

1) self-affirmation of the Russian Federation as a major political player, a nuclear superpower;

2) generation of international hatred and conflicts.

The intensity of disinformation waves

Powerful waves of disinformation

The most powerful waves were found in 142 false reports that spread four main narratives (see Figure 1):
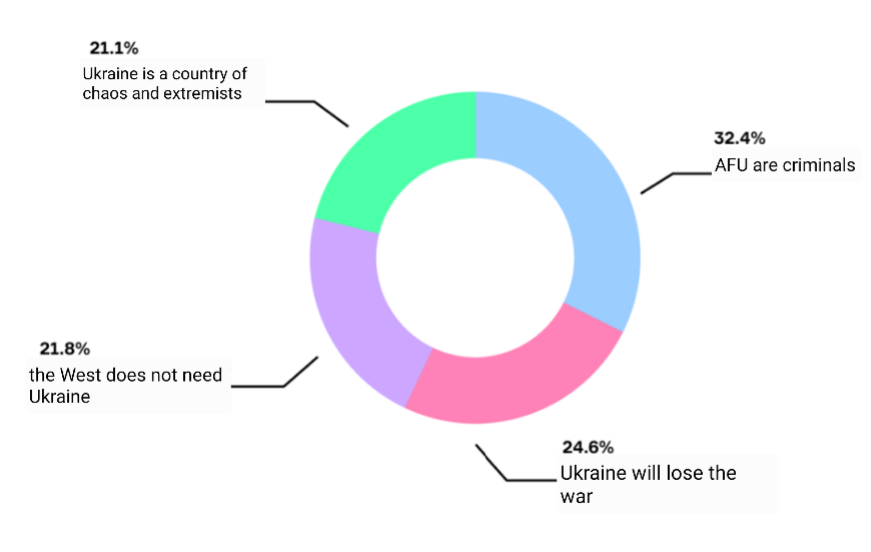
Figure 1. Powerful waves of disinformation.

The most powerful waves of disinformation during May — July 2022 aimed to create an image of Ukraine as "a country that has historically failed and has already lost." At the same time, Russian propagandists emphasized real and imagined difficulties in the military, political, economic, and other spheres.

A separate stream of disinformation is devoted to the Ukrainian military-political leadership, which is depicted as incompetent, corrupt, Nazi-like, and dependent on the West. In particular, in 10% of the analyzed texts, disinformation personally affects the figure of the President of Ukraine. The logic of coverage leads to a prepared, in advance conclusion about the need for a change of power in Kyiv, and it is emphasized that this is precisely what the Ukrainian people want.

Throughout the analyzed period, there was a powerful wave of disinformation aimed at discrediting the Armed Forces of Ukraine by demonizing the fighters of the Azov Regiment. The propaganda image is highly ambiguous and contradictory. On the one hand, the Ukrainian military is depicted as "criminals, punishers, militants, terrorists/bioterrorists, Banderivtsi / Nazis / neo-Nazis" and, on the other — as weak and inept losers. The thesis that the Ukrainian military is "drug addicts" and "cannibals" also reinforces entirely negative connotations.

Quantitative analysis has shown that powerful waves of disinformation have stability. For example, figure 2 demonstrates that the messages we selected for analysis were distributed consistently throughout the study period — May, June, and July.
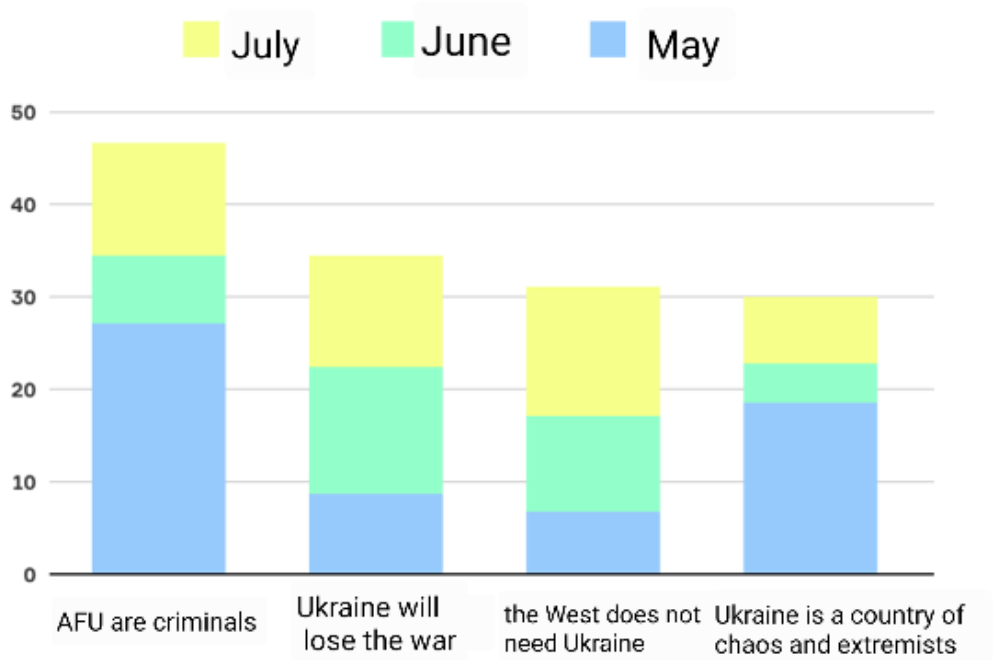
Figure 2. Persistence of powerful waves of disinformation during the monitoring period.

Medium waves of disinformation

Medium waves of disinformation are associated with 12 narratives implemented in 124 texts (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Medium waves of misinformation.*

Russia wants peace / Putin will liberate everyone	19
panic	16
Ukraine is a mess	15
The West is an enemy that wants to destroy Russia	11
Ukrainian authorities do not care about the citizens who remained in the temporarily occupied territories	10
Ukrainian authorities do not need their own citizens; they are like cannon fodder	10
Nazis are in power in Ukraine, and pro-government structures	9
NATO is fighting in Ukraine	8
Russophobic Ukraine	7
People abroad support the Russian Federation, although their authorities are against it	7
The Armed Forces of Ukraine is only a proxy army used for war; the West supplies weapons to Ukraine in order to prolong the conflict	6
The West/USA does not trust the government of Ukraine	6

One of the powerful waves noted above aimed to discredit the AFU soldiers. The opposite wave was made up of massive messages related to the glorification of the Russian military-political leadership and the Russian army. "Russian soldiers are liberating Donbas, Kherson

Oblast, Zaporizhzhia region," "Russians have defeated German Nazism — they will overcome Ukrainian Nazism as well," and "Russians voluntarily concede in some situations in order to bring peace closer" — these are the main messages of this wave.

A noticeable wave of disinformation justifies the "special operation": "If Russia had not started a special operation, then Ukraine would have attacked." Under this narrative, the propagandists used a complex of fabricated documents that "attest" the aggressive plans of the Ukrainian military-political leadership, which prompted the Russians to "save Donbas from attack" and not only Donbas.

A powerful wave of disinformation became a wave of fakes about Ukrainian refugees who "do not want to work," "fight on the streets of European capitals," "arrange noisy rallies," and "burn down the homes of Germans." This unattractive image is expressed visually — "photos from the scene of events" and "eyewitness video."

Tangent to the previous one was the wave about the "tiredness of the West from Ukraine," and this "tiredness" is also felt by politicians ("It makes no sense to provide weapons to Ukraine — Russian soldiers are destroying it," "War for Europe is expensive," "Ukraine must capitulate for the sake of peace"), and ordinary citizens ("People abroad support the Russian Federation, although their authorities are against it," "Ukrainians are not allowed in shops in Prague," "In fact, the USA is not ready to support Ukraine").

Point waves of disinformation

In 32 messages received for fact-checking, we recorded 8-point waves of information. They are associated with the least persistent and thematically narrower messages (see Figure 3).
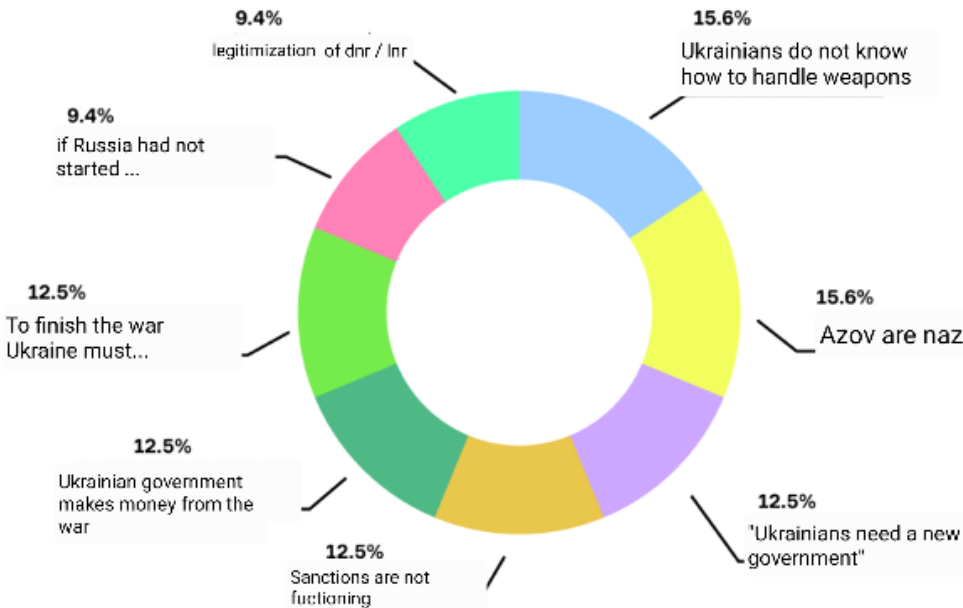
Figure 3. Point waves of disinformation.

An intriguing phenomenon was a wave of reports about the Russian president's allegedly severe illness and possible death, apparently separate but firmly embedded in the propaganda content plan. It ended with the sacramental "you will wait for it forever," which clearly reveals the purpose of such messages — to disappoint and demoralize the Ukrainian audience. A wave of social narratives aimed at a similar effect: "Ukrainians are losing their jobs," "Unemployment, hunger, and poverty await Ukrainians," and "Children in Ukraine and in the West are in danger."

A separate wave of disinformation is associated with the opposition "Russia-Western Civilization," "Russia-USA," "Russia-NATO," and the like. The propagandists specifically focused on Poland ("Poland wants to seize western Ukrainian lands"), Moldova ("Moldova's problems are due to Ukraine"), Lithuania ("A Polish-Lithuanian military contingent will be introduced into Ukraine," "Lithuania wants to annex Kaliningrad"). In this wave, experts — "friends of Putin" and "friendly" Western media became active producers of false reports. At the same time, a complex of techniques aimed at manipulating the public opinion of domestic Russian, Ukrainian (from national to local), and global world audiences was used. Taking words out of context, twisting, hiding/adding specific facts enabled propagandists to interpret the events of the analyzed period in a favorable context.

Recommendations for the audience

The results of the monitoring study of disinformation waves for the period May — July 2022 encourage us to provide the audience with the following recommendations:

1) Realize that there is a physical and a media reality. Unfortunately, they are not always congruent. After all, some people and organizations want to create a media quasi-reality and control the masses. This is how the propaganda in the Russian Federation works – as an element of a large-scale and prolonged hybrid war against Ukraine.

2) Focus on official sources. It is advisable to obtain reliable information about the government's position from official websites and verified pages in the social media of national and local authorities.

3) Learn about events not from a single mass media but from several different ones. This will allow us to see events from different angles and compare interpretations. According to the Institute of Mass Information (https://imi.org.ua/), we recommend resources for reading that have a good reputation: "Suspilne," "Hromadske," "Liga," "Ukrainian Pravda," Ukrinform, "Radio Liberty," "Dzerkalo Tyzhnia," "Babel," NV.

4) Avoid toxic Telegram channels and other projects in social media. Among them: "Legitimny," "Black quarter," "Kherson Live," "Rebel," "Onion UA," "ZeRada," "Whisperer UA Ukraine War," "Nablyudatel," "Woman with a Scythe," "Ukrainian format," "Ukraine. Special operation, Monitoring", "KhtoSho." Recognize toxic projects in social media by the following cues: salient ideological accent; sensational, stressful headlines; lack of references to sources or strong doubts in the reliability of cited sources; the presence of manipulative evaluative judgments and ready-made conclusions in the texts; spread of panic moods, etc.

5) Accept messages about "exact coordinates of missile strikes," "offensive from Belarus," etc., without panic. The threat exists — that is right. Nevertheless, the primary guideline for actions is observing information from official sources.

Conclusions

Waves of disinformation are massive flows of false messages aimed at different audiences to obtain specific communication effects (misleading, manipulation, intimidation, demoralization, etc.).

Waves of disinformation have two main characteristics: content quality (thematization, focus on certain protagonists, genre forms, and data formats) and intensity (massiveness of messages).

From 1 May to 31 July 2022, the fact-checking bot "Perevirka" detected 24 central information waves, among them powerful, medium, and spot waves. Disinformation was generated primarily by professional internet platforms and television (TASS, RIA Novosti, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Izvestia, Vzglyad, RBC, NTV, Zvezda, the website of the Russian Orthodox Church). On the other hand, social media, in particular Telegram channels, played the role of the most active "ventilators" that spread waves of disinformation.

False messages were directed at different target audiences (internal - external, Ukrainian - Russian - Western, national - local), trying to achieve programmed effects (manipulation, misleading, intimidation, demoralization).

Waves of disinformation carried narratives actively promoted by their producers. Four groups of narratives were identified: 1) military-strategic; 2) political; 3) socio-economic; 4) cultural. Such a complex of narratives proves that the modern hybrid war takes place simultaneously in different social domains, and its massive course is reflected in the information field.

An analysis of disinformation waves for May — July 2022 proves that Russia is destabilizing the world order and routinizing military conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, Russian rhetoric currently does not give reason to hope for a peaceful settlement shortly and encourages the intensive development of strategic communications.

At the same time, we consider it particularly important to preserve Ukrainian identity through knowledge of national history, language, culture, and the development of civil society and democracy. Equally important are information countermeasures, rapid response to information leaks, tracking the appearance of specific narratives and media characters, and the targeted formation of media literacy among the population in Ukraine.

Further monitoring of disinformation waves will provide more context for conclusions about stability, dynamics, and their transformations, contributing to developing global and local counter-reactions models.

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R E S E A R C H   A R T I C L E S

VR, NFT, Metaverse... How digital innovations affect the development of marketing and PR communications

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine innovative global trends in communications and their impact on the development of the marketing and PR industry. For this, we applied trend analysis, one of the modern forecasting methods, which is based on the examination of secondary sources and news publications and allows the identification of weak information signals from various markets based on the mention of digital innovations. Innovative tools guide companies to construct a new reality for stakeholders, improve interaction methods with stakeholders, and form their favorable corporate image and brand positioning. We identified six trends that will impact the development of communications in the coming decades: *machine learning; big data; virtual reality technologies; digital gamification; blockchain and NFT; migration to the metaverse.* We concluded that these digital innovations would enrich the promotion toolkit, form a new socio-communication dimension, and produce a creative and meaningful context. In particular, we conclude that VR technologies will encourage further penetration of advertising and PR into the field of integrated virtual communications. Gamification will become more and more deeply rooted in all areas of marketing and PR activities, diversify interaction with stakeholders, and increase its effectiveness thanks to novelty, emotionality, and user involvement. Finally, NFT will become a symbol of innovation from the image perspective and a thematic platform for stakeholder communications. The article also outlines the features of marketing and PR in the metaverse.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Мета цього дослідження – визначити глобальні інноваційні тенденції у комунікаціях та їхній вплив на розвиток маркетингових і PR-комунікацій. Задля цього застосовано один із сучасних методів прогнозування – аналіз трендів, що ґрунтується на вивченні вторинних джерел та новинних публікацій і дає змогу виявити слабкі інформаційні сигнали з різних ринків, спираючись на згадування про цифрові інновації, завдяки яким компанії конструюють нову реальність для стейкхолдерів, удосконалюють способи взаємодії з ними, формують власний сприятливий корпоративний імідж і позиціювання брендів. Автори дослідження виокремили шість трендів, які матимуть вплив на розвиток комунікацій у найближчі десятиріччя: *машинне навчання; big data; технології віртуальної реальності; цифрова гейміфікація; блокчейн та NFT; мігрування у метавсесвіт*. Зроблено висновок, що ці цифрові інновації збагачуватимуть інструментарій просування, а також формуватимуть новий соціокомунікаційний вимір і креативно-смисловий контекст. Зокрема стверджується, що VR-технології заохочуватимуть подальше проникнення реклами й PR у сферу інтегрованих віртуальних комунікацій. Гейміфікація дедалі глибше вкорінюватиметься в усі напрямки маркетингової та PR-діяльності, урізноманітнюватиме взаємодію зі стейкхолдерами, збільшуватиме її результативність завдяки новизні, емоційності, залученості користувачів. NFT ставатимуть символом інновацій в іміджевому ракурсі. Також у статті окреслено можливості та особливості маркетингу та PR у метавсесвіті.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: комунікації, маркетинг, метавсесвіт, NFT, паблік рилейшнз, віртуальна реальність.

Introduction

"Virtual reality: When what does not really exist is stronger than what does," noted the respected Ukrainian scholar Pocheptsov (2021). In the conditions of the contemporary digital society, this statement acquires extraordinary depth. Innovations related to the digital area and virtual reality technologies give rise to new ways of data exchange, communication, perception, and knowledge of reality. They direct, inspire, become the meaning of development, and reveal unprecedented opportunities and threats.

Innovative digital technologies' impact on society's behavioral models is at the center of researchers' attention. In 2004, the Scientific American Journal published an article on the Internet of Things, which demonstrated how artificial intelligence could change the human environment by eliminating routine problems through automation (Gershenfeld, Krikorian, & Cohen, 2004). Since then, innovative technologies have taken a giant step forward. They help improve the world and transform its paradigm, changing the usual way of life.

Innovative trends in communications can be detected with the help of weak information signals from different markets. They reflect revolutionary digital solutions due to which corporations construct a new reality for consumers and other stakeholder groups, improve ways of interacting with them, and use the attractive power of innovation in shaping the corporate image and brand positioning. Researchers say communications prospects are linked to concepts such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, the Internet of Things, big data analysis, mobile applications, cloud computing, augmented and virtual reality, blockchain, and much more (Troise &

Camilleri, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to determine the main global innovative trends in communications and characterize their impact on developing marketing and PR technologies.

Theoretical background

Forming a theoretical justification for the impact of innovations on communications, scholars in Ukraine and worldwide study the principles, features, and prospects of using artificial intelligence, virtual reality, blockchain, NFT, and metaverse technologies in various practice areas.

Chinese investigators believe that interaction with AR/VR (augmented reality and virtual reality – authors' note) can be considered a process of tricking the brain, so developers should pay more attention to forming a believable virtual experience (Tan, Xu, Li, & Chen, 2022). Due to the involvement of the full senses, the illusion of the real world is created, and a user becomes an integral part of the interaction. Furthermore, the development of affordable portable devices, such as head-mounted displays, which can integrate various interaction methods and free users' hands, should revive their use and improve human-computer interaction, which will generally affect the convenience and quality of such communications.

Martyniuk and Korolyov (2020) analyzed the current state of virtual marketing technologies and the transformational processes in the virtual reality environment. Observing innovations at Facebook, Lego, Adidas, Nike, Wayfair, and IKEA, they concluded that the desire to innovate to improve business performance and attract investment is the reason for using VR in such fields.

Researchers from the University of Duisburg-Essen conducted an expert survey and found that NFT (non-fungible token) is most actively used in the art sector (Gonserkewitz, Karger, & Jagals, 2022). At the same time, they expand the field of application of this innovation in business, communications, and intellectual property protection. Bao and Roubaud emphasized that blockchain and cryptocurrency generally are relatively well-studied, but NFTs are still in the shadows and not fully covered (2022). They are convinced that NFTs are at the crossroads of several fields, requiring researchers to have specific knowledge and understanding of how many domains function. In order to better understand the progress in this area and create a solid foundation for further exploration, the authors analyzed the state of NFT research, focusing on economic and financial aspects.

The environment that combines virtual reality and other digital innovations is the metaverse. Laeeq, a computer technology expert, suggests that more companies will "get on the metaverse train" because this innovation will eliminate the problem of geography in the context of business interaction (2022). Representatives of the J. P. Morgan Corporation investigated the topic "Opportunities in the metaverse: How businesses can explore the metaverse and navigate the hype vs. reality," involving 18 companies with experience using this digital space (Moy & Gadgil, 2022). The main conclusion was that developing virtual experiences assists people in creating communities based on similar values and authentically expressing themselves. Moreover, the combination of technological, social, and economic possibilities makes this technology engaging.

Other authors emphasize that the transition to physical and virtual integration consists of three stages: digital doubles, digital natives, and the metaverse (Lee et al., 2021). Thus, an immersive future with a metaverse requires both developing technologies and creating an ecosystem because it must connect permanent, general, parallel, and three-dimensional virtual spaces united into a single universe. This paper also identifies innovation research's fundamental challenges and design to shape the "future in the future."

Method

This research uses trend analysis, one of the modern forecasting methods, which combines a systematic approach, the study of cause-and-effect relationships, extrapolation, and rational and intuitive prediction. At the same time, the trends in digital innovations are considered in the context of developing marketing and PR activities, making it possible to determine its state in the

long term schematically. In this way, macro trends show changes in communication methods and audience behavior, imprinting business and social development.

Trend analysis as a research method in communications can be based on various data sources. For example, Elving used a set of publications from a scholarly journal (2010); Raupp and van Ruler (2006) utilized dissertations on a selected topic. In addition, trend analysis can be founded on statistical data of industry competition (Oltarzhevskyi & Todorova, 2019) or surveys of the communication field representatives (Adi, 2019). As part of the presented study, trend analysis was conducted based on secondary sources and news publications of 2020-2022.

Results and Discussion

The development of digital technologies at the beginning of the 21st century opened a second wind for communications, increasing their intensity, interactivity, and variety of content. Thanks to this, organizations integrated into the social media space and began to turn into digital media holdings with developed communication channels. In addition, the rise in popularity of mobile devices and competition in the field of mobile applications have also enriched the arsenal of the marketing and PR industry, enabling companies to stay connected with their stakeholders online 24/7.

One of the apparent trends in current communications is *machine learning*. This concept was proposed by Arthur Samuel, who defined it as "a field of research that allows computers to learn without explicit programming" (Turner, 2019, p. 71). Currently, chatbots, special programs that reproduce human communication with users based on the recognition of keywords and pre-developed scenarios, are built on this technology. In communications with consumers, using chatbots increases the speed of interaction and helps to be constantly in touch with them.

Another powerful marketing tool is *big data* analysis. Artificial intelligence technologies make it possible to determine a user's preferences based on likes and comments on social media and to create his/her psychological portrait. Researchers are convinced that the analytics of search engines and social media is another opportunity to manage public opinion, connected with the growing importance of big data, which is increasingly considered a critical business asset (Fitzpatrick & Weissman, 2021). In general, the collection and processing of personal data take the study of the consumer experience to a new level. This means that communicators can use big data to understand their stakeholders and competitors better and thus optimize their performance (Wiencierz & Röttger, 2019).

Artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies have created a new era of neural networks capable of massively producing communication content. E.g., at the end of 2022, ChatGPT, a chatbot developed by the OpenAI laboratory, which creates and structures texts, was presented. Likewise, Midjourney, which can generate illustrations, works on similar principles. With the advent of such tools, the duration and cost of content creation have been reduced many times, and this will undoubtedly have a profound effect on the development of the communication industry soon.

Virtual reality technologies that imitate the physical environment introduce objects, and the presence of a person into it, involving his sensory experience with the help of special computer programs, 3D images, and devices (smart glasses, helmets, holographic projectors, tactile gloves) opened a new level in the evolution of the marketing and PR industry. If VR technologies immerse us entirely into a simulated artificial environment, then AR partially complements the real picture with virtual objects and superimposes new images and effects.

An example of augmented reality is the IKEA Place mobile application, which in 2018 made a breakthrough in the online sales market (IKEA, 2018). With its help, users can film their home and insert furniture into the image to see how it fits into the interior. Due to similar programs, companies conduct test drives of cars and offer customers to live in the future, yet-to-be-built

house. Such innovative instruments give consumers an unusual experience, fuel interest in communication, and increase the likelihood of purchasing a product or service.

In our eyes, VR technologies are transforming the approaches to event management as one of the areas of marketing and public relations. Online tours, digital exhibitions, virtual presentations - all these formats are already used in stakeholder communications. Furthermore, photo zones with augmented reality, three-dimensional holographic images, aroma generators, and other inventions enable the achievement of the wow effect and the feeling of presence and enhance the emotional perception of a marketing or PR event.

In the 2020s, *gamification* crystallized as the newest trend in communications. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been isolated within four walls, so the need for VR technologies has deepened. According to experts, at this time, the use of computer games in the United States increased by 75% (Lynn, 2020). As they suggest, due to the improvement of technologies, games have become media platforms that unite, allow self-expression and are rooted in actual events. As a result, billions of users play, collaborate and create in these virtual spaces. Thus, gaming technologies and the communication worlds created with their help can be used to promote relevant goods and services among gamer audiences by integrating branded content and product placement.

Another innovative global trend was the use of *NFTs*. This acronym is recognized as the "word of the year 2021". It means "a unique digital certificate registered in the blockchain used to record the ownership of works of art or collectibles" (Collins English Dictionary, 2021). In 2021, Fortnow and QuHarrison published a paper describing the specifics and process of creating NFTs (2021). In fact, NFT is a piece of code in which data about the owner and the object are encrypted: who bought it, when, and for what amount. Its protection against counterfeiting is the same as that of cryptocurrencies. The difference is that cryptocurrency is identical to virtual coins, while NFT is a unique asset with no analogs (digital image, audio, video). One of the most famous digital artifacts was the first tweet of Jack Dorsey, the founder of Twitter, which was sold at auction for almost $3 million. Its buyer noted that years later, people will realize the true value of this tweet, just like the Mona Lisa paintings (Benveniste, 2021).

A sample of the use of NFT in integrated communications is the campaign of the brewing corporation Anheuser-Busch InBev. In 2021 it released the "Budweiser Heritage Collection," which consisted of 1,936 unique digital designs of beer cans released at different times. A set of NFTs worth almost $1 million was sold out in less than an hour (Ab Inbev, 2021). However, the company received an even greater profit for its image, building communication with stakeholders on the brand's rich history and, at the same time, its innovation.

Because NFTs create an exclusivity effect, they can be a valuable tool for building brand communities. For example, unique tokens can approve the right of access to closed clubs, limited product collections, individual discounts, and everything associated with additional privileges or boost the status and worth of the brand. Likewise, NFTs can be an additional driver in implementing social responsibility programs. E.g., the Anheuser-Busch InBev mentioned above and its Stella Artois brand digitized a unique fried chicken recipe, auctioned it off, and the proceeds went to support restaurants on the brink of bankruptcy due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Sanchez, 2021).

Innovative trends in communications are undoubtedly related to the transition of human life into the *metaverse*. In the novel "Snow Crash" by the American writer Neal Stephenson, this concept is depicted as a parallel reality where people escape from reality using digital avatars, special glasses, and headphones (1992). Metaverse is a collaborative virtual space, a set of three-dimensional worlds that will duplicate almost all domains of physical human existence in the future. This phenomenon merges the possibilities of augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence with blockchain, and an alternative digital reality where people can perform most of the things they do in their daily lives (Barrett, 2021). On the other hand, the metaverse is a virtual

online world where avatars of real people can communicate with each other, play, work, and interact (Robbins, 2022).

The prototype of the metaverse was the game Minecraft, assembled in 2011, which allows users to construct virtual buildings and 3D cities from different blocks. From the moment of launch until 2021, Minecraft gathered 141 million active players worldwide (Clement, 2021). This is more than the total population of Great Britain and France! Moreover, shared interests gave birth to a communication cluster of Minecrafters who form groups in social networks and wiki resources, discussing achievements and ways of completing game tasks.

In October 2021, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg presented Meta, a "social technology company" focused on creating an artificial digital world that should fundamentally change our communication and lifestyle (Meta, 2021). Imagine a person who spends 24 hours in front of a computer without leaving the online space. He (she) finds everything he (she) needs for life in the digital world. A typical citizen of the metaverse works in the remote access mode that is already routine to us and receives payment for the work performed in cryptocurrency. In addition, they can be used to buy intangible values that provide satisfaction from ownership and personal status. These can be virtual properties of land, apartments, or other digital real estate registered on the blockchain or rights to own collections of paintings as NFTs. Of course, promoting such specific assets requires adapting marketing and PR strategies to the rules and needs of the metaverse and considering the specificity and segmentation of target audiences formed around new virtual interests.

Conclusions

This study confirmed that the development of digital innovations would not only enrich the toolkit of marketing and PR but will also form a new socio-communication dimension and a creative and meaningful context, which require professionals to have expanded competencies and responsibility for the future of society. Moreover, it also leads to the emergence of new forms of integrated communications related to such hybrid industries as, for example, digital marketing, e-sports, the cryptocurrency market, etc., in which billions of dollars are circulated, and whole armies of programmers, target specialists, designers, and content managers are involved.

According to the study results, we singled out six main trends that will impact the development of communication technologies in the coming decades: *machine learning; big data; virtual reality technologies; digital gamification; blockchain and NFT; migration to the metaverse.*

Thus, machine learning and working with big data using artificial intelligence will liberate professionals from algorithmic communications and routine processes of analyzing the behavioral habits of audiences, which will contribute to the intensity and purposefulness of communications. The next step in this path is to reduce human participation in generating communication content. The expansion of VR technologies will stimulate the further penetration of advertising and PR into the field of integrated virtual communications, which will offer new formats of digital content that will boost the influence and recognition of brands, provide psychological immersion of audiences through the use of virtual images, and change the perception of reality. Gamification will become more and more deeply rooted in all areas of marketing and PR activities, diversify interaction with stakeholders, and increase its effectiveness thanks to novelty, emotionality, and user involvement. NFTs do not so much pretend to be communication tools as they are a source of a fundamentally new type of digital content. Simultaneously, they become a symbol of innovation in terms of image and a relevant thematic reason for communication with interested parties in any field.

The process of metauniverse formation requires separate prospective studies. However, despite the blurred boundaries of this phenomenon, the inconsistency of views on the boundaries of virtual and real, the imperfection of technology, and the uncertainty of the consequences of the migration of society into this semi-fantastic world, it unites more and more supporters world-

wide. It becomes a shell for communications of a new level, with which future generations of professionals will have to work in marketing and PR.

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R E S E A R C H   A R T I C L E S

Newsmakers and news sources in the "hybrid media system" (the case of the full-scale Russian invasion coverage)

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to compare leading newsmakers' and news sources' usage in a professional mass media and a Telegram channel. The computer-assisted method of news processing was used. As a result, we discovered that audiences of both professional mass media and new media consume the same content in different forms, and they deal with mostly the same news-makers, with more considerable attention towards personalities for the Telegram channel and with more quotes from other mass media and accurate references for the online mass media. Therefore, we concluded that the general observation about the coexistence of professional and new media, where the former publishes classic "hard" news and the latter entertains people with information, may be questioned.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Мета дослідження – порівняльний комп'ютерний аналіз Української правди (одного з найстаріших, якісного і найбільш популярного онлайн масмедіа, що представляє професійні медіа) та Україна Сейчас (одного із найбільш популярних Телеграм-каналів, що представляє нові медіа). Визначалися та порівнювалися провідні ньюзмейкери та джерела новин, щоб зрозуміти специфіку виробництва новин за часів нової медіаекології або ж «гібридної медіа системи», де співіснують професійні та нові медіа. У дослідженні був використаний комп'ютерний аналіз збору новин (заголовків), ньюзмейкерів та джерел новин (мова Python). Для ідентифікації популярних ньюзмейкерів був створений словник найбільш популярних персоналій та організацій/інститутів. Для того, щоб визначити джерело новин, вживалися регулярні вислови, що відповідають найбільш типовим видам посилань у заголовках. В результаті було з'ясовано, що під час повномасштабного вторгнення авдиторії професійного та нового медіа споживають один і той самий контент у різних формах, вони зустрічаються майже із тими самими ньюзмейкерами та джерелами новин, використовуючи переважно надійні джерела. Телеграм-канал приділяє більше уваги персоналіям (Кім, Гайдай, Арестович, Подоляк), мережеве масмедіа – організаціям/інституціям – (Офіс президента, ОВА тощо). Для професійного ЗМІ також характерна більша кількість посилань на інші ЗМІ та достовірних посилань. Таким чином, ці авдиторії можуть бути фрагментованими, але за часів повномасштабного вторгнення одні й ті ж ньюзмейкери та джерела новин формують громадську думку. Зроблено висновки, що результати дослідження ставлять під питання загальні спостереження щодо співіснування професійних та нових медіа, де перші друкують класичні "hard" news/ «жорсткі» новини, а другі розважають людей із допомогою інформації (або ж інфотейнменту). У випадку України ми бачимо спільні підходи до виробництва новин як у нових, так і професійних медіа.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: гібридна медіа система, онлайн мас медіа, нові медіа, Телеграм, Україна.

Introduction

The modern media environment is often characterized by A. Chadwic's concept of a "hybrid media system" (2017), where traditional and new media "interconnect via social media" (Joyce & Cheng, 2022). In this contemporary media ecology, more and more new "communication platforms are coming into play, sometimes interacting with each other, sometimes in competition with each other" (Blach-Orsten, Eberholst, & Burkal, 2017, p. 9). Moreover, audiences use different media and narratives to follow the events and connect with different groups and identities while consuming news (Sumiala, Tikka, Huhtamäk, & Valaskivi, 2016).

However, how exactly did these older media and newer media produce news, especially in the case of Ukraine, during the full-scale invasion? Who are the leading newsmakers of their news texts? What about reliable sources? As we know, news gathering and dissemination traditions differ for professional media and new media – often prevalent, however, anonymous platforms, where the professional standards of journalism may be violated.

To address these questions, we conducted a comparative computer-assisted analysis of Ukrainian Pravda (UP – the oldest qualitative and the most read online media) and Ukrayina Seychas (US – one of the most popular Telegram channels) will be conducted.

UP is one of Ukraine's oldest online mass media, founded in 2000. Ukrainian professional media organization – Institute of Mass Information – included UP in the "white list of mass media" (IMI, 2022), which means it publishes the content of high quality. According to Similarweb statistics, UP is in second place for popularity in Ukraine (category "News and Media Publishers") with 61.8 million visits per month.

US was founded in October 2018, and according to Telegram statistics, the channel is the most popular in the category "News and Media" as the verified channel with 1.7 million subscribers.

The leading newsmakers and news sources will be defined and compared in order to understand the specifics of news production in the times of new media ecology.

News production in the reality of a "hybrid media system."

First, let us differentiate the main changes in professional journalism.

1. *The number of journalistic texts increases dramatically.* News organizations publish more news than 10-15 years ago, 24/7. For instance, in 2005, UP produced 6254 news items; in 2021, five times more – 36535. Additionally, journalists deal with information overflow, the growing number of "daily news sources" (Liu, 2022), and "information pollution in the Internet environment" (Abdukaya, 2022). As a rule, the number of texts, which must be produced increases, and the number of professional journalists working with the texts decreases, as far as news organizations need to reduce staff to deal with financial hardships (see Davis, 2009).

2. *Journalists deal with "the rapid speed of communication"* (Caren, Andrews, & Lu, 2020, p. 444), *and new media are usually faster in the process of news generation.* Therefore, professional mass media should verify the information to see the whole picture with background and balance. However, for some new media, it is different from the rule. Here researchers are using the concept of the Twitter effect to describe the situation: now, posts from social media are the first source of information for journalists and their audiences (Bruno, 2011). As A. Mattoni and D. Ceccobelli say: "journalists are becoming followers rather than leaders of the news making process" (2018). Not gatekeepers, but gatewatchers, according to A. Bruns (2003): journalists do not decide what information should be given to mass audiences; however, they work as curators or librarians, gathering information and providing access to a variety of reliable, trustworthy sources with direct references in order to show a more complete, balanced, trustworthy picture.

3. *In professional media, the number of exclusive news declines, and journalists reprint information from many sources.* To produce more news in an environment where every citizen with a smartphone may be a news generator, journalists do not have time or other resources to get on the scene, look for his/her sources. That is why reprints dominate the news feeds. Furthermore, the more news items a news organization publishes, the more reprints a reader gets (Detector Media, 2015).

4. *News quality and trust in the news tend to decrease.* Ukrainian professional media organizations report a correlation between the number of reprints and balance and completeness standards violations. Some regional mass media (printed or online) may reprint press releases without any change or with minimal changes, thus in such cases, journalists do not look for alternative positions, do not check information in a press release, and do not include any context (see IMI and POID reports). Of course, it influences readers' perceptions. According to a Digital news report, less than half of their respondents (42%) "trust most news most of the time" (Newman et al., 2022).

5. *There is no classical mass audience anymore; many digital audiences have replaced it.* This phenomenon is described within the "issue public" concept proposed by Dhavan and colleagues (Shah, Friedland, Wells, Kim, & Rojas, 2012). In their view, there is not a single audience, but many of them, and each audience is sporadically formed on the web to discuss and solve a specific issue that is personally important to every audience member. Of course, in such an environment, news content becomes "fragmented and personalized" (Han, 2020), or an effect of "echo-chamber" or "filter bubbles" may occur (Kitchens, Johnson, & Gray, 2020). In addition, audiences worldwide may be "more selectively exposed to the news, unmediated by editors and professional journalists, in ways that could also lead to less diversity and the reinforcement of prejudices" (Newman, Dutton, & Blank 2012). Researchers also report some threats here: in such an environment, various groups may be formed, for instance, right-wing media, facilitating the

circulation of propaganda, political radicalization (Caren, Andrews, & Lu, 2020, p. 445), the spread of disinformation, conspiracy theories (Pyrhonen & Bauvois, 2020).

6. *Attention towards the news decreases*. "Interest in news and overall news consumption has declined" internationally, and more and more people are avoiding the news (Newman et al., 2022). Speaking about political issues, R. Shroeder proposes a concept of "limited space of political attention," where people are not ready to pay much attention to politics and news about the topic (2018). The same situation applies to news in highly competitive or high-choice media environment (Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre, & Shehata, 2015). Nowadays, some traditions of news production (objectivity, professionalism, impartiality, fairness, credibility) are changing because of "the hybridization of news and entertainment media" (Edgerly & Vraga, 2019, p. 810). For instance, not the status of a newsmaker but his/her ability to attract attention is critical (see Goldhuber, 1999). Moreover, some new factors are essential: the shareability of news (Mattoni & Ceccobelli, 2018, p. 8), the virality of the content (Gustafsson, 2010), the potential number of retweets (Wells et al., 2010), clickability. In such an environment, new media usually are more successful in content spreading (Joyce & Cheng, 2022).

However, traditional mass media may not only suffer because of the challenges of the new media environment, but they also may use the potential of new media to cover some issues more deeply or to reach more audiences with the coverage. This was observed in Egypt during the Arab Spring when bloggers and members of civil society exploited different platforms to counter the fake official versions about the death of Khaled Said, who was brutally beaten by police. With the help of new digital instruments, "the coverage transferred the issue's salience from new media into mainstream media, thus reaching wider non-politicized audiences" (Badr, 2021, p. 524). Additionally, some researchers argue that with user-generated content, it is possible to make coverage deeper and more diverse (Bruno, 2011), as far as "the newsmaking process is no longer the prerogative of a limited number of actors from the political, economic, and media elite" (Mattoni & Ceccobelli, 2018, p. 2). And "ordinary people, especially the underprivileged," may be better represented in the news (Joyce & Cheng, 2022). Even the concept of the Internet as the fifth estate was proposed, where the web can "fill niches not being served by the traditional news media… or held the traditional press to account for their practices" (Newman, Dutton, & Blank 2012).

Thus, some researchers see professional mass media and new media as competitors and co-creators of new media ecology. Newer and older media may form some system where their functions are effectively distributed, as far as relations between them can be perceived "as both competitive and interdependent" (Joyce & Cheng, 2022). To this end, McCombs and Valenzuela proposed the concept of "intermedia agenda setting" (2020), where one media's agenda may influence others' agenda. Alternatively, some media may be better at spreading news, whereas others – are in packaging (Joyce & Cheng, 2022). Newman and colleagues discussed a "new ecology of news production and consumption," where both professional mass media and new media "draw from and contribute to the strength of the other while holding each more accountable" (Newman, Dutton, & Blank, 2012). Therefore, we examined the main differences and similarities in the news production process to comprehend the specifics of traditional and new media coexistence. Additionally, with the Ukrainian context, we defined the coverage of historically significant events when effective and complete reporting is crucial.

Hypothesis and research objectives

Considering the main changes for professional journalism in news production in times of the "hybrid media system," it is appropriate to formulate the hypotheses for this study. Additionally, the media were compared as professional (with the transparent editorial office, recognizable journalists, publishing traditional journalistic genres and following the professional standards of journalism with information verification, objectivity, and editorial independence) and unprofessional new media (without transparent editorial office, confirmed authorship of publications,

predominantly publishing posts, containing only headlines and leads, with violations of some professional standards (information verification, subjectivity, 'jeansa' (covered advertising), etc.).

H1: Professional media (UP) and unprofessional new media (Telegram channel US) have significant differences in choosing both newsmakers (mentions) and news sources (newsmakers quoted in the headlines). Moreover, leading officials and politicians (Ukrainian and international) are not recognizable to fragmented new media audiences, who mostly follow information of personal interest in a high-competitive media environment with many choices.

H2: Both the percentage of mentions and the percentage of quoted newsmakers are more significant for professional mass media (UP) than for unprofessional new media (US), as far as unprofessional new media perceive news as entertainment and do not follow the norms and traditions of classic news writing: to include recognizable newsmaker, references to sources.

H3: Professional mass media (UP) mention personalities and institutions as far as they consider them newsworthy. On the contrary, unprofessional new media (Telegram channel US) publish news about famous personalities – to attract the public's attention, to encourage readers to share content.

H4: In the "hybrid media system," professional mass media prefer reliable sources, whereas, for unprofessional new media, it is not obligatory. Thus, UP will use more reliable (official) sources; in contrast, US texts will have more unreliable (non-official) sources.

To check the hypothesis, we need a purpose and several research objectives:

The *purpose* of the study is to define and compare the most popular newsmakers and news sources for UP (professional mass media) and for US (unprofessional new media) to describe the specifics of news production in the "hybrid media system."

Research objectives are as follows:

- to highlight the main changes in news production for professional journalism in the context of the "hybrid media system";
- to form the text corpuses for UP and US, to use vocabularies of the most popular newsmakers for the media and regular expressions to find news sources in the headlines;
- to compare and interpret the data (to differentiate types of newsmakers and news sources);
- to analyze the specifics of news production in the "hybrid media system."

Method

For this research, a computer-assisted method of news collection (headlines) and newsmakers and news sources identification was used (Python language)[1].

With request module news archive html-pages (https://pravda.com.ua/archives/) were collected from the Ukrainian Pravda website (from 24th February till 31st October 2022).

With bs4 module headlines, were got 35577 total[2].

To identify a popular newsmaker, mentions of a person's surname and an institution's name were considered. Then, with re module and a vocabulary of the most famous personalities and institutions, a list of the most popular newsmakers was created (e.g., Zelensky – 1776; Biden – 311). The vocabulary contains 1288 items – surnames or institutions/political parties' names. The vocabulary updates every year; for the details of its creation see (Steblyna, 2020).

To define a news source, three most common types of references for UP were used:

A proper name or an abbreviation before a colon:

Biden: Russia will not be disconnected from SWIFT because of Europe's position[3].

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[1]All Python programs, vocabularies, and files with headlines are described in the tutorial, which may be found here: http://www.ualocal.media/?page_id=989
[2] The dataset may be found by the link: Mendeley Data, V1, https://doi.org/10.17632/mb76gkzjcv.1

A proper noun or an abbreviation after a dash:

Banks and energy sector work in a standard mode, there are fuel shortages at gas stations – *OP*[4].

A proper noun or an abbreviation after a quotation mark and a colon:

"If we consider each other to be brothers": *Usyk* appealed to Russians and Putin[5].

As for US, at first, the chat history was exported (the same period). The first sentence considered the headline (total 30784). As a rule, here, the first sentence and a headline match. The same vocabulary and regular expressions were used to identify newsmakers and news sources.

Results

First, let us look at the most popular newsmakers and news sources for both media (Table 1).

Table 1. *The most popular newsmakers and news sources for UP and US.*

UP (mentions)		US (mentions)		UP (quotes)		US (quotes)	
Zelensky	5	Zelensky	5,8	Mass media	1,3	Zelensky	0,7
Putin	3,5	Putin	3,3	Zelensky	1,2	Operational command	0,4
Mass media	2,9	Regional Military Administration	2,9	General Staff	0,7	General Staff	0,4
General Staff	1,8	General Staff	1,9	Regional Military Administration	0,4	ISW	0,3
NATO	1,4	UN	1,4	Kuleba	0,2	Arestovych	0,3
Regional Military Administration	1,3	Biden	1,1	Hayday	0,2	Mass media	0,3
Security Service of Ukraine	1,2	President's Office	1	Danylov	0,1	Podolyak	0,2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,1	Podolyak	0,8	Bloomberg	0,1	Bloomberg	0,2
UN	0,9	Hayday	0,8	Security Service of Ukraine	0,1	Reuters	0,2
Biden	0,9	Johnson	0,6	Operational command	0,1	Hayday	0,1
National Bank	0,8	Akhmetov	0,5	President's Office	0,1	CNN	0,1
Kuleba	0,7	Kuleba	0,5	Ministry of Defense	0,1	Ministry of Defense	0,1
Kremlin	0,7	Kim	0,5	Pentagon	0,1	Biden	0,1
Ministry of Defense	0,6	Macron	0,5	ISW	0,1	Pentagon	0,1
Operational command	0,6	State Emergency Service of Ukraine	0,4	Reznikov	0,1	Reznychenko	0,1

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[3]The original headline: "Байден: Росію не від'єднують від SWIFT через позицію Європи"

[4]The original headline: Банки та енергетика працюють у штатному режимі, на АЗС є дефіцит палива - ОП

[5]The original headline: "Якщо ми вважаємо одне одного братами": Усик звернувся до росіян та Путіна

For both media, the newsmakers are mostly common: Zelensky and Putin are at the top for both media. Both UP and US mention General Staff, Regional Military Administrations, foreign affairs minister D. Kuleba, the UN, and American President J. Biden.

As for the news sources, the situation is the same: Zelensky and the General Staff are in the top 3, UP and US quoted other mass media, Operational Command, Institute for the Study of War, the head of Luhansk Regional Military Administration Hayday, Bloomberg, Ministry of Defense, Pentagon.

Therefore, H1 is not confirmed: no significant difference exists in the lists of the most popular newsmakers and news sources. Approximately half of the list of the most popular newsmakers and more than half of the list of news sources are common for both media.

The percentage of mentions is approximately the same as for Zelensky – he was mentioned more often (5,8% of headlines) in US. The average percentage of the 15 most popular newsmakers' mentions is almost the same – 1,6% for UP and 1,5% for US. However, with the news sources, the situation is different. The first positions in the UP's lists have twice more quotes.

H2 is confirmed partly: new medium (US) mentions newsmakers as often as professional media (UP) does, but there are more quotes of the most popular newsmakers for media (UP) than for unprofessional new media (US).

We saw some differences in the lists of the 15 most popular newsmakers. For mass-media institutions are interesting (Kremlin, OC, National bank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Security Service of Ukraine, NATO, and Mass media). As for US, here we can see primarily personalities: Podolyak, Hayday, Johnson, Kim, Macron, Akhmetov). Thus*, H3 is confirmed*.

As for reliable/unreliable sources – in the lists of the most popular newsmakers and news sources, there are no unreliable (non-official) names; therefore, *H4 is not confirmed*.

Discussion

As far as there is no significant difference between newsmakers and news sources selection, we may conclude that the news agenda for both media is the same with little differences. The media mentioned almost the same personalities and institutions. Thus, the audience of the Telegram channels has some differences from the audience of other social networks because it has the same news reading experience as the audience of professional mass media (here the concepts of "filter bubbles," "echo-chambers," "issue public" do not work). Additionally, there is approximately the same percentage of popular newsmakers' mentions, so for the Telegram channel, it is essential to base news on the statements/actions of recognizable personalities/institutions. No doubt, there are some headlines without mentions of any newsmaker on US, e.g.: Russian propagandists' imbecility leads to successful attacks and positive consequences for Ukraine. However, mostly the Telegram channel headlines are created with the same norms, with references to sources, in direct quotes as an exception. The difference in the number of quotes may show a more classic approach for professional mass media (direct quotes with explicit references accompanying mentions) and a light style of news writing with some professional standards violations for the Telegram channel. For instance: "Poroshenko was seen at the airport" – the post without direct quotes or other reliable confirmation.

One more difference of the Telegram channel is its reliance mostly on newsmakers-personalities. Moreover, here, one can see some favorite politicians and officials for Ukrainians, heroes of memes and anecdotes: Arestovych, Kim, Johnson, and Macron. Of course, UP also mentions them; however, they are mainly in the top 50 most popular figures. Moreover, here both media may refer to a similar source but name it differently: for UP, it is usually a Regional Military Administration; for US, these are both an Administration and its heads (Kim, Hayday, etc.), or both the President's Office and the President's advisors (Arestovych, Podolyak, etc.).

Remarkably, part of our hypothesis about reliable/unreliable sources was not confirmed; thus, for the most famous figures, it does not work. Both media mention Putin and do not quote him or

other Russian official sources. Mostly official sources prevail. An interesting situation is with Akhmetov: he is famous for US (mentioned 183 times). However, UP mentioned him quite rarely (only 39 times). A brief analysis of posts about him shows signs of "jeansa" – covered advertising. Therefore, he cannot be considered an unreliable source. However, his selection as a newsmaker does not correspond with the professional standards of journalism.

Additionally, we may analyze the order of the most popular newsmakers and news sources. For UP, mentions of mass media as newsmakers and as news sources are important. Consequently, UP collects all unique publications from colleagues and helps to spread information. For US, not only mass media in general, but concrete names are essential, particularly as news sources. US uses more local sources (Regional War Administration and their heads); UP is interested in all-Ukrainian sources.

Conclusions

This paper discovered some specific features of professional mass media and unprofessional new media coexistence in times of full-scale invasion. We saw that both media produce news in the circumstances of information overflow, high speed of news generation (both produced more than 30 thousand texts for 8 months), and most mention the same newsmakers. Therefore, the difference is only in the forms of informing: classic news on the website or posts on the Telegram channel. According to the results, we may confirm that the so-called Twitter effect does not affect news production. Journalists or Telegram-channels administrators may use different channels to confirm information, but the most popular newsmakers remain mostly the same. Slight differences, which were observed, show us that for professional mass media "gatewatching" function (Bruns, 2003) is more important (UP quotes and mentions mass media more often). However, the Telegram channel may also fulfill it, referring to mass media in general and specific brands. This additionally conforms with the previous statement about many reprints in mass media, and we see that reprints are also popular for new media. We observed that with the proposed type of analysis, it is possible to notice some violations of the professional standards on the Telegram channel. Additionally, with the lists of the most popular newsmakers and news sources, we may observe the general situation with the standards of balance and completeness. As far as official sources dominate, there may be some problems with the standards; however, it is critical to consider the situation of a full-scale invasion, where mass media should follow martial law obligations.

This study contributes to understanding modern digital audiences' specifics: audiences of both professional mass media and unprofessional new media consume the same content in different forms. They recognize mainly the same figures, with more extensive attention toward personalities for the Telegram channel. Accordingly, these audiences may be fragmented and selective, but these differences may not be crucial during the full-scale Russian invasion. The common topics and personalities may influence public opinion using professional media and unprofessional new media. There is no evidence of political polarization or radicalization; however, this may be another effect of the invasion.

And lastly, in the Ukrainian case, we see the same newsmakers and news sources for both media. Thus, for further research, it would be essential to compare news before the full-scale invasion and after the victory of Ukraine. It is possible that the efforts of Ukrainian informational front fighters will help form a more qualitative media environment, where both unprofessional new and traditional media will share the same approaches to professional news production.

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R E S E A R C H   A R T I C L E S

Online business media of Ukraine: Forming a conceptual framework

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ABSTRACT

In the article, for the first time in the Ukrainian social communications research discourse, we propose the definition of the term "social and economic issues" in the practice of Ukraine's online business media. We described in detail the scientific approach to the definition of the concepts "media issues" and "thematic specialization" in Ukrainian and foreign scientific discourse and proposed our own definitions of the concepts "issues" and "socio-economic topic" (SET) in the content of Ukrainian online business media, which consider the complex nature of these concepts. The main subject was the formation of the socio-economic topic in the content of online business media using the method of compositional structure modeling. The presented model should be tested and can be actively used by practitioners to work on complex socio-economic topics to bring them out of pure economics into the realm where we can solve urgent social issues and problems. This became possible after conducting a qualitative content analysis of online business media. This enabled us to determine the peculiarities of thematic guidelines' choice and work with a complex synthetic socio-economic topic. The methodology proposed in this study includes theoretical substantiation of the concepts "subject-thematic orientation," "social-economic topic," "thematic orientations," formation of an experimental sample of media messages that contain features of the socio-economic topic and criteria for their selection, qualitative content analysis of selected texts.

РЕЗЮМЕ

У статті вперше у вітчизняному науковому дискурсі соціальних комунікацій запропоноване визначення терміну «соціально-економічна проблематика» в практиці ділових онлайн-медіа України. Авторка детально охарактеризувала науковий підхід до визначення поняття "проблематика медіа" та "тематична спеціалізація" у вітчизняному та закордонному науковому дискурсі, а також запропонувала власні визначення понять "проблематика" та "соціально-економічна тема" (СЕТ) в практиці ділових онлайн-медіа України, які враховують комплексну природу цих понять. Основною метою роботи стало формування за допомогою методу моделювання композиційної структури соціально-економічної теми в практиці ділових онлайн-медіа. Представлена модель, безперечно, має пройти апробацію та може активно використовуватися практиками для роботи над складними соціально-економічними темами, щоб вивести їх із суто економічної у площину вирішення нагальних соціальних питань і проблем. Це стало можливим після проведення якісного контент-аналізу ділових онлайн-медіа, який дозволив визначити особливості вибору тематичних орієнтирів у роботі зі складною синтетичною соціально-економічною темою. Запропонована у цій роботі методика включає: теоретичне обґрунтування понять «предметно-тематична спрямованість», «соціально-економічна тема», «тематичні орієнтири», формування експериментальної вибірки медіаповідомлень, які містять ознаки соціально-економічної теми та критеріїв їхнього відбору, якісний контент-аналіз відібраних текстів.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: ділові онлайн-медіа, соціально-економічна тема, предметно-тематична спрямованість, тематичні орієнтири медіа.

Introduction

In the conditions of active interaction, covering socially significant economic topics becomes the number one task for various types of business media, regardless of the channel of their operation.

Interpenetration and mutual enrichment of, it would seem at first glance, purely economic issues with social aspects becomes the reason for the appearance of complex synthetic topics in business media – socio-economic. These topics have a dual nature and a complex structure because they are based not only on the economic or business context but also on additional socially significant aspects such as social equality, economic well-being, satisfaction with the standard of living, the level of financial freedom, housing affordability, security of life environment.

Business media journalists become not only providers of business information important for decision-making by an economically active part of the population in the world of business and personal finance but also partly act as mediators in public dialogue between the main participants of various social issues and problems. In this way, they bring them out of the economic discourse into the realm of solving urgent social issues and problems.

However, there is still no widely accepted definition of "socio-economic topic" in the research literature, and there is a lack of methodology for investigating such topics in online business media.

The article aims to define the concepts of "problematics" and "socio-economic topic" in the context of Ukrainian business media to characterize their essence and critical components.

To this end, the following objectives were outlined: 1) to characterize an approach to defining the concepts "media issues" and "thematic specialization" in Ukrainian and foreign scientific discourse; 2) to propose the concept definitions for "problematics" and "socio-economic topic"

(SET) in the discourse of Ukraine's online business media; 3) to investigate the prerequisites for the emergence and essential characteristics of the socio-economic topic in business media.

In the Ukrainian scientific discourse of social communications, many authors addressed certain thematic aspects of media issues. Thus, Boiko (2016), Kozyriatska (2018), Sklenar (2009), and others wrote on religious issues; Temchur (2019), Pykaliuk (2018), Chervinchuk (2020) – military; Shenderovskyi (2012), Lavryk (2010), Sashchuk (2014) – social; Opryshko, Pankratova (2016) – court journalism; Makeieva (2019), Bachyna (2011), Porfimovych (2009) – legal and criminal journalism; Petriv (2003), Nosova (2016) – international; Butyrina (2018), Shenderovskyi, Vyrtosu (2018) – human rights. Until recently, the problem of business media was considered exclusively in terms of economic, financial, and various branch subtopics within the study of media discourse in general. Among the scholars who worked on this issue, the names of Lazarieva (2005), Chekshturina (2021), Drul (2005), Lazarchuk (2013), Kulytskyi (2009), Maltseva (2011), Dudchenko (2019), Paliichuk (2013). However, hardly any works are dedicated to studying socio-economic topics in business media coverage.

Method

The qualitative content analysis method was used to identify essential regularities for business media regarding the selection of thematic guidelines and work with a complex synthetic socio-economic topic.

The study's content pool (empirical base) consisted of 4643 materials from four online business media during January 2020 - January 2022, namely The Page, Delo.ua, Property Times, and Commercial Property. These journalistic projects represent four types of online business media by the nature of subject-thematic orientation: 1) broad economic profile (The Page), 2) specialized (Delo.ua), 3) highly specialized (Property Times), and 4) professional (Commercial Property) (Nikytenko, 2022, pp. 132-133).

The algorithm for forming a sample to analyze the features of a socio-economic topic is as follows:

1) to look for all available journalistic media reports in the news feed of the selected media, as well as select according to specific criteria those that meet the definition of "socio-economic topic" (SET);

2) to conduct a qualitative content analysis on selected media reports that contain SET.

The criteria according to which we formed the empirical base of the study from the content pool were:

a) a combination of economic (macro- and microeconomic indicators, narrow-industry business information, corporate information, financial data) and social context (living conditions, income level of the population, social equality, financial freedom, housing affordability, safety of the social environment) within one business report;

b) at least 40% of the content is devoted to the social context of the topic.

The unit of analysis is a journalistic business report from the content pool during the research period, and the comparison base is the frequency of categories' appearance and features of categories in the texts.

At the first level of analysis, the coding categories were the topic of the story (social, economic, socio-economic) and the type of problem (social, economic, business).

We then scrutinized the texts to identify descriptors (a word or phrase that characterizes a socio-economic topic). Descriptors were classified by categories:

1) thematic orientations, namely profile and non-profile;

2) subject-thematic focus;

3) report feed angle.

We consider the profile thematic orientations to be those related to business and highly specialized information, namely:

1.1. Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business;

1.2. The current state and prospects for the development of individual markets and branches of the economy;

1.3. News of business, management, advertising, and marketing in the business field.

The non-core thematic orientations include those formed due to mutual penetration and mutual enrichment of business information with distinct thematic aspects – social, political, cultural, and educational.

Among them, we highlight the following:

1.4. News and information about various aspects of political, legal, judicial, educational, and cultural fields affecting the world of business and decision-making by subjects of business communications;

1.5. Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, and human well-being;

1.6. Information of an educational nature to increase the level of a broad audience's financial literacy.

Thematic orientations are characterized by a broader scope of reality coverage than, say, the concept of "subject-thematic orientation" of business media. By this concept, we understand the critical subject of journalistic materials and the precise direction of the editorial policy to cover exclusively business topics with appropriate accents – economic indicators, financial indices, and market markers. Besides, to determine the nature and essence of the business issues in the media, it is worth considering the angle of presenting the content, which allows attracting the audience's attention not only to specific thematic markers but also to other issues and problems that arise in the process of forming social ties between key subjects – citizens, representatives of business, authorities, and state institutions.

Results and Discussion

"Thematic specialization" and "media issues" in social communications research

The definition of the concepts of "thematic specialization" and "media issues" still cause heated discussions among communication researchers and journalists. In their works, the interpretation of these concepts was repeatedly addressed by Ukrainian and foreign scholars, in particular Kholod (2011), Mykhailyn (2011), Carlsson (2005), Brouard, Grossman, Guinadau, Persico, & Froio (2018), Rogers and Chaffee (2006).

Meanwhile, the scientific discourse still needs to form a unified and established view on the nature of these definitions. Authors of the textbook "Problematics of the Media," edited by Kholod, approached this issue in the most detailed way. Thus, the authors propose to call the problems of the mass media "such a systematic collection of problems that are covered in the mass media. This means that any problem or problem to which a report, interview, review, analysis, note, etc. is dedicated can be defined as one of the problems (or problems) of mass media" (Kholod, 2011, pp. 10-11).

It is about the fact that the problem is a systematized collection of several issues that are united by a particular theme. In comparison, the topic is a media representation of certain relevant and socially significant aspects of society.

Rogers and Chaffee consider the topic "the most effective way of information work of a journalist and specialization in a certain field" (Rogers & Chaffee, 2006). And Oltarzhevskyi, researching the place and role of the corporate press in the mass communication system, calls the topic one of the tools that allow any media "to fulfill the main communicative task - to bring its unique media field as close as possible to the needs of a certain audience" (Oltarzhevskyi, 2011,

p. 12). In addition to the topic, the author also mentions the importance of the tonality and direction of the performance, the genre arsenal, the system of images, and stylistic tools. At the same time, a specific thematic mosaic is formed depending on the socially significant aspects of various domains of life covered by the media and the agenda, which is formed based on their totality. This allows us to talk about the existence of a hierarchy of topics and issues that exist in one or another media depending on the thematic orientation, editorial policy, and requests from the target audience (Brouard, Grossman, Guinaudeau, Persico, & Froio, 2018, p. 917).

Turning to the definition of the problem-thematic field of business media, it is worth starting with understanding the discourse in which they function and interact with their readers. Gee, a sociolinguistics and discourse analysis expert, suggests defining discourse not only as a linguistic construct but also as the social-cultural, socio-political, and ideological context in which it exists and shows its resistance (Gee, 1999, p. 123).

The scholar offers his structure of interrelated linguistic elements, which interact to form the meaningful social reality in which this or that communication process occurs.

In this research paper, we propose to use three main criteria to analyze the discourse of online business media, namely:

1) the general organization of the topic's architecture and its place in the agenda of the business media;

It is about various aspects of the topic and subtopics the journalist covers, the order of topic selection, and their gradation in the problem-thematic field of a specific business media.

2) contextualization;

The economic, socio-political, and business background plays a vital role in analyzing the topics and issues of business media. It signals specific facts of objective reality that people actively discuss, interpret, analyze, form their opinion, and make management decisions based on.

3) thematic organization of the text.

It covers genre and stylistic tools and means of expression used by a journalist in his direct work on covering a particular topic.

Media, although they have qualitative technological differences and unequal communicative value in culture, "in their everyday production practice, they produce a general principle that is related to the provision of the social representation of human experience and the involvement of this experience in the general informational and semantic space of a particular society" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 123).

This opinion of McLuhan can also be extrapolated to the online business media, which, thanks to their unique opportunities mediated by the technical means through the Internet, subtly feel the rapidly changing social context, adapting to it, and forming not only public opinion regarding this or that phenomenon, but also influencing the reader's communicative interaction, his / her professional skills, everyday habits, and decisions with the help of social engineering tools.

Defining the concept of "problematics" in the discourse of online business media in Ukraine

Today any text in the online business media as a direct embodiment in a separate genre form of a particular meaning with the help of stylistic components and expressive means is a consequence of the author's pragmatic intention and resource-creating communication technologies.

When choosing one or another issue, a business media journalist uses not only the principle of covering reality and the scope of generalization, approaching his target audience's interests, but also necessarily takes into account social reality, the economic context, and the market situation, as well as cultural, social, psychological and cognitive abilities of readers: the quality and nature of attention, social memory, internal readiness for operative perception and interpretation of information.

Most scholars who study business media agree that the main task for this type of mass communication, namely the dissemination of socially significant business information to broad sections of the population and various social groups directly involved in various fields of the market economy.

However, some researchers rightly note that the nature of business journalism and its development in the modern world goes far beyond exclusively market or economic news and requires a different approach.

Both highly specialized audience groups (investors, business people, representatives of the commercial sector) and a wider audience interested in consuming business information, for whom it is an area of personal interest, benefit from the fact that business media journalists pay attention to complex issues, which have a dual nature and concern not only the economic but also the political, social, public area of life, the corporate world (Starkman, 2015).

The works of Berry and Straub (Berry, 2015; Strauß, 2019) also discuss the political and social nature of the economy and the business, which once again emphasizes the multifactorial nature of the business journalism functions, which is not limited to the supply of business information, but also becomes an active stakeholder in solving a considerable number of social issues and problems.

In our opinion, after the growth of social tension in various economic sectors caused by geopolitical challenges and threats, the crisis in the energy sector, the last economic crises of 2008, 2014, and 2019, as well as the full-scale war unleashed by the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine in February 2022, in order to understand the nature of socio-economic issues in business journalism, it is necessary to emphasize the synergistic influence of neoliberalism in the corporate sector, the business environment and Ukrainian society in general.

The basic tenet of political and economic philosophy is the belief that "the level of individual and social well-being can best be increased by supporting and developing entrepreneurial freedoms and skills." (Harvey, 2005).

Based on classical liberalism, neoliberalism provides an invaluable credit of trust to a specific person as a market economy subject, who, by his actions, can contribute to developing a favorable environment in which entrepreneurship and business can exist. Moreover, business media, in turn, become the leading platforms for social dialogue between various participants in solving one or another social problem – government, society, and business.

However, applying the principles of neoliberalism to determine the nature of socio-political issues in business journalism, it is worth looking critically and soberly at the realities in which business journalism is developing in Ukraine. Political institutions as a tool for the satisfaction of individuals and groups connected by economic, political, and even family ties, the shadow economy, tax frauds in large business, and a high rate of oligarchization in the country's economy become the cause of emerging political and economic unity between oligarchic clans and party leaders, which quite often stands in the way of the development of a free-market economy and independent business journalism.

In such conditions, the adherence to general journalistic standards, formed in several regulatory and legal documents, such as acts and codes of professional ethics, generally accepted by the journalistic community, as well as the development of specific rules and standards for the activities of business journalists, is highly relevant.

After all, even in the threat of an attack on the freedom of business journalism, the main task of this media type is to present balanced, relevant, socially significant media messages about the business world.

In this context, it is worth noting that it is important to remember another challenge for business journalism: creating content according to the needs of a highly segmented audience (Merrill, 2019; Milne, 2009).

Ordinary citizens, investors, office workers, retirees, students, and other subsets of the business media audience have different levels of interest and understanding and decode the messages they receive in their way. E.g., in the USA and Great Britain, professional investors, business people, and top managers of companies prioritize business news (Schechter, 2009).

Forsyth refers to the business media readers as representatives of specific, professional, industrial, trade groups and persons united by a certain occupation, who have specific interests

related to business information (Forsyth, 1964, p. 23). German researchers highlight the following key topics of business publications: "the system of economy and economic policy in which decisions are made and implemented regarding the distribution of resources, production, distribution and accumulation of property in the monetary context and the context of real politics; economic theory, individual and/or societal analysis of costs and efficiency; economic impact of results and measures of other systems, etc." (Weischenberg, 2011).

Instead, the audience of Ukrainian business media in recent years has "changed and covers a wider range of readers" (Lazarchuk, 2013) who do not necessarily have business interests. However, business information belongs to their personal interests because it affects decision-making on personal finances, which affect various fields of their lives – family well-being, personal development, health, upbringing and education of children, paying pensions, and social assistance from the government.

Considering the production and professional essence of business journalism – the production and supply of business information to a mass audience, as well as the audience factor, in our opinion, it is crucial to develop an understanding of issues in business media and the list of thematic accents that arise in the agenda of this media type.

We propose to consider the issues in business media (IBM) as a set of thematic guidelines that ensure the satisfaction of the information needs in business information for the highly specialized community and wider audiences that may be involved in business processes.

As a result of the monitoring of the media content, the following results were recorded. The total collection of texts during the research period was 4 643 media reports, of which 3 268 texts met the SET criteria.

Of them, 2834 were dominated by thematic profile orientations, distributed in this order.

Table 1. *Distribution of profile thematic guidelines in the reports of online business media.*

Thematic orientation	Type	Number of reports	%
A sharp drop in economic indicators due to the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	556	19,62%
Challenges for the economy of Ukraine and the world due to the war	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	431	15, 21%
Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy of Ukraine	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	316	11,16%
Economic indicators of Ukraine in 2021/2022	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	268	9,46%
Direct damage to various sectors of the economy caused by Russia	The current state and prospects for the development of individual markets, branches of the economy	225	7,94%
Market forecasts for certain industries in connection with the war	The current state and prospects for the development of individual markets, branches of the economy	208	7,34%

The financial aspect of rebuilding lost or damaged property	The current state and prospects for the development of individual markets, branches of the economy	192	6,77%
Privatization of Russian property (oil and gas sector, real estate market, banking sector)	News of business, management, advertising, and marketing in the business sphere	184	6,49%
Construction market and mortgage 7%	News of business, management, advertising, and marketing in the business sphere	165	5,83%
Monetary policy of the National Bank of Ukraine (during the pandemic and war)	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	157	5,53%
The financial impact of the lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic	Trends and news of micro-macroeconomics and the world of business	132	4,65%
Total		2834	100%

The five most common profile thematic orientations covered almost two-thirds of the analyzed content that meet the criteria of the socio-economic topic during the analyzed period. In connection with non-specialist thematic orientations, they form discourse oriented towards the search for solutions to complex social issues – restoration (rebuilding) of the country, elimination of raw material and energy dependence, and progressive development of the market economy.

Non-specialist thematic orientations, which were key for 1272 reports from the sample during the study period, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Distribution of non-core thematic guidelines in online business media reports.*

Thematic orientation	**Type**	**Number of reports**	**%**
The yeTysyacha program is in cooperation with libraries, art institutions, and educational projects	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	454	35,69%
The program yePidtrymka in the first months of the war	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	213	16,74%
Program of social payments to internally displaced persons	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	156	12,26%
Mortgage 7%	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	113	8,88%

the program yeOselya	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	78	6,14%
How to get compensation for lost housing	Information of an educational nature to increase the level of financial literacy of a broad audience	67	5,26%
How to get financial assistance to Ukrainians from international funds and organizations	Information of an educational nature to increase the level of financial literacy of a broad audience	65	5,12%
Liquidation of the State Architectural and Building Inspection	News and information about various aspects of political, legal, judicial, educational, cultural spheres, etc., affecting the world of business and decision-making by subjects of business communications	54	4,24%
Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and business	News and information about various aspects of political, legal, judicial, educational, cultural spheres, etc., affecting the world of business and decision-making by subjects of business communications	37	2,92%
State and international programs to support Ukrainian business	Social issues related to personal and corporate finance, business philosophy, human well-being	35	2,75%
Total		1272	100%

The next stage of the research was determining the subject-thematic orientation of journalistic reports that contain signs of SET. Upon analyzing the general sample, we identified eight key subject-thematic guidelines for journalistic reports on socio-economic topics, i.e.: 1) housing affordability and the quality of the living environment, 2) the level of the population's real income, 3) socio-economic aspects of doing business in Ukraine (affordability, openness, simple registration of public services, transparent taxation system, level of corruption), 4) economic aspect of the state social policy, 5) development of entrepreneurship in the country, 6) level of financial freedom, 7) public-private partnership and healthy competition in various markets, 8) the importance of individual sectors of the economy for the economic well-being level of the country (agricultural sector, I.T., creative industry).

The presentation angle is the coverage of a broad topic from a specific perspective, the definition of the main idea of the report through the combination of critical issues and subject-thematic guidelines as a response to current social problems. The angle of submission in the work of online business media on socio-economic topics is always determined by the reports' social sig-

nificance. In other words: the more concrete media reports are the more influential can be proposed solution of complex socio-economic problems.

During the research period, we established a selection of crucial angles of content presentation in the work of online business media on socio-economic topics:

1. Negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy and business, in particular, and ways to overcome them.

2. Socio-economic challenges for Ukraine and the world due to the war (famine, destruction of houses and infrastructure, drop in real incomes of the population, burden on the medical industry, loss of production capacity due to occupation and destruction) and ways to solve them.

3. Difficult issues/difficulties/contradictions in specific sectors of the economy and business niches that are of public interest (development of mortgage lending, housing affordability, pension reform, development of insurance medicine). The content distribution in these groups is presented in the diagram for a better understanding.

Two-thirds of the reports, 64%, covered the second block, namely the socio-economic challenges for Ukraine and the world due to the war. Of them, 76% represent informational and observational frames of the topic presentation rather than constructive ones (focused on finding and solving problems), and 24% of reports are about finding ways to solve problems.

The first block absorbed 23% of all reports, of which 87% have signs of informational and ascertaining frames of the topic presentation. This indicates the unpreparedness of journalists to work within socio-economic topics, which require deep immersion in socio-economic processes and the subject's position in solving current issues.

The reports of the third group accounted for the smallest amount in the sample - 13%, which is related to the business agenda of online media during the martial law period. The vector of attention is focused primarily on military and political news, to a lesser extent on socio-economic topics.

Prerequisites for the emergence and development of socio-economic topics in Ukrainian online business media

Interpenetration and mutual enrichment of the social and economic areas form a new, more mobile, and changing socio-economic discourse in which modern business media function. In the conditions of this discourse, the concept of socio-economic topics, which are formed at the intersection of the social and economic domains of society's existence, emerges.

When embarking on a socio-economic topic, a business journalist should be guided not only by the familiar tools and methods of his professional and industrial area but also turn to the mechanisms of social journalism.

Among theorists of this media sector, there are different views on its nature, tasks, and functions. E.g., Sokolova defines social journalism as "a specialized type aimed at solving, preventing, and reflecting social problems in society" (Sokolova, 2015, p. 33).

Shenderovskyi defines social journalism as "the integration and relationship of social work and media activity, the key element of which is the sphere of solving social problems" (Shenderovskyi, 2012, p. 47). I.e., social journalism, according to this author, acts as a litmus test, a relay, and at the same time, an active participant of certain social polylogues regarding the search for possible practical ways to solve pressing issues and problems in society.

Furthermore, Lavryk focuses primarily on the functional tasks of this journalistic field, such as "forming the foundations of a civilized society, helping to solve social problems, helping people make competent decisions based on reliable, operational socially significant information" (Lavryk, 2010, p. 43). At the same time, social journalism in its legal field also "performs the function of social criticism and control and is a tool for dialogue between different social groups."

Despite the penetration of social journalism into the problem-thematic field of Ukrainian business media, it is worth understanding that social discourse plays an auxiliary role. Therefore, in our research, we propose to consider the socio-economic topic as a *circle of events and life*

phenomena that are of great importance for ensuring favorable conditions for economic activity, the functioning of economic processes, the realization by economic subjects of specific roles that they need to play in society for effective functioning of the socio-economic system.

Media content contributes to the regulation of economic behavior in society, helping people to make important decisions in the everyday economic life of the society (aspects of micro- and macroeconomics), as well as answering socially significant and relevant questions and requests (e.g., an opportunity to engage in entrepreneurial activity, business protection, issues of investments, savings, and consumer economy).

Business journalists, taking on the coverage of socially significant and, at the same time, socially marked topics (economic well-being and the level of real incomes, housing security, comfort and ecosystem for life as the main factor of new criteria for choosing housing), deal with an important category of their industrial and professional domains – effectiveness.

Effectiveness in business journalism is achieved through two elements:

1) personalized selection of the form and its improvement, i.e.: selection of the optimal genre form, development of the architecture of the report, and journalist's author style. E.g., the reports "Ukrainian shopping malls and business centers are ready for a difficult heating season and reduction of energy consumption" (Iryna Nastych, Property Times, 13.10.2022), "How the team of the National Complex "Expocenter of Ukraine" restarts business activities after several months of downtime" (Yeva Taranova, Delo.ua, 7.07.2022);

2) improvement of the report content, i.e.: the choice of key and auxiliary topics, the angle of presenting the content, selection and verification of facts, clarity and consistency of argumentation. E.g., for the reports ""Monster on the Podil": Is it possible to force the developer to demolish the "extra" floors" (Oksana Hryshina, The Mind, 11.17.2020), "Data giants" (Tetyana Khomyak, Commercial Property, 11.11.2021).

Observing the work of several teams of business media offices in Ukraine (Delo.ua, The Page, Property Times) allows us to state that, in practice, journalists have to choose every day which specific approach and method of work will be the most effective to achieve the primary goal of reflecting socio-economic topics – to synchronize the informational picture and essential factors of the economic and social fields of society's life to ensure the completeness of the objective picture of reality and events which affect making or changing critical decisions in the personal finances, public interests, and corporate business.

After all, socio-economic topics concern not only a specific person but are usually a reflection of several interdependent elements from various sectors of social life, which affect the level of social well-being, the investment climate, and the stability of the whole economy.

The modeling method based on the results of a qualitative content analysis of online business media in Ukraine during the research period allowed us to form a system of the socio-economic topic's compositional structure:

The compositional structure of the socio-economic topic:

1) exposition – introduction, presentation of the social reality elements, economic context, and market situation on the topic;

2) articulation of a socio-economic topic and a contradiction/problem/current socially significant issue on the topic that needs to be resolved with a comparison of at least two opposing positions;

3) theses in support of each position + argumentation against the "antithesis" using business, economic, and statistical information;

4) positions of the main stakeholders on the topic;

5) narrow branch expert assessment on the topic;

6) synthesis of theses, antitheses, stakeholder positions, and expert assessment – the equivalent of a culmination;

7) summary – conclusions, a possible algorithm of actions to solve the problem/contradiction/current social issue.

The socio-economic topic reaches the readers in certain genre forms, each with its content and formal specificity.

In the social communications scientific discourse in Ukraine, passionate discussions about genre differentiation are currently ongoing, considering the globalization of the information environment, the technologization of journalistic work, and the emergence of new hybrid genre forms.

However, most Ukrainian scholars agree that the classic system of dividing genres into three groups – informational, analytical, and artistic-journalistic – remains the basis. Therefore, during the qualitative content analysis of the online business media publications from our sample, we considered the investigations of Vasylenko (2006), Holik (2012), and Radchyk (2011), as well as works on genres of Internet journalism by Shevchenko (2015), Zakharchenko, Tsymbalenko, Sokolova (2013), Horodenko (2016) and identified certain regularities regarding the most widespread genre forms for the reflection of socio-economic topics in the online business media.

The vast majority of reporting on socio-economic topics (73%) was embodied in analytical genre forms from the total sample during the research period. The most common genre was the feature – 32.5%, the analytical article – 23%, and the review – 17.5%.

The remaining reports from the total analyzed population (25%) were displayed in the genres of the information group, where notes (57%), interviews (23%), and reportage (20%) prevailed.

Journalistic genres as a way of reflecting socio-economic topics in online business media of Ukraine are not widespread. From the genres of this group present in Ukraine's online business media during the analysis, we saw only the author's column format (2%).

This is explained, first of all, by the specificity of business media and the discourse in which they function, as well as the specificity of the journalistic method, the basis of which, according to Zdoroveha, "is the discovery of social conflicts, the analysis of contradictions, the identification of a problematic situation" (Zdoroveha, 2004, p. 144). All this involves the synthesis of artistic and scientific methods of perceiving reality and elements of the journalistic method – a real fact and its interpretation, cognitive and reflective means, systems of images, and the original author's thoughts.

Business journalism, by its very nature, still gravitates towards the use of analytical methods of knowledge because it requires several specialized skills and abilities from the journalist: understanding of the economic agenda and market conditions, skills of working with large arrays of narrow-field businesses, economic, statistical information, skills to work in an interdisciplinary industry environment.

Conclusions

Business journalism has a particular functional specificity, as it focuses not only on informing about the state of the business world and reflecting public opinion regarding this or that issue of objective reality in this economic sphere but also takes a direct part in real life, in particular, the formation of the country's investment climate, business image, solving social issues and contradictions related to personal finances and interests – buying a home, forming an investment portfolio, or increasing the level of financial well-being.

The issues of media content in online business media are an important set of thematic guidelines that help journalists fulfill their main function – meeting the informational needs of a highly specialized community and wide circles of the population in business information, which is vital for decision-making in the field of personal finance and business.

It is worth remembering that there are two types of business media issues: professional and non-professional. The latter, in particular, opens the way for business journalists to work out complex synthetic topics that have a dual nature in their practice.

An example of such topics is socio-economic ones, which we propose to define as a separate thematic block in the issues of business media, which considers current socially significant

business and social guidelines, requires the journalist to use special skills and abilities, as well as the initiation of a polylogue between the main stakeholders for bringing a certain issue out of the purely economic into the context of social regulation.

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R E S E A R C H   A R T I C L E S

Adherence to journalistic standards in coverage of religious issues in Ukrainian and Italian media

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ABSTRACT

This article aimed to investigate the adherence to professional standards by the Ukrainian and Italian media in covering the conflict around the UOC MP (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate) during the war in Ukraine. Thanks to the method of scientific literature analysis, Ukrainian scholars' views on professional journalistic standards and their observance in the media were clarified. With the help of the media monitoring method, we found 97 publications covering the conflict around UOC MP. The content analysis method determined the subject of the relevant publications and the presence of Russian propaganda narratives in them. Quantitative and qualitative adherence indicators to professional standards were also determined using the content analysis method, and the context mentioning the OCU and UOC MP activities was clarified. The main results and conclusions of the study: most of Italian media had a neutral attitude to the conflict, some media ignored it, there were also those openly promoting Russian narratives and even sometimes containing hate speech (Il Giornale) and reacted sharply to the fact of the searches and the statement of Volodymyr Zelenskyi about the banning of the UOC MP (Avvenire). Despite occasional standards violations, Ukrainian media covered the events objectively and in a balanced manner, without inciting enmity towards UOC MP.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Мета статті: простежити дотримання професійних стандартів українськими та італійськими медіа у висвітленні конфлікту навколо УПЦ МП (Української православної церкви московського патріархату) під час війни в Україні. Для досягнення мети поставлено такі завдання: визначити ставлення італійських й українських медіа до конфлікту навколо УПЦ МП; проаналізувати дотримання професійних стандартів українськими та італійськими медіа під час висвітлення конфлікту навколо УПЦ МП; з'ясувати у матеріалах наявність інформації про діяльність ПЦУ (Православної церкви України). Завдяки методу аналізу наукової літератури було з'ясовано погляди українських вчених на професійні журналістські стандарти та їх дотримання в медіа. За допомогою методу моніторингу ЗМІ було виявлено 97 публікацій, у яких висвітлювався конфлікт навколо УПЦ МП. Методом контент-аналізу встановлено тематику відповідних публікацій та наявність у них російських пропагандистських наративів. Також методом контент-аналізу визначено кількісні та якісні показники дотримання професійних стандартів, з'ясовано контекст, у якому згадувалося про діяльність ПЦУ та УПЦ МП. Головні результати і висновки дослідження: переважна більшість італійських медіа мали нейтральне ставлення до конфлікту, частина медіа його проігнорували, були й такі, що відкрито просували російські наративи та часом навіть мову ворожнечі (Il Giornale), і гостро відреагували на факт обшуків та заяву Володимира Зеленського про заборону УПЦ МП (Avvenire). Українські медіа, незважаючи на поодинокі порушення стандартів, висвітлювали події цілком об'єктивно і виважено, без розпалювання ворожнечі до УПЦ МП. Щодо діяльності ПЦУ, у зазначеному контексті про неї згадали менше ніж у п'ятій частині публікацій.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: професійні журналістські стандарти, українські медіа, італійські медіа, релігійна тематика.

Introduction

Compliance with journalistic standards by Ukrainian media during the war remains one of the most painful and debatable topics for discussion and research. Even before the full-scale invasion, starting in 2014, the question of preserving quality journalism, which would avoid unnecessary pretexts for enemy propaganda, arose.

One of the fabricated "casus belli" or pretexts for the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine was and remains the religious aspect: "oppression of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine." The aggressor country began to impose this narrative in its propaganda, like many others, in 2014, in the context of the so-called hybrid war. The religious factor continues to cause a sharp confrontation, probably second only after the language problem. The narrative about the persecution of the Orthodox Church was adopted by many Western media, especially in countries that actively sympathized with the Russian Federation before the start of the full-scale invasion. One of these countries was Italy. From 2014 until 24 February 2022, the Italian press could quickly call the war in the Donetsk region fratricidal, call the separatists and mercenaries patriots of their own land, and meticulously emphasize the "Nazi battalions" from Ukraine. There was a similar approach to the religious issue. The most exciting thing is that reports with such narratives appeared in the most popular private and state media. After 24 February 2022, the attitude towards

Ukraine began to change, but sometimes Russian narratives still appear in the Italian media's news and journalistic analytical reports.

The purpose of this paper was to trace the observance of professional standards by the Ukrainian and Italian media in covering the conflict surrounding the UOC MP (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate) during the war in Ukraine. Achieving the envisions the following objectives: 1. To determine the attitude of the Italian and Ukrainian media to the conflict surrounding the UOC MP. 2. To analyze the observance of professional standards by the Ukrainian and Italian media during the coverage of the conflict surrounding the UOC MP. 3. To find out in the reports the presence of information about the activities of the OCU (Orthodox Church of Ukraine).

Method

In the first stage of the research, the method of analyzing research literature was applied, which helped clarify Ukrainian scholars' views on professional journalistic standards and their observance in the media. The media monitoring method contributed to the identification of publications that covered the conflict surrounding the UOC MP in Ukraine during the war. Thanks to the content analysis method, the relevant publications' topics and the presence of Russian propaganda narratives in them were established. Quantitative and qualitative indicators of compliance with professional standards were also determined using the method of content analysis, and the context in which the activities of the OCU and UOC MP were mentioned was clarified. Three parameters were taken for analysis: the attitude to the conflict surrounding the UOC MP (negative, neutral), the promotion of Russian narratives (promoted, not promoted), and mentions of the OCU (yes or no) in the media texts.

13 of the most popular Italian media were included in the monitoring: Corriere della Sera, Rai News, Il Giornale, Il Tempo, Il Fatto Quotidiano, Avvenire, Famiglia Cristiana, TV 2000, Il Sussidiario, La Repubblica, Euronews, La Nuova Europa, Il Foglio. Besides, 15 Ukrainian media with a high rating were selected for analysis: TSN (tsn.ua), Ukrainian Pravda, UNIAN, Obozrevatel (obozrevatel.com), Ukrinform, Znaj.UA (Znaj.ua), RBC-Ukraine (rbc.ua), Censor.NET, Gordon (gordonua.com), Correspondent (korrespondent.net), Gazeta.ua (gazeta.ua), Zaxid.net, Hromadske, Livy Bereg (lb.ua), Interfax-Ukraine. According to SimilarWeb (Most Visited Websites in Ukraine in February 2023, 2023), which is based on Google Analytics and has a good reputation, in February 2023, the most popular Ukrainian media were: Censor.NET, Ukrainian Pravda, Obozrevatel, RBC, TSN, Correspondent, UNIAN, is a list in descending order.

The empirical basis for the study was 97 media reports for the period from June 2022, when the mayor of Lviv, A. Sadovyy, voiced a proposal to ban the UOC MP, until January 2023, when the head of the UOC MP Onufriy complained to the UN about the persecution of his parish.

Results and Discussion

Ukrainian media in wartime demonstrate unity in defending national interests, trying to adhere to ethical principles and professional standards of journalism, both Ukrainian and international. According to the Institute of Mass Information (Kuryata, 2021), modern Ukrainian professional standards for quality media provide a balance of opinions and points of view, credibility, separation of facts from comments, accuracy, completeness, and efficiency. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), among its editorial guidelines, distinguishes audience trust, freedom of expression, independence, compliance with the public interest, honesty and accuracy, impartiality, editorial integrity, protection of vulnerable groups, avoidance of unjustified offenses, respect for privacy as the central editorial values. Back in 2014, the Institute of Mass Information published a list of standards that operate in war conditions: accuracy, efficiency, impartiality,

ethics, completeness, separation of facts from comments (Standards of journalism during the war. How to write about tragic events - infographic. 2014, 11 August).

Compliance with professional standards has always been in the field of view of Ukrainian researchers. "The main criteria for evaluating a journalist's activity is his objective and truthful reflection of reality. The criteria are quite correct, and the desire for objectivity and truthfulness should be the basis of the activities of those on whom the fate of society and man depends", Rizun notes (2004, p. 45).

In research, educational and methodological publications of Ukrainian authors, the need to comply with standards is deeply and comprehensively substantiated as the only possible way of functioning in professional journalistic activity: Rizun (2008), Ivanov and Serdyuk (2008), Kuznetsova, (2007), Prystupenko (2011), Chekmyshev (2021). The analysis of compliance with standards in practice is reflected in the scientific investigations of Dzholos (2019, pp. 38-44) and Budivska (2019, pp. 27-35). Analyzing the problems of compliance with the standards of information broadcasting, Dzholos emphasizes that the standard of balanced information involves giving a voice to all parties. Budivska traces trends in the perception of professional standards by Ukrainian journalists who work with socio-political issues and notes certain discrepancies between theory and practice.

Revealing typical violations of professional standards in publications on religious topics, particularly journalists' inclination towards sensationalism and "fried facts," Boyko notes that the media attracts propagandists as the most massive and effective means of spreading any ideas. Consequently, professional propagandists often try to hide the promotion of the desired idea, disguising it under the facade of journalistic publications. These include pseudo-news, pseudo-analytical and pseudo-historical articles, interviews with the "necessary" person, and fake ratings and polls (Boyko, 2015, pp. 284–294). According to Potyatynyk, compliance or non-compliance with professional standards is the watershed that determines whether texts of various forms of mass communication belong to journalism (Potyatynyk, 2010).

Today, we can say that the time when Italian state media, such as Rai News, broadcast documentaries like "Fratello contro fratello" (Brother against brother)[6], where separatists were depicted as heroes of Donbas, is already in the past. However, complaints about official Kyiv continue, for example, because of the SBU's (State Security Service) searches in the structures of the UOC MP. Some media even called it a religious war of President V. Zelenskyi or Ukraine's authorities against the church; others treated it neutrally and followed the standards. We explored the violations of standards and the overall narratives that appeared in news stories, analytical pieces, and reviews.

The most radical messages were promoted on the website of one of the most popular Italian newspapers, Il Giornale, owned by the Berlusconi family. The website is also viral - 35 million views in February 2023. After Volodymyr Zelenskyi's statement about the possible ban of the UOC MP, Il Giornale reacted with the following lines: "After eight years of *civil war* in Donbas and ten months of Russian intervention, Ukraine is also preparing to deal with the dramatic wounds characteristic of *religious wars*."[7] (emphasis added). These are the first two sentences after the title, i.e., all the accents were immediately placed at the beginning of the lead. Further, the article discusses Russia's crimes against Greek-Catholic priests in occupied Berdyansk. However, the general impression and context in which the events are considered are stated at the be-

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[6] «Fratello contro fratello». Reportage sulla guerra civile in Ucraina(2015, 23 Febbraio) Rai News https://www.rainews.it/archivio-rainews/media/Fratello-contro-fratello-Reportage-sulla-guerra-civile-in-Ucraina-68ddc78f-f7a0-4c6c-b921-caaedb208375.html

[7] Gian Micalessin. (2022, 3 Dicembre). Chiesa ortodossa russa, pugno duro di Zelensky «Sono collaborazionisti». Il Giornale. https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/chiesa-ortodossa-russa-pugno-duro-zelensky-sono-2091518.html

ginning of the text. Especially since the publication ends with "The large-scale repressive action does not seem to be giving many results so far."

A similar article appeared in Avvenire, a newspaper owned by the Italian Bishops' Conference. There, the return of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra's part to the OCU was called "the last act of the Kyiv authorities' crusade against the largest church of Ukraine."[8] This is no longer the position of the Berlusconi family but of the Catholic Church bishops, who are directly or indirectly related to the papal curia and the Pope himself.

Part of the Italian media completely ignored this topic. Some purely Catholic media decided to follow a different strategy: they simply did not cover these events at all (Famiglia Cristiana - about a million readers, TV2000 - Catholic television, about 3 million viewers). Rai News, owned by the Italian government and financed by taxpayers, took the same position. Thus, on the one hand, we see Avvenire, which released four negative articles, and on the other, a bunch of Catholic media that ignored the event, as did Italy's state broadcaster, like the British BBC.

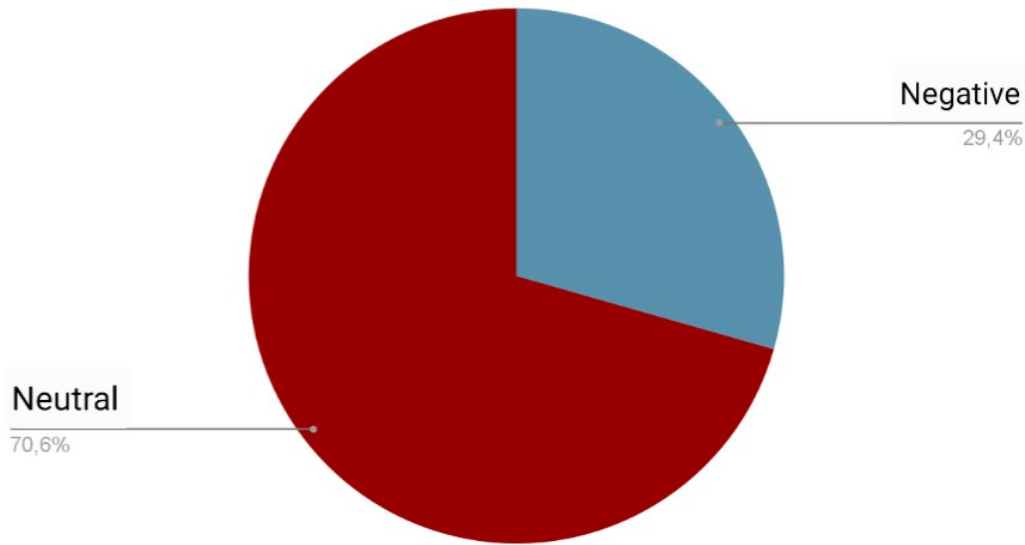We included 17 reports from the Italian media in our analysis: from short notes to large analytical items.

Figure 1. Italian media's attitude towards the conflict.

We believe that neutrality in conflict coverage is essential for impartial journalism. An impartial journalist should cover the event from different angles, providing a balanced perspective on why it is happening. This is particularly important in analytical reporting, where journalists should avoid using inflammatory phrases like "religious war," "oppression of believers," or "Zelensky's crusade against Orthodoxy" to prevent any bias in their reporting.

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[8] Giacomo Gambassi (2023, 6 Gennaio). Monastero delle grotte. Kiev caccia dalla Cattedrale i monaci ortodossi legati a Mosca. Avvenire. https://www.avvenire.it/mondo/pagine/ucraina-il-governo-di-kiev-caccia-gli-ortodossi-di-mosca-dal-monastero-simbolo
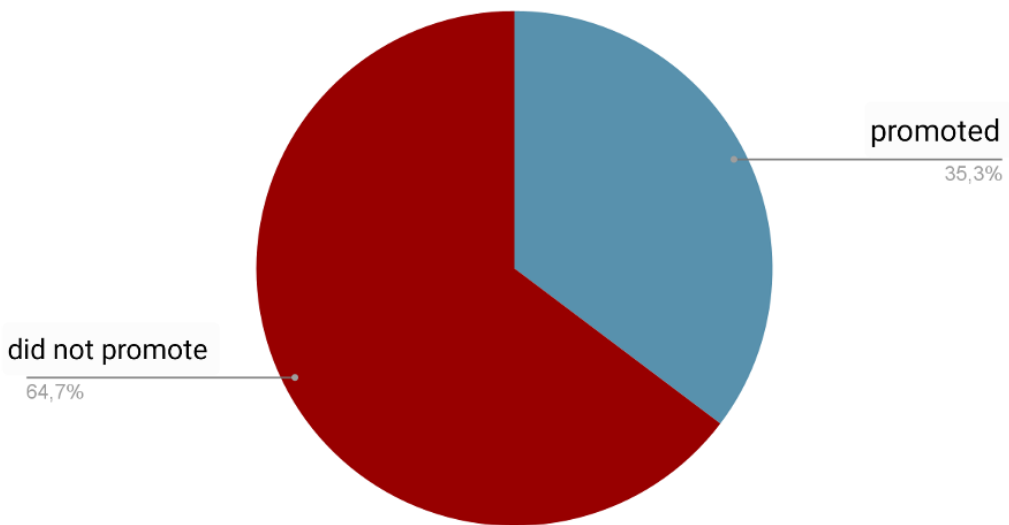
Figure 2. Promoting Russian narratives.

The most radical Russian narratives have already been named above, e.g., the "religious war," but the most popular narrative, which in one way or another was broadcast in every media report where Russian narratives were promoted, was the statement that the persecution of the Orthodox Church was beginning in Ukraine without any grounds: believers not guilty, but they are interrogated, monks are not guilty, but they are also interrogated. However, of course, such reports did not mention the existence of the OCU, so it seemed as if an infringement was directed against the entire Orthodox Church.

Against the background of news about searches in the churches of the UOC MP, publications about the "war that spilled over into the church," and reports about the eviction of the Moscow Patriarchate from part of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, there is a lack of media content mentioning the existence of the OCU. Only 6 of 17 reports mentioned another Orthodox jurisdiction in Ukraine besides the UOC MP. Sometimes the reader, far from Ukrainian realities, may get the impression that the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is being taken away from all Orthodox, and nothing is known about its future fate. In the same way, when they talk about "repression of the UOC MP," for some reason, they do not mention that there has been an alternative OCU for many years. I.e., Italian journalists present this conflict rather one-sidedly, forgetting such an extremely essential detail that could completely change the view of an Italian reader who does not know Ukrainian realities.

Ukrainian media, compared to Italian ones, are much more attentive to details: they carefully separate facts from comments, do not give a vibrant color to the events, present reliable facts and verified information from the first sources (usually official websites, in particular, the SBU), as a rule, maintain a balance of opinions. Even Znaj.ua, which does not belong to quality media, did not abuse the situation. It is also worth noting that the top Ukrainian media, while not sympathizing with the UOC MP, decently covered the conflict and did not use negatively colored vocabulary regarding this Orthodox jurisdiction. Out of 80 analyzed materials, facts, comments, and opinions were presented neutrally. As for the promotion of Russian narratives, there are conflicting interpretations in two materials, more precisely in the titles of these publications.

In the content on the TSN website covering the conflict around the UOC MP, adherence to professional standards can be observed: reliability of facts, the balance of opinions (opinions of Ukrainian Orthodox Church representatives were presented), no inflaming of the conflict or heat-

ing the topic with snappy headlines. However, one of the 12 analyzed materials of the website, perhaps unknowingly, but completely defeats the statements of the Russian side that the "persecution" of the UOC MP is only a political decision of the Ukrainian authorities and not the eradication of a spy network and a real threat to the integrity of the state. "This is a political decision: Sadovyy commented on the ban of the Moscow Patriarchate in Lviv."[9] - the headline of the news article. The text further explains that the political decision refers to the position of the Lviv City Council, which cannot ban the activities of UOC MP in the region - that should be done by other state bodies. E.g., one of the Lviv media named this news as follows: "The ban on the activities of the UOC MP in Lviv is political, not legal in nature" - Sadovyy[10]. Thus, calling the ban a "political decision," the mayor of Lviv confirmed an obvious pro-Russian narrative.

A media report in Obozrevatel with a considerable volume of 5,400 characters turned out to be ambiguous: "The UOC MP priest, because of whom Lomachenko was disgraced, again spoke about the bloodshed in Ukraine and the violation of God's laws. Video"[11]. The only fact of this publication was the speech of UOC MP Metropolitan Longin, in which he lambasted the OCU and talked about the "desecration of shrines." At first glance, the standards were met because it was not indicated in any way that the editors shared such opinions, and Longin's statements were presented in his own words. The problem is that 5,400 characters are the volume of the analytical genre that Obozrevatel devotes to the speech of the UOC MP metropolitan, in which he calls the OCU "Satanists." In our opinion, a note of up to 1000 characters is enough for such a message. Knowingly or unknowingly, providing such a large platform as Obozrevatel for a whole sermon to spread pro-Russian narratives can be considered a violation of professional standards. It is worth emphasizing that there was no balance of opinions, no adequate refutation of Mr. Longin's words, or an explanation of why searches are being conducted in the churches of the UOC MP. 7 direct quotes from Longin were used in the report, and his words were paraphrased several times. "These people (priests of the OCU) want to desecrate our shrines and our church," "They forced people into the church, which these wolves in sheep's clothing took to desecrate our shrine - the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra," "We see how today the Constitution of our of the state - free religion for each of us – is violated," - such narratives of the Metropolitan of the UOC MP are no better than the remarks of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Kiril. I.e., nothing would have changed if Obozrevatel had provided a platform for preaching to a Russian propagandist.

In addition to the cases of promotion of Russian narratives in our mass media, it is worth paying attention to several violations of journalistic standards that were discovered during the content analysis.

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[9] «Це політичне рішення»: Садовий прокоментував заборону Московського патріархату у Львові ["It's a political decision": Sadovyy commented ban of Moscow Patriarchate in Lviv]. (2022, 30 June). TSN. https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/ce-politichne-rishennya-sadoviy-prokomentuvav-zaboronu-moskovskogo-patriarhatu-u-lvovi-2100256.html

[10] Заборона діяльності УПЦ МП у Львові має політичний, а не правовий характер – Садовий [Ban of UOC MP in Lviv has political, but not legal nature - Sadovyy]. (2022, 30 June). Varianty. https://varianty.lviv.ua/89090-zaborona-diialnosti-upts-mp-u-lvovi-nosyt-politychnyi-a-ne-pravovyi-kharakter-sadovyi

[11] Ragutska, L. (2023, 9 January). Священник УПЦ МП, через якого зганьбився Ломаченко, знову заговорив про кровопролиття в Україні та порушення законів Божих. Відео [The UOC MP priest, because of whom Lomachenko was disgraced, again spoke about the bloodshed in Ukraine and the violation of God's laws. Video]. Obozrevatel. https://news.obozrevatel.com/ukr/society/svyaschenik-upts-mp-cherez-yakogo-zganbivsya-lomachenko-znovu-zagovoriv-pro-krovoprolittya-v-ukraini-i-porushennya-zakoniv-bozhih-video.htm

The headline on the Ukrainian Pravda website is "The SBU exposed another enemy accomplice in a cassock."[12] contributes to forming a negative stereotype and labels not only the priests of the UOC MP but also any other person in a cassock. According to this logic, every priest becomes a potential accomplice of the enemy, which is highly destructive. I.e., the technology of generalization works: a man in a cassock is an enemy henchman. For comparison, the headline, which corresponds to the truth, to the same news from UNIAN: "He waited for the occupation of Zaporizhzhia: SBU exposed a deacon of the UOC MP who promoted "Russian world""[13] - not a single attribution of people in cassocks to "enemies."

Another case of professional standards violation was revealed in the report on the website of Ukrainian Pravda – "The authorities explained why the UOC MP is banned: it is dangerous for health and life."[14] The problem is that the headline does not correspond to the report content, i.e., the news does not explain why or how the UOC MP is dangerous to health and life. Therefore, we can call such a headline manipulative, which does not carry a serious threat but is designed to attract as much attention as possible. This news item contains nothing manipulative, only an appeal to the Center for Strategic Communications message under the Ministry of Information Policy "Spravdi."

A common trend in the coverage of the conflict by the Italian and Ukrainian media is a small number of mentions in the texts about OCU as an alternative to UOC MP. However, of course, Ukrainian society is much more informed about the existence of OCU because according to the latest KMIS survey (Press releases and reports. Dynamics of religious self-identification of Ukraine's population: results of a telephone survey conducted July 6-20, 2022, 5 August 2022), 54% of Ukrainians enroll themselves in the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Thus, even according to the harshest estimates, more than half of Ukrainians know about OCU, which is an audience feature. On the other hand, Italians' awareness of the OCU is much lower, which creates a vast space for manipulating the fact of the existence of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by default.

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[12] Romanenko, V. (2022, 10 December). СБУ викрила ще одного поплічника ворога в рясі [The SBU exposed another enemy accomplice in a cassock]. Ukrainian Pravda. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/12/10/7380178/

[13] Чекав окупації Запоріжжя: СБУ викрила диякона УПЦ МП, який просував «русский мир» [He waited for the occupation of Zaporizhzhia: SBU exposed a deacon of the UOC MP who promoted "Russian world"] (2022, December). UNIAN. https://www.unian.ua/incidents/chekav-okupaciji-zaporizhzhya-sbu-vikrila-diyakona-upc-mp-yakiy-prosuvav-russkiy-mir-12073656.html

[14] Balanchuk, I. (2022, 2 December). Влада пояснила, чому забороняють УПЦ МП: небезпечна для здоров'я і життя [The authorities explained why the UOC MP is banned: it is dangerous for health and life]. Ukrainian Pravda. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/12/2/7378985/
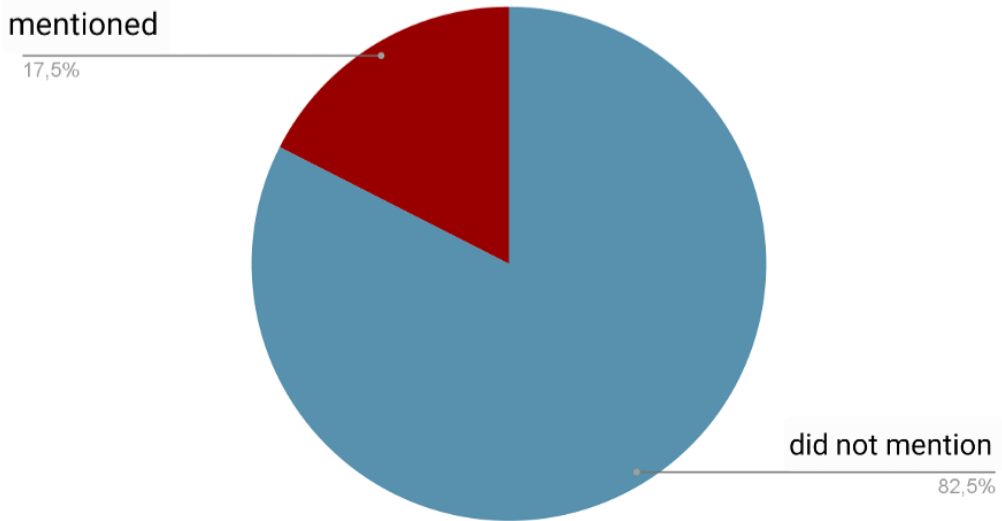
Figure 3. Mentions about OCU in Ukrainian media.

Therefore, only 14 out of 80 media reports in Ukraine mentioned the existence of the OCU. However, it was evident in short news messages, such as: "The SBU came with an inspection to the facilities of the UOC MP in Khmelnytskyi region."[15], there is no mention of the OCU. And in another article by Hromadske: "54% of Ukrainians support the complete ban of the UOC MP – survey"[16], which also does not mention the existence of OCU; it would be pretty appropriate to supplement it with statistics from KMIS: 54% of Ukrainians count themselves in the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and only 4% in the UOC MP. Out of 14 reports, in two, the OCU was mentioned exclusively negatively - in quotes from representatives of the UOC MP. E.g., "The UOC MP priest, because of whom Lomachenko was disgraced, again spoke about the bloodshed in Ukraine and the violation of God's laws. Video" from Obozrevatel, which we have already analyzed above. No opposition to the words of Longin was given.

Out of 12 neutral reports, the OCU is mentioned the most in the news background, e.g.: "On 2 December, the representative of the OCU Yevstratiy Zorya reported that the Holy Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra was registered as a monastery within the OCU."[17] (the news was about the expiration of the UOC MP's lease of some buildings of the Lavra). Therefore, on the one hand, the issue of not mentioning OCU in the texts of Ukrainian media is also worth raising. However, on the other hand, it is worth understanding that the specifics of the Ukrainian audience are entirely different, and there are essentially fewer opportunities to manipulate this topic.

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[15] Kramar, O. (2022, 29 December). СБУ прийшла з перевіркою до об'єктів УПЦ МП на Хмельниччині [The SBU came with an inspection to the facilities of the UOC MP in Khmelnytskyi region]. Hromadske. https://hromadske.ua/posts/sbu-prijshla-z-perevirkoyu-v-obyekti-upc-mp-na-hmelnichchini

[16] Lutsenko, Y. (2022, 29 December). Цілковиту заборону УПЦ МП підтримують 54% українців — опитування [54% of Ukrainians support the complete ban of the UOC MP – survey]. Hromadske. https://hromadske.ua/posts/povnu-zaboronu-upc-mp-pidtrimuyut-54-ukrayinciv-opituvannya

[17] Stavska, Y. (2022, 27 December). В УПЦ МП сплив термін оренди двох найбільших храмів Верхньої Лаври: Павло «заволав» [In UOC MP the lease of two biggest churches in Upper Lavra: Pavlo grumbled]. UNIAN. https://www.unian.ua/society/v-upc-mp-spliv-termin-orendi-dvoh-naybilshih-hramiv-verhnoji-lavri-pavlo-zavolav-12091401.html

Conclusions

As a result of this study, we can conclude that the adherence to professional standards by the Ukrainian and Italian media in covering the conflict surrounding the UOC MP contributes to the protection of Ukrainian interests. According to the analysis, a large part of the Italian media had a neutral attitude toward the conflict (70.6%) and did not promote pro-Russian narratives (64.7%); some of the media showed a negative attitude (29.4%). Some media openly promoted Russian propaganda narratives and sometimes even used hate speech, such as Il Giornale, and reacted sharply to the fact of searches and Volodymyr Zelenskyi's (Avvenire) statement about the banning of UOC MP - only 35.3%. Some popular Catholic and secular media refused to mention the event (Rai News, Famiglia Cristiana, TV 2000). Therefore, most Italian media had a neutral attitude to the conflict and did not promote pro-Russian narratives. However, the problem of ignoring the OCU exists. Therefore, if Italy actively supports Ukraine in other areas, Russian narratives are still being actively promoted around coverage of church problems.

Ukrainian media approached the coverage of the events in a much more professional manner: most of them were limited to referring to official sources and comments by UOC MP representatives when appropriate. That is, we can confidently confirm that the field of Ukrainian popular media, in the absolute majority, does not contain pro-Russian narratives regarding events related to UOC MP, but here it is not without mistakes. Perhaps the two detected violations were unconscious, but they happened. It is worth noting that, unlike the Italian media, Ukrainian media, despite occasional violations of standards, covered the events objectively and in a balanced manner without inciting enmity towards the UOC MP. As for the mentions of the existence of the OCU, whose activities were discussed in this context in only 17.5% of Ukrainian media publications, the situation is not entirely unambiguous and requires a more detailed study of the context of all publications and focusing on this issue. Nevertheless, we generally have a much more positive trend among this field's most popular Ukrainian media.

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