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CONTENTS

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Media and Information Literacy Education: Exploring the gaps in curriculum development at the Egyptian universities

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Abstract

The need for Media and Information Literacy Education is critical in digital age, especially when people are increasingly vulnerable to disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and diverse digital risks. This study specifically looks at the case of Egypt because qualitative academic research into Media and Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum development is limited in the country. Therefore, drawing on Tyler's model of curriculum development, this study explores the key gaps in the curriculum development of media and information literacy at the higher educational institutions in Egypt in four key areas including: objective planning, students' learning experiences, organization of these experiences and overall evaluation of MIL courses. In doing so, this study uses the qualitative method of in-depth interviews and offers a deductive thematic analysis of findings.

Keywords

Media and Information Literacy, pedagogy, curriculum development, Egyptian higher educational institutions.

Introduction

Technological advancements have certainly transformed the way information is produced, disseminated and used through various channels such as the Internet

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and social media platforms (Zangana, 2017). While the velocity of information exchange has doubled by virtue of technology, it remains uncertain whether the received information is verified and accurate (Jamil, 2022b; Fleming, 2009). The dilemma arises when people are left with their choices and preferences to choose information without an understanding of how to access verified information, to critically analyze and interpret the information for its appropriate usage (Gladkova et al., 2022; Vartanova, & Lukina, 2022; Gureeva et al., 2022). Media, as well as other information providers including libraries, archives and the Internet, can serve as the essential tools for enabling the citizens to make informed decisions (Leaning, 2019). However, people do need basic knowledge of how these media and information providers operate in their specific context, how can they access it, how can they use it for diverse purposes, and how do they assess the content and information provided by these channels (Msimanga, Tshuma, & Matsilele, 2022; Jamil, 2022c). MIL thus enables people to access, critically analyze, interpret and use media content and information received through various sources, as well as to create and disseminate information and media content with the use of available tools in ethical and legal ways (Leaning, 2019; UNESCO, 2011).

Many scholars recognize the importance of media and information literacy and thus there is an increasing academic interest in researching MIL (Park et al., 2021; Rao, 2020; Leaning, 2019; Lee et al., 2013) and its education (Iqal, & Idrees, 2022; Jamil et al., 2022; Batool, & Webber, 2019; Costa et al., 2018; Ameen, & Ullah, 2016; Fedorov, 2021). Most of these international studies highlight the state of MIL education in different contexts, address its significance, and reflect upon teaching and curriculum development from different perspectives. Despite a growing interest of scholars, media and information literacy as a field of study is relatively new, and it continues to be explored and built upon worldwide, and is still evolving in the Middle East and the North Africa (AlNajjar, 2019; Abu-Fadil, Torrent, & Grizzl, 2016; Martin, Birks, & Hunt, 2010).

When specifically looking at the case of Egypt in the Middle East, the country's media is acknowledged as one of the influential media players within the Arab-speaking countries (Gody, 2015). The country has witnessed a gradual growth of online news media and social media websites in the past two decades (Farahat, 2021). A recent report by British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) suggests that "around 57% of Egyptians are online", especially Facebook[2], YouTube and WhatsApp are popular platforms (British Broadcasting Cooperation, 2021). The increasing popularity of digital news platforms and social media is not certainly

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[2] Belong to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.

a recent development. The role of news media, and particularly social media, has been widely acknowledged in the Arab uprisings of 2010s (Jamil, 2022a). The Egyptian youth's use of social media for political expression and activism is regarded as the driving force of political transformation in the country (Al-Najjar, 2019). However, there are a range of challenges including a strict state control on news media and an absence of journalistic ethical standards, which result in dissemination of unverified information, societal fragmentation and political bias (Abu-Fadil, Torrent, & Grizzl, 2016). These issues require the Egyptian citizens to be skilled enough for dealing with obstacles in the local media systems by developing a good understanding of the media landscape, challenge unprofessional media practices, and obtain required skills to filter information for reliability and accuracy.

Recognizing the importance of MIL education, the Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University introduced the first undergraduate course of media and information literacy in 2005. Since then, there are some major Egyptian universities that provide media and information literacy course to their students. These educational institutions include Cairo University; Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AAST); Ahram Canadian University (ACU); American University Cairo (AUC), and Beni Suef.

While the Egyptian universities are inspired to offer media and information literacy courses, there is a scarcity of qualitative academic research that identifies gap in the curriculum development. Consequently, the efficacy of media and information literacy education provided by the Egyptian universities remains unexplored. Therefore, informed by Tyler's model of curriculum development (1949), this study identifies gaps in the curriculum of media and information literacy at Egyptian public and private sector higher educational institutions.

Literature review
The concept of Media and Information Literacy

MIL emphasizes "learning, critical thinking, and interpretative skills across and beyond professional and educational boundaries" (International Federation of Library Association, 2011, para. 2). MIL is a composite of media literacy and information literacy fields, so MIL education combines competencies and skills from media literacy and information literacy (Anna Kozlowska-Barrios, 2023). As a complex concept, it is increasingly taking its legitimate presence in educational institutions across the world.

Information literacy is the skill to use information and communication technologies and their applications to access and create information. It extends

from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information iself; its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural and philosophical context and impact (Carlsson et al, 2008). MIL is required in all levels of education and more so to research scholars, it provides a serious approach to critically question what the people have read, heard and learned (Singh, & Ramaiah, 2021). So, it is clear that MIL is an essential for attaining empowerment and raising the students abilities to manage positively their media usage.The above-mentioned definitions for the concept of media and information literacy assure its importance as an efficient course for the students and to what extent it is needed especially in this digital era full of many and successive technological and media developments.

Media and Information Literacy Education in the Middle East

There is a broadening interest in media and information literacy education in the Middle East (Allam, & ElGhetany, 2020). In the past decade, the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and the American University of Beirut in Lebanon have developed courses for media and information literacy. Abu-Fadil et al. (2016) suggest that Egyptian universities first started media and information literacy education in the region. Cairo University, in partnership with the Autonomous University of Barcelona and backing of the UNESCO Office in Cairo, developed a MIL tool kit as a primary teaching resource for academics at public and private sector institutions. The MIL tool kit, developed by Cairo University, offers course materials into the following key areas:

- Intercultural Dialogue and MIL (cultural diversity and MIL, stereotyping, reconstructing stereotypes, media cooperation);
- New media and young people (the use of media, social media, risk and advantages);
- Global experiences in MIL;
- Media and Information Literacy: UNESCO Curriculum for Teachers;
- An introduction to Media and Information Literacy (definition, historical perspective, global framework, media and information literacy in formal learning);
- Media values and MIL (analyzing the news, entertainment, advertising, political persuasion);
- How to implement Media and Information Literacy Curriculum (methodology and resources);
- Freedom of expression and MIL (Abu-Fadil, Torrent, & Grizzle, 2016: 111).

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The MIL education tool kit, developed by Cairo University, is useful in terms of covered topic areas. Nevertheless, Allam and ElGhetany (2020) highlight the diversity of education provided at the Egyptian Universities in terms of language of teaching, system of education at public and private sector universities, pedagogical approaches, as well as the taught curriculum. The country currently has four types of tertiary-level educational institutions including public[3] (i.e., government's owned), privately-owned[4], international and the high-quality El-Ahlya national universities. Noticeably, media and information literacy courses are mainly offered by Cairo University; Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AAST); Ahram Canadian University (ACU); American University Cairo (AUC), and Beni Suef. The efficacy of MIL education, in terms of pedagogy, content, learning experience and outcomes, is thus dependent on the process of curriculum development. However, research papers into media and information literacy education in tertiary-level institutions, can be described as few papers in Egypt. Some of these papers mainly focus on evaluating the program outcomes such as "a case study for the efforts of civic society sector in Egypt in the field of media literacy" (Hamdy, & Attia, 2021). Another study to evaluate the students' digital literacy skills during the online learning process through Covid-19 (Badr, 2020). Other one to demonstrate Egyptian university students' smartphone addicition and their digital media literacy level (Okela, 2022). Hence, threre is an evident research lacunae within this area and there is an urgent need for qualitative research that identifies gaps in the existing curriculum to underline the outcomes of media literacy education in Egypt. Therefore, this study aims to fills this gap in the literature.

Conceptual model

Tyler's model of curriculum development
This study is informed by Tyler's model of curriculum development (1949), which is one of the first models of curriculum development and has been used widely by educationists in different parts of the world (Cheng-Man Lau, 2001). Tyler indicates that his rationale is a set of categories to guide people from very

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[3] The major government-owned Egyptian universities include: Cairo University, Assiut University, Beni Suef University, Sohag University, Port Said University, Sadat City University, Matrouh University.

[4] There are ten major private universities currently operating in Egypt including: Future University, Ahram Canadian University (ACU), American University in Cairo (AUC), Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AAST), Arab Open University, Badr University (Cairo), Badr University (Assuit), British University, Canadian International College, Delta University of Science & Technology.

different backgrounds (Antonelli, 1971). Tyler (1949) suggests four stages of curriculum development including:

1. Objectives
2. Selection of learning experience
3. Organization of learning experience
4. Evaluation

In his model, Tyler emphasizes the articulation of objectives as the first step of curriculum development thereby to define the purpose of education. The planning of objectives requires three sources: 'learner' (i.e., students), 'subject matter' (i.e., the knowledge that is useful) and 'society' (i.e., inclusion of societal values and industrial experts). Dopsan and Tas (2004: 39-40) highlighted:

> 'The curriculum planner 'screens' the needs of each of these forces by checking ideas against a philosophy of education and understanding of the psychology of learning. This enables educators to specify precise instructional objective and thus lead to the final steps of curriculum development that includes selection of students' experiences, organization of students' experiences and evaluation'.

The three sources of objective planning combine all relevant stakeholders necessary to be part of the curriculum development. The inclusion of 'learner' helps to understand students' needs and expectations while devising the objectives. The 'subject matter' allows to filter knowledge that is significant and required within any context. Then the 'society' is a source that gives values as wells provides an opportunity to industry/or professional experts to contribute their inputs. The screening of inputs, from all the abovementioned sources, thus help to check key ideas listed as objectives.

Once the objectives are articulated, the second and third steps of curriculum development are the selection and organization of students' learning experiences. These steps allow to focus more on how students can have rich learning experience through greater in-class participation, activities, discussions and experiments, and how their experiences can be organized to finally evaluate the teaching and learning outcomes.

Tyler's model is a practical functional model and it can be applied to all learning areas. It is considered a technical model because it includes an assessment of the steps that need to be progressed through with respect to the crucial elements of outcome, content, method and assessment (Brady, & Kennedy, 2010).

Rationale for using Tyler's model of curriculum development

Like any other models, Tyler's model was criticized. Some scholars wrote about its disadvantages and some others explained its advantages. While the model has been criticized as it doesn't include an explanation for the sources of the objectives (Kliebard, 1995) some other researchers and scholars clarified that the sources were actually determined as the learners and their needs besides experiences and abilities (Lounsbery, & Mckenzie, 2015). Tyler's objectives curriculum model considered as a strong model which influences the field of curriculum development since its publication in 1949. The influence of this model remains strong despite its age, demonstrating the importance of the questions Tyler based his model around (Vaughan Cruickshank, 2018).

In this study there are three reasons for choosing Tyler's model of curriculum development. First, Tyler (1949) emphasizes a student-centered approach to curriculum development and prioritizes students' needs, expectations and engagement in learning process. Secondly, it acknowledges the importance of specialized knowledge that keep on evolving time-to-time. Thirdly, it allows industry's perspective, as well as recognizes the importance of societal values and context when planning objectives of curriculum. All these three key aspects are useful to identify gaps in MIL curriculum development in Egypt, where students may have different needs and expectations than other parts of world. The Egyptian society has its specific socio-political and cultural milieu, and the country's media industry has its unique dynamics that necessitates to incorporate the perspectives from the society in the process of curriculum development.

Method

Research question and data collection method

This study explored a research question, namely: what are the key gaps in the curriculum development of media and information literacy at the higher educational institutions in Egypt? To explore this research question, this study used the qualitative method of in-depth interviews (face-to-face).

Sampling of interviewees

A total of twenty (22) media faculty, belonging to five public and private sector Egyptian higher educational institutions, were interviewed in this study. Interviewees were of age ranging between 32 and 66, and of both gender male and female (i.e., 17 female and 5 male). Using purposive sampling, interviewees were selected from the major Egyptian higher educational institutions that offer media and information literacy courses. These institutions included: two

public-sector institutions (i.e., Cairo University and Beni Suef); three private-sector institution (i.e., Ahram Canadian University, American University Cairo and Canadian International College); and one El- Ahlya University that is an institution developed by the cooperation of GCC countries[5] (i.e., Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport – AAST). There were two reasons for using purposive sampling to select interviews and their institutions (see also Cresswell, & Plano Clark, 2011). First, it helped to identify the Egyptian faculty who could offer significant insights about the media and information literacy education by virtue of their expertise. Second, it ensured the representation of key tertiary-level institutions in Egypt where undergraduate and postgraduate students could receive MIL education.

The following sample characteristics were used to select the interviewees:

- Interviewees should be a full-time employee at a public or private tertiary-level educational institution (i.e., that offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs) at a lecturer/or assistant professor, senior lecturer/or associate professor and professor level;
- The minimum qualification of interviewees should be a Master in Media Studies and maximum qualification a PhD in Media Studies or closely related discipline;
- Interviewees should possess teaching and research expertise in the area of media and information literacy.

It is important to mention that the sample included more female interviewees as compared to male interviewees because of female dominance in Media and Communication faculties at the Egyptian tertiary-level institution. Therefore, this study suffered from the limitation of gender-imbalance in sampling. Moreover, each interviewee was interviewed for around 60 to 70 minutes. An interview guide was used to seek participants' responses. *Table 1* explains the interview guide used in this study:

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[5] GCC countries include: The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt, Jordon, Oman, and Bahrain.

Interview guide used in this study

Interview guide
1	Do you specify MIL course objectives clearly? If yes, what is the process of planning course objectives?
2	Are students, subjects' experts and media industry's experts consulted at the time of planning course objectives?
3	Is student's learning experience prioritized when developing curriculum?
4	What strategies are used to enhance student's learning experience of MIL courses?
5	How do you see the organization of student's learning experience in the process of curriculum development?
6	Are there any challenges the organization of student's learning experience that affect the process of curriculum development?
7	How do you describe the evaluation process of MIL curriculum at the Egyptian tertiary-level institutions?
8	Are there any loopholes in curriculum evaluation process that affect the overall quality of MIL course delivery and learning outcomes?

Data analysis and ethics

Interview data were analyzed using deductive thematic analysis, and thus themes were emerged from the conceptual framework of this study (see Braun, & Clarke, 2006). The deductive thematic analysis followed three steps. In the first step, themes were derived deductively from Tyler's model of curriculum development. These key themes included:

- Planning of objectives
- Selection of learning experience
- Organization of learning experience
- Evaluation

In the second step, significant statements in the interviewees' responses were listed in response to interview questions. Finally, in the third step, interviewees' responses were coded based on the keywords in their statements. As far as the research ethics is concerned, this study has been approved by Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University. Both researchers followed advised ethical protocols by Cairo University; and therefore, all research participants were provided a project information sheet that described information related to research objectives, methods, and voluntary participation and anonymity of participants' names in research findings. Signed informed consents were also obtained from research participants.

Findings

Interview data revealed some gaps in the curriculum development of media and information literacy at both the public and private sector higher educational institutions in Egypt. Interestingly, gaps were identified by the interviewed male and female faculty at all four stages of curriculum development, as explained in *Table 2*:

Table 2

Gaps in the curriculum development of MIL education at the tertiary-level educational institutions in Egypt

	Process of curriculum development	Key gaps in curriculum development
1	Planning of objectives	No focus on media industry experts' as a source of planning of objectives for MIL curriculum; A lack of clarity for the role of education institution's philosophy in planning of objectives.
2	Students' learning experiences	Less focus on improving learning resources in local language (i.e., Arabic); Less focus on assessing students' experiences in different study years.
3	Organization of students' learning experience	Less focus on devising multi-strategy system for organizing students' learning experiences.
4	Evaluation	A lack of qualified instructors to introduce new course content and assessment methods during curriculum evaluation.

This study found that both public and private sector tertiary-level institutions shared three common objectives of media and information literacy education in Egypt. First, a curriculum that could enhance students' awareness and knowledge of diverse new media and challenges related to information such as fake news, disinformation and misinformation. Second, a curriculum that could improve their skills to efficiently access, analyze, and evaluate different media contents. Third, a curriculum that could offer skills to students to create different types of media messages, as well as to using all the media platforms professionally. For instance, two interviewees from the public-sector universities, suggest:

'At Cairo University, I see the media and information literacy course as an eye opener for students about media messages they receive. The purpose is to make them aware about the power of media and digital technologies

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and what skills they need to critically filter and analyze the media content to better deal with the implications of it for them and society on the whole'.

'At Beni Suef University, there is a specific aim of the Faculty of Mass Communication and the staff, which is to raise the students' awareness of MIL. These students, later as professionals, can voluntarily help the people in different villages and governorates in Upper Egypt to educate people about how to access and use the media content without getting negative impacts of fake news and disinformation, and also how to take part in public's debate about societal issues. We feel responsibility to the local culture and urgent important needs in Beni Suef'.

These findings clearly indicated the educational institutions' emphasis on students' needs when planning curriculum objectives, and therefore; student appeared as the key source of objective planning. Interviewed faculty from the privately-owned international institutions, including the American University in Cairo (AUC), Ahram Canadian University (ACU) and Canadian International College (CIC), also highlighted their focus on students' needs. In addition, they mentioned about the influence of American and Canadian educational standards in their educational philosophy that shaped their MIL curriculum. For instance, an interviewee from a private international institution said:

'Ahram Canadian University develops its curricula, teaching, and administrative methods in collaboration with major Canadian universities. The university is committed to meeting the Canadian and the Egyptian educational standards as far as MIL education is concerned'.

Interestingly, AAST is a special educational institution established by GCC countries, which emphasizes international standards of MIL education. For this purpose, the University has accreditation with the Autonomous University of Spain. Interviewees' responses from AAST suggested some emphasis on students' needs when planning curriculum. Thus, this study found two key gaps at the first stage of curriculum development: (i) no focus on media industry experts' as a source of planning of MIL curriculum objectives, (ii) a lack of clarity for the role of education institution's philosophy in the planning of objectives. Educational institution's philosophy does matter for the planning of curriculum objectives because it indicates not only the cultural context within which that institution operates, but also the ideology of the institution that reflects its values and goals.

Tyler (1949) suggests students' learning experiences as the second step of curriculum development. He emphasizes vertical and horizontal integration of students' experiences. Vertical integration helps students to use the gained knowledge gained in subsequent years of their undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Whereas horizontal integration of learning experience helps student to use and apply the gained knowledge of one discipline in other related fields (Smith, & Lovat, 1995).

Interviewees' responses, in this study, revealed the media faculties' focus on students' learning experiences at most public- and private-sector educational institutions in Egypt. For instance, according to an interviewee, "we do focus on learning experiences of students, and we try to ensure their interaction with teachers, industry's experts and MIL researcher. This is all to give them a rich learning experience". Despite focus on students' learning experience, this study found two gaps in the curriculum development at this stage. First, there is a less focus on learning resources in the local language (i.e., Arabic), which did affect the learning process and experience of students. According to an interviewee from a public-sector educational institution:

'Most text books are in English language that are part of the curriculum. Books and journal articles, written in Arabic language, are not used and listed in most curriculums. This is a problem because not all faculty can teach in English language and not all students are proficient in English language. This affects their learning process and overall experience'.

The second gap, in terms of students' learning experience, was lower focus on students' learning experiences, especially in the subsequent years of their degree programs, at most public and private sector Egyptian educational institutions. For instance, a faculty at a private-sector University highlighted:

'Faculty, sometimes, do not pay attention to the learning experience of senior or final year students because it is assumed all key concepts and content has already been taught to them. It is not considered that how can they use and apply in subsequent years of their study'.

In the Tyler's model of curriculum development (1949), organization of students' learning experience is the third step. This study found one key gap at this stage which was less focus on multi-strategy system for organizing students' learning experiences. "We lack multi-facet strategies to better organize and

integrate students' experiences from year one to year four", said an interviewee. This implied that the aspects of continuity, sequence and integration were missing when organizing students' learning experiences at the Egyptian educational institutions. And therefore, raised a potential question related to the efficacy of MIL instruction to students.

Finally, at the evaluation stage of curriculum development, this study found a lack of qualified instructors who could introduce new course contents and assessment methods during the evaluation of curriculum. Unlike the first stage of objective planning, interviewees highlighted the incorporation of industry's experts and faculty both to evaluate the course content. For instance, an interviewee mentioned, "normally experts, practitioners and faculty participate in the evaluation process to provide a comprehensive feedback about strength and weaknesses of MIL curriculum. Yet, the process may vary in different universities." These findings suggested a potential problem in MIL curriculum development in Egypt. An inconsistency, in terms of involved stakeholders in different stages of curriculum development, was revealed by the interviewees. The first stage of objective planning had dominant emphasis on students' needs and not on industry's/or practitioners' perspective. Nevertheless, interviewed faculty highlighted the involvement of practitioners' feedback in the final stage of evaluation. Objective planning and evaluation could be better performed if all relevant stakeholders (especially faculty and industry's expert) could take part.

Discussion

MIL education has become a major component of many media programs in different parts of the world. It is not certainly surprising considering the evolving nature of media and information landscape. Technological advancements have given rise to digital platforms and social media that are now serving as the main source of information (Jamil, 2022b). While the diversity of media content and the velocity of information exchange has increased, the issues of information authenticity and ethics pose new sort of challenges (such as fake news, disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, racism, propaganda and so on). People lack awareness on how to access, store and share the information ethically. These reasons have motivated educational institutions to introduce courses into media and information literacy across the globe. However, the Arab world has been an exception given no university in the Middle East had started media and information literacy education until 2005. Egypt's Cairo University was the first university that introduced MIL education and that was followed

by many universities in the country, as well as in other countries, to mention some: the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Lebanon, and Syria (Allam, & ElGhetany, 2020; Melki, 2015; Al-Aufi, & Al-Azri, 2013).

In case of Egypt, it has been over a decade that some major higher educational institutions are offering MIL education. Nevertheless, this study unpacked the gaps in the curriculum development at various stages that could potentially affect the efficacy of teaching and learning. These gaps were mainly related to the involvement of relevant stakeholders in objective planning, clarity of educational institutions' philosophy in objective planning, diverse strategies for students' learning experience and learning resources in local language, better organization of students' learning experiences and the overall evaluation of curriculum involving qualified instructors and all relevant stakeholders (including students and media industry's practitioners).

Drawing on Tyler's model, this study indicated that the planning of objectives at major public and private-sector educational institutions had involved clear purpose of MIL education. Students appeared as the key source of objectives' planning. This means students' psychological needs are considered when planning the curriculum's objectives. Interviewees' responses suggested some influence of both subject experts and the government to plan the curriculum thereby to align it with local needs of some specific regions such as Beni Suef. Nevertheless, interviewees' responses from public-sector universities, did not clarify to what extent planning of objectives considered the overall philosophy of their educational institution. Therefore, this aspect needs further exploration.

Tyler (1949) suggests that two more sources of objective planning other than 'learners' (i.e., students). These includes 'subject matter or expertise' and 'industry's or practitioners' perspective'. The authors argue that delivery of significant MIL knowledge requires expert or rather trained teachers who can further enhance the capacity of students to use, interpret and analyse diverse media content and information critically. Particularly, social media platform like Facebook[6], Twitter, and WatsApp, are considered as regular channels for misinformation. In the context of Egypt and broadly the Middle East, Facebook[7] and Twitter, are attributed as powerful social media platforms that has brought political awareness and online activism among the users (Jamil, 2022a). In this backdrop, challenges of online hate speech, propaganda, misinformation and societal fragmentation continue to affect people individually and the Egyptian

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[6] Belong to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.
[7] Ibid.

society. Therefore, all three sources of objectives' planning including 'learner', 'trained experts/or teachers' that have subject knowledge, and perspectives from media industry's practitioners, all together matter for the efficacy of MIL curriculum.

While Tyler's model of curriculum development does highlight sources of objectives' planning clearly, some scholars view that it does not explain well the sources of objectives (Kliebard, 1995). In the context of Egypt, incorporating perspectives from students', teachers and media industry along with national MIL policies, in total can facilitate effective objective planning for curriculum development. However, it is crucial to consider any unintended outcomes of those planned objectives. The objective planning stage thus needs to be flexible allowing teachers space to modify the MIL course goals keeping in view any changes in students' learning needs and evolving media industry's trends.

Furthermore, this study found that Egyptian public and private-sector universities do focus on curriculum evaluation, despite some loopholes in organizing students' learning experiences in different study years and the challenge of learning resources in Arabic language. Tyler's model of curriculum development is useful as it recognizes the role of students', teachers, practitioners and local culture/or values altogether. However, the model is linear that means the process of curriculum development ends at the evaluation stage. Some authors have argued that a cyclic approach can be useful to integrate the evaluation process with objective planning (Beyer & Apple, 1998). This allows to overcome any previous gaps in the curriculum development and to introduced any changed objectives in the new phase of curriculum development.

Conclusion

The Egyptian media landscape is evolving as the country's media embraces technological transformations and the penetration of ICT infrastructure allows the Egyptian citizens to be online than ever before. Over the past ten years, there is a steady growth of online news consumers and social media users in Egypt (Farahat, 2021). These developments do not necessarily mean that the Egyptian citizens are proficient enough to access, ethically use, interpret and analyse media and information. Therefore, it is crucial that the Egyptian government work together with relevant stakeholders (including teachers and media industry's practitioners) to introduce national level policies and initiatives to develop MIL education and facilitates the Egyptian citizens access to the right tools to actively participate in digital society.

This study manifested some gaps in MIL curriculum development especially in objectives' planning, organization of students' learning experiences and evaluation process. It is thus crucial to pay attention to some aspects, related to: (i) practical benefits of MIL education beyond aiming to increase the efficacy of teaching, (ii) the diversity of offered learning experiences to students, (iii) students' mental and physical disabilities when assessing their needs and expectations, (iv) provided resources (such as labs, interactive classrooms, digital equipment, and reading materials in local language), (v) and professional development of students.

To sum up, a new generation of digital natives is emerging in Egypt. Broadband improvement and proliferation of ICTs are allowing more and more Egyptian citizens to be online. National policies thus require reforms that can facilitate public's accessibility to digital platforms without any restrictions, as well as provide a strategy vision is required towards creating a media and information literate society in Egypt.

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ARTICLES

'Digital youth' agenda in social media: The study of popular Russian platforms[1]

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Abstract

This study pays close attention to the agenda of the most popular social media public pages among digital youth. It was revealed that the key ideas contained in community publications are in line with the contemporary Russian state ideological course and traditional culture. Among the values promoted by the communities, historical memory, family, patriotism, protection of the weak and economic growth are prominent. The study of the media geographic agenda shows that events taking place inside Russia are most widely covered, while international news is of interest to young people only if it is relevant to Russians. Culture and humor are among the most frequent topics of publications.

Keywords

Agenda-setting, social media, media culture, 'digital youth', Telegram, media geography.

Introduction

The media consumption practices of 'digital youth' are qualitatively different from the media patterns of older people. Moreover, they constantly demonstrate dynamics, which is explained the extensive development of digital media communication technologies and the determined approach of young people

to their use. It is the representatives of young people, according to studies of audience behavior, who are often included in the group of 'innovators' of the conceptual model of diffusion of innovations.

Recent data from Mediascope (TV Index, Russia 100k+) show that traditional media are less attractive to schoolchildren and students than social media. Only 30% of young respondents turn to television, radio and print, while 70% do not use them at all. The functions of traditional media for this audience are performed by the Internet. At the same time, 99% of Russian 'zoomers' actively use messengers and social networks. Digital products of social media platforms, as well as official Internet sites, are singled out by representatives of young people aged 14 to 24 as priority news sources: according to Deloitte, 67% and 55%, respectively, turn to them, while only 34% turn to television. According to other data, more than 41% of Russian schoolchildren turn to social networks and Internet sites, while less than 7% turn to traditional media channels (Dunas (ed.), 2021: P. 120).

Spending a lot of time in social media, young people are obviously influenced by media socialization as a process of assimilation of socio-cultural norms and values from mediatized (personal and social) experience as a result of media consumption. The authors of this article proceed from the position of the ubiquity, large-scale and irreversibility of media socialization. The recognition that individuals can be socialized simultaneously by different social agents cannot but cause concern and raises research questions about the consequences of the conflict of norms and values between the social and mediatized worlds. Researchers talk about a 'co-constructed' world with the help of media, where the question of the well-being of a young person remains open (Anderson, & McCabe, 2012).

The information agenda of young people today is formed mainly by digital social media, in the space of which, in addition to texts professionally produced by journalistic editorial offices, fall the materials of bloggers, influencers and the audience itself, and not only traditional and registered federal state media services. As a result, not a single information picture of the country and the world is formed for all citizens, but a fragmented social reality determined by various factors. For each representative of the audience, their own agenda is constructed, which is created by 'non-news' non-institutionalized media, as a result of a combination of algorithmic technologies of social networks, microtargeting of the advertiser and personal preferences of the media consumer (Kampes, & Brentel, 2020; Vartanova et al., 2021; Vartanova, 2022; Dunas, & Salikhova, 2022). There is no longer a single agenda, and many agendas that

are being formed reinforce contradictions both in social communication and in society, not uniting it, but dividing it into many communities that support contradictory value and ethical norms.

The scientific problem is the unstudied agenda of social media (the agenda that is set not only by news media, but by all subjects of social media – bloggers, influencers, audience, traditional media, Internet communication in communities in general), aimed at representatives of 'digital youth', with the identification of frames as 'semantic framework', containing interpretation, their classification and verification based on the study of media practices of representatives of 'digital youth', with subsequent prediction of socio-cultural effects. A more widely posed scientific problem is the need to identify links and dependencies between the arrays of data on the media consumption of 'digital youth' (agenda, frames, confirmed or refuted effects of framing on the audience) and the directions of social development, the establishment of the main qualitative and a number of quantitative patterns between them.

An attempt of content-analytical research of the materials of the communities most in demand among young people on the VK platform was the purpose of this study. The object of the study were particularly popular communities on VK ('Rifmy i panchi' (Rhymes and punches), 'Ovsyanka, sir' (Porridge, Sir) and 'Leonardo Dayvinchik') and Telegram channels ('Topor 18+' (Axe 18+), 'NE MORGENSTERN' (Not Morgenstern) and 'Krovavaya Barynya' (Bloody Lady), uniting the largest number of representatives of the 'digital youth'. The subject of the study is community publications that represent a complex media text consisting of a set of elements: a title, news information, a photo, an editorial comment or opinion, emojis accompanying text, emojis and commentary discourse (if any) produced by the audience.

Setting agenda and the theory of framing: Features of Russian approaches to studying

The theory of setting the agenda suggests that the media force citizens to consider some events more important than others, performing the function of social construction of reality. A conventionally unresolved issue in the academic community remains the differentiation of the types of agendas that are represented by political, media, public, interpersonal and personal agendas (Kazakov, 2014; McCombs, & Shaw, 1972). However, in the era of universal deep mediatization (Couldry, & Hepp, 2017) and the networking of society (Castells, 2000; Latour, 2020) the listed types hardly continue to remain relevant. It is probably more methodologically correct to talk about a mediatized agenda, in

which the issue of transit of social problems from the media to the public is removed, as well as about the personal-group refraction of its reproduction.

Setting the agenda is the most significant function of the media, to which an enormous number of both classical and modern works in Russia and abroad are devoted. It is obvious that in recent years, social media have begun to make considerable changes in setting the agenda, liberating and complementing the agendas of traditional media, even forming parallel agendas, expanding the range of news available to society. The next step after parallel agendas is to create alternative agendas. Parallel agendas need not necessarily be alternative. The alternative agenda appears mostly in non-professional political media, being in close connection with their audience communities. Non-professionals put forward issues relevant to the ideologically, politically and culturally close users in the public discourse. And these alternative agendas, which are being reinforced and supported by modern technical means, as a rule, fill those niches that often remain outside the media's attention (Vartanova, 2021a, 2021b).

In the Russian literature, the theory of setting the agenda has been thoroughly developed within the framework of a political approach (D'yakova, & Trakhtenberg, 1999, 2001a, 2001b). The peculiarity of this approach is the identification of correlations between information and socio-political agendas and an attempt to fit them into the Russian national context. Studies have shown that Russian journalists often use allegories, hidden meanings and subtexts that the audience willingly searches for and finds (D'yakova, 2002). Studying the behavior of Moscow viewers while watching information programs has revealed that the audience retained the Soviet habit of being wary, even suspicious of any political message, people tend to interpret texts, monitor internal inconsistencies and contradictions in them, as well as interpret in whose interests this or that information is being reported. In everything, even in the order of the reports in the program, viewers still successfully find a hidden agenda behind the explicit one (D'yakova, 2002). This feature of media communication, explained by the Soviet past, is confirmed by the study of Mickiewich (1999).

Problematizing the agenda, Russian media researchers seek to understand how the fragmentation of the media system can affect the overall information agenda, whether the time of traditional agenda-forming media has passed, how great is the role of social media in shaping the agenda (Nazarov, 2019). That is why in recent years the attention of researchers has been focused on the information agenda of social media, more precisely on the difference between the agendas in social and traditional media. Comparing agendas is becoming one of the most common types of media research. The result of such studies, as

a rule, is the conclusion that there is a significant difference in the content of the agendas. The content of social media is more in line with the public agenda than the content of traditional media (Kaminchenko, 2020). Public space can be divided into several communicative fields with narratives prevailing in them. The information agendas of various media, which differ in their content, confirm this idea (ibid).

Media texts and the media environment generated by them have systemic characteristics that have a complex impact on a person in the formation of identity, mentality, ideology, that is, they have a culture-forming potential. This approach gives grounds to consider the media environment and media consumption practices as a media culture, which in turn becomes an integral part of the modern culture of the society.

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Since social networks have become the leading channel of information for young people, the question becomes relevant: can social networks set the agenda in society and how strong can the influence of individual bloggers or channels be against the background of the general information flow? As the conducted research has shown, quirky news prevail among secondary topics. Professional journalists and media researchers usually perceive them as 'garbage' content. But quirky news is actively used by political technologists to create information noise that 'drowns out' socially significant topics (Garbuznyak, 2020).

Media culture is powered by polarized media discourses, which is why it is not a homogeneous and harmonized entity, but rather represents a confrontation of various strategies of mental and discursive activity of media communications, including manipulation strategies, hedonism, secularization or de-sacralization, and a strategy of cultural shock (Annenkova, 2012: 16).

In the digital environment, social media platforms have turned out to be a new public sphere, where civil dialogue takes place on all issues, including memories of the common past, its discussion and nostalgia for it. Social networks have a powerful potential to influence our collective and historical memory. Researchers distinguish between individual, collective, communicative, cultural, and historical memory. The transformation of the category of memory in the digital space is the subject of separate studies. Digital memory studies

reveal the place of digital tools, services and social platforms in the activation of the past and the construction of the present based on it. The central thesis in the theoretical understanding of memory is the understanding of it as a social construct: memory arises only in the process of socialization of an individual, is mediated by the social environment, the content of memory is determined by external, social and cultural frameworks (Assman, 2004). Today it has become possible to say that in the era of mediatization, memory is not only a social, but a media construct.

Empirical study

In the course of the research conducted by the content analysis method, the posts published during the week from June 20 to June 26, 2022 in three VK communities and three Telegram channels were studied, which showed the highest level of engagement and the share of representatives of 'digital youth' among subscribers. A random calendar week was chosen, which does not differ exponentially in resonant events and holidays. The sample included VK communities 'Rifmy i panchi', 'Leonardo Dayvinchik' and 'Ovsyanka, sir', Telegram channels 'Topor 18+', 'NE MORGENSTERN' and 'Krovavaya Barynya'. The listed communities can be classified as communities of general interest, publishing news about personalities popular among teenagers (bloggers, musicians, etc.) and memes. A total of 1,134 publications were studied.

The content analysis matrix consisted of three main components, allowing to identify the dominant news topics, key newsmakers and audience reactions; the objectivity of the content; and the frames presented (Dunas, Salikhova, Tolokonnikova, & Babyna, 2022). The headline complex of the publication was analyzed (the presence/absence of a title and subtitle, the type, tonality and format of the title), the type, tonality and subject/problematic of the publication, the basis of the information occasion, the scale of the event, the personality of the newsmaker, the type of information source, the presence of links and direct quotes, hashtags. It was revealed for whom the publication is valuable, the key heroes and antiheroes, values and anti-values, as well as the degree of polarization of opinions in the comments were determined.

Our attention was focused on the topics of publications that formed the agenda of the 'digital youth' in social media. We examined the publications for their subject matter, dividing them into the following categories: international, politics, economy, society, lifestyle, army, incidents, sports, humor/ entertainment, culture, medicine, religion, ecology, interpersonal/family/ gender and others.

Thus, the most common publications related to the topics of lifestyle, humor and entertainment, society and culture. 16% of all 1,134 publications studied were on the topic of lifestyle: consumer habits and fashion trends, which makes this topic the most popular among the rest. Humorous publications were also common: 14% of all publications were memes, jokes or news with a satirical component, 10% of the publications were on social and cultural topics.

It also seems important to us to pay attention to the geographical aspect of the agenda, to identify the geography of the published messages. The total media geography of the studied social media comprised 52 states, 3 interstate associations (NATO, CIS, European Union) and an abstract category of global news of a global nature, whose influence extends regardless of the borders of countries.

Publications of global significance concerned mainly lifestyle issues: current fashion trends, memes popular all over the world, dedicated to psychological problems, cultural events. Often in publications related to world issues, authors turned to the representation of nature and animals. The least publications about the world revealed the topic of politics, science, technology and food, and the problems of the army, religion and ecology were not reflected at all.

The activities of the European Union were presented differently. In this case, interest in the political and international agenda prevailed in the statements of political figures concerning Russia's actions in the international arena, as well as threats of new sanctions. This kind of news was presented in a negative tone, any anti-Russian statements were condemned or ridiculed. A similar situation is revealed when studying publications related to the activities of NATO.

During the week under study, Russia was represented most often and in a variety of ways, which is generally logical for Russian-speaking online communities in domestic social media. Informational occasions related to Russia mainly related to the topics of lifestyle, humor and entertainment, society and culture. A more detailed examination reveals the connection between the representation of social, political and lifestyle topics in publications containing reflection on changes in the life of Russians due to the withdrawal of a number of foreign brands from the Russian market, restrictions on movement, as well as in the understanding of such information cases in a humorous way. The cultural agenda is mainly related to the coverage of the release of new musical tracks by Russian artists popular among young people. It is noteworthy that the news of Russian culture dominated over similar news from other countries and even with global events from the world of cinema and music.

The internal Russian agenda in social media during the week under study was presented by 44 subjects and a separate category of all-Russian news that have a common importance for Russians or have no affiliation with a specific region. The most covered topics in this category were related to changes in the lifestyle of Russians, topics of humor and entertainment, as well as culture, describing both the upcoming premieres of new Russian films and music tracks, and the premieres of foreign cinema taking place in Russia. Public topics were also widely presented by publications about the decisions of top officials of the state that are significant for Russians, the impact of the current international and political situation on the state of socially important spheres and problems related to social injustice. Due to the specifics of such informational occasions, in addition to public topics, the authors covered economic and political issues in their publications.

Important in the week under study was the topic of death, the memory of celebrities who had passed away, in particular in the context of the death of singer Yuri Shatunov that occurred during the study period. In such publications, the author's intention was revealed to draw attention to the need to honor the memory of media heroes and cultural figures who influenced childhood – the time of a Russian's life, which is represented as the happiest.

It is also possible to consider the topic of interpersonal and family relations as an important part of the all-Russian agenda in social media. In this context, mainly reports and photos were published showing the happy family life of Russian celebrities popular with representatives of the 'digital youth', as well as news about interpersonal conflicts of celebrities and ordinary people who came to the attention of the media, but destructive manifestations of human communication were presented with negative connotation, condemnation, and sometimes ridicule. The dominant and approved by the community manifestations were precisely the pictures of friendship or a family with children.

Among the cities, Moscow had the widest thematic representation, which is explained by the status of the administrative center of the country and the most frequent venue for protocol events. Most often, when mentioning Moscow, the topics of lifestyle, death, animals and politics were raised. The topics of incidents, humor and entertainment were often raised, and posts on public topics were published. It is noteworthy that when publishing news reports about events in Moscow, a specific toponym was also mentioned – a district or street of the city, which was not revealed when studying publications about events in other cities. Moscow can also be considered a key city from the point of view of forming

ideas about the lifestyle: most of the publications on this topic correlated with the capital.

Another city with a high level of thematic diversity on the social media agenda is St. Petersburg. Most often, the 'Northern capital' was mentioned in the context of the public agenda and in publications about lifestyle, which was primarily associated with the celebration of school graduation. It is noteworthy that the congratulations were associated with the socially significant issue of citizens' responsibility for cleanliness in the streets and civilized pastime in public places.

The Krasnodar region seems to be the place of natural accidents, but at the same time, large cities with airports have made a variety of reports of tornadoes off the Black Sea coast, due to the extension of their closure. Thus, the Krasnodar region has become the third region of Russia in terms of the diversity of thematic representation on the agenda in social media, being mentioned in the context of two main information occasions of a different nature. A similar trend can be observed when studying the media representation of the Kaliningrad region: the land blockade of the region by the decision of the Lithuanian authorities provoked references to the region in an international and political way, as well as in connection with the topics of the army, economy, society and incidents.

Another 40 regions of Russia did not demonstrate diversity in the topics of related publications, however, using their example, it is possible to identify another feature of the representation of Russian regions on the agenda in social media — the uniformity of their representation. The breadth of coverage of various events that took place in Moscow is explained by the status of the city as the capital of Russia, while the increased attention to St. Petersburg, the Krasnodar region and the Kaliningrad region is due to the specifics of the informational occasions that marked the week under study.

Events related to the United States had a level of diversity in representation comparable to Russia, but they were written about less often than about Russia. The informational events that occurred in America or related to it were mainly related to the topics of humor and entertainment, lifestyle and politics, and humorous publications similarly were not independent memes or jokes, but ironic news coverage, ridiculing the behavior of American politicians, primarily US President Joe Biden. Publications about the American lifestyle also often had a contextual connection with Russia during the coverage of brand policies towards Russian consumers.

The representation of life in China was also distinguished by a significant thematic diversity. Users of Russian social media were offered publications

about social problems, issues of economic partnership between Russia and China, as well as incidents. In the reports containing information about China, deep partnership relations with Russia were noted, an attractive image of this state was formed as a reliable ally and a strong partner capable of positively influencing the solution of urgent economic problems of Russia, as well as the restoration of the usual lifestyle, for example, the return of familiar goods.

The remaining 49 countries were mentioned much less frequently and with much less thematic diversity, which indicates a geographical imbalance in the representation of the international agenda in social media popular with 'digital youth'. The media geography of the agenda in social media mostly coincided with the agenda of the official media, however, in social media, the assessment of the actions of representatives of states or events taking place in countries is expressed not in a direct evaluative statement, as it happens in traditional media, but in ironic headlines or the last sentences of the publication, thematic memes and emojis.

Thematic agenda of individual online communities

Despite the fact that it is fair to consider the media geography of the agenda in social media to be common to all the sites studied, then with a more detailed examination of the thematic diversity of individual communities, it is possible to identify differences due to both the functionality of each platform and the general orientation of a particular community.

Of the publications posted by the VK community 'Rifmy i panchi', 32% were devoted to cultural topics. It is important to note that modern musical culture, in particular, related to the Russian-speaking rap culture, is also accepted as part of it, since it is significant and relevant for the youth audience. Significantly less, i.e. 14% of publications were devoted to the topic of lifestyle. In the case of the 'Rifmy i panchi' page, lifestyle posts were often associated with political, sanctions-related topics. The editorial board of the site covered the withdrawal of foreign companies from the Russian market, the change in the names of popular brands and successful examples of import substitution. The tone of such publications was mostly neutral or negative in relation to the companies that left Russia, which was reflected in the comments: their authors expressed disagreement with such brand policies. There are comparable indicators for humorous, social and political topics (11% each), which often intersected within the same publications. For example, American political leaders have become the cause of ridicule, as well as the heroes of memes, especially in connection with the incidents of US President Joe Biden or Donald Trump's penchant for

scandals. Controversial statements of Russian politicians were also placed in a humorous context.

Other communities under study, i.e. 'Leonardo Dayvinchik' and 'Ovsyanka, sir' due to the lack of a cultural agenda have almost identical distribution of topics raised. Both communities published mostly memes but paid special attention to the choice of informational occasions, linking them with the news agenda and news from the life of bloggers.

Thus, 41% of the publications in the 'Ovsyanka, sir' community are devoted to the topic of lifestyle, and 25% are devoted to humor and entertainment. Interpersonal, family and gender issues were not ignored (12%), which also affected the coverage of conflicts between bloggers. The topic of family turned out to be important, as in the 'Rifmy i panchi' community, celebrities (rap artists and bloggers) who got married became the heroes of the approving publications of the 'Ovsyanka, sir' community.

A thematic policy similar to 'Ovsyanka, sir' was also observed in the 'Leonardo Dayvinchik' community, that is a classic meme public. The ratio of humorous (41%) and lifestyle posts (30%) was slightly different. Interpersonal, family and gender topics were in demand (17%), in which events from the life of public figures were covered. The topic of culture was not ignored: 9% of publications are devoted to it, some of which are associated with the death of Yuri Shatunov.

The differences in the agendas can be explained both by the editorial independence of the communities and by the peculiarities of the presentation of information – purely news or ironic, focused on the creation of memes. For example, irony has become an integral element of news publications in the'Leonardo Dayvinchik' community, but not in the 'Rifmy i panchi' community. First of all, we are talking about irony as a tool for 'packaging' content and do not refute both the unity of the informational occasions underlying the publication and the integrity of the key values that unite all three communities.

A different thematic diversity is represented in Telegram channels, which, unlike VK communities, presuppose mainly the publication of texts. In the Telegram channel 'Topor 18+', humor/entertainment (31%), incidents (28%) and lifestyle (25%) became frequent topics of publications. It is worth noting that one publication could be simultaneously devoted to several topics, so we can talk about humor not as much as a specific topic of publication, but as a kind of humorous support of news, the formation of a joke or meme based on an informational occasion.

The second Telegram channel under study was 'NE MORGENSTERN'. The most frequently published messages related to lifestyle (31%), humor and

entertainment (25%), as well as the topic of society (22.5%). The role of humorous topics is similar: in the publications of the channel 'NE MORGENSTERN' it occurs both as an independent and as an additional one, for example, in the review of incidents, economic and political news.

The Telegram channel 'Krovavaya Barynya' differs significantly in thematic content from the other two in the sample. The most frequent publications were devoted to political (47.5%), public (38%) and international (26.5%) topics. The topic of humor and entertainment, typical for other channels, was touched upon in 15% of publications. In general, this Telegram channel can be attributed to the information and analytical genre, especially popular on this platform.

Conclusion

The empirical research has shown the presence of not only a single information agenda in all analyzed communities, but also the mechanism of formation of common frames, which once again convinces of the need to consider the agenda inextricably with the analysis of frames in conceptual unity (Dunas, Salikhova, Tolokonnikova, & Babyna, 2022).

The agenda of digital youth in social networks consists mainly of content about Russia and relevant for Russians, as evidenced by both the numerical superiority of local information occasions over global ones, and the representation of foreign information occasions in the context of their connection with Russia. Russian youth are interested primarily in lifestyle publications that reveal both current trends in fashion and consumption and refer to memories of the past through publications that compare modern goods and practices with those that cause associations with childhood.

Despite the general media-geographical and thematic concept of the media, each community has its own internal thematic agenda, which causes differences in the details of the coverage of key ideas. These ideas, which we find in the media texts of the communities, correspond to the ideological basis of Russian society: patriotism, family and loyalty, economic stability, and prosperity, as well as historical memory[3]. They are encoded in the conclusions set out in the media texts that the user comes to as a result of the process of media consumption. When creating such texts, communities mostly resort to the theme of memory, i.e. collective or historical.

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[3] On the approval of the Foundations of the state Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 dated 09.11.2022. The official portal of the President of Russia Kremlin.ru. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502

For example, the ideas of patriotism are transmitted through the thesis 'a strong Russia – a decent standard of living' and an appeal to the importance of preserving the memory of significant events (historical memory), people and even household items associated with times of prosperity and abundance of goods. The growth of the ruble exchange rate observed during the study period was actively covered in the communities and compared with the events of 2015. Representatives of the 'digital youth' were still children or younger teenagers at that time, so publications about the strengthening of the national currency were side by side with the mention of music tracks and Russian-made goods popular in those years. Probably, this technique can be considered a thoughtful media technology associated with provoking the audience with joyful and at the same time sad memories of the past and the motherland – nostalgia, which is inherently a deeply patriotic feeling. However, nostalgia as a media technology aimed at a young digital audience is an innovative and understudied practice, since older people are prone to nostalgia. This practice is found mainly in communities on the VK platform, where celebrities most often became newsmakers.

Due to the fact that ordinary people most often became newsmakers on Telegram channels, the main hero of this platform can be considered an ordinary Russian, and the ideas being disseminated are patriotism, security, resistance to violence, a healthy lifestyle, a decent standard of living, the work of officials for the real improvement of the life of an ordinary citizen, positive business decisions that contribute to growth the quality of life of ordinary people. The actions of criminals, unscrupulous officials (including foreign ones who negatively affect the lifestyle of Russians), violators of public order and representatives of the LGBT community were covered in a negative way. Among the lifestyle practices and topics that have received a negative assessment in publications, alcoholism, violence, corruption and anti-Russian sanctions are highlighted. There has rarely been criticism of individual statements by Russian politicians that affect the standard of living of an ordinary person.

So, it is possible to talk about the identification of a kind of humanistic and patriotic discourses in the studied Telegram channels, sometimes criticizing, but mainly aimed at constructive. Through ideas transmitted through publications that make up the agenda of the 'digital youth' in social media, images of the most socially acceptable social practices, views and preferences in culture, everyday habits, politics, and other spheres of life are formed.

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Factors affecting trust in news media among young people in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Public trust in news media has been declining worldwide in past few decades. This phenomenon is no exception to the case of news media in Bangladesh. Although the notions of trust occupy much space in the public debates, academic discussions and scholarships of the news media and its role in society, the relationship with its audience, and sustainability, there is little work on the topic in the context of the country. Against this backdrop, this study examined the factors that influence trust in news media among young people in the country. A total of 430 individuals from rural and urban areas took part in this study through a web-based questionnaire survey. The findings of the study reveal that the level of trust in news media among the young is very low; males tend to have less trust compared to females, and people living in urban areas have less trust in news media compared to rural areas. Overall, the factors such as political biases in news content, biases toward media owners' business interests, lack of accuracy in news content, poor writing, editing and storytelling; lack of use of reliable sources, providing unimportant/irrelevant news, and the tendency of sensationalizing news and information affect trust in news media. We conclude that the low trust in news media and journalists is alarming for democracy and the sustainability of the news media industry of the country.

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Trust, credibility, news media, media trust, Bangladesh.

Introduction
Trust is the foundation of human relationships and building blocks of a society (Bourdieu, 1986; Govier, 1997). A healthy information ecosystem is crucial for creating, upholding and communicating trust in the society (Heinecke, 2019; Ruhde, 2022). The availability of diverse, credible, reliable, accurate and trustworthy information contributes to the creation of such an information ecosystem (Jaroucheh et al., 2020; Macy, & Cook, 2002; Mitchell-Wong et al., 2007). News media is one of the most powerful social institutions that can influence public trust in other institutions of society (Etemad, 2020; Jo, 2005; Kass, 1996; Ognyanova, 2019), by creating such a favorable information ecosystem. A trusted media system can play an instrumental role in combating the spread of misinformation, disinformation and fake news during an uncertain situation and emergency like the recent COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and wars. Researchers have found strong associations between public trust in media and vaccine acceptance (Piltch-Loeb et al., 2021; Stecula et al., 2020); panic buying (Arafat et al., 2021), and adherence to public health recommendations by the government (Sundiam et al., 2023). For example, Li & Sun (2021) found that high trust in traditional news media contribute to reduce public's hesitation to take vaccine against COVID-19 virus. Meanwhile, Arafat et al. (2021) argued that a trusted media ecosystem plays a significant role in preventing panic buying behavior among people during an uncertain situation and natural disaster. On the other hand, Wu & Shen (2022) found that there is a strong correlation between compliance of COVID-19 health protocols and trust in media. People with high trust in media tend to more comply with the protocols compared to people having low trust.

On the other hand, trust is considered an important element of the media industry. In the past few decades, the media ecology across the globe has experienced massive transformation: reduced authority as the sole source of information lessened gatekeeping role and reduced public trust. The availability of social media platforms and several other communication technologies have contributed to the high prevalence of misinformation, disinformation and fake news which has created an age of suspicion (Bakir, & Barlow, 2007). But it is no denying that a trustworthy media system can play a vital role in reducing confusion, and thus the proper functioning of society and democracy (Buchanan, & Benson, 2019; Fisher, 2018; Jaroucheh et al., 2020; Majerczak, &

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Strzelecki, 2022). Moreover, trust is an important asset for media organizations also as there is a strong association between public confidence in the press and their relationship with the news and media consumption (Str mb ck et al., 2020; Tsfati, 2010). Public trust in news media has a financial value for the media organizations also (Watzek, 2019). Because, a decline in the trust would lead to a fall in public attention to the news media content (Williams, 2012); then advertisers will not reach their consumers through news media where there is less audience; and thus the news media organizations will lose their revenues (Amazeen, & Muddiman, 2018; Belair-Gagnon et al., 2019; Figenschou, & Ihleb k, 2019; Knudsen et al., 2021; Newman, & Fletcher, 2017; Tsfati, & Ariely, 2014) in many ways. In sense, news media do the business of trust and sell the trust in the form of news stories and other content to their audiences and advertisers. So, communication of truth, gaining public trust and maintaining credibility in their content are becoming indispensable assets for the sustainability of future journalism (Mrazek, 2019).

Most of the current debates and discussions about news media center around some important questions such as how the media shape our society; what would be the demarcation line between journalism and social media and what are the dynamics of their communication of truth and trust in society; and what would be the business models and strategy of their survival – should they focus on only generating money or concentrate on gain public trust (Heinecke, 2019). Previous studies indicate that public trust in news media has been declining around the world in the past two decades, and the level of trust is low worldwide among the youth (Blobaum, 2014; Swart, & Broersma, 2022). Most of the previous studies explored public trust in media in the context of different countries. Little is known about the topic from the context of a developing country like Bangladesh, a developing nation in South Asia with a vibrant media industry that consists of more than 1200 daily newspapers, 35 on air television channels, 60 radio stations, and around 3000 online news portals. Because of its geographical location and consistent economic growth, rising human capital, high prevalence of natural calamities, political instability, and dysfunctional democracy and issues of human rights, the country often gets wider attention and importance to the global community. The mass media system often functions as a mirror of the socio-political and cultural issues of a country. An understanding of the public trust in the news media could be a lens to understand the media system, and thus the country as a whole. A study on a such topic could contribute to the knowledge body for the global audience and broader international academic discourse from the perspective of a developing country like Bangladesh.

According to news reports that quoted members of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) as saying that the news media organizations in the country are experiencing a financial crisis as revenue has been decreasing along with the number of readers at a rate of 5 to 10% in the past few years (Islam, 2020). There is a paucity of reliable data on news readership and viewership, news consumption behavior, circulations and reach of news media in the country. Despite the fact that drawing conclusion on causal relationship between decline of readers and circulation of newspapers and trust in news media is difficult in the context of the country. It can be argued that a clear and contextual understanding of trust is very important for media outlets to strategize content and target audiences appropriately to ensure their revenues and sustainability. Against this backdrop, this study examined the factors that influence trust in news media among young people in Bangladesh.

Literature review

Although the notions of trust occupy much space in the debates, discussions and scholarship of the news media and its role in society, relationship with its audience, and sustainability, there is no universally accepted definition of trust in news media (Fisher, 2018; Fisher et al., 2020; Park et al., 2020). It is not a new phenomenon, rather it has recently come to the forefront of public discourse and academic debates amid the high prevalence of fake news, misinformation, disinformation, propaganda campaigns and questions regarding the socially responsible functions of media outlets (Brosius et al., 2021; Hameleers et al., 2022; Ognyanova, 2019). Over the past centuries, the notions and meaning of trust evolved, and scholars from various disciplines tried to understand it in a myriad of ways as it is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. However, media scholars defined it as credibility (Fisher, 2016; Kohring, & Matthes, 2007), reliability (Haskins et al., 1984; Horne et al., 2019; Matthes, & Kohring, 2008; Swart, & Broersma, 2022), trustworthiness, and confidence in the news media system as a whole (Fawzi et al., 2021; Gei et al., 2013; Kohring, & Matthes, 2007); news media as a public institution; media ownership (Williams, 2012); media types (Fawzi et al., 2021; Gei et al., 2013; N. Jackob, 2012; N. G. E. Jackob, 2010; K uts et al., 2013); specific media outlets, brands, programs, or newsrooms (Daniller et al., 2017); media coverage (Kass, 1996; Str mb ck et al., 2020), media content (Grosser et al., 2016; Newman, & Fletcher, 2017; Williams, 2012); and journalists (Blobaum, 2014).

Fawzi (2021) argued that trust in media has social, political and media system-related dimensions. Williams (2012) explained this phenomenon in

three categories: interpersonal trust, institutional trust, and informational trust. The notion of interpersonal trust refers to people's trust in professional journalists of a certain news media organization, while institutional trust is associated with a news media organization, and informational trust indicates trust in news content. Meanwhile, Fawzi et al (2021) argued that trust in news media is associated with people's expectations of media organizations as social institutions. In that case, people tend to trust a news media organization that function by following certain norms and values of society. Knudsen et al (2021) defined the idea of trust as a process of interactions between a media organization and its audiences. In that case, the audience makes sense of the reality of their world by taking a risk of not double-checking or acquiring facts themselves, rather they keep confidence in the media. Credibility refers to perceptions of public trust in a certain news medium, such as newspapers, television, radio, social media, and so on (Fisher, 2018).

The media ecology across the globe is very dynamic as it experiences constant changes in the very organizational structures, functions, the use of technologies, audiences and socio-political realities. So, measuring trust requires multidimensional methodological approaches, conceptual frameworks and diverse parameters. Kohring and Matthes (2007) argued that trust in news media can be measured through three methodological approaches: the assessment of credible news sources, credibility in the medium, and factor analysis. They also argued that the assessment process consists of four dimensions: trust in the selectivity of topics; trust in the selectivity of facts; trust in the accuracy of depictions, and trust in journalistic assessment. Mehrabi, Hassan and Ali (2009) identified eight indicators that help to measure credibility in news media, which indicators include clarity in a news story, not being biased in presenting a news story, telling the whole story, maintaining accuracy, trustworthiness, fairness, and timeliness. Str mb ck et al. (2020) proposed a framework for conceptualizing news media trust at different levels of analysis based on news media in general, media type, individual media brands, journalists and media content. Appelman and Sundar (2016) developed a scale to measure the credibility of a media message. In measuring credibility, it focuses on the accuracy, authenticity and believably of the content.

Verma, Koltai and Fleischmann (2018) found that trust in news media is associated with an individual's demographic features such as gender, age, educational attainment, political leaning, and frequency of social media use. Several other studies found that there is a link between an individual's news consumption behavior and trust in news media (Fernandez-Planells, 2015;

Kalogeropoulos, 2019; Pacheco, & Melhuish, 2018; Ridder, 2020; Young, 2016). In a study in 35 countries, Kalogeropoulos et al. (2019) found that those who mainly consume news through social media platforms, tend to have lower trust in news. Tsfati and Ariely (2014) argued that people's trust in news media is influenced by their social environments: political interest, interpersonal trust, education levels and the perception of journalistic institutions. Gender and education demographics have also some impacts on the perceived reliability of media content. A study by Andaleeb, Jamil and Rajeb (2022) found that gender and level of educational attainment have a strong influence on trust in news media. They found that females tend to have more trust in television news compared to males, while individuals with lower educational levels perceive TV news as more credible than those with a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, Jo (2005) argued that trust in news media is strongly influenced by the sources used in the news stories. Karlsen and Aalberg (2021) argued that people are less trustful of the news they consume through social media. However, the results also suggest that social media news sharing can contribute to a long-term decrease in trust in news. The platforms through which news reaches the audience also affect trust.

The impact of trust in news media is multi-faceted. For example, Marcinkowski & Starke (2018) found that people's political attitudes and trust in government are often influenced by exposure to political news and trust in those media. Fletcher and Park (2017) argued that individuals who have a low level of trust in news media tend to consume more news and information from non-mainstream sources such as social media platforms and blogs compared to mainstream news media organizations. Williams (2012) argued that there is a strong relationship between people's trust in media and their preference for specific content or media organization. A lack of trust in the media is congruent with global tendencies toward deinstitutionalization, privatization, and individualization, which give more weight to facts gained from personal experiences than recognized authorities and experts (Van Zoonen, 2012). There is a definite link between a decline in trust in other significant societal institutions, such as the government (Hanitzsch et al., 2018). Hanitzsch, Van Dalen and Steindl (2018) argued that when people don't trust their local media, they stop believing in their local government. As a result, both democracy and political consciousness are weakened. The trust gap between informed folks and the much more skeptical mass population is also widening (Barometer, 2019). Concerns regarding the impact of this change on democracy have arisen. Deliberative and participatory models of democracy contend that without people viewing media as venues

for reliable news, citizens will stop consuming its content. By providing shared knowledge and facilitating shared frames of reference to public life, they are therefore unable to effectively serve as watchdogs or create cohesiveness (Coleman, 2012).

Several studies argued that the news media environment of Bangladesh is not conducive to fostering trust among the audiences (Bhatti et al., 2021; Haque, 2019; Khatun et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Haque et al (2020) attributed the decline in media trust to the propagation of false information via online media, particularly Facebook[2] in Bangladesh. Ahmed (2018) argued that the high prevalence of fake news is a big threat to traditional media or news sources as it undermines the public's trust in the country. In another study, Hasan and Mohua (2020) found there is a strong association between online non-mainstream news consumption and trust in the mainstream media. They argue that people with low levels of trust tend to consume from alternative sources such as social media platforms, YouTube channels and blogs, etc.

Theoretical framework

There are two broad schools of thought about social trust, i.e. trust as an individual property and trust as a property of social systems (Delhey, & Newton, 2003). However, scholars of both schools of thought argue that the prevalence of trust is a foundation of society (Lehman, & Sztompka, 2001). They argue that it is an element of all enduring social relationships. Without trust, societies really could not exist as it makes possible the formation of relationships, interactions and cooperation. In investigating trust in news media, we must understand the phenomenon from two perspectives: the notion of trust in the society (Misztal, 1992), media as a social institution and public trust in the institutions. From the institutional perspective, trust is a dynamic relationship between a media organization and its audiences. It is based on a certain type of expectation of the citizen, media audiences and society as a whole. The relationship often changes based on a media organization's role, function, position and coverage of certain issues or events in a certain way, and public expectations about the organization's role. In the past few decades, societies around the world have transformed dramatically. People expect that a media organization would ensure fairness, honesty and accuracy in all of its content delivery and activities; and would work for the better good of society. From this point of view, a trustworthy media organization would monitor and guide the power authority and institutions; work as a mechanism for social surveillance and accountability of the power

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[2] Belongs to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.

structure (Hardin, 2002). Mass media can be a tool to build trust and can play the role of the guardian of trust crucial in any uncertain situation, in the time of crisis, natural disasters and outbreaks (Mehta, 2007).

Trust is typically viewed as a precondition to public connection in ideas concerning journalism's democratic mandate (Swart, & Broersma, 2022). But for the common citizen of society, determining the trustworthiness of news and staying updated on current events is becoming an increasingly challenging task. Choosing which sources to trust for current events is made more challenging as people have to consider all possibly perceived biases (Eberl, 2019; Saechang et al., 2021; Soontjens, & Van Erkel, 2022), the possibility of getting controlled by automated algorithms (Dogruel et al., 2022) and financial interests (De Bruycker, & Beyers, 2015). Only when individuals believe the news, they will interact with it and act upon it to fulfil their duty as a citizen. But increasingly lower media trust has generated concerns about consumers rejecting journalism, deliberately avoiding the news, and becoming less and less informed (Prochazka, & Schweiger, 2019). According to Swart and Broersma (2022), these worries are supported by two presumptions. It starts by assuming that users have specific reasons for believing a particular source or report. Second, it assumes that people would only read news sources they trust and that they will ignore news sources they perceive to be unreliable. As a result, media trust has frequently been viewed as a largely rational choice based on consumers' assessments of the perceived dependability of the news source or company (Str mb ck et al., 2020). This phenomenon can be understood through the lenses of usage and gratification theory.

The uses and gratification theory by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) explains how people behave when consuming particular media sources, including the fulfilment of their demands and satisfactory feelings. Theorists argued that a media consumer searches for a media outlet that meets their specific demand, and they assumed that the consumer always has other options available to meet those needs. The theory is later expanded by McLeod and Becker (1974) where the audience is placed in a stronger position by the uses and gratification approach because they are engaged, goal-oriented, self-aware enough to articulate why they are using a particular news outlet, and most importantly, their gratification is derived from the media content, exposure, and the socio-political context in which the exposure occurs. Later researchers worked to improve the framework of the idea to expectancy-value theory (Palmgreen, & Rayburn, 1979) and dependency theory (Wenner, 1982). Both theories rely on the concept of uses and gratification as a foundation.

Although this approach has typically been used to study traditional mass media, scholars have argued that it should also be used to study new communication technologies like online and social news media. According to Coleman (2012) and others, in modern times, trust extends beyond factual accuracy and includes the belief that news media will uphold public expectations regarding news, including more affective assessments of how one feels when reading news stories, those news organizations are run with genuine intentions, and that journalism reflects social reality and audiences' everyday experiences (Coleman, 2012; Metzger, & Flanagin, 2013; Schmidt et al., 2019). To comprehend how individuals, deal with trust in news media, we adopted a user-centric approach. We investigated when and how explicit and tacit knowledge becomes significant to young audiences for assessing the trustworthiness of news using a cross-sectional survey of young individuals in Bangladesh. Possible factors that affect the credibility of news sources and content, as well as how such evaluations affect their usage habits were investigated.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional study among young people in Bangladesh. Data were collected through a web-based survey among young people across the country between May 2022 and October 2022. A survey link was distributed through email, WhatsApp messaging tool, and Facebook[3] messenger among potential participants using a convenient sampling method. The inclusion criteria to participate in the study were being at least 18 years of age irrespective of their gender, profession, income level, residence, and geographical location in the country. Bangladesh is home to a relatively young population as the median age of the population is 28.3 years. Of the total population, 12.8 per cent are aged between 18-24 years; and 17.1 per cent are between 25-34 years (Digital 22: Global Overview Report, 2022). The country officially considers youth as an individual aged between 18-35 years (National Youth Policy, 2017). So, the target population of this study were aged between 18-35 years. Another inclusion criterion was reading, watching or listening to the news in printed newspapers, television, online portals, or radio at least once a week. In term of administrative structure, Bangladesh is divided into eight divisions and 64 districts. Using multi-stage simple random sampling method, we aimed to collect 1200 responses, that is 150 responses from each division of the country. We randomly distributed 1200 survey links in the selected divisional cities to reach the target groups. During the study period, a total of 887 individuals filled up

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[3] Belongs to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.

the questionnaire (response rate 73.91%). Due to inconsistency and inaccuracy, we removed a big portion of the responses and used 430 responses for the final analysis.

We used a semi-structured questionnaire for data collection, which contained questions about demographic information, time spent on media consumption and media consumption behavior, and trust in news media. In understanding trust in news media in the country, we adopted the framework developed by Str mb ck et al (2020). The framework measures trust in news media using five dimensions, which include the extent to which young people trust information from news media in general, specific media types, individual media brands, journalists, and media content. The dimensions of trust are measured in terms of being fair, and unbiased, telling the whole story, maintaining accuracy, and separating facts from opinion while covering an issue or event. The participants were asked to rate some statements on a 5-point Likert scale. For example, the participants were asked to rate statements such as "the news media are fair when covering the news", and "journalists are unbiased when covering the news". On the scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

At the beginning of the survey, consent was obtained from the participants by explaining the aims, objectives, procedures, and right to withdraw at any stage of the survey. The participants could enter questions only after giving consent to participate in the study. We performed descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation,) using SPSS (version 26.0).

Results
Socio-demography
The demographic characteristics offer us some insightful information about the participants. A total of 430 individuals from rural and urban areas took part in this study. Among them, 55.3% were male and 44.7% were female. The majority of the participants belonged to the age group between 18 and 23 years. The vast majority of the participants were urban dwellers (38.1%). About two-thirds of the participants (70.2%) were students, and more than half of the total participants had an undergraduate degree (55.1%). A sizable portion of participants come from semi-urban areas, proving that semi-urban youngsters also have good access to news media, particularly online media. However, the low participation rate from rural areas demonstrates the country's substantial digital divide.

Media consumption pattern

We tried to understand the pattern of consuming media content in terms of the participants' spending time using a particular media platform in a day. Our results indicate that young people spend a large portion of their waking time using social media platforms followed by watching dramas or movies on YouTube and watching various programs on television in a day. The participants spend on average around three hours (160.16 minutes) of their awake time using social media platforms such as Facebook[4], while they watch drama or movies on YouTube for about two hours (109.65 minutes) every day. Interestingly, on average, they spend less than a half hour (25 minutes) reading printed newspapers a day, while they read news on online platforms for 32 minutes. The interesting part is that they can hardly tell how much time they devote to viewing television news, despite spending approximately 44.30 minutes watching TV. The majority of them watch television news while others are watching.

The main source of news and mode of news consumption

The participants of the study mainly get news through daily newspapers, online news portals, television channels and the newsfeed of the social media platform Facebook[5]. Our results indicate that printed newspapers are the least popular source of news for young people (8.8%) in the country. On the other hand, online news portals are the top source of news for the participants in the study as about half of them (48.1%) informed that they get news mainly from various online news portals, followed by Facebook[6] newsfeed (30.0%). Both males and females prefer to get news through online platforms instead of printed newspapers.

Mobile phone apps are the top mode for consuming news among the young people. Of the total participants, around two-thirds (66.0%) informed that they mainly consume news using different mobile phone apps. Of those who mainly consume news using apps, 34.7% are male, 42.8% are aged between 18-23 years, 49.8% are students, 36.0% had at least an undergraduate degree, and 24.4% lived in urban areas. So, it is evident that urban young men mainly consume news using mobile phone apps.

Trust in news media

Overall, the level of trust in news media is low among young people in Bangladesh, irrespective of gender, age, occupation, education level, and

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[4] Belongs to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

residence of the participants. Moreover, males tend to have less trust in news media compared to females. Among the males, 35.8% have low trust and 11.2% have an extremely low level of trust in the country's news media. While 28.6% of all females have low trust and 9.1% have extremely low trust. Locations of the residence play an influential role in trust in news media. People living in urban and metropolitan areas tend to have less trust in news media compared to people in rural and semi-urban areas. Details are shown in *Table 1*:

Table 1

**Overall trust in news media by gender,
age groups, occupation, education, and residence**

		Extremely low	Low	Some	Total
Gender	Female	39 (9.1%)	123 (28.6%)	30 (7.0%)	192 (44.7%)
	Male	48 (11.2%)	154 (35.8%)	36 (8.4%)	238 (55.3%)
Age	18-23	59 (13.7%)	165 (38.4%)	42 (9.8%)	266 (61.9%)
	24-29	22 (5.1%)	95 (22.1%)	23 (5.3%)	140 (32.6%)
	30-35	6 (1.4%)	17 (4.0%)	1 (0.2%)	24 (5.6%)
Occupation	Student	68 (15.8%)	183 (42.6%)	51 (11.9%)	302 (70.2%)
	Private job	11 (2.6%)	62 (14.4%)	10 (2.3%)	83 (19.3%)
	Business	2 (0.5%)	8 (1.9%)	1 (0.2%)	11 (2.6%)
	Unemployed	6 (1.4%)	24 (5.6%)	4 (0.9%)	34 (7.9%)
Education level	<= Up to class 12	30 (7.0%)	99 (23.0%)	17 (4.0%)	146 (34.0%)
	Undergraduate	46 (10.7%)	148 (34.4%)	43 (10.0%)	237 (55.1%)
	Graduate	11 (2.6%)	30 (7.0%)	6 (1.4%)	47 (10.9%)
Residence	Rural	8 (1.9%)	26 (6.0%)	8 (1.9%)	42 (9.8%)
	Semi-urban	22 (5.1%)	68 (15.8%)	14 (3.3%)	104 (24.2%)
	Urban	33 (7.7%)	103 (24.0%)	28 (6.5%)	164 (38.1%)
	Metropolitan	24 (5.6%)	80 (18.6%)	16 (3.7%)	120 (27.9%)

Level of trust by media type

Data in *Table 2* indicate that the level of trust in different forms of media such as newspapers, television, radio and online portals is very low in the country. Online news portals were found to be the least trusted source of information as more than half (57.4%) of the participants reported that they have extremely low trust in news portals followed by television channels (37.4%). However, newspapers were found to be the more trusted source of information compared to other media platforms, as 37.9% of total participants informed that they have some trust in the information provided by printed newspapers in the country followed by television channels 21.9%, radio 17.4%, and online news portals 15.3%. Details are shown in *Table 2*:

Table 2

Level of trust by media type

Media type	Trust levels	N (%)
Trust in information from the newspaper	Extremely low	36 (8.4%)
	Low	231 (53.7%)
	Neutral	0 (0.0%)
	Some	163 (37.9%)
	High	0 (0.0%)
Trust in information from the television channels	Extremely low	161 (37.4%)
	Low	175 (40.7%)
	Neutral	0 (0.0%)
	Some	94 (21.9%)
	High	0 (0.0%)
Trust in information from the radio	Extremely low	0 (0.0%)
	Low	0 (0.0%)
	Neutral	355 (82.6%)
	Some	75 (17.4%)
	High	0 (0.0%)
Trust in information from the online portals	Extremely low	247 (57.4%)
	Low	117 (27.2%)
	Neutral	0 (0.0%)
	Some	66 (15.3%)
	High	0 (0.0%)

Perception of trust factors in news media and journalists

Fairness, unbiasedness, telling the whole story, accuracy, and separating facts from opinion are some of the key issues when trusting a news media organization or journalists. The mean scores in *Table 3* indicate most of the participants disagree with statements that news media organizations and journalists are fair, unbiased, tell the whole story, accurate, and separate facts from opinion when covering an issue or event in the country. Lack of accuracy is the most important factor that the participants are most concerned about. Details are shown in *Table 3*:

<div align="right">*Table 3*</div>

Perception of news media and journalists

		Min	Max	Mean	SD
Trust in news media	The news media are fair when covering the news	1.00	4.00	2.1140	.91531
	The news media are unbiased when covering the news	1.00	4.00	2.1837	.94176
	The news media tell the whole story when covering the news	1.00	3.00	2.0698	.65117
	The news media are accurate when covering the news	1.00	2.00	1.7326	.44314
	The news media separate facts from opinions when covering the news	1.00	3.00	1.9953	.62203
Trust in journalists	Journalists are fair when covering the news	1.00	4.00	2.1558	.96869
	Journalists are unbiased when covering the news	1.00	4.00	1.8953	.75461
	Journalists tell the whole story when covering the news	2.00	3.00	2.2558	.43683
	Journalists are accurate when covering the news	1.00	2.00	1.7256	.44674
	Journalists separate facts from opinion when covering the news	2.00	3.00	2.5977	.49094

Data in *Table 4* show that none of the participants strongly agree with statements that news media organizations and journalists are fair, unbiased, tell the whole story, accurate, and separate facts from opinion when covering an issue or event, which indicates a low trust in news media organizations and journalists in the country. Almost two third of the participants think that news

media and journalists are not fair when presenting a news story. On the other hand, more than the two-third of the participants perceive that the news media and journalists are biased when covering an issue or event. A vast majority of the participants reported that the news media organizations and the journalists do not tell the whole story of an issue or event. Moreover, the news media and journalists do not present accurate information as stated by a vast majority of participants of the study. Details are shown in *Table 4*:

Table 4

Trust in news media and journalists

		News media	Journalists
Fair when covering the news	Strongly disagree	109 (25.3)	121 (28.1)
	Disagree	212 (49.3)	173 (40.2)
	Neutral	60 (14.0)	84 (19.5)
	Agree	49 (11.4)	52 (12.1)
	Strongly agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Unbiased when covering the news	Strongly disagree	79 (18.4)	113 (26.3)
	Disagree	272 (63.3)	283 (65.8)
	Neutral	0 (0.0)	34 (7.9)
	Agree	79 (18.4)	0 (0.0)
	Strongly agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Tell the whole story when covering the news	Strongly disagree	77 (17.9)	0 (0.0)
	Disagree	246 (57.2)	320 (74.4)
	Neutral	107 (24.9)	110 (25.6)
	Agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Strongly agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Are accurate when covering the news	Strongly disagree	115 (26.7)	118 (27.4)
	Disagree	315 (73.3)	312 (72.6)
	Neutral	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Strongly agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Separate facts from opinions when covering the news	Strongly disagree	84 (19.5)	0 (0.0)
	Disagree	264 (61.4)	173 (40.2)
	Neutral	82 (19.1)	257 (59.8)
	Agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Strongly agree	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Factors affecting trust

Data in the *Table 5* show that multiple factors contribute to the trust in news media among young people in Bangladesh. The factors include bias towards a certain political party; bias toward the business interest of media owners; lack of accurate information; poor editing, poor writing and storytelling; lack of reputable sources; providing unimportant/irrelevant news; publishing government press releases; using clickbait headlines; sensationalizing news and information; lack of admitting mistakes/apologizes; giving priority to advertisements over the news story; lack of follow-up stories and providing the stories that do not help to make sense of the issues / event. Details are shown in *Table 5*:

Table 5

Factors affecting trust in news

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Political biases in news content	1	3	2.59	.666
Biases toward media owners' interest	1	3	2.54	.705
Lack of accurate information	1	3	2.50	.728
Poor editing	1	3	2.25	.781
Poor writing and storytelling	1	3	2.23	.799
Lack of reputable sources	1	3	2.33	.765
Providing unimportant / irrelevant news	1	3	2.41	.767
Publishing government press releases	1	3	2.07	.812
Using clickbait headlines	1	3	2.38	.709
Sensationalizing news and information	1	3	2.45	.717
Lack of admitting mistakes / apologizes	1	3	2.44	.710
Giving priority to advertisements over a news story	1	3	2.40	.750
Lack of follow-up stories	1	3	2.34	.729
Stories do not help to make sense of the issues / event	1	3	2.13	.763

Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that the level of trust in news media among the young people is very low; males tend to have less trust compared to females, and people living in urban areas have less trust in news media compared to rural areas. There are some media factors such as quality of content, biasness, accuracy, and tendency of sensationalizing of an issue or event often negatively affect the trust of people.

The low trust in mainstream news media may lead people to consume news and information from alternative sources, which are often not verified, can be inaccurate, and full of misinformation. Increased consumption of misinformation may foster distrust about mainstream media outlets, which is very alarming for democracy and the sustainability of the news media industry of the country. Young people, who are equipped with diverse information and communication technologies and have access to multiple sources of information, may avoid news and information from mainstream sources (Karlsen et al., 2020; Str mb ck et al., 2020; Villi et al., 2022). This avoidance would affect the media organizations in two ways, namely the loss in direct revenues from the audiences, and the loss in revenues from the advertisers. Generally, advertisers want to reach a large and diverse body of consumers through media organizations by paying for publishing advertisements, and they would pay only those media organizations which have large and diverse body audiences and provide trustworthy content. On the other hand, less trustworthy media organizations cannot help the public to be informed about public affairs and hold leaders accountable for their actions.

Our findings indicate that there is an association between sociodemographic factors and trust in news media, which is similar to the findings of some previous studies (Andaleeb et al., 2022; Verma et al., 2018). The findings show that males tend to have less trust in news media compared to females in the country, which is similar to the findings of Andaleeb, Jamil and Rajeb (2022). Haselhuhn et al. (2015) argued that there is a gender differences in trust dynamics. Women tend to trust more than men after a trust violation. Although the overall trust in news and journalist is low among both gender groups, the gender dynamics may have contributed to the fact the level of trust in males is lower than females. We also found that the locations of the residence play an influencing role in terms of trust in news. People living in urban and metropolitan areas tend to have less trust in news media compared to people in rural and semi-urban areas. Urban people's availability of and high exposure to different and alternative sources of information might be a reason behind the low trust in news. So, news media

outlets must keep in mind the socio-demographic factors such as gender and geographical locations of their audiences when making a strategy on content and target audiences.

Another key finding is that the level of trust in news media organizations and journalists is very low in the country. Our findings also show that none of the participants strongly agree with statements that news media organizations and journalists are fair, unbiased, tell the whole story, accurate, and separate facts from opinion when covering an issue or event, which indicates a low trust in news media organizations and journalists in the country. The findings indicate that the media organizations in Bangladesh must critically reflect on their professional roles and responsibilities. Karlsen et al (2020) showed that a lack of trust in news media and journalists may lead to news avoidance among the consumers. So, it is evident that there is a high possibility of not consuming news and information from traditional media outlets by the young audience due to the prevalence of low trust in the news outlets and journalist, which would lead to a loss of audiences and thus loss of revenues. The loss of revenue may negatively affect financial viability (Moore et al., 2019) of the media organizations; and the financial weakness would lead them failing to attract qualified journalists and producing quality content. A weak media system is also a threat to democracy of the country.

We found that young people spend less time in consuming news compared to using social media platforms and consuming videos on YouTube. So, it is evident that young people tend to spend most of their time using social media platforms which may be linked to low trust in news media in the country as Karlsen and Aalberg (2021) argued that the individuals who consume through social media are less trustful of news. Similar to the findings of Karlsen and Aalberg (2021), we found that young people in Bangladesh prefer to get news through online platforms instead of printed newspapers. The main sources of news are online news portals and Facebook[7] newsfeeds. Individuals who have a low level of trust in news media tend to consume more news and information from non-mainstream sources such as social media platforms and blogs compared to mainstream news media organizations (Fletcher, & Park, 2017). Kalogeropoulos, Suiter and Eisenegger (2019) found that people who consume news mainly through social media platforms tend to have lower levels of trust in news from traditional media outlets. Young people mainly consume news using a mobile phone. Among those who consume news using mobile phones, the majority are males aged between 18-23 years. It is a paradox that although online news portals are a dominant source of news and information for young

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[7] Belongs to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.

people, the level of trust in the information provided by portals is very low. Once more, it is found that people have greater trust in printed newspapers, although printed newspapers are a less used news source for young people.

These two findings are in stark contrast to one another. In earlier literature, this propensity of mass skepticism has also been addressed (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2019). As previously noted by Prochazka and Schweiger (2019), this uncertainty causes them to indiscriminately have less faith in the media, to actively avoid the news and to become less and less informed. The factors such as political biases in news content, biases toward media owners' business interests, lack of accuracy in news content, poor writing, editing and storytelling; lack of use of reliable sources and providing unimportant/irrelevant news, and the tendency of sensationalizing news and information affect trust in news media. Islam and Rahman (2016) argued that trust in news media affects the news consumption behaviour of audiences. The link between a decline in trust in other significant societal institutions, such as the government has also been addressed by Hanitzsch, Van Dalen and Steindl (2018).

The overall results of this study are very well explained by the usage and gratification theory. Similar to this theory, current study addresses the social and psychological causes of needs, as well as expectations that are generated and met by news sources and news media. Studies found these expectations result in different patterns of media exposure, which in turn cause need gratifications and other effects. We discovered that the audience is in a stronger position in this circumstance as they are involved, goal-oriented, and self-aware enough to explain why they are using a particular news source. Most importantly, though, we discovered that their satisfaction comes from media content, their exposure, and the socio-political context in which the exposure takes place are also taken into consideration. This framework allows us to predict that diminishing trust will lead to lower news consumption where people consciously receive only the information that is meaningful to them and will completely/ partially reject all other ideas. This is significant concerning the deliberative and participatory notion of democracy where consumers reject journalism due to a perceived lack of legitimacy. This results in cynicism as they are unable to act on the public information it provides, which makes it more difficult for them to exercise their civic duties as well-informed citizens.

Conclusion

The level of trust of young people in news media organizations and journalists is very low in Bangladesh. Trust is influenced by mainly two factors:

the audience's socio-demographic characteristics, and media factors. In trusting a news media organization and journalists, people expect that they would get fair, unbiased, accurate, and comprehensive information that is not an opinion of the news media organization or a journalist. People become distrustful when they perceive that there are biases toward media owners' business interests and political parties; lack of accurate information; poor writing, editing and storytelling; lack of using reputable sources; providing unimportant or irrelevant news; publishing government press releases; using clickbait headlines, sensationalizing news and information and giving priority to advertisements over a news story.

In the case of trust in news media, people's socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, location of residence and education level play an important role. Both males and females are potential consumers for advertisers. An increase of trust in news media among the gender groups would attract advertisers, which would ensure revenues for the media organizations. So, if media organizations pay attention to gaining the trust of both gender groups, it would enhance their financial sustainability. They also focus on gaining the trust of their audiences living in urban areas as results of the study indicate that they have low trust. The audiences in the urban areas often have high education levels and purchase capacity.

Media organizations must reinvent their roles, responsibilities, and business models to gain the trust of young people who are less trustful of news than ever. The gaining of trust would lead to increased consumption of news by young people which would contribute to the increase in revenues. The media organizations in Bangladesh can regain trust by avoiding political biases in their news content; circumventing biases toward media owners' business interests; ensuring accuracy and high-quality storytelling through the use of reliable sources. In gaining trust of their audiences, the media organizations must invest more in producing diverse and quality content that could satisfy the digitally savvy and hyperconnected audiences. In producing quality content, they should focus on careful fact-checking, intensive verification, and crafting news stories well. Moreover, they also so should invest in attracting skillful, talented and passionate young storytellers to journalism profession. Retaining experienced, passionate, highly committed, skillful and honest journalists in the journalism profession is another area of concern for media organizations in Bangladesh.

Summing up, we believe that the findings of the study would help media organizations, media managers and media owners to strategize their content and business models by gaining the trust of their audience in Bangladesh. It

will also help understand the notion of trust in news media from the context of a developing country. Global scholars who focus on south Asian studies and media studies may find insight into Bangladesh's society and media system.

However, the study has some limitations. The study was conducted among a small sample of the population and people from limited age groups. So, the findings may not be generalizable for people from all age groups and across the country. Moreover, it did not explore any causal relationship between sociodemographic dimensions and the trust in news media, and media consumption behavior. Future research should focus on the association between media consumption behavior and the trust in news media in the context of the country. Future works should also focus on understanding the paradox of why people consume news they do not trust, and do not trust the news they use.

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Media effects and the impact of fake and anti-fake news on youth audiences: The use of eye-tracking technologies

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Abstract

This paper analyzes media effects of fake and anti-fake journalistic materials and their impact on youth audiences. The paper deals with fake news as a relevant problem of the modern information society and defines the term "anti-fake" as a way to combat Internet fakes. A sample of fake and anti-fake news was formed from 100 informational political materials. The selected media texts were marked as "fake" and "anti-fake". The research was based on the main provisions of the cognitive approach in the investigation of media effects within the framework of interrelated models: agenda-setting and framing (analysis of the content and form of presenting information). The main results of the research identified the key patterns of the respondents' attention and areas of interest ("image", "text"), as well as their attitude to the proposed stimuli. The research was based on eye-tracking and a survey. The results showed that anti-fake and fake news attract the respondents' attention; however, anti-fake materials have the maximum impact on the respondents in terms of the number of fixations on the stimulus, the level of memorability, and the level of credibility. "Fake" and "anti-fake" warning labels affect significantly the perception process.

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Keywords
Media effects, framing, agenda-setting, fake, anti-fake, youth audiences.

Introduction
The development of the Internet, information and communication technologies has enabled people to quickly receive and spread news messages (Jamil et al, 2022). The number of media channels and the amount of disseminated information and misinformation on the Internet has increased dramatically (Simons, & Manoilo, 2021). The main field of misinformation activities is information and psychological operations, which are becoming more aggressive and targeted through the use of fakes, and youth audiences are among the main targets of impact.

The future of society depends on how this category is socialized and how it perceives information. Among various groups of young people (scientific and creative intelligentsia, school students, etc.), a significant part is made up of students. Student youth (Mikhaylovskaya, 2014) is not only the most active and dynamic part of any society, objectively it is its future, since it will soon have to determine the fate of the country in a decisive way. The student youth is of interest as a generation that, due to its significant educational level, active working age, dynamic social behavior, will take the place of the main intellectual and productive social force in the near future. At the same time, the information impact aimed at deforming the consciousness of young people to blur their values and moral and ethical standards has recently intensified.

Fake news unintentionally and intentionally spread by various political actors have become part of the daily "news menu" (Albright, 2016; Allcott, & Gentzkow, 2017) of Internet users. The social, political, and economic consequences of the mass distribution of fakes (Sternin, & Shesterina, 2020) are devastating to society; they sow confusion, contribute to the incorrect political orientation and mobilization of citizens, and form a sense of anxiety and uncertainty. The situation is aggravated, on the one hand, by the speed of spreading fakes on the Internet and, on the other hand, by the fact that youth audiences, unable to distinguish between reliable and fake information, spread themselves misinformation.

Fake news is a multifaceted area of research, in which scholars focus on various aspects: essence, typology (Wang, 2020; Allcott, & Gentzkow, 2017; Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2018, etc.) and the functional role of fake news (Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, & Vrontis, 2022); psychology of fake news (Pennycook, 2021; Greifeneder, & Newman, 2020, etc.); politics and fake news (Ognyanova, Lazer,

Robertson, & Wilson, 2020, etc.); journalism and manipulative techniques in fake news (Ilchenko, 2015; Sternin, & Shesterina, 2020; Manoilo, 2019; Perez-Escoda, 2022, etc.), morphological analysis of fake news (Kapusta, Hajek, & Munk, 2020, etc.). However, today we face a problem of fragmentation and inconsistent knowledge about media effects and the impact of information (fake and anti-fake messages) and the responses of youth audiences to them. Methods quantifying the perception of misinformation by young people and their responses have almost not been studied. The effectiveness of the insight into the impact and responses of young people to fake and anti-fake news can be upgraded using neuromarketing technologies (Lobodenko et al, 2022). Real-time neuromarketing studies record individual unconscious physiological reactions (pupil movement, changes in the activity of various brain regions, etc.) to various media stimuli, as well as assess potential memorization, cognitive load, and involvement in viewing, identifying features of text perception and attention patterns. This generally determines the relevance of adequate measuring the audience behavior.

Besides, despite the growing number of studies on combating fake news (Tandoc, Ling, & Westlund, 2018), there is no adequate review of the impact of fake news on the society and various audience groups. Giglietto et al. (2019), Grundmann (2020) and Dentith (2018) talk about a research approach based on considering the producer. Giglietto et al. (2019) proposed to go beyond the initial stage (producer of misinformation) using an interdisciplinary approach. The purpose of this work is to identify and compare the effects of fake and anti-fake political messages on youth audiences using eye-tracking and sociological research methods (survey).

In this paper, the scientific focus is shifted from the dominant area of studying the information and misinformation producer to a new area of unconscious and conscious consumer responses (cognitive, affective) to fake and anti-fake messages, which makes this interdisciplinary research relevant.

Based on the stated relevance and for the future development of the issue of the impact of fake and anti-fake news, we outlined the hypotheses tested during the research:
- The respondents react to both fake and anti-fake news due to the emotional presentation of information;
- "Fake" and "anti-fake" warning labels fall into the zone of the audience's attention and set out the direction of perceiving messages;
- The respondents pay more attention to the text (headline, body text) in fake and anti-fake news than to the image.

Theoretical framework

Modern civilization is characterized by the development of the Internet and the globalization of the communication space. The Internet embodies the entire diversity of human life, from "facilitating interpersonal relationships" (Ledbetter, Mazer, & DeGroot, 2011), "influencing personal well-being" (Kim, & Lee, 2011), "facilitating social coordination" (Ling, & Lai, 2016) to the formation of "news consumption" habits (Lee, & Ma, 2012).

The Internet provides users with freedom of opinion and information, as well as huge flows of news information. However, the negative aspect of this phenomenon is the appearance of trolls, bots and the fact that the news flow in the digital media space is "accompanied by the spread of misinformation" (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2019) fairly characterized by scholars as a challenge of the digital media space (Simonova, 2022). Quoting the words of the Spanish journalist I aki Gabilondo, one can say that "during the flood, drinking water is most scarce" (Perez, 2019).

In the recent past, news was generated and spread through traditional media (newspapers, magazines, television, radio) acting as an authoritative source of information. The rapid spread of news and messages on the Internet has changed news industry practices (Westlund, 2013). In the age of the Internet, many new media channels have emerged to deliver news (online news media, news aggregation sites, content farms, and social networks). Fake news or "camouflage content" disguised as news floods the Internet with fakes, propaganda, hoax news, which mislead with their content, false, and manipulative information (Perez, 2019).

The concept of fake has become widespread today. However, despite the high interest of scholars from different scientific fields, the scope of this phenomenon remains disputable. A wide range of heterogeneous phenomena are considered fakes. Wang (2020) notes that several terms are used interchangeably to define fake information, for example, fake information and false information; the terms misinformation and mal-information are close in meaning to these concepts. In the variety of terms somehow related to fake information, the scholar also identifies news satire, 'yellow' journalism, junk news, pseudo-news, hoax news, propaganda news, advertorial, alternative fact, misinformation, and fake news.

Scholars showed that the scientific literature has various definitions of this term based on two levels: facticity and deception (Tandoc, Lim, Ling, 2018). Considering the features of these levels, Kornev (2018) points out that fake errors are unintentional, passive (typos, inaccuracies, inattention), while fake deceptions are deliberate, active fakes (characterized by bias, prejudgment,

dependence, and engagement of the author; they contain conscious manipulative structures). In the second case, there is an ulterior motive for manipulating the audience.

In turn, Rini (2017), clarifying the scope of the term "fake", suggests that fake news should not be identified with false news, i.e., not only false information, but also content intends to deceive and falsify the journalism industry. More recently, the term began to refer to false or misleading information fabricated to look like a fact-based story (Nelson, & Taneja, 2018).

The analysis of scientific works shows that the term "fake" is often defined as "the intentional presentation of false or misleading statements to manipulate the cognitive processes of the audience" (Bilos, 2019). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020) emphasizes that the definition of the word "fake" leads us to forgery, fraud, imitation, replica, or pretense". Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) also define fake news as news deliberately created to mislead readers.

In the conditions of aggravated information confrontation, "fake news coverage" is almost officially legalized in media activities. A fake "as a specific format for working with information and its sources in this way turns from a purely entertaining, postmodern fun or game of Internet fans into an unexpected and effective tool for political struggle" (Ilchenko, 2015). As modern researchers note, "fake is understood as a deliberate distortion or framing of reality, and fake news is news items based on a deliberate distortion of facts, created to derive certain benefits (for example, increase traffic or citation)", as well as for the political benefit of global political players (Voronova, 2022).

In order to respond to the destructive effects of fake information in the media space, there appears a new "anti-fake" format. The technologies for creating this format are actively used in the modern Internet space. However, there is still no scientific interpretation of this phenomenon. We propose to define the term "anti-fake" as a message created and spread in the media space in response to a fake message, including the results of validating published information and the exposure of false, misleading statements, as well as the description of the real (actual) state of affairs. The main function of anti-fakes is to counteract the processes of manipulating the minds of the audience and the negative information-psychological impact.

The practice of marking fakes and anti-fakes with warning labels is quite actively developing on the Internet. R.H. Grady et al. (Grady, Ditto, Loftus, 2021 note that "if people were warned that information is unreliable before receiving it, they processed it differently and, over time, persistently did not believe it." This is consistent with other studies on correcting misinformation, since

warnings about upcoming misinformation are more effective than correcting the information after, though these warnings do not offer complete protection (Ecker, Lewandowsky, & Tang, 2010; Loftus, 2005).

The study of fake news becomes particularly relevant in the context of constantly changing communication technologies. It is essential to determine media effects and the impact of fake and anti-fake news on the audience, as well as how users react to fake news and its refutation they face with (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2019). At the same time, the information and psychological impact of fake information can be directed both to an individual and a group of people, or to public consciousness in general. It is aimed at changing such mental areas as need-motivational, intellectual-cognitive, emotional-volitional, and communicative-behavioral areas (Manoilo, 2003). The mechanisms most subject to changes and transformation are beliefs, stereotypes, and attitudes (Shmelkova, 2018).

Evidently, news has value, and the reasons why people read news affect what they will go in for to authenticate a story. People rely on their own judgment about a source and a message, and when it does not give an adequate answer, they turn to external resources to verify news. These verification strategies may involve intentional information search in their social sphere or other institutional sources. Alternatively, verification may be random. Verification can simply arise from the process of interacting with friends or consuming media (Tandoc, Ling, & Westlund, 2018).

Tsfati and Cappella (2005) summarized the motives for consuming news to include social integrative (to be part of a conversation), observational (gathering information that will help in everyday life), mood management (stimulation when you are bored), and cognitive needs (understanding the world, political life, pros and cons of the topics discussed). In order to achieve goals, fake news creators take into account these social needs, as well as the conditions for verification and spread of news by the audience in the digital media space. Majority of fake news is targeted to a specific sample of the population with the aim of promoting a certain ideology by stimulating strong beliefs and polarizing society (Chen, & Sharma, 2013).

At the same time, the specifics of information and communication in the digital environment – its clipping and streaming nature, appeal to emotions – hinder the development of analytical thinking and make youth audiences that grew up in this environment receptive to this kind of information, which requires a detailed study of media effects on youth audiences.

Studying the impact and media effects of information and misinformation is of particular relevance when fake information deliberately distorts the real course of events and is massively spread. At the same time, while the investigation of the media impact in the science of communications occupies a leading place (McQuail, 2010), media effects of fakes and anti-fakes have not been fully studied yet.

Research aimed at studying the media impact on the individual and society has become one of the most developed areas in the science of communications. The study of media effects is represented by a fairly extensive publication database (McQuail, 2010). Researchers analyze the media impact on changes in cognition and beliefs, as well as emotional and behavioral effects. The authors emphasize that the impact of a media message on the representatives of the audience depends on many factors (demographic data, psychological characteristics, etc.). Media effects can be positive or negative, short-term or long-term, direct or indirect.

The term "media effects" has been widely interpreted in the scientific literature. In the paper, we define media effects as "conscious and unconscious short-term and long-term intrapersonal changes in cognitions, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, physiology, and behavior resulting from using the media (Valkenburg, Peter, & Walther, 2016).

In the communication process, the perception of messages is expressed in the effects on human consciousness. Thus, the subject of the "Society, Media and Audience: Reciprocal Relationships" conceptual model proposed by well-known specialists Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) is the structural conditions of society realizing mass media effects (see *Figure 1*). The main idea of the concept is that people become maximally dependent on the media in a situation of changes, conflicts and instability in society. Within the framework of the model, the authors focus on the following set of media effects: cognitive (formation of attitudes, definition of "agenda items"); affective (appearance or formation of emotions); behavioral (activation of old or new activities). The probability that views and images broadcast by the media penetrate into the consciousness of the target audience is the highest in the conditions of uncertainty (Semenova, & Korsunskaya, 2010).

Figure 1

Society, media, and audience: Reciprocal relationships
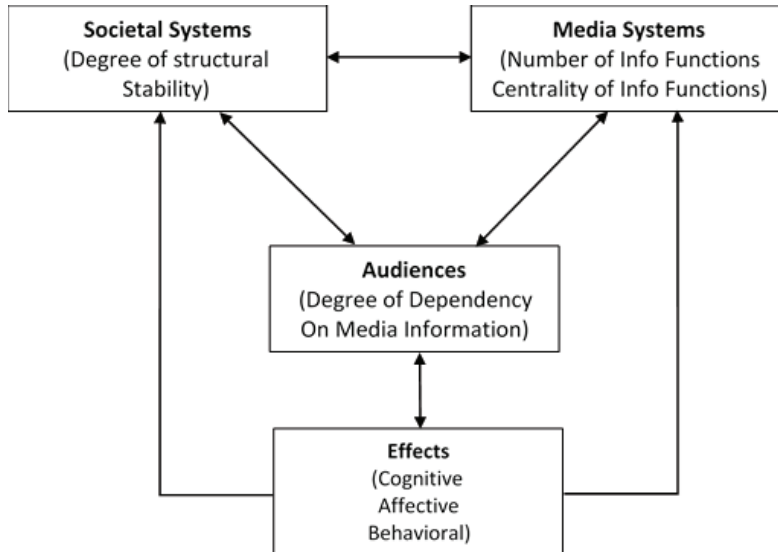
Source: Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976

As society becomes more complex and the quality of media technologies improves, the media constantly assume more and more unique informational functions. The potential of media messages to achieve a wide range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects will keep on growing as media systems exercise many unique and centralized informational functions.

According to the theory of Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, a high level of dependency on media information is a key interactive condition in understanding when and why media messages alter the audience beliefs, feelings, and behavior. Dependency is defined as a relationship in which the satisfaction of the needs or goals of one party depends on the resources of the other party. This state can be encountered when the user verified the received information. Media messages affect human needs, psychological and social characteristics.

Neuman and Guggenheim (2011) analyzed almost all publications on the theory of media effects over fifty years and identified six historically consistent clusters in the theory of media effects. The fifth stage, which includes related traditions of the theory of agenda-setting and framing, is relevant for our research. The authors do not only prove the significant impact of media, but also

explore how the impact can affect the perception, interpretation, and cognitive organization of information and opinions to which people are exposed:

- agenda-setting (Lippmann, 1927; McCombs, & Shaw, 1972) – the impact of the media on society and the individual *through the structuring of the information field* and "assigning" the degree of significance to various topics and plots;
- framing (Goffman, 1974; Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1993) – the impact of the media on society and the individual *through the form of presenting information* framing the *meanings* and relationships between the publicized objects in such a way as to frame a certain model of perception/interpretation of this information.

Notably, the key problem in the study of media effects is the concealment of the true feelings of the audience through psychological screens, including the screen of consciousness, the screen of tolerance, the screen of courtesy, the screen of conformity, etc. To this end, the use of neuromarketing technologies becomes relevant for studying media effects.

Neuromarketing is an innovative line of research, the subject of which is human unconscious cognitive and emotional reactions to certain stimuli. Neuromarketing technologies allow tracking and "measuring" indirect reactions to a stimulus (individual physiological reactions: pulse and respiration rate, pupil movement), i.e., measuring interest and attention patterns.

In psychology, attention is defined as the process and state of setting a subject to perceive priority information and complete tasks (Tsfati, & Cappella, 2005). The orientation and concentration of mental activity during attention provides a more effective perception of information. In general terms, there are two main types of attention: involuntary and voluntary (selective). The level of distribution and switching of attention is considered as a psychological characteristic and an integral indicator of performance under cognitive loads. In our work, we used eye-tracking (or oculography) to capture gaze motion, patterns of visual attention, and areas of interest.

One of the leading and most studied functions of attention is the selection of relevant information. The applicable experimental data and theories allow that relevant information can be selected on different bases depending on the task to be completed. Thus, information can be searched for and selected highlighting individual essential features, which can be conditionally designated as areas of interest.

In general, the media can affect the feelings and thoughts of the audience, form attitudes and stereotypes, and influence the behavior of various subjects.

Media effects, which are "perhaps insignificant within a single communicative event, can provoke significant social shifts due to their cumulative nature" (Aslanov, 2021). In these conditions, the study of media effects and the impact of media messages on the audience's opinions seems relevant.

Methodology

The reliability of this research is ensured by the extensive empirical material and the system of its study, as well as the use of an interdisciplinary approach. The work is based on a set of methods, namely comparative analysis, document analysis with elements of content analysis, as well as visual neuromarketing – eye-tracking and survey.

Special attention was paid to eye-tracking technologies which use video recording to register eye movement, gaze direction, the duration of visual fixation on an object and to determine the degree of focus and the sequence of viewing information. Visualization methods used in eye tracking clearly and accessibly represent dynamic processes through quantitative indicators, thus improving the comprehension of the available data. They include fixation sequence maps and heat maps. The main eye-tracking indicators used in the research are the number of fixations and the average duration of fixations. Fixations are used to calculate the time spent on viewing a particular spot, which reflects the attentional involvement and time needed to process the stimulus at that spot. The average duration of fixations is related to the speed at which the brain processes information.

Heat maps demonstrate the statistical and dynamic integration of all points of the respondent's gaze by overlaying a color gradient on the presented image. They show which elements of the stimulus attracted maximum attention: "warm" red areas correspond to more gaze points (maximum interest), cooler yellow and then green areas correspond to fewer gaze points (lower interest).

An important element of the eye-tracking research procedure is the areas of interest of the stimulus material, which are a tool for selecting areas of focus on the presented image. The calculation of such indicators as the number of fixations and the average duration of fixations is determined by areas of interest.

The Gazepoint GP3 HD eye-tracker with a sampling frequency of 150Hz and the Gazepoint Analysis software were used to prepare, conduct, and analyze the results of the experiment. In the experiment, the respondents were shown stimulus materials separated by neutral images on a 24-inch monitor. The experiment lasted for 20 seconds. As a result, we obtained metrics of views,

fixations, returns to the area of interest, time to the first fixation, etc. and built heat maps. The eye-tracking study was followed by a survey.

The experiment was based on the analysis of social media content (Telegram). At the initial stage in selecting the stimulus material we analyzed the content of "WarFakes"[2] telegram channel (according to the official website of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, it is an authoritative channel specializing in the exposure of fakes on acute facts) for the period 28.02.2022 – 01.05.2022.

The starting point for the beginning of the study (28.02.2022) and the collection of fake and anti-fake information was the statement of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN Vasily Nebenzya during a meeting of the UN Security Council that an information war has been unleashed in social networks[3].

The stimulus material was selected by five experts and agreed upon at a collegiate discussion by the team of authors. Media texts were selected based on the homomorphism principle (unity of form) and included image and text (headline, body text). More than 100 messages about current political processes were studied and 12 messages were selected for the research (six fake and six anti-fake messages). Fake and anti-fake messages were selected on the subjects mostly discussed in the media space. All selected the materials were marked with "fake" and "anti-fake" warning labels.

The participants of the experiment were 78 students (bachelors and masters) of humanities and technical specialties of the South Ural State University aged between 18 and 22 years old, who agreed in writing to participate in the study and were informed about the content and progress of its conduct. In the course of the study, respondents were asked to familiarize themselves with the incentive material on the topic using tracking technologies that analyze the unconscious reactions of participants, and then all respondents took a survey aimed at analyzing the conscious perception of the information presented. Respondents individually participated in the study in the period from 01.06.2022 to 30.09.2022. Viewing the incentive material and passing the survey by the participants took no more than 20 minutes. This pilot research was aimed at determining the effectiveness of the impact of fakes and anti-fakes, agenda-setting for the audience, as well as framing by analyzing attention patterns and responses of the youth audience by areas of interest.

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[2] https://tgstat.ru/channel/@warfakes
[3] https://iz.ru/1297914/2022-02-28/nebenzia-zaiavil-o-razviazyvanii-protiv-rf-informatcionnoi-voiny

Results

Eye-tracking research results

The purpose of our research was to analyze the media effects of fake and anti-fake materials and their impact on youth audiences. The study was conducted in three stages: 1) studying the current media space, selecting stimulus material and categorizing it into fakes and anti-fakes; 2) conducting an eye-tracking research and an online survey; and 3) processing the obtained results.

The first stage of the research included sampling of 12 messages (six fake news items and six anti-fake news items refuting the selected fake news items) out of 100 news items on political topics according to their frequency on Telegram-channel. They were devoted to the following topics: *Tragedy in Bucha*, *Strike on Kramotorsk*, *Maternity hospital in Mariupol*, *Ghost of Kiev*, *Chemical weapons in Mariupol* and others. Each stimulus was assigned a code (see *Table 1*) of the letter 'S' and a two-digit number (for example, S01). While forming the sample and thematic sections, five experts analyzed the stimuli to meet the following criteria: content (relevance of the political topic); active public discussion on the Internet. The stimulus material was preliminarily categorized into areas of interest: a headline, a text, an image. All the selected materials were marked with warning labels, i.e. 'fake', and 'anti-fake'.

The second stage of the experiment involved the use of eye-tracking technologies, and the participants were shown selected stimuli randomly for 20 seconds each. After the eye-tracking research, all respondents participated in a survey aimed at revealing their conscious perception of the presented information. The survey was aimed to determine the efficiency of the materials' impact and identify the agency-setting for the audience; and to identify the attention and reaction patterns of the youth audience by areas of interest (frames).

Topics and stimuli codes (anti-fakes, fakes)

Stimulus code	Warning label	Headline	Date	Average number of fixations, units
S1	Anti-fake	The massacre in Bucha is a fake, and here's why	03.04.2022	59.200
S2	Fake	An eyewitness of the massacre in Bucha	29.04.2022	65.867
S3	Anti-fake	Strike on Kramatorsk: ridiculous accusations and a reason to ask for more weapons	08.04.2022	63.714
S4	Fake	Tragedy in Kramatorsk	10.04.2022	63.400
S5	Anti-fake	A girl-blogger from Mariupol maternity hospital told how she was involved in a fake story	03.04.2022	63.857
S6	Fake	A pregnant woman died in Mariupol after a maternity hospital was bombed	14.03.2022	59.533
S7	Anti-fake	Looting or not?	22.04.2022	66.929
S8	Fake	A new wave of looting in Mariupol	19.04.2022	63.267
S9	Anti-fake	Ukrainian Air Force Command recognized the 'ghost of Kyiv' as a fake	01.05.2022	64.786
S10	Fake	The 'Ghost of Kiev' has already destroyed 15 enemy aircraft	28.02.2022	60.933
S11	Anti-fake	'Sarin' in Mariupol. Is 'Russian use of chemical weapons' a fake?	13.04.2022	55.067
S12	Fake	Russia used chemical weapons in Mariupol: victims in relatively good state of health	13.04.2022	67.067

The eye-tracking research on the media effects of fake and anti-fake online media materials involved the indicator of the average number of fixations' (units) of respondents' views on the stimulus and its areas of interest, which shows the attention and interest of the audience. The use of the obtained results revealed the leading topics in the information agenda, the most interesting for the target audience (*Table 1*).

Thus, the leaders of the information agenda according to the total number of fixations of gaze (from 65.867 units to 67.067 units) are stimulus S12 (fake) with 67.067 units of fixations. The second place is held by stimulus S7 (anti-fake) with 66.929 units of fixations, and the third place belongs to stimuli S2 (fake) with 65.867 units of fixations and S9 (anti-fake) with 64.786 units (see *Figures 2-4*).

Figure 2

S12 (fake)

Figure 3

S7 (anti-fake)

Figure 4

S9 (anti-fake)

Thus, the analysis of the impact of fake and anti-fake materials of online media showed that the fakes about the use of chemical weapons, the tragedy in Bucha and anti-fake materials refuting the looting in Mariupol, as well as the existence of the military pilot 'Ghost of Kiev' attracted the greatest interest of the respondents. According to the areas of interest, the attention of the respondents was distributed by text and image areas (see *Table 2*).

Table 2

Text and image areas of interest

Code	Warning label	Area of interest	Average time of viewing (sec.)	A share of total duration of viewing stimulus material (%)	Average number of fixations, units
S1	Anti-fake	Text	11.111	55.556	39.714
		Image	1.166	5.829	7.000
		Headline	0.732	3.658	4.083
		Monument	0.162	0.810	1.375
S2	Fake	Text	10.409	52.047	36.533
		Image	3.038	15.189	14.733
		Headline	1.640	8.198	9.600
		people1	0.066	0.329	1.500
		people2	0.207	1.035	1.714
		people3	0.141	0.704	2.400
S3	Anti-fake	Text	8.574	42.868	29.643
		Image	3.323	16.615	15.429
		Headline	1.268	6.340	7.462
		Weapon	1.038	5.189	5.071
S4	Fake	Text	7.595	37.973	26.800
		Image	3.300	16.502	14.533
		Headline	2.220	11.100	13.929
		People	1.049	5.244	5.133
S5	Anti-fake	Text	6.090	30.449	24.462
		Image	6.685	33.425	27.143
		Headline	1.313	6.566	7.000
		People	4.082	20.411	16.357
S6	Fake	Text	8.092	40.459	30.667
		Image	3.945	19.725	16.143
		Headline	1.579	7.894	8.308
		People	1.684	8.419	7.231
S7	Anti-fake	Text	6.149	30.744	45.566
		Headline	0.956	4.780	4.769
		Image	1.521	7.607	7.538

S8	Fake	Text	3.562	17.808	13.214
		Image	5.957	29.785	22.867
		Headline	2.677	13.386	14.733
		Buildings	2.600	13.001	10.333
S9	Anti-fake	Text	8.247	41.234	36.804
		Image	2.821	14.103	19.514
		Headline	1.208	6.042	8.071
		People	1.586	7.929	7.929
S10	Fake	Text	9.298	46.489	32.000
		Image	4.003	20.013	16.357
		Headline	1.451	7.253	8.769
		People	2.262	11.312	9.500
S11	Anti-fake	Text	7.987	39.937	26.286
		image	2.583	12.913	12.071
		headline	1.256	6.278	8.308
		buildings	1.331	6.653	6.357
S12	Fake	Text	2.450	12.252	26.286
		Image	4.190	20.950	15.667
		Headline	3.671	18.356	21.214
		people	1.238	6.188	4.308

At the next stage of the research the study of frames (attention patterns) was carried out in the framework of the analysis of creolized media texts by selected areas of interest. Creolized media texts are understood as such texts, "the texture of which consists of two inhomogeneous parts: verbal and nonverbal, belonging to other sign systems than natural language" (Sorokin, & Tarasov, 1990). All media texts (fakes and anti-fakes) were grouped into the following areas: 1) verbal – text (title, main text); 2) non-verbal – image.

The data in *Table 2* shows the average viewing time (sec.), the share of the total duration of viewing the stimulus material (%) and the data of heat maps of the average number of fixations, thus identifying the respondents' attention fixation areas. The results by areas of interest show that the area of text comes first in terms of attracting attention. The analysis of the headlines and the body text shows that it is the fake headlines that attract the attention of the audience, however, more respondents concentrate on reading the body text of the anti-fake headlines. The leaders in the headline area of interest are stimulus S12 (fake, 21, 214 fixation units), followed by S8 (fake, 14, 733 fixation units) and the third place in this area of interest is occupied by stimulus S4 (fake, 13, 929 fixation units).

The analysis of the average number of fixations and the time of viewing (%) of the body text shows that the leaders are the anti-fakes. Stimulus S7 comes first (anti-fake, 47.572 fixations), stimulus S1 comes second (anti-fake, 39.714 fixations) and stimulus S9 comes third (anti-fake, 36.840 fixations on the text) (see *Figure 5-7*).

Figure 5

S7 (anti-fake)

Figure 6

S1 (anti-fake)

Figure 7

S9 (anti-fake)

The data of heat maps and content analysis of the text area revealed that the following lexical units fall into the audience's area of interest:

- nouns – truth, data, photos, videos, tragedy, girl-blogger, maternity hospital, residents, attacks, strike, nationalists, command, servicemen, shield, ghost, Ukrainians, Russians, Google map, planes, epicenter, etc.;
- nouns/toponyms – Mariupol, Bucha, Kramatorsk, etc.;
- verbs – tracked, shot down, withdrawn, confirmed, reported, etc.;
- adjectives – armed, Ukrainian, peaceful, alive, Russian, etc.;
- word combinations – civilians, mass departure, epic failure, fake, nationalists, fake factory, in fact, 'ghost of Kiev', legend superhero, refuted the information, etc.

Among the leaders in terms of attention to the image area there were S5 (anti-fake, 27.143 fixation units) in first place (see *Figure 8*); S8 (fake, 22.867 fixation units) in second place (see *Figure 9*), and S9 (anti-fake, 19.514 fixation units) in third place (see *Figure 7*).

Figure 8

S5 (anti-fake)
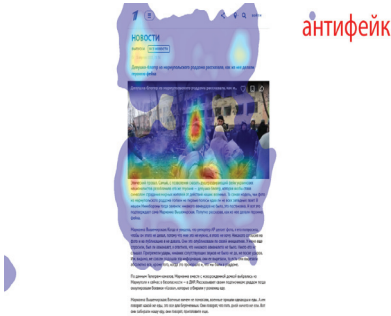
Figure 9

S8 (fake)
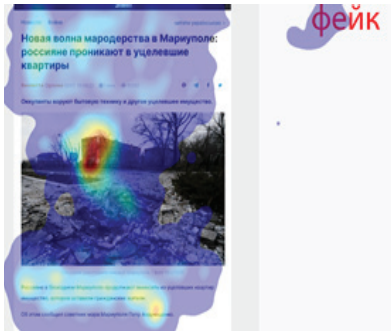
In the image area, the respondents' attention is drawn to people and their faces, buildings, and destroyed weapons. The warning labels "fake" and "anti-fake" were of great importance in the stimulus demonstration in this research. The analysis of the eye-tracking research in this area (see *Table 3*) showed that the "anti-fake" labels were rated higher in terms of the number of fixations and ranged from 2.169 units to 4.317 units; the "fake" labels were rated from 1.282 to 3.854 units.

**Results of eye-tracking research by "fake"
and "anti-fake" warning labels**

Stimulus code	Warning label	Average viewing time (s)	Average viewing time (%)	Average number of fixations, units	Number of fixations, units
S1	Anti-fake	3.367	0.569	2.846	4.109
S2	Fake	4.100	0.221	1.106	1.282
S3	Anti-fake	1.925	0.476	2.378	2.667
S4	Fake	1.836	0.271	1.356	2.311
S5	Anti-fake	3.544	0.241	1.206	2.169
S6	Fake	0.790	0.349	1.747	2.086
S7	Anti-fake	7.219	0.676	3.382	4.317
S8	Fake	3.505	0.657	3.286	3.854
S9	Anti-fake	5.326	0.399	1.994	3.485
S10	Fake	7.947	0.430	2.151	2.409
S11	Anti-fake	2.359	0.522	2.611	3.534
S12	Fake	4.154	0.176	0.879	1.714

In the current eye-tracking research, the average viewing time by stimulus area of interest ranges from 15.072 seconds to 17.511 seconds, with a fixed stimulus viewing time of 20 seconds. Another important aspect of the research was the survey of respondents at the end of stimulus viewing. Unlike the eye-tracking technique, providing data on the unconscious reactions of the audience, the main objective of the survey was to reveal opinions and conscious attitudes towards the viewed material.

Survey results

In order to assess the news communicative impact, the respondents were asked to complete a survey with an online questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to examine respondents' attitudes toward the news items presented. For each fake news item, an anti-fake rebuttal news item was provided. The news items were intentionally assigned these statuses; the

respondents saw them in the survey. Attitudes toward fakes and anti-fakes were measured identically. The questionnaire included three questions to examine the cognitive and emotional effects of the respondents. Percentages were distributed separately for each question according to the number of respondents. Each news item was evaluated according to different criteria: reliability of the item, the level of its emotional impact, and the communicative purpose of the text (comprehension and memorability of the item).

The responses to the first question *Do you trust the presented materials?* (*Table 4*) revealed that the respondents (79.0%–95.6%) demonstrate a low level of trust in the fakes presented in S2, S4, S6, S8, S10, S12 stimuli. The respondents trust more the anti-fake news (S5, S11 and S3), providing the most detailed refutation of false information.

Table 4

The level of trust in the presented information, % of the respondents

Stimulus code	Warning label	Level of trust, % of the respondents
S1	Anti-fake	yes – 56.8 no – 43.2
S2	Fake	yes – 8.4 no – 91.6
S3	Anti-fake	yes – 61.7 no – 38.2
S4	Fake	yes – 13.7 no – 86.3
S5	Anti-fake	yes – 80.4 no – 19.5
S6	Fake	yes – 6.5 no – 93.5
S7	Anti-fake	yes – 54.4 no – 45.6
S8	Fake	yes – 4.4 no – 95.6
S9	Anti-fake	yes – 54.3 no – 46.6
S10	Fake	no – 79.0 yes – 21.0
S11	Anti-fake	Yes – 72.3 no – 27.7
S12	Fake	yes – 22.7 no – 87.3

The second question inquired about the emotional impact of the news on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low impact and 5 is high impact (see *Table 5*). The score of 2.5 was considered the average value in the research.

Table 5

Evaluation of the emotional impact of the messages by the respondents

Stimulus code	Warning label	Average score, point
S1	Anti-fake	2.5
S2	Fake	2.4
S3	Anti-fake	2.4
S4	Fake	2.4
S5	Anti-fake	2.8
S6	Fake	2.4
S7	Anti-fake	1.6
S8	Fake	2.1
S9	Anti-fake	1.75
S10	Fake	2.0
S11	Anti-fake	2.6
S12	Fake	2.4

The obtained data (*Table 5*) demonstrate that more than 50% of the anti-fake messages disclosing the tragedies in the hospital in Mariupol and Bucha, as well as denying the use of chemical weapons in Mariupol had the highest emotional impact (S5 – 2.8 points, S11 – 2.6 points and S1 – 2.5 points).

The responses to the third question *What do you remember most in this message?* (*Table 6*) revealed that the most memorable were the headlines of fake and anti-fake messages (S1 and S2, respectively, 86.0% and 68.3%), because these titles have a strong emotional connotation. The anti-fake messages (S5 and S3, respectively, 72.3% and 65.9%), with a photo of a girl blogger and a destroyed weapon, were the leaders in terms of images.

Table 6

The level of remembering the stimulus material in the areas
of interest (headline, image) by the respondents

Stimulus code	Warning label	Score, % of respondents
S1	Anti-fake	headline – 68.3 image – 31.7
S2	Fake	headline – 86.0 image – 14.0
S3	Anti-fake	headline – 34.0 image – 65.9
S4	Fake	headline – 53.2 image – 46.8
S5	Anti-fake	headline – 27.6 image – 72.3
S6	Fake	headline – 38.7 image – 61.2
S7	Anti-fake	headline – 56.8 image – 42.2
S8	Fake	headline – 66.6 image – 33.3
S9	Anti-fake	headline – 46.3 image – 53.6
S10	Fake	headline – 50 image – 50
S11	Anti-fake	headline – 63.6 image – 36.3
S12	Fake	headline – 42.2 image – 57.7

The results of both the eye-tracking research and the survey showed that anti-fake and fake news attract the attention of respondents. However, anti-fake materials have the greatest impact on respondents by the number of fixations on the stimulus, by the level of remembering and by the level of trust. Warning labels strongly influence this process of perception.

Conclusion

The *first hypothesis* was confirmed by the high level of attention of respondents to the stimulus material in the eye-tracking research. The respondents spent almost all the available time (from 15.072 sec to 17.511 sec) for a given time of viewing the stimuli for 20 seconds. The results of the survey revealed that

over 50% of the anti-fake materials evoked quite strong emotional reactions, exceeding the average level of emotional impact of 2.5 points (S5 – 2.8 points, S11 – 2.6 points, S1 – 2.5 points). These are the materials disclosing the tragedies in the maternity hospital in Mariupol, in Bucha and also messages refuting the use of chemical weapon in Mariupol. The survey revealed that the respondents mostly remembered the headlines of fake and anti-fake materials that have a strong emotional connotation (S1 and S2, respectively 86.0% and 68.3%). Also, the obtained data (*Table 5*) show that more than 50% of the anti-fake materials caused the strongest emotional reaction.

The *second hypothesis* was supported by the fact that the respondents focus on the labels when viewing all the stimulus materials (*Table 3*). The average number of fixations on the "fake" warning labels is lower than on the "anti-fake" labels, which correlates with the survey data proving that respondents trusted the "anti-fake" labels the most. The respondents (79.0%–95.6%) show a low level of trust in fakes (S2, S4, S6, S8, S10, S12) (*Table 4*). Meanwhile, the respondents trust more in the anti-fakes (S5, S11, S3) with a detailed refutation of the false information.

The *third hypothesis* was confirmed by the results of the eye-tracking research and the survey. The survey revealed that the text area in the anti-fake (S1, S7, S9) materials attracted the most attention of the respondents compared to the image area.

Based on the data in *Table 2*, constructed taking into account the indicators "average viewing time" (sec.), "average number of gaze fixations" (units) and heat maps data, the areas of fixation of respondents' attention on the main parts of creolized media texts were identified. This was necessary to determine the main areas of focus of the respondents' gaze. According to the results of data analysis, it was revealed that:

- The average viewing time (sec.): text (including title) varies from 6,121 (S12) to 12,049 (S2); images - from 1,166 (S1) to 6,685 (S5);
- The average number of gaze fixations (units): text (including the title) varies from 27,947 (S8) to 50,335 (S7); images from 7,000 (S1) to 27,143 (S5).

According to the results of the survey, images attracted less attention. In particular, respondents reacted to the images of people and destroyed objects in anti-fake messages (S5, S3). The results of the eye-tracking research showed that anti-fake stimuli (S5, S9) attracted the attention to the image area.

The research revealed that anti-fake is quite effective in terms of opposing fake information, as it always relies on the results of checking the reliability of

published information, discloses false and confusing statements, and offers a description of the real situation. This is confirmed by the increased interest of respondents in the text area, it indicates the desire of respondents to understand the issue, emphasizes the relevance of this format and highlights the need for journalists to acquire the skills to create anti-fakes.

In their turn, fake messages tend to form certain perception and interpretation of information and draw attention to themselves through very emotional images and headlines (mostly related to the problem of human life and health safety, and other basic values). However, fakes do not evoke trust when information is delivered precisely in the 'fake-anti-fake' block, and the objective of fake information is not achieved. The respondents focus more on 'anti-fakes', as they evoke the greatest emotional response and trust in them.

Thus, the impact of fake and anti-fake information on the audience is highly relevant and multidimensional. The use of neuromarketing technologies enables getting the most objective data, as unconscious audience reactions obtained through eye-tracking research are supplemented by survey data, which offers wide research perspectives to the scientific team.

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