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## Mapping of Learning Efficacy Through YouTube: An Empirical Study of Media Learners in Kolkata

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### Abstract

YouTube has augmented from a platform of entertainment and information dissemination to a brilliant tool of learning and sharing knowledge. Supporting the mechanism of online education, social media became a podium where knowledge could be shared easily and interaction was possible despite the strict confinement protocols during Covid 19. Social distancing hampered the educational process and social media tried to fill the gap thereby making interactions possible between teachers and learners, and kept them connected. During this time YouTube emerged as a learning tool which facilitates understanding of concepts and expertise. This research attempts to study the utilization of YouTube for the purpose of learning. The research methodology adopted is qualitative and focussed group discussions have been conducted and analyzed to understand the usage of the platform by the learners of media and communication studies. The research substantiates the social learning theory that erudition can take place by observation of media like YouTube and acts as an aid to understanding concepts and procedures. The study delves into reasons for which media students can efficiently learn from YouTube like easy and cheap accessibility, audio-visual content, content in various languages, significant resources, and varied content. There are also reasons like poor quality of the audio-visual content, frequent advertisements and misleading content which can lead to obstruction in a pleasant experience of learning. The primary reason which emerges from the analysis for the popularity of the medium is 'micro-learning' which enables learning through simplification.

**Keywords:** Social media, media education, YouTube, education, technological acceptance, new media.

### 1. Introduction

Social media is getting popular for information dissemination and enhancing the image of a brand by increasing social media participation. It is used as a knowledge sharing platform as it is easily accessible and widely popular among the youngsters, and interaction happens swiftly (Scherer et al., 2019). More and more educators are using the social media platform to improve the teaching learning process. There are various pages, groups and communities on social media platforms by different educational institutions or members which promote active participation and engagement. These groups or communities also serve as a space where information sharing and discussions take place, thereby reaching to people in an informal way, which make it more convenient. This fosters collaboration and networking among talent from anywhere possible and also makes scope of promotion of their intellect. One can share great ideas, work with one another and get guidance from the great minds across boundaries. Also, the learners can form expedient connections for their career ahead. After the pandemic it is quintessential to form connections on

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social media between the teachers and learners to keep associated off campus. During the pandemic the social media served as a quick tool to regularly inform about the updates and receive inputs from one another, because of the high popularity of the medium. The technological advancement has enabled every sphere to make a progression towards betterment and higher accessibility; the digitization of media and communication has led mankind to take a giant leap towards development and better quality of life. The new media ensures feasibility of tapping the next level potential and power of communication as it is interactive, digital, versatile, convergent. The sustainable development goals promote those areas which are necessary for the survival of mankind on the planet and which can only happen with the judicious utilization of resources. The internet since its birth, has evolved into a tool, which can be greatly beneficial for the society and help in the accomplishment of a sustainable future. YouTube is one such popular platform which churns massive content for various purposes. The audience consumes this global content for keeping oneself entertained and informed, where it has been observed that the audio-visual content uploaded on YouTube can impart knowledge, learning and skills.

Vincent Miller in his book, *Understanding Digital Culture* says that digital media and new media devices like mobile phones have integrated with the lives that there seems no existence without them (Miller, 2020). The new media is a comprehensive kind of media that can advance every industry, including education, entertainment, business, finance, science, and every aspect of societal activity (Adnan, Yaacob, 2021). There are many reasons to use new technology, theory of technology determinism proposes that theories about its benefits and drawbacks are put forth. There are certain new dimensions which a new technology meets when it is integrated with the society, this has not been decided when this new technology was given birth to. So, the potential uses of a new media cannot be determined from the very beginning when it is introduced in the society. Marshal McLuhan opined that communication is revitalised by the new, interconnected, global new media, and he distinguished between "technique and technical invention" and explained how a new invention became an 'available technology' (Freedman, 2002; Williams, 1974). This can only be accomplished through the guided efforts of the human mind; society decides which technologies to continue using and which to abandon after considering their utility.

#### *Social media altering interactions*

Social media has impacted the process of social interaction in the world and ushered in many changes. It gives scope of interaction with different groups of people in various roles with a 'low risk environment'. According to the author Shannon Deaton, social learning theory is widely applicable in case of interaction on the social media and there is less social anxiety more self-efficacy. Social learning can only happen when the learners are engaged to others in a 'cohesive environment', which is not possible in a traditional classroom as it does not permit the learners to interact with other experts, peers, researchers, industry mentors (Deaton, 2015). It acts as a platform which opens bigger avenues for interaction which were earlier limited to only physical meetings and mass media (Macek, 2015). The sociocultural theory of cognitive development by psychologist Lev Vygotsky asserts that learning is a social process as well as a cultural phenomenon and happens through interaction with skilled people. A study conducted by a researcher does provide 'educational opportunities' as in their results they found out that many learners feel motivated through interaction and socialization which is fostered by social media (Taylor et al., 2012).

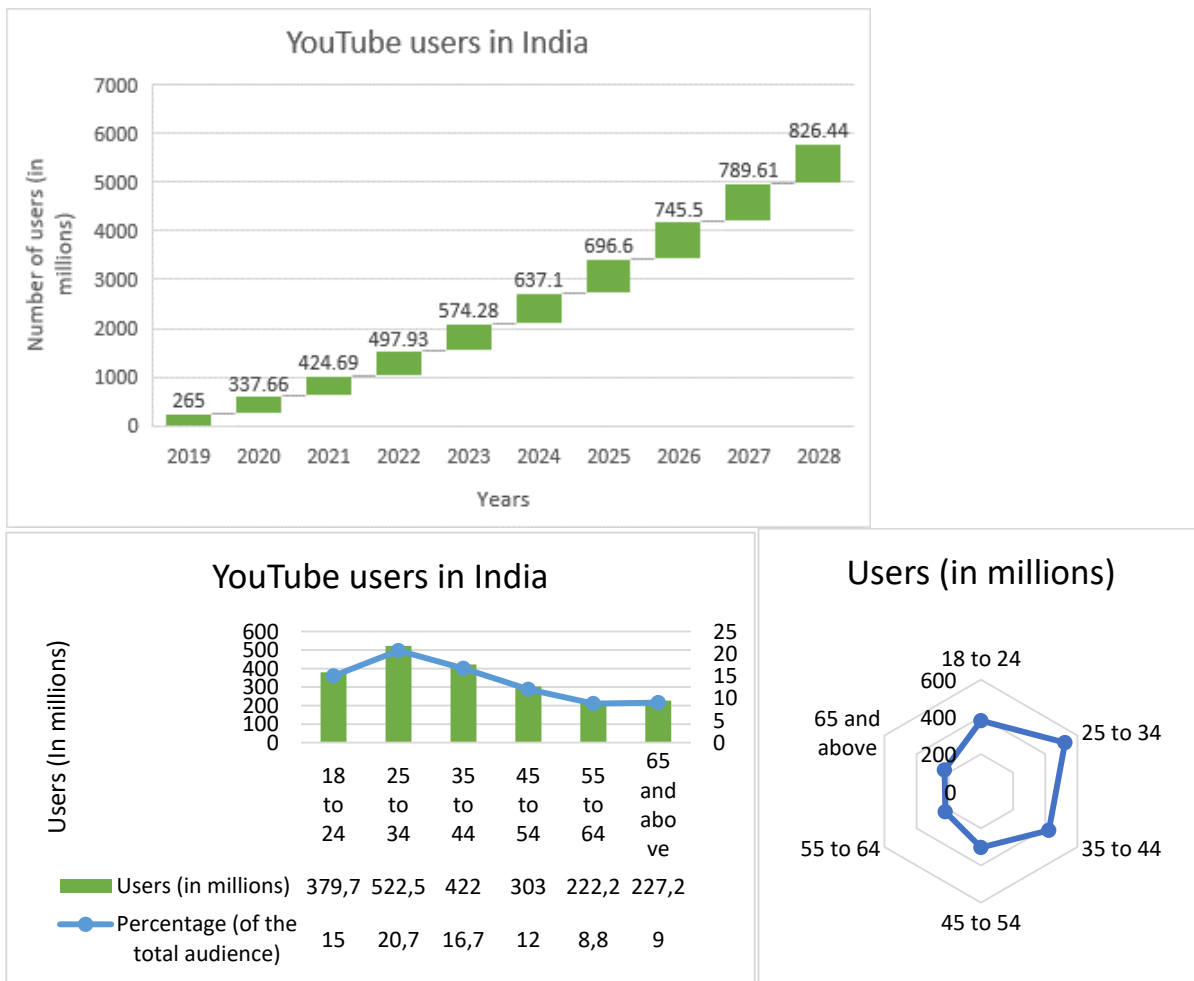
#### *YouTube as a learning tool*

YouTube started its operation in 2005 by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim. The search engine Google attempted to start a new service called Google videos, which failed to congregate viewers and led Google to occupy YouTube in 2006. Then Google started to negotiate deals with content creating companies to let them telecast their content on YouTube to avoid copyright infringement issues and allowed playing some advertisements between the videos (Rawal, 2018). The success story of YouTube has created history. It is estimated that by 2028 the number of YouTube users will increase by 252 million, almost 43 per cent which makes it the second social media in terms of popularity. Statista reports that there are 2.6 billion viewers of YouTube in a month and 467 million in India in 2023, with T-series being the most subscribed YouTube channel on the international front. Of the total users, most of the audiences are in the age group of 18–35. Also, it is established that 7 in 10 users are on a mobile device for consuming the content. YouTube is a platform which contains gigantic information about varied topics and the study carried out by the researcher on analysing the viewer's comments on the video found that

such content is capable of generating understanding and positive interest. The researcher thus concluded that YouTube does serve as a knowledge sharing platform where educators should upload quality videos to transmit information on topics of academic interest (Godwin et al., 2017).

YouTube content can serve as an aid which can further the reception of topics that are challenging and could simplify the information, thereby benefitting education (Bello-Bravo et al., 2021). The younger generation are adept with the digital can adapt to the new digital learning environment and consider YouTube as very popular and a versatile medium for educational and learning purposes (Cihangir, Çoklar, 2021). A study conducted to measure the technological adoption of YouTube found that its use is made significantly in respect of tertiary education and is accepted as a popular medium among individuals for learning something new. It was also suggested by the researcher through a regressive analysis that there exists a relation between the willingness of the learner and their intention of use, which makes YouTube a successful platform for learning (Maziriri et al., 2020).

Information and Communication Technology has become pertinent for students to cope up with learning and the learners have been making extensive use of these tools for educational purposes. The videos which are shared through the new media are helpful in sharing of information and skills. The videos packed with information certainly has the capacity to educate and entertain a large audience and it can promote learning through audio visual exposure which captures the attention of a mind easily. The researchers have found evidence that YouTube videos do augment learning experience and offer relaxation coupled with erudition and information, it affirms that YouTube is a media towards which people have an affinity and dependence as a learning solution (DeWitt et al., 2013; Moghavvemi et al., 2018).



**Fig. 1.** YouTube user demographics in India

As per data available from Statista.com, India has the highest number of 462 million active YouTube users as a consequence of the Covid where YouTube served as a dominant source of

information, entertainment and learning. The YouTube is bound to exert a significant influence on the society in India. The total number of YouTube users in India accounts for 18.68 % of the users in the globe. The Oxford Economics suggests that YouTube creative ecosystem generated over 10,000 crores of rupees in India and 7,50,000 full time equivalent jobs. The graph below demonstrates that the expected rise in users of YouTube in 2028 reflecting a steep rise. Also the other graph suggests that the most of the YouTube users in India are in the age group 25 to 34.

### *The Digital Divide*

A majority of the individuals have access to digital media, and a vast population relies on new technologies for information and communication. At the same time new media is harnessing power benefitting from its ability to bring people together and mobilising them for varied causes. There are various concerns leading to speculations about the new media exerting influence on socio political factors that could lead to disinformation, information polarisation, and political affinities (De Zúñiga, Chen, 2019). In a study 'Covid-19 and the Digital Divide: Responding to the South Asian Digital Divide in the Education Sector', Irini Iacovidou and Himanshi Sharma accepted that digital growth heralded an era of manifold use of information and communication tools but articulated about a worrisome situation where all the individuals might not be able to reap in the advantages of the digital technology equally pertaining to the digital divide (Iacovidou, Sharma, 2022). Homes defined digital divide as a condition because of which not everyone has equal access to the benefits of digitization and digital tools available with the progression of the digital media (Goat, Holmes, 2022).

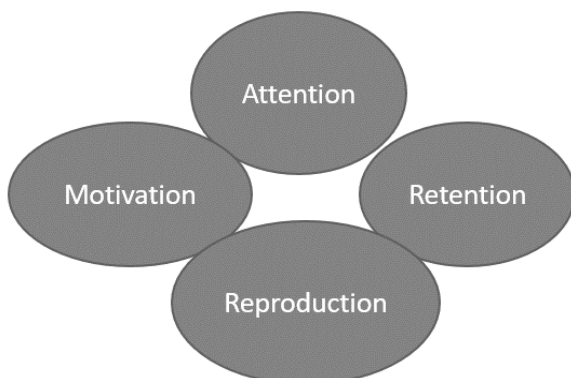
## **2. Materials and methods**

The research objective is to understand the role of YouTube as a social learning tool. To map the efficacy in learning, the qualitative research was adopted with its emphasis on focussed group discussions. Focus Group Discussions were conducted among the learners and participants (age group of 18-24 and pursuing graduation and post-graduation in media and communication) who were the followers of different channels of educational content on YouTube has been taken into consideration. Purposive sampling was the measure of choosing the respondents for this study. There were three discussions which had 8 participants in each group. The researcher has attempted to find out the opinion who view/subscribe/like the various educational content (special focus on media & communication studies) on YouTube and following are the questions:

1. What is the average time spent daily on YouTube/educational videos on YouTube?
2. What are the purposes of time spent on YouTube for media & communication studies?
3. What are the experiences of learning on YouTube and reasons to follow YouTube?
4. What causes YouTube viewers to not discontinue viewing an instructional video?
5. How long is the appropriate length for a YouTube instructive video?

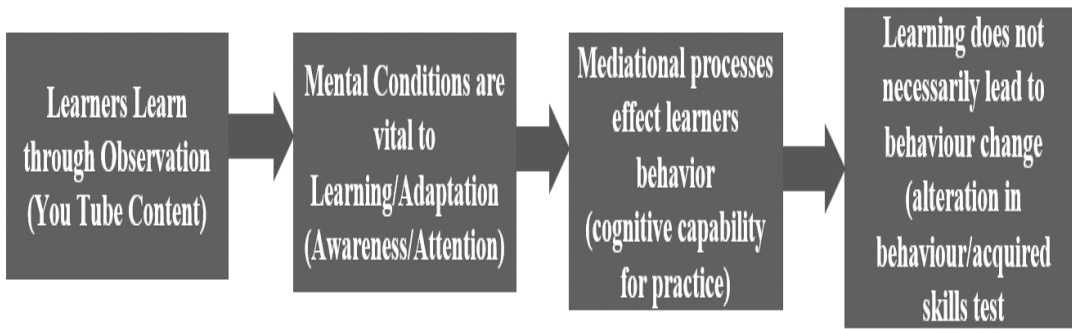
*Social Learning Theory*

*Stages of Social Learning Theory*



**Fig. 2.** Theoretical Framework of Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura, 1961, 1963, 1971)

Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1971) proposed social learning theory to determine whether social actions could be accumulated by observation and simulated. Bandura proposes that people can learn actions/performs through observation. He further explains children or any person learns or imitates the actions by seeing/viewing regularly from many aspects (it can be elders, parents, teachers, friends and others) directly or indirectly.



**Fig. 3.** Conceptual Framework of Social Learning Theory

Here in this study, it can be assumed that the learners with an objective to learn in asynchronous mode, they observe the content from various media especially YouTube (where they can map, compare and can find the best audio/audio visual content of their own choice) and practised the same whenever required. So, social learning theory is not restricted to the limited sphere of physical spaces (synchronous learning) but it deems fit for learning through You Tube.

### 3. Discussion

In the research paper published in U.S.A. *Social, Psychological, Professional and Academic Features of the Use of Social Media in the Activities of Higher Education Institutions* articulates social media platforms play a role in shaping academic trajectories by facilitating interaction with the teaching staff of educational institutions and integration of social media in university activities is pertinent. The examination of the content on various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and others indicates that the content in selected educational institutions consists of educational and informational materials. A diverse thematic approach leads to the content creating a greater impact. This study documented that the content from New York University available on YouTube focusses on social and academic themes where a substantial portion of material comprised of interviews, discussions on student life, and speeches delivered by graduates from different batches The university's content, encompassing texts, graphics and videos, is designed to yield specific outcomes. The authors highlight that videos play a crucial role in enhancing students' professional attributes by providing them with the opportunity to acquire knowledge in a particular thematic area remotely.

The case study of the New York University for analysing their practical use of social media hints at thee causal connection between the content of the social media and the competence of the institution (Slutskyi, 2023). A research study titled *YouTube's influential factors for academic achievement: A two-stage approach* to examine the factors influencing the use of YouTube as a learning tool and how these factors impact academic performance concluded that in the contemporary era, YouTube has become a prevalent educational resource, with students being the primary user who utilize YouTube for diverse purposes, including learning (Gerundo et al., 2022; Roy, 202). Regenerative endodontic procedures represent a significant advancement in dental practice, and amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, YouTube audio-visual content has emerged as an informational resource for dental students, practitioners, and patients. The study carried out in 2022 seeks to assess the quality, content, and demographic aspects of YouTube videos related to regenerative endodontic procedures. They could be regarded as an additional source of information for dental students and practitioners (Kaval et al., 2023).

In a research study conducted in 2023 with the aim of investigating the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, regarding the adoption of augmented reality smart glasses in teaching. The study was constructed employing a questionnaire among the educationists to understand their attitude towards the practice of using these mobile smart glasses o medication, to which it was observed that they were optimistic for it (Kazakou, Koutroamanos, 2023). The digital pose a hurdle to traditional school settings as the central hub for learning and development. Informal learning environments, facilitated by avenues such as computer games, social media, and coding programs offer young individuals vibrant communities to cultivate the competencies and knowledge essential for twenty-first century (Erstad, Silseth, 2023). A scholar writing on technological acceptance maintains that technology gains acceptance when users embrace it.



The study highlights the machine learning algorithms generated and gives validation of previous studies, indicating that user acceptance plays a crucial role in the technological acceptance (Chung et al., 2023). The rise of digital storytelling and generative artificial intelligence platforms represent a significant transformation, providing individuals the ability to express themselves with assurance and share their narratives proficiently. The study proclaims the potential of generative AI platforms holds great promise in enhancing the narrative intelligence and writing self-assurance of undergraduates, fostering the design and development of their storytelling skills (Pellas, 2023).

The onset of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the learning experience of university students, particularly in developing nations such as Nigeria. As a result, numerous institutions have turned to social media as a means of facilitating learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. Therefore, the primary objective of the study is to evaluate the effects of social media learning environments on the university learning process. The study suggests the positive role of social media learning environment like YouTube, Facebook in skill enhancement course and urges the government to take concrete steps towards developing infrastructure for e-learning (Gambo, Musonda, 2022).

This study emphasizes the significance of media information literacy, emphasizing the crucial role played by social media in spreading information and promoting literacy among users. It serves as a noteworthy contribution to both researchers and policymakers, offering insights into how social media enhances awareness during pandemics. Utilizing quantitative research through surveys, the study investigates the connection between social media, information literacy, and the behavior of youth, specifically exploring the effects of information dissemination related to COVID-19. The conclusion drawn is that social media plays a substantial role in fostering literacy and influencing youth behavior, encouraging the adoption of preventive measures like wearing masks, using sanitizers, and maintaining social distance (Bajwa et al., 2022).

Yet another research study titled, *YouTube as a site for vocational learning: instructional video types for interactive service work in retail* appropriates the effectiveness of online instructional videos for learning skills required at workplace and vocational education. There has been a splurge in the number of businesses, educators, and learners who are utilizing public video-sharing platforms such as YouTube to educate and acquire knowledge about work practices, job roles, and skills. The researchers gathered and analysed videos instructing on service work that involves transactions on YouTube. The study asserts the adoption of digital technologies, including social media, publicly accessible online video-sharing platforms, mobile devices, and the growing availability of affordable video production tools, is poised to revolutionize the provision of vocational education and training. Education specifically has developed and employed training and tutorial videos for skills enhancement (Arkenback, 2020; Callan et al., 2020; Srinivasa, 2020).

A research study conducted in study in 2020 finds that apparent appropriateness is a suitable insight for YouTube as a perceived educational tool whereas the acceptance by the students who were part of it and also undergone the perceived insights, beliefs and intents which was drawn by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Further they argued that intention and anticipation as a hypothesis was significantly associated with this (Maziriri, et al., 2020). The findings also indicated that males tended to adopt devices at an early stage, whereas academics were early adopters of both commercial services and academic social networking sites.

The research publication titled *Technology and Social Media Usage in Higher Education: The Influence of Individual Innovativeness* indicated that males tended to adopt devices at an early stage, whereas academics were early adopters of both commercial services and academic social networking sites (Aldahdouh et al., 2020). There has been an exponential growth social media for educational purposes and utilizing a bibliometric method, the results indicate a consistent increase in scientific output and citations, along with the broadening of topical areas over the last decade. Among the 15 social media platforms analyzed Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube garnered the most attention (Barrot, 2020). A research titled *Video and language learning* expresses that audio-visual content and video represents a notably enriching form of second language input. It not only immerses learners in authentic language usage but also, through the integration of diverse input modes like imagery and audio, has the potential to engage multiple facets of second language acquisition, including comprehension and vocabulary development (Lin, 2014; Perez, Rodgers, 2019).

T. Sharma and S. Sharma (Sharma, 2021) in their study finds that You Tube plays an integral part of teaching and learning for elementary, high school, graduates, academician along with

educators. A researcher talks about importance of YouTube for social studies teaching learning instruction in elementary classrooms. Consideration assumed to the assessment of YouTube videos. Their article deliberates the possible encounters of using YouTube as an aiding tool for classroom and proposes recommendations for incapacitating those encounters. They discuss the importance of YouTube for social studies teaching learning instruction in elementary classrooms. Consideration assumed to the assessment of YouTube videos. Their article deliberates the possible encounters of using YouTube as an aiding tool for classroom and proposes recommendations for incapacitating those encounters (Joonas, 2011). During Covid-19, YouTube assessment was done in a research study to find that it has influenced and proved to be effective for the medical trainees/practitioners for otolaryngology. The trainees find YouTube educational content as a primary learning tool for their practice (Korkmaz, 2019). The study undergone to Technology Acceptance Model through the help of the questionnaire for doctoral students suggests that active collaborative learning and participation through social media enhance students' learning experiences, fostering group discussions. Consequently, the incorporation of these methods should be promoted in higher education institutions during the learning and teaching processes (Al-Rahmi et al., 2018).

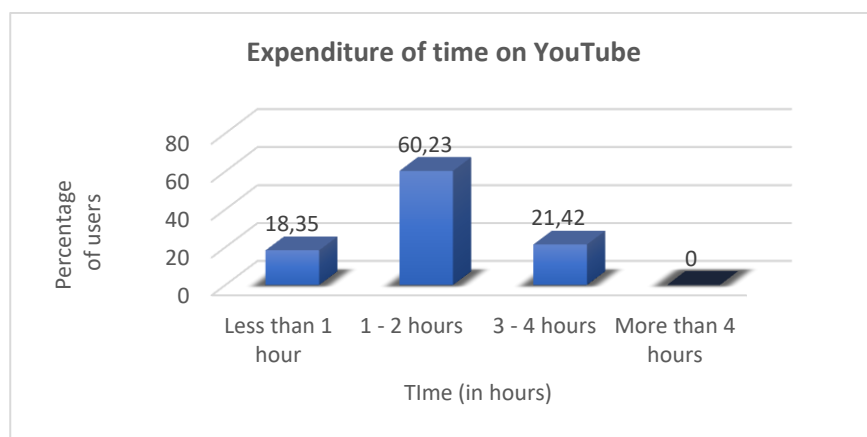
A study published as *The social mediated age of information: Twitter and Instagram as tools for information dissemination in higher education* carried out an experimental research involving 405 college students, which observed the impact of visually oriented messages on Instagram to recall digital information among American college students. It aimed to find the influence of communicator credibility on the manner in which college students engaged with digitally disseminated information. This researchers ascertained in the study that the highest enhancement in information retention occurred when visually based information was disseminated (Arceneaux, Dinu, 2018). Male Urethral Catheterization (UC) educational content (information/practice/approach/demonstration) through You Tube has been assessed by researchers in their study (Nason, 2015). Junior doctors find this selected content of Male (UC) relevant and helpful for their study (Iriarte-Solano et al., 2022). The video content shared on YouTube provide large pool of resources which enable discussion on topics of academic interest and with the help of tutorials, forums it facilitates the reception of knowledge. The audio-visual content of the platform nurtures creativity as it has at its disposal the tools of illustrations, graphics which assures impartment of the skills. YouTube could offer help in imparting knowledge by audio visual content on simple and short information which could be consumed multiple times (Sari et al. 2020).

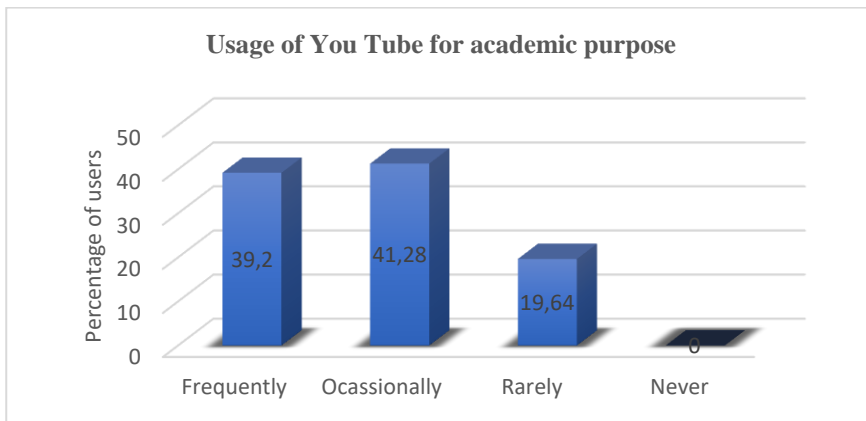
#### Theory

Persons who are observed are termed models. In our heterogeneous and diverse society like India, learners are encircled by various persuasive models, like parents, teachers, family, friends and most importantly the content along with the characters on media (social media, Television etc) McLeod, S. (2011).

#### 4. Results

A poll was conducted on social media Facebook which probed regarding the time spent by audiences on YouTube, and the poll collected the following data (Reach – 935, Engagement – 361):





**Fig. 4.** Average time spent on YouTube; use of YouTube for academic purpose

The results showed that 1-2 hours was the time for which most users were engaged on YouTube (60.23 %) for various purposes. Around 41.28 % respondents used YouTube once in a while (ocasionally) for academic purposes, but 39.2 % always used the platform for fulfilling their curiosity for learning. However, 19.64 % informed that they are only sometimes dependent on YouTube for learning. Also, it was found that there was no respondent who never used YouTube to learn anything.

The groups were informed about the topic and asked some questions and their opinion was sought on different issues while viewing content on YouTube. The participants conveyed that mostly they use the platform for purposes of entertainment, information gathering, and learning.

**Table 1.** Primary data collection from group discussion

	<i>Group Discussion 1</i>	<i>Group Discussion 2</i>	<i>Group Discussion 3</i>
<i>The average time spent daily on YouTube</i>	1 – 3 hours, less than 1 hour, less than 1 hour, 1 – 3 hours, 1 hour, less than 1 hour, 1 – 3 hours, less than 1 hour.	Less than 1 hour, less than 1 hour, 10-15 minutes, 2-3 hours, 15 – 30 minutes (Less than 1 hour), less than 1 hour, less than 1 hour, 1 – 2 hours.	Less than 1 hour (4), 3 – 4 hours, 1 – 2 hours, 1 – 2 hours, 1 – 2 hours
<i>Purpose of viewing content on YouTube</i>	Entertainment, News, Analysis of news, topics from the syllabus, preparing for current affairs, knowledge of the world, preparation of topics for interview, Information about varied subjects related and not related to our discipline, to be aware of the popular culture.	Watching adaptations, movies, plays, reviews of books or movies, learn digital marketing skills, review of new restaurants and food, skills (videos are available at beginners’ level to expert level), areas related to my discipline, doubt clearing on various issues, peer learning videos, travel vlogs, entertainment, news.	Entertainment, learning new software or watching tutorials, learning new technology, keeping abreast with new technology, news and current affairs, completing assignments, case study, revision of topics covered in class, learning from the experts, interviews of celebrities and industry experts.
<i>Reasons for learning on YouTube</i>	YouTube offers audio – visual content so it’s easier to learn and understand, information is accompanied by	Easily accessible as it can be viewed from mobile phone and tab, portable and flexible, the content can be watched within	Free content (only data pack required), learning extracurricular activities, a lot of content is available – one is free to

	<p>visuals, informative and entertaining at the same time, availability in regional languages, translation possible, more accessible. Portable and flexible (ability to learn freely irrespective of time and space), easy to access and easy to operate, tutorial channels are also very popular, learning extracurricular activities, like cooking, painting, home decor, music composition, art and craft, photo editing, possibility to learn new software.</p>	<p>the comfort of one's place by simply using headphones, learning extracurricular activities, language is not a barrier, catching up with the trends, international content, watching reviews of upcoming movies, interviews, Large and diverse content available across geographical boundaries, international content.</p>	<p>choose a video which they can understand, the video can be played again and again, the speed of the video can be altered as per one's convenience, YouTube recommends other similar videos which can be viewed, audio-visual platform, no language barrier, career counselling, inspirational videos, videos of online games, challenge videos, music videos, Youtube reels.</p>
<p><i>Negative experiences of learning on YouTube</i></p>	<p>Very short length videos which sometimes are incapable of explaining properly, internet is a new media and subjected to rampant changes – creator have to keep up with the current trends and SEO guidelines, repetitive content, content might go unnoticed as similar topics are available on all channels, no experimentation of content.</p>	<p>Endorsement and indirect advertising through videos, incorrect information, and promotional content, content is not appropriate or vague.</p>	<p>Quality of the audio and video, longer duration videos, offensive content, clickbait videos, advertisements.</p>
<p><i>Appropriate length for a YouTube instructive video</i></p>	<p>15 – 30 minutes (8).</p>	<p>30 minutes (3), 1 hour (1), less than 20 minutes (2), 15 – 30 minutes (2).</p>	<p>Less than 20 minutes (2), 9-10 minutes (2)), 7 minutes (1), less than 20 minutes (1), 1 hour (2).</p>

*Utility of YouTube as a learning tool in media and communication*

From the group discussion it was evident that YouTube is very popular in terms of providing assistance for learning and education and many turn to the platform as a tool for revisiting or explanation of complicated topics required for academic purpose. It does impart understanding of various issues, extracurricular activities, facilitates in making assignments, and benefits in keeping abreast with new trends and developments. Many students informed that they make ample use of the platform to learn innumerable media related software and train themselves taking its help as an additional knowledge source, as these videos can be viewed at their leisure and pace. Some students commented content could be repeatedly viewed as many times as desired and therefore it is a help in remedial learning. A student studying her master's degree in film suggested that the platform is quite prominent for accessing movies, plays and other audio-visual content. However, students with specialisation in Journalism consider it to be an illustrious source of news and current events which provide unbiased analysis and varied perspectives from across the globe, and it becomes pertinent for journalism enthusiasts to partake in the information exchange, either as a consumer or content creator. The universal recognition of mobile journalism creates opportunities

of 'citizen journalism' or 'grassroots journalism' where one could generate content and reach a large audience through the medium of YouTube and lead to entrepreneurship and further develop employment. Another student said, "We could post our documentaries, travelogues, short movies on our own channel on YouTube as we are novice and honing our skills, and it offers a brilliant prospect to showcase our work".

#### *Reasons for the popularity of YouTube as a learning tool*

The media learners pointed out the utility of the YouTube – easy and cheap accessibility, portability, case studies, audio-visual content which provides information and diversion, multilingual content, translation tool, large pool of resources, custom playback speed option, diverse content (global). "The platform ascertains great power of reaching a huge population irrespective of geographical boundaries. I can access study materials and new developments from different universities across the world. It gives me the ability to connect with like-minded people who have similar interests. I can read their work and share my work with them", said a student pursuing post-graduation in journalism. Another student, who is an undergraduate student of communication opined, "I am planning my career in digital marketing and I regularly engage in workshops and content of courses which are provided on YouTube. I have gathered a lot of knowledge from such videos where I can see and learn from the experts. It is interesting to brush up some skills from YouTube as there are numerous videos posted by diverse people, and you can keep switching from one video to another depending on your predilection". Yet another undergraduate student came up with the opinion that she particularly is fond of learning from YouTube for the simple reason that she can view the content as per her convenience and availability of time. "I can relax in the comfort of my home and plug in earphones on the mobile phone and keep watching something which I really want to learn at the moment".

#### *Causes of content being unappealing*

An undergraduate student of communication said, "The primary reason why I stop watching content is when it is endorsing something/someone and it is an indirect marketing tool". Another student stated, "The content is not appreciable if it promotes political affiliations or vested interests; if this happens, I switch to some other video or stop following a channel". "I aspire to become a famous journalist and it's my passion to report accurately, I discourage sharing of biased information and cannot stand this happening, I would immediately stop watching content which is not objective", a learner reiterated. Many said that too many undesired advertisements are an annoyance while watching content. Also, many said, "boring video is the chief reason for putting off a video, also, if the style of presentation is not understandable and clear; the tone of voice; the knowledge of the instructor; audio and visual quality all are variables which decide how interesting an audio-visual content could become". One group discussed that if any part of the content carries offensive statements, it can damage the reputation of a content creator. Another group accepted that if the video is very short and not capable of explaining information serves no purpose. "Creators on YouTube should update their SEO skills so that the video meets the appropriate audience, also they need to experiment with their content. YouTube search be more accurate, as not always you stumble upon the video which I might require", discussed some students.

## **5. Conclusion**

Micro-learning emerges as the foremost reason for the popularity of YouTube content for learning, one has the ability to break down the process of understanding a complex topic. The audio-visual nature of the platform is compelling people to come back to visit the content, which is again in lieu of the social learning theory which claims that people can learn by imitating and observing other members of the society regularly. Hence, the social learning theory by Albert Bandura is applicable to make YouTube a worthy learning tool, because it employs auditory and visual facilitation of knowledge and information. Learning by seeing/online visiting the information, use of photographs/info graphics, makes the reception of knowledge easy. YouTube has brought enormous impact on the concept of learning and served a huge pool of resources being generated and stored online. The content is globally available and easily accessible through the internet which promotes democracy in terms of providing equal access to information. The acquaintance with search engine optimisation skills will lead to reach a wider appropriate audience. The platform has the potential and efficiency to elevate a country which has a huge manpower having the will to learn, where many do not get the right environment and opportunity to ameliorate their skills.

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## The Synergy of Media and Language Literacy to Foster Kazakh Students' Critical Thinking and Communication

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### Abstract

This paper examines the impact of incorporating media literacy practices into language instruction. The study explores a practical pedagogical approach to increase language learners' awareness of media content and ability to recognise, resist, and respond to fake news and disinformation and guide them to become critical thinkers and effective communicators in a media-saturated world. The paper presents the integrated media literacy and language learning model as a teaching framework that guides the designing and implementing effective teaching strategies for contextual learning of the real world. During the research, we discovered that media literacy and language learning synergy can help students engage with various media forms and develop strong communication skills. The study results show that the suggested approach creates an educational environment that encourages the application of concepts to address real-world issues by analysing information, comprehending new ideas, solving problems, and making decisions. Students show significant improvement in reading and interpreting specific texts, viewing media critically, understanding and examining sources of information, and communicating their opinions and ideas using various multimedia tools. The study concludes with practical recommendations for educators implementing media literacy instruction to enhance students' critical communication skills.

**Keywords:** language learning, media literacy, awareness of media content, critical thinking and communication, pedagogical framework.

### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of information technologies makes the task of education to introduce pedagogical tools for transferring and acquiring new knowledge even more relevant. Today's interconnected and media-driven world urges higher education to train specialists who can interpret various messages critically, some conflicting ones, to overcome daily challenges (Hobbs, 2018). Modern citizens should possess critical listening, creative cooperation, collaborative problem-solving, and responsible decision-making skills to meet the challenges of the media-saturated world (Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020; Goodman, 2003). Thinking critically about mass communication is crucial for survival in a society driven by technology and consumerism (Worsnop, 2004). The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has recognised Media Literacy (ML) as a crucial skill for success in modern life and identified the need to incorporate ML into educational programs (Partnership..., 2004). Possessing ML skills enables media consumers to assess the

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content, examine its form, investigate its use and effect, and create alternative content (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2019).

In language learning, media significantly affect individuals' thoughts and behaviour (McLuhan, 1967), and developing ML skills is essential for analysing, interpreting, and evaluating media text, which can build language learners' communication skills (Tryphonopoulos, 2023). It also increases the motivation of students to acquire content-based knowledge and involves them in the cognitive process when discussing various topics using various experiential learning methods (McNeal, 2015). Such an approach displays the fundamental concept behind the synergy of media and language literacy (MLL), which refers to accessing and utilising media for critical thinking and communication in conventional media and new digital platforms to develop specific media-related knowledge and skills.

Although ML has been a component of education in most developed countries for decades, it is in its infancy in Kazakhstan (Akhmetova, 2016; Akhmetova et al., 2023; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2019). Only a few Kazakh educational institutions have incorporated ML skills into their programs. There are several reasons why transforming education has been challenging, including insufficient teacher training, inadequate technical support, excessive emphasis on drill and practice programs, reluctance to depart from traditional teaching methods, and limited time (Bates, 2019; Erdem, Erişti 2018; Reyna et al., 2018). One of the main challenges in the case of the Kazakh education system is that the Kazakh government defines ML alongside digital one quite narrowly as the technical skills associated with using the Internet to search for data, access social services, produce various media products (i.e., videos, blogs, websites), using media products as teaching materials (i.e., for reading, listening) (State..., 2017). However, as it turned out during our research, educators acknowledge the importance of maintaining ML in language education to increase youth awareness of media content and their ability to recognise, resist, and respond to fake news and disinformation. Teaching integrated with ML language requires a different skill set than simply becoming literate (Bates, 2019). Language educators face the challenge of not only understanding ML themselves but also of being able to develop pedagogical strategies to teach about the language while using media to communicate with and engage their students. This shift to mastering ML as central to language learning and teaching (LLT) requires extensive pre-service and professional development for teachers, resources and curricula, technology support, and new pedagogical approaches. Thus, this study examines the teaching modes that enhance Kazakh students' critical communication skills by integrating ML into English classrooms to address the abovementioned reasons. The study aims to explore some key questions and challenges for incorporating ML in LLT:

1. What pedagogical approaches take language learners through media content and structure to become critical thinkers and effective communicators in a media-saturated world?
2. Are students satisfied with media literacy and language learning approaches to foster critical thinking and communication?

As the use of ML in the Kazakh education system is still in its early stages, pedagogical solutions are needed to equip teachers with the relevant teaching tools to address this learning gap. The increasing role of media in consuming and producing new knowledge urges introducing media literacy education (MLE) in schools and designing a sufficiently 'critical' pedagogy to implement it. Thus, developing students' critical communication skills through synergising LLT and ML is justified.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### *Participants*

The study involved undergraduate students of second-year Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages (hereafter Ablai Khan University) and al-Farabi Kazakh National University (hereafter al-Farabi University). All participants (n=146) are aged between nineteen and twenty. The focus was on this particular group because it is a critical age in the education system, where self-esteem, self-expression, and self-image are gradually reinforced. Ablai Khan University groups were selected as control groups (CG) (n=70), while al-Farabi University groups were selected as treatment groups (TG) (n=76). The decision to choose al-Farabi University groups as the TG was based on the fact that these students were less active in sessions during learning before the treatment. The aim was to improve their learning outcomes experimentally using ML in language learning based on the MLL. The CG was provided with conventional learning.

### *Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis*

This research examines the effectiveness of incorporating ML into LLT during CGs' and TGs' English sessions for specific purposes. The study used various methods such as testing, interviews, and student discussions to verify the study statements' validity. During the study, students were given a non-fiction print, audio, video, or visual media message followed by open and checklist questions to measure their ability to analyse messages. At the beginning and end of the treatment sessions, pre-tests and post-tests were conducted to determine the student's level of English proficiency. The language proficiency test consisted of Writing (reading, listening and article critique) and Speaking parts. Articles came from news networking platforms such as BBC Global News ([bbcglobalnews.com](https://www.bbc.com/news)), The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com>), and Euronews ([euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com)), among others. The student's analysis of the text plot, key message, or character was followed by a contextual discussion and critical view during the Speaking part. The researchers enlisted three PhD language instructors from the same department who have been teaching English for more than ten years as test experts to ensure that the tests were of similar difficulty in scope and format.

## **3. Discussion**

### *Literature Review*

McLuhan (1967) suggested that one must know how media functions as an environment to comprehend social and cultural transformations. McLuhan believed that the medium through which information is transmitted profoundly influences how people perceive and understand the world, claiming that media technologies shape human consciousness, social interactions, and cultural dynamics. Each medium has inherent characteristics affect how information is received and interpreted, often overshadowing the content (Jenkins, 2006). Thus, developing an individual's literacy to understand the effects of media rather than focusing solely on its content is essential.

Initially, literacy was used to represent the ability to read and write, but its meaning was gradually extended. With the development of communication information technologies, 'literacy' has expanded from '*mastery of capabilities in reading and writing print texts*' to '*engagement with a range of semiotic forms of visual, aural, and digital multi-modal texts*' (Kress, 2003; Jenkins, 2006). UNESCO introduced the following definition: "*Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society*" (UNESCO, 2013: 23).

Media literacy has been defined variously at different times. ML is mainly about understanding media effects, content, media industries, the real world, and oneself. With this knowledge, individuals can become more aware during information-processing tasks, make better decisions when seeking and working with information, and construct meaning from it (Thoman, 1999: 51). ML is the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to use and interpret media content (Buckingham, 2003). ML involves a combination of aural, visual, and digital skills. These skills include comprehending the influence of images and sounds, utilising that influence, manipulating digital media, widely distributing it, and quickly modifying it to adapt to new forms (New Media Consortium, 2005). ML seeks to offer media consumers the ability to comprehend the role of media in society and develop practical skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for all citizens (Hobbs, McGee, 2014). ML is more of a process that includes asking essential questions, reflecting on how media affects society and civic engagement, and having the skills to access, analyse, and even create media (Kellner, Share, 2019). The authors argue that individuals can only participate adequately in public life with mindful and critical media consumption (Kellner, Share, 2019: 421). As part of our study, we adhere to the definition of ML proposed by A. Fedorov: "*the ability to perceive, interpret, analyse and evaluate media texts to develop one's creative and communicative skills, critical thinking with the help of and on the material of various forms of media*" (Fedorov, 2018: 8).

Critical scholars believe education is the key to addressing the disparity in media use. McLuhan emphasised the need to master and teach "mosaic patterns" of meaning or mass media's linguistic and perceptual biases (cited in: Tryphonopoulos, 2023: 10). The convergence between media and education has significantly changed what and how we learn in a multi-tasking and vibrant world (Kellner, Share 2019). According to Jenkins (Jenkins, 2016), school programs must

prioritise the development of ML in the younger generation to adapt them to the changing environment. The author claims that the focus of literacy has shifted from individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies require social skills built through collaboration and networking, complementing traditional literacy, research, technical, and critical analysis skills taught in classrooms (Potter, 2013). MLE enables individuals to scrutinise and evaluate media content, investigate effects, and create alternative media messages in various formats (Hobbs, McGee, 2014). It also promotes critical thinking skills necessary to understand and communicate complex issues facing modern society (Jolls, Johnsen, 2018). MLE supports peer learning, student engagement, and collaborative and contextualised learning (Kelly, 2018). MLE involves acquiring the skills and knowledge to comprehend, analyse, and create different types of texts and media while developing the intellectual tools and abilities to participate in society (Fedorov, 2018). The researcher emphasised connecting culture, society, media literacy, and education. They suggested that classrooms adopt a multi-literacy approach to education, which does not favour literacy over others (Fedorov, 2018: 17). As a cross-curricular approach, ML can be utilised at any grade level and in any subject area, including social sciences, language, arts, history, health education, communication, and other sciences, enhancing overall teaching and learning (Potter, 2022).

McLuhan (McLuhan, 1969: 47) claimed that traditional reading and writing literacy is no longer sufficient: “Radio and TV are not audio-visual aids to enhance or to popularise previous forms of experience. They are new languages. We must first master and then teach these new languages”. This notion allows us to enlarge what is conventionally considered and taught as “media literacy” to “integrated media and language literacy.” LLT and MLE are inseparable and stimulated parts of all subject curricula, and adjusting ML in the language curriculum reinforces the 21st-century learning skills required for lifelong learning in a constantly changing world. The potential of ML in language education has been recognised to benefit metalinguistic analysis as an authentic classroom activity, facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies (Kung, 2016). It encourages students to question, analyse, and evaluate the messages conveyed through different media forms, cultivating their comprehension, vocabulary building, and critical thinking skills (Hattani, 2016). Incorporating ML into LLT provides extra language input and enhances learners' comprehension. Students master linguistic knowledge and abilities independently by utilising diverse media forms incorporating language, sound, imagery, and multimedia technologies (Erdem, Erişti, 2018). Expanding the concept of ‘text’ from interpreting print texts to creating and communicating one’s ideas in various message forms helps students develop the necessary skills to succeed in the modern world (Ugalingan et al., 2022). So, integrating ML into FL classrooms can enhance students’ critical thinking, information evaluation, intercultural competence, and digital citizenship.

#### *The Synergy of Media and Language Literacy*

Enhancing Kazakh students’ critical awareness alongside LLT is essential, as current National Education Standards are based on different learning theories and goals without considering sociocultural content (Akhmetova, 2016; Akhmetova et al., 2023; Rydchenko et al., 2023; Yelubayeva et al., 2023). Although MLE has become crucial in Kazakhstan and needs to be incorporated into the education system, it has gained more momentum in journalism, mass media, and communication study programs, where students are taught to create high-quality media content (Akhmetova et al., 2023; Kuanysheva et al., 2019). Regarding the LTL, Kazakh teachers often need modern textbooks and digital educational resources. However, the reality is that the teaching-learning materials do not focus on enhancing students' ability to interpret and produce media content critically, although media platforms are used for educational purposes. Kazakh instructors cannot teach language through media literacy without new or unique materials. They have already employed media resources such as textbooks, newspapers, videos, print texts from the Internet, TV, movies, ads, radio broadcasts, social media, and more. However, not everyone knows some functions of media content, like transmitting fake news and disinformation. Thus, what is crucial for Kazakh language instructors is to have a comprehensive understanding of what they are teaching with media materials and adopt an approach that maximises the potential of these materials as teaching tools for literacy.

Several attempts have been made to incorporate ML into education standards, such as those proposed by (Cheung, Chau, 2017; Mihailidis, 2018; Reyna et al., 2018; Thoman, Jolls, 2004). Thoman and Jolls (Thoman, Jolls, 2004) developed a framework that helps students increase their knowledge of current media content, analyse information, and communicate effectively in a diverse

global media culture. It is designed to develop media literacy education in both school and non-school settings and enables learners to participate in media creation and express themselves through various media resources. Mihailidis (Mihailidis, 2018) proposed the 5 A's framework to help young learners become responsible global citizens. The framework includes access to media, media power awareness, media coverage assessment, appreciation for the media's role in creating civil societies, and action to encourage better communication. Its purpose is to foster diversity and encourage individuals to take responsibility and contribute to improving our planet.

These frameworks comprehensively organised and structured classroom activities for implementing media learning in education. However, research shows that incorporating well-organized teaching methods with media materials is more effective for LLT than solely focusing on teaching about media manipulation. In addition, having a more tangible and meaningful approach to help students master their metacognitive skills, such as 'reading,' 'interpreting,' and 'writing' in audio/visual multi-media language, is crucial nowadays (Zou, Ou, 2020). Language instructors need a new teaching approach that organises educational experiences to raise students' awareness about the power of language in influencing and connecting people by reflecting on the realities of media content and exploring how media images and sounds are formed, function, and relate to each other across communication in different contexts (Chen, 2021; Díaz-Martín, 2023; Richards, Rodgers, 2001). By viewing the media as a tool for developing communication, the new approach should focus on mastering skills to delineate 'reliable' from 'unreliable' content (Chen, 2021), maintain identities, construct discourse and community (Reyna et al., 2018), warn students against the harmful effects of media (Cheung Chau, 2017), and explore the fluid nature of meaning in media texts (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020). It should also allow language instructors to create a learning environment where students can envision real-life contexts and use authentic resources to complete their assigned tasks (Díaz-Martín, 2023).

Based on our findings, we propose utilising the MLL model as a teaching approach to incorporate ML into LLT classrooms (Table 1). This approach emphasises contextual teaching and learning and developing necessary skills for the 21st Century. It guides the design and implementation of effective teaching strategies to train students to become critical thinkers and effective communicators. Along with developing students' linguistic skills (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, syntax) and language (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) skills, it drills reflecting on media texts, enhancing their critical thinking skills and ability to deliberate on the reasons and truths behind daily life events. The Model prioritises the need to activate and extend students' prior knowledge from their experience with mass media to acquire media literacy competencies. While students can complete the activities in any order, they tend to develop critical thinking skills more effectively when following the sequence presented below: *Access* valuable information and comprehend its meaning effectively; *Detect* how a message is constructed to carry a specific idea for a target audience; *Analyze* the credibility of information from various sources; *Adjust* messages to different situations and audiences; *Create* a new message with compassion and mutual respect; *Communicate* accurately, clearly, and creatively in various contexts using different forms of media.

**Table 1.** Media Literacy & Language Learning Model

<i>Learning Skills</i>					
Linguistic Skills		Language Skills		Critical Communication	
<i>Competencies</i>					
Accessing	Detecting	Analysing	Adjusting	Creating	Communicating
<i>Teaching Methods</i>					
Case-based Learning	Inquiry-Based Learning	Problem-Based	Project-Based Learning	Collaborative Learning	
<i>Teaching Instructions</i>					
Content-based		Technology-based		Competency-Based	
<i>Learning Resources</i>					
Audio & visual materials		Print materials		Internet resources	
<i>Learning outcomes</i>					
1) evaluating the reliability of information obtained from various sources,					

- 2) conveying a message through various forms of media with accuracy, clarity, and creativity,
- 3) encouraging students to compare different perspectives in media texts,
- 4) engaging students in research and critical thinking,
- 5) fostering students' collaborative autonomous learning abilities,
- 6) mastering students' proficiency in communicating and disseminating their thoughts and ideas,
- 7) acknowledging the values and perspectives embedded in the plot and
- 8) encouraging students' interest in various global and local issues.

*Learning Objective:*

- a) Enhancing the acquisition of information skills,
- b) Facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies,
- c) Improving understanding and communication of complex issues facing modern society,
- d) Minimizing the gap between the classroom and real life.

Prior research on ML has demonstrated that media-oriented skills and abilities can be learned effectively through discovery processes pursuing meaningful global goals instead of isolated ones. The teaching instructions (TI) for LLT that align with contemporary theories, such as case-based, inquiry-based, problem-based, project-based, and collaborative learning, prioritise student involvement, critical thinking, and self-expression. These methods focus on analytical learning and problem-solving, encouraging learners to actively engage in learning and create personal connections to solidify their knowledge (Richards, Rodgers, 2001). They promote collaboration and boost participation by putting learners at the centre, empowering them to take responsibility for their learning and become more autonomous. The collaborative functions engage learners in deep thinking or acquiring specific skills or prompt them to work together toward a standard end media product (Ahmad et al., 2023: 271). These are practical methods for designing classroom activities applicable to all levels of language proficiency, enabling students to apply their knowledge to life scenarios inside and outside the classroom. Students produce their best work when they engage in personally significant activities (Kelly, 2018: 411).

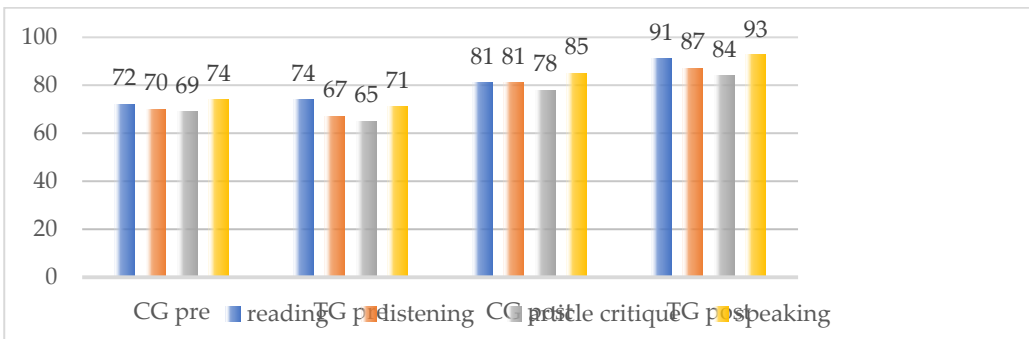
It is a content-based, technology-based, and competency-based TI, wherein activities focus on students using the media materials and resources to create real, meaningful communication in language learning (Yelubayeva, Mustafina, 2020). All these TIs have already advocated their value at all levels of education. *Content-based TIs* integrate the presentation of subject matter (global warming, nanotechnologies) in teaching a second language, while *Competence-based TIs* prioritise a student's ability to demonstrate desired learning outcomes as the central aspect of the learning process. *Technology-based TIs* encourage active learning strategies focusing on problem-solving, project-based, or inquiry-based approaches. In an integrated way, content, technology, and competency-based language TIs offer dynamic and evolving input for meaningful interaction, embedding learning within real-world contexts and exposing students to authentic materials. With integrated TIs, students can actively participate in classroom settings, take charge of their learning process, and be trained to think creatively and find solutions to complex issues that may arise in the future (Appendix A).

The MLL Model application is expected to promote learning techniques, consider international social contexts, offer new education landscapes and insights, and provide relevant use of information. It does not replace traditional learning methods but complements them and is a valuable part of modern teaching. Additionally, this approach is adaptable to various teaching methods. The synergy of LT and ML raises students' awareness of their choices in their life and career and how they fit into a greater social context because the suggested framework is aimed at *enhancing the acquisition of information skills, facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies, improving understanding and communication of complex issues facing modern society, minimising the gap between the classroom and real life.*

Hence, we can presume that integrated MLL classrooms (1) are good practices for students to expose actual language, extract accurate information from an authentic text, and react to trends and challenges the same way L1 speakers do, and (2) can manage the student' development to become a critical thinker and effective communicator.

### 3. Results

The first step in performing a one-way MANOVA is to quantitatively compare the language proficiency of CG and TG students across four components: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. MANOVA results show that the two groups were homogeneous – without significant multivariate and univariate differences in English language proficiency level before receiving treatment sessions (Figure 1). Figure 1 demonstrates the results of the pre-test and post-test. At the beginning of the experiment, the TG showed a comparatively poor language proficiency level (overall 69 %) compared to the CG results (71.25). By the end of the experiment, the TG demonstrated significant improvements in speaking (+21), reading (+16), listening (+20), and writing (+12) sections due to careful adjustment of students' assignments. The TG's English proficiency level was improved. Both groups showed progress in their language skills, but the treatment group (TG) showed a significant improvement up to 88.75 % (+19.75) in their overall performance. The CG also improved their academic performance, but it was half as much (+10) for 81.25 %. The CG writing constructs in this analysis were still the weakest, but all productive and receptive skills improved (Figure 1). The results indicated that students preferred communicating with others and were actively engaged in in-class activities. The MLLL collaboration improved TG's critical thinking and creative written and spoken communication.



**Fig. 1.** Pre- and post-experiment English Proficiency Test Results in CG and TG

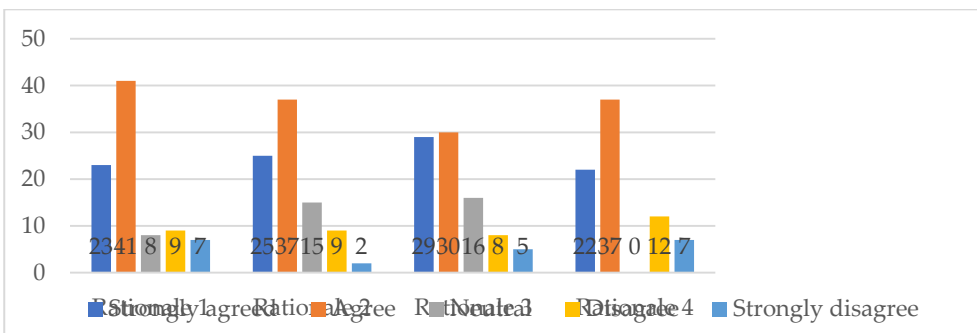
Following the language proficiency test, the students were given a questionnaire with multiple choice answers (Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree) to determine their attitudes towards implementing ML in the English language classroom. The questionnaire results are given in Figure 2. The questionnaire contained four rationales (R):

R 1: ML increases students' interest in learning English;

R 2: ML practice involves mastering four language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking);

R 3: Media products make English content more meaningful and flexible;

R 4: Media products master critical awareness.



**Fig. 2.** Rationales for Introducing ML in EL Classrooms

Out of the 146 respondents, eighty-eight voluntarily participated in a follow-up interview to discuss their responses to the questionnaire. About 73 % of the respondents believed incorporating ML education into English instruction boosts motivation for studying English. Students tend to be

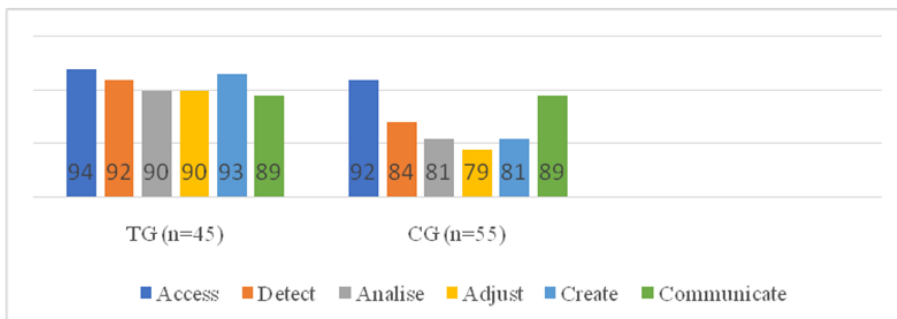
more motivated to develop language proficiency when they use their media experiences in an educational environment (Buckingham, 2015). Additionally, 71 % of the respondents believed that MD is closely related to teaching the four language skills. The interviewees stated that ML is easy to implement in English lessons since they listen to music, watch videos, read articles, write messages/essays/emails, and discuss various topics. They also claimed that the meaningful and flexible content of ML makes it a valuable addition to English classrooms.

Furthermore, 67 % of the respondents believed that the English teaching content is adaptable to students' abilities and interests. They agreed that practising ML enhances their broad knowledge and analytical skills, effectively allowing them to analyse and synthesise media messages. Moreover, actively using methods to analyse and structure information independently, check facts, and reach valid conclusions promotes cognitive activity and critical thinking among students. The respondents' positive attitudes towards the survey demonstrate their eagerness and preparedness to participate in the experiment. They believe the investigation can significantly improve the quality of language learning and teaching and their academic achievements.

Figure 3 presents the final results of assessing critical communication skills in TG and CG, which took place three weeks later after treatment sessions. The diagram shows the levels students achieve on their exams in the take-home assignment format. The take-home exam assignment asks students to work on their exam text in three stages individually. First, they chose an article from open internet sources on the suggested topics and critiqued it. Next, they post their critique on the article's web page. Then, they share the link on the social account for the feedback to analyse. They need to summarise the stages of the exam, but the main focus should be analysing the input. This assignment tests students' ability to perform media and language literacy with full awareness accurately and respond to their followers' feedback. The assessment criteria used to evaluate the student's criticism and creativity performance in communication are as follows:

- *accessing* various media formats and technologies to facilitate information and create, share, and communicate messages;
- *detecting* how messages are constructed to carry a specific message for a particular audience;
- *analysing* the way messages are constructed to build meaning for the target audience;
- adjusting messages to different situations and audiences;
- *creating* contextual information and critical perspectives extracted from a text to demonstrate critical judgment and interpretation skills;
- *communicating* with greater mutual understanding, recognising diversity in multicultural and multilingual societies, and respecting such diversities.

Notably, 37 % of the TG students in the experiment performed exceptionally well academically and academically. Of these, 47 % had already achieved the same level before the review, while 16 % of students still needed to achieve good results (Figure 3). It may be due to low enthusiasm for learning, lack of motivation, interest in education, weak willingness to learn, and poor learning mentality. All TG participants' communication skills improved significantly, with an overall score of 91, considering they were the least anxious EFL learners.



**Fig. 3.** Post-experiment communication skills result in TG & CG

The participants generally had a positive view of the MLLL classes. The CML was an efficient tool for testing students' media literacy communication skills. Most participants (85 %) felt the MLLL model effectively incorporated language and media literacy, while 79 % found the task-based



assignments feasible. Only 21 % found the tasks to be infeasible. [Figure 4](#) displays the results of the student's perception of the MLLL model.

Research indicates that the treatment has significantly impacted students' critical thinking abilities and media literacy. All 88 students who were enrolled in the treatment completed the surveys. According to the surveys, most participants showed dramatic progress in their knowledge of various media formats, the specificity of the English-speaking environment, and deep insight into the discussed issues and problems. They also demonstrated an increased ability to make inferences, higher critical judgment and interpretation skills as media viewers, and active participation in debates compared to the initial surveys. However, the remaining 14 students performed differently, which could be partially explained by poor attendance or failure to complete home assignments aimed at viewing mass media outside the class.

All students showed more flexibility in their thinking after completing the treatment. Interviews with students and teachers revealed that they appreciated the new teaching approach, finding it exciting and enjoyable. However, students found the home assignment policy requiring excessive media viewing a drawback. Similarly, most course instructors admitted that preparing for the course was time-consuming.

The study used the following criteria to assess the level of media literacy of students: the ability to gather information from different media formats, accurately identify critical points of a question, comprehend the depth and significance of a problem, draw thorough and consistent conclusions, exhibit improved proficiency in foreign languages, and demonstrate high-level critical judgment and interpretation skills. Integrating ML into language classrooms has numerous benefits: (1) it enhances students' comprehension skills, analytical abilities, independent thinking, production skills, worldview, and use of their interests; (2) it helps them understand the message behind every story they read or watch and evaluate whether it is positive or negative; (3) it develops their analytical skills, enabling them to distinguish between real and fake news and form their own opinions; (4) it teaches to create media responsibly, such as writing blog articles, making videos, or composing music, makes producing media content more accessible; (5) it helps students see how bias in the news can impact how a story is understood, and learn to understand the author's perspective and how it can affect their views.

## 5. Conclusion

After discussing the feasibility of the MLLL framework, we identified the reasons for the failure of the treatment tasks. We found that poor communication was the primary factor. Some students needed to establish positive communication channels, and their confidence improved as they got to know their peers. Teachers decided to implement a task management system to facilitate smooth group communication. Second, some students had low English proficiency levels despite the group's overall pre-intermediate proficiency. Therefore, classroom activities need to be adjusted to meet individual needs. Third, we discovered that more than assigning roles alone was required. Teachers should regularly monitor progress and appoint team members responsible for their actions. When team members feel accountable, they perform better and achieve better results.

Students also hesitate to apply critical communication skills due to a fear of negative judgment or opinions. Rather than offering quick tips, this fear can be overcome through consistent practice in the classroom. Tasks based on the MLLL framework encourage students to engage in discussion and critical thinking, promoting social awareness and engagement while enhancing their communication skills.

The study findings have shown that it is essential to customise task instructions to meet students' individual needs, create a learning environment for effective group communication, promote media education in Kazakhstan, and explore the role of new technologies in language and media literacy development. Here are some tips to help educators seamlessly incorporate media literacy into their teaching approach:

1. Critically evaluate media content to question and assess the reliability and credibility of information sources.
2. Create short explanations or video clips instructing students to break down complex information into digestible parts to enhance their understanding and retention.
3. Provide chronological historical events with timelines to visually represent events, helping students better comprehend the historical context.

4. Adapt short stories into movies to encourage students' creativity and deepen their understanding of narrative elements like plot, character, and setting.

5. Identify fake news on your own before teaching students how to do so.

6. Use online tools, such as fact-checking websites and plugins, to teach students how to critically evaluate information and distinguish between credible sources and fake news.

7. Integrate digital storytelling into lessons to develop students' critical thinking skills, challenging them to think deeply about their experiences, beliefs, values, and opinions.

These efforts will enable students to go beyond consuming media – producing, sharing, and communicating their content, thus overcoming various challenges. Therefore, by integrating media literacy into FL classrooms, educators can empower students to engage critically with various media forms, develop discerning communication skills, and become responsible and informed digital citizens. Following the suggestions presented in this article, language instructors can effectively prepare their students to navigate the media-saturated world and communicate successfully across diverse cultures in the digital era.

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## Appendix

### Classroom Activities to Practice Mastering ML in LLT

Activities	Objective	Instructions (* St = Student)
Media Source Evaluation	Develop St’s critical thinking skills and the ability to evaluate the credibility of media sources.	Provide St with a mix of online articles, ranging from reputable news sources to less credible platforms. Have them analyse and compare the reliability of the sources by considering factors such as authorship, publication date, and supporting evidence; focus on the language used, the tone, and the overall message; discuss how different media outlets may present the same information differently.
Media Genre Exploration	Familiarise St with different media genres and writing styles.	Provide examples of news articles, opinion pieces, and editorials. Have them discuss the unique features of each genre, including language conventions and tone; write their short pieces in various genres to apply their understanding.
Media Bias Analysis	Increase St’s awareness of bias in media and develop skills to identify different perspectives.	Select news articles from different sources that cover the same event. Ask St to analyse the language used, tone, and framing to identify potential biases; discuss how the same information can be presented differently based on the source's perspective.
Fact-Checking Challenge	Enhance St’s fact-checking and promote critical research skills	Provide St with some statements or news headlines, some accurate and some false. Ask them to research and verify the information independently using reliable sources. Guide the fact-checking and identifying signs of misinformation, discussing their findings to reinforce the importance of fact-checking.

Adaptation Projects	Encourage St's creativity and practice the use of various media formats.	Assign St to choose a news article and adapt it into different formats, such as podcasts, infographics, or videos. This exercise reinforces comprehension and encourages creativity and understanding of various formats.
Digital Storytelling	Enhance digital literacy and communication skills through multimedia storytelling.	Assign students to create a digital story using a combination of text, images, and audio. This exercise encourages creativity, effective communication in different formats, and an understanding of the unique aspects of digital media.
Interview Analysis Exercise	Improve listening skills and analyse communication in interviews	Provide students with video or audio interviews and ask them to analyse the language used by interviewees and interviewers, focusing on clarity, tone, and effective communication. Have students identify key messages and potential biases and discuss how interviewees and interviewers convey information and the impact of their choices.
Advertisement Analysis Project	Develop awareness of persuasive techniques in media and improve visual literacy.	Assign students to analyse a series of advertisements from various sources, considering language, visuals, and target audience. Have them present their findings, discussing how advertisers use language and imagery to convey messages and influence consumer behaviour. Discuss the persuasive techniques used in language and visuals. Encourage students to deconstruct the message and consider the intended audience and impact.

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## Reducing the Managers' Anxiety Related to the Lack of Media Literacy by Visualization Methods

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### Abstract

The visualization method applies to many scientific fields, allowing you to present information, data, objects and situations as a visual image to incorporate the information as soon as possible. The method of visualization is by and large effective in working with originally "non-visual" information. It is also valuable while representing mental processes, for example feeling and emotions, as well as social and psychological phenomena (e.g. relationships, data about other people) which are sometimes difficult to express verbally. Visualization is always based on mental activity and developed cognitive interest. Visualization in the program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers, as a psychotechnical technique, combines relaxation, concentration and the construction of an entire imaginative space – a metaverse of images.

The article contains the results of a study aimed at the possibility of using a program for psychocorrection of anxiety disorders for managers under 30 years of age based on visualization. The program was tested on managers under the age of 30, who exhibited high-level personal and situational irritability, anxiety, depression, asthenia, neuroticism, and aggressiveness. All personal parameters decreased significantly after participating in the program. The study confirmed the assumption that there are differences between the manifestation of anxiety of managers younger than 30 years after a correction program based on visualization.

**Keywords:** media literacy, information, images, anxiety, leader, effective leadership, visualization, image, cognitive schema.

### 1. Introduction

The emergence of the Internet as a method of mass communication, the rapid development of information and digital technologies, the widespread use of computers, smartphones and other digital devices has led to the formation of the phenomenon of digital society and digital culture. Currently, digital devices are used not only in the field of information and communication technologies, education and business, they have penetrated into all spheres of human activity. In order to exist and develop in a digital society, a person needs digital literacy skills that will help them perceive and critically evaluate large amounts of information and work with digital devices (Gálik, Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2022; Gálik, Oprala, 2021; Hübner et al., 2023). Digital technologies allow you to get quick access to information, personalize information content, visualize objects and create an interactive environment. In the modern world, young people already use digital technologies from an early age to solve various tasks, but they do not always have a high level of

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digital literacy. The lack of digital competencies does not allow you to enjoy all the benefits of digitalization. The use of digital technologies helps those who have the skills to use them, and otherwise it can lead to negative consequences. Constant human interaction with digital devices, the need to always be accessible can lead to the accumulation of stress, therefore, as part of the development of digital literacy, it is important to develop the ability to critically perceive information and work safely online. The formation of digital literacy skills becomes part of the psychological competence of specialists and helps them to live comfortably in a digital environment (Balina, 2022; Egorova, 2023). The modern world dictates the conditions for the perception and processing of information that has increased many times, which is necessary for the full functioning and decision-making of people, especially those who hold senior positions in organizations. Memorizing, structuring information, processing it and "fitting into the inner picture of the world" is difficult. Among the key functions, qualitative understanding and analysis of information are possible when using visualization – processing data into adequate, understandable, meaningful visual cognitive concepts (Stoiber et al., 2022). The lack of skills in working with digital technologies leads to the inability to master new professions and the dissatisfaction of workers who are forced to switch to less qualified jobs. The use of visualization technologies for psychocorrection helps to understand the benefits and safety of digital technologies, contributes to the development of digital literacy.

Visual cognitive concepts are a variant of system images that form the basis of the so-called "fast", automatic thinking, which is the basis of intuition, rapid decision-making, accurate but uncritical information processing. Verbal components capture individual concepts and elements of information, private data, and visual components have a high generalization character.

The extrapolation of mental representations from the inner plane of consciousness to the outside plane during cognitive activity is how the theory of schemes and the theory of frames explain vision. Associative and projective modes of information processing and perception are most frequently linked to the format of mental images. The original information is contained in a generalized form while maintaining its structure in mental representations.

Visualization allows, after analyzing the content of information, to collapse it into a specific and meaningful image for the personality, which becomes the basis for further decision-making and practical actions. The consistent representation of a mental image is based on the mechanism of projection of images of consciousness into the external plane.

Visual thinking is an analytical activity consisting of chronological transformation of visual images, which can be applied within the framework of the ability to perceive and interpret images. The key goal of visualization is to process a large amount of data into understandable images that will subsequently be reproduced fairly quickly.

The basis of visualization is the utilization of unique qualities of mental images as cognitive objects, which represents the subject's level of accessibility and intelligibility of these images. The idea behind visualization is to create an image upon completing a cognitive task, wherein sensation, memory, thought, imagination, and personal meaning are all involved. Every exterior reality is mirrored inside a person's inner world within a model that they have developed via the process of perception. Initially, a person perceives all information as distinct fundamental sensations. Every information that a person sees, hears, or touches is refracted in his consciousness and takes the form of a particular mental construct, which is then appropriated during introjection.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers is based on visualization, a method implying the mental processing of symbols, images, a variety of metaphors, considering the sociocultural setting in which they operate, as well as the individual semantic sphere of personality. Visualization as a method is effective in dealing with mental states and socio-psychological phenomena that are difficult to express verbally, eventually allowing you to increase the level of harmony of personality, the level of personal development through the study of images significant to the personality. The program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers allows you to realize the hidden potentials of the emotional sphere in creating a new reality, which means the implementation of an act of creativity by the respondent when constructing a visual image. The program participants literally create personally significant images, signs, and individual archetypes that maximize the repertoire of interaction with the world, the environment,

and themselves. All this allows you to increase the feeling of control and differentiate it from what is impossible to subdue, which increases calmness and reduces the manifestation of anxiety.

The program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers using the visualization method combines mandatory relaxation, focus on the formation and development of an internal metaverse of images in order to form a single figurative space on some problem. The use of visualization stimulates the expansion of the repertoire of internal self-support, stimulating the diverse work of the subconscious mind in order to try to combine the physical and mental layers for the harmonization and improvement of personality. The main format of using the visualization method in the program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers is the initial focus on the problem and systematic consistent promotion and deepening with the help of information verbalized by a psychologist as part of collaboration with an attempt to distract from "external noises", which also reduces anxiety and focuses attention on what needs to be perceived without distraction.

The basic principles of visualization help to create effective and understandable representations of the information presented and to form a certain attitude towards it. Here are some of them:

1. Simplicity and clarity. Visualization should use texts, symbols, metaphors, and signs that are understandable to the participants of the program. It is worth using a minimum of colors, shapes and elements in the visualization to avoid information overload. It is important to clearly identify the messages that need to be conveyed and focus on them.

2. Compliance with the goals. Visualization should focus on achieving clearly defined goals. It is important to determine what information needs to be broadcast and what stories to tell, and to choose the appropriate forms of demonstration of visual images in order to best display the information.

3. Clarity and precision. The text for visualization should be clear and accurate. This is important in order to avoid distortions and incorrect perception of information, it is important to check that all meanings, symbols, images are understandable.

4. The use of contrast, taste and sound images. Such images can be a powerful tool in visualizing information. This will allow you to highlight key elements and emphasize, enhance contrasts that will allow you to create an image better.

5. Using interactivity. It can make visualization more understandable, attractive and practical. It is important to allow program participants to interact with images, change their parameters and visualization conditions so that they can explore the information in more detail.

Within the framework of the program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers, the first stage is devoted to conducting guided relaxation techniques in order to relax and train the focus of attention, which will be used to work with selected situations in the future. The next mandatory stage – the main one – is actually visualization, which is carried out by a psychologist, reading out a text prepared in advance, which allows you to weaken conscious control and work with subconscious processes through active mental transformation of images. Further, the detailing of the internal image presented by the participant is realized, related to the overall goal of the program (to reduce anxiety), followed by its analysis and analysis both independently and in a group.

The study was aimed at the possibility of using a program for psychocorrection of anxiety disorders for managers under 30 years of age based on visualization. The main goal is to test the program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers under 30 years of age based on visualization. The study was conducted between 2022 and 2024.

84 managers under the age of 30 had complaints of severe anxiety, some turned to a psychologist with this problem: 44 men and 40 women. The respondents were aged 26-30 years, the average age was 28.5 years. All hold senior positions in companies with at least 150 employees. They have positions from the head of the department to the general director. They have been in office for at least 1 year, they began to feel anxiety on a regular basis around the same time they received the position.

The study was conducted in several stages:

- the first stage is the selection of tests for diagnosis, the search for respondents using the snowball method, dividing them into control and empirical groups and testing;

- the second stage is the generalization and analysis of test results, statistical analysis of the data obtained, the selection of respondents to participate in the program and the selection of some



respondents to the control group, with whom no work was subsequently carried out to correct anxiety, they also did not take anti-anxiety drugs and did not contact a psychologist with this problem;

- the third stage is summarizing the results after the implementation of the program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers based on visualization and repeated testing in order to confirm the effectiveness of the program.

The object of the study: anxiety disorders of managers under 30 years of age.

Subject: psychological mechanisms of anxiety reduction.

All methods are aimed at testing the hypothesis that there are differences between the manifestation of anxiety (its reduction) of managers younger than 30 years after a correction program based on visualization.

Testing before and after the implementation of the program was carried out using the following methods: the personal and situational anxiety assessment scale, the asthenic state scale, the Freiburg multifactorial personality questionnaire (separate scales). The Mann-Whitney criterion was used to identify differences between the manifestations of anxiety and other psychosocial factors in the control and empirical groups. Using the Wilcoxon T-test, it was possible to analyze the effectiveness of the implemented program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers.

All respondents participated in the study voluntarily and were in an even physical and emotional state. The work was carried out in natural conditions, in a calm environment and in a group format. The number of selected methods, the selected scales correspond to the research program and fully meet the opportunity to test the stated hypothesis.

The program of psychocorrection of anxiety disorders of managers based on visualization included detailed drawing of images and made it possible to monitor the dynamics of anxiety experiences by managers. During the course of participation in the program, the images presented by the participants gradually acquire greater expressiveness, brightness of colors, richness and saturation, which indicates an increase in the quality of living emotions, the depth of anxiety, and an increase in the energy level of mental processes.

Visualization allows you to identify among the group members those who are in a destructive emotional state, and direct all energy and strength for internal transformation. Participation in the program allows you to present in detail, describe and mentally work out the images that appeared during visualization in order to correct or simply realize the existing patterns of behavior, life goals and objectives, self-images that maximally stimulate the occurrence of anxiety. Work with visual images is implemented in three planes: introspection of visualization results by participants, group analysis of the most common images, professional comments by a psychologist on introspection and group analysis.

Introspection of visual images, in accordance with the comments of the psychologist who manages visualization, the participants of the program themselves fill with personal meanings, values, symbols.

During the group analysis in microgroups of 2-5 people, participants exchange impressions and experiences, describing and living in the microgroup all the images that they imagined during the visualization. In the microgroup, there is an opportunity to share the emotions, ideas, thoughts that were experienced, which were tracked and presented in the framework of visualization, showing painted images or talking about them, participants also perceive third-party symbols and images that can lead them to new insights.

The professional analysis of the psychologist and his comments are implemented in the following format: a general lecture session on the functioning of visualization, the general cultural meanings of symbols; a session on the analysis of specific examples of images and symbols of group members, a group consultation session on the results of visualization.

In total, 10 3-hour meetings were held with respondents on the topic of anxiety.

### **3. Discussion**

In the presented study, visualization is used as the most appropriate technology for solving the tasks set. The rapid development of technical means of data visualization, such technologies as virtual reality, augmented reality allow specialists in various subject areas to improve their visualization techniques and technologies and use them in their practice (Kui et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). For example, research in the field of education shows that computer visualization develops students' critical thinking skills well (Ngajie et al., 2020). Even simple visualization tools,

pictures, photographs help to reduce the level of anxiety of students, and for the psychologist conducting the training, it is possible to combine diagnosis and corrective action. Information visualization is widely used to create models in mathematics, computer science and programming (Bork, De Carlo, 2023). Virtual reality technologies allow a person to gain experience of participating in various situations and processes by modeling the situation and using simulations, therefore they have high potential and have already proven their effectiveness (Dunmoye et al., 2024; Kaplan-Rakowski et al., 2024). The use of virtual reality to manage stress in the emergency department shows that after a relaxation session in virtual reality, patients noted a decrease in anxiety, relaxation, and improved mood, and therapists also confirmed a positive result (Riches et al., 2023). In some studies on the use of visualization tools, virtual reality for the treatment of stress disorders and anxiety reduction, positive results of visualization therapy have been noted. However, there are practical problems regarding the use of the headset and equipment (Best et al., 2023). Research in the field of cognitive psychology shows that data visualization tools contribute to making more informed decisions because they help synthesize the necessary information from various sources, often contradictory (Eberhard, Wulf, 2023). One of the visualization methods to reduce anxiety and stress is visualization meditation. It can be practiced using simple visual effects, or it can be embedded in more complex techniques (Aksu, Ayar, 2023). A review of the literature for the ongoing study showed an insufficient number of studies devoted to the use of visualization in psychocorrection. Most of the available research is devoted to the problems of visualizing the results of clinical trials, diagnosis of diseases, or other subject areas that are not related to psychological research. With this study, we will fill this gap.

As part of the work carried out, it was possible to correlate information about the use of visualization as an opportunity to analyze the emotional state and construct effective patterns of behavior of a person, especially one holding a high position without sufficient experience (if the head is younger than 30 years old). In the work with figurative plots, within the framework of visualization, it is possible to combine conscious manifestations and unconscious personality structures, identify internal unconscious conflicts and emotional tension that arises as a result of destructive relationships, needs, unrealized desires and motives. The images that arise during visualizations can be interpreted and explained as messages from the individual unconscious. To increase the significance and value of images that arise within the framework of visualization, it is important for the images presented to be very similar to the values and meanings of the inner world of a person, which are important for the personality.

The data also confirmed the information that visualization is more effective when the images transmitted in the process of using this method correspond as much as possible either to cultural symbols or to personally significant images important to a particular person. Images are a significant key to work and getting results, because they make up the inner world of a person, but they may not always be realized.

The conducted research has strengthened the work that confirms that visualization is an effective tool when working with the inner world of a person, balances the personality and the outside world by creating resource states for the emotional sphere through internal elaboration of basic symbols.

The work carried out confirms the idea that information plays a serious, if not a key role in the modern world. The dissemination of information has changed a lot nowadays, not least because of digital technologies. The ways of broadcasting data and information are also changing the format of its representation – mainly visual. Visualization makes the possibilities of perception and processing of information more flexible, considering its various aspects and meanings. The design of modern information requires maximum approximation to the interactive format, which is important because the recipient has become accustomed and adapted to this way of perceiving data.

The data obtained on the images used by the participants of the program confirm research on the emergence of an original form of data and information consumption – "clip thinking" based on emotional and sensory perception and transformation of visual and auditory images. The image that arises as a result of clip perception is usually the result of curiosity and the emotion that has arisen, as a rule, without intellectual analysis. A person with a dominant clip perception and thinking easily jumps "from information to information", from some individual meanings and constructs to others of the same; a person prefers visually presented information, without verbal accompaniment, he is able to quickly navigate an extensive flow of information. The recipient perceives data and information in fragments, focusing in more detail only on what is interesting.

Clip thinking is implemented according to the algorithm "visual image – catchy short information – the rest of the text". Visualization of data and information is interesting for its facticity, maximum detail, focus on details and other attributes. Information should attract and retain attention as much as possible.

Maximum visualization efficiency in the representation of data or information that was not originally visual. The results obtained confirm a number of recommendations that allow you to present information and data: information should be structured; include important or interesting information in a format that allows you to go back and analyze everything again; with meaningful images. Visual information has a number of functions: communicative (visual images allow you to keep focus on important details, present various facts); ideological (the presentation of images allows you to create a worldview, stable categorized thinking on significant issues); cultural and educational (visual images stimulate education and increase the level of culture); recreational (visual images allow you to optimize the state with targeted use).

The proven effectiveness of using the program confirms the idea that an image can replace an entire text, transform complex information into a system of visual images. Visualization is characterized by: accurate translation of the essence of the idea, concise forms; a simple but systematic format for presenting information, taking into account the level of culture and education of visualization participants; the use of general social images, the absence of a large number of associative connections; clarity and depth of details; appeal to emotions, search for unexpected angles of analysis of the situation.

The study also confirmed that visual data gets into the inner world of a person faster, can quickly cause an associative series and stereotypical images. Visualization makes it easier to perceive cultural, social rituals and traditions, transforming symbols into a universal and understandable system. Visualization allows you to interpret symbols without effort, without spending a lot of time. The images that arise as a result of visualization retain the specifics and characteristic features of the object, situation, event, person, omitting minor details, these images are perceived quite simply and quickly.

#### 4. Results

The diagnostic results are presented below. First, the data that were obtained in the empirical group before and after the results of participation in the program are described.

The following are the features of the manifestation of personal and situational anxiety in the group before and after the implementation of the program (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The severity of personal parameters in the sample before and after the implementation of the program (data in % of the total sample)

Various parameters of test methods	Before the implementation of the program (%)	After the implementation of the program (%)
low situational anxiety	5	26
high situational anxiety	77	16
borderline situational anxiety	19	5
low personal anxiety	7	45
high personal anxiety	19	6
borderline personal anxiety	15	4
absence of asthenic manifestations	12	39
pronounced asthenic manifestations	68	12
neuroticism	18	4
spontaneous aggressiveness	12	6
depression	17	5
irritability	34	17
reactive aggressiveness	26	12

These tables allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1) Before the implementation of the program, most of the respondents expressed personal anxiety (64 points), they tend to accept the external environment as carrying the maximum threat,

any external influence is perceived by them as negatively affecting their self-esteem, respect and attitude towards themselves. It is important for them to constantly control everything, they are characterized by regular concern, most social interactions are perceived as threatening, therefore they constantly cause negative emotions. Situational anxiety (58.5 points) is not typical for respondents, but when it manifests, it also causes a range of negative emotions: pronounced tension, increased anxiety, repeated concern about the same situation, a high degree of nervousness. Among the moments that most cause both situational and personal anxiety among respondents are those that are associated with work or career moments, with the occupied social status in society, the appearance of difficulties in relationships with others. After the implementation of the program, personal anxiety (51 points) and situational anxiety (38 points) decreased in terms of indicators and began to manifest less frequently (more often – the average level of severity). After the implementation of the program, situational anxiety dominates among respondents, personal anxiety is less common.

2) Prior to the implementation of the program, severe asthenia dominates in the group of respondents: they perform any activity with great tension, it is difficult for them to keep the focus of attention, they do not have enough resources to endure and overcome something, they are characterized by muscle weakness, there are difficulties in memorizing, pronounced fatigue, high fatigue, especially from communicating with people. They are also quite touchy and vulnerable, any events for them are always associated with feelings and emotional stress, they are characterized by insomnia. After the implementation of the program, a larger number of respondents showed mild asthenia, which indicates that it became easier for them to perform any activity, it was easier to keep their focus, they had enough resources to endure and overcome something, they had less difficulty remembering, fatigue was less pronounced, fatigue decreased. They also became less likely to show resentment and vulnerability, any events for them became less associated with feelings and emotional stress, insomnia began to appear less often.

3) The key personal characteristics of respondents associated with manifestations of the emotional sphere in the group of respondents before the implementation of the program were: neuroticism (8 points), spontaneous aggressiveness (8 points), depression (7 points), irritability (8 points), reactive aggressiveness (7 points). All these data confirm that before the implementation of the program, the respondents had quite pronounced neurotic manifestations of the asthenic type with possible psychosomatic disorders, this is reflected in the general reduced emotional background, in behavior, in a negative attitude towards themselves and others. The respondents expressed a typical stress reaction to typical life situations of a passive-defensive type. These personal characteristics contribute to the manifestation of stiffness and insecurity in behavior and interaction with others, as a result of this – difficulties in building a dialogue and establishing communication. They are characterized by an unstable state (frequent mood changes, high level of excitability, irritability, low level of self-regulation). This personality profile reflects anxiety as a dominant personality trait. The influence of the key personal characteristics of the respondents decreased after the implementation of the program: neuroticism (5 points), spontaneous aggressiveness (5 points), depression (4 points), irritability (4 points), reactive aggressiveness (5 points). All these data confirm that after the implementation of the program, neurotic manifestations of the asthenic type with possible psychosomatic disorders became less pronounced in respondents. The emotional background has become higher, the attitude towards oneself and others has become more positive. The respondents stopped showing the typical stress reaction to typical life situations of a passive-defensive type. These personal characteristics began to contribute less to the manifestation of stiffness and insecurity in behavior and interaction with others, and the difficulty in building a dialogue and establishing communication began to manifest itself less. Their mood began to change spontaneously less often, the level of excitability, irritability decreased, and the level of self-regulation increased.

The shifts in the group after participation in the program were confirmed statistically using the Wilcoxon criterion:  $T = 0.229$ , which is below the critical value at the significance level of 0.01.

The following is an analysis of the severity of personal parameters in the sample before and after the implementation of the program in comparison with the control group where the work was not carried out (Table 2). This confirms the hypothesis formulated earlier.

According to Table 2, it can be said that before the implementation of the program, the data in the control and empirical groups were approximately the same, and after the implementation of

the program, qualitative and quantitative changes occurred in the empirical group, which cannot be said about the control group, where the program was not implemented.

**Table 2.** The severity of personal parameters in the sample before and after the implementation of the program in comparison with the control group where the work was not carried out (data in % of the total sample)

Various parameters of test methods	Before the implementation of the program		After the implementation of the program	
	Emp. gr.	Contr. gr.	Emp. gr.	Contr. gr.
low situational anxiety	5	5	26	5
high situational anxiety	77	69	16	68
borderline situational anxiety	19	15	5	14
low personal anxiety	7	4	45	3
high personal anxiety	19	19	6	18
borderline personal anxiety	15	13	4	14
absence of asthenic manifestations	12	11	39	12
pronounced asthenic manifestations	68	64	12	65
neuroticism	18	22	4	21
spontaneous aggressiveness	12	13	6	12
depression	17	15	5	14
irritability	34	37	17	35
reactive aggressiveness	26	29	12	27

This also indirectly confirms the effectiveness of the proposed correction program using visualization. Comparative statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U-test confirmed the results obtained (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Comparative analysis of the severity of personal parameters in the sample before and after the implementation of the program in comparison with the control group where the work was not carried out

Various parameters of test methods	The empirical value of the criterion
low situational anxiety	U* emp = 0,122 (p=0,01)
high situational anxiety	U* emp = 0,125 (p=0,01)
borderline situational anxiety	U* emp = 0,158 (p=0,01)
low personal anxiety	U* emp = 0,176 (p=0,01)
high personal anxiety	U* emp = 0,159 (p=0,01)
borderline personal anxiety	U* emp = 0,129 (p=0,01)
absence of asthenic manifestations	U* emp = 0,159 (p=0,01)
pronounced asthenic manifestations	U* emp = 0,164 (p=0,01)
neuroticism	U* emp = 0,138 (p=0,01)
spontaneous aggressiveness	U* emp = 0,101 (p=0,01)
depression	U* emp = 0,115 (p=0,01)
irritability	U* emp = 0,152 (p=0,01)
reactive aggressiveness	U* emp = 0,134 (p=0,01)

According to Table 3, it can be seen that there are differences in the manifestations of the personal parameters of the respondents of the control and empirical groups before and after the implementation of the program: in the manifestation of personal and situational anxiety, in the manifestation of asthenia, as well as neuroticism, irritability, aggressiveness and depression. The differences can be explained as follows: before the implementation of the program, respondents expressed high-level personal anxiety, reaching borderline forms, asthenia,

neuroticism, aggressiveness, depression, irritability, after the implementation of the program. As part of the targeted use of visualization to reduce the anxiety of young managers, including due to lack of media literacy in management, it was possible to reduce anxiety, irritability, neuroticism and other parameters.

## 5. Conclusion

The modern world dictates its own conditions for the perception of information, new cognitive constructs appear, models of reflection of the external world, which allows you to build trajectories of interaction with reality, taking into account internal experiences, attitudes to the environment and personal. All these patterns are difficult to track, because they are often an integral element of unconscious processes, which makes it difficult to perceive and evaluate, and this can negatively affect decisions, work and other areas of life. The use of visualization allows you to work effectively with little-realized constructs and models of the inner world.

As part of the study, an analysis of anxiety, asthenia and personal parameters was performed in the empirical and control groups. The study revealed high levels of personal and situational anxiety, asthenia, neuroticism, irritability, aggressiveness and depression. Before the implementation of the program, the data in the control and empirical groups were approximately the same, and after the implementation of the program, qualitative and quantitative changes occurred in the empirical group, which cannot be said about the control group, where the program was not implemented. The data has been confirmed statistically.

Thus, the study confirmed the assumption that there are differences between the manifestation of anxiety (its decrease) of managers younger than 30 years after a correction program based on visualization.

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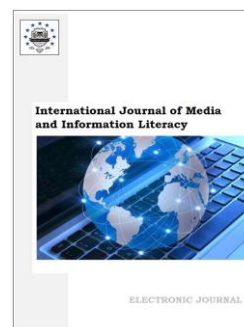
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## Some Issues of Improving Media and Information Literacy Level Amongst the Population in Uzbekistan: A Comprehensive Analysis of Central Asian Context

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### Abstract

This research investigates the challenges associated with inadequate media and information literacy (MIL) knowledge among the population of Uzbekistan, offering a comprehensive analysis within the unique Central Asian context. Employing a case study approach, the study examines real-life instances where insufficient MIL skills have led to issues such as misinformation, digital manipulation, and limited access to reliable information. By delving into these practical scenarios, the research aims to highlight the pressing need for enhanced media literacy. The study not only identifies the problems but also proposes optimal solutions by leveraging various media channels. It explores the potential of TV programs, social media platforms, and other media campaigns as effective tools for disseminating essential MIL knowledge. Through a meticulous examination of successful interventions and their impact, the research provides practical insights into designing and implementing tailored media literacy initiatives. Furthermore, the research acknowledges the evolving nature of media landscapes and considers the influence of cultural and socio-economic factors on the effectiveness of interventions. By adopting a multi-dimensional perspective, the study seeks to offer nuanced recommendations that align with the specific needs and dynamics of the Uzbekistani population. In conclusion, this research contributes a holistic understanding of the challenges surrounding media and information literacy in Uzbekistan, substantiated by real-life cases. It not only underscores the importance of enhancing MIL skills but also presents actionable strategies, particularly through diverse media channels, to address and overcome these challenges in the Central Asian context.

**Keywords:** Media and information literacy (MIL), digital literacy, private literacy, Central Asia, Uzbekistan, socio-cultural context, educational interventions, TV programs, social media campaigns.

### 1. Introduction

In an era dominated by digital information and communication technologies, the imperative for robust media and information literacy (MIL) has never been more critical. In the recent period, role of MIL in the condition of globalisation of media and information technologies are widely discussed by many scholars (Carlsson, 2019; Mihailidis, 2014).

This research delves into the multifaceted challenges surrounding the enhancement of MIL among the population of Uzbekistan, offering a meticulous examination within the distinctive Central Asian context. The study aims to unravel the complexities arising from insufficient MIL knowledge and its tangible consequences on individuals' ability to navigate an increasingly information-rich environment.

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By employing a case study methodology, this research seeks to illuminate real-life instances wherein the lack of media and information literacy has resulted in adverse outcomes, including misinformation, digital manipulation, and constrained access to reliable information. Through a nuanced exploration of these practical scenarios, the study underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to uplift MIL proficiency.

Moreover, this research not only identifies the problems but endeavours to provide optimal solutions. It strategically explores the potential of leveraging diverse media channels, such as TV programs, social media platforms, and other media campaigns, to disseminate essential MIL knowledge effectively. The goal is to contribute actionable insights that can inform policy decisions and practical strategies to enhance media literacy within the unique socio-cultural landscape of Uzbekistan.

#### Main Objectives:

1. **Identify Existing Challenges.** Conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify the primary challenges associated with insufficient media and information literacy among the population of Uzbekistan, considering factors such as misinformation, digital manipulation, and limited access to reliable information.

2. **Examine Real-Life Cases.** Utilize a case study approach to examine real-life instances where inadequate media and information literacy has resulted in tangible consequences, providing in-depth insights into the practical implications of the existing issues.

3. **Assess Socio-Cultural Dynamics.** Investigate the influence of socio-cultural factors on media literacy, recognizing the unique context of Central Asia and Uzbekistan, and understanding how cultural nuances impact the effectiveness of educational interventions.

4. **Explore Educational Interventions.** Explore and evaluate existing and potential educational interventions aimed at improving media and information literacy, with a focus on the utilization of TV programs, social media, and other media campaigns.

5. **Propose Optimal Solutions.** Develop actionable recommendations for enhancing media and information literacy by proposing optimal solutions, specifically considering the effectiveness of interventions through diverse media channels.

#### Research Questions:

1. What are the prevalent challenges associated with insufficient media and information literacy among the population of Uzbekistan?

2. How do real-life cases exemplify the consequences of inadequate media and information literacy in Uzbekistan?

3. To what extent do socio-cultural factors impact the effectiveness of media literacy interventions in the Central Asian context?

4. How can TV programs, social media, and other TV media campaigns be strategically utilized to enhance media and information literacy in Uzbekistan?

## 2. Materials and methods

This research employed a comprehensive analysis approach to investigate the issues related to media and information literacy (MIL) among the population of Uzbekistan. Real-life cases were examined, and optimal solutions were proposed to address these challenges. The study utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data from various sources, including TV programs, social media platforms, and other media campaigns.

#### *Data Collection methods are as follows:*

1. **Case Studies.** Real-life cases were collected from different regions of Uzbekistan to provide a diverse representation of media and information literacy challenges faced by the population. These cases were selected through a purposive sampling technique, ensuring the inclusion of individuals from various demographic groups and geographical locations.

2. **Surveys.** A structured survey instrument was developed to gather quantitative data on the current level of media and information literacy among the population. The survey included questions related to information-seeking behaviour, media consumption habits, critical thinking skills, and awareness of misinformation. A representative sample of the population was selected using a random sampling technique. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, and the survey data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods.

3. **Social Media Analysis.** Content analysis was conducted on a selection of social media platforms to examine their effectiveness in promoting media and information literacy. A systematic sampling

technique was used to identify relevant programs and social media accounts for analysis. The content was evaluated based on criteria such as accuracy, balance, credibility, and educational value.

#### *Data Analysis:*

1. **Qualitative Analysis:** The case studies were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Common themes and patterns were identified, helping to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the population and the effectiveness of various interventions.

2. **Content Analysis:** The TV programs and social media content were analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques. The content was categorized based on predefined criteria, and themes related to media and information literacy were identified.

*Results and Discussion.* The findings obtained through the above-mentioned data collection and analysis methods will be presented, discussed, and compared with existing literature and international best practices. The results will highlight the current status of media and information literacy in Uzbekistan and identify the key challenges faced by the population. Moreover, optimal solutions to improve media and information literacy will be proposed, focusing on the effective utilization of TV programs, social media platforms, and other media campaigns.

*Ethical Considerations.* Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional review board to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being during the data collection process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

*Limitations.* This research may have some limitations, including potential biases in data collection, the representativeness of the sample, and the generalizability of the findings. However, efforts were made to minimize these limitations by adopting rigorous sampling techniques and utilizing a mixed-methods approach.

The materials and methods employed in this study aimed to comprehensively analyze the issues surrounding media and information literacy in Uzbekistan. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods allowed for a thorough exploration of the challenges faced by the population. The optimal solutions proposed in this research, utilizing TV programs, social media, and other media campaigns, aim to address these issues and improve the media and information literacy among the Uzbekistani population.

### **3. Discussion**

A number of observations and studies carried out up to this period show that the level of media and information literacy in the Central Asian region is relatively low. For example, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March in 2022 the experts from four countries of the region discussed the polarisation of communities, low level of media literacy, the lack of critical thinking, and other issues during the expert meeting “How to Improve the Media Literacy of the Population of the Central Asian Countries?” held by the CABAR.asia analytical platform.

The following recommendations are given by experts as a solution to these problems:

“The experts proposed several measures to improve the situation with the level of media literacy, including:

- The governments of countries should work more thoroughly and fundamentally to improve media literacy and critical thinking of the population of their countries;
- To support initiatives and educate different segments of the population;
- To strengthen work to ensure own information security;
- Use a wide range of tools to increase empathy;
- Create zero tolerance for violence using all available tools and opportunities;
- To support local independent media so that they do not depend on grants and projects from foreign states” (CABAR, 2022).

One of the scientists who conducted a number of studies on the level of media education in the region and its development I. Chelysheva in her article entitled "Media Literacy Education in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan" analysed the development and current state of media literacy education in a number of Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan). The author considers the priority technologies of modern mass media education; systematization of the material under study was carried out, the main theoretical concepts of mass media education and key trends in further development were identified (Chelysheva, 2019: 3).

Insufficient media and information literacy in Uzbekistan can lead to various challenges and problems for its population. Here are some common issues faced as a result:

1. Misinformation and fake news: Without proper media literacy skills, individuals may struggle to differentiate between credible information and fake news. This can lead to the spread of misinformation, affecting public perception, decision-making, and trust in the media.

2. Limited critical thinking: Insufficient media literacy can hinder critical thinking skills, making it harder for people to analyze and evaluate media content effectively. This can contribute to the uncritical acceptance of information and opinions without proper examination.

3. Lack of awareness of media bias: Media bias can influence public opinion and shape narratives. However, without media literacy, individuals may fail to recognize bias in news reporting, leading to a skewed perception of events and issues.

4. Vulnerability to manipulation: Insufficient information literacy can make people more susceptible to manipulation and propaganda. It becomes easier for outside influences to shape public opinion, especially through disinformation campaigns and social media manipulation.

5. Reduced digital security: Inadequate media and information literacy can leave individuals vulnerable to cyber threats, scams, and online manipulation. Without proper awareness of online risks, people may become victims of identity theft, financial fraud, or privacy breaches.

6. Challenges in civic engagement: Lack of media literacy skills may hinder citizens' ability to actively participate in public debates and engage in informed discussions. It can limit their capacity to understand and critically analyze various perspectives, inhibiting meaningful dialogue and collective decision-making.

Addressing these issues requires efforts to improve media and information literacy in Uzbekistan. Promoting critical thinking, fact-checking, and digital literacy can help individuals develop the necessary skills to navigate the complex media landscape and make well-informed decisions.

The differentiation of concepts such as "misinformation" and "false information" (fake) was discussed thoroughly by the authors of the book entitled "Media Manipulations and Media Literacy Education" (Fedorov et al., 2022: 7-9). In this term, H. Derakhshan and C. Wardle substantiate the following typology:

- "Dis-information. Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country;
- Mis-information. Information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm;
- Mal-information. Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization, or country" (Wardle, Derakhshan, 2017: 5).

The concepts of media bias and manipulation are the terms that cause many problems and discussions in the world media industry today: "...manipulation in social networks is a big business: since 2010, political parties and governments have spent more than half a billion dollars on research, development and implementation of psychological operations and manipulation of public opinion in social networks. In some countries, this includes efforts to combat extremism, but in most cases – to spread unwanted news and misinformation during elections, military crises and complex humanitarian disasters" (Bradshaw, Howard, 2018: 3).

One of the important ways to rationally solve the above issues is to develop certain knowledge and skills in these areas. Such skills cannot be implemented only with various projects and grants. It is possible to develop the media education of the population through systematic and clear life examples through the channels of media and social networks that the country's population uses the most. Because "...mass media education of the audience can effectively contribute to the development of analytical thinking and media competence of the individual" (Fedorov et al., 2022: 12)

Studies show that the people of Central Asia, in particular, Uzbekistan, today receive the main information from TV channels and social networks (Internews, 2021: 13-14; Sostoyanie..., 2021: 5). In addition, problems related to the lack of knowledge in the field of MIL arise from the population's use of social networks and mobile communication tools, non-compliance with security rules for bank account numbers and personal data protection.

Today, the following tools and directions are important in improving the media and information literacy of the population in the country:

1. *TV shows, soap operas, serials and other media products are as a main medium in enhancing population's MIL level.* Television shows, soap operas, and other media products have the potential to play a significant role in enhancing the media and information literacy (MIL) level in Uzbekistan. These platforms can serve as powerful tools to educate and engage the population, particularly in rural areas where access to formal education may be limited.

One way in which TV shows and soap operas can contribute to MIL is by raising awareness about different social, cultural, and political issues. By portraying diverse characters and storylines, these media products can foster discussions and critical thinking among viewers. They can tackle important topics such as democracy, human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and health education.

TV shows and soap operas also have the advantage of being easily accessible and enjoyed by a wide range of audiences. According to some American scholars, seriality is thus important in transforming mediums into mass mediums (Harrington, Bielby, 2022: 1). Soap operas enjoy great popularity around the world. In fact, large audiences are fascinated by the packaged but never-ending narratives (Hofmann, 2021: 502).

They have the potential to reach mass audiences, including those who may not have access to the internet or other educational resources. By incorporating accurate and reliable information into their narratives, these media products can promote dialogue and increase public understanding of important issues.

Furthermore, incorporating specific MIL elements within TV shows and soap operas can be an effective strategy. For instance, characters can demonstrate critical thinking skills by fact-checking information, questioning sources, and evaluating the credibility of news. Over time, viewers can learn from these examples and apply similar approaches in their personal lives.

Additionally, televised shows can provide practical information on media literacy, emphasizing the importance of verifying information, detecting misinformation and disinformation, and developing digital literacy skills. This can be done through incorporating educational segments or providing resources during commercial breaks.

Collaboration between broadcasters, educational institutions, and governmental organizations is key for the success of such initiatives. Working together, they can develop educational content, workshops, or symposiums that support media literacy initiatives and reinforce the lessons learned from TV shows and soap operas.

In conclusion, television shows, soap operas, and media products can serve as effective tools in enhancing the population's media and information literacy level in Uzbekistan. By depicting diverse perspectives, addressing significant issues, and incorporating educational elements, these platforms can foster critical thinking, broaden knowledge, and promote a more informed society.

*2. The Role of social media in shaping MIL.* Social media plays a significant role in shaping media information literacy in Uzbekistan. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram, individuals in Uzbekistan have access to a wide range of information sources and have become active participants in the digital landscape.

As we know, social networks were not originally conceived as a political or manipulation tool: they were supposed to become a free and democratic space for communication between friends and relatives, with participants could share their impressions of books, films, music, travel, food recipes, post photos and videos etc. However, as soon as social networks (with their wide possibilities of users' segmentation by interests) gained a multimillion audience, they immediately entered the sphere of business and politics interests. Today, social networks are increasingly being used as a swift and relatively inexpensive way to promote information, including false one. As a result, social networks are becoming sources of various kinds of political and advertising fakes (Fedorov et al., 2022: 6).

One of the keyways social media shapes media and information literacy is by providing a platform for individuals to engage with news, opinions, and different perspectives. Through social media, people can access local and global news outlets, follow journalists and public figures, and engage in discussions on various topics. This exposure to diverse viewpoints helps individuals develop critical thinking skills and encourages them to question the information they consume.

Furthermore, social media facilitates the sharing and dissemination of information. Individuals can quickly and easily share news articles, videos, and other media content with their social networks. This feature allows for the rapid spread of information, which can be both beneficial and challenging when it comes to media information literacy. On the one hand, it enables the promotion of accurate and reliable news, empowering users to share verified information. On the other hand, it can also lead to the spread of misinformation and fake news, making it critical for individuals to develop the ability to discern credible sources.

Social media platforms also offer opportunities for citizen journalism and user-generated content (Kaufhold et al., 2010; Cervi, 2019).

Uzbekistan has seen an increase in citizen reporting, where ordinary people play the role of journalists by capturing and sharing news events through their social media accounts. While this can contribute to a more democratic and diverse media landscape, it also requires media information literacy to verify the accuracy and credibility of such content.

Moreover, social media serves as a platform for public dialogue and expression of opinions. Social media platforms provide a new way of representing and measuring public opinions (Dong, Lian, 2021).

Uzbekistan has witnessed a rise in online discussions, where individuals express their views on political, social, and cultural issues. Such discussions encourage media information literacy as people engage in debates, fact-check information, and seek reliable sources to support their arguments.

To promote media information literacy in Uzbekistan's social media landscape, it is important to focus on education and awareness. Introducing media literacy programs in schools and universities can help individuals develop critical thinking skills, teach them how to identify reliable sources, and navigate the digital media landscape responsibly. Additionally, initiatives by government agencies, NGOs, and media organizations can provide workshops, seminars, and online resources to promote media information literacy among citizens.

In conclusion, social media plays a significant role in shaping media information literacy in Uzbekistan. It offers opportunities for accessing diverse information sources, sharing and disseminating news and opinions, engaging in public dialogue, and contributing to citizen journalism. To ensure individuals can navigate this digital landscape effectively, efforts should be made to promote media literacy through education, awareness, and collaboration between various stakeholders.

*3. Enhancing online and digital banking literacy through Media and Information Literacy projects.* Due to the exponential growth of the internet, smartphones, and communication technologies during the last two decades, the digital banking sector has enormously advanced in terms of user-friendly, efficient, and fast financial transactions (Indriasari, 2022).

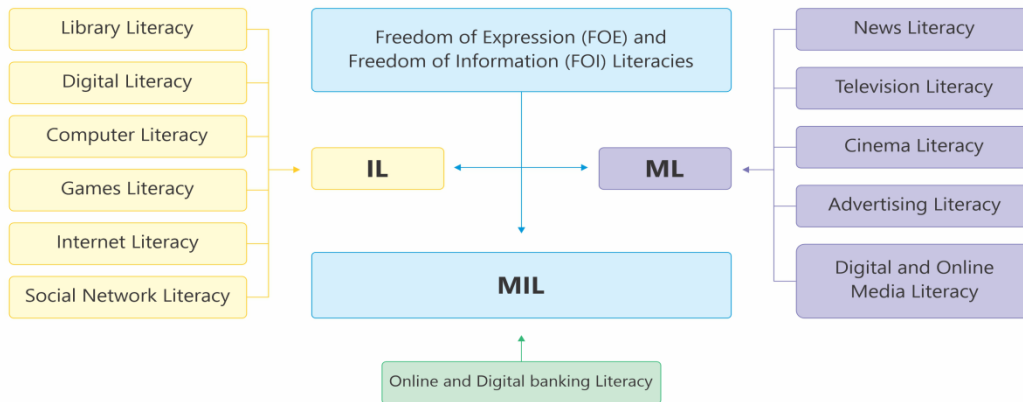
Finding out that hard-earned money has been taken from the bank account without the knowledge or consent could be anyone's greatest nightmare. Due to the rising frequency of bank account fraud, this is regrettably a fact of life for many (Craw Security, 2023).

In many literatures, it is presented in diagrams and figures that MIL field includes the knowledge levels that can be acquired in a number of fields such as Computer and IT, Cinema, Mass Media and Mass communication, Library studies. For example, in the guide "UNESCO MIL for teachers: Unifying Notions of Media and Information Literacy" there is a figure under the title "The Ecology of MIL: Notions of MIL", according to which the field of MIL includes information literacy, media literacy, including news literacy, advertising literacy, television literacy, cinema literacy, games literacy, internet literacy, computer literacy, digital literacy, FOE and FOI literacy (Wilson et al., 2011: 19).

This issue and figure were further developed in the manual "Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines", the above concepts were changed in colour depending on the degree of closeness, and the term of "social network literacy" was also added (Grizzle et al., 2013: 54).

By creatively using these drawings and developing the ideas in them, we reflect our approach and views on Ecology of MIL in the form of the following figure (Figure 1).

In this diagram, the types of "literacy" listed above are divided into specific groups with attention to content and essence. Concepts, depending on the level of field affinity, were initially combined into information literacy and media literacy, and through them were combined into the general field of MIL. We have included the concepts of online and digital banking literacy, which are very important in today's digital era and pose a serious threat to many people, as part of information literacy. Although these concepts seem related to economy and finance at first glance, we cannot deny that people's knowledge in the field of information literacy plays a decisive role in the attacks on bank cards and accounts of individuals by various hackers and the withdrawal of funds from them.



**Fig. 1.** The Ecology (Notions) of MIL (Source: own creation)

In general, in today’s digital age and the globalization of information technologies, the role of MIL is becoming more and more important, including the knowledge that is important for people’s daily life.

Enhancing online and digital banking, as well as online financial literacy, through Media and Information Literacy (MIL) initiatives in Uzbekistan can play a significant role in promoting financial inclusion and empowering individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge for managing their personal finances effectively. Here are some potential steps that can be taken to achieve this goal (Table 1):

**Table 1.** Potential steps that can be taken to achieve improvement in levels of Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

No	Potential steps	Definitions
1.	Educational Campaigns	Launch comprehensive educational campaigns to raise awareness about online and digital banking services among the general public. These campaigns could utilize various mediums, such as television, radio, social media, and other online platforms, to reach a wider audience.
	2. Collaboration with Financial Institutions	Collaborate with banks and financial institutions to provide targeted training programs and workshops on online banking services. This can include educating users on creating and managing online accounts, understanding transaction processes, and ensuring digital security.
3.	Mobile Banking Apps	Develop user-friendly mobile banking applications that cater to the needs of individuals across different age groups and demographics. These apps should offer intuitive interfaces, secure transaction features, and provide easy access to financial information and services.
4.	Online Financial Literacy Courses	Partner with educational institutions, financial experts, and industry professionals to develop online financial literacy courses. These courses can cover a wide range of topics, including budgeting, saving, investing, credit management, and financial planning.
5.	Social Media Campaigns	Leverage social media platforms to create engaging content that promotes online banking services and financial literacy. This can include informative posts, videos, infographics, and live sessions with experts where users can ask questions and receive guidance on personal finance matters.

№	Potential steps	Definitions
6.	Public-Private Partnerships	Foster collaborations between government entities, private organizations, and NGOs to jointly implement MIL initiatives. This can help mobilize resources, expertise, and funding required for creating impactful online banking and financial literacy programs.
7.	Online Community Engagement	Create online communities and forums where individuals can come together to discuss personal finance topics, share experiences, and seek advice. Moderators and financial experts can actively participate in these communities to provide guidance and support.
8.	Capacity Building for Financial Professionals	Conduct training programs for financial professionals, including bank employees and financial advisors, to enhance their digital banking knowledge and skills. This will enable them to assist customers effectively and offer appropriate guidance on utilizing online banking services.
9.	Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of MIL initiatives through feedback mechanisms, surveys, and data analysis. This will help identify strengths and weaknesses, allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation to the changing needs of the population.

By implementing these MIL initiatives, Uzbekistan can empower its citizens with the necessary skills and awareness to take advantage of online and digital banking services, fostering financial inclusion and promoting economic growth.

#### 4. Results

In order to substantiate the problems analyzed in the "Discussion" part and their solutions with the events that occur in people's lives in recent years, many journalistic materials related to the topic were analyzed and studied among the messages transmitted on various media and social network channels. Some of them are presented as cases for analysis in this article.

The first case is not only about dating chats, which have become popular since the advent of the Internet, and the dangerous consequences of not following "privacy literacy" ([Hagendorff, 2018](#)) in their use:

##### Case 1.

Convinced that it is possible to earn income through "love from a distance", the man goes hunting again through "Odnoklassniki". Of course, he searches for women who have been hit by life's shocks, who are divorced or who are looking for happiness, who are thirsty for love, and who intend to marry if they meet a person like in the brochure. 34-year-old Kh. S., who is divorced with one child, has secondary special education, lives in Almalyk becomes his next prey... The guy "in love" introduces himself as a businessman engaged in trade in China. In this way, "romantic" relationships begin through the social network. More declarations of love, non-stop text messages...

Two weeks later, the "lover" who "left for China" convinces the woman with promises that he will send a matchmaker to the woman's family upon his arrival in a month, and with oaths taken in his mother's name. Having her naked photos, he moved to the goal: "I received 100 US dollars from a guy you know to do this work. After receiving the pictures, he will give another 200 USD. Okay, if you give me \$100, I'll give him his money back and delete your pictures. But my service fee is 200,000 soums." Of course, there is nothing more valuable to a woman than her honour and dignity. Kh. brought the requested money – US dollars to the specified address, that is, to the metro station "Almazor" in Tashkent city, and wrapped it in a plastic bag and threw it under a tree, based on the text message written by a man who was watching from afar, and left it under a tree. She was thankful that she was spared the shame ([Sobirov, Matyoqub qizi, 2019](#)).

Such cases are explained by Canadian experts with the term "sextortion".

"Sextortion is a sophisticated cybercrime in which perpetrators often contact a victim through an online forum, including social media like Instagram and Snapchat. Targeting teen boys and young men, the perpetrators often pose as teen girls or young women who claim to be interested in a sexual relationship with their potential victim. They then request intimate photos and videos of the boys or young men. Once they have received these images or videos, they then threaten to share the videos or photos with the teen boy or young man's family, friends, school community and/or employer, attempting to shame their target into handing over money" (vicpd.ca, 2023).

The next case is about people who are trying to deceive people by gaining their trust in the field of online trade and services, which are widely popular on today's Internet and social networks:

### Case 2.

In today's information age, buying all the products necessary for our daily needs through various trading platforms and social networks has become a common practice. Especially, it is very convenient for people to find hotels or rental houses in other cities through the Internet.

Unfortunately, today there are enough fraudsters who use these facilities for malicious purposes.

On January 17 of this year at 14:00, citizen J.I., born in 1999 in Nishan district of Kashkadarya region. When looking for a relatively cheap apartment with comfortable living conditions for rent in Tashkent, he sees that exactly one apartment is available on the site "olx.uz" and several groups on the Telegram social network, and immediately contacts the owner of this ad. The owner of the ad says that this apartment will be vacated in a couple of days, until then he need to transfer 500,000 Uzbek soums to the bank's plastic card as an advance, otherwise the owner may give this apartment to someone else. In order not to miss out on a good rental house, citizen J.I. transfers the requested amount to the owner's plastic card.

After that J.I. can no longer contact this unknown person and, realizing that he was deceived, turns to the internal affairs authorities ([Aniq.uz, 2022](#)).

With the development of media and information technologies, the cases of attempts to steal data from a distance are also increasing. The news article titled "Be careful! A dangerous virus is spreading on Telegram" by J.Kadamov, a journalist of "Qalampir.uz", discusses about the hacking technology related to stealing phone passwords and other personal data by hackers.

### Case 3.

In the last two or three days, various viruses have been distributed on the Telegram social network in Uzbekistan, and citizens are suffering from this. The Cybersecurity Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs called on Telegram users to be aware.

"Please vote for me" messages are coming to almost everyone's Telegram account. The main purpose of spreading these messages is to capture your account, confidential correspondence, video or photo data.

Similar situations can be observed in applications related to bank plastic cards.

"If you received such a message and clicked the "vote" button, you will be asked to enter your phone number and confirm the SMS sent to your phone number. "By confirming this SMS, you are allowing third-party devices to access your account," the MIA warns.

In order not to fall into the trap of fraudsters, it is recommended to follow the following:

- setting up two-way authentication;
- in any case, do not provide the numbers received in the SMS-notification to anyone;
- stop the activity of other devices by checking "Active sessions" in the messenger devices section.

"We ask citizens to be extremely careful and not to be deceived by information attacks," the authority informed in the warning ([Kadamov, 2023](#)).

The Cyber Security Center of the Rapid Investigation Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan has an official channel on Telegram and YouTube social platforms. On these channels, under the hashtag "#Cybercrime", such messages are regularly



broadcasted, and through them, the population becomes aware of various new forms of cybercrime and is called to be alert. In particular, the message distributed on December 30, 2023 contains the following information.

#### Case 4.

U.O. (female) and B.Kh. (female), living in Samarkand region, contacted the internal affairs body and reported that an online loan was issued in their name for unknown reasons...

According to findings, A.Sh., (female) called those two women and introduced herself as "Bank operator", obtained their personal data by sending "SMS" message (fake link), registered on their behalf via mobile application, and transferred 27 million soum online loan – a total of 54 million soums – and at the same time transferred this amount to her own bank account.

In recent years, various life situations similar to the cited cases have appeared frequently in the media channels of Central Asia. However, in this regard, it should also be noted that the persons who are threatened in this direction do not always turn to the internal affairs bodies or the mass media. People in the region avoid public discussion, certain level of national, religious and social values and other factors prevent them from doing so. But the main issue here is not to cover all such problems in the media, but to increase the literacy of the people in the field of MIL based on the existing situation and examples.

From the above cases and their analysis, it is clear that insufficient media and information literacy knowledge can indeed have a significant impact on various aspects of society, including social life, family dynamics, and the economy. This applies not only to Uzbekistan but also to many other countries around the world:

1. Social Life. Lack of media and information literacy can lead to the spread of misinformation and the prominence of fake news, which can negatively affect social interactions and relationships. People may form biased opinions, misunderstandings, or even engage in conflicts fuelled by misinformation. This can strain community cohesion, trust, and cooperation among individuals.

2. Family Problems. Insufficient media and information literacy can contribute to family problems by perpetuating and reinforcing harmful stereotypes, biases, and misconceptions. If family members lack the critical thinking skills to evaluate information effectively, it can lead to misunderstandings, tensions, or even conflicts within families. Furthermore, exposure to unreliable or false information can lead to family members making uninformed decisions, such as falling for scams or engaging in harmful practices.

3. Financial Harm. Inadequate media and information literacy can also have economic ramifications. Financial scams, fraudulent schemes, and investment misinformation can lead to individuals making unsound financial decisions, resulting in financial harm. It can be particularly detrimental for vulnerable populations who may lack the necessary awareness and knowledge to protect themselves from exploitation.

To address these challenges, it is important to focus on improving media and information literacy education in Uzbekistan. This includes promoting critical thinking skills, teaching individuals how to evaluate sources of information, valuing reliable and evidence-based information, and encouraging open dialogue and discussion. By equipping people with the necessary skills and knowledge, they can navigate the media landscape more effectively, make informed decisions, and contribute to a healthier and more prosperous society.

#### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this comprehensive analysis has unveiled critical insights into the challenges and opportunities surrounding media and information literacy (MIL) within the population of Uzbekistan, set against the backdrop of the unique Central Asian context. The research has meticulously examined real-life cases, illustrating the tangible repercussions of insufficient MIL knowledge, including misinformation, hacking and digital manipulation. Through this exploration, the study emphasizes the urgency of addressing these issues to fortify individuals against the pitfalls of the information age.

Recognizing the impact of socio-cultural dynamics on the effectiveness of interventions, the research advocates for a nuanced approach tailored to the specific context of Uzbekistan.

It highlights the need for educational programs that resonate with the cultural fabric of the region, promoting an understanding of media and information literacy as a fundamental skill for navigating the complexities of the digital era.

The proposed solutions, leveraging TV programs, social media, and other media campaigns, present actionable pathways for improvement. These mediums offer not only avenues for disseminating essential MIL knowledge but also serve as platforms for fostering a culture of critical thinking and responsible information consumption.

As we navigate an increasingly interconnected world, the imperative to enhance media and information literacy becomes paramount. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse by providing practical recommendations and insights that can inform policymakers, educators, and media practitioners alike. By collectively embracing these recommendations, we pave the way for a more informed, resilient, and digitally literate population in Uzbekistan, ready to face the challenges and opportunities of the evolving information landscape.

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## Addiction to Social Networks and Its Influence on the Academic Performance of the Students: An Analysis from the Bayesian Approach

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### Abstract

Social networks are websites and applications that favor the teaching-learning process because you can communicate, share information and establish relationships between students and teachers. In this research, an estimation of the relationship between the addition to social networks and the academic performance of university students is carried out. For this, the Bayesian factor is used, in whose analysis technique it characterizes the posterior distribution and the Bayes factor is estimated, which measures the linear relationship between two variables of the scale, following a bivariate normal distribution. For this purpose, a sample of students from the Middle Zone Multidisciplinary Academic Unit of the UASLP is analyzed. The sample includes 200 students. The Social Networks The instrument is made up of three dimensions: obsession with social networks, lack of personal control in the use of social networks and excessive use of the social network. The results indicate that there is not enough evidence to say that there is a relationship between obsession with social networks, lack of personal control in the use of social networks and excessive use of social networks with academic performance, because the Bayesian Factor value is between 10 and 30.

**Keywords:** social networks, academic performance, factor Bayes, college students.

### 1. Introduction

Information technologies have achieved that some activities that were carried out in a conventional way, are now carried out in a different way. At the beginning of the year 2023, Digital (2023) reports 100.6 million Internet users in Mexico, of which 94.00 million are users of social networks, equivalent to 73.4 percent of the total population. The most widely used means of access is the mobile phone, with 123.5 million active connections. The social network with most access is Facebook with 94 million users who access it.

In this sense, the Internet Association (2023) reports in the 19th Study on the Habits of Internet Users in Mexico 2023 that 42.7 % of those surveyed in the study spend an internet connection time of 7 to more than 9 hours. Generation Z (11 and 26 years old) are the users who connect to the Internet the most (27 %), in second place, Generation X between 43 and 58 years old (25 %) Internet Association (2023). In third place are users of the Millennial Generation between 27 to 42 (22 %). The most common use is to social networks WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram continue to be the most used social networks by those surveyed.

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Other applications where technology is immersed, as Smit (2012) refers, is the use of different instant messaging platforms in education, which have the potential to increase learning. In this idea, Bouhnik and Deshen (2014); have expressed the advantage of using social networks such as WhatsApp in the teaching-learning process because it can be used at any time and place, and it is useful in collaborative learning. Limas and Vargas (2021) mention that universities have adapted to social networks, and have managed to change the teaching process and improve the quality of education.

In the study carried out by Cetinkaya (2017), refers that the students had a positive opinion about the application of social networks in their courses, especially WhatsApp, also points out that in this modality, learning occurs more spontaneously and, if they are used images learning is more effective. On the other hand, Abraham and Fanny (2019) point out that different investigations report that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social platforms are preferred by young people and conclude that students are highly dependent on social networks, affecting significant in the teaching-learning process.

Some authors (Matikiti et al., 2017; Hajarjian et al., 2017 cited by Van Rhyne et al., 2019) explain that social networks are "websites and applications designed to allow people to share content in a fast, efficient and in real time". For his part, Dyer (2020) expands the explanation, pointing out that: social networks are a challenging task, since; it is an area that continuously changes. Social networks are websites and applications that favor the teaching-learning process because it is possible to communicate, share information and establish relationships between students and teachers. Torres (2011) shows that social networks in universities have facilitated communication and collaborative learning and have introduced new ways of working among the actors in the training processes. Meso (2010, cited by Torres, Alcántar, 2011) published the results of a study in Spain, 83 percent of Spanish youth use at least one network. Its use makes various processes efficient and helps to solve problems; at the same time, they are widely used to improve classroom performance.

Vasquez et al. (2022), carried out a bibliographic review in 30 articles in which they analyze the role that social networks play in the teaching-learning process of university students during the period 2016–2021. In their findings, they conclude that it has a real effect on the learning, since it moves students from passive receivers of information to active participants; it also allows updating knowledge and providing feedback. Therefore, the incorporation of these technological platforms in Higher Education is very convenient and beneficial, even with the inconveniences that they can cause, such as distraction and lack of concentration in the process.

In this time, technology has become a tool to obtain greater knowledge. Recent media such as social media, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook have made a difference in the dissemination of information and knowledge due to their effect and influence on society. Currently, people believe that these tools are useful to achieve goals, as well as to understand what is happening in society (Adegbola, Gearhart, 2019 cited by Mohamed et al., 2020).

Owusu-Boakye (2020) talks about the impact of the technological tools of the 21st century and mentions that they have come to transform the teaching-learning process. There are two causes: 1) the student has a different way of learning and 2) the teacher is forced to modify his teaching profession due to the presence of digital technology. A similar conceptualization has been referred to by Mynbayeva and Sadvakassova (Mynbayeva, Sadvakassova, 2018, cited by Owusu-Boakye, 2020) when considering this technological tool as a transformed process. In this idea, Owusu-Boakye (2020) refers that WhatsApp is a useful tool in the field of learning at any time and in any place and increases attributed collaborative learning since it increases learning. In this sense, Adamson (Adamson, 2012, cited by Wiid, 2014) indicates that social media network systems do not prevent them from be used in teaching, since information can be shared between teachers and students at any time and from any location.

However, excessive use can generate addiction, which would generate concern in the health sector, which has focused more on the issue due to the addictive characteristics and psychological consequences that social networks cause in people. There is growing evidence that social media addiction is a persistent problem among students. Dominguez-Vergara and Ibáñez-Carranza (2016) found that adolescent students from 12 to 16 years old show a moderately significant level of addiction to social networks. It also indicates that, the greater the addiction to social networks, the lower level of social skills in adolescents is demonstrated.

Koç and Turan (2020) clearly show in their results that most of the participants use Instagram as their main app. However, we did not find any significant relationship between academic performance and addiction to social networks. Nevertheless, they report a gender difference, with women spending more time on SNS than men do, while men have more online friends than women.

Amador-Ortiz (2021) reports that there is a significant association between university students failing school and social networks addiction. The associations are presented in two factors: the obsession with social networks and their excessive use. Chávez and Coaquira (2022) report three levels of addiction to social networks in university students; the most relevant is the medium level with 48 %, 27.4 % of the students have a low level and only 24.6 % have a high level. The high-level reports that 25.6 % are obsessed with social networks, 29 % lack personal control and 30.8 % use social networks excessively.

Alarcón-Allaín and Salas-Blas (2022) studied the relationship between social networks addiction and emotional intelligence in 279 students of different technical degrees from a state institute in Callao-Peru. Regarding social networks addiction, it reports that students who spend more time online (more than 6 hours) score higher in the ARS dimensions (obsession, lack of control, and excessive use). Of the three dimensions, the excessive use of social networks presents the biggest difference. The authors conclude that students who are online for longer periods obtain higher scores on the ARS.

As a follow-up to this topic, Reynoso (2022) applied Escurra and Salas (2014) social media addiction scale to students, showing that students have low levels of addiction. However, the addiction level is affected by age since the level increases with age and it differs whether or not the student has a work activity. In addition, he reports that the greater the use of social networks, the greater the increase in academic stress in higher-level students.

Weihong and Fethi (2023) studied the influence of social networks (SNS) addiction on academic performance in 251 college students from the southwestern United States. Their findings indicate that social media addiction does not have an impact on college students' grade point average (GPA). However, they report that they have a positive effect on their anxiety and stress.

On the other hand, Valencia et al. (2023) report that for students there is no risk derived from the use of social networks, nor does it create problems in any context: social, work or academic. They do not feel the "obsession" or discomfort to know what is happening in SN. Likewise, men and women do not differ in the ARS, those who spend more hours connected are more prone to show higher scores in addiction to networks.

This research is based on the Media Dependency Theory (MDT). It is used to interpret the data and propose explanations for social networks addiction causes or influences. According to the MDT, a mean would become an integral part of an individual, if he/she is too dependent on it to satisfy his/her needs. Regarding this theory, it can be said that social networks are the mean that students use in the teaching-learning process to achieve academic performance (Nul et al., 2020).

Therefore, emerge some pertinent questions: Does social networks addiction have an effect on college students' academic performance? To answer the question, the following objective is proposed: to verify the relationship that exists between social networks addiction and academic performance in college students.

## 2. Materials and methods

In this research, an estimation of the relationship between social networks addiction and academic performance in university students is made through the Bayesian factor, where the posterior distribution is characterized and the Bayes factor is estimated, which measures the linear relationship between two scale variables jointly following a bivariate normal distribution. For this purpose, a group of students from the Middle Zone Multidisciplinary Academic Unit of the UASLP is analyzed.

The study is carried out in the municipality of Rio Verde, SLP, in the semester between the months of August to December 2022. The sample includes 200 students of which, 38.5 % are from the civil engineering degree, 24.5 % from the nursing degree, 11 % from the public accountant degree and 26 % from the administration degree. Of the total number of students, 42 % are men and 58 % women.

### 3. Discussion and results

#### Instrument

The Social Networks Addiction questionnaire designed by Escurra and Salas (2014) was used. The instrument consists of 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always (to which scores from 0 to 4 were assigned). It has 23 direct questions and 1 reverse question. Three dimensions integrate the instrument: obsession with social networks, lack of personal control in the use of social networks and excessive use of the social network.

Social media obsession is characterized by constantly thinking and worrying about not being able to access or be connected to social media. The lack of personal control in the use of social networks refers to a concern for the lack of control in the use of networks, which results in the non-compliance or neglect of certain activities, and finally, the excessive use of networks. Social refers to being connected to social networks for a long time. The instrument has a reliability of .95 and the dimensions have Cronbach's alpha values of .91, .89 and .92 respectively, so they have adequate internal consistency (Escurra, Salas, 2014).

For the Bayesian analysis, the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software is used, which includes Bayesian statistics and Pearson's correlation. In this sense, firstly a Pearson linear correlation is performed, taking into account the definitions of the following hypotheses:

- $H_{01}$ : There is no relationship between the obsession with social networks and the academic performance of college students.
- $H_{11}$ : There is a relationship between the obsession with social networks and the academic performance of college students.
- $H_{02}$ : There is no relationship between the lack of personal control in the use of social networks and the academic performance of college students.
- $H_{22}$ : There is a relationship between the lack of personal control in the use of social networks and the academic performance of college students.
- $H_{03}$ : There is no relationship between the lack of personal control in the use of social networks and the academic performance of college students.
- $H_{33}$ : There is a relationship between excessive use of social networks and the academic performance of college students.

#### Contrasting by the Bayesian method

On many occasions, only two hypotheses are formulated: one of no difference or no association, noted as  $H_0$ , and another as the opposite event. However, an advantage of this model is the possibility that with the Bayesian hypothesis test it is not based on the rejection of a null hypothesis, but on being able to contrast two hypotheses: the null or no-effect ( $H_0$ ) against the alternative or effect one ( $H_1$ ). The relationship between these two hypotheses is summarized in the Bayes factor or FB factor (see Figure 1).

	FB <sub>01</sub> Null Hypothesis	Value	FB <sub>10</sub> Alternative Hypothesis	
Favor	Very strong	>30	Very strong	Favor
	Strong	10.-30	Strong	
	Moderate	3.1-10	Moderate	
	Anecdotal	1.1-3	Anecdotal	
	No evidence	1	No evidence	
In contrary	Anecdotal	0.3-0.9	Anecdotal	In contrary
	Moderate	0.29-0.1	Moderate	
	Strong	0.09-0.03	Strong	
	Very strong	<0.03	Very strong	

Fig. 1. Bayes Factor (own)

#### Data analysis

The descriptive analysis of the sociodemographic variables is as follows: The greatest participation in the survey was women (n=116), versus men (n=84). The age range is between 17 and 28 years, and the highest percentage is between the ages of 20 and 22 (56 %), of which a

representative percentage studies and works. In addition, it is observed that the career where more students participated was civil engineering in the most advanced semesters (see [Table 1](#)).

In relation to the information on the use of networks shown in [Table 1](#) we observed that, a very high percentage (98 %) connects to social networks through their cell phone and the frequency is 7 to 12 times per day that they consult or review their social networks. In addition, the students surveyed report knowing in person more than 70 % of their contacts. Finally, the use they give to social networks is both for socializing and for work and academic activities.

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic variables

<i>Gender</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Connection</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	42,0	17 to 19	24,5	Smartphones	98
Female	58,0	20 to 22	56,0	Computers	2
		23 to 25	17,0		
		26 to 28	2,5		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Study	55,0	First	16,5	All the time	20,5
Study and work	44,5	Third	0,5	1 to 2 times per day	24,0
Only work	0,5	Fifth	12,5	3 to 6 times per day	26,5
		Seventh	48,0	7 to 12 times per day	28,0
		Nineth	22,5	2 to 3 times per day	1,0
<i>Carrer</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
CE	38,5	Socialization	27,5	All the time	20,5
N	24,5	Academic	9,0	1 to 2 times per day	24,0
PA	11,0	Work	8,0	3 to 6 times per day	26,5
A	26,0	All the above	55,5	7 to 12 times per day	29,0

Note: civil engineering (CE), Nursing (N), public accounting (PA), Administration (LA)  
Source: own

Regarding the level of addiction, [Table 2](#) shows that the highest percentage refers to the obsession that students have about accessing social networks (94 %). Meanwhile, in the dimensions about the lack of personal control and excessive use, the level of the students corresponds to a medium level.

**Table 2.** Addiction to social networks level

<i>Abuso ( %)</i>	<i>Control ( %)</i>	<i>Uso ( %)</i>	<i>Puntuación</i>
1.0	3	5	Bajo
7.0	23	35.5	Medio
92	74	59.5	Alto
100	100	100	

Source: own

To verify the research hypotheses (HO versus HA), the results described in [Table 3](#) show the Bayesian factor for each of the constructs. We observe that the Bayes factor of the relationship between obsession, lack of control, and excessive use of social networks with the academic performance variable is greater than 10, indicating that there is a 10, 17 and 15 greater probability that there is a large (strong) difference between the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis. This means that the null hypothesis is more in favor: there is no relationship between obsession, lack of control and use of social networks and the academic performance of college students; because the value of the Bayesian Factor is between 10 and 30.

Regarding the characterization of the posterior distribution, the credibility limits are observed at 95 %, which indicates that the true value of the  $r$  (Pearson) statistic is within those limits. In the case of obsession with social networks, the true value of  $r$  is between the ranges of -



,208 and ,062 in the case of lack of control it is between -,121 and ,148, finally with respect to the excessive use of social networks, the values are between -,172 and ,101 (Table 4).

**Table 3.** Inference of Bayes factor in pairwise correlations

		Obsession	Lack of control	Excessive use	Average
X <sub>1</sub>	Pearson correlations	1	,675	,659	-,074
	Bayes factor		,000	,000	10,431
X <sub>2</sub>	Pearson correlations		1	,617	,018
	Bayes factor			,000	17,254
X <sub>3</sub>	Pearson correlations			1	-,037
	Bayes factor				15,556
Average	Pearson correlations				1
	Bayes factor				

Source: own

**Table 4.** Posterior distribution characterization

Variable	Lower limit	Upper limit	Value <i>r</i>
Obsession	-.208	.062	-.074
Lack of control	-.121	.148	.018
Excessive use	-.177	.097	-.037

Source: own

#### 4. Conclusion

Considering that the study focused on verifying the relationship between the addition to social networks and academic performance in college students, therefore the following discussion and conclusion is obtained:

According to the instrument designed by Escurra and Salas (2014) it was possible to evaluate in each of the constructs that comprise it, that there is no relationship between the obsession with social networks, the lack of personal control in the use of social networks and excessive use of social networks with academic performance. The Bayes factor that measures the relationship between the dependent variable (academic performance) and independent variables (addition to social networks) shows a value greater than 10, indicating 10, 17, and 15 times the probability of a large difference. (strong) of the null hypothesis versus the alternate hypothesis.

These results are consistent with those proposed by Koç and Turan (2020) who report that there is no significant relationship between addition to social networks and academic performance. However, other studies Owusu-Boakye (2020) report that the use of the WhatsApp social network increases collaborative learning. These results do not coincide with those reported by Amador-Ortiz (2021) who reports that there is a relationship between school failure and the addition to social networks, mainly in the constructs with the obsession with social networks and their excessive use.

Regarding the addition to social networks, this study coincides with the results presented by Chávez and Coaquira (2022). In their study, the authors indicate that a percentage of 25,6 % are obsessed with social networks, 29 % lack personal control and 30,8 % use social networks excessively. This study reports that 94 % of students abuse social networks. However, this data partially coincides with the work of Alarcón-Allaín, and Salas-Blas (2022), since they report high levels in each of the constructs; in this sense, it only coincides with the high level of abuse of social networks.

From the above, we can conclude that students feel worry too often when they cannot access social networks, however, this does not mean that it affects their academic performance. This feeling is probably because students use social networks in the learning process; therefore, it causes concern not being able to access them.

Finally, it is proposed for subsequent work to analyze the relationship between the addition to social networks in the learning process with academic performance, specifically during the semester in which the student is studying.

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## Western Cinema on the Pages of the *Soviet Screen* Magazine: 1986–1991

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### Abstract

Based on the content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of the texts published during the "perestroika" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991), the authors came to the conclusion that materials on the subject of Western cinema on this stage can be divided into the following genres:

- ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience (1986–1987);
- articles on the history of Western cinema;
- biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors (as a rule, with positive ratings);
- interviews with Western filmmakers (as a rule, with those who came to Moscow film festivals);
- reviews of Western films (here we can note a violation of the old tradition: if in 1986–1987 the magazine still often negatively evaluated some "politically harmful bourgeois" films, then later Western film production was evaluated without regard to ideological stereotypes, moreover, even received a positive interpretation films that were previously rejected for ideological reasons);
- articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, reviews of the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies (no longer divided into "progressive" and "bourgeois" cinematography);
- short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

**Keywords:** *Soviet Screen* magazine, Western cinema, film criticism, ideology, politics, reviews, articles.

### 1 Introduction

In this article, we will focus on the analysis of materials about foreign cinema published in the *Soviet Screen* magazine from 1986 to 1991, when its editors-in-chiefs were: D. Orlov (1935–2021), Y. Rybakov (1931–2006), V. Demin (1937–1993).

In [Table 1](#) presents statistical data reflecting changes (from 1986 to 1991) organizations, the organ of which the journal was, its circulation, periodicity. The names of the editors of the journal and the time intervals of their leading work in the publication are indicated.

The authors of texts about Western cinema in the *Soviet Screen* in most cases were well-known film experts, film critics, some of whom held leading positions in the editorial offices of magazines and newspapers of that period.

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**Table 1.** *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991): statistical data

Year of issue of the magazine	Organizations whose authority was a magazine	Magazine circulation (in million copies)	Periodicity of the journal (numbers in year)	Editor of the magazine
1986	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	D.K. Orlov Nos. 1-23 Y.S. Rybakov No. 24
1987	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	Y.S. Rybakov
1988	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	Y.S. Rybakov
1989	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	0.9 - 1.0	18	Y.S. Rybakov
1990	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.0	18	Y.S. Rybakov Nos. 1-3 Editorial board (Nos. 4-8) V.P. Demin (Nos. 9-18)
1991	Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Goskino of the USSR (Nos. 1-17) Publishing house "Pravda" and the editorial staff of the <i>Screen</i> magazine * (No. 18)	0.4 - 0.7	18	V.P. Demin

\* Under the name *Screen* the magazine was published only in 1991.

**Table 2.** The main authors of the publications of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991) on the subject of Western cinema

No.	Surnames of film critics who most often published articles on Western cinema in the <i>Soviet Screen</i> magazine	The number of articles published by these film experts in the <i>Soviet Screen</i> magazine on the subject of Western cinema
1	Kudryavtsev S.V.	16
2	Braginsky A.V. (1920–2016)	10
3	Plakhov A.S.	10
4	Tirdatova E.I.	10
5	Dmitriev V.Y. (1940–2013)	9
6	Sulkin O.M.	8
7	Andreev F.I. (1933–1998)	7
8	Lavrentiev S.A.	7
9	Osipov A.A. (?–1991)	7
10	Mikhalkovich V.I. (1937–2006)	6

1. S.V. Kudryavtsev (born 1956) is a film critic, director. Graduated from the Film Studies Department of VGIK (1978). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia. He taught at VGIK (1994–1998), at the Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Directors (2006–2013), at the Institute of Contemporary Art (2008–2010; 2015–2018). Published in the magazines: *Soviet*

*Screen, Cinema Art, Video Digest, Cultural and Educational Work, Video-Ace*, in the newspaper *Kommersant-daily*, *Screen and Stage*, etc. Author of books and reference books: *500 films* (1991); *+500* (1994); *Latest 500* (1996); *Our cinema* (1998); *3500* (2008); *Nearly forty-four thousand* (2015–2017). In 2021, the premiere of his first feature "arthouse" film *...and there will be a daughter* took place. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia.

2. A.V. Braginsky (1920–2016): film critic and historian, translator. Graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (1941). Was a member of the Soviet Communist Party, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Author of many articles and books on French cinema. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen, Cinema Art*, etc. Author of books: *Le Chanois* (1972); *Christian-Jacques* (1981); *Jean-Paul Belmondo. In cinema and in life* (1997); *Gerard Depardieu. Stolen letters* (1998); *Alain Delon. In love and life* (1999); *Catherine Deneuve* (2000), etc. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia in the category "Literature about cinema" (for a series of books about French film masters) (1999).

3. A.S. Plakhov (born 1950): film critic and historian. Ph.D. (1982). Graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of the Lviv University (1972) and the Film Studies Faculty of VGIK (1978). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation (2014). He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party (since 1980), President of FIPRESCI (2005–2010). Worked in the department of culture of the newspaper *Pravda* (1977–1988), taught at VGIK. Browser in newspaper *Kommersant*. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen, Screen, Cinema Art, Seance, Sight & Sound*, etc. Author of books: *Struggle of ideas in modern Western cinema* (1984); *Western screen: the destruction of personality* (1985); *Catherine Deneuve* (three editions: 1989; 2005; 2008); *33 in total. Stars of world film directing* (1999); *33 in total. Close-up of the stars* (2004); *Aki Kaurismaki. The last romantic* (2006); *Directors of the present* (2008); *Directors of the future* (2009); *Cinema on the brink of a nervous breakdown* (2014); *Ozone* (2018); *Cinema beyond* (2019); *Visconti. History and myth. Beauty and death* (2022), etc. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia, Honorary Diploma of the President of Russia (2014), Nika Prize "For Contribution to Cinematographic Sciences, Criticism and Education" (2017),

4. E.I. Tirdatova (born 1951): film critic, director, screenwriter and producer. Graduated State Musical and Pedagogical Institute (1972) and Film Studies Department of VGIK (1985). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Vice-President of the Russian Guild of Film Critics. He teaches at VGIK, at the Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Directors and other Moscow universities. Published in the magazines: *Soviet Screen, Screen, Cinema Art, Opinions*, etc., in newspapers: *Screen and Stage, Culture, Interlocutor, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Literaturnaya Gazeta, Russian Courier, Izvestia, Moskovsky Komsomolets, Evening Moscow, Rossiyskaya gazeta, Parliamentskaya gazeta, SK-news*, etc. In 1990 she wrote (together with P. Chernyaev) the script for the documentary film *Your "leaving object" Leonid Obolensky*. In the 21st century, she began to master the profession of a producer and director of documentaries and feature films. Author of the books: *Henry Fonda* (1989), *Spotted movie* (2020), etc. Laureate of the Russian Guild of Film Critics.

5. V.Y. Dmitriev (1940–2013): film critic, archivist. Graduated film studies department of VGIK (1962). Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation (1998). He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party (since 1974), the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. After graduating from VGIK, he worked at the State Film Fund (department of scientific processing of a foreign fund), since 1996 he was deputy Director General of the State Film Fund of Russia. Created and became the artistic director of the festival of archival films "White Pillars". Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen, Screen, Cinema Art, Film Studies Notes, Séance*, etc., in the newspapers: *Independant Paper, Culture*, etc. Author of books (together with V. Mikhalkovich): *Alexander Ford* (1968, the monograph was not published due to A. Ford's emigration to the West); *Anatomy of a myth: Brigitte Bardot* (1975). He starred in the films *Mournful insensibility* (1983) and *Down with commerce on the love front* (1988). Co-author of scripts for documentaries *Promised Land. Return* (2000), *Flowers of the Occupation Times* (2003), *Big Holidays of the 30s, Forties* (2004) and others. Laureate of the State Prize of the Russian Federation in the field of literature and art (2007) and the Nika Prize "For contributions to the motion picture sciences, criticism and education" (2013).

6. O.M. Sulkin: film critic, journalist. Graduated from Moscow State University. Member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Worked as head department of foreign

cinema in the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1981–1987), editor-in-chief of the magazine *Soviet Film*. Co-author of the project of the film encyclopedia *Video Guide*. Since 1995 he has been living and working in the USA. He lectured at the UN, at a number of US universities. He was a film reviewer and reporter for the *New Russian Word* newspaper, and is currently a correspondent for the *Voice of America* Russian Service. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Itogi*, *New World*, etc., in the newspapers: *Vedomosti*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *Evening New York*, etc. Author of books: *Natalia Andreichenko* (1984); *Yuri Ozerov* (co-authored with N. Sumenov) (1986); *Oleg Yankovsky* (1987).

7. F.I. Andreev (1933–1998): film critic, journalist. He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party and the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR. Worked as a deputy editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1980–1990). From 1990 to 1998 he lived and worked in the USA, where, in particular, he was Executive Director of the Brighton Beach Borough Management Association (New York). Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Crocodile*, in the newspapers *Soviet Culture*, *Soviet Cinema*, etc. Author of books: *Ivan Pereverzev* (1982); *Oleg Tabakov* (1983).

8. S.A. Lavrentiev (born 1954): film critic, film critic Studied at Acting Department of the Sverdlovsk Theater School. Graduated from the Film Studies Department of VGIK (1982). He served in the Nizhny Tagil Drama Theater (1975–1977), worked as a researcher at the *Illusion* cinema of the USSR State Film Fund, researcher at Institute of Cinema History, editor-consultant of the *Ostankino* TV channel, editor-consultant of the film screening service of the *TV-6* channel, director of film programs at a number of film festivals. He taught at the Moscow University "Synergy", the Moscow Institute of Television and Radio Broadcasting "Ostankino". He acted in the films: *Prishvin's Paper Eyes* (1989), *Concert for a Rat* (1995), *Specialist* (2009), *The Firebird* (2021). Published in the magazines: *Cinema Art*, *Soviet Screen*, *Seance*, in the newspapers: *Screen and Scene*, *Literary Newspaper*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets* and others. Author of books: *Igor Maslennikov: Creative portrait* (1988); *Clint Eastwood. Furious and beautiful* (2001); *Red Western* (2009); *Mosfilm directors* (2021).

9. A.A. Osipov (? – 1991): film critic. Published in the magazine *Soviet Screen / Screen*. Author of the book: *Actors of French Cinema* (1991). He died in 1991.

10. V.I. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006): film critic and historian. Graduated from the Belarusian State University (1959) and film history department of VGIK (1968). Ph.D. (1997), professor. He was a member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. He worked as a researcher at the State Film Fund (1963–1966), in office of foreign cinema at VGIK (1966–1968), editor of the foreign department in the journal *Cinema Art* (1968–1970), researcher at the Institute of Art History (1970–1974), researcher at the Research Institute of History and Theory of Cinema (1974–1977), researcher at the State Institute of Art Studies (1977–2006), professor at VGIK (1986–2006) and at the State University of Management (2000–2006). Published in scientific collections, in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Film Studies Notes*, *Literary Review*, etc. Author of books: *Alexander Ford* (1968, together with V. Dmitriev, the book was not published due to A. Ford's emigration to the West); *Anatomy of a myth: Brigitte Bardot* (1975) (together with V. Dmitriev); *Meetings with the X muse* (1981) (together with V. Demin, I. Weisfeld and R. Sobolev); *Barbara Brylska* (1984); *Figurative language of mass media* (1986); *Poetics of photography* (1989) (together with V. Stigneevev); *Selected Russian cinemas* (2006). Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia.

Articles of the *Soviet Screen* magazine in the first four months of 1986 practically did not differ in subject matter and manner of presentation of the material from publications of 1983–1985. And this is not surprising, since the active "perestroika" processes in Soviet cinema began in May 1986, when the memorable V Congress of Soviet Filmmakers took place (May 13–15, 1986), many key figures were not elected as delegates. At this congress and the subsequent meeting of the new secretariat of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR (it took place on May 29, 1986), the contents of the *Soviet Screen* magazine and its active editor-in-chief D.K. Orlov (1935–2021) has been heavily criticized.

Realizing that a chair staggered under him, D.K. Orlov made an attempt to keep his position, emphasizing in the editorial of issue 18, handed over to the set on August 1, 1986, that the editors "with special attention are studying critical remarks against our publication", since and the V All-Union Congress of Cinematographers loudly, honestly and uncompromisingly spoke about the need for fundamental changes and in film production, and in the film distribution system, and in the work of the creative union itself.

This led to the conclusion that one of the most important, paramount conditions for solving pressing problems, overcoming the crisis situation is to increase the level of criticism, designed, first of all, to restore the criteria for assessing the ideological content, artistry, and aesthetic value of film works that have been blurred in recent years. The ability to call a spade a spade, to tell the authors of a failed picture, despite the faces, albeit bitter, but the truth, the desire to support true talent on its difficult path to the audience – this is what filmmakers and all our readers expect from a film magazine today ... What should the Soviet screen be like?

Both the editorial team and our numerous authors – film critics, critics, filmmakers of various professions – are now living with thoughts about this. Maybe, readers have already noticed certain changes in the content and design of the latest issues of the magazine. But, of course, its restructuring cannot be limited to what has already been done.

Too significant are the claims against the magazine, expressed both from the rostrum of the congress of cinematographers, and from the secretariat of our creative Union, and in the press. Undoubtedly, in determining its current activities, the editors will not pass by a single critical remark, each of which is prompted by a high interest in ensuring that the *Soviet Screen* as a mass, critical and journalistic illustrated publication meets the most important tasks of today (K..., 1986: 3).

D. Orlov always followed the rules of the game and, responding to criticism of the magazine, thathe "carried out the line of Goskino", rightly pointed out that "what other line, in fact, should he have pursued, being his official organ?" (Orlov, 2011).

And, indeed, after the 5th Congress of Cinematographers of the USSR, D. Orlov began to significantly change the content of the *Soviet Screen* magazine, proving from issue to issue that he was able to "rebuild" and effectively follow the course of state and cinematic changes. Let us suggest that if, at the end of 1986, D. Orlov would not have been replaced in the chair of the editor-in-chief Y. Rybakov (1931–2006), the *Soviet Screen* magazine would be no less critically "sharp" and "perestroika"...

At the end of 1986, the theater scholar Y. Rybakov took over as editor-in-chief of *Soviet Screen*. Despite the general decline in film attendance in the USSR, the circulation of the magazine in 1987–1988 remained at the level of 1986: 1.7 million copies. At the same time, Y. Rybakov initially left the editorial board of the *Soviet Screen* in the same composition (and the deputy editor was, as under D. Orlov, film critic F. Andreev), significant changes occurred in it only at the beginning of 1988, when famous film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993).

The way Y. Rybakov saw the *Soviet Screen* can be judged from the editorial article, published in early 1987: "Changed in the life of the country, in our life. The fresh wind of perestroika, glasnost, and the struggle for the moral health of society seemed to have moved like an avalanche the stale layers of habits acquired in the recent past towards inertia of thought and action. Change. The delegates of the 5th Congress of Cinematographers of the USSR, which took place in May last year, also visibly felt them. A frank business conversation, which was heard from the rostrum of this representative forum of screen masters, allowed in a free creative discussion to identify, identify "pain points" and "bottlenecks" in film production and distribution. It became clear that without new approaches to urgent problems, without a collective thought based not on good-hearted wishes, but on a deep and honest analysis of the existing situation, it is impossible to reach a qualitatively new round of creativity. Today, cinema is going through a difficult, but very interesting and fruitful time of renewal. Not everything is working out the way we would like. There are still gray films made by an indifferent hand (and, alas, there are quite a few of them), still quite unresolved, and sometimes even unresolved issues in film distribution, still coming out on the screens, sometimes criticism still rolls along the familiar, well-trodden rut. ... Perestroika is a big and complex job, not designed for one day. And the new year 1987 coming into its own, the year when the entire progressive world will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, now takes on his shoulders all our unfinished business. To continue what has been started so actively, not to calm down, not to turn halfway – this is today the main task, the duty of the cinematographer to the time" (Na..., 1987: 2).

As can be seen from these theses, the new program of Y. Rybakov was not much different from what D. Orlov on the pages of the magazine in the summer of 1986. *Soviet Screen* was ready to follow the current party guidelines and decisions of the new leadership of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR, with all the necessary references and citations. Moreover, the November issue of the magazine for 1987 traditionally placed on the first cover an anniversary inscription, in this case "70 years of the Great October Revolution", and then came the



corresponding quite ideologically consistent materials written by representatives of the older generation of film critics and film critics.

At the same time, it was under Y. Rybakov, several "youth" issues of the *Soviet Screen* were published, where articles by young film critics were published, many of which were sharply out of step – both in style and in material – from the usual rut of this still mass magazine.

However, the continuing decline in film attendance and, on the contrary, the growing distribution of video did their job: in 1989, the circulation of the magazine reached one million copies. In addition, instead of 24 issues per year, only 18 issues began to appear (though with an increase in the volume of each issue from 24 to 32 pages).

In 1989, the *Soviet Screen* also reacted to the invasion of video, a heading *Videocompass* appeared on its pages, which was initially led by film critic S. Kudryavtsev (then he was replaced by film critic A. Vyatkin).

Here we agree with N. Shishkin: "Affecting ideological and legal aspects of the video boom, a publication represented by video enthusiasts ... defended the freedom to choose spectacles without ideological interference, took the side of an ordinary video amateur who, by accident, could end up in the dock even because of watching a Western video film at home. When the deepening process of liberalization led to the removal of this problem from the agenda, its place was taken by the issue of video piracy, in the approaches to which the editorial staff showed a certain loyalty" (Shishkin, 2020: 930).

Meanwhile, the "perestroika" tendencies in the USSR were rapidly gaining momentum: on May 23, 1989, a decree was issued on the restoration of Soviet citizenship by director Y. Lyubimov. In July of the same year, the journal *Novy Mir* for the first time in the USSR began publishing A. Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago*; On November 9, 1989, the destruction of the Berlin Wall began, and on January 30, 1990, the USSR agreed to the unification of Germany. On November 18, 1989, the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the restructuring of creative, organizational and economic activities in Soviet cinematography" was issued, which practically approved the previously given permission to create cooperatives, including cooperatives for the production and distribution of films. And most importantly, in 1989 there was a change of power in many countries of Eastern Europe.

All this led to the fact that the editorial course of Y. Rybakov began to be perceived by the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR as not corresponding to the dynamics of the "perestroika" events, and in the spring of 1990, one of the then secretaries of the Union of Cinematographers, film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993).

Despite all the changes, the circulation of the *Soviet Screen* in 1990 still amounted to a million copies. But the general trends of the economic crisis, reinforced by a sharp drop in attendance and cinema halls and the flourishing of pirated video, led to very negative trends for the existence of the magazine, about which V. Demin wrote in his article in September 1990: "We are clipped wings, increasing the price per issue two and a half times. The rise in price of paper is accompanied by rise in price of printing services. *Soyuzpechat* is going to charge twice as much for distribution. Let's add a rather harsh tax law. This means that our income, which has been greatly reduced, which, however, does not go to either the staff of the journal or its authors, will still be cut off by the tax rate.

Today we have a million subscribers. How many will there be on January 1, 1991? Half? Quarter? What part can be compensated by the lost retail? One tenth? The equation is obtained with a very large number of unknowns, to which new ones will be added, also not yet known. More than fifty private and cooperative journals have already been registered in Moscow. ... Someone was able to contact a foreign printing base, much newer than ours. What response will be born in the soul of the reader when these and other publications lie next to the *Screen*? How will our polygraphy and paper sound in the conditions of this competitive struggle? And what about our content? ... Forecasts, even the most desperate ones, are worth absolutely nothing – we have nothing to compare our tomorrow with, we have not yet lived in the conditions of the book and magazine market" (Demin, 1990: 3).

The year 1991 showed that V. Demin's fears were largely justified: the circulation of the magazine (from the name of which the word "Soviet" was removed) fell sharply to 0.4–0.7 million copies, with a final trend of temporary stabilization at the level of 400 thousand copies.

In 1991, the editorial board changed in the journal: instead of F. Andreev, who emigrated to the USA, the position of deputy editor was taken by film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993),

the second deputy editor was the journalist and film critic V. Kichin, the journalist B. Pinsky became the responsible secretary.

The materials of the magazine became more “free”, politicized, calling for further “democratic changes” in society, which could not but cause sharp resistance from the conservative part of the Ekran audience, who perceived these changes extremely negatively.

The third and sixth issues of *Screen* in 1991 featured characteristic letters from this category of readers:

“I subscribed to your magazine for 15 years. It's a pity to leave, but such a magazine as *Demin* made it together with like-minded people is not interesting to me. Now the magazine publishes only that material that coincides with the views of *Demin*, where everyone is trying to kick the party, one way or another. Who is angry, and who is with a cheerful gleam in his eyes. Because of this, the journal lost a lot of what it had, after all, even the usual objectivity. So we get a sad picture: you no longer go to the cinema, because they have recently overfed us with negativity, and now you have to give up the magazine as well” (V. Balandina).

“Mr. *Demin*, V.P. Since 1957, I regularly received the *Soviet Screen* by subscription and kept all the issues, but this year I canceled the subscription. Cause? Rejection of the political coloring of the magazine, its aesthetic norms. Your unbridled cosmopolitanism could still be tolerated to some extent, but Russophobia, skillfully camouflaged and presented in every issue, is not worth enduring. ... I wish you to lose all your subscribers and burn out, but for you personally, as they used to say in the old days, neither the bottom nor the tire” (V.K.).

“For twenty-two years I have regularly read your magazine, but I am ashamed of the new *Soviet Screen*, and I did not subscribe to it for the 91st year. I will take it in my hands only when the “naked” ones disappear from it. ... I'm tired of tearing pages out of a magazine, I have two sons, and I'm ashamed that they see these vulgarities. Why does the state need depravity? We need money, and behind this money they forgot about morality. Goodbye. I'm crying!”

“I have always subscribed to your magazine, but this year I will not. Money sorry? No no. That's not why at all. Your magazine prints more filth than any other magazine prints. I am a man, not a bore and not a hypocrite, but not a dirty trick either. I will see a naked woman anyway if I need to. It is not necessary for me to look at this “beauty” in a magazine. And then on the inserts of some whores you print, on the covers – what the men are ashamed of...” (Musein).

V. *Demin* was not too lazy to answer these letters, emphasizing that the magazine does not and did not have any Russophobia, that “we regularly publish two, three opinions about the film”, and “who wrote where how many millimeters of a female naked shoulder can be shown, from which millimeter to start the ban?” that “the very principle of publicity already presupposes a dispute with a point of view, even the most authoritative one, if it is incorrect. ... truth for the sake of truth” (*Demin*, 1991: 22, 4).

But it can be assumed with a high degree of probability that the majority of readers who unsubscribed from *Screen* magazine in 1991 were not affected in any way by such answers. In 1992–1998, the circulation of the magazine continued to fall sharply, which eventually (already with a circulation of 40 thousand copies) led to its disappearance ...

## 2. Materials and methods

The research methodology consists of key philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and the social in cognition; scientific, film studies, sociocultural, culturological, hermeneutical, semiotic approaches proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aronson, 2003; Bakhtin, 1996; Balazs, 1935; Bibler, 1990; Casetti, 1999; *Demin*, 1966; Eco, 1976; Eisenstein, 1964; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; 2011; Kuleshov, 1987; Lotman, 1973; 1992; 1994; Mast and Cohen 1985; Razlogov, 1984; Sokolov, 2010; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on a research content approach (identifying the content of the process under study, taking into account the totality of its elements, the interaction between them, their nature, turning to facts, analyzing and synthesizing theoretical conclusions, etc.), on a historical approach-consideration of the concrete historical development of the declared theme of the project.

*Research methods*: complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis, methods of theoretical research: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; methods of

empirical research: collection of information related to the subject of the project, comparative-historical and hermeneutic methods.

### 3. Discussion and results

– *ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience*

Despite the fact that at the end of 1986 there was a change of editor-in-chief at the *Soviet Screen*, and the growth of “perestroika” tendencies regarding Soviet cinema continued, in the approaches to exposing the “harmful influence of bourgeois cinema”, the *Soviet Screen* of 1986–1987 largely retained the traditions of previous decades.

For example, film critic O. Sulkin, in his article “Aggression of Pseudo-Culture”, who reviewed A. Kukarkin’s book “Bourgeois Mass Culture” (Kukarkin, 1985), wrote that “by sharpening the argumentation, convincingly revealing the reactionary essence of the pseudo-aesthetic manifestations of the ideology of imperialism, we will be able not only to more successfully resist the attacks of enemy propaganda, but also to seize the initiative, at the same time to strengthen the atmosphere of ideological and moral exactingness among the workers of our socialist culture. ... The ideological struggle does not forgive carelessness, underestimation of the harmfulness of models of bourgeois consumer goods. A. Kukarkin's book ... convincingly shows the destructive impact of Western pseudo-culture on the human psyche and mind” (Sulkin, 1986: 22).

In a similar vein, international journalist M. Ozerov (1944–2022) wrote on the pages of the magazine, emphasizing that in American “mass culture” is reviving with renewed vigor such a phenomenon as anti-Sovietism. It is precisely among the anti-Soviet films, moreover, of the most rude kind and, moreover, “tuned” to violence, that Stallone's films, the action films *Red Dawn* (USA, 1984), *Firefox* (USA, 1982) and a huge number of other frank fakes (Ozerov, 1986: 20-21).

In an article by another well-known international journalist, M. Sturua (1928–2021), the attention of the readers of the *Soviet Screen* was drawn to the connection between the Pentagon and Hollywood: Wall Street finances militaristic movies. The Pentagon acts as their “idea producer”. Such, for example, is the film *Patriot* (USA, 1986), the main character of which is Superman from the sabotage squads of the US Navy. Incidentally, now Hollywood has become a genuine mouthpiece of state terrorism. This is evidenced by such films as *The Green Berets* (USA, 1968), *Top Gun* (USA, 1986), praising vulture pilots based on aircraft carriers, *American Anthem* (USA, 1986), the series of films *Rambo* and some others. The anti-Sovietism of movies labeled “Made in the Pentagon and Hollywood” literally cries out to the heavens. ... The military doctrine of the United States proceeds from the principle of the admissibility of nuclear war, survivability and victory in it. That is why the Pentagon is acquiring first-strike weapons, that is why it is implementing the Star Wars program – plans for the militarization of space. Yes, the destruction will be great, say the strategists of the Pentagon, but in the end, America will survive and erect the building of “Pax Americana” – “the American world” on the ruins of civilization. In full accordance with this extremely dangerous doctrine, Hollywood is churning out films like *Mad Max* (1979), whose heroes are supermen, in the end, America will survive and on the ruins of civilization will erect the building of “Pax Americana” – “the American world.” In full agreement with this extremely dangerous doctrine, Hollywood has made films like *Mad Max*, in which the heroes are supermen who recreate the “New Jerusalem” from nuclear ruins based on a cult of strength. Similar ideas underlie the film *Terminator* (USA, 1984). The only difference is that the main character in *Mad Max* is a policeman, while the main character in *Terminator* is a robot (Sturua, 1987: 2-3).

Further, M. Sturua reasonably noted that the process of quite a definite politicization of American cinema and, if I may say so, the “cinematographization” of American politics, it was no coincidence that it crossed itself with Reagan, his presidency. The point, I repeat, is by no means that Reagan was a film actor in the past. The fact is that with his coming to the White House to power in the United States, the most militaristic, anti-communist circles, having imperial ambitions, but calling us the “evil empire”, seized control. The crusade they declared against socialism and progress began to dominate the ideology and culture of America, distorting and distorting them. Therefore, the camera turns into a weapon. And not only in a figurative sense. ... In the film *Born American* (1986), overseas thugs sow death and destruction in the Soviet Union. In the painting *Amerika* (1987) will show the “Soviet” occupation of the United States. How far all

this is from the ideas of friendship among peoples, from the principles of peaceful coexistence! (Sturua, 1987: 2-3, 11).

In the same 1987, journalists Y. Algunov and V. Orlov emphasized that the 70th anniversary of October is celebrated not only by us and our friends in the world. Those who do not like the Soviet way of life are also "celebrated". They "celebrate", of course, in a peculiar way: first of all, strengthening, hardening, forcing anti-Soviet propaganda. All lines. Through all channels. And not least with the help of cinema and television, the audience of which is tens and hundreds of millions of people. ... An unbiased display of both our history and socialist reality has been and remains the strictest taboo for the American film industry. But slander and lies have become more sophisticated. Fortunately, there were some of the "former" who were eager to share "knowledge" (Algunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

However, further, in the order of objectivity, they drew the attention of readers to the "sober, bitter realism of O. Stone's films" *Platoon* (USA, 1986) and *Salvador* (USA, 1986), characterizing them as philosophical movies about the moral consequences of aggression, however, stipulating that, unfortunately, such examples can be counted on the fingers (Algunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

Since 1988, such articles with clearly expressed anti-American and anti-bourgeois accents no longer appeared on the pages of the "perestroika" *Soviet Screen*.

And the then worldview of Soviet film critics of the older generation can be judged from the article of one of the most consistent (in the 1950s – 1970s) conductors of the Marxist-Leninist teaching in film studies S. Freilich (1920–2005): "There is a great confusion in our society now . We are used to living in slavery. With a one-party system, it was easier, you knew in the evening what would happen in the morning, they would give you instructions, they would tell you where to go, what to do. And now we do not know how the Communist Party Congress will end. The paradox is that our cinema now lives off a stagnant period. During the period of stagnation, paintings were banned, many of which have now won international prizes. When you think about it, the usual notion of the "torment of creativity" is filled with historical content" (Freilikh, 1990: 12-13).

As a result, by the end of the 1980s "bourgeois cinematography, which for a long time was a "vague object" of ideological denunciation for Soviet viewers and critics, has ceased to be such. The editors of [*Soviet Screen*] were faced with the task of eliminating the audience's illiteracy with regard to previously banned film production and overcoming their own inferiority complex, which has political, social and professional roots. ... [But] the rehabilitation of bourgeois cinema initiated by socio-political transformations did not cause a noticeable increase in the number of publications about it, only the tone changed" (Shishkin, 2020: 700, 702).

– articles on the history of Western cinema

With regard to the history of Western cinematography, the *Soviet Screen* magazine did not change its traditions even during the period of "perestroika" and still spoke warmly about the work of Chaplin. True, now the authors openly expressed regret that many important films of this great cinematographer were not bought for the Soviet film distribution, or bought too late.

For example, director E. Ryazanov (1927–2015) wrote as follows: "Charlie Chaplin for me and, I think, for the vast majority of the world's population, of course, is a genius and precisely a genius for good. ... Another thing is curious: before the war, our country bought films of the world comedian. ... But *The Great Dictator* (1940) was not bought. He was not shown to the people, who at that time were waging a desperate battle not for life, but for death with the fascist hordes. But the picture of Chaplin would have helped the fighters, she debunked the enemy, destroyed him with laughter, struck, as they say, on the spot. Who banned Chaplin's anti-fascist movie? Was it Stalin himself, who saw that some analogies could be associated with him? Or one of the devoted lackeys? Don't know. ... True, our country did not buy films of the brilliant master further. We got acquainted with the films *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), *A King in New York* (1957), *A Countess From Hong Kong* (1967), *Limelight* (1952) belatedly ... We were explained that Chaplin's films are so expensive that for the price of one of his films, you can buy a dozen others. And these "others" were bought. The country was flooded with foreign cheap crafts in every sense, the brains of the audience were stuffed with commercial crap, and our people did not see the films that the whole world watched. In fact, Chaplin was stolen from the people. For films should be watched when they are made, and not decades later. Each film is a child of its time and acts in its context" (Ryazanov, 1989: 25-27).

E. Ryazanov was echoed by film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006): "I remember the beginning of the seventies, when we finally acquired and released on the screen several great Chaplin films.

These were *The Gold Rush* (1925) and *The Circus* (1928) almost half a century late, *Limelight* (1952) and *A King in New York* (1957) with a delay of only 15-20 years... Then, in the early seventies, Chaplin's films suffered a crushing failure at our box office. Any *Queen of the gas station* could then easily knock out *A King in New York*. I will not talk about the mediocrity of our film distribution, which ruined masterpieces in the bud – gray advertising, complete lack of control over the premiere situation of "old" films, absolute conviction in their "unwatchability" – what a professional word! – and immediate shoving off the screen into film storage. Many thousands of viewers simply did not have time to get to the cinemas, many, many thousands remained in the dark that Chaplin's films were in our bins, and to this day – I was convinced of this more than once! – they simply don't know that *Circus* and *Gold Rush*, *Lamplights* and *A King in New York* were bought by us and seemed to be on the screens. And again at meetings with the audience questions, notes: when will we finally see Chaplin? Rolling results were shameful and, as usual, unpublished. But they should have been published today for moral self-purification" (Zorky, 1989: 28-29).

Taking this opportunity, we will finally present here the statistics of the USSR Goskino, intended in the 1970s for purely official purposes: *A King in New York*: 12.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration; *Gold Rush*: 10.6 million viewers; *Circus*: 8 million viewers; *Lamplights*: 6.4 million viewers. And here A. Zorky is right: the attendance of the *Queen of the Gas Station* was much higher: 34.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration, and yet it was far from the highest grossing Soviet comedy film of the 1960s and 1970s.

In "perestroika" *Soviet Screen / Screen* also published positive articles about the work of B. Keaton (Chernenko, 1987: 20-21), I. Bergman (Utilov, 1991: 23); G. Garbo (Trauberg, 1990: 24-25), V. Leigh (Utilov, 1991: 25), R. Taylor (Kompanichenko, 1991: 12-13), M. Rökk (Mosina, 1991: 6), D. Durbin (Bosenko, 1991: 6-7), M. Lanza (Shishov, 1989: 27), G. Philipe (Bozhovich, 1991: 10-11), J. Gabin (Braginsky, 1991: 13).

At the same time, film critic V. Utilov (1937–2011) wrote that the best roles of Vivien Leigh have always been a cry of pain and a challenge to compromise, hypocrisy and indifference. This is the secret of Vivien Leigh: a great actress, a caring person, a lady with a broad and generous soul (Utilov, 1991: 25). And Ingrid Bergman was given something more than the ability to perfectly clearly and emotionally convey the feelings of a woman in love, experiencing unbearable psychological pressure, doubting and finally experiencing her discovery of a woman. With her heroines, Mystery returned to the screen: incapable, joyful, knowing no barriers of love-instinct, love-gift, love-rock. On top of that, this actress was perfectly cinematic (Utilov, 1991: 23).

Film expert V. Bozhovich (1932–2021), clearly exaggerating and obscuring the situation in the Soviet film distribution of the 1950–1960s, composed an entire ode to the remarkable French actor Gerard Philip: our gloomy screen of the 1950s and 1960s of the dazzling Gerard Philip in the role of Fanfan-Tulip. This jubilant hero burst into the circle of inhibited characters, who, without ideological sanction and author's permission, seemed to be unable to take a step, burst into this jubilant hero, like a messenger from another world. He did not look back at anyone, was not afraid of anything, did not reflect: he was a man of action and obedience only to his own emotional impulse, a direct outburst of feeling. ... Movies like *Fanfan La Tulipe* (1952) and *Great maneuvers* (*Les Grandes manoeuvres*, 1955) illuminated by the brilliance of the French tradition, the skill of their creators and the smile of Gerard Philip, and now, as if alive, stand before the eyes of our memory (Bozhovich, 1991: 10-11).

Other retro-portraits of actors of past years were painted with a haze of nostalgia:

For many, it pops up before their eyes: a huge white staircase from *The Girl of My Dreams*, a magnificent, billowing dress, a dazzling smile and ... gilded shoes with huge heels. From a musical phrase to another, from the top step to the bottom step, these heels jump, beating the beat of an ever-accelerating melody, until the actress is at the foot, face to face with the audience ... Music and dance almost from the cradle joined the life of Marika Rökk, so that, it seems, her biography also obeyed their stormy, impetuous rhythm, which knows no respite (Mosina, 1991: 6).

Music of amazing beauty and sadness. A graceful girl with a gentle soulful face. And an incredibly handsome young man in military uniform, circling his partner in a captivating waltz ... Such a sad and wonderful memory was *Waterloo Bridge* (1940) in the memory of those whose childhood and youth fell on the fifties. The waltz "Burning Candles" then sounded from the stage and on the dance floors. Photos of Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor, even in the monstrous performance of local craftsmen, dispersed from the shelves and from under the floor ... Taylor

brought to the cinema – in addition to male beauty rare even for Hollywood – his own theme: a man whose talent manifests itself in love, in relationships with women ([Komanichenko, 1991: 12-13](#)).

We lived in poverty. Our girls are like a sigh of barracks melancholy. Plain black aprons and round collars... But Deanna Durbin. Vivien Leigh, Milica Korjus, Marika Rökk, Sony Henie, Francesca Gaal! *The Great Waltz* (1938) – we brought to life from the screens of the old Arbat ([Zorky, 1991: 19](#)).

An article by film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) about the key actor of the "Tarzaniada" J. Weissmuller (1904–1984) was more academic, although also not devoid of personal memories: "I came across an article in a foreign magazine about the last years of Johnny Weissmuller's life. He settled in Acapulco, the reporter wrote, exists on welfare, is practically a beggar. From a photograph on a magazine page, a haggard old face with protruding cheekbones, sunken cheeks, with an extinct look looked out. Sadly thought: and idols are not eternal. He really was an idol – Johnny Weissmuller, Tarzan, the hero of the childhood of people like me – fifty years old ... The canonical motives of the epic in the films with Weissmuller turned out to be emphasized, pointed, bulging. Here it became especially clear that with the help of Tarzan, nature is protected from people in general, from people as such. Tarzan fights not only with selfish and greedy Europeans, he is also at enmity with the local African population, thus placing himself outside the framework of the human community and finding himself "on the side" of nature. At the same time, this outcast cannot exist without an institution, which, it is true, is characteristic not only of man, but of almost all vertebrates, namely, without a family. From series to series, Tarzan acquired life partners. First, Jane appeared, rescued almost from the cauldron of savages, then a baby who miraculously survived a plane crash and was picked up by the "king of the jungle". Tarzan, Jane and the Kid, having gathered together, formed, as it were, the holy family of the jungle" ([Mikhalkovich, 1988: 17-18](#)).

On the pages of the *Soviet Screen* appeared, of course, and articles about filmmakers, whose work, although gone down in history, was not yet distant from the moment of publication for decades.

So film critic V. Dmitriev (1940-2013) published a review of the book "Luchino Visconti. Articles. Evidence. Statements" (1986), where he evaluated the work of this outstanding director respectfully, but ambiguously ([Dmitriev, 1987: 21](#)).

And the film critic K. Razlogov (1946-2021) wrote about a much more controversial figure in Italian cinema art as follows: "Introducing the audience to the paintings of the Pasolini retrospective held in Moscow and in a number of other cities ... I, with a sense of awkwardness, had to begin my speech with a blatant banality: "Who would have thought until very recently that this is possible... ". Of course, I immediately apologized to the audience for this common cliché, and yet – *The Flower of a Thousand and One Nights (Il Fiore delle mille e una notte, 1974)* just a few years ago even filmmakers had no right to watch. And now it is watched by "just" viewers who have bought a ticket for a particular session. Of course, the screening of Pier Paolo Pasolini's films in our country, although not as wide as we would like, is a sensation. One of the most complex and controversial figures in the culture of this century, the poet, writer, cinematographer, publicist, scientist, Pasolini combined such a number of talents and used them so recklessly that not only in our country, but also in his homeland, he often caused a shock reaction. Christianity and demonstrative homosexuality, Freudianism and Marxism in their own way focused the extremes of his nature, refracting in all those areas where he had a chance to create" ([Razlogov, 1989: 26-27](#)).

And absolutely unusual for Soviet film critics was an article by E. Tirdatova, who in 1988 dared to write a long positive article about director Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), who was categorically condemned in the USSR: "Hitchcock – this name sounded to us, "stagnant", fascinating. Hitchcock was frightened like a terrible beech: he put supposedly pathological "horror films". This incarnation of all the abominations of capitalist society was not allowed into our closed, closed from alien influences, pure and immaculate world. ... Yet before I say what Hitchcock did, I'll tell you what he didn't do. He did not deal with ghouls, ghouls, monsters, zombies and other evil spirits. So all sorts of Frankensteins, Draculas, Nosferatu, as well as King Kong are not his part. And Boris Karloff, like Bela Lugosi, he never shot, but shot more and more beautiful superstars: Ingrid Bergman, Grace Kelly, Cary Grant, James Stewart, Gregory Peck, Henry Fonda. ...

To dot all the "i": a detective in its purest form – as an intellectual investigation – he was also of little interest. So what is Hitchcock? Hitchcock is the ultimate master of suspense. With the exception of a few works, all of his paintings are made in the thriller genre. Their indispensable affiliation is a riddle, a mystery, a crime. Ironic suspension is a must. Hitchcock is a master of

subtle psychological analysis. Hitchcock is style. Hitchcock is taste. Hitchcock is quality. "Light" camera and clear simplicity – this is also Hitchcock. Hitchcock is anti-literary, he is cinematic. ... The main thing for him – using all the specifics of cinema – editing, rhythm, angles, sound effects – is to create an atmosphere of tension. ... In my opinion, he has achieved the very balance that everyone who works in cinema dreams of deep down – the balance between spectacle and Art, commerce and Creativity” (Tirdatova, 1988: 12-14).

The last issue of *Screen* in 1991 was almost entirely devoted to the history of the film distribution of "trophy" Western cinema in the USSR.

A fragment from the memoirs of the film critic I. Manevich (1907–1976) was published there, in which he described how, in fact, the fund of the so-called “trophy films” was formed: “The Minister of Cinematography asked if I would like to urgently fly to Berlin. Naturally, I agreed. ... Bolshakov explained that my task was to find and urgently send a batch of color German films to Moscow. ... [Back] with me to Moscow flew the famous *Girl of my dreams* (*Die Frau meiner Träume*, 1944) starring Marika Röckk. I returned to my editorial cell on the fourth floor and now met films from the Reichsfilmarchiv only in the cinema, where for many years they helped Glavkinoprokat to exceed the plan and receive awards” (Manevich, 1991: 4-5).

And the editor-in-chief of *Screen*, V. Demin (1937–1993), recalling his childhood, wrote that when the mysterious “New Film Program” appeared in cinemas in the late 1940s and early 1950s, everyone knew that this was another the so-called "trophy" film. Precisely what “so-called”, because, having defeated Germany, to take American, English and French films as a trophy – only we Russians can do this. ... Of course, the inevitable selection was carried out here too. Not a single Hitchcock film was given to us. Why scare compatriots? ... But the *Stagecoach* (1939) was brought – under the title *The journey will be dangerous...* As for Robert Riskin and Frank Capra with their socialist realism based on the Roosevelt program, they were presented almost completely... Excuse the expression, not a single striptease was presented to us at that time. But there were, there were extremely daring ladies' dresses, on stage or even in everyday life, and a millionaire recovering. And most importantly, in these films, to our amazement, there was a body, feminine, attracting, bewitching, lusting, or masculine, keeping a physical memory from work or a fight, with its own voice that does not coincide with the voice of pure reason. ... The trophy film was an anti-culture sally. Did Stalin understand this, did Zhdanov, Molotov, or anyone else understand it, but they introduced us to the feeling of a free person, not a cog in the state, not a person who is interesting because she is destined for something, but simply a person who exists in real life. space of life, without our censorship cuts (Demin, 1991: 2-3).

Recalling the release of the famous *Sun Valley Serenade* (1941) in the USSR, playwright V. Slavkin (1935–2014) wrote: What did we absorb while watching these films? We absorbed the lifestyle. Where else was there to see how others live – not us? Of course, the plot, of course, the music, but above all, the style! Yes, and music, jazz was perceived by us as life, and not as art. It was impossible to love jazz and at the same time remain a Soviet hemp in a gray Cheviot suit, with a Komsomol badge in a buttonhole. So the jazz banners intuitively understood from which side the danger came. But that's it guys, it's done! "Sun Valley Serenade" watched. Stylish people picked up the Chucha, spread the score between the guitar and the phono, someone learned the words in English... (Slavkin, 1991: 26).

Film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) was most analytical about this retro theme of the magazine, quite reasonably arguing that in the 1920s the revolution that had won in Russia and the victorious movie heroes from Hollywood” were united by “the uncertainty of the legal norms of the emerging statehood – as in conditional Wild West, and in the real circumstances of the revolutionary elements. Norms and laws matured and matured directly in the course of action and were identified with this or that character. Both the virtuous sheriff and the stern commissioner were equally sources of lawmaking, at the same time they contained the functions of a judicial search, coupled with repressive ones. In short, the Bolsheviks could probably in some ways and with some imagination enter into the position of Hollywood cowboys, who, in turn, were not alien to some of the slogans of professional fighters for the people's happiness.

Both did not get along on the issue of collectivization. Cowboys remained principled and irreconcilable individual farmers. In general, all Western movie heroes, even those who are socially close to us (like the tramp Charlie), turned out to be sworn individualists, in connection with which the iron curtain was lowered. From that moment on, our paths diverged: they moved each on their

own, relying only on themselves, and we are in formation, moving to the front step at the right moments... Therefore, in the distant twenties, American cinema was not useful to us.

The next fleeting meeting with him was almost illegal. I mean the appearance on our screens in the first post-war years of trophy pictures. Commercially, this operation turned out to be successful – films were rolled to the *darmovshchina*, which collected packed halls. But ideologically, it was an undermining and a puncture. Ragged Tarzan, a child of the jungle and the best friend of the monkey Chita, appeared as an apologist for the main bourgeois values – abstract humanity and devout individualism. But on us, the then Timurovites, he made an indelible impression. And Tarzan, and Robin Hood, and the avenger from El Dorado... acted at their own peril and risk, under personal responsibility.

...Then a date with a typical Hollywood cinematography turned out to be short-lived and therefore especially romantic. After all, it took place even before the first thaw. It was almost the only light in the window at the time of low pictures, when the moviegoer lived with visual impressions from *The Fall of Berlin* and *The Tale of the Siberian Land*. ... And, of course, our ideological overseers were right in their own way when they covered the light in the window and sent all the trophy movies to the special film fund. A person for whom the General Assembly is the Lord God did not have the right to associate with a person who relies mainly on himself (Bogomolov, 1991: 29).

– *biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors*

If in the 1950–1970s and the first half of the 1980s *Soviet Screen* tried to write mainly about "progressive" Western filmmakers, but during the "perestroika" period, the main reason for publishing creative portraits of foreign actors and directors was the appearance in the Soviet film distribution and the Moscow International Film Festival of films with their participation.

Thus, positive materials about famous Western actors appeared in the magazine: F. Ardant (Braginsky, 1987: 18); J. Birkin (Osipov, 1988: 24); L. Ventura (Braginsky, 1987: 18); M. Vitti (Babenko, 1986: 23); C. Deneuve (Amashukeli, 1990: 16-17; Rubanova, 1986: 20-21); G. Depardieu (Gérard..., 1988: 22, 24); M. Douglas (Nenasheva, 1990: 16; Pozdnyakov, 1989: 16-17); M. Jobert (Osipov, 1989: 26); A. Quinn (Tretyak, 1987: 21); J. Lang (Lavrentiev, 1989: 9-10); G. Masina (Bogemsky, 1986: 20-21); J. Marais (Mosina, 1991: 18); L. Minelli (Litvyakova, 1990: 15); O. Muti (Bogemsky, 1990: 16-18); J. Nicholson (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10); P. Noiret (Braginsky, 1987: 18-19; Makarov, 1986: 20-21); M. Placido (Bogemsky, 1987: 20-21); M. Pfeiffer (Vladimirov, 1990: 16-17; Osipov, 1991: 18); V. Redgrave (Yartsev, 1987: 18); M. Streep (Drozdova, 1990: 20-21); J.-L. Trintignant (Plakhov, 1991: 28-29); O. Hepburn (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 14-15); A. Hopkins (Anatolyev, 1987: 15); O. Sharif (Maskina, 1991: 12); A. Schwarzenegger (Kokarev, 1988: 12-13); I. Huppert (Isabelle..., 1988: 22, 24); quartet "Charlot" (Bragin, 1986: 21).

Unlike past decades, the biographies of some actors included some details of their personal lives. For example, S. Lavrentiev mentioned Jessica Lange's affair with Mikhail Baryshnikov (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10).

Analyzing the creative path of Audrey Hepburn (1929–1993), film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that her acting fate is a kind of confirmation of the idea that reality is as much subject to common myths as the "dream factory", and maybe even stronger. For the actress was persistently offered roles that were directly related to a certain mythological character. Such perseverance makes one think that here life dictated its own laws. ... Subsequently, critics noticed a curious feature of Hepburn's screen heroines: young people, the same age as these girls, almost never fell in love with them. The heroines of Audrey were adored by men who were fit to be their fathers – such is Professor Higgins, who turned a shabby flower girl into a society lady in *My Fair Lady* (1964). ... Novels with peers are a natural thing. But when passions flare up in the hearts of men very different in age, then one would want to think about obsession, about charms, in which both nymphs and undines and mermaids are excellent masters (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 14-15).

Just as accurately approached the actor's image, this time Jean-Louis Trintignant (1930–2022), film critic A. Plakhov recalled that after waking up after Lelouch's film *A Man and a Woman* (*Un homme et une femme*, 1966), the famous, Trintignant still remained "a man in himself." The smile of a happy lover and a successful professional did not become either his face or mask. Five years later, domestic distribution again prepared a meeting with the actor for us – and what a! Film *The Conformist*... The divided life of a neurasthenic, who feels at heart a stranger, an uninvited guest at the feast of life, is probably the main motive of Trintignant the actor! ... One



way or another, in his images, an otherworldly existence beyond the bounds of madness and absurdity is more and more visible (Plakhov, 1991: 28-29).

Film critic S. Lavrentyev was equally convincing about Jack Nicholson's creative credo, rightly pointing out that both in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and in *Professione: Reporter* (1975) an actor plays a person who cannot fit into the surrounding reality, who is uncomfortable in it, looking for ways to change its position. Let's say more – various variations of this model of human existence appear before us in all of Nicholson's major films. ... However, the losing heroes of Nicholson, even in the loss, do not cease to be Americans. They don't think about giving up. They perfectly feel stronger, cleaner, better than the life that defeated them. Depending on the individual traits of character, his characters can move away from life, spitting on it, become embittered or enter into a real fight with it. ... He is not just a good actor, there are many. He is an actor who expressed the essence of the era. There are only a few of them (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10).

Film expert G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) reminded the readers of the *Soviet Screen* that Giulietta Masina (1921–1994) was glorified by films created by Fellini's mighty talent, it was in them that she gave us unfading images, touching and humane, which became not only classics of cinema, but symbols of defenseless kindness, sincerity, humanity. We do not at all want to say that Masina owes everything to Fellini, here the matter is much more complicated: it was not for nothing that Fellini himself repeated more than once that he owed everything to Giulietta. The mechanism of mutual understanding, interdependence, complementarity of these two great artists, who understand each other without words on the set and guide each other, is very subtle: more than forty years of married life and joint work are worth something! (Bogemsky, 1986: 20-21).

And the film critic I. Rubanova was convinced that the beauty of C. Deneuve has no marks of history. She is for all time, because she is close to what can be called the absolute of female attractiveness. This determined, on the one hand, the multi-genre nature of her work, on the other hand, the fact that a popular actress is not perceived as a representative and, as a result, an exponent of one generation. It happens infrequently (Rubanova, 1986: 20-21).

At the same time, film critic A. Osipov (?–1991) was sure that compatriot Catherine Deneuve – actress Marlene Jaubert – took her place in French cinema. And not only thanks to talent, the ability to be concise and recognizable in every role, the ability to convey on the screen the most complex range of movements of the female soul. Marlene Jaubert captivates with her now rare poetry, the depth and unspent feelings with which her heroines live – at the same time fragile and persistent, strong and restless (Osipov, 1989: 26).

Another talented French actress, Isabelle Huppert, also received warm words on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: The best works of the actress are distinguished by concise means of expression and at the same time great inner fullness. ... After the success of *The True Story of the Lady with Camellias* (*La Storia vera della signora delle camelie / La Dame aux camelias*, 1981), criticism increasingly began to compare Isabelle Huppert with the famous Greta Garbo, the romantic movie heroine of the 1930s, the best lady with camellias world cinema. They really do have a lot in common – lyrical charm, watercolor colors, subtle nuances of psychological nuances, a kind of melancholy reticence behind which the currents of an intense inner life pulsate (Isabelle..., 1988: 22, 24).

The magazine also praised the roles of famous American actresses: Liza Minnelli and Meryl Streep:

In *Cabaret* (1972), Sally Bowles, played by Liza Minnelli, is defiantly free, talkative, flirtatious, cheerful and at the same time pathetic, defenseless, naive and lonely. The actress, capable of grading a wide variety of feelings, with her sparkling performance, a whole cascade of changing emotions, does not leave any spectator indifferent (Litvyakova, 1990: 15).

Youthful ideals, an independent mind, mentality as a value in itself, sensuality as a feature of a developed intellect formed the basis of the type that the actress brought to the American screen. By analogy with the definition of traditional female charm – “she is all made from the bottom”, one can say about Meryl Streep that she (and her eroticism as well) is “all made from the top” (Drozdova, 1990: 20-21).

A kind of aloof in this series of creative acting portraits looked like a large, filled with a positive revision of the biography of R. Reagan, who was recently cursed by the Soviet press, an article by film critic E. Tirdatova, written clearly on the opportunistic wave of the “perestroika” revival of Soviet-American interstate relations and negotiations between the heads of the USSR and the USA – by M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) and R. Reagan (1911–2004): “For about a quarter of a

century, Reagan worked in Hollywood – and during this time he played more than 50 roles. He always treated cinematography and continues to treat it with great respect, considering it a very important part of the spiritual life of Americans. ... What is the reason for such popularity? ... Reagan immediately defined his role – "a typical American." He was, as they say, "a pleasant young man", easy, contact, flexible – and in the cinema, and in life. He was the most suitable for the embodiment on the screen of the ideal of the average American, corresponding in many respects to the idea of the president. What was included in this image? First of all, it had to be a person you can rely on. Reliable, strong and strong. Restrained and laconic, as befits a real man. Endowed with a sense of justice and duty, common sense and humor. Firmness of character and sincerity will not interfere with him either. Further: business, with a practical streak. Conservative in the good sense of the word – with stable habits, stable ideals. A patriot, a true friend and a good family man. And most importantly, simple, like everyone else. Therefore, the success that he achieves can be achieved by anyone. This is the type of positive hero (with variations and deviations, of course) that Reagan brought to the screen in most of his films.

The same actor's image then organically and naturally turned into a political image. ... In 1966, Ronald Reagan took over as governor of California and was re-elected for a second term four years later. ... Many believe that Reagan's spectacular success in the televised debate with President Carter played a decisive role in the general election, in which Reagan won. This is where his many years of experience in film and television turned out to be so necessary! Almost half a century ago, Reagan, through the mouth of his favorite hero Drake McHugh, said the phrase: "Someday I will surprise this city." The words turned out to be prophetic: Reagan became the most famous person in America" (Tirdatova, 1988: 20-21).

There were noticeably fewer articles on the work of Western filmmakers in the *Soviet Screen* in the second half of the 1980s than there were biographies of actors.

So the *Soviet Screen* could not pass by the seventieth birthday of the outstanding Swedish director Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007). Film critic A. Plakhov, in our opinion, absolutely correctly wrote that the film *Fanny and Alexander* (*Fanny och Alexander*, 1982) occupies a special place in Bergman's work. The bright Renaissance worldview is not at all alien to the "Nordic temperament" ... But the real nightmare of life, embodied in the world's sorrows of the middle of the century, eclipsed smiles, deeply settled and took root in the minds of Bergman's heroes. Regardless of their personal experience, each of them carries this nightmare and fear of life, which prevents them from enjoying everyday comforts, spiritual blessings and emotional attachments. Most of Bergman's male characters are either mired in hardened egocentrism, or they are obsessed with an abstract speculative idea... But women, unlike men, are able to suffer deeply and therefore suffer doubly – both for themselves and for the strong half of humanity. But the children who suffer most of all are those who, from birth, look into the mirror of the sins and torments of their parents (Plakhov, 1989: 30).

In connection with the long-awaited release of the musical Bob Fosse *Cabaret* (1972) in the Soviet film distribution, an article devoted to his work was published in the *Soviet Screen*, which noted that Sally Bowles, "Fräulein from America," on the stage of the triumphant *Cabaret* (1972) heralded the birth of a new musical. The personal catastrophe of the heroes in front of the audience develops into a worldwide catastrophe. Contrary to all the rules of a film musical, in the finale the lovers part, but another plot that developed in parallel, with and without their participation, corresponds to the canon of the chosen genre; in a fit of social hysteria, the country throws out a hand with a swastika on its sleeve. ... In *Cabaret* the musical comes to life not because it has mastered the modern film language. Here there was a "surgical intervention" in the core of the genre. ... The director uses the roll prepared for him by tradition. Heroes and spectators are equally defenseless against the magical "expected effect". True to the terms of the genre, the characters desire intensely, but their dreams cease to come true. Flywheel stuck. Utopia is preparing a big surprise and is not exchanging for trifles. She wants to make everyone happy. And as a result, everyone immediately punishes. The atmosphere, which Sally Bowles, in the spirit of the times, calls "divine decadence", is a sublimation of the feeling of Utopia. Since dreams have ceased to come true, the genre proclaims a new law: "Let yourself!" And the heroes obediently allow themselves everything, without becoming freer or happier because of this (Maximov, 1990: 28-29).

In 1991, *Screen* published one of the first articles that positively assessed the work of the émigré director Roman Polanski. Film critic A. Plakhov wrote that his *Cul-de-sac* (1966) and especially *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967) are distinguished by the grace of ambiguity, light

and piquant irony. ... And in the rather heavy-weight *Pirates* (1986), the most charming and inspiring moment is the uprising on the ship because of the rotten meat issued to the crew. As in the *Battleship Potemkin*, turned inside out not without malice. ... *Repulsion* (1965) can serve as a practical textbook for both psychopathology and filmmaking. This is a surprisingly capacious prototype of Polanski's later works, each of which develops one or another line outlined in it. ... Freudian paraphernalia (a crack as a "hole of the subconscious", secret attraction with an incestuous tinge) reappears in *Chinatown* (1974). The motive of disastrous, pernicious, infernal female beauty will be repeated many times in Polanski. In all this, internal connections are found with the intellectual problems of European and American modernism – with Jean Cocteau and Tennessee Williams, with Bergman and Antonioni. ... *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) is the pinnacle of Polanski's work: cruel, truly diabolical energy appears in it, a fairy tale plot is rooted in psychological reality. Once again, we are faced with a masterful deformation of time and space, with the destruction of habitual inertial connections, when the viewer, together with the heroine, begins to be convinced of the unreliability of his sensations, that things sometimes are not at all what they seem to us (Plakhov, 1991: 12-14).

The work of Woody Allen was also highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*: As a true intellectual – and Woody Allen is a very intelligent comedian – he, first of all, laughs at himself: at his appearance, his problems and complexes. And, amused, he overcomes the difficulties that inevitably arise on the path of a small, ugly, frail little man in a vast, ruthless world. There is great wisdom and great democracy in this self-irony (Pritulenko, 1989: 26-27).

– interviews with Western filmmakers

The principle of choosing interviewed Western filmmakers in the "perestroika" *Soviet Screen* was approximately the same as the choice of persons for writing creative portraits, that is, completely free, but, as a rule, tied to the events of the Moscow International Film Festival and the current film distribution.

Of course, positive acting interviews dominated: J.-P. Belmondo (Osipov, 1989: 16-17); K.-M. Brandauer (Gurkov, 1987: 23-24); L. Ventura (Braginsky, 1986: 20-21); M. Vlady (Svistunov, 1989: 26-27); M. McDowell (Kolbovsky, 1990: 14); G. Depardieu (Svistunov, 1987: 11); C. Cardinale (Svistunov, 1987: 22-23); N. Kinski (Braginsky, 1987: 20); M. Mastroianni (Sulkin, 1986: 21-22); M. Mercier (Shumyatskaya, 1991: 10); J. Moreau (Osipov, 1988: 22; Smirnova, 1991: 18-19); M. Placido (Rtishcheva, 1990: 31); R. Redford (Svistunov, 1988: 20); I. Rossellini (Karakoleva, 1991: 20-21); D. Sanda (Osipov, 1989: 16-18); A. Celentano (Bogemsky, 1987: 12-13, 15); H. Shigula (Krasnova, 1988: 20-21).

Interviews with Western directors, screenwriters and producers were significantly less: M. Antonioni (Antonioni, 1986: 20-21); P. Barthel (Fomina, 1991: 31); N. Jewison (Tirdatova, 1990: 24-25); J. Dreville (Vikhlyaev, 1986: 20); K. Lanzmann (Lungina, 1989: 26-27); C. Zavattini (Weisfeld, 1986: 20-21); P. Maslansky (Rakhlina, 1991: 26-27); O. Stone (*Platoon...*, 1987: 20-21).

In 1987, even an interview with the formerly "disgraced" émigré director Milos Forman was published (Kompanichenko, 1987: 21-22). It was very friendly, but cautious, without going beyond the then "red lines" (after all, 1987 of the "Great October" was practically the last year of its existence for the *Soviet Screen*, when it was to some extent important to show a positive difference between socialism and capitalism).

- reviews of Western films that got into the Soviet film distribution

Due to the fact that at the initial stage of "perestroika" Western films continued to be released to Soviet film distribution, purchased in a limited number and subject to numerous censorship restrictions in the previous period, in 1986–1987, the *Soviet Screen* published reviews mainly of secondary ones and today thoroughly forgotten western movies.

And in some reviews, the rudiments of the magazine's former ideological approaches were still visible, when it was important in the first place to single out (if any) a "progressive political component" in Western films.

Here is how, for example, in the *Soviet Screen* Giuseppe Ferrara's Italian film *One Hundred Days in Palermo* (*Cento giorni a Palermo*, 1983) was evaluated: The film follows the traditions of documentary art. conscientiously reconstructing the events of the political chronicle. It contains real names, carefully recreated pictures of the massacres of the mafia over their victims. ... The director skillfully inflates the atmosphere of fear around the protagonist, the inevitable expectation of a terrible end. ... The progressive forces of Italy still have a long and persistent battle ahead of them against the secret syndicate of criminals that is the offspring of capitalist society.

The Italian democratic public and the Communist Party have repeatedly noted that the Mafia can be eradicated only through profound social changes in the life of all Italian society, the elimination of unemployment, social inequality, poverty and exploitation (Malyshev, 1986: 19).

Analyzing the Spanish film *Demons in the Garden* (*Demonios en el jardín*, 1982), film critic N. Savitsky drew the attention of readers to the “correctly placed” ideological accents of the film: In *Demons in the Garden* a shaky and blurry, like a shadow projection of events and moods is given, by which a huge disturbing world lives, it seems, tightly fenced off from the cramped and prosperous little world of the petty bourgeois for an outsider's gaze... At the same time, it would be an obvious stretch to perceive the movie as an open metaphor for Spanish reality during the reign of Franco. Aragon does not pretend to do this at all, we are offered something else: a kind of random sliver of time; we are allowed to feel its atmosphere, suffocating, oppressive, and, looking closely, imagine the essence of the socio-political system, which deliberately emasculates the human soul (Savitsky, 1986: 9-10).

However, evaluating the political detective story *The Seventh Target* (*La 7ème cible*, 1984), film critic A. Osipov was more critical. Noting that in this film the thought of the defenselessness of the human person in a capitalist society, which has become especially aggravated in recent years due to the rampant terrorism. A. Osipov emphasized that the authors of *The Seventh Target* do not pretend to be a serious social analysis of the topic raised. ... By the end of the film, the intrigue's amusement becomes self-sufficient. The authors' attempt to give psychological motivation to the actions of the characters turns out to be only external credibility, because this attempt is nothing more than the result of speculative plot constructions. None of the lines of the film is not fully revealed artistically. The contrived plot, the cold mannerism of directing, dramatic stamp deprive the picture of life volume and reliability. And here neither the charm of Lino Ventura, nor the talent of other performers who simply have nothing to play, nor the wonderful music of Vladimir Kosma (how often dramatic helplessness is hidden behind beautiful music) can save (Osipov, 1987: 11).

Film critic G. Maslovsky (1938–2001) reviewed the Spanish film *Stico* (1984) in a similar vein. The reviewer considered that the main task of this parable was to stigmatize a society in which the ancient slave relations were only modernized, acquired sophisticated forms (Maslovsky, 1987: 21).

Curiously, cursed by the Soviet press for the film *Confession* (*L'Aveu*, 1971), recognized as anti-communist and anti-Soviet, director Costa-Gavras was completely rehabilitated in the 1980s in connection with the release of his political drama *Missing* (1982), which sharply condemned the dictatorial regime of Pinochet.

Running a little ahead, it can also be noted that in 1990 a screening of *Confession* took place in Moscow, which was attended by the authors of this psychological drama, which was also reflected in pages of the *Soviet Screen* (Braginsky, 1990: 14; Gerdt, 1990: 14-15).

A magazine review of *Missing* in action noted that it recreates an atmosphere of total violence with amazing authenticity. It is everywhere, it seems to be dissolved in everyday life. ... Costa-Gavras exposes the dialectic of betrayal pretending to be mercy. ... *Missing* is a political film. He explores the "logic" of imperialist thinking, according to which man, whom the ancients called the "measure of things", becomes a neglected value, easily "subtracted" from life. Unrighteous power, in order to assert itself, needs deception and demagoguery. And those who cannot be deceived are destroyed. There is no need to talk about how relevant, how hot this topic is in our time (Valagin, 1986: 10-11).

Also positively evaluating *Missing*, film critic N. Tsyrukun wrote on the pages of *Soviet Screen* that almost simultaneously with Costa Gavras, American director Roger Spottiswoode made the film *Under Fire* (1983), also inspired by a true story: the murder in 1979 in Nicaragua of an American journalist who was preparing a report on the fighters of the Sandino National Liberation Front. ... The tense dramatic situation itself is deliberately weakened by them, rarefied, the narration is slowed down, so that the viewer is given time not only to follow the course of events, but also to think about them. The personal experiences of the central characters and how they gradually become aware of their involvement in the just struggle of the rebellious people for national independence and democracy come to the fore (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

N. Tsyrukun and S. Lumet's drama *Daniel* (1983) were positively evaluated: Lumet staged the picture, not counting on box office success and not hoping for the location of criticism. But, to his surprise, the film found its audience and received a high response from the progressive press. This, apparently, affected the interest of Americans, who are starting to get tired of pseudo-political tales

like *Red Dawn* (1984), *Moscow on the Hudson* (1984) or *Invasion USA* (1985), made in the spirit of cavernous anti-communism, to a film in which events related to the persecution of communists in the United States itself are recreated without any political chatter and tendentiousness, to a topic that was first heard in such a tone from the American screen. ... Lumet's film enters into controversy with a whole clip of films that have appeared in recent years in the United States, such as *First Blood* (1982), *Rambo: First Blood. Part II* (1985), *Commando* (1985), *The Delta Force* (1986), whose heroes, appearing in the guise of supermen, defend the expansionist interests of their country in Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and other far from borders of US regions. ... In Lumet's film, the problem of choice is posed rigidly: there are only two ways: resistance to the military-political machine or withdrawal from the struggle, but then the fate of the victim awaits you (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

Moving on to an analysis of the American film *Flashpoint* (1984), N. Tsyrukun wrote that it would be a stretch to call it a political film in the full sense of the word: the action-detective genre, the brilliant stunt numbers of the lead actor Chris Kristofferson do not allow the viewer to fully focus on the serious background of on-screen events: the theme of the assassination of the president runs as if on a tangent. And, perhaps, one could reproach the authors of *Flashpoint* that they only speculate on a sensitive topic, play on the interest in the mystery. This reproach would be absolutely fair, if not for one circumstance. The film unequivocally conveys the idea that the official version of the lone killer is doubtful, that there was a conspiracy organized not without the participation of the CIA and the FBI – otherwise why pursue and kill those who who is trying to find out the truth? It is precisely this thought that makes *Flashpoint*, for all its naivety, related to such serious films as *Under Fire* and *Daniel*, where, unlike the pictures that tell about the mythical "red threat", the incredible exploits of *Rambo*, etc., we are talking about real issues that are relevant to America and Americans, and the viewer can check for truth the rhetorical statements about democracy, human rights and bourgeois freedoms, in the light of which the American administration seeks to present its country to the world (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

The review of the film critic V. Dmitriev (1940-2013) on the Australian drama *Winter of Our Dreams* (1981), on the contrary, was devoid of ideologization: The film sympathizes with an individual in his searches and disappointments, in the desire to break himself and get out from the dreary and dreary everyday life. However, having got out, he risks being in a dead end of loneliness, and, to prevent this from happening, you need to go to the people involved in the business (Dmitriev, 1986: 10).

Of course, even during this period, the initial "perestroika" period, films by prominent Western screen masters sometimes got into the Soviet film distribution.

Thus, film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2021) wrote that in Francois Truffaut's stylized and ironic film *Vivement dimanche!* This is done very subtly. Truffaut suggests that his viewer is an expert and connoisseur of the chosen genre. And not just a detective, but a detective of the 1930s and 1940s, with its black and white palette, restraint of external means and the finest lace of intrigue. ... The wonderful actors Jean-Louis Trintignant and Fanny Ardant do not play real people, but conditional cinematic characters. Their action and facial expressions correspond to certain feelings and dramatic situations, but are devoid of real psychological content. And again, no pressure, the parodic beginning is a little dawning. To play like this, you need the highest class skill (Bozhovich, 1986: 10).

Analyzing the film of another outstanding French director, Bertrand Tavernier, film critic A. Plakhov, not forgetting to ritually mention that he "gained a reputation as the largest director in France, an artist of anti-bourgeois in spirit," he further noted that in *Sunday in the country* (*Un Dimanche a la campagne*, 1984), this master "will show himself as a skillful restorer of time and – what is especially important – an in-depth interpreter of it. ... he managed to change his artistic style, remaining absolutely organic in the sound of his author's voice" (Plakhov, 1986: 10).

But in relation to the films of two famous Italian directors – Francesco Rosi (1922-2015) and Ettore Scola (1931–2016) – A. Plakhov was more strict.

So about the film *The Chronicle of a Declared Death* (*Cronaca di una morte annunciata*, 1987) A. Plakhov wrote that "Rosy, following Marquez, considers ... connections within a semi-patriarchal society, oppressed by the fate of age-old prejudices. The springs of a protracted and cruel conflict are not love, passion, not even jealousy, but adherence to rituals that are senseless in their wildness, encouraging people to play roles that are unusual for them. The humanistic pathos of this movie is stated frankly and strongly, but it is prevented from being realized by an equally

frank picturesqueness, decorativeness of the environment in which the characters are placed (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

And in Scola's film *Family (La famiglia)*, 1986), according to A. Plakhov, there is no sharpness of thought that captivated in the film of the same Scola *Terrace (La terrazza)*, 1979), built on a similar technique, there is no laconic expressiveness of microplots *Le Bal* (1983), although one cannot fail to pay tribute to the wit and ingenuity of the production (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

Damiano Damiani's film *Pizza Connection* (1985) received a very restrained assessment in the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic O. Nenasheva, recognizing that Damiani is a recognized master of political detective, who knows all the intricacies of the recipe for a "movie about the mafia", further made the reasonable conclusion that in the film *Pizza Connection* the desire to please the viewer outweighs. A sharp, dynamic... tough plot and frank melodrama of the story told, softening the disturbed hearts of the audience, will not make us regret the time lost in the cinema hall. And no frontal political attacks (Nenasheva, 1989: 29).

On the other hand, film critic A. Doroshevich considered David Lean's grandiose fresco *A Passage to India* (1984), based on the novel of the same name by E.M. Forster (1924). A. Doroshevich reasonably considered that having made the film after fourteen years of silence, Lean nevertheless remained faithful to his artistic principles, remained a romantic director, professing a "great style", striving to see some kind of eternity behind the vicissitudes of individual destinies, which in this case should carry India in itself (Doroshevich, 1987: 10-11).

Claude Lelouch's melodrama *Edith and Marcel (Edith et Marcel)*, 1983) also received quite a benevolent assessment in the magazine. Film critic T. Khloplyankina (1937–1993) wrote that the director did not overload this beautiful legend with either everyday details (which, however, is probably good), or psychology. As a result, the picture turned out to be whole in its own way, although – we repeat – and greatly stretched. There is a legend about love in it, and there is love itself – to the extent that the legend allows (Khloplyankina, 1987: 21).

A notable event in the initial period of "kinoperestroika" was the release of the famous film by Wim Wenders *Paris, Texas* (1984) in the Soviet film distribution.

Film critic A. Plakhov perceived this philosophical parable as the implementer of a universal model of human feelings and relationships (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21). And film critic E. Tirdatova noted that most of the audience attracted by the name of the picture will be disappointed. True, the spectacle that will open their eyes will be simply gorgeous: a dazzling, fantastic panorama of Houston at night or a strange, bewitching picture of a deserted suburb in the evening after a thunderstorm ... There is both a mystery and a touching story about lost love with tears and repentance, and a beautiful woman: the star Nastassya Kinski... Wenders' picture is extremely simple: it is a melodrama, the plot twists and tricks of which are directly designed for audience success ... and it is extremely complex – this is a thoroughly metaphorized parable about modern man (Tirdatova, 1987: 22-23).

In 1987, F. Fellini's film *And the ship is sailing (E la nave va)*, 1983), in general, there was a unique case: an enthusiastic review of it was posted on three pages of the *Soviet Screen* with color frames from the film! There was no such case with reviews of a Western film in the magazine either before or after...

Theater and film critic T. Bachelis (1918–1999) wrote that in the film *And the ship is sailing* Fellini's mischievous fantasy shifts the images of the film into the register of a buffoon opera, where the banal coexists with the original, the monstrously tasteless with impeccably beautiful, the sublime with base and where the music never stops. ... But through the amusing collage of cinematography and opera, comedy and lyrics, tragedy soon gives its voice (Bachelis, 1987: 6-8).

But around another then novelty of the Soviet film distribution – the movie *Ginger and Fred* (1986) by Federico Fellini – on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* (albeit with a large distance gap) a dispute arose.

Film critic N. Savitsky, in his very positive review, wrote that in the film *Ginger and Fred* the director – for the umpteenth time! – creates its own special world. Quirky, enchanting, extravagant. ... In the polyphonic sound of the film, the dominant motif gradually stands out – a sarcastically merciless debunking of modern "mass media", commercial television, this insatiable moloch of today's bourgeois culture, which grinds and crushes everything under itself. Talents, minds, human souls. This is more than just a profit-making spectacle. This is a whole "philosophy", a well-thought-out system for processing the mass consciousness in the interests of those who

“order the music”. A system of leveling the tastes, the spiritual demands of multimillion audiences, directly designed to kill any healthy taste, etching the spiritual beginning in man (Savitsky, 1986: 20-21).

In general, film critic T. Bachelis (1918–1999) agreed with N. Savitsky's opinion, arguing that *Ginger and Fred* is perceived very easily. Everything is clear in it, although in it sadness goes hand in hand with joy, serious drama – with a careless joke, lyrics – with irony, and faith in the future – with undisguised bitterness. That is, this is again a Fellinian mixture of contradictory feelings, a Fellinian brew, where the vulgar suddenly becomes elegant, the rough becomes tender, and the tender becomes sharp and spicy. One plot enters into another, “an object cuts an object”, and the trifle of a “tip-top” variety dance turns into a poem of resurrecting love. ... Let us note by the way that Fellini does not miss a single opportunity to caustically ridicule the stupefying television business (Bachelis, 1988: 18-19).

But the film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) admitted that in the film *Ginger and Fred* he did not like the movie as a movie. ... The “love story” of the elderly dancers, told in the film, is not so much romantic as sentimental. Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni, great actors, meeting whom the audience stands up and the ovation does not stop for several minutes, this time did not add anything to what was known about them before, at least to me. The impression is that they appeared to remind of themselves. That, they say, they are alive... That they are healthy, full of creative powers (Bogomolov, 1990: 30).

No less controversial opinion about another famous Western film of the 1980s, which hit the Soviet film distribution, was expressed by A. Plakhov, reproaching him for being unemotional. Evaluating the masterpiece of Milos Forman *Amadeus* (1984), the film critic argued that “Foreman, having mastered the Hollywood self-discipline, did not succumb to the nostalgic elements, made the film cold, perfect in its own way and accepted as a product of the highest standard on all five continents (Plakhov, 1987 : 20-21).

But since not only masterpieces of Western cinematography appeared on Soviet screens in the mid-1980s, critical articles about ordinary productions of Western entertainment cinema also appeared in the magazine.

In particular, in his witty review of the American film *Heavenly Bodies* (1984) film critic V. Turovsky (1949–1998) noted that the authors of this film are very desperate, funny and fearless guys. Who would tell and who would believe that from a television program like our “Rhythmic Gymnastics” you can build a full-length, one and a half hour feature film into which they will try to squeeze love, aerobics, the problem of sports honor, the theme of the perfidious deceit of rivals, the conflict between honest knights sports and sharks of private capital. ... It is difficult to suspect the authors of the seriousness of their artistic intentions, and therefore it is difficult to question them on any account of art. The art of cinema, unlike the art of aerobics, was not part of their intentions at all, so they must be judged by the laws they adopted for themselves. They made an honest, frank, professional visual guide to aerobics, which at times is impossible to look at (Turovsky, 1986: 10-11).

But the most resonant in this series was the article by film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) “About *Angelique*”, published in 1987. To a large extent, this publication was a response to the emotional, but devoid of analytics, criticism of the situation in the Soviet film distribution, expressed by journalist Y. Geiko on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in his sensational article “Why *Angelique* came to us” In particular, Y. Geiko criticized the USSR Goskino in purchasing such entertaining Western films, such as French costume adventures: *Angelique – Marquise of Angels* (*Angelique, marquise des anges*) and so on movies (Geiko, 1985).

V. Dmitriev reasonably noted that the case of *Angelique*, which seemed so simple and unpretentious, now does not seem so simple. It's no secret that opinions clashed around the film. Critics are largely against it. The audience is largely in favor. The former allude to aesthetic illiteracy, the latter to isolation from the tastes of the broad masses. ... First of all, *Angelique* is not a historical film. It is a historical popular print, using the scenery and costumes of the 17th century not to restore the everyday truth of the past or to explain in depth the reasons for the clash of opposing forces, but to create a great performance that lives according to the laws of a multi-colored spectacle. ... *Angelique* is what it is: an entertaining picture that does not pretend to be much, a historical popular print, with its ups and downs, its not fully thought out aesthetics, its more than modest place in the pyramid of world cinema. ... Imagine for a second that the entire

screen is filled with *Angelique*, *Three Musketeers* or *Counts of Monte Cristo*. Nightmare. And if it is filled with some serious problematic films? Hand on heart, do we want this? (Dmitriev, 1987: 16-17).

With the light hand of V. Dmitriev, the *Soviet Screen* further wrote about Western entertainment film production that got into the Soviet film distribution, already without the previously obligatory ideological curtsy (Dementiev, 1989: 28; Eshpay, 1989: 28; Ivanova, 1989: 29; Mikhalkovich, 1989: 28; Razlogov, 1988 : 21-22; 1990: 25; Simanovich, 1989: 28; Stishov, 1989: 26-27; Sulkin, 1988: 21-22, etc.).

So film critic Y. Ivanova wrote that, of course, one can continue to call American action films a product of mass culture, accusing them of all sorts of commercial “sins”. But if for many years even our box office managed to patch up financial holes with the help of such “certainties”, it means that the viewer has a need for such cinematography. ... People love scary stories. Memories of sweet horror stretch from childhood, from tales of ogres and dragons to tales of witches and vampires. The need for emotional sensations of this kind gives rise to a steady interest in their carriers – rumors, detectives, horror movies. Even at the beginning of the century, it became clear that the timeless Horror Story, and even more so with a detective story – a sure pledge of commercial success of the film. It is precisely on such a win-win combination that Curtis Hanson's film *The Bedroom Window* (1987) is based (Ivanova, 1989: 29).

And film critic O. Sulkin rightly noted that the ingenuous main character of the film “*Crocodile*” *Dundee* (1986) “in the company of modern fashionable heroes of the commercial Western screen ... looks like a “black sheep”. It is enough to compare him with the muscular and merciless avengers of Stallone and Schwarzenegger, the gloomy outcasts of Eastwood and Pacino ... He is from some other value system. He personifies the myth-memory of mankind about the “golden age” ... He is somewhat akin to the Russian Ivan the Fool ... This hero is attractive, because he is from a fairy tale. From a fairy tale for all times” (Sulkin, 1988: 21-22).

Analyzing *The Soap Thieves* (*Ladri di saponette*, 1989), film critic A. Dementiev (1957–2023) was convinced that it was a very light, very “entertaining” comedy about how a neorealistic picture and commercial advertising are mixed up on the TV screen. ... How pleasant this unpretentious and at the same time witty film looked against the general background of the competition program! And let it be lightweight, let it be! At least cinema (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

The French comedy *The Runaways* (*Les Fugitifs*, 1986) was also positively assessed in the *Soviet Screen*: “The main thing for Weber is an interesting story. And the genre, the choice of actors and everything else is the closest and most acceptable way for him to tell this story. ... In *The Runaways*, as always with Weber, laughter is based on witty and tense comic situations, subtly sustained on the verge of absurdity. In general, this feeling of “on the edge” is extremely important for comedy as such. After all, here it is so easy to jump into vulgarity, into a frank psychological blunder, and simply into “not funny”. Until now, this feeling of Weber has not failed – it has not failed this time either” (Stishov, 1989: 26-27).

Film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) believed that Wolfgang Petersen in his films – *Enemy Mine* (1985) and *The Never Ending Story* (1984) – stubbornly follows a certain program, worship of the past felt to be the essence of Petersen's program, its basis. *The Never Ending Story* is about an attempt to breathe new life into the images of the past, taken not from the space sagas of modern fiction, but from traditional children's literature that has retained an affinity for fairy tales with their princesses, brave heroes and monsters. These creatures inhabit the Land of Fantasy in Petersen's painting. ... If *The Never Ending Story* is tied to traditional children's literature, then *Enemy Mine* is a clear move towards *Star Wars*. ... The story of the hero's initiation seemed ornamental in Lucas, in *Enemy Mine* it is the main content of the film. His hero – astronaut Will Davidge – in full accordance with the canons of initiation goes through all its stages: he leaves his familiar environment, though not of his own free will, acquires secret knowledge and, in the end, finds himself in a new environment – with those whom he considered enemies. ... Worshiping the past is called passeism. The creator of *The Never Ending Story* and *Enemy Mine* is no doubt a passeist. For him, the history of mankind is truly endless, since it makes its movement in a circle. Technique progresses infinitely, becomes infinitely more complex, but ethics does not need such progress – it immediately presented itself to the mythopoetic consciousness in its absolute forms. Having described the circle, humanity will return to them – this is probably how our future is conceived by the creator of *Enemy Mine*. The Passionist is not often optimistic. Petersen is inherently optimistic because he believes that the past is achievable (Mihalkovich, 1989: 28).



No less analytically another film critic – V. Eshpay (1953–2016) – reacted to another bright example of entertainment production – *Romancing the Stone* (1984), believing that this movie can be treated as an adventure thriller and not racking their brains over it, moreover, the majority will do so. However, this film is not as simple as it seems. Being drawn into the picture, you notice that everything is somehow shifted in comparison with the usual adventure films. ... Commercial cinema? Without any doubt. But accurately reflecting the artistic and cinematic tastes of middle-aged Americans. As a matter of fact, cinema, as the most mass-produced of the arts, should be so – accessible and, as far as possible, not vulgar. American yuppie directors do it well (Eshpay, 1989: 28).

But about *Single (Le Solitaire)*, 1987) on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* in 1989, two reviews were published at once.

Film critic G. Simanovich melancholy noted that the film by Jacques Deray *Single* “evokes sadness. Police thriller with Belmondo – and suddenly sadness? You don’t believe anyone, they dismiss it, they go to look, and then they ironically advise you to turn to a neuropsychiatrist. ... I was also in anticipation. Having cast aside this annoying critical snobbery of ours, I, honestly, prepared to be that childish grateful viewer of adventure films, for whom dashing, spectacular attractions are much more important than artistic integrity, moral conception, general idea and other "conventions" important for finicky adults. And, God knows, I steadfastly fought back the annoying sensations that all this was, was, was, and it was already clear, it was known what the next episode would be.

When the derogatory, arrogant, biting term “Belmondism” was put into use by our criticism (and this is the end of the 70s), any domestic viewer who had the slightest understanding of cinema art, any admirer of the actor had every reason to be offended by Jean-Paul Belmondo. Yes, he has already participated in several not very successful police films, hinting at the image, the role of the hero, calmly looking down the barrel of an enemy pistol, but managing to shoot first. However, could one forget that this is the actor of Godard, De Sica, Louis Malle ... that theatrical Paris applauds him. We have to stick a label, that the brand is licked, once, and you're done. ... After *Single* I realized something had changed. It seems to be the same gestures, the same chic style of reprisals against opponents, but some kind of tiredness, mechanistic, "breathlessness" in Belmondo's game. And within the framework of a worn-out plot cliché, in terms of obvious director's amorphousness boring and vulgar actor it all comes out" (Simanovich, 1989: 28).

To a large extent reflecting the opinions of the mass audience, film critic A. Dementiev (1957–2023) argued with G. Simanovich: When I see any creation of Belmondo on the poster, even if it is at least three times *Single*, I’ll go, by golly. And I really do not want to be deprived of this pleasure. ... Belmondo will always be of interest to him. If this Belmondo is given a teaspoon a year, then they will love only him, dream only of him. I agree, The Loner may not be the highest quality essential item. But where are they, these high-quality ones? ... I want to watch Belmondo hold a cigar, get into the Citroen and kiss the baby. By God, even with sluggish directing, it's better than our beauty pageants. And Belmondo is a living embodiment of an amazingly beautiful life (Dementiev, 1989: 28).

In the late 1980s, succumbing to persistent pressure from the new Board of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and the film press, the USSR Goskino bought and sent for wide release a considerable number of masterpieces of Western cinema, which had been inaccessible to the masses of viewers in previous decades. Of course, these old movies did not become box office hits (especially against the backdrop of an aggressive video boom), but they received considerable support in the *Soviet Screen*.

Thus, reviewing Jean Cocteau's *Orphée* (1950), released to the Soviet cinema with a colossal delay, film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that Cocteau refers to the ancient Greek myth not just to return it to modern times. The poet's existence is tragically torn between the real world and the beyond. This is how it was thought in antiquity, and this is how it is now. Cocteau's film tells about the eternity of this gap (Mikhalkovich, 1989: 26-27).

Film critic N. Amashukeli reminded readers that the director of the film *French Cancan* (1954) Jean Renoir "belongs to the generation of great French directors Jean Vigo, René Clair, Marcel Carnet. In his films, in particular in the *French Cancan*, simplicity and sophistication, a special, inherent picturesqueness, are surprisingly combined. The episodes of the exhausting rehearsals of the girls from the Moulin Rouge resemble paintings with blue and pink dancers by Degas, colorful posters, of course, Toulouse-Lautrec, at the sight of the narrow and hunching streets of Montmartre, Utrillo's drawings come to mind, and cheerful visitors to taverns, cafes and

cabarets seem to have gone from the paintings of Auguste Renoir, the director's father. Yes, literally every character in the film resembles the images of impressionist artists, each of his frames is permeated with a poignantly sad and at the same time cheerful sense of the world, characteristic of these artists. ... Let me repeat: the whole film is characterized by a special, amazing sense of style, exceptional cheerfulness" (Amashukeli, 1990: 28).

Referring to Federico Fellini's masterpiece *8 1/2* (1963), which was finally released in Soviet cinemas, theater and film critic T. Bachelis (1918-1999) reasonably argued that time is powerless before some works. *8 1/2* is one of them. And if the means of expression, first used by Fellini, are replicated a thousand times by his followers and imitators, then the main motive of the picture completely retains its freshness and power. Moreover, I dare to say that in our days, in the current social conflict, this motive has gained additional sharpness. For the main theme of the film is the heavy burden of responsibility that the freedom of expression granted to the artist imposes on the artist (Bachelis, 1988: 18-19).

Film critic N. Savitsky reminded the readers of the magazine that *The Red Desert (Il Deserto Rosso, 1964)* was staged by the recognized master of Italian cinema Michelangelo Antonioni almost a quarter of a century ago, but an attentive viewer will certainly notice and appreciate the unique – not only for his time – the artistic solution of *The Red Desert*. The subtle, deep psychologism of this picture, where every, even the most inconspicuous nuance is essential, and optional details are absent. Impeccably accurate in terms of performing technique and at the same time naturally laid-back work of a well-coordinated ensemble of actors, in which Monica Vitti is confidently leading. The slender composition of the movie, all the more surprising given the almost eventless and deliberately blurred plot. workshop, a truly directorial use of color is not a help in achieving pictorial authenticity or self-made spectacle, but a powerful means of emotional impact that forms a capacious metaphor for human experiences. ... Antonioni chose one of the most disturbing and painful problems of the so-called post-industrial, that is, modern capitalist society, the problem of alienation, the catastrophic rupture of natural human ties, as the object of his primary interest. ... There are many questions in the film and questions for the film, and none of them suggests an unambiguous, simple answer. It is clear, however, that in a world where nature is fading away and living human feelings atrophy, breathing is difficult, and full-blooded existence is unthinkable. And there is nowhere to go from here ... But the world can (must!) be changed, trying to start at least a little to replenish the increasingly tangible lack of humanity in it, morality – in its broadest sense. This is the main result of the trip to *The Red Desert*, the main meaning of the message of the artist-humanist, addressed to the people of the Earth without a statute of limitations (Savitsky, 1989: 26-27).

These kind of retro-reviews adjoined articles about the old Hollywood westerns *Stagecoach* (1939) and *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

Film expert V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that we remember *Stagecoach* under the long, albeit expressive name of our distributors *The journey will be dangerous...* *Stagecoach* makes an unforgettable, indelible impression thanks to the skillful dosage of tension. ... Here, at Ford, all episodes with a moving carriage seem to be permeated with the "smell of danger." It seems to hang in the air and is physically palpable. In fact, this feeling is evoked "without cinema" – not by camera angles, not by montage, but by purely dramatic means, by the prudent and effective introduction of signs of an approaching threat into the plot (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 26-27).

And film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) in relation to *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) reasonably suggested that in the early sixties we did not have a more famous foreign film. The roar with which he rolled across the screens of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, very soon reached the ears of cinema lovers of the most remote outskirts. Copies were in short supply, they were torn hot from the processing machines of film copy factories and thrown to the audience, languishing from tedious waiting. ... And when the remarkable critic Yuri Mironovich Khanyutin dared to remark that he personally liked *The Magnificent Seven* much more than *The Seven Samurai*, it was considered a joke, unworthy scurrilousness, a mocking mockery of the shrine of world cinema. Protested and ostracized, Yuri Mironovich, as I recall, did not change his opinion, but he did not consider it necessary to vigorously defend it. ... For us, *The Magnificent Seven* was a solemn film that embodied the dream of male brotherhood, personal responsibility and that intoxicating feeling of freedom, when everything seems to be within your power, you can race on a beautiful horse against the wind and, breathing in the fresh air, feel yourself the master of the earth that is under your feet, the wide sky that is above your head, the entire boundless universe, of which you are a small part. How could this feeling please our ideological system to the limit with its forever

established hierarchy of values and priorities? Shouldn't it have frightened that considerable part of the citizens of our country, which saw the only possible evolution of society in a slightly modified Stalinism? (Dmitriev, 1990: 29-30).

But, probably, the most unexpected retro premiere of the Soviet film distribution in 1991 was Liliana Cavani's film *The Night Porter (Il Portiere Di Notte, 1974)*, accused in the 1970s of justifying Nazism not only in the USSR, but also in many other countries.

Film critic A. Plakhov wrote in his review, in our opinion, filled with very overestimated estimates of the secondary and morally slippery work of L. Cavani, that *The Night Porter* caused him "a surge of conflicting feelings. On the one hand, it was confirmed that the powerful energy of this picture continues to operate and has not been blown away by the wind of history. On the other hand, that the scandals that accompanied the appearance of the film are not connected only with the insanity of ideology, but affect the very nature of man, his "ego" hidden from prying eyes. ... Socio-cultural stratifications, intellectual metaphors and "naive" laces of postmodernity entangled the natural trunk, and it took the vital corrosiveness and feminine recklessness of Liliana Cavani to penetrate this core. ... This film, teetering on the dangerous edge of the erotic guignol, tried to locate somewhere between Visconti and Pasolini. ... Between two interpretations of fascism – as a demonic myth in the coordinates of the new history and as a decadent performance in the spirit of kindergarten libertinage. ... And the intuitive rebuff that the film caused in America, frightened by the double bogey of anti-Semitism and pornography, says not only that idiots are found everywhere, that there are far more of them than ideologically preoccupied Soviet film critics. He also speaks of the original frightening power that emanates from this piercing drama, testifying to the incomprehensibility of a person's actions, through and through, to "black holes" drilling his body and soul. ... Oh yes, and Cavani herself. and her teammates were convinced they were making a left-wing anti-fascist film. ... No matter how perverted and wild this love may seem, it is still ultimately hostile to ideology. Love is an exception, not included in the program of ideology. And so she must be killed. As for sex, it certainly enters into this program – one way or another, no matter how ideologically it is denied. ... Cavani's film is one of the acts of introspection of Western society, acts necessary in its time, when the "sexual revolution" was put forward as an antithesis to totalitarianism. The very combination of words is paradoxical. Cavani is one of those who reminded that violence is accompanied by pleasure, and all this together creates the ground for tyranny, for fascism. No revolution is a panacea and does not guarantee the free development of the individual. Now it is time to remind us of this. Liliana Cavani, whom we have been frightened of as a monster to whom it is dangerous to let underage children within reach, is indeed a tough, sometimes cruel director. In all her films one can find shocking scenes: as a rule, they receive some kind of meaningful justification" (Plakhov, 1991: 18-19).

But, of course, in the late 1980s and at the turn of the 1990s, relatively new Western films by well-known filmmakers appeared on the screens of the USSR, which were also analyzed now without biased ideological optics.

For example, film critic G. Krasnova reasonably noted that "in terms of dramaturgy, *The Longing of Veronica Voss (Die Sehnsucht der Veronica Voss, 1982)* loses to *Maria Braun (Die Ehe der Maria Braun, 1978)*, although over the script in collaboration with The same pair of playwrights worked as Fassbinder... But with all the imperfections, this film gives a visible idea of Fassbinder's style. ... the psychological drama of the film's characters is revealed in contrasts of light and shadow, black and white, and in this Fassbinder acts as a continuer of the traditions of German film expressionism – the art of light painting. Glare of light, falling on the faces of the characters, creates an atmosphere of uncertainty, doubt, impending disaster. The glow of neon advertisements and the twinkling of street lamps through streams of rain, the shimmer of precious stones, the sweep of the blades of a huge fan in the newspaper office – everything here is permeated by a continuous pulsation of light" (Krasnova, 1988: 21).

And film critic N. Petrova wrote that Arthur Penn's film *Four Friends (1981)* represents the duel of young heroes with life in the American ring of the 60s. ... We are watching how the hopes of young people melt away, how the illusions of a generation disappear, how the American dream gradually fades, although it still lives on. "What happened to the American Dream?!" W. Faulkner exclaimed in the 1950s. The echo of his words is heard in the Arthur Penn film. But the director does not give a definite assessment of the past, apparently not wanting to be categorical and simplify (Petrova, 1989: 29).

Speaking about the psychological drama *Father* (1990), in which the main character denounces a Nazi criminal 45 years after the Second World War, film critic O. Sulkin emphasized that “the most intriguing thing in the film is the gradual, very slow, but inexorable disclosure of the inner [former Nazi] Müller's world under the influence of external circumstances. It is clear that today he is a good, kind person. But is it possible to erase the sin you committed from your memory, like chalk from a school board? Can the gravity of what has been done leave the human soul? God forgives the penitent sinner, but the sinner is doomed to drag his cross to the end of his days. Directed by John Power, an avalanche of psychological nuances allows Max von Sydow inexplicably maintains the mysterious impenetrability of the soul, and this, without causing annoyance or languor, keeps the interest in the film” (Sulkin, 1991: 10).

Analyzing the film *Sweet Dreams* (1985), film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) believed that the English birthright did not allow Karel Reisch to completely dissolve in the elements of American cinema, to make a film literally following the formulas of traditional melodrama. ... This picture is not so much a continuation of Hollywood as a game of Hollywood, in condensed sentimentality, brutal tenderness, in a semi-magical world, which appears at the same time as a literal cast from the surrounding life and a semblance of a theatrical scenery (Dmitriev, 1989: 28).

But *The River* (1984), according to V. Dmitriev, is a cinematic formation that is not so common: it is a traditional Soviet film in a traditional American performance. ... We will see not only our plot schemes, of course, adjusted for American realities, but also our principle of editing, our principle of framing, our artlessness, when, for example, love experiences are depicted by changing the corresponding landscapes, and, finally, our pathos (Dmitriev, 1990: 16).

Referring to the sensational film adaptation of U. Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (*Il nome della rosa*), film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) recalled that in the comments on the novel, Umberto Eco told about his trick: for the title, he deliberately chose a symbol so ambiguous in that it allows for many different interpretations. From the reader, the symbol requires mental work, efforts to find “its own” interpretation and substantiate it with plot events. Jean-Jacques Annaud, staging the film, coped with a similar task. ... Echoes of the fiction of two English writers – Conan Doyle and Fleming – seem to be fighting in the screen Baskerville, and this struggle is no less entertaining than the detective intrigue of *The Name of the Rose* (Mikhalkovich, 1990: 18-19).

Reviewing another striking Western film of the second half of the 1980s – *Angel Heart* (1987), film critic M. Drozdova correctly noted that in this film a split personality is masterfully built. The mystical branch of the plot opens a pathological mutant with two souls who commits crimes on the intuition of one of them that belongs to Lucifer. In the historical twist of the plot, we have before us a specific *American tragedy*. A painful stage in the nation's hateful romance with the Dream (the central character of its civil mythology). The picture was taken during a period of neo-conservative tendencies in American culture. And reflections on the painful relationship of the nation with its first fetish are quite natural. ... It remains to add that the elegance of the intrigue will allow those who are not up to it to avoid being drawn into philosophical historicism. Today, the American filmmaker who decides to talk about serious things most often erects them as an intellectual mezzanine above the first floor, accessible to anyone, right off the street (Drozdova, 1990: 29).

And we can probably agree with the film critic E. Plakhova, who, in her review of the psychologically subtle film *The Four Adventures of Renet and Mirabelle* (*Quatre aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle*, 1986), that there seems to be no phenomenon more alien to domestic distribution, than the films of the French director Eric Rohmer. So here you are, as many as three of his films “package” out on our screens. But, perhaps, it is against the inflamed, screaming background that the calm meaning of these paintings becomes especially transparent. Their stories are defiantly unpretentious. Little love misunderstandings, temptations and mistakes of youth, heart worries. Their heroes do not experience fatal passions, their main passion is curiosity about life. Knowing it not in an extreme, but in an everyday face, they discover its paradoxical nature. They also discover the play of contradictions within themselves. The essence of Romer's films is precisely in this subtlety of gradations of measurement, in the enlargement of the scale. Using this method, together with the director, we discover that any, literally any incident around us is far from unambiguous, and our own participation in it can be interpreted in completely different ways. ... Romer aestheticizes life, but does it with such graceful carelessness (or its appearance) that it seems as if life itself drapes itself into artistic forms (Plakhova, 1991: 14-15).

Film critic and culturologist K. Razlogov (1946–2021) reasonably stated in his voluminous article that 1987–1988 in world cinema was characterized by a radical change of milestones. Leadership gradually shifted from children's and teenage fairy-tale legendary movie comics to cinema for forty-year-olds: retro-nostalgic melodramas, dramatic comedies that allow former rebels of the sixties to find peace with themselves and honor the memory of their once abused parents. [However] the foreign repertoire of our cinemas ... based on the films of 1987–1988, nevertheless, as a whole, stands apart from the world film process. And this is no coincidence. The leaders of the world distribution both were and remain unaffordable to us in terms of prices, and they can be viewed at best in the out-of-competition program of Moscow international film festivals or on video. We still dare to hope that in the near future the “champion” of more than a decade ago, *Star War*”, will finally appear on the screens of cinemas, we timidly ask ourselves how the famous *E.T.* will be combined with the domestic psychosis of “flying saucers” (Razlogov, 1990: 25).

And then Kirill Razlogov, in his review of the current Soviet film distribution repertoire, we note certain advantages of the films *The Moderns* (1988), *Married to the Mob* (1988), *My friend is a traitor* (*Mon ami le traître*, 1988), *Tandem* (1987) and *To the left of the elevator* (*À gauche en sortant de l'ascenseur*, 1988) that although the principle of periodic self-repetitions can lead not only to a crisis in art, but often contributes to honing skills (Razlogov, 1990: 25), this is not always the case.

Among all this rather diverse bouquet of Western films, K. Razlogov singled out Eric Rohmer's elegant parable *My Friend's Friend* (*L'Ami de mon amie*, 1987) – a modern version of medieval morality... This story of love qui-pro-quo with unexpected happy endodrom could appear only in the country of Marivaux and the *Rules of the Game* (*La règle du jeu*, 1939) by Jean Renoir, whose heir can be considered Romer. Like his *Green Ray* (*Le rayon vert*, 1986) (Grand Prix of the Venice Film Festival and an unexpected guest of our screens), *My Friend's Friend* (*L'Ami de mon amie*, 1987) runs the risk of falling short of the expectations of everyone – distributors, directors of cinemas and spectators, but meanwhile this, in fact, the most famous picture of the reviewed repertoire (Razlogov, 1990: 25).

Thanks to the efforts of the film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023), the “perestroika” *Soviet Screen* also responded to the screenings of Western television series in the USSR. At the same time, the mechanisms of their influence on the mass audience were revealed.

For example, Y. Bogomolov rightly wrote that in the *Jane Eyre* (1983) series that there is magic, which, however, contains motives of a non-aesthetic and non-artistic order. The series *Jane Eyre* is a myth about a person's stoic resistance to forces that doom him to spiritual conformism and social inequality. This is a myth with a winning ending. That is why it allows millions of people to get rid of, even if only emotionally and even for a short time, a complex of both social and moral inferiority (Bogomolov, 1989: 7). And the character of the Italian TV series *The Octopus* (*La Piovra*, 1984) – police commissioner Cattani we need for consolation ... the creators of this seemingly endless series lead Corrado Cattani consciously, or perhaps instinctively, to a one-man duel with an octopus. Folklore, fabulous patterns are already at work here. The hero must single-handedly crush the dragon or the haughty snake. And the fact that *The Octopus*, despite all the realities, both political and everyday, tying it to today, – the creation of folklore and mythology, so it's obvious. ... The main lesson taught by the Octopus is that evil is an organization, and good is an individual, a single person on a single Earth. So they are waging an eternal, as well as endless battle, in which Corrado is always at the forefront, and against him are countless hordes of bought, hired, intimidated by the octopus fighters of the invisible front (Bogomolov, 1989: 10).

And after watching the TV series *Dallas*, which appeared on Soviet television screens, Y. Bogomolov noted that the relationship of the people inhabiting *Dallas* is very contradictory, overflowing with unsatisfied desires and ambitious ambitions. But at the same time, this is a fairly stable world: the balance in it is maintained by the fact that everyone knows something compromising about the other. Compromising evidence is the weapon of the middle bourgeoisie. He also uses it for defensive purposes. ... Each series is built according to one plan: first, something like the harmony of personal and private business relations is demonstrated, then it, this harmony, is violated (some kind of dirty provocation, betrayal, hurricane), and then it is restored. ... If we lift the canopy of the business morality of ordinary American millionaires, then under it we will find a Russian folk tale that begins something like this: the old man had three sons: the eldest was a scoundrel, the middle one was an alcoholic, and the third was Bobby the Fool, that is, a simple kind soul. ... *Dallas*, in particular, hints at the fact that all of us – such adults, smart, civilized, regardless

of the color of our skin and the fifth point, from educational qualifications and social security – are terrible idealists in the deep subconscious (Bogomolov, 1991 : 23).

– reviews of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution

The ratings of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* at the initial stage of perestroika were, as in previous decades, largely ideologically biased.

However, even today such American anti-Soviet "cranberry" crafts as *Red Dawn* (1984) and *Amerika* (1987) are perceived exactly as Soviet journalists wrote about them in 1986–1987: a mediocre anti-Soviet propaganda brew.

So the international journalist Y. Ustimenko wrote on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* that *Rocky-IV* (1985) makes a depressing impression: a monotonous scuffle with thickly smeared, wherever possible, blood and cannon punches of boxing gloves. The plot is obscenely primitive and boils down to a fight between Rocky and the "Soviet" champion Ivan Drago (it was necessary to come up with such a "purely Russian" name) (Ustimenko, 1986 20). And then Y. Ustimenko quite reasonably noted that such movies appeared on the screens at a time when the White House is frantically looking for an "external enemy"... [and] the United States carried out barbaric aggression against sovereign Libya, escalates threats against Nicaragua ... The authors of such films are characterized not only by the desire to distort Soviet reality, but also to present the Soviet people in the form of subhumans who have no place on earth, and therefore they are not worthy of pity and regret. It is not only a sport, but also a sacred duty of every 'true' American (Ustimenko 1986: 20-22).

In 1987, journalists Y. Algunov and V. Orlov published a review article, which quite objectively told the readers of the *Soviet Screen* about the most notable Hollywood anti-Soviet/anti-Russian film creations:

"In the *Red Dawn* (1984) show how the "Soviet landing force" made an attempt to capture the American town. In *Rocky IV* (1985), boxer Rocky Balboa proves the superiority of the American way of life in the "match of the century" in the Soviet ring...

Thus, a distorted, caricature image is persistently created about the USSR as a country that, in comparison with America, is in the "Stone Age" in terms of development. ... And the plot of the television movie *Amerika* is built on a wild fiction about the capture of the United States by the "Soviet Armed Forces" acting under the guise of UN troops. It was no coincidence that the idea of a television series saturated with hatred of the Soviet Union was born precisely in the bowels of the ABC, which for many years has been distinguished in the trio of commercial US television empires by militant reaction. ... a murky anti-communist, anti-Soviet, anti-UN brew, the creation of which was spent about 35 million dollars, spilled onto the TV screens in the homes and apartments of millions of Americans. During the 14.5 hours of TV time they saw the Capitol set on fire by the "Soviet invaders", members of the U.S. Congress fall, the "invaders'" tanks ravaging American cities and towns, and beast-like soldiers raping American women... This was the monstrous light in which ABC's efforts presented the Soviet Union to U.S. citizens" (Algunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

It is curious that even one of the leaders of the "cinema perestroika" – film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) – in the same 1987, he very critically assessed the *Platoon* (1986), which was generally positively assessed by the Soviet press, telling readers of the *Soviet Screen* that although in West Berlin *Platoon* received the "Silver Bear" for directing, "at the announcement of this prize, as in the initial screening, the audience burst into heart-rending whistles. To understand such a reaction, one must not deduce the meaning of the picture from what is directly shown in it. The atrocities of the American army against the unarmed Vietnamese population are shown. Multiple and inventive. A young hero, a college boy, a volunteer pours out his bile in mental letters to a distant grandmother: what the hell took me into this swamp, this is not a war, but solid vomit, these are not comrades-in-arms – trash, human scum, food for prisons. So you are waiting for on-screen repentance: I participated in a vile and ungodly deed, forgive me, people, if you can! .. The film turns in a different direction. College bum grows into a great warrior. His inner monologues now herald newfound truths – friendship tested by bullets, brotherhood after despair, unity through hell. The politicians are to blame for not being able to avoid this vileness, and we – we have proved to the whole world that we can endure even worse. And a solemn dedication at the end – to those Americans who were and remained in Vietnam" (Demin, 1987: 20-21).

A rather sharp assessment was received in the *Soviet Screen* and the sensational film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) by Martin Scorsese. Film critic A. Braginsky (1920–2016)

wrote that delivered to Paris already with a halo of martyrdom (persecution by orthodox “fundamentalists” in the USA), this film was met with fierce attacks from the most conservative Catholic circles – “integrists”, who, like their American “colleagues”, do not allow any liberties in the interpretation of the image of Christ. ... I can testify: M. Scorsese made a rather boring film. ... One way or another, there is enough falsehood and even outright stupidity in the picture (Braginsky, 1989: 30-31).

And the masterpiece of Bernardo Bertolucci *The Sheltering Sky* (1990) received a completely ambiguous assessment in the *Soviet Screen*: “Bertolucci’s Desert is a test tube for a tricky experience with a hurtful, bitter, unambiguous result. Bertolucci cuts off everything extraneous, private, so that his research in the field of the human psyche reaches almost scientific purity. ... When Bertolucci stunned the world in the 1970s with his *Last Tango in Paris* (*Ultimo tango a Parigi / Le dernier tango a Paris*, 1972), few realized that the strength and novelty of the images was not in explicit sex scenes, but in the intensity of the psychological interaction of the participants in the drama. Bertolucci revealed completely new ways for cinema to penetrate the human psyche, sharply, like no one before him, exposed the existential conflict. In the new film, the fierce sexuality of *Last Tango in Paris* deliberately gives way to an almost dull physiology. Heroes not only cannot say anything to each other through sexual contact. They have absolutely nothing to say to each other. ... Anyone who tries to find a coherent story in Bertolucci’s new film will be disappointed. The director does not lead either the characters or us anywhere, except for the edge of the psychological abyss” (Rakhlina, 1991: 22-23).

Did not feel reverence for well-known Western directors and film critics. A. Dementiev (1957–2023), who, in our opinion, quite reasonably noted that inadapation of D. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* (1989), the famous Ken Russell tries in vain to repeat his own discoveries of twenty years ago, made by him in the brilliant film adaptation of *Women in Love* by the same author. Today’s Russell was only enough to picturesquely shoot, say, a glass of red wine on an inlaid table, but otherwise this solid and boring costume spectacle (at times, however, completely without a costume) causes only regret about Russell’s stormy energy that has gone somewhere – rebel of the 1960s and 1970s. .... Hector Babenko, from whom one could expect masterpieces after *Kiss of the spider woman* (1985), was presented with the painting *Ironweed* (1987)... which, whatever one may say, cannot be called a masterpiece. ... A sort of American *At the Bottom of the Great Depression* with an admixture of *The Threepenny Opera*: long, tedious and on the verge of a masquerade (and sometimes, frankly, beyond). ... The author of *Fifteen Years Old*, Jacques Doillon, seems to have delved into the study of the consciousness of a girl of adolescence so seriously that he achieved the feeling that his entire film was directed by such a fifteen-year-old girl – the level of directing, in any case, is appropriate (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

Just as strict (and, in our opinion, excessively and not always justifiably) to the works of famous Western screen masters of the second half of the 1980s, film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) also appeared on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*, literally defeating the Cannes and Oscar winners:

*Too beautiful for you* (*Trop belle pour toi*, 1989, special prize of the last Cannes Film Festival) – verbal fights, erotic fun, female perseverance and male impotence. An ironic self-parody by the fifty-year-old Frenchman Bertrand Blier.

*Sex, Lies and Video movie* (1989, Grand Prix of the same festival): male impotence and female perseverance, erotic fun, verbal fights. Touching narcissism of a young American Steven Soderbergh.

*Pelle the Conqueror* (*Pelle Erobreren*, 1987, Oscar for the best foreign film in 1988) by the Dane Bille August is a large novel form, heavy construction, intense directing, barely holding the crumbling material in his hands.

*The Last Emperor* (1987, Oscar for the best film in 1987) by the Italian Bernardo Bertolucci is a cumbersome novel form, tense construction, heavy directing, holding collapsing material to the limit of possibility.

And again you are convinced how dangerous it is to form an opinion about a picture based on what you hear, without seeing it. I recall the recent enthusiasm of our critics, addressed to the winner of the West Berlin Festival in 1989 *Rain Man* (1988), American Barry Levinson, but after watching the movie, I lower my hands, initially ready for a storm of applause. Before me is more than traditional cinema, rather conventional, overly theatrical, plot monotonous, and even the brilliant actor Dustin Hoffman seemed to me this time only a hypocrite, masterfully playing

sketches on a given theme and striving for technical perfection, not supported by internal obsession. One feels he is also tired (Dmitriev, 1989: 10-11).

However, V. Dmitriev treated many Western films that were deprived of such significant film prizes even more strictly:

How many pleasant words could be read in the foreign press in connection with the black comedy of the Englishman Peter Greenaway, *Drowning by Numbers* (1988)! And at first you really look with pleasure. And then such boredom, such self-satisfaction, such dissolute literaryism creep out onto the screen that even individual successful finds do not want to be attributed to noticeable merits.

I believe that the Englishman Ken Russell (born in 1927) has the right to shoot erotic episodes in the film *The Rainbow* (1989) using the old man's peeping method with pressure and barely restrained pleasure. But to be honest, it is absolutely incomprehensible to me why the American Phil Kaufman (born much later) uses the same method in his *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), turning a very serious movie into a political-sexual show with long tricks of very dubious taste, which, having appeared on the screen, begin to rapidly live an independent life and require that they pay much more attention to them than is required by the logic of the development of the action. And if we add to this the fact that, defusing the situation, the director lubricates the film with thick and deliberate sentimentality, then one of the generally recognized sensations of the festival does not seem to me a sensation at all (Dmitriev, 1989: 10-11).

Almost equally pessimistic was the article by film critic V. Kichin, devoted to the analysis of films presented at the Berlin Film Festival in 1991:

In the movie *House of Smiles* (*La casa del sorriso*, 1990) by Marco Ferreri, who went out to receive the Golden Bear, does not resemble the author of *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) or *Dillinger* (*Dillinger è morto*, 1968), who is now certainly "dead". The film breathes the energy of a paraplegic, and received the prize, according to the jury, for the totality of the master's contribution to cinema.

*Sentence* (*La condanna*, 1990). Special Jury Prize. Marco Bellocchio in recent years fell ill with mysticism and devilry. ... Panther-like divas from erotic visions finished off the audience, the film went under the friendly laughter of the audience, and the jury that handed him the "silver" was booted.

*Dances with Wolves* (1990). Kevin Costner (producer, director and lead actor) was named best director at the Golden Globes in Hollywood. And all this for a picturesque western on a grand scale, where each plot move is guessed in half an hour. Of course, the panoramas of South Dakota are amazing. Of course, the bison shake the hall with a stereotype. Of course, in every frame there is a humane idea of rapprochement between peoples and civilizations. But this is a product of the assembly line, not insight.

*The Russia House* (1990). The first big-budget American film shot in 'real Russia'. Sean Connery against the backdrop of Moscow cathedrals is impressive. Michelle Pfeiffer, filming in the USSR, experienced first hand the charms of our democracy and even went on strike in solidarity with the Soviet members of the film crew, who, according to our rules, cannot eat with the Americans and must swallow their saliva. Having known reality, she perfectly played the Russian woman Katya, exhausted by the most humane system. Katya is hungry, but spiritual. The hero Connery is full, but in love with Russian literature, temples, and then with Katya. Love is slightly hindered by the fact that he was sent here on a special mission by the Russian Department of the British Secret Service. ... Nevertheless, the usual spreading cranberries came out ... (Kichin, 1991: 25-28).

Much more warmly V. Kichin spoke about the films *Journey of Captain Fracasse* (*Il Viaggio di capitano Fracassa*, 1990) by Ettore Scola ("the film is touching, evokes nostalgia for the beautiful tradition of the "travel novel"), *The Godfather Part III* (1990) by Francis Ford Coppola ("the best of the Don Corleone series. ... 161 minutes of the film passes like a moment ... A brilliantly designed intrigue ends with an episode in an opera that is not surpassed in editing skill") and Peter Weir's *Green Card* (1990) ("he has now shot an absolutely brilliant comedy ... An example of witty dialogue, impeccably funny positions and superbly played characters") (Kichin, 1991: 25-28).

At the same time, film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1991), which at the Moscow International Film Festival in 1991 the Soviet spectator, who, on the one hand, believes that we have "no sex", and on the other hand, is already pretty tired of the dull domestic screen half-heartedness, but believing that somewhere out there, in well-fed and prosperous countries, still there is a diverse, powerful, great cinema, whose characters live with passions that are not limited to the limits of the bunk, a powerful sexual volley fell. ... After countless scenes that showed us how



men “fuck” with men, women with women, how a sister suffers from attacks of passion for her brother, how suddenly people who accidentally find themselves together in an elevator rush into each other’s arms, and how they try put themselves in a state of combat readiness bored with each other spouses, discussing all the stages, as if at a reception with a sex therapist – after this festival marathon, which merged into some endless on-screen intercourse, one could really forget that the word “love” has many other connotations (Khloplyankina, 1991: 6-7).

Of course, such a situation at the Moscow Film Festival was absolutely impossible to imagine either in the 1950–1970s, or in the first half of the 1980s, when censorship there was, of course, not as strict as in mass Soviet film distribution, but still very strict.

But in general, especially in the late 1980s and at the turn of the 1990s, Western films that did not end up in the Soviet film distribution were evaluated in the magazine with an unprecedented degree of benevolence.

Thus, film critic A. Plakhov quite highly appreciated the artistic level of Francis Ford Coppola’s *Rumble Fish* (1983) films shown at the Moscow Film Festival (here the director’s subtle understanding of the possibilities of cinema was noted by him “its deep impact on the level of the viewer’s subconscious”) and *Good morning, Babylon* (*Good morning Babilonia*, 1987) Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

Film critic I. Rubanova wrote that in the emotional drama of Francesca Arcebuggi *Toward Evening* (*Verso sera*, 1990) – the wind that calmed down by night, soft light, still sparse shadows – is poured into the very fabric of the film – quiet, discreet, to the point of modest asceticism. So gentlemen, fans of film fireworks – whether in the form of linguistic acrobatics or hummocks of plot incoherence – are asked not to worry (Rubanova, 1991: 7).

Film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) noted that *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989) outwardly seems to be enclosed in traditional US cinema forms. The dashing four young drug addicts, using all sorts of tricks, every time avoiding police persecution, rob pharmacies. ... You soon become convinced that the creator of a serious psychological study needed the traditional plot schemes of the first episodes as a kind of bait. What follows is a picture full of bitter and terrible generalizations of the “dehumanization of the heroes”, their gradual loss of the properties and qualities that until recently made four charming young people into people (Andreev, 1990: 28).

P. Almodovar’s films *Matador* (1986) and *Tie me up! (¡Átame!*, 1989) (Vetrova, 1991: 26), *Jacquot from Nantes* (*Jacquot de Nantes*, 1991) Agnès Varda (Khloplyankina, 1991: 6-7).

And even the very ambiguous film by D. Jarman *The Garden* (1990) was interpreted on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* as an apocalyptic vision of the world ... Jarman is not embarrassed by arbitrariness, subjectivity, apparent randomness of images, as a result of the film they will make up a world of rare integrity, full of light and love, sublime and purifying. What is unique is that for all the author’s bias, he never stoops to straightforward social or political criticism. ... A picture that puzzles with its structure and strikes with artistic power (Kuznetsov, 1991: 11).

And quite paradoxically “perestroika” in the magazine looked unrestrainedly enthusiastic review of the film franchise about the adventures of the superhero Rambo, which was recently cursed by the entire Soviet press: “They scared us for eight years. And he is really scary when he makes a face, shaking his machine gun. And so – well, the sweetest person! Bad luck for John Rambo. Worn out by our videos and hammered by international observers, he finally broke through with his machine gun into the horizon of our domestic screen. Ronald Reagan himself at one time gave patronage to the movie hero, appreciating his merits in the fight against “godless communism.” And we, tormented by a cruel inferiority complex, could not then interpret his adventures otherwise than “damage to the military and ideological power of the USSR.” ... Meanwhile, in the film by Ted Kotcheff *First Blood* (1982) (then there were *Rambo II, III...*) the protagonist is initially presented not as a predator, but as a victim (having returned from the war, the veteran meets the open hostility of the authorities and is forced to enter into war with them). His cruelty is not the sophistication of the villain, but a reaction to misunderstanding, the aggression of the defender. This is a man who has gone through the fire and water of Vietnam and, like a “green beret”, can do nothing more than kill, crawl on his belly, and complete a task” (Ageev, 1990: 15).

The radical perestroika changes of the late 1980s, accompanied by the invasion of video, led to the fact that in the *Soviet Screen* there was a heading “Videocompass”, which gave a brief analysis of notable Western films that, for various reasons, did not fall into the Soviet film

distribution of the 1960–1980s. This column in 1989–1990 was written by film critics S. Kudryavtsev and A. Vyatkin.

At the same time, it was about both outstanding works of cinema and typical entertainment products.

In particular, S. Kudryavtsev, almost for the first time in the history of Soviet film criticism, gave a positive assessment of Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, noting that he "belongs to a small number of films, the importance of which increases over time. The scandalous story of 1972 about his "explicit erotic scenes" prevented a lot of people from accepting and understanding *Last Tango in Paris*. ... Fans of porn pictures will certainly be disappointed: the film, one might say, is innocent in comparison; that comes across sometimes in the program of Moscow international film festivals, not to mention what is found on video cassettes. ... The director managed to catch and show in the most clear form the monstrous confusion that reigned then in the minds and moods of society" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

S. Kudryavtsev also highly appreciated another until recently absolutely inaccessible to ordinary Soviet viewers, the film *Casanova Fellini* (*Casanova di Fellini*, 1976): side of his character's life. The witty fantasy of a great master deprives these scenes of rudeness and vulgarity, brings a sense of celebration, the triumph of love, freedom and liberation of the body and spirit (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Michelangelo Antonioni's classic masterpiece *Blow-up* (1966) also received, in our opinion, quite an adequate assessment: "Antonioni uses this story ... to create a parable about the unknowability of the world by man. Truth is hidden from the observer, as well as the boundary between illusion and reality. The theme of non-communicativeness, typical for M. Antonioni, of a person's inability to understand himself (and even more so, who is nearby) was transformed in *Blow-up* into a study of the philosophical problem of the relativity of human knowledge, which is content only with signs of things and events. The world here is a clownery, an illusory game in which everything is devoid of meaning and essence" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Another winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, *Scarecrow*, 1973, was also highly appreciated: "The sober and impartial attitude of the filmmakers to reality does not contradict their kind, slightly sentimental completely dissimilar people who loiter like tumbleweeds and seem to respectable townfolk "scarecrows." The humanity and sincerity of the picture allow it to retain its charm and power of influence even today" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

It seems that it was quite rightly noted that the satirical parable *Being There* (1979) by Hal Ashby, which successfully "uses" the display of the surrounding eyes of a person, on the one hand, "not spoiled" by civilization, and on the other hand, is a pure "product of of the television era, gives a striking effect – the hero gives presidents and politicians advice that is unexpected for them, but for him natural and simple. The greatest achievement of the film is the brilliant, virtuosic performance of the role of the gardener by Peter Sellers (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev called *Duel* (1971) by Steven Spielberg "a small masterpiece", where the director not only was able to inventively maintain tension throughout the plot, but accurately guessed the rare opportunity to create a philosophical parable about the impersonal, anonymous force of evil pursuing the ordinary a person, an "average American" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev also liked the screen version of the Broadway musical *Hair* (1979): "Perhaps it was the distance in time that allowed M. Forman to create not just a screen version of one of the first rock musicals, but a kind of portrait of a generation, a panorama of youth subculture 60-s. The acute relevance of the topics covered in the performance (the Vietnam War, student unrest, the spontaneous revolt of the "hippie" movement) and the calculation of scandalous outrageousness (in one of the episodes completely naked actors appeared on the stage) in the film gave way to a bitter and sober look at the "prodigal children" America and America itself, lost in a world of violence, military psychosis, rampant unbridled permissiveness. M. Forman's evil satire on the "powerful ones", on the insane military ... did not really appeal to American viewers and critics. ... However, such an attitude aside, the film, it seems, cannot but admire the unrestrained imagination, the vivid imagery" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Further, perhaps for the first time in the history of Soviet film criticism, two films by Andrzej Żuławski, *It's important to love* (*L'important c'est d'aimer*, 1974) and *Possession* (1981), received positive reviews. In fact, the plot, even tense, with elements of mysticism and detective story, is always for the director A. Żuławski only an excuse, a starting point. The action of his paintings suggests an expansive, metaphorical interpretation. The director gravitates towards the method of

fantastic realism, towards the genre of the parable about "human passions". According to Żuławski, one brief moment of happiness justifies long torments, strife, the eternal and irreconcilable struggle of the male and female principles, the dramatic, and often tragic fight of one person with another and at the same time with himself. ... Żuławski is a philosopher of initially doomed passion, confusing situation of mutual attraction – repulsion of a man and a woman. ... an ambiguous, complex artist (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev also claimed that the film *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1981) by Marco Ferreri is full of inner subtlety and wit. The "pain of an artist" here is not just an image. The intense, unceasing search for inspiration, the joy of creativity is far from being as beautiful as its result (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

But the boundless delight experienced by S. Kudryavtsev from watching the sensational drama Michael Cimino *The Deer Hunter* (1978) seems to us greatly exaggerated.

Apparently, in defiance of previous Soviet publications, in which this movie was subjected to well-founded ideological criticism (Yurenev, 1979: 19, and many others) S. Kudryavtsev, significantly simplifying and exaggerating the assessments of Soviet film critics of the older generation, decided, contrary to the plot and the author's concept of this movie, to try to inspire the readers of the Soviet Screen that "a large-scale saga about human destinies, which are mercilessly distorted by a senseless, useless war in Vietnam, our press accused of anti-Sovietism on the sole basis that some of the heroes were the children of emigrants from Russia, and in Vietnam American prisoners of war were mocked by playing "Russian roulette" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Meanwhile, the main claims to the really professionally made *The Deer Hunter* in the same Soviet Screen of the 1970s were made quite different: "The just war that the heroic people waged for forty years against the French and American imperialists is shown only in a monstrous episode where a Vietnamese blows up Vietnamese women and children. The Vietnamese woman is shown as a prostitute who is not ashamed of her own child. The Vietnamese are shown as a confused herd running after the American soldiers. And most importantly, the heroic Vietnamese warriors, whose courage and military prowess the Americans were given to experience to the full, are shown as fanatics torturing prisoners! .. The Vietnamese are shown as fanatics, executioners, and the American interventionists are innocent victims and invincible supermen" (Yurenev, 1979: 19).

S. Kudryavtsev's assessment of N. Oshima's scandalous film seems unjustifiably overpriced. "*Corrida of Love (Empire of the Senses/L'empire des sens, 1976)*. Here, clearly overflowing with the "perestroika" impulse of "creative freedom", S. Kudryavtsev at that time "shockingly" wrote that "N. Oshima's film can make a shock impression, and not only on our viewers. The directorate of the Cannes Film Festival in 1976 did not dare to allow this film to participate in the competition precisely because of "obscenity". ... It took time to understand that there are no boundaries for true art, and these boundaries are set mainly by our moral prejudices. ... *Corrida of Love* is clearly not designed for one viewing. This is a profound exploration of the existential foundations of love, a philosophical analysis of the human personality and its limits, in particular the problem of the penetration of one individuality into another – at the edge of the abyss between life and death. In addition to this "European stratum" there is a specifically Japanese one: N. Oshima continued here his favorite theme of the collapse of national myths, rituals, ceremonies, codes of honor" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Referring to the best examples of entertainment cinema, S. Kudryavtsev rightly singled out Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) as one of the best films of the adventure genre, striking with the richness of fiction, incredible stunts, and the unique use of all kinds of visual effects, computer technology. This is not only a story of dizzying adventures... but also a witty, subtle, intellectual parody of films of this genre (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Among science fiction films, *The Terminator* (1984) by James Cameron received a positive assessment: a wonderful example of tense non-stop action that does not let the viewer go literally for a second. ... The director accurately felt and sustained to the end the necessary rhythm and pace of action, showed remarkable imagination (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Another sci-fi film, *Blade Runner* (1982), was also highly acclaimed: R. Scott very subtly combines the style of a typical "black film" in the spirit of D. Hammett or R. Chandler with science fiction at a high level of technical complexity. ... R. Scott's film is a good example of a very interesting combination of a spectacular "action movie" with an entertaining intrigue, with a philosophical picture-reflection (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

And Walter Hill's *48 hrs* (1982) was singled out from a wide range of police comedies, where the combination of a tense development of action with comic situations, tricks, gags can be defined as a "comic thriller" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

And again, too enthusiastically, in our opinion, the mystical *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) by Roman Polanski was evaluated. We can agree that Polanski "not only created a fashion for" screen demonism", opening with his work a whole direction of films about modern occultism, but brought European culture to the film, connected the mystical genre with centuries-old philosophical searches in literature ... paying special attention to the manifestations of the magical, otherworldly, diabolical world at the level of everyday life (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 31). But with the fact that "from this point of view, the film *Rosemary's Baby* is perfect" can probably be argued...

With certain reservations, S. Kudryavtsev also positively assessed other famous Western entertainment films: *Trading Places* (1983) by John Landis (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29); *Blow Out* (1981) by Brian de Palma (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29); *Robocop* (1987) by Paul Verhoeven (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30); *The Omen* (1976) by Richard Donner and *Back to the Future* (1985) by Robert Zemeckis (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 31).

Whereas such secondary entertainment movies as *Cobra* (1986), *Xtro* (1983), *Class of 1984* (1982), *Salon Kitty* (1975), *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Police Academy* (1984) and others deservedly received negative ratings (Kudryavtsev, 1989, 29-30).

Analyzing the "Bondiana" that was recently mercilessly criticized by the Soviet press, film critic A. Vyatkin suggested that the readers of the *Soviet Screen* recall its plot scheme, which passes from film to film: 1. The enemy is a maniac who claims to rule the world or, at worst, to unleash a new world war. 2. Technique – on the verge of fantasy, the enemy – titanic, Bond – miniaturized. 3. Beauty – of all nationalities, colors of hair and skin, and none can resist the charm of James. 4. Plein air – like on tourist postcards. And finally. 5. Irony, parody, play – all this gives lightness to the most cumbersome inventions and reduces the drama of the most cruel fights (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

In general, we can agree that accusing Bond of dislike for the USSR is like accusing a fairytale knight fighting dragons of dislike for the animal world. Bond fights a Stereotype of the Enemy – during the Cold War, and during times of détente, his opponents often do not have a specific citizenship and a specific nationality. These are either maniacs-"Bonapartes" or agents of the fictitious organization SPEKTR (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

Further, A. Vyatkin, also without ideological pathos, introduced the readers of the *Soviet Screen* to the *Star Wars* franchise, reasonably noting that until recently, we associated the expression "star wars" not with cinema, but with the arms race. It is to be hoped that now *Star Wars* has forever occupied the only worthy place for them – on the screen (Vyatkin, 1990: 28-29).

Reflecting on the film adaptations of Stephen King's novels, A. Vyatkin wrote that King's fear is spilled in everyday life, among cars and computers, electric stoves and typewriters. His heroes are not only vampires and werewolves, but above all telepaths and psychics. Fear, according to King, inspires us not with a mysterious past, but with a threatening future, the sprouts of which are in our today ... King hits on sore points – social, political, environmental. But he does not paint global catastrophes. The horror of a single human soul is much more impressive, the writer believes (Vyatkin, 1990: 28-29).

In the same 1990, A. Vyatkin decided to review Hollywood horror films. First, he recalled that not so long ago, the horror film genre was one of the lures of the rotten West, along with chewing gum and rock music. Today we chew our own gum, and listen to our own rock, and films, as the audience complains, "are getting worse and worse" (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

And then, turning to the analysis of three famous franchises: *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Poltergeist*, Andrey Vyatkin wrote that the main reason for success with the audience is win-win use of the main factor of the "horror movie". This is the so-called "suspense", tension, that is, the viewer experiences a feeling of fear not so much at the sight of something terrible as in anticipation of it. Conventional tricks – disturbing music, the sound of steps, the creak of a door, a creeping shadow – always work flawlessly, causing an increased heartbeat (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31). To this, as the film critic correctly noted, an element of irony was often added.

*Articles about the problems of distribution of foreign films in the USSR and about the "video boom"*

The first "swallow" in which the situation of film distribution of foreign films in the USSR was sharply criticized was a sensational article by journalist Y. Geiko (Geiko, 1985) in

*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, published in the fall of 1985. The Soviet film press, controlled by the USSR Goskino, then kept silent.

However, in May 1986, the fifth, so-called "revolutionary" Congress of filmmakers took place (from which, in fact, an active film restructuring began) and the subsequent meeting of the new secretariat of the USSR filmmakers, at which the *Soviet Screen* was criticized.

Against the backdrop of the weakening positions of the USSR State Film Agency and its then head F. Yermash (1923–2002), the editors of the magazine, in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves, published an article by film critic O. Sulkin "Only for sale?.. Polemical notes on the rental of foreign films", where it was noted, that a number of Western films that were released in the Soviet film distribution in the mid-1980s are designed "for the most undemanding taste" and even contain "justification for immorality": "Alas, in the distribution policy, there has recently been a more and more tangible bias towards films that are artistically untenable and ideologically flawed representing not even the second, but, so to speak, the third and fourth echelons of Western "mass culture". Let's not underestimate the harm they cause. After all, they teach the viewer, especially the young one, to the fact that cinema is not an art, that the perception of the film does not require any spiritual work, that it is like a dessert, a sweet pie that should be eaten quickly and immediately forgotten. It's easy to get used to film chewing gum, but it's much more difficult to get used to it. That is probably why many works that require a little bit of mental stress are not perceived, which is why there is a "discrepancy" with serious films. "Mass culture" deforms the value orientations of the individual, and sociologists and social scientists speak about this with concern. The harm is that for other viewers who do not fully realize that they are dealing with a fantasy world of "white phones", such film illusions often serve as a way of knowing the Western way of being. He looks at one such surrogate, another, and comes to the conclusion: all of them are millionaires, at the worst, half-millionaires; there is no life there, but paradise, blue or pink" (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

As necessary measures to correct this situation, it was proposed to put a decisive barrier to films that are empty, vulgar, tasteless, glorifying, sometimes openly, sometimes in the subtext, the notorious bourgeois values (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

And here, quite in the spirit of the traditional Soviet film criticism approaches of previous decades, it was emphasized that it was necessary to "give the green light" to "socially significant films, works in the credits of which appear the names of masters of world cinema art" (Sulkin, 1986: 10), although it was stipulated that foreign films of entertainment genres "in their best examples, we need in our "time of stress and passion" (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

Further, O. Sulkin touched upon in his article the problem of censorship cuts in Western films that were released in the Soviet film distribution, and gave a rather impressive list of masterpieces of the world screen that never made it to the Soviet mass film distribution ...

In one of his following articles in the *Soviet Screen*, O. Sulkin clarified his position on the topic of film distribution: "The main conclusion is as indisputable as it is banal: we go to foreign cinema mainly to have fun. We love to be entertained with quality, and we are very indignant at hack work. And then he pointed out the need to straighten a quivering doe from a rolling cart, that is, difficult, complicated films. Let her out of financial difficulties be taken out by a strong, full of energy horse of a sharp plot and bright entertainment available to millions. ... But [films that are difficult for a mass audience] should be delicately and cleverly screened separately, in parallel or in clubs... In the system of differentiated distribution, they will definitely find their grateful audience" (Sulkin, 1987: 18-19).

Shortly after the first of O. Sulkin's articles cited above, the editors of the *Soviet Screen* returned to the topic of Western film distribution in the USSR, asking the then head of the repertoire planning and film distribution department of the Main Directorate of Film Production and Film Distribution of the USSR Goskino L. Veraksa.

In his response, L. Veraksa tried (in our opinion, very unconvincingly) to get around all the sharp corners of the problem, concentrating the attention of the magazine's readers on the imminent release of several films by "famous masters of Western cinema" (F. Truffaut, S. Lumet) into Soviet distribution and box office films *Spartacus* (1960) S. Kubrick, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) S. Kramer, *Italian Divorce (Divorzio all'italiana)*, 1961) P. Germi, *Great maneuvers (Les Grandes manoeuvres)*, 1955) R. Clair (Veraksa, 1986: 3).

Continuing the discussion about the system of Soviet film distribution, film critic S. Lavrentiev recalled that "there is a department for editing and dubbing foreign films in the Main Directorate of Film and Film Distribution. From the name it is clear what is preferred here, what

comes first, but this does not bother anyone. It would never occur to anyone to ask: why do you need to “edit” foreign films at all? Such a question, obviously, seems blasphemous to the authorities. How could it be, after all, this is a tradition, and an old one at that!.. “Our Soviet viewer does not need this” – this is the main slogan of the work of the “editors”. Armed with it, uncles and aunts with scissors withdraw episodes, characters, entire storylines from purchased films...” (Lavrentiev, 1987: 21).

Further, S. Lavrentiev drew attention to the fact that often not film critics and historians wrote about Western cinema in the Soviet press, but political observers, staff correspondents of newspapers and magazines, who, on duty, are forced to stay in the bourgeois world for a long time, but at the same time they often make amateurish mistakes, confusing the names of directors and actors and reporting other false information (Lavrentiev, 1987: 19).

The same film critic also recalled another unpleasant Soviet tradition of the press, this time “cancelling”, hushing up this or that foreign cinematic figure: “Yves Montand has ceased to be sympathetic to our country – forget about the *Pay for Fear!* Simone Signoret made unfriendly remarks – no *Thérèse Raquin!* ... In this absurdity it is easy to trace a peculiar logic. Since almost any foreign filmmaker can, if desired, find a film or a statement that bureaucratically should be qualified as “hostile”, on the basis of this “point” one can constantly narrow the repertoire of the cinema (Lavrentiev, 1988: 20).

A kind of response to the articles by O. Sulkin and S. Lavrentiev was a conversation organized by the *Soviet Screen* of the director of the *Soyuzkinofond* A. Wesker, the head of the department for editing and duplicating films G. Inozemtsev and the former head of this department G. Bogolepov.

G. Inozemtsev hastened to reassure the readers of the *Soviet Screen*: Editing does not mean ‘cutting’ films. Such judgments come from ignorance of our profession. In his article, S. Lavrentiev gives examples of 15 years ago... These movies have not been in the box office for a long time, and there are no people who crippled them. So the pathos of the article is turned rather into the past...

A. Wesker added to the words of his colleague: The reductions were provided for by a standard contract for the purchase of films by capitalist countries. The Main Directorate of Film Production and Film Distribution was instructed: To make changes and cut films in accordance with the requirements of the Soviet screen without changing the meaning and content of the film. Why did you have to shorten the movies? One of the most significant is the shortage of film. Because of him, it happened at one time to release color paintings in black and white. Many episodes were cut if there was violence and pornography: their propaganda is prohibited by our Constitution. Unfortunately, there were also abbreviations that destroyed the meaning of the works, their artistic fabric (Quoted by: Nenasheva, 1987: 21-22).

Film critic A. Erokhin (1954–2000) also wrote about the problems of film distribution in his characteristic ironic and mocking manner. He recalled how the Soviet audience, like a little boy, for many decades “they tirelessly frightened with the predatory jaws of an unknown man-eating shark – with taste, they frightened on a large scale, so that even in Serebryany Bor it was scary to go into the water. Thanks to all the same kind uncles, departmental miracle heroes who defeated this movie monster even on the distant approaches to our territorial waters. And desperate hand-to-hand combat with bad King Kong! Only shreds flew from a primate alien to us. “There are sharks in Africa, gorillas in Africa... Don’t go, children, to walk in Africa!” ... And indeed: why lure into your cinema networks, picking up a reasonable price with a creak, representatives of their products are known, if they can be dealt with alone (after an intimate date in some secluded corner like Cannes or Venice) our valiant plenipotentiary taster in suede jacket, riddled with all sorts of *Godfathers*, our unbending exerciser, cheerfully exorcising the devil from the world’s movie screen, which came into his field of vision on duty, which is “both dangerous and difficult.” The plenipotentiary to this, of course, and the cards in hand: he is an initiate, after all, he knows both Fellini and Bergman, and Kubrick and Coppola like the back of his hand, and so sensibly stated everything about them in books with harsh titles, that in the films themselves the boy has just no longer needed. A convenient system, the boy thought: now I’ll buy guidebooks and I don’t have to go anywhere, and if I also get a cookbook, I can do without a grocery store with a restaurant. This boy grew up and received the proud name of a “mass viewer”, causing the quiet tenderness of film distributors because of his understandability and understanding” (Erokhin, 1987: 3).

As can be seen from this text, without naming specific names and surnames, the relatively young at that time film critic Alexei Erokhin rather caustically walked through the "elite", "ideologically consistent" film critics of the older generation (V. Baskakov, G. Kapralov, A. Karaganov, R. Yurenev and others), who regularly visited key Western film festivals, and, consequently, who then had the exclusive right to share their impressions of the films they saw there (inaccessible to the mass Soviet audience) in the Soviet press in the "correct way".

In the same 1987, a completely sensational event took place on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: in the December issue, an article by film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) was published under the defiant title "Let's talk about erotica", and even accompanied by a photograph, where depicted, albeit rather modestly presented, but still a naked female body.

In his article, V. Dmitriev dared to break the taboo that had been held in the USSR for many decades, and declared the right of Soviet viewers to watch erotic films.

To "accelerate", V. Dmitriev began with a horror film, the beloved child of fighters against cinematic infection on the ideological front": , a mystical picture, although depending on the position of the author, it can be pathological and mystical, and a movie with monsters – fabulous, folklore, literary (Dmitriev, 1987: 20).

And then it was about the right of Soviet viewers to watch erotic episodes that have a plot and semantic character in the pictures (eroticism, used solely to raise the commercial potential of the picture, and we will not discuss pornography: their inadmissibility on our screens, I think, doubts does not cause). We are unlikely to achieve anything if we oppose [cinema erotica] sexless cinema and the sterile "purity" of relationships constructed in the silence of studio offices. And we can expect success if, calling on the help of the traditions of art, discarding cowardice and hypocrisy, we offer the audience high eroticism, which is high because it is based on morality. ... I vote for the right of our viewer to see on the screen the beauty of not only the soul, but also the human body. The term "eroticism" must finally be stripped of its veil of ambiguous mystery (Dmitriev, 1987: 20-21).

It is logical that this article (as well as previous articles about film distribution) caused a storm of opposite emotions among the readers of the *Soviet Screen*, many of whom later wrote letters to the editors of the magazine and personally to film critic V. Dmitriev.

Here are just a few quotes from readers' letters cited on the pages of the magazine:

"What would be the style of our museums if some "guardian of morality" had the idea to dress or smash the sculptures of Rodin, cut or paint over the "shameful places" on the canvases of Rubens?" (Y. Chernenko).

"Why do they decide for us: what we can watch and what we can't?" (A. Popov).

"Thanks for your article! I thought I would not live to see the years when they finally talk about erotica with respect".

"And you are talking about erotica! Disgusting to read! Let's talk about promiscuity! How can you not be ashamed? I despise you after that!" (A. Ovcharenko).

"Someone is rooting for production, another is struggling with various negative phenomena, but V. Dmitriev will now fight to ensure that there are as many naked women and sex scenes on our screen as possible" (O. Marfenko).

It is interesting that the readers, who bravely fought against sex on the screen, supported in many ways in his sarcastic feuilleton "Where is the sex? I don't see sex!", published in the newspaper *Soviet Culture*, journalist E. Grafov (Grafov, 1988).

Film expert V. Dmitriev decided to answer the readers. At first he noted that he was surprised by "the degree of frankness, enthusiastic or hostile, disproportionate, in my opinion, with a very modest task of publication", and then once again emphasized that cinematic "high erotica" is still not "artistically executed sexual acts", but the situation of the transition of sex from the biological to the spiritual, that state of sensual delight, which is familiar to any loving couple and which is a constant subject of depiction in art" (Dmitriev, 1988: 20-21).

One of the authors of these lines also joined this discussion: "I have long been convinced that filmmakers are very well aware of the real audience demand. ... for the sake of financial gain, they are ready to release in all cinemas without exception any picture that contradicts their views and aesthetic tastes. They just know the "market" well: what is interesting today and what is not interesting to the audience. As for erotic films, they are also different. And I don't think, for example, that after watching F. Zeffirelli's beautiful and sentimental erotic melodrama *Endless Love* (1981), bad inclinations will wake up in young viewers. And the beautiful erotic scenes in the films of L. Visconti, M. Jancsó, F. Mazelli? Undoubtedly, in other paintings – by I. Bergman,

M. Ferreri, P.P. Pasolini, D. Makaveev, the sexual sphere of human life is sometimes given in harsh manifestations. So what, to deprive these works of any significance, to brand them with "darkness"? Another thing is that these films are not designed for children and viewers with weak nerves ... And everyone is already tired of the bans – both viewers and filmmakers. ... The spring festival of Italian films in Moscow was held without full houses and queues. I remember that at one of the "stagnant" festivals, crowds of spectators who dreamed of "breaking through" to Fellini's *Sweet Life* were held back almost by mounted police. And in April of this year, in the capital's cinemas, where, in addition to *La Dolce Vita* (1960), there were *Satyricon* (1969), *City of Women* (*La Città delle donne*, 1980) and *Casanova* (1976), there were many empty seats ... Here you have the "forbidden" erotica in Fellini's films. Many viewers prefer the spicy clarity of *Emmanuelle* to his whimsical and ambiguous fantasy. However, why be surprised here – with the help of video, our viewers, who were sitting on a starvation ration, enter into a situation of choice that is normal for the rest of the world. Each of us chooses what he can do without, and what he can't do without..." (Fedorov, 1990: 10).

Film critic A. Plakhov continued the discussion about the "forbidden film fruit" on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: "For the third year now, I have been watching how our domestic erotic business is getting on its feet. At first, only a naked female bust could be seen on calendars and posters, then tender buttocks, and now the most cherished frontal projection. So the title of the notorious novel *All Ahead*, imbued with a sacred horror of the power of pornography, turned out to be prophetic. They say that this is supposedly erotica, and pornography in our rule of law state is prohibited by law ... This, of course, can be consoled, forgetting for a moment that laws are powerless in front of the underlying springs that guide the course of life. ... All peoples who were lucky enough to taste the taste of totalitarianism are also familiar with its aftertaste, expressed in the suppression of normal sexuality, driven into the framework of rigid taboos. Religious precepts and national shrines, political doctrines and state-family moral codes were called to help. But the oppressed erotic energy, breaking through in underground ugly outbursts, was accumulating for a big explosion. It was experienced by Italy after Mussolini, and Spain after Franco, and Japan, which ceased to be a samurai reserve ... But the erotic boom fades faster than the generation that provoked it has time to grow old. And the faster, the more unconditionally the freedom granted to him. ... You might think that Western society is de-erotizing. Nothing happened. It simply passes into the next stage, when sex ceases to be a subject of public excitement, it becomes an individual affair of each person, free to choose any form of sexual behavior, except for violence. Violence is suppressed not only direct, but also indirect – psychological. Aggressive sexuality in magazines, on television, in films is not so much censored as localized, limited in circulation and distribution methods. ... On the other hand, we are afraid to hurt the feelings of the elderly and give the young what they should not be deprived of by definition – youth erotic films. In the West they are produced in abundance, they are not at all expensive to buy, and many of them are not in bad taste at all. These films are not vulgar, they are not "heavy porn" and could serve to increase the erotic culture of our youth. And maybe not only her" (Plakhov, 1991: 25-26).

At the turn of the 1990s, another article by film critic S. Lavrentiev was published in the *Soviet Screen*, where he summed up the results of the short campaign of the USSR Goskino to release some masterpieces of Western cinematography: An attempt to systematically familiarize the Soviet audience with the greatest achievements of world cinema, undertaken at the dawn of film perestroika, can, apparently, be considered complete. Our audience saw Fellini and Kurosawa, Renoir and Clair, Coppola and Foreman.. Well, that's enough! Cinematography has entered the era of self-financing. You need to make money, you have to buy commerce abroad. After all, people don't really look at masterpieces. While *Seven Samurai* is playing in the empty halls of our largest cinemas in the world, the box office of video salons is filling up, offering the people works like *Go, girl, take off your clothes* (Lavrentiev, 1990: 27-28).

But on the other hand, by the end of the 1980s, a system of "pirated" video rentals and private video viewings of recently banned Western film products arose in the USSR. Film critic S. Kudryavtsev wrote in 1988 that "you can't pretend all the time that the contingent of VCR owners is insignificant! ... Let's say roughly that there are 5-7 million video viewers in the country. ... But now, thanks to the "parallel" rental, the viewers also receive such outstanding films that were previously blatantly classified as pornographic, such as L. Bunuel's *Beauty of the Day*, B. Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, M. Ferreri's *Big Grub*, *Casanova* by F. Fellini, all films by P.P. Pasolini, starting with *The Decameron*; *The Night Porter* by L. Cavani, *Empire of the Senses*



by N. Oshima. And the viewer can now cleanse them himself of the husk that has stuck to them because of the preconceived interpretations of the prudes of art" (Kudryavtsev 1988: 22).

In addition, it turned out that it was at this time that "documents similar to the Methodological Recommendations of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs appeared in the USSR, in which films falling under articles 228 and 2281 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and corresponding to them in the Criminal Code of other republics) include such films of world classics, as *Last Tango in Paris*, *Beauty of the Day*, *The Godfather* or *Once Upon a Time in America* (Bolezni..., 1988: 16-17).

As V. Borev and A. Morozov wrote, such articles of the Criminal Code dealt with responsibility for distribution or storage for the purpose of distribution of objects of a pornographic nature, in particular video films, on the basis of which some Soviet video amateurs received real prison terms (Borev, Morozov, 1989: 22-23).

A milder measure to combat the "wrong" Western videos was their confiscation from Soviet citizens at customs inspections: in 1988, more than 80,000 video cassettes with recordings were checked at the country's customs when entering the USSR. About 9 thousand of them were confiscated (Morozov, 1989: 19).

In 1989, on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* was published a document entitled "Methodological recommendations for article 228 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR on the conduct of art criticism examinations of photo-film and television production", developed by several candidates of art history, philosophical and medical sciences (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

In these recommendations, the following signs of pornographic films were defined: Auto-attribution is the assignment of a film by its creators or distributors to the "x" category (porn). The anonymity of the filmmakers, the lack of a list of performers. Use of pseudonyms to refer to performers and directors. Significant features include the inherent value of showing sex scenes outside of any artistic task: the main screen time is devoted to showing in a naturalistic form of copulation; the absence of the concept of the film and the artistic principles of its construction; as a rule, the lack of plot, intrigue, context; purely conditional connection of individual scenes and episodes; detailed development and predominant use of close-ups and directional lighting, direct shooting angles when showing scenes of sexual intercourse (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

The editorial staff of the *Soviet Screen* magazine reacted ironically to these methodological recommendations: The description of the examination technology itself is of particular admiration. A picture is vividly drawn in the imagination: priests in white coats, sitting in easy chairs around a video recorder, look at various sexual acts "frame by frame" all day long, strictly comparing them with a "control group of artistic images", making sure that no more is seen than at Resting Venus – well, at the very least, at the very least – so that the video characters behave no more cheekily than the Romans of the Decline. Wow job! (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

But the Soviet video amateurs sent on the basis of this kind of "expertise" probably had no time for irony ...

For example, in 1985, two video amateurs were convicted by the Leninsky People's Court of the city of Yaroslavl under Article 228 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR "for distributing pornography." The fact of the "distribution" of two videos: *Papaya*, *The Adventures of a Taxi Driver* and a *Plumber*, which the local expert commission recognized as pornographic, was established. My friends served their time – one and a half, the other two years (Pinsky, 1990: 24-25).

In addition, cases were recorded when a criminal case was opened for the demonstration and possession of so-called "anti-Soviet" films (KGB ..., 1990: 22-23).

However, the situation with video viewing changed very quickly in the USSR. Here is what film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006) wrote about this in 1991: "In the old village ..., next to the ruined Church of the Epiphany, there is a cinema, videos are playing: *Mad Max*, *Love Boarding House* (only for adults!), etc., erotica, adventure, horror. Here, film distribution services are practically dispensed with. Provincial grimaces? But even in the metropolitan cinema "Meeting" on the Garden Ring, formerly an elite one, famous for its brilliant repertoire ... now there are commercial video programs, only the first screening at 9.20 is given "for blazir" and an empty hall to some Soviet film. Today, for example, all day "Fanny Hill (USA, erotica) with a moronic alert: "Children under 18 years old are not allowed". But back to Ples. On its compact cinema sites (4,500 residents plus tens of thousands of vacationers), a kind of battle between cinema and video takes place. Today, with Matveev's *Cup of Patience* competed *Love Passion and Ecstasy* and *Girls on Wheels...* Further more. Everything you want to know about sex, *Love by subscription*, *Queen of the*

*Barbarians* (everything was honorary, the fourth category of “sexual complexity”) was played in the video salon ... today you can burst from the belly” (Zorky, 1991: 18-19).

In the same 1991, film critic O. Goryachev echoed Andrei Zorky: “Video is seriously crowding cinema. He has something to offer the viewer. Another question is where these treasures come from. ... While we do not have a properly functioning box office, it was piracy that first provided our world's most disadvantaged viewer with the opportunity to choose. ... What genres are leading? – You still need to name the champions. The most popular genre so far is erotica. Erotic movies go wherever the owners want to squeeze the maximum profit out of their establishment, because erotica today is one hundred percent sold out. Full house in any situation and at any time of the day. In the video salon at the Moscow *Art Cinema*, for example, they start at ten: the box office opens at half past nine, and by noon there are no tickets. And so month after month. “We had different films,” they say here, “but the erotic ones last the longest: they played the *Greek Fig Tree* (*Griechische Feigen*, 1976), for three months, now the *Wild Orchid* has entered the third month. And they add, lowering their eyes: “The men are knocking down the shaft, they almost demolish the doors.” ... This is in the center of Moscow. And how many of these mini-pornosalonchikov huddle in different corners. Their posters are designed, in my opinion, for an exciting effect. Here is one that I rewrote in a working hostel: Video salon “Success”: 10.00 – 11 days, 11 nights. 12.0 – *Sex Star*. 14.0 – *Insatiable wife*. 16.0 – *Bangkok sex*. 18.0 – *Turkish fruit*. 20.0 – 6 *Swedes on the island of Ibiza*. 22.0 – optional. It is not difficult to imagine what this desire will be. There is no shortage of those who wish themselves” (Goryachev, 1991: 26-27).

Film scholar and culture expert K. Razlogov (1946–2021) argued with O. Goryachev on *Screen*: I will begin with a statement that may seem paradoxical: we know nothing about the video repertoire in our country. It only seems that the situation is insanely simple. All we have to do is use the “commercialization” picklock and we will get an unambiguous answer. One such answer is offered by my young colleague in the pages of this journal. He imagines that Satan “rules the ball” with the help of erotica and pornography. I categorically disagree: there is no pornography in video salons and video libraries at all. Perhaps it is shown clandestinely or, as in the rest of the world, it is preferred to be viewed at home. I am not one of those who consider this a criminal offense – I think that human curiosity about one's own nature is quite natural and should not be persecuted. But I repeat: knowing that there is an article in the penal code, pornography is not shown openly.

As for erotica, I don't think it prevails either. ... I don't think I would be wrong to say that it takes up less than a third of the repertoire.

But that's where the most curious thing comes in. Indeed, which erotic films (there are hundreds if not thousands of them) are the most popular with our viewers? At the first stage of the video business development this question could be answered more or less unambiguously. The most popular films were simply the first ones that caught our eye. An example of that was the famous *Greek fig tree* (*Griechische Feigen*, 1976), which for a while became an absolute bestseller on Russian video screens, and then ... *American Nine ½ Weeks* (1985)...

Let's look around and try to figure out what the structure of the rest of the non-erotic repertoire is. I don't think it would be wrong to say that American adventure films make up the lion's share of it. ... And, perhaps, the most important thing. In all current projects for creating a system of censorship and combating video piracy, one should always keep in mind that the elimination of the created video system is not only impossible in principle, but can also have fatal consequences from the point of view of cultural development. It is not necessary to demand bans, but to carry out persistent work to legalize the video market. If its repertoire expands, if critics regularly and skillfully write about video production, maybe someday in the future everything that happens in this very specific area will finally take civilized forms (Razlogov, 1991: 27).

A curious consequence of the Soviet video boom at the turn of the 1990s was the mass production of video catalogs, carelessly, with a huge number of errors, compiled by anonymous amateurs. One of the authors of these lines also wrote about this peculiar phenomenon on the pages of *Soviet Screen* (Fedorov, 1990: 22).

*Articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR and reviews of Western national cinemas*

During the “Perestroika” period in the *Soviet Screen* there were radical changes in the articles about international film festivals. Firstly, the usual scheme of the past decades was violated, when among the films shown at foreign festivals, “progressive works of cinematography” were singled out and the rest were sharply criticized. And secondly, the circle of “travelling” film critics has

changed: "ideologically consistent" film critics and international journalists of the older generation have been replaced by film critics of a "perestroika" orientation.

Of course, this did not happen immediately. For example, in an article by film critic N. Savitsky about the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1986, the ideological rules of the game in the presentation of the material were traditional: he praised the anti-war drama Bill Bennett *A Street to Die* (1985) and *Rosa Luxemburg* (1985) by Margaret von Trotta for revolutionary pathos and for the main "dignity – the image of the main character, unusually reliable and truly humane, completely devoid of "textbook gloss" (Savitsky, 1986: 20-21).

But already in the article of the film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993), devoted to the West Berlin Film Festival, a departure from the previous ideological stereotypes was indicated. For example, it was emphasized that the West Berlin fest the main thing in character is reasonable efficiency. It was conceived not as a festival, but as an important cultural event, and then there was an analysis of the competition films, without any division into "progressive" and "reactionary" ones (Demin, 1987: 20-21).

There was no criticism of bourgeois cinema in the report of film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) from the 1988 Munich Film Festival (Andreev, 1988: 20-21).

And in the even more "perestroika" year of 1989 also film critic F. Andreev joyfully corresponded to the *Soviet Screen* from America: "Thank God, the time of tenacious, commonplace stereotypes has passed. ... I only went to three very different screenings of the long American summer. My friends joked that you can live the whole year practically without leaving the cinema, taking a break from viewing only during flights from one city to another. There is a lot of truth in this joke. Several dozen film festivals are held in the United States every year. Some of them deservedly won international fame" (Andreev, 1989: 28-29).

In 1989, the last censorship barriers at the Moscow International Film Festival practically disappeared. Due with which film critic Andrei Dementiev (1957–2023) described one of the sexual innovations of this festival as follows: "No, of course, it's wonderful that dogmas and stereotypes are collapsing. Only here you sometimes wonder at yourself: they collapse, collapse, but something still does not dry out. How many have accumulated there! ... Here is another one. I sit in a crowded festival hall and watch the American avant-garde short film *Hermes Bird*, that is, for ten minutes I watch the full process of erection, shot in close-up in rapid motion and in profile so that you can see it better. And on a dark background, so that nothing random distracts from the main content. Vague verses are spoken behind the scenes, something about closeness to nature, about the unity of all principles – I didn't make out, I was carried away by the main content. And after all, what is interesting: if I watched something like that at someone's house on video, I probably would not have paid attention, I would have forgotten right there – after all, anything can be seen on the video. Here, the very situation struck me, the very idea that this is being shown today at the Moscow International Film Festival. Here is the stereotype for you: "This is not allowed at our Soviet festival" (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

In the same 1989 in Moscow was organized retrospective of American erotic films. At the same time, there were almost no complaints about obscenity ... But disappointment was strongly felt that in most of the films the promised "strawberry" was not at all, or, in any case, in frankness, it was much inferior to the latest searches of Lenfilm, Mosfilm or the Gorky Studio . The rumor that in Moscow they show solid pornography turned out to be, to put it mildly, greatly exaggerated. Mostly serious films were shown, reflecting on the vicissitudes of the biological nature of man, and not just demonstrating its charms (Razlogov, 1989: 7).

Going to a foreign cinema adulation, film critic E. Tirdatova already gave her positive assessment of the title of her article: "Berlin: a symphony of a big festival" (Tirdatova, 1989: 28-29), and then there was also an analysis of the competitive and non-competitive program, devoid of any ideological bias...

E. Tirdatova retained the same positive approach to this festival a year later, when in the title of her article she reflected the significant political changes in then Germany: "The time when the walls are falling down. Berlin is an open city" (Tirdatova, 1990: 26-27).

This positive perception of the political situation in Germany could easily be felt at the very beginning of this article: "...The Berlin Wall has collapsed. Its remnants in the area of the Brandenburg Gate were already dismantled with us on one of the rainy days of February. Today, pieces of the wall are sold as souvenirs. And for the first time in the festival's forty years,

the program was shown on both sides of the former wall. It is not surprising that the jubilee Berlinale gathered a lot of people” (Tirdatova, 1990: 26-27).

Approximately the same positive perestroika moods of change towards a “common European home” were filled with an article by film critic E. Stishova: “It all depends on how soon we get over wall syndrome. The International Film Festival in Oberhausen, which chose the motto "The way to the neighbor" three and a half decades ago, has waited in the wings. The Berlin Wall is no more. In a physical sense. The wall syndrome is still there, and it will be for a long time, but it has finally become really obvious what close neighbors we are in our cramped European home. Oberhausen-90 retained its inherent dryish correctness. ... The spirit of the collapsed wall, the spirit of freedom, the rules are also in the competition program, placing the focus on works reflecting the theme of totalitarian despotism. There is nowhere to go – this theme has become the superplot of the festival” (Stishova, 1990: 27).

But in the report of the film critic V. Kichin, who visited the Montreal Film Festival in 1990, behind the ironic presentation, a bitter feeling of the crisis (or already the collapse?) of socialist "perestroika" was seen through. At the beginning of the article, it was described how “an Air Canada plane carried us across the ocean. He gave Irish liquor and Scotch whiskey to drink, he showed movies and made you listen to eight stereo music programs to choose from. The stewardesses smiled (we knew: fake), gave souvenirs all the time (we knew: for promotional purposes) – they did their business, unsuccessfully trying to lull people into a class instinct. But, of course, we did not compromise our principles. Although they ate, also for appearances, "brochette New Orleans." In the meantime, the World Film Festival began...”. And after the end of the festival, it was good to “plunge into a comfortable Air Canada chair”. Put on fluffy bourgeois socks kindly offered by the stewardess – so as not to blow. Have a last drink of a bourgeois gin and tonic, watch some bourgeois nonsense on a video screen. The soul rejoices: home! Home, home, to empty shelves and native problems. To the unceasing debate about whether we are faithful to the holy ideas of socialism” (Kichin, 1991: 24-25).

Yes, film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937-2003) was right: Before, twenty years ago, we read reports from international festivals excitedly, trying to get some information about what was happening in the world from under the husk of cheap denunciations. movie. Now the situation has changed. The words "foreign film" or even "American action movie" do not excite anyone anymore. Films “from behind the hillock”, translated into video, bought many years late or almost new – a stream that is not always good quality, carrying a lot of garbage, but quite full-flowing, has finally rushed to us (Khlopyankina, 1991: 30-31).

And regarding the program of the Moscow International Film Festival in 1991, film critic E. Tirdatova reasonably stated that “gone are the days when the Moscow Festival had to provide its screen to friendly Zimbabwe or struggling Kampuchea. We are no longer afraid of the enemy's ideology. We ourselves are now hard to outdo in terms of anti-Sovietism; in eroticism, the world screen that has grown cold towards it will not overwhelm us either. So it became easier for the festival selection committee. But... The Moscow festival is not in the best shape. And, of course, it is impossible to imagine that Spielberg or Bertolucci would hold their new painting especially for him. What is left of solid Berlin, magnificent Cannes is coming to us, which is not reserved for luxurious Venice” (Tirdatova, 1991: 12).

Approximately in the same spirit, but with an emphasis on the motives of the belated, but still reaching the USSR, “sexual revolution”, film critic A. Gerber wrote about the same Moscow Film Festival: “They say that the screen of the festival shocked the volume of the bed theme. I think that he rather shocked the viewer not only with the looseness of love adventures, not only with vivid pictures for lectures of Freud, who was recently banned in our country, but now available (on all stalls) and therefore unnecessary. He, I am sure, helped many to liberate themselves, to discover their complexes, to look at sexual problems not with the curious eye of a dirty trickster who looked into the crack, but with the eye of an artist who knows that it is here, in the mysteries of love, that a person rediscovers himself every time. The whole mystery, everything in us is an abyss. To understand this, one had to at least spend the night with the films of Liliana Cavani. Agree, that after the ultimate openness of on-screen love, I wanted to dress her, love, take it in my hands, return it to spiritual purity. Such love came to us as a gift in the impeccable farewell film of Agnès Varda (in memory of her deceased husband, the famous Jacques Demy). The film was the closing chord of the festival” (Gerber, 1991: 2-3).

And the film critic V. Kichin was very strict about this event: “The festival passed, but no one noticed it. There was no usual national holiday, with fairs at the cinema "Russia", with posters: I change Buñuel for Spielberg. There were no full, and often half-full halls. Those who wish wandered from boredom – what do they give there today? France? Depardieu? Do we have time for the Vesti program? No? Then well, to hell with him, Depardieu, we'll see by the video. ... Except for a few outstanding retrospectives – Polanski, Russell ... – the program caused mixed feelings. They took what they gave. So there were no sensations” (Kichin, 1991: 4).

However, further on V. Kichin made an essential film/geopolitical, albeit also a very pessimistic reservation: “I don't think, however, that the lack of good cinema at the 17th Moscow International Film Festival is the festival's fault. This is the misfortune of today's cinematography, which is universally affected by anemia. Quiet period: there are no new Fellinis and Bergmans, the luminaries took a timeout, there are no past shocks, and our souls are not ready for them. In essence, this festival reflected reality better. He was a workhorse in the dull field of world cinema. Weekdays. But this is how most of the festivals of the planet live, in fact – they work, and do not rejoice at a visit to noble collective farmers. Cod lovers now back off. There remain people who are faithful to cinema, faithful both in joy and in a moment of hypochondria. ... And maybe what we, in our apocalyptic mood, take for agony, and there is a return to the normal state of our festival. When there is no shortage of tickets. When everyone can come without blat. And when it reflects not the brotherhood of progressive working people approved by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, but the real state of the film process. Of the abnormalities – only our native rudeness and unprecedented poverty. But these are typical birthmarks of socialism” (Kichin, 1991: 4).

To some extent, however, also on a sad note, film critic L. Dularidze tried to oppose these conclusions, who wrote that, in her opinion, the festival nevertheless took place. And if someone again says something about a feast during a plague, one can answer that if someone has a chronic plague, then cinema has nothing to do with it (Dularidze, 1991: 5).

As we can see, during the “perestroika” period, it was mainly film critics who traveled to foreign film festivals, who had previously been deprived of such an opportunity for one reason or another. But as is well known, there are exceptions to every rule. So in 1990, on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* was published an article by a festival regular of previous decades, a well-known film critic and one of the leading television *Cinema Panorama* G. Kapralov (1921–2010).

It was about the review of the films of the International Film Festival of Fantastic and Strange Films in Avoriaz.

It is clear from the text of G. Kapralov's article that at the turn of the 1990s he decided to completely abandon the party-ideological approaches familiar to him, the long-term head of the culture department of the *Pravda* newspaper, and to show that he was completely in the stream of “perestroika” changes.

What can we say, even the then leaders of cinema perestroika, the film critics Demin (1937–1993) and A. Plakhov did not dare by 1990 to write with such politically revealing pathos these lines: “For decades, the guilty rulers' guilty conscience, burdened by total suspicion that promised no one anything but the apocalyptic Gulag, in every fantastic picture they saw an ideological treachery, a threat to socialist virginity, which had never existed, and in the images of evil spirits the vampires of the party and state suddenly recognized themselves and protected the people from such destructive spectacles. As a result of this all-round care for the working people, we had no more science-fiction, let alone boots on the ground and so on. Cinema fiction became invisible: in all civilized countries it was seen firsthand, but in our country one could only guess by unverified rumors that it was still out there somewhere” (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

Further G. Kapralov gave an unexpected (for him and his past publications) high praise to a rather mediocre and now almost completely forgotten picture: “The Grand Prize in the fiction section was awarded to the picture *I, Madman* (1989) by the Hungarian-born American director Tibor Takács. An impressionable reader of novels about a homicidal maniac finds herself caught up in her own hallucinations from this reading, which tragically coincide with the sadistic crimes going on in the city. The film is elegantly and wittily constructed and directed” (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

And absolutely unexpected for the readers of the *Soviet Screen*, who are familiar with the previous publications of G. Kapralov, from year to year exposing bourgeois cinematography, along with its horror films that corrupt the consciousness of fragile spectator souls, were the following

lines: "I personally prefer Brian de Palma's *Carrie* – the prize of the same Avoriaz-77 – the best of the film adaptations of King's books, which our box office should have bought" (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

– short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral messages to "yellow" gossip).

The section of brief news of foreign cinema at the beginning of "perestroika" as a whole kept within the ideological framework of the previous decade.

So film critic E. Tirdatova wrote in 1986 that actress B. Bardo "managed to express in their screen images the ideals of a whole generation, to convey the atmosphere of the time. Her heroines are simple, natural girls, independent, often protesting against bourgeois morality. ... Unfortunately, the talent of the actress was mercilessly exploited by purely commercial cinema" (Tirdatova, 1986: 21).

And the film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) noted Dean Reed's participation in mass anti-imperialist and anti-war demonstrations in front of the American embassies in Lima, Caracas, Santiago, Mexico City, the appearance in his work of new songs of protest against social oppression and inequality, songs calling for they led the unity of good people in the face of the threat of war, a nuclear catastrophe (Andreev, 1986: 22).

But at the turn of the 1990s, "yellowness" came to the news feed of the magazine (Braginsky, 1991: 30; Kokorev, 1991: 20-21, etc.).

Moreover, even the scandalous everyday details of the Moscow International Film Festival began to penetrate the pages of *Screen* (which had never happened before): Canadian director Atom Egoyan only knocked on the door. It was in a hotel, and Atom was confused by its many corridors. Immediately there were the security officers, who thought the knocking was too loud and that the person knocking was too much fun. Under the threat of physical violence, the Canadian was taken to the hotel basement. The only thing that saved him from going to jail was his foreign appearance – they would have taken ours there for sure... During a cruise on a motor vessel a famous actor from Georgia had a quarrel with a guest from Germany. The guest did not like our festival as well as the Soviet cinema and the Soviet nature surrounding the ship" (Scandaly..., 1991: 15).

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of the texts published during the "perestroika" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991), we came to the conclusion that materials on the subject of Western cinema on this stage can be divided into the following genres:

- ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience (1986–1987);
- articles on the history of Western cinema;
- biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors (as a rule, with positive ratings);
- interviews with Western filmmakers (as a rule, with those who came to Moscow film festivals);
- reviews of Western films (here we can note a violation of the old tradition: if in 1986–1987 the magazine still often negatively evaluated some "politically harmful bourgeois" films, then later Western film production was evaluated without regard to ideological stereotypes, moreover, even received a positive interpretation films that were previously rejected for ideological reasons);
- articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, reviews of the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies (no longer divided into "progressive" and "bourgeois" cinematography);
- short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

As a kind of curiosity, but somewhat symptomatic, it can also be noted that a considerable number of employees or authors of the *Soviet Screen*, who often vividly exposed "bourgeois cinematography" on the pages of the magazine, eventually emigrated precisely to the countries of this most actively criticized Soviet press of the West: V. Matusevich (1937–2009), S. Chertok (1931–2006), F. Andreev (1933–1998), M. Shaternikova (1934–2018), I. Lishchinsky, V. Golovskoy, O. Surkova, I. Kokarev, O. Sulkin, M. Yampolsky and others.

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## Appendix

The main dates and events related to the historical, political, economic, ideological, socio-cultural and cinematic context in which the publication of the *Soviet Screen* magazine was carried out in 1986–1991

1986

February 25 – March 6, 1986: XXVII Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

April 21-28: All-Union Film Festival (Alma-Ata).

April 26: Accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

May 13-15: The 5th Congress of Soviet Cinematographers, which proclaimed a course towards the restructuring of Soviet cinema.

May 29: meeting of the secretariat of the Union of Cinematographers, dedicated to the state of affairs in the *Soviet Screen* magazine, where there was sharp criticism of the editorial office and editor-in-chief of the magazine D. Orlov(1935–2021).

June 24-28: Eighth Congress of Writers of the USSR.

June: M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) announces the beginning of "perestroika".

June: a three-fold drop in world oil prices (from \$ 29 per barrel, noted the previous year, to \$ 10), sharply intensifying the economic crisis in the USSR.

July 7-10: visit to the USSR of French President François Mitterrand (1916-1996).

October 11-12: meeting of M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) and R. Reagan (1911–2004) in Reykjavik.

November 4: Opening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna.

November 19: The law "On individual labor activity" is adopted in the USSR.

December 23: Academician A. Sakharov (1921–1989) returns from exile to Moscow.

December: Yuri Rybakov (1931–2006) succeeds Dal Orlov (1935–2021) as editor of Soviet Screen. Y. Rybakov retained this position until 1990.

1987

January 13: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the procedure for the creation on the territory of the USSR and the activities of joint ventures with the participation of Soviet organizations and firms of capitalist and developing countries."

January 27-28: "Perestroika" Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, which decided to develop cooperatives and alternative elections.

February 5: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the establishment of cooperatives for the production of consumer goods."

March 28–April 1: British Prime Minister M. Thatcher (1925–2013) visits the USSR.

May 1: The "Law on individual labor activity" came into force in the USSR.

May 18-24: All-Union Film Festival (Tbilisi). The main prize was awarded to the film *Repentance* by T. Abuladze (1924–1994).

May 23: USSR cancels jamming of most Western radio stations on its territory.

May 28: 18-year-old amateur pilot M. Rust made an illegal flight from Hamburg (via Helsinki) to Moscow (he landed practically on Red Square).

July 6-17: Moscow International Film Festival. Gold Prize: *Interview* (Italy, director F. Fellini).

October 22: Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996) is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

November 7: The USSR solemnly celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power.

December 1-10: M. Gorbachev's visit to Washington. The signing of the treaty on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles.

M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) was declared Man of the Year in the West.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1988

March 8: The Ovechkin family makes an unsuccessful attempt to hijack and hijack a passenger plane from the USSR to the West.

March 13: The newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published a letter from N. Andreeva (1938–2020) "I cannot compromise my principles", in which she actually opposed "perestroika".

April 19-25: All-Union Film Festival (Baku).

May 15: Beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

May 29 – June 2: meeting of M. Gorbachev and R. Reagan in Moscow.

May: Boris Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* was published for the first time in the USSR.

October 24-27: visit to the USSR of German Chancellor G. Kohl (1930–2017).

November 25-26: visit to the USSR of French President François Mitterrand (1916–1996).

November 30: The USSR canceled the jamming of *Radio Free Europe* on its territory.

December 6–8: M. Gorbachev's visit to New York (UN). His statement about the reduction of the Soviet armed forces and the beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population, the desire of the most active part of it to emigrate to the West, now permitted.

1989

January 20: George Bush Sr. (1924–2018) becomes President of the United States.

February 15: End of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

March 26: the first in the history of the USSR alternative elections of delegates to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

April 9: A rally in Tbilisi was violently dispersed by Soviet troops demanding Georgia's independence.

April 18: The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR proclaimed the republic's state sovereignty.

May 23: Decree on the restoration of Soviet citizenship for theater director Y. Lyubimov (1917–2014).

May 25 – June 9: First Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) was elected to the post of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

June 4: A student demonstration in Tiananmen Square is dispersed in Beijing.

June 4: Solidarity wins parliamentary elections in Poland.

July 7–18: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Soap Thieves* (Italy, director M. Niketti).

July 28: The Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR proclaimed the republic's state sovereignty.

July: *Novy Mir* magazine, for the first time in the USSR, began publishing A. Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago*.

November 9: Beginning of the destruction of the Berlin Wall.

November 10: The overthrow of T. Zhivkov (1911–1998) in Bulgaria.

November 24: Victory of the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia.

November 18: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the restructuring of creative, organizational and economic activities in Soviet cinematography", which practically approved the previously given permission to create cooperatives, including cooperatives for the production and distribution of films.

November 26: The victory of the anti-communist opposition in the elections in Hungary.

December 12–24: II Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. The congress condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939), as well as the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the use of military force in Tbilisi on 1989.

December 14: death of academician A. Sakharov (1921–1989).

December: victory of anti-communist forces in Romania.

Numerous meetings of M. Gorbachev with Western leaders (including US President George W. Bush) and his statements about further disarmament.

Mass riots in a number of union republics.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1990

January 30: The USSR agrees to the unification of Germany.

February 27–28: The founding congress of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia.

March 25: Soviet authorities send troops to Vilnius to stop Lithuania from secession from the USSR.

April: Victor Demin (1937–1993) succeeded Yuri Rybakov (1931–2006) as editor of Soviet Screen.

May 29: B. Yeltsin (1931–2007) was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.

June 12: The Declaration on State Sovereignty of the RSFSR is adopted. The priority of Russian laws over all-Union legislation has been introduced.

July 2–13, 1990: the last XXVIII Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. During the congress, B. Yeltsin defiantly announces his withdrawal from the Soviet Communist Party.

July 14–16: The USSR agrees to the entry of a united Germany into NATO.

September 12: Signing of the German unification treaty.

September 18: The newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article by A. Solzhenitsyn "How can we equip Russia?".

October 15: M. Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Numerous meetings of M. Gorbachev with Western leaders.

Mass riots in a number of union republics.

The Union republics one by one declared their sovereignty.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1991

January 16–19: War in Kuwait between the US and Iraq.

May 20: The Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted the Law "On the Procedure for Exiting the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Entry into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Citizens of the USSR", allowing free travel of citizens of the USSR abroad.

June 12: B. Yeltsin is elected President of the RSFSR. A. Rutskoy was elected Vice-President.

July 1: The elimination of the military bloc of the Warsaw Pact countries.

July 8–19: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Piebald dog running along the edge of the sea* (USSR-FRG, director K. Gevorkyan).

August 19–22: Failed coup attempt in the USSR.

August 24: M. Gorbachev resigned from the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and called on the Central Committee Soviet Communist Party to announce the self-dissolution of the party.

Mass riots in a number of union republics. A number of republics of the USSR declared their independence.

December 8: the actual dissolution of the USSR as a result of the "Belovezhskaya agreements" between the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR) and Ukraine as the founding states of the USSR, which signed the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR (1922).

December 25: voluntary resignation of M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) from the post of President of the USSR, transfer of power to B. Yeltsin (1931–2007).

December 26: Official liquidation of the USSR.

World oil prices remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

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## Assessing the Readiness of Teachers to Develop the Creative Potential of Youth in the Higher Education System

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### Abstract

Modern economies and societies are undergoing constant changes in various areas. This condition is called “turbulence”. In these conditions, it is not enough for educational organizations of higher education to prepare highly specialized graduates with a sufficient amount of theoretical and practical knowledge. It is important to ensure the development of the creative potential of young people in order to teach them to adapt to constant changes and find extraordinary creative solutions to professional problems in conditions of turbulence. In this regard, it is necessary to study the degree of readiness of higher school teachers for this urgent task – the development of the creative potential of youth. The purpose of this study is to develop a methodology for assessing the readiness of teachers to develop the creative potential of young people through educational practices. After conducting a theoretical analysis, the authors took as a basis works using the Big Six (BIG 6) and CIE (Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship) methods. As a result, based on a generalization of the experience previously accumulated in the global scientific community, combining approaches to the study of creativity in Pedagogy, Psychology and Economics (entrepreneurship), a questionnaire was compiled to assess the readiness of teachers of educational institutions of higher education to develop the potential of young people, including their creativity. The questionnaire involves diagnosing not only the readiness of individual teachers, in isolation from the context, but also makes it possible to take into account the quality of the educational environment and the diversity associated with the content of various academic disciplines.

The questionnaire developed in this study can be used to assess the above parameters both at the level of an individual educational organization and at the regional and state level, which can further become the basis for developing recommendations for the development of the educational environment at all three levels: state, region, educational organization of higher education.

**Keywords:** creativity, potential, development, teacher, student, assessment.

### 1. Introduction

The relevance of this study is associated with a number of problems in both higher and secondary education, noted in domestic and foreign publications. There is a problem of inequality in obtaining quality higher education (Prakhov, 2023), including in terms of gender and “payback” in the future (Quadlin et al., 2023); in addition, it raises questions about both the content of education and the teaching methodology itself. For example, there is much talk about the rise of gamification in education, but the relationship between gamification and student knowledge, engagement, and satisfaction is poorly understood (Murillo-Zamarano et al., 2023).

Additionally, universities have been criticized for not producing graduates with sufficient ability or experience in creativity or innovation (Gube, Lajoie, 2020). It is also worth noting that all

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of the studies listed above ask questions about quality, availability, demand, etc. higher education for the student, losing sight of the second participant in the educational process – the teacher. We want to fill in this gap in our work.

Of course, in addition to the student and the teacher, student government bodies and administrative units that are in close contact with them (administrations for academic and educational work) are involved in the educational process, however, our main task is to develop a methodology for assessing the readiness of teachers to form creative potential youth, and therefore the object of our research will be only teachers.

Thus, this study is designed to solve the following problems: (1) identify criteria for creative potential (creativity), (2) describe pedagogical methods and techniques for the formation and development of creative potential, (3) develop a methodology for assessing the readiness of teachers to use the selected techniques.

## 2. Materials and methods

On popular Internet sites, creativity is often seen as a more or less fixed trait that some people have and others lack. For example, Kaiser wrote: “There is no more controversy. Neuroscience confirms that highly creative people think and act differently than average people. Their brains are literally programmed in a unique way” (Kaiser, 2018). On this resource, he presented 20 distinctive features of creative people:

1. Their thinking never slows down;
2. They challenge the status quo;
3. They recognize their genius even if others don't;
4. They find it difficult to concentrate on a task;
5. They create cycles (creative activity is rhythmic and has periods);
6. They need time to recover (for example, prolonged loneliness);
7. They need space for creativity;
8. They focus intensely (cannot multitask effectively);
9. They care deeply;
10. They live on the edge of joy and depression;
11. They think and speak in stories;
12. They fight the Resistance every day;
13. They take their work as something personal;
14. They find it difficult to believe in themselves;
15. They have deep intuition;
16. They often use procrastination as a tool;
17. They are dependent on the state of creative flow;
18. They have difficulty completing projects;
19. They are better than others at connecting the dots (being able to see patterns before they become obvious to everyone else);
20. They will never grow up.

To evaluate these characteristics as truly distinguishing creative people from non-creative people from a scientific point of view, it is necessary to give a clearer definition of creativity.

There are many definitions of creativity and they vary from publication to publication, but most of them follow a “two-way standard definition”, according to which creativity includes, firstly, originality (novelty, uniqueness), and secondly, effectiveness (usefulness, relevance, applicability) (Runco, Jaeger, 2012). That is, originality by itself may lead to unhelpful products or ideas, and conversely, effective products or ideas by themselves may not contribute to new understanding or new knowledge.

The article by N.B. Shumakova presents approaches to measuring creative potential in modern foreign studies (Shumakova, 2021). The author rightly notes that there is terminological complexity associated with different understanding and interpretation of the concepts of “kreativnost” and “tvorchestvo” in Russian and foreign publications, but, at the same time, allows their use as synonyms. We will take the same approach – treat them as synonyms. This article provides a consensus definition of creativity as “the ability to generate original ideas that have value in their context” (Shumakova, 2021).

The most popular are two approaches to its measurement: “(1) component or resource-based, focused on the study of abilities and personal characteristics associated with creativity, and

(2) more holistic, based on the study of creativity using tasks from different areas that imitate real creative work. EPoC creative potential assessment method can be considered as the most promising tool that implements a holistic approach. However, as research shows, any approach to measuring creativity seems significant if it leads to information about the creative profile as a whole, and not about individual characteristics of the process or some cognitive or conative resource” (Convergent...).

Returning to the question of the differences between creative and non-creative people, we should turn to the thinking process. The researchers observed that the terms “creativity” and “creative problem solving” were often used interchangeably in the literature and applied the idea of “creativity as a process” to “creativity as problem solving.” It turns out that the most effective learning involves the initial divergent production of new ideas, followed by convergent selection and development of ideas. Convergent thinking occurs when the solution to a problem can be deduced by applying established rules and logical reasoning. This type of reasoning involves solving a problem in the context of known information and narrowing down the solution based on logical inference (Runco, 2011). There is following definition of divergent thinking is “cognition that goes in different directions”. Some of these directions are ordinary, and some are original. Because some of the ideas generated are original, divergent thinking represents the potential for creative thinking and problem solving. We agree with other scientists that “originality is not synonymous with creative thinking, but originality is undoubtedly the most widely recognized facet of creativity, as we wrote about above. To the extent that divergent thinking tests are reliable and valid, they can be considered an assessment of creative thinking potential. Not surprisingly, divergent thinking tests are among the most commonly used in creativity research. Divergent thinking tests are also used in numerous educational programs and in various organizational training packages” (Runco, 2011).

In the article of N.E. Sviderskaya, A.G. Antonov and L.S. Butneva (Sviderskaya et al., 2007) the features of the neurophysiological organization of divergent and convergent thinking are described. The authors conclude that “changes in the spatial organization of potentials, noted when using the model of divergent thinking, are similar to those observed when creative processes are activated” (Sviderskaya et al., 2007), which indicates the peculiarities of the neurophysiological mechanisms of divergent and creative thinking.

From the definition of creativity, we will move on to its structure and consider some socio-psychological theories of creativity. We will start with T.M. Amabile componential model of creativity. In a simplified form, the author initially proposed that three components at the individual level, namely domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivations, combine to allow creativity to arise at their intersection. Subject knowledge and skills are expert knowledge in a relevant field or fields – they include general intelligence, knowledge, experience, technical skills in a specific subject area in which creative problems are solved. The creativity-relevant skills or processes are cognitive processes of the individual that promote unconventional thinking and include cognitive style and personal characteristics. Task motivation involves internal motivation to participate in an activity out of interest, pleasure, or self-expression, as well as external incentives, such as monetary reward (Amabile, 2018). It is important to emphasize that the theory points to the need to merge all the components. Creative achievements are possible when a person is intrinsically motivated, has extensive subject knowledge and skills in a particular field, and has the ability to think unconventionally. In addition, the external environment allows him to express his creativity.

The influence of the social environment on the process was added later, reflecting the growing understanding of the critical influence of the social environment on creativity in the field of social psychology. Multicomponent model T.M. Amabile, especially after including the effects of the social environment, was one of the first theories to consider creativity holistically and systemically (Amabile, 2018). The systematic approach is an example of a social psychology approach that takes into account the complex, multifaceted interactions not only within an individual, but also the exchanges between the individual and his or her environment. Another version of a systematic approach to creativity was proposed in the works of M. Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), who pointed out the interaction between the individual, the field (social institutions that act as judges that determine the value of the creative result) and the sphere (stable culture within which new ideas persist over time).

The componential model of creativity leads us to the idea that the following stages of this process can be distinguished:

1. Identification of a problem or task: the motivation of the task determines whether the search for a solution will begin or continue;
2. Preparation: domain-specific skills determine which paths will be available during the search for an answer;
3. Generation of the response: procedures related to creativity serve as an executive regulator and influence how the search for an answer will occur;
4. Answer checking and communication: domain-specific skills determine what criteria will be used to evaluate the answer;
5. The outcome: the corresponding decision is made; the outcome will in turn influence task motivation and further determine whether the process continues or ends.

Similar stages of creativity include the model of ecological systems for the development of creativity:

1. Preparation: collecting related information and organizing it into schematic models;
2. Incubation: analysis and synthesis of information in a diagram;
3. Insight: finding a connection between the information in the diagram and the formation of a creative product;
4. Evaluation: using the product and confirming its originality and value (Yeh, 2011).

### 3. Discussion

The analysis of previous research on creativity has shown the role of factors influencing the relative effectiveness of creativity training programs. Thus, more successful programs have focused on developing cognitive skills and heuristics associated with skill application, using realistic, domain-appropriate exercises (Scott, 2004).

If we return to the model of T.M. Amabile (Amabile, 2018), described above, then one of the tasks of universities is the development of professional skills. Theories of expertise describe how novices integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge to gradually become experts in their field (Lajoie, 2003). According to these theories, the intelligent, timely, and consistent use of relevant and goal-oriented learning strategies allows novices to move through a continuum of levels of the “mastery scale” of knowledge accumulation, becoming first experts and then masters, so that expertise can be acquired by most students (Chi, 2006). One of the key tenets of theories of expertise is that once expertise is achieved, a certain level of automaticity in problem solving occurs. The new expert’s knowledge is contextually interconnected and networked, which makes it possible to recognize the main patterns in the subject area. This increasing automaticity frees up cognitive resources for other tasks and allows students to not be overwhelmed by the constant processing of previously learned material (Bransford, 2000). However, high levels of knowledge and automaticity can be an obstacle to creativity and adaptation because the mere force of habit can inhibit creative thinking.

Thus, in the workplace, employees with more work experience have been found to have more difficulty adapting to new organizational and task demands, regardless of their chronological age (Ibrayeva et al., 2022) and, although students must have sufficient training to master a subject area, may there is a tipping point beyond which further teaching only serves to “over-socialize” the student and leads to rigid thinking and behavior.

Since, according to generally accepted definitions in the scientific literature, creative thinking is defined as the ability not only to generate new ideas, possibilities and alternatives in various situations, but also to evaluate and select the most creative ones, it can be expressed (among other things) in writing, open-ended problem solving, drawing, or music and can be measured by examining students' performance and work processes (Azaryahu, 2023). However, since this research is being carried out at the Financial University, we would like to focus on developing students' creativity (and teaching techniques) in the field of economics and finance. In this regard, the work of C.-M. Chou et al is of interest, in which creative, innovative and entrepreneurial abilities are considered as a decisive factor in increasing national competitiveness. This work attempted to integrate creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship education with the Big Six Information Stages (BIG 6) learning strategy and examined its effectiveness on students' innovation motivation, creativity, metacognition, and self-esteem (Chou et al, 2023).

Since we are also interested in specific methodological techniques in the work of a teacher, before considering the results of the research obtained, we will briefly dwell on the content of the “Big Six”. It supposes six steps: (1) Task Definition: Be sure you understand the problem;



(2) Information Seeking: Identifying sources of information; (3) Location and Access: Gather relevant information; (4) Use of Information: Select a solution; (5) Synthesis: Integrate ideas into a product; and (6) Evaluation: double-check the result (Chou et al, 2023).

The BIG 6 teaching model can be used as a teaching strategy to solve information problems and can improve students' information literacy. Below we consider each step in terms of teaching students at university with major in economics and finance. As an example, let's take the preparation of a creative homework assignment on the topic "Risks of using cryptocurrencies as a means of payment"

(1) Task Definition: Be sure you understand what cryptocurrencies are and how this term relates to related concepts. What is the main problem that needs to be resolved?

(2) Information Seeking: Brainstorm keywords (other than cryptocurrency, means of payment, risk) that you will use to search for information. Browse the Internet for information, use various keywords to find possible information, and use various search strategies to increase the amount of information.

(3) Location and Access: Determine criteria and sort reliable sources containing information on cryptocurrencies and their prospects for use. What allows you to consider a particular source of information as a reliable one? What are the reasons to exclude certain information from the analysis?

(4) Use of Information: Interpret the information received. Organize information according to one or more criteria (for example, by sources of risk associated with the development of cryptocurrencies).

(5) Synthesis: Integrate ideas into a graphic form – students receive a "product" – chart, graph or scheme reflecting the approaches to understanding risks of using cryptocurrencies as a means of payment

(6) Evaluation: double-check the result. Conclude about the validity of the work and the effectiveness of the process of solving information problems: students think about the entire process of collecting, sorting and producing products and evaluate how the product can be improved.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that in addition to information literacy, the development of which is ensured by the use of the "Big Six", media literacy is also of particular importance. Media literacy is "the ability to adequately interact with flows of media information: search, analyze, critically evaluate and create media texts distributed through various media and communications, in all their diversity of forms" (Chicherina, 2012). Social media plays a significant role in the dissemination of information (Bajwa, 2022). That is, in addition to teaching students to solve information problems when analyzing scientific texts, attention should also be paid to the ability to work with financial media information and critically evaluate messages presented in the media, including social media.

In this regard, if we return to the issue of creativity and practical tasks, then it is possible to use the above-mentioned "Big Six" model to analyze various types of information messages presented in the media and social networks, including video and audio content, and not text messages only.

CIE (Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship) education aims to develop creative educational courses, innovative topics and entrepreneurial business models to develop students' creativity, teamwork, creative thinking and entrepreneurial spirit. In education, CIE pays attention to indicators such as student innovative motivation, creativity, metacognition and self-assessment of employability.

Innovative motivation refers to the internal psychological process that causes and supports students' innovative activities and becomes the internal driving force for stimulating innovative behavior. Innovation motivation is an internal driving force that directly motivates and encourages students to participate in innovation activities and plays a role in guiding, stimulating and catalyzing students' innovative behavior (Chou et al, 2023).

Creativity is the process of understanding flaws, knowledge loopholes and missing elements of problems, finding answers, guessing solutions, forming hypotheses, modifying and re-testing as much as possible and finally communicating the results. CIE education values the attributes of creativity based on students' ability to produce creative outputs. Creativity is a type of psychological process that pays attention to the emergence and process of creativity and is associated with personality characteristics. Creativity and entrepreneurship are two interrelated competencies;

entrepreneurship promotes and results from creative activities related to real world problems to help students develop these competencies.

Metacognition (metacompetence) refers to the knowledge and regulation of one's own cognitive processes, which is considered a critical component of creative thinking that individuals can master, control, dominate, monitor, and evaluate their own cognitive process. The cognitive process includes memory, perception, calculation, association and other types of thinking. Metacognition is a phenomenon in which people control and direct their mental processes; it can be used for learning strategies: students, by controlling their own thinking patterns, can achieve effective learning methods, strategy selection and application in metacognition. It includes activities such as continuous attempts at planning, testing, monitoring, selection, review and evaluation. Metacognition involves building self-identity and self-esteem around entrepreneurial life ([Ecosystem..., 2023](#)).

Employability refers to a person's ability to obtain a job, maintain a job, and perform a job well after completing the training process. Employability is also the ability to obtain and continue to perform work-related tasks and the self-sufficient ability to realize one's potential through continued employment in the labor market.

The authors of ([Chou et al, 2023](#)) conclude that CIE education integrated with the BIG 6 learning strategy influences students' innovative motivation, creativity and metacognition. For creativity, the transition from innovation to entrepreneurship is a step-by-step process. Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship refer to three different concepts and behaviors, but from an educational perspective they are inseparable in CIE education. Creativity is a personal quality or ability to create new, useful, valuable, appropriate things. Innovation is the result of further creative practice or commercialization. Creativity and innovation capabilities are essential for businesses to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Creative people are more prone to entrepreneurial activities, so students need to be actively involved in the learning process and be able to plan, monitor, regulate and control their cognitive processes in relation to their attitudes and behavior. This means that students must have high metacognition skills to actively participate in learning. With CIE training integrated with the BIG 6 learning strategy, the implementation process is as follows: Guide students to identify challenges, search for information, propose solutions to solve problems, study patent laws, find the best solution, evaluate materials and implementation, and collaborate with practitioners.

Other examples of the development of creativity are participation in solving real-world problems ([Weng, 2022](#)), the use of digital technologies ([Tang, 2022](#)), the use of interdisciplinary, project-oriented technologies ([Chang, 2022](#)), the use of joint activities ([Zabrodina, 2021](#)), and the identification of relationships with emotional intelligence ([Razumnikova, Mezentsev, 2020](#)).

Creativity presupposes independence in decision-making, which means another important aspect of teaching and nurturing creative potential in students is participation in student government bodies. For example, at the Financial University there is a practice-oriented student club "Self-government beyond borders", the areas of work of which are related to scientific, educational, project activities, as well as the organization of practice and regional cooperation.

The BIG-6 training model makes it possible to increase the information literacy of students and can be used as a strategy for the training and development of students, allowing them to solve information problems. This model goes well with the CIE Education model (Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship).

The authors developed and tested a methodology for assessing the readiness of teachers to develop the creative potential of young people, which is presented in Appendix A (results of pilot study see ([Gagarina, 2023](#))).

The technique can be used for diagnostic purposes as follows:

- Within one university: to track the dynamics of group processes within a separate unit (annually); to determine the effectiveness of innovations (before and after changes); to assess the quality of the educational environment in different departments. For example, at the Financial University it is possible to include this methodology in the annual survey "Satisfaction with the working conditions of the scientific and teaching staff of the Financial University."

- Within one region: to track the dynamics of the quality of the educational environment within an individual university and compare universities with each other; to determine the effectiveness of innovations for individual universities and compare universities with each other.

- To track the dynamics of the quality of the educational environment within a particular

region and compare regions with each other; to determine the effectiveness of innovations for individual regions and compare regions with each other.

Processing of the results obtained within the framework of this methodology for assessing the teacher's readiness to form the creative potential of youth through educational practices occurs as follows:

1) Answers to open questions 8 and 12 can be processed using the content analysis method and assessed by experts for the presence in the answers of content units that characterize the teacher as focused on the development of the creative potential of youth;

2) Answers to closed questions can be assessed on a R. Likert scale, and the arithmetic mean of the answers to each of the closed questions is calculated. A score above 3 can be interpreted as a tendency towards the teacher's readiness to develop students' creative potential.

In the future, the practical application of the developed methodology will make it possible to collect a database and highlight the sectoral and regional features of the studied parameters of teachers' readiness to develop the creative potential of youth, on the basis of which it will be possible to evaluate specific teachers in contact with the educational environment in which they work.

#### 4. Results

In this block we will focus on the results of the analysis of empirical works on the study of creativity in the field of education, which will allow us to move on to the formulation of our own approach. The article by L. Ibraeva and co-authors (Ibrayeva, 2022) describes teachers' ideas about creativity in Kazakhstan. The authors consider it important to address this aspect of the problem, since these ideas can influence the effective implementation of creativity in the educational group. The problem is that teachers often do not have a clear understanding of what creativity is, and teachers' lack of understanding of creativity means a possible lack of creativity development in the classroom. However, the results of a study conducted with the participation of Kazakh teachers using the method of semi-structured in-depth individual interviews show that regardless of what type of schools the participants work in, and what subjects they teach, the participants' ideas about creativity and creative students coincide not only with the ideas of teachers from other countries, but also with most theories of creativity (Ibrayeva, 2022). Thus, the authors' empirical results (Ibrayeva, 2022) showed that all participants believed that creativity is not a rare phenomenon, but a property of all people, and everyone has creative potential. However, participants from Kazakh and Russian schools also believe that while some aspects of creativity can be developed, others cannot. Whether it's finding solutions to problems, thinking outside the box, or critical thinking, they agree that anyone can develop these skills. Thus, participants had confidence in the creative potential of their students and that creativity is common to all people. Another component of the nature of creativity, based on the conceptual apparatus, is the plasticity of creativity (a person's creativity can increase or even decrease throughout life). All participants shared a common belief that student creativity can be enhanced in classrooms if teachers provide a supportive environment and can also be expressed in any subject.

Other studies point to a connection between arts participation practices and creative development. For example, in one longitudinal study, 240 undergraduate dance students took a test of creativity and flexibility-of-thinking test before and one year after participating in workshops aimed at developing metacognitive skills (May et al., 2020). As a result, it was confirmed that the use of mental imagery as a skill contributes to the growth of flexibility of thinking and general creativity.

Another study (Chacón-López, Maeso-Broncano, 2023) also examined the role of prior artistic participation in creative development, self-esteem, and barriers to creativity. The study also aimed to determine the frequency with which students engaged in artistic activities and to determine which activities were most often performed by men and women. A study to identify differences associated with participation in artistic activities found that the group that carried out such activities received higher scores in narrative, graphic (albeit at the limit of significance) and general creativity. No significant differences were found between the groups in terms of barriers to creativity or self-esteem. In conclusion, the authors recommend participation in artistic activities and note the benefits of creativity, especially in narrative and graphical tasks.

We should also dwell on a project aimed at operationalizing creativity in educational institutions. J. Heard et al. describe creativity as a cognitive process leading to a creative product (Heard et al., 2023). Three aspects were found most useful to include in its design:

- **Problem Definition:** This refers to the initial and potentially iterative process in which a student explores an ill-defined problem he or she is facing in order to give it a more personal definition.

- **Idea Generation:** This refers to the stages of the creative process during which a student engages in divergent and experimental thinking to explore a variety of possible solutions.

- **Quality of ideas:** This refers to the criteria by which students can begin to engage in convergent thinking to evaluate their ideas and arrive at their creative solution. They also provide criteria by which others can judge the creativity of a solution.

Defining a problem involves two dimensions. The first refers to discovery-oriented behavior, which involves students encountering an ill-defined problem and exploring the “territory” of that problem space, as well as the possibilities open to them within it, before proceeding to a solution. The second, problem framing, refers to the learner giving a more personal definition of how he views an ill-defined problem: how he interprets the problem and frames it for himself.

Idea generation includes three additional dimensions. The first two – fluency and flexibility – come directly from a long tradition of divergent thinking tests (see above). Basically, this can be applied to individual and group brainstorming in the classroom to highlight the greater likelihood of generating both original and workable ideas when a larger number and range of ideas are developed. However, creative thinking and divergent thinking are not synonymous, and so the third dimension – experimentation - was designed to focus on the generation of creative ideas after the initial brainstorming stage.

Quality of ideas – includes originality, fitness for purpose, and elaboration.

Because the environment plays an important role in the development of creativity (Amabile, 2018; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), the authors (Tang et al., 2022) have developed a resource that describes the concept of a supportive environment for creativity, which can be equally applied to both the school as a whole and to a specific classroom. The resource provided a self-assessment tool that school staff could use to evaluate the extent to which their classrooms allowed students to demonstrate and develop creativity. The tool describes four levels (minimal, limited, adequate, and comprehensive) in relation to five factors that influence students' ability to be creative in a school context:

- **Fundamental knowledge:** a sufficient amount of prior knowledge to enable creative processing and consideration of worthy ideas.

- **Valuing creativity:** The value placed on the creative process by explicitly teaching it and rewarding persistence and reflection, as well as allowing trial and error.

- **Task capability:** the nature and focus of the task, including its openness and the amount of time allocated to its completion.

- **Support:** the degree of management involvement, feedback and opportunities to reflect on creative results and ideas.

- **Access to resources:** availability of relevant, useful and sufficient resources.

- We consider this work worth spreading and should be extended to educational institutions in other countries, including Russia.

Thus, the conducted research gives the right to assert that creativity is not a rare phenomenon, but a property of all people. It means that different people to a certain degree are engaged in creative activity or are prone to certain types of it. It is important to note that each individual has a certain creative potential. The creative process itself is plastic. This means that over time, an individual's creativity can decrease or increase under the influence of a number of factors. The factors promoting and hindering creativity could be identified.

## 5. Conclusion

The theoretical review allowed us to come to the conclusion that the development of the assessment methodology was based on the following judgments:

Firstly, creativity is a property of all people, everyone has creative potential, and it can change throughout life, which means the development of creative potential is possible.

Secondly, the development of creativity is possible within any discipline, but different disciplines have different potential for developing creativity.

Thirdly, the development of students' creative potential is associated with the individual characteristics of the teacher.

These three judgments were a prerequisite for including in the methodology questions related to socio-demographic (gender, age, education, experience), professional (discipline taught, opportunity to participate in interdisciplinary courses) and individual personal characteristics (for example, self-assessment of one's own creativity). In order to be able to make comparisons at the regional level, we also included questions about federal districts and types of localities.

Fourthly, since at the individual level creativity presupposes (1) knowledge and skills in the subject area, (2) processes associated with creativity, and (3) motivation towards the goal, the next set of questions is related to the readiness of teachers to work towards the development of these elements.

To what extent do you consider it is your goal to develop students' knowledge and skills in the subject area? Rate it on a 5-point Likert-scale.

To what extent do you consider student development of following characteristics as your personal goal (Rate on a 5-point Likert-scale.):

- general intelligence
- unconventional thinking
- deep interest in professional activities

To what extent do you consider it is your goal to develop a special reward system for completed tasks? (Rate it on a 5-point scale.)

Fifthly, since the "Big Six" has proved its reliability as a way to develop creativity, the questionnaire should include questions on awareness of all six stages and use of special techniques when working with information: 1. Statement of the problem; 2. Information search strategies; 3. Location and access to information; 4. Use of information; 5. Synthesis; 6. Evaluation.

Sixthly, there are many specific techniques used to develop creativity and determined by the specific content of the activity. Therefore, it is necessary to include questions about the extent to which respondents use particular techniques, such as solving real problems, digital technologies, cases, analysis of media texts, etc.

Seventh, based on the work of J. Heard et al. (Heard et al., 2023), what is important for the development of creativity is (1) the amount of prior knowledge acquired to enable creative processing and consideration of worthy ideas; (2) the value placed on the creative process by explicitly teaching it and rewarding persistence, trial and error, and reflection; (3) the nature and focus of the task, including its openness and the amount of time allocated to its completion; (4) degree of management support, feedback, and opportunities to reflect on creative results and ideas; (5) availability of relevant, useful and sufficient resources. These indicators should also be included in the questionnaire.

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## Appendix

*Questionnaire for assessing the readiness of teachers to develop the creative potential of students*

Dear colleague! We invite you to take part in a study of teachers' readiness to shape the creative potential of young people. Your answers will allow us to see problem areas, as well as opportunities and prospects for increasing the efficiency of the educational process. The research is conducted anonymously and its results will be published only in aggregate form (*Full form of Inform Consent depends on special task and requirements of a particular Ethical Committee of the Educational Institution*)

1. We would like to ask a few questions about you. Your gender (Single selection)

male  female

2. Your age (total number of years) (Free answer)

3. What is your highest degree of education? (Single selection)

bachelor's degree  specialist  master's degree  two (or more) higher education degrees  PhD  DSc  other

4. Indicate your work experience (full number of years) (Free answer)

5. Specify the direction of the disciplines taught (Drop-down list)

Management and Economics  
 Humanities and Social Sciences  
 IT  
 Technics and Technology  
 Media, Design and Architecture  
 Natural Sciences  
 Security and Military Affairs  
 Art  
 Medicine and Healthcare

6. In which federal district of the Russian Federation do you live? (Single selection)

Central Federal District  
 Northwestern Federal District  
 Southern Federal District

- \_\_\_ North Caucasus Federal District
- \_\_\_ Volga Federal District
- \_\_\_ Ural federal district
- \_\_\_ Siberian Federal District
- \_\_\_ Far Eastern Federal District
- \_\_\_ Difficult to answer

7. How many inhabitants are there in the city where you live? (Drop-down list)

- \_\_\_ More than 1 million
- \_\_\_ From 500 thousand to 1 million
- \_\_\_ From 250 to 500 thousand
- \_\_\_ From 100 to 250 thousand
- \_\_\_ Less than 100 thousand
- \_\_\_ Difficult to answer

8. Do you consider yourself a creative person (slider, not creative on the left, creative on the right)

9. The next block of questions is dedicated to your teaching activities.

To what extent, in your opinion, does the teacher contribute to the development of the student's creative potential (rate on a 5-point scale)

1. Doesn't help at all
2. Doesn't help
3. Sometimes it helps, sometimes it doesn't
4. Contributes
5. Contributes greatly

10. To what extent do you agree that the teacher should develop special tasks aimed at developing the following competencies in students (matrix)

	1 – completely disagree	2 – rather disagree	3 – neither one nor the other / difficult to say	4 – rather agree	5 – completely agree
Domain-specific knowledge and skills					
General intelligence					
Thinking outside the box					
Deep interest in professional activities					

11. To what extent do you use tasks aimed at (matrix) when teaching your discipline?

	1 – I don't use it at all	2 – I don't use it	3 – neither one nor the other / hard to say	4 – I use it	5 – I use it all the time
Ability to formulate a problem					
Finding relevant sources of information to prepare a solution					
Selecting the necessary information from the source					
Interpretation of information from sources: assessing the reliability of information content					



Process information from multiple data sources and display it in an integrated form					
Evaluation/checking of the work done for compliance with the task and conclusion on the effectiveness of the process of solving information problems					

12. What forms of developing the creative potential of young people do you consider the most effective? (free answer)

13. When teaching information literacy skills to students, do you address social media content? If the answer is yes, please list which ones (free answer)

14. To what extent have your educational institution created the following conditions for the development of creative potential (matrix)

	1 – completely absent	2 – absent	3 – neither one nor the other/difficult to say	4 – present	5 – fully present
Students' Fundamental Knowledge: Sufficient prior knowledge to enable creative processing and consideration of worthy ideas.					
The value placed on the creative process by teaching teachers new methods, encouraging persistence and reasoning in learning new things, allowing trial and error; organization of discussion clubs.					
Opportunities within the discipline: the nature and focus of the subject, the number of hours per discipline, the presence of a creative task, laboratory work, hours for checking individual assignments, etc.					
Support: degree of management involvement, availability of feedback and opportunities to reflect on creative results and ideas.					
Access to resources: availability of relevant, useful and sufficient resources (information, technical).					

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## Media Coverage of Conflict Situations in Kazakhstan in the Early Years of Independence

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### Abstract

The article examines the coverage in the Kazakh mass media of the issues of countering terrorism and extremism at the national and international levels. The topic is relevant, since the acts of terrorism taking place in the modern world cause a public resonance and affect the security of States. Terrorism has recently been seriously disturbing the public consciousness of almost all states, and in the early 90s, after the collapse of the USSR, terrorism spread its roots to the newly formed CIS countries. Unfavorable trends began to manifest themselves in Kazakhstan. Having gained independence, the young state also found itself under the threat of extremism, and the fight against manifestations of terrorism has become a priority in ensuring the national security of the country. Therefore, they begin to actively cooperate with international organizations, becoming a member of many associations in the world and Eurasian space, whose goals include countering terrorism and extremism in the territory of the participating countries. The latest information technologies and the development of social networks contribute to the intensification of the impact of terrorism on public consciousness. This is due to the scale and nature of the recent terrorist attacks. The authors consider the issues of coverage of the manifestation of modern terrorism and, based on the conclusions and conclusions, formulate recommendations for journalists writing on the topic under consideration.

**Keywords:** terrorism, terrorist acts, extremism, struggle, high-profile events.

### 1. Introduction

The relevance of the topic. With the globalization and digitalization of the information space, terrorism and extremism acquire an international character and threaten the territorial integrity of States, provoking the emergence of various kinds of conflicts, outbreaks of intolerance, hostage-taking. The turbulent situation in the world, the post-Soviet space, as well as the immediate proximity of our country to the hotbed of terrorism, Afghanistan, leaves its mark. Most modern countries are exposed to the threat of terrorism, and Kazakhstan is no exception either. The relevance of this work is related to the growth of radicalization in modern society, as a result of which it is important to consider the origins, as well as manifestations of terrorist activity in Kazakhstan and methods of countering it by law enforcement agencies.

At the end of the XX – beginning of the XXI century, the problems of terrorism and counteraction to it became one of the most important both for individual states and for the world community as a whole. This is explained by the scale and nature of the terrorist acts committed recently (Beznosov, 2010; Pochebut, 2010). If in the XIX and XX centuries terrorists acted by the method of individual terror, killing political and state figures, then the victims of modern terrorists

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are civilians – hundreds and thousands of people. This was the case with the explosion of residential buildings in Moscow and Volgograd in 1999 and the destruction of the World Trade Center building in New York in 2001. In the past, terrorists sought to find ethical justifications for their actions, while modern ones demonstrate cynicism, extremism and a willingness to neglect people's lives. The means of carrying out terrorist acts are also changing. At first, the terrorists used cold steel and firearms, then explosives appeared. Currently, the trends in the development of terrorist activities are aimed at equipping the technical and technological base. The origin of terrorism is based on many causes – economic, political, religious, social, psychological, environmental (Beznosov, 2010; Pochebut, 2010).

The topicality of the topic under consideration determines the importance of analyzing the problems of terrorism in modern conditions, as well as developing an effective policy to counter such a phenomenon, protecting the country from destabilization by anti-terrorist methods of struggle. At the same time, in the name of creating models of personal and social security, it is extremely important for journalists today to know how to cover various kinds of conflicts and talk about its participants.

The systematization and evaluation of the role of mass media in covering the manifestation of acts of terrorism and extremism is one of the little-studied topics. By promptly covering the law enforcement agencies' resistance to manifestations of terrorism and extremism, the mass media contribute to solving the conflict problem. At the same time, in certain cases, journalists, promptly covering a high-profile event, can provide information services to terrorists, facilitating their illegal actions. The theoretical and practical significance of the work lies in the fact that some extremely poorly researched issues are being studied. In the article *The problem of terrorism in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, the authors argue that terrorism in Kazakhstan can be divided into the following stages: the first stage – the late 1990s – early 2000s, when the first cases of terrorism appeared in Kazakhstan immediately after independence; the second stage - the early - mid 2000s. During this period, there has been an increase in cases of involvement and participation of citizens of Kazakhstan in terrorist activities, both on the territory of neighboring countries and in foreign countries; the third stage – 2005 – 2011, when terrorists from among the citizens of Kazakhstan appear who carry out terrorist actions on the territory of the country; the fourth stage – the it is being exploited by the spread of Islamic extremist groups and their terrorist activities in Kazakhstan in order to undermine the foundations of society (Dusmetova, 2020; Nalibai, 2020).

Is this really the case? This work will also consider a short period of time from the first stage, that is, the beginning of the nineties. Is it possible to agree with the opinion of the above-mentioned author that terrorists in Kazakhstan manifested themselves only in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The object of the study is the media coverage of the topic of terrorism and extremism in Kazakhstan. Subject of the study: mass media and problems of countering terrorism and extremism in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the article is to characterize the media coverage of counter-terrorism in Kazakhstan. To achieve the goal set in the work, it is necessary to perform the following tasks: to consider the prerequisites for the emergence, the origins of extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan; to study international legal documents regulating the fight against terrorism; to analyze the coverage in mass media of issues of countering terrorism and extremism in Kazakhstan. The practical significance of the study lies in the fact that the provisions and conclusions of the study can be useful for journalists covering the topic of combating terrorism and extremism. It has been established that modern terrorism is a qualitatively new and specific form of war. Terrorist activity acts as a new form of military action - armed (terrorist) struggle, different from the classical perception.

## 2. Materials and methods

The material base of the study. The sources of this research are monographs, textbooks, textbooks, as well as materials published in domestic and foreign mass media on the topic of terrorism and extremism.

The methodological basis of the research is the methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, analogy, comparison and others. The bases for constructing theoretical models of the main forms of terrorist activity, which allow solving the problem of identifying the Kazakh specifics of terrorist activity and developing recommendations for covering the activities of anti-terrorist structures, published in the period from 1991 to 2023. The theoretical and methodological

foundations of the study are justified in considering from different sides the coverage of the topic of terrorism and extremism in the early years of independence and assumes a comprehensive interdisciplinary methodology combining descriptive and correlational types of research.

### 3. Discussion

Terrorism is a kind of political extremism in its extreme violent manifestation. Translated from Latin, the word "terror" means "fear", "horror". The main goal of terrorists is to cause a state of terror not only in their hostage victims, but also in all other people (Russian News, 2019). Therefore, during terrorism, which causes a public outcry, it is better to be careful when spreading any information. This is due to the fact that information disseminated during a special operation is more likely to lead to disruption of all activities or aggravation of the situation. Not only will it not achieve the goal of confidentiality, but it can also lead to new risks to data security (Liu, 2023).

In the region where terrorist acts occur, the risk of spreading disinformation increases. This threat has doubled nowadays with the use of new media. Some studies confirm this by finding that greater consumption of social media is negatively associated with a belief in disinformation (Competiello et al., 2023).

The problem of terrorism currently underlies the research of many scientists, one of which is considered in the work of modern researcher Mauro Lubrano, in which the author notes that during terrorist attacks, in most cases, the final decision is made by terrorists. Relations with friendly or hostile movements also influence their decisions. Obviously, excluding these elements would be detrimental. However, at the same time, focusing on terrorist organizations as units of analysis allows us to trace the logic and dynamics of their decision-making process. As soon as contextual factors and external actors limit and/or determine the available strategic options, the final decision remains with terrorist organizations (Lubrano, 2023).

As noted above, terror can be called violence deliberately directed against the state. Bruce Hoffman, an expert in the field of terrorism, argues that "with the help of mass media, terrorism easily reaches a wide audience. There is an interactive symbiotic relationship between media and terrorism". This symbiosis is the product of a complex relationship between the methods used by terrorists and priorities (main interests) Mass media (Ryzhkova, 1992).

According to Henman, 'digital technologies automatically collect, collate, combine and distribute digital traces of our actions and thoughts, which are used to create our digital characters (Henman, 2022). First of all, when linking terrorist activities with information technologies, mobile phones are used as the most frequently used means, as well as the means used in carrying out terrorist activities. Central to this quest for digital well-being is the paradoxical experience of using mobile technologies that both enhance and suppress individual autonomy (Vanden, 2021). Working with data is a part of our daily lives and throughout our lives, which is especially important for children growing up in a world full of data (Armstrong et al, 2023).

Extremism (Latin *extremus* – "extreme") means commitment to extreme, mostly violent means in order to achieve goals. In politics, extremism manifests itself in an effort to undermine the stability of existing social structures and political institutions. This is done through demagoguery, calls for violence, acts of terrorism and methods of guerrilla warfare. Extremism is characterized by uncompromising, all-or-nothing actions. The ideological and theoretical basis of extremism are radical ideological concepts, religious fundamentalism, and nationalism (Russian News, 2019). It is difficult to define extremism clearly. When explaining extremism, we must clearly point out the explanandum and the relevant contrast with which this explanandum is combined (Peels, 2023). But based on Berger, we understand violent extremism as the belief "that the success or survival of an internal group can never be separated from the need for violent action against an external group" (Berger, 2018). Extremists have an enemy in their minds. He may be a representative of another religion. In its violent extremist form, such ideology also includes specific claims and the legitimization of violence against certain enemies (Ackerman, Burnham, 2021).

There is a Global Terrorism Index, which is calculated based on four indicators. In 2018 alone, according to The Global Terrorism Index, 15,952 people died at the hands of representatives of terrorist cells in the world. According to the ranking of countries by the level of terrorism, compiled in 2019 by specialists from the University of Maryland (USA), Kazakhstan took 85<sup>th</sup> place. This is probably more or less reassuring information when the top five with the highest number of violent acts and deaths from them include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria and Pakistan. Our northern neighbor Russia ranks 37<sup>th</sup> (Russian News, 2019).

The higher the index, the more often conflicts and terrorist acts occur in the country. According to the data, the top 10 countries in the ranking account for 80 % of all deaths from terrorism in the world. Kazakhstan ranked 95<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of the most dangerous countries in terms of terrorism – in 2020, the number of crimes related to extremism and terrorism in the country decreased by 15 %. In total, 135 states are listed in the ranking. According to the portal *Energyprom.kz* Kazakhstan's terrorism index was 0.901, which is a very low indicator (Krivtsanova, 2020).

The problem of terrorism and extremism remains one of the main problems in the world and still requires in-depth scientific research, their underlying mechanisms are insufficiently studied theoretically (Cherney, Koehler, 2023).

*The first terrorist act in Kazakhstan or fugitive convicts hijacked a bus with passengers*

In the first stage, from 1991 to the end of 1999, according to researchers, individual manifestations of extremism and terrorism make themselves felt on the territory of the young independent state. The first terrorist act in Kazakhstan, the hostage-taking in the Kyzylorda region, took place in 1992, when convicts, natives of Uzbekistan, who were transported from Samara to Tashkent, managed to tie up a guard and jump out of a train carriage. They planned to escape to Almaty and "lay low" there. In order to carry out their plan, they seized a bus en route to Saryagash. The operatives conducted long negotiations with the officials, who demanded a plane to fly to warmer countries. The demands of the terrorists were not fulfilled – they were killed during the storm attack (Mukhit, 2021).

The correspondent of the regional socio-political newspaper *Southern Kazakhstan* T.Koretskaya describes the resonant event as follows: "On Sunday afternoon, February 23, 1992, at a press conference in the office of the KGB of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Shymkent region (now the Turkestan region-the author), General Major E. Mustafetov said: "Today in Shymkent, employees Alfa special forces released the passengers of the Ikarus bus, who became hostages of armed prisoners who escaped from custody. All the hostages are alive. Alpha fighters too. The terrorists are destroyed" (Koretskaya, 2019).

In the collection *The Special Service of South Kazakhstan*, the author of the reserve Major General describes this incident in more detail. "... in February, criminals on the Kyzylorda – Shymkent highway seized an Ikarus flight with two dozen passengers, taking them hostage, and arrived at the bus station of the village of Shieli. When the bandits began to get off the bus with the passengers, the police opened fire. Two were killed. Two were detained. One policeman was killed in the shootout. The two remaining bandits closed down together with 11 passengers". Further, the author writes that "a pre-worked operation "Alarm" was involved, the hostages were released, and the bandits were eliminated". This is how the first terrorist act in independent Kazakhstan ended (Koretskaya, 2019).

More complete information about how the operation took place was made public after the Almaty journalist O. Gubaidullin, with reference to the participants of the operation, outlined the course of events in more detail. He begins his story with how the prisoners who took the bus passengers hostage escaped. "All the blame," the journalist said, "lies with the commander who accompanied the special wagon with the prisoners. He opened the locks. They broke into the compartment to the head of the convoy, tied him up and took three flights. They tore off the stopcock and ran away" (Gubaidulin, 2019).

The official information in the media was positive - bandits, criminal authorities, sentenced to capital punishment and hostage takers were eliminated. However, how should the perpetrators of the emergency be perceived – are they escaped convicts, hostage takers or terrorists? There are many forms of terrorism that can be classified by subjects of activity and by their focus on achieving certain results. Terror can be called violence deliberately directed against the State. Violence comes in two forms: 1) direct violence, which is expressed in the direct use of force (war, armed uprising, political repression, terror) (Osobennosti..., 2012).

In paragraph 5) of Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan *On Countering Terrorism* dated July 13, 1999, the following definition of terrorism is given: "the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing decision-making by state bodies, local governments or international organizations by committing or threatening to commit violent and (or) other criminal actions related to the welfare of the population and aimed at causing damage to the individual, society and the state" (Zakon..., 1999). Considering the conflict, two sides can be distinguished, which have their own truth. Firstly, the passengers became hostages of convicts who escaped from

custody and seized weapons. Secondly, the terrorists have been destroyed. Where is the truth? Are they terrorists or fugitive convicts who hijacked a bus with passengers?

In the handbook *Terrorism and terrorists* K.V. Zharinov notes: "Any actions of a terrorist (even those not related to murder) still involve violence, coercion, and threat. After all, the word terror came from the Latin language: "terror" – fear, horror" (Zharinov, 1999). There is violence, coercion, and threat in the actions of escaped convicts. Therefore, their illegal actions in February 1992 can be confidently qualified as a terrorist act, the first in the history of the young independent State.

An event can be qualified as a terrorist act based on the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan *On Countering Terrorism* dated July 13, 1999 No. 416, where article 1 defines that "an act of terrorism is the commission or threat of an explosion, arson or other actions that create a danger of loss of life, causing damage to significant property damage or the occurrence of other socially dangerous consequences, if these actions are committed in order to violate public safety, intimidate the population (...)" (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 1999).

The authorities, however, try not to focus on the event, which created a danger of loss of life. Even in the documents on ensuring the national security of the country, they did not want to classify the events as terrorism, the fight against terrorism was considered only an external threat. Although this could happen again, and residents could become victims of their manifestation. "...almost until 2011, the state did not want to classify events as terrorism, which gave terrorists a head start to prepare for terrorist acts (Dusmetova, 2020; Nalibai, 2020).

This could happen anywhere, but not in our country. "The fight against terrorism, according to official data, in the documents on ensuring the national security of the country, was not a priority and was considered only an external threat. For example, in the program "Time" of the TRK of the Russian Federation on June 19, 1992, Sergei Fateev's report on the conflict in Transnistria was shown, where there were terrifying shots of how refrigerated trucks filled with corpses drove up to the cemetery in Tiras field, where the funeral of soldiers took place (Osobennosti..., 2018).

Despite such reports from the former Soviet Republic, which shocked the audience, our government representatives were confident that terrorism was far away and there would be no such events in Kazakhstan aimed at de-stabilizing the country. Everyone was also reassured by the fact that it was a foreign news story. The country's leadership presented such information through the QMS that the population was completely confident that this infection was somewhere out there, far away, and would not reach us" (Kozlovsky, 2018).

In ensuring national security, one of the directions – countering terrorism was perceived in our country only as an external threat. You can refer to the opinion of political scientist Abraham Miller, who wrote: "Terrorism and the media share a symbiotic relationship. Terrorism is capable of creating any drama – no matter how terrible - to attract the attention of the media... Terrorism is like an ill-mannered obnoxious child, whom the media, unfortunately, can neither ignore nor reject" (Ryzhkova, 1992). There is violence, coercion, and threat in the actions of the fugitive convicts, and they were able to attract media attention. Therefore, their illegal actions in February 1992 can be confidently qualified as a terrorist act, the first in the history of the young independent State.

The country's first suicide bomb explosion occurred on May 17, 2011 in Aktobe, when R. Makatov entered the building of the Aktobe National Security Committee and detonated a self-detonation. R. Makatov, was a member of a religious extremist organization. He died on the spot, three people were injured. (...) The event immediately acquired the character of an emergency. All the media, both domestic and foreign, were vying to tell about the incident. The journalists of the publications wanted details and details. "A variety of epithets were used in relation to the deceased Makatov: the first Kazakh suicide bomber, the first shahid and other comparisons" (Terakt..., 2021), the press service of the National Security Committee said. However, the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan did not recognize the self-detonation as a terrorist attack.

In fact, even after the first terrorist acts were committed in 2011 (the explosion in the building of the National Security Committee department in Aktobe and at the building of the National Security Committee pretrial detention center in Astana), the authorities refused to call the incident terrorist acts. The word "terrorism" was not used in subsequent statements. In the case of Aktobe, the name "self-detonation" appeared in official reports (Abramov, 2012; Shibutov, 2012).

The *Karavan* newspaper published an article entitled "The most high-profile terrorist attacks in the history of Kazakhstan", which described the twin terrorist attacks in Atyrau on October 31, 2011. The first explosion occurred near the prosecutor's office, the National Security Committee

and the regional akimat. The second one is in the courtyard of an apartment building. The terrorist, 23-year-old B. Sultangaliyev, died on the spot. The events in Atyrau were recognized as a terrorist act for the first time in the history of modern Kazakhstan. The terrorist group Soldiers of the Caliphate claimed responsibility for the bombings. All those involved in the terrorist attacks in Atyrau were arrested a few days later. A year later, the extremists were convicted under the article "Terrorism" (Samye..., 2016).

The fact of terrorism was thus recognized for the first time by the Kazakh authorities only after two explosions in Atyrau at the end of October 2011. Then a criminal case was initiated under the relevant article of the Criminal Code. At the beginning of the following month, five militants were killed near Almaty, who killed two policemen on November 8, 2011. The extremists were planning a series of terrorist attacks in the city. Two commandos were killed during the storming of the house where the terrorists were hiding (Samye..., 2016).

#### *Creation of a domestic legal framework for countering terrorism*

Perhaps the actions of unrecognized terrorists influenced or it was a natural step of a young state trying to gain international recognition, on May 15, 1992, Kazakhstan became a member of the International Regional Collective Security Organization Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which unites six states (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan) (Kozlovsky, 2018).

At the 61st session of the Interpol General Assembly, held in Dakar (Senegal) on November 4, 1992, Kazakhstan was accepted as a member of the International Criminal Police Organization Interpol. A year later, the National Central Bureau of Interpol of the Republic of Kazakhstan (NCBI RK) was established as a structural unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs" (Toksanbaev, 2012). It should be noted that ten years later, that is, in 2012, this organization, NCBI RK, "maintained business contacts with law enforcement agencies of 47 states, trying to increase the effectiveness of its work through mutually beneficial exchange.

The next step was that Kazakhstan joined the Shanghai Five in 1996, later renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (2001) (Dusmetova, 2020; Nalibai, 2020). For the first time in the domestic legal field, terrorism as a separate type of crime was consolidated on July 16, 1997, Article 233 "Terrorism" was introduced into the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Prestupleniya..., 1997). The Agreement on Cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) dated June 4, 1999 and membership in the Council for Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) (O merah..., 2000).

Countering terrorism requires joint coordinated efforts by the State and society through national and international means. Therefore, it has become necessary to develop relatively unified political, legal, financial, economic and military mechanisms for combating terrorism, and to develop a program to combat religious extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan.

In order to effectively counter organized terrorism by criminal legal means, in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated February 19, 2002 No. 295-II "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on combating terrorism", relevant novelties were introduced in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which made it possible to criminalize acts reflected in the introduction of the following offences: Articles 233-1 "propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit an act of terrorism", Articles 233-2. "Building, leadership of a terrorist group and participation in its activities", Articles 233-3 "Financing of extremism or terrorist activity" (UK Respubliki..., 2002).

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan *On Countering Terrorism* was adopted on July 13, 1999 (No. 416-I) and defined the legal, organizational foundations for combating terrorism, the procedure for the activities of State bodies and organizations, regardless of their forms of ownership, as well as the rights, obligations and guarantees of citizens in connection with the fight against terrorism (Zakon..., 1999).

Broad explanatory work is becoming one of the key tools in the country's anti-terrorist activities. For the first time, the status of the Anti-Terrorist Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan was legally consolidated and the creation of anti-terrorist commissions in the regions was envisaged (Zakon..., 1999).

According to the requirements of the adopted law, organizations whose activities are of a terrorist nature have been banned on the territory of Kazakhstan. Organizations are recognized as terrorist if their statutory goals and activities contradict the Constitution and Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan and international treaties to which the Republic of Kazakhstan is a party; if there is a

potential danger of activating the functioning of these organizations to destabilize the situation in the states of the Central Asian region (Zakon..., 1999).

The global experience in combating international terrorism has shown that the main importance should be given to its financing, as well as the fight against organized crime. Kazakhstan has joined all thirteen international universal conventions on combating terrorism (Bekishev, 2017).

#### *Information terrorism of the weekly Karavan*

In the modern world, since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been issuing global reports on human development issues. The criteria for a new measurement of socio-economic progress were taken by the Human Development Index (HDI). According to the UNDP, after the collapse of the USSR, HDI fell in Kazakhstan, in particular, in 1991, the structure of this decline was as follows - by 84 % due to the economic downturn, 13 % due to a decrease in life expectancy and 3 % due to a decrease in the level of education (Tema..., 2023).

After gaining independence in December 1991, changes began to occur in Kazakhstan not only in socio-political and economic life. On the way to true sovereignty, Kazakhstan has faced a number of difficulties: economic crisis, social tension, decrease in the standard of living of the population, unemployment, environmental problems, criminogenicity. The national security system of the young independent state was more focused on preventing and preventing interethnic conflicts, drug trafficking, economic threats, and corruption. During these years, the authorities have always officially supported all initiatives aimed at combating terrorism and have taken preventive measures to counter them. They tried not to advertise certain phenomena of extremism and terrorism, as if it were not a topical problem for the country. The impression was created, it could happen anywhere, but not here.

The most difficult times for the young state were 1991-1992. "Lights and heat were constantly turned off in Almaty, unemployment was worried in Karaganda, and various sects began to appear in Kokshetau with provocative slogans. The Ural Cossacks and the Lad movement in Kaliningrad escalated the situation with extremist actions, and the incident with Chechens in the area of Klyuchi in Eastern Kazakhstan caused concern," Z. Aupbayev, a journalist, recalls those times in an interview. – The first issue of the newspaper "Karavan" was published in early August 1991 and over time the weekly began to gain popularity among readers. However, some provocative materials were negatively perceived by society and caused misconceptions. Then a group of journalists was invited to the Ministry of Press and Mass Information. Minister A. Sarsenbayev met with us and expressed concern: "Every time they get more and more arrogant and go beyond the limits of what is permissible, they ridicule our people and our lands. They touch the independence of the state with unflattering words, and there are negative statements addressed to the head of state. We need to stop this lawlessness, but how can we influence them? I ask you to write your suggestions within an hour and leave them to the head of the department," the Minister addressed the audience (Kutken..., 2023).

In those years, two parliamentary newspapers were opened in the state-owned *Halyk Kenesa* and the Russian language *Soviets of Kazakhstan*. "Then I worked as deputy editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Halyk Kenesa* and my colleague, the editor-in-chief of *Soviets of Kazakhstan* Yuri Anrevich Tarakov, sat next to me at this event. I do not know what he wrote, but my suggestion was that if "The *Karavan* received a Certificate of registration from the Ministry of Press and Mass Media, it is necessary to raise the registration documents and familiarize yourself with the charter of the editorial office, which is attached in one copy. This will allow you to find answers to the questions: the scope of the newspaper? What is the subject-thematic focus of the publication?" It is necessary to clarify whether the publication complies with the statutory requirements?

Soon, after three or four days, they found out that the newspaper *Karavan*, which has always excited the population with its publications, disappeared from the shelves of retail outlets in Almaty, the next fresh issue did not arrive at newsstands. The merchants of the publication, who loudly called visitors near shops and bazaars, also disappeared. For many, this was an unexpected event that had never happened before. However, in the second half of the following week, street vendors began to appear again with the offer to buy the latest issue of the weekly.

As it turned out later, the publication of the newspaper was suspended by the Ministry of Press and Mass Media for gross violation of the regulations specified in the charter, and the circulation distributed by street vendors was printed in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. This was told to us by Aida Abnizova, head of the Department of the Ministry of Press and Mass



Information. I was pleased to hear her say to me: "The Minister expressed his gratitude to you". A gross violation of the provisions of the Editorial Board's Charter was that it was written in the charter that the newspaper was not engaged in politics, they were interested in advertising and commerce, the issues would be filled with educational materials, the main direction, reviews, operational news. Thus, the publication of provocative materials in the weekly was stopped, which could cause a crisis situation, because times were very difficult for the young state. In this way, information terrorism can be said to have been avoided (Asabaev, 2009; Umirzakova, 2009).

Tabloid-type mass media are oriented to a large extent to the psychology of the crowd, to the needs and interests, to lower levels of the mass psyche. The yellow (tabloid) press has its own typology – it is a "universal" tabloid, offering gossip and hyped sensations from all spheres of life (*Express Newspaper, Yellow Newspaper*). So the *Karavan* of those years, it was safe to refer to the yellow press, one of the first among non-state newspapers to publish photographs and materials under the heading "Intimacy". The reason for the emergence of various kinds of proceedings was the column in the newspaper "Well, wow!", which published comments on the statements of prominent public and political figures published in other newspapers.

*Are they terrorists or just soldiers' riots on Baikonur*

In the publication *Kazakh riots in the 90s were also on Baikonur*, E. Sazhneva describes the situation of that time as follows: "Meanwhile, the residents of Leninsk (as Baikonur was called in the old days) recall how they survived the soldiers' riots in the early 90s. These were the 91st, 92nd and 93rd years. A huge and seemingly friendly country, the Soviet Union, has just collapsed. The future was hazy. (...) The command of the cosmodrome, caught between two fires, even had to issue a special leaflet-an appeal to the Baikonur people. In which they sternly described the truth of life and a bleak future. "In difficult conditions, we carry out tasks with you. The collapse of the USSR, the economic chaos and devastation that followed it, political instability, the crisis of national relations, inconsistency in solving issues of military construction and military service – all these are characteristic signs of the present day" (Sazhneva, 2022).

However, the appeal of the cosmodrome command to the military personnel did not help, since "A dozen military construction detachments turned out to be isolated from the world. And this is in the neighborhood of missile defense complexes and mines with nuclear missiles that were on combat duty! (...) The bed linen was no longer changed, the food in the dining room became worse, even worms in the meat came across. The dirty and hungry soldier's mask was growling softly, and the officers could not help them in any way. The soldiers began to get even angrier" (Sazhneva, 2022). This is how journalist Yuri Dmitriev describes what happened in those days on Baikonur: "On the night of February 23-24, 1992, a real soldier's riot broke out in the military construction units of the 110th, 118th, and 253rd sites. In a few hours of outrages, robberies and robberies, multimillion-dollar damage was caused to state property. By the way, the estimated date of the beginning of the rebellion was known to dawn – the Day of the Soviet Army. There were warnings-reports to the right place. But they were unwrapped. No one believed to the last that such a thing could happen at all. [...] The rioters tried to grab weapons and go to Baikonur. When this failed, the crowd rushed to smash the nearest military town: barracks, headquarters, canteen, tore off locks from food and clothing warehouses... Beat officers and all those who tried to show at least some resistance, tore off watches, hats, pea jackets, wrung their hands... (Sazhneva, 2022).

Residents of Baikonur stayed at home in those terrible days. There were no official reports of what was happening. Local television in the news briefly reported that some kind of small emergency had occurred in military units near Lenin- and that was all. Trains flew past the nearest stations without stopping, fearing capture. In the end, a rather controversial, but the only possible decision in those circumstances was made – all the conscript rebels, almost three thousand people, were sent home. Supposedly on vacation, from where they have not returned. No one was criminally responsible for the riot and pogroms. (...) Criminal cases against the real culprits were preferred to be put on the brakes. It is possible that this was a mistake. Since the next year, another soldier's riot broke out near Baikonur (Sazhneva, 2022).

Exactly a year later, at the 95th site, where the specialists who prepared and launched Proton rockets into space lived, a group of Russian rocket soldiers rebelled. The example of their colleagues inspired the construction workers to revolt. The soldiers honestly admitted that they also hoped for a speedy discharge into the reserve and therefore acted. (...) Another media riot in the summer of '93 was suppressed and, thank God, it turned out to be the last one. A lease agreement between Kazakhstan and Russia was signed soon (Sazhneva, 2022).

There was no publicity about these riots in the Kazakh mass media, except: "Local television in the news briefly reported that some kind of minor emergency had occurred in military units near Leninsky, and that's all." Until now, many of our compatriots do not know that there were military riots on the territory of the Baikonur cosmodrome.

*The Moment of Truth in the nineties or how organized criminal groups in Kazakhstan terrorized small businesses*

New institutions of government were just being formed, a market economy was being built, foreign investors came in, and international contracts were concluded. The winds of political change in its former expanses blew with such force that many citizens of newly formed sovereign states felt their heads spin: the market, freedom, competition, democracy, glasnost – all this, of course, is good, but why did the crisis develop in such terrible forms (Tema..., 2023), – wrote A. Suetin in the article "The Moment of truth. The nineties became decisive in the development of sovereign Kazakhstan" and further the author identifies their causes. – Unemployment and prices were growing rapidly, salaries were not paid at many enterprises, paid medical services turned out to be unaffordable for the majority of the population, and life expectancy fell. The previous political and socio-economic methods of leadership have exhausted themselves, but the new ones have not yet worked" (Suetin, 2016).

The crisis in 1992 could not be overcome, and it lasted until the end of the 90s of the last century. It was the most difficult period in the history of independent Kazakhstan. The collapse of a large country, economic stagnation, the decline of agriculture, the loss of moral guidelines and other negative phenomena. Despite the various measures taken, the evolutionary process of the formation of radical movements is being monitored, their groups tried to take advantage of the political and economic instability of the young state. One of them was that organized crime groups began to appear in the country. Only in Almaty, according to official data, there were more than a hundred of them (Mukhit, 2021).

Many organized criminal groups consisted of athletes and law enforcement officers. They "protected" bazaars and certain people, traded drugs, beat out debts, and distributed porn products. To destroy the leaders of the organized crime group, it was necessary to have a serious evidence base. Even its presence did not guarantee that a person would "serve" a full term. Many bandits managed to be released on parole. Kurdish, Chechen-Ingush and other ethnic criminal groups were particularly active in the country. The most famous among them were *Four Brothers*, *Deputy Corps*, *Red Diamond organized criminal group*, *Bahi Festival*, *Atabs*, *Krykbaevsky*, *Kisa*, *Abram*, *Mahara-Chivanin* (Mukhit, 2021).

One of the most respected among this circle was Aitkali Mai-mushev, aka Lesha Maymysh, a man with multimillion-dollar profits from both legal and illegal businesses. He was the organizer of the large drug trafficking Siberia-Kazakhstan-Urals, and also engaged in trade with China. He was repeatedly convicted of hooliganism, possession of weapons and extortion. He was detained with drugs and fake passports. In total, Aitkali Maimushev spent about 20 years in prison. For a long time, Aitkali "looked after" Kazakhstani prisons and was engaged in the production of alcohol. Thanks to such organized criminal groups, the "shadow" economy is developing, huge financial flows are generated that are not controlled by the state or other authorities (Mukhit, 2021).

Some organized criminal groups in Kazakhstan have maintained their activities, reformed methods and techniques of criminal activity, and some even changed their direction. Meanwhile, groups appeared in society that began to strictly follow the rules of religious communities; the training of the special services was not at the appropriate level to resist terrorists, as they did not have such experience. Social networks, which actively promoted prohibited activities on the Internet, also played a certain role.

#### 4. Results

The main forms of terrorist activity in Kazakhstan are: terrorist act; hostage-taking; political assassination. The most significant scientific results in the article are that it gradually examines the coverage of the actions of terrorists and extremists in Kazakhstan, directed against the system of public relations, to achieve goals by terrorists through forcible coercion of public authorities using depressive psychological factors. The content and functions of the methodology for building a new system of scientific knowledge on the coverage of terrorism and anti-terrorism arising in the confrontation between their terrorist and anti-terrorist activities. The provisions and conclusions of the scientific study of the coverage in the QMS of the organization and conduct of the terrorist

struggle are in urgent need of further scientific development and implementation of the interdisciplinary theoretical and practical branch of scientific knowledge in Kazakhstan.

The structure of the article is subordinated to the main idea and strategy of the research of a scientific problem and consists of an introduction, discussion, conclusion and bibliographic list.

## 5. Conclusion

Currently, Governments in many countries recognize that organized crime is not only a problem for law enforcement agencies, but also a threat to national security. The Heads of State and Government expressed concern about local, regional and global crime problems. The UN has taken a leading role in this area. In 2000, a special convention was adopted in which organized crime was declared a threat to global security.

The article considers a short period of time in the early nineties of the last century. Analyzing examples from the events of those years, it is safe to say that terrorists manifested themselves in Kazakhstan in the early nineties, and not in the early 2000s.

The digitalization of the information environment has enriched terrorists with an extremely powerful tool for promoting their views and mobilizing like-minded people. The mass media promptly covered the anti-terrorist activities of law enforcement agencies and special services, since coverage of the topic under consideration always attracts public attention in the information space. Certain groups resort to it due to social, religious and ethnic contradictions. Therefore, it became necessary to combine the efforts of the mass media and law enforcement agencies in countering extremism. This will allow maintaining public control over the process of anti-terrorist activities of the state, thereby maintaining a balance between security and human rights.

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## Correlative Effects Between Digital Literacy and Religious Authority Among Academic Communities in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This research found a dynamic orientation between digital literacy and religious authority. A quantitative approach leads the authority to influence digital literacy. In contrast, the qualitative one passes the opposite direction, i.e. the more literate to technology, the closer religious behaviour to traditional religious authority. This research discusses three important issues. Firstly, digital literacy influencing religious behaviour illustrates the awareness of the importance of digital technology in religious social practices. This awareness creates the idea of the importance of technological literacy in building socio-religious practices. Secondly, the impact of digital literacy on religious authority is discovered by the development of digital literacy associated with disseminating religious knowledge on social media. However, due to their instability, social media platforms cannot be used as a standard for authorizing religious sources. Consequently, some referred to traditional sources. Lastly, the dynamics of religious authority investigate the constellation of dialectical processes that refer to standard terminology in religious practices. Those processes have led to a big question about the actuality of religious authority in society. The actuality of the dominant religious authority tends to lead to technology in practice, but the conceptual point of the authority is in the conventional realm.

**Keywords:** digital literacy, religious authority, digital religion, conventional religion.

### 1. Introduction

Digital literacy discourse in the last decade has become increasingly stronger as digital terms spread in almost every aspect of people's lives, such as digital religion and digital society. This term describes technological trends and domination of social practices through the cultural mediation of actors as a form of technological hegemonic (Schalk, 2018). This mediation process has contributed greatly to the socio-religious practices of the millennial era, which is experiencing a shift from print tradition to digital modernization (Campbell, 2020). This era is marked by a monopoly on communication and information technology in almost every individual and group struggle. Technological monopolies, besides having a significant impact on societal progress, also have technological excesses that tend to be destructive, such as hoaxes (Siddiqui, Singh, 2016), or against established traditions, such as threats to religious authority and local wisdom (Højsgaard, Warburg, 2005).

To face this hegemonic technology, some social actors are still resistant, but others have moved with social change reasoning (Khaidir, 2006; Nashrullah, 2016) to maximize their role in

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the development of millennial society. One form of digital literacy is adapting and adopting technological roles into social leadership. Digital literacy is the ability to master computer technology whose information is based on digital sources and social media and to interpret social practices via internet networks (Lankshear, Knobel, 2008; Rowsell, Pahl, 2015). Digital literacy is becoming an important vehicle for approaching knowledge (Reedy, Parker, 2019). American Library Association (ALA, 2020), for example, places terminology as an effort to use information and communication technology in finding, evaluating, creating, and communicating information.

The emergence of two forms of societal response to technological hegemony is interesting to see as religious authority, which for several centuries to the last few decades had been enjoyed by those whose knowledge is based on printed books (Campbell, 2020). This printed religious authority began to find competitors when the new culture of religious authority and digital religion emerged (Højsgaard, Warburg, 2005). Digital religion refers not only to religion, as practiced and articulated online, but also to how media and digital spaces shape and are shaped by religious practice. There is a synergy and dialectical mutual influence in the struggle between religion and digital technology toward forming current religious social practices. Campbell (Campbell, 2013) used this term to discuss the state of religion about digital and cultural artifacts, where religion and digital meet each other. The impact of the debate between religion and digital has given rise to new phenomena, such as the disruption of conventional religious authority on the one hand and the emergence of new digital religious authority on the other (Herzfeld, 2017). How this phenomenon is responded to by society is interesting to study, and the research will take PTKIN (State Islamic Religious Colleges) academics as subjects because they have been intensively involved in religious issues.

The matters of the phenomena will be viewed from conceptual frameworks as follow. A shift in religious authority following the development of information and technological mediation processes has framed the social structure of society. This mediation has inherently driven a cultural shift from print tradition to digital-modernization (Pshenichnykh, Novi, 2023). This phenomenon can be read through the conceptual framework of new media technology. The digitalization of society and its literacy is an inevitable development in technological mediation, which is one of the outputs of the struggle of ideas rather than a technical practice (Farlina et al., 2022). One struggle currently developing is the emergence of concepts emphasizing mastery of ideas, which require careful evaluation of information and intelligent analysis and synthesis. This process is based on a concept that presents a diverse list of specific skills and techniques to meet the qualifications that can create a digitally conscious society. It is illustrated by a phenomenon initially based solely on semantic meaning, namely the ability to read and write. It is defined as the ability to understand information in various presentations. The multimedia nature of digital information emphasizes the meaning, which describes the complexity of articulation and synergism in society (Lankshear, Knobel, 2008; Pechinkina, Vepreva, 2023).

New articulations of technology and social synergism have given rise to the concept of digital religion, which is pervasive in religious practice. This concept begins with communication technology that influences the way people practice religion. The internet and various technological devices are increasingly being used in religious practices. Digital religion is a new framework for articulating the evolution of online religious practices, as is often done in religious practices, such as sending online prayers and other practices (Campbell, Tsuria, 2022). Digital religion not only refers to religion as practiced and articulated online but also shows how religious practices shape digital media and spaces. As a concept, this situation allows society to talk about the current state of religion concerning digital artifacts (Campbell, 2013). Grieve (Grieve, 1995) looked at digital religion as representing a distinct cultural sphere of unique religious practice, but not dichotomous with other forms of religion. Understanding digital religion helps scholars encourage discourse to see online religion as an innovation in media space and an expression of important religious ideologies in contemporary culture, which can change practice and meaning-making itself (Campbell, 2017; Tsuria, 2020).

The emergence of digital religion has helped the religious development and propagation process, but at the same time, traditional religious authorities are experiencing crucial challenges. The question of how this authority can be maintained is one of the keys that can be considered. Meyrowitz in Campbell (Campbell, 2013) stated that authority weakens when information systems are combined. A leader's authority is reduced when a medium allows different people to have open access and gain greater control over social knowledge and information. There is a dominant conceptualization that holds the forms of religious authority are transformed by digital technologies, which are seen as replacing traditional doctrines and domains of belief, which are

often embedded in hierarchical forms of communication, structures, ideologies, and texts, which Hill (Hill, 2002) considered to be authoritative in reason, science, institution, and religious traditions. Besides that, religious authority is also determined by other elements, such as the local wisdom of the community (Nixon, 2019), which is known in other terms as local intelligence. This intelligence refers to the character of original values that are local, inherited from generation to generation, and different from global values (Daniah, 2016; Syamsiyatun, Wafiroh, 2013).

## 2. Materials and methods

This research method includes research approaches, research objects and subjects, research data collection, research instruments, frameworks, and research stages. This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a constructivist approach. Qualitative descriptive is research conducted with an attempt to explain what is in a natural setting using multi-methods that are seen as they are, then interpreted by researchers following individual and societal understandings. Meanwhile, the constructivist or interpretive approach is intended as an attempt to interpret the meaning of a phenomenon of human action and thought through a description of the basic structure of reality which is evidence of human self as individuals and groups in society (Denzin, Lincoln, 1994; Laugu, 2015). This approach is backed up by quantitative measurement using Likert Scale with interpretation by percentage in order to understand quantitative levels of understanding. Before the qualitative method began, the researchers distributed quantitative instruments to potential respondents as can be seen in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Number of populations, respondents, and informants

No	Research Location	Population		Respondent		Informant	
		Lecturer	Student	Lecturer	Student	Lecturer	Student
1	UIN Alauddin Makassar	19	577	10	77	4	5
2	UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	23	577	21	82	4	5
3	UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta	20	837	12	56	4	5
4	UIN Raden Fatah Palembang	12	372	11	94	4	5
Total		74	2363	54	309	17	20

This study used four data collection techniques, namely: interviews, observation, documentation, and FGD (Focus Group Discussion). Interviews are questions posed directly and indirectly to a number of research informants, which consist of three elements, namely students and lecturers. Observation is a direct observation made by researchers in the field.

**Table 2.** Informants' codes

No	UIN Alauddin Makassar		UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta		UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta		UIN Raden Fatah Palembang	
	Lecturer	Student	Lecturer	Student	Lecturer	Student	Lecturer	Student
1	Alau-Lo1	Alau-So1	Suka-Lo1	Suka-So1	Syah-Lo1	Syah-So1	Rafa-Lo1	Rafa-So1
2	Alau-Lo2	Alau-So2	Suka-Lo2	Suka-So2	Syah-Lo2	Syah-So2	Rafa-Lo2	Rafa-So2
3	Alau-Lo3	Alau-So3	Suka-Lo3	Suka-So3	Syah-Lo3	Syah-So3	Rafa-Lo3	Rafa-So3
4	Alau-Lo4	Alau-So4	Suka-Lo4	Suka-So4	Syah-Lo4	Syah-So4	Rafa-Lo4	Rafa-So4
5	-	Alau-So5	-	Suka-So5	-	Syah-So5	-	Rafa-So5
Number	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5



Documentation refers to documents related to the formal object of research. FGDs were conducted by inviting a number of informants and resource persons to explore the research material. Those informants' identification is coded as follows.

The data collected from all techniques are validated through triangulation techniques on three aspects, namely data sources, data collection techniques, and time (Arikunto, 2010; Denzin, Lincoln, 1994; Sugiyono, 2006). To interpret the level of conformity between what respondents want and the content of the statements submitted to them, an interpretation of the Likert Scale interval values is used which is converted into percentage (Jamieson, 2024) interval values as follows.

**Table 3.** Interpretation of percentage levels

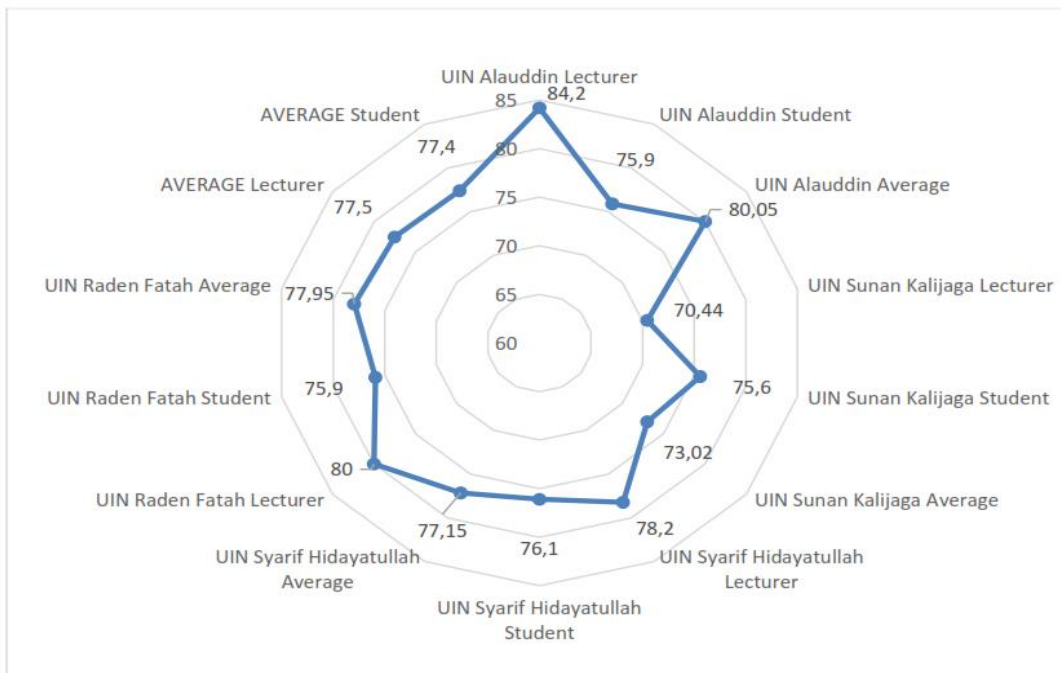
No	Percentage (%)	Interpretation
1	90-100	Outstanding
2	80-89	Excellent
3	70-79	Very Good
4	60-69	Good
5	50-59	Fair
6	49 Down	Poor

**3. Discussion and results**

This research is seen in two approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative, even though the research is actually qualitative descriptive research. Therefore, a quantitative approach is only used to help explain qualitative phenomena regarding the object of research, namely digital literacy and religious authority that occur in the life of the academic community. Therefore, this research presentation is divided into two main parts, namely quantitative display of questionnaire data and qualitative analysis of interview results.

*Quantitative Display of Data Questionnaire*

This research generally discusses three main issues, namely the effect of digital literacy on religious behavior, the impact of digital literacy on religious authority, and the dynamics of religious authority in the era of digital technology. The questionnaire results were presented at four universities, including UIN Alauddin, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, and UIN Raden Fatah. Each location describes the results of interviews from two groups, which include lecturers and students. The percentage results that describe the condition and situation of digital literacy and religious authority as can be seen in Figure 1 below.



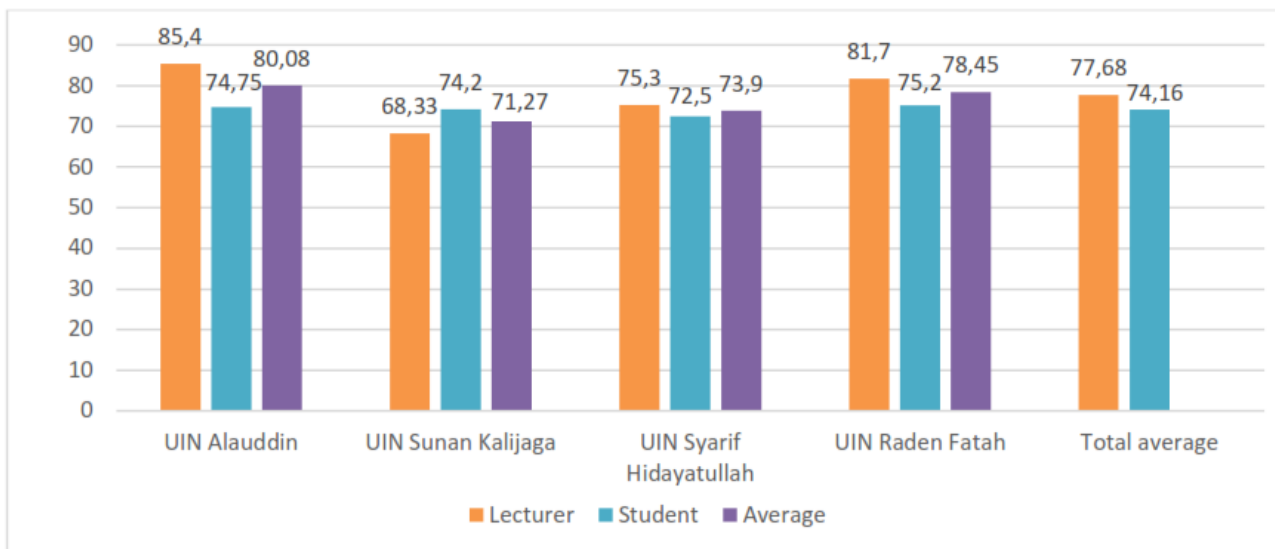
**Fig. 1.** Avarage values of relations between digital literacy and religious authority

The data shows two dimensions, namely the first is the condition of the institution which is represented by lecturers and students and the second is the topic being researched. In the first dimension, respondents' answers regarding the effect of digital literacy on religious authority were reflected by 77.5 % among lecturers and 77.4 % among students. This percentage is in the very good range, although the response from Gen Z students, which was initially predicted to be higher, was actually 0.1 % lower. The highest value of the response was Alauddin, namely 80.05 % with an Excellent interpretation, while the other three were in the range of 70 to 79 % with a very good interpretation. The lowest score was Sunan Kalijaga, namely 73.02 %, while the other two were Syarif Hidayatullah with a score of 77.15 % and Raden Fatah with a score of 77.95 %.

In the second dimension which includes three important issues, namely the effects of digital literacy on religious behavior, the impact of digital literacy on religious authorities, and the dynamics of religious authority in the digital technology era, it is generally illustrated with an average figure of 77.5 % or entering a reaction condition at a very good level. The highest values from respondents were on the second issue related to the impact of digital literacy on religious authority, namely 78.6 %, followed by the third issue regarding the dynamics of religious authority in the digital technology era with 77.5 %, then the first issue related to the effect of digital literacy on religious behavior as much as 76.3 %. The quantitative data illustrates that the respondents' answers among lecturers and students are at the same level, namely at 70 to 79 %, with the meaning of very good.

The three issues above are described in detail in quantitative form as illustrated in the following three figures, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.

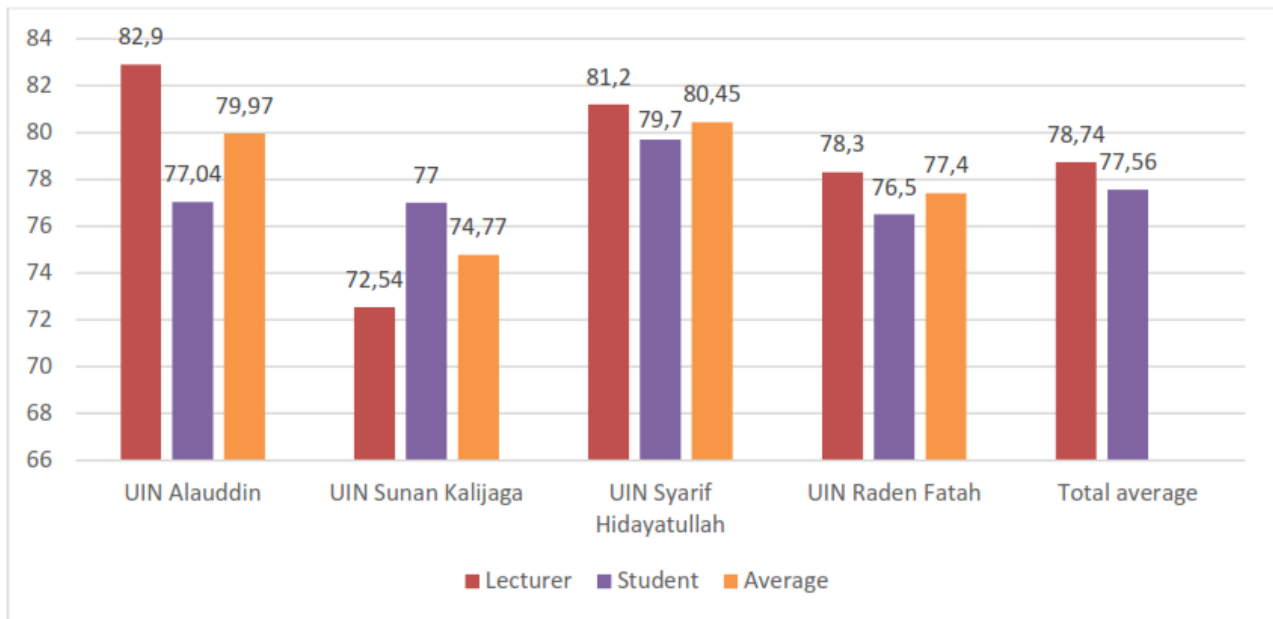
In Figure 2 issues related to the effect of digital literacy on religious behavior are as follows.



**Fig. 2.** The effect of digital literacy on religious behavior in percentage

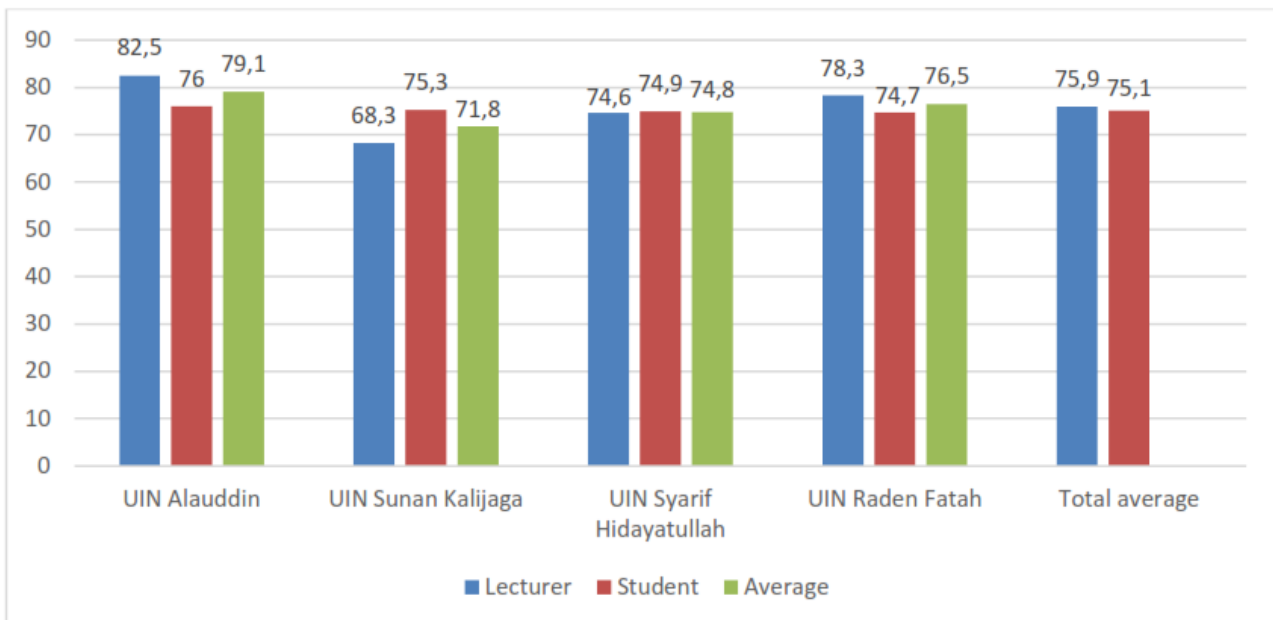
The effects of digital literacy were concluded from six situations experienced by respondents, which include the importance of digital technology as a tool in society; university digital technology facilities and influences religious behavior; digital literacy competency supports in religion; religious practice has shifted from traditional to digital; digital technology is a dominant media for learning religious knowledge; and digital media are dominant sources influencing religious behavior.

As for Figure 3 is related to the level of impact of digital literacy on religious authorities. This impact is the average of the six issues explored, including the crucial role of religion in resolving personal and social affairs; the important role of religious figures in contemporary issues, such as religious, political, economic, social, and cultural; the urgency of religious symbols, such as the Koran, *Ulama*, *Ustadz*, *Habib*, etc. are in people's lives; the need of religious organizations, groups, and communities in society; religious learning methods available on digital media can replace conventional (offline) methods; and the dominance of digital media compared by printed media in religious understanding.



**Fig. 3.** The impact of digital literacy on religious authorities in percentage

Figure 4 describes the level of dynamics of religious authority in the era of digital technology, which is also formed from six things, which include: great influence of new digital media, such as social media, in religious authorities; a must of digital media to maintain religious authority; the importance of digital media in religious preaching carried out by religious figures; the role of digital media in religion among people; the correlation of digital technology development toward religious authority; and the threat of digital literacy toward conventional (offline) religious authority, such as reduction of traditional preaches congregations.



**Fig. 4.** The effect of digital literacy on religious behavior in percentage

#### *Qualitative Analysis of Interview Results*

The following analysis will focus on qualitative analysis, which looks at informants' responses to the abovementioned critical issues. Data on this phenomenon will be explored from 37 informants consisting of 17 lecturers and 20 students. The informants were taken from four institutions, each with 4 lecturers and 5 students. Some data is presented verbatim, and others are

presented based on the meaning obtained from the informants. The data presentation and analysis can be seen in the following discussion.

### *The Effect of Digital Literacy on Religious Behavior*

Technological developments have changed many things in worldly matters and religious affairs (Højsgaard, Warburg, 2005). These changes have illustrated a variety of phenomena and dialectics of public opinion in addition to aspects of their direct impact on people's lives, especially in religious behavior. Based on the conceptual bases and the reality of the phenomena of the academic community in the four locations, those dialectics can be seen in three main issues regarding the influence of digital literacy on religious behavior (Bellar, Campbell, 2023), namely technology as a tool for modern culture, the urgency of technological literacy in religious behavior, and technological mediation and religious practices among the university community. These three issues will be presented as follows.

Digital technology has opened and encouraged a new atmosphere of communication and interaction in modern society. The novelty of this communication and interaction is not only felt in the mundane aspects of society but also in the *ukhrawiah* aspect, which is shown in religious behavior, which experiences a dynamic through digital technology. The dynamic of this technology has signaled its urgency in the struggles of society, where almost no activity escapes the use of technology (Afrilyasanti et al., 2022). Therefore, mastery of digital technology is no longer a secondary need but a primary demand that must always exist in an advanced society. The achievement of programs through technological assistance is the same between the informants. They believe that the presence of digital technology is an essential tool for society to improve their performance in their jobs. Therefore, they realize that the technology currently being developed needs to be utilized to the fullest, especially for them, the holders of religious authority, so that the religious resources found can be more extensive so that their religious insights are more advanced and comprehensive, which ultimately develops their religious behavior (Echchaibi, Hoover, 2023). However, in particular, they think that their religious behavior is not controlled by technology; it is just that digital technology has made it easier for them to recall previously learned religious knowledge (Clark, Lindsey, 2022).

In addition to the urgency of digital technology in the religious practices of the academic community, digital technology has a remarkable influence on the community's religious practices. In the use of mobile phones, for example, the academic community in general, and students in particular, feel that technology in everyday life is a primary need, inseparable from their every social interaction (Zaluchu, 2020). This mobile phone technology has a profound impact, so they are powerless to be separated, which can go beyond primary needs, such as surviving quietly without eating and drinking for spiritual reasons or because of religious practices. However, if someone needs to remember to bring their cell phone to work or to their university, they will experience some discomfort throughout the day or return home to retrieve their forgotten cell phone. This condition illustrates that technology is essential in mediating daily life and culture (Barker, 2000).

“...the presence of digital technology and its development provides many things that people need to develop and make changes in their life to be more modern and efficient. This occurs especially in general communication, such as in hospitality, where people are in direct contact with each other. However, with technology, this gathering can be replaced by long-distance communication via cell phones, audio calls, or video calls. I practice them... sometimes when I am still busy, I can still stay in touch through cell phone, long distance (Syahid-LO4)” and others, because our daily lives follow religious norms... (Rafah-SO1)”.

The results of the interviews above show that the presence of technology with all the literacy tools and capacities of the university community has a significant impact on their religious behavior, which is generally driven by the intense mediation of technology due to the perceived efficiency of society. From interaction to information retrieval in religious practices, digital technology has influenced them, resulting in the development of activities from conventional practices to digital practices. Mastery of digital technology has shifted their conventional religious practices and traditions towards digitalization and has influenced their interactions with others. Therefore, media literacy education becomes significant in such a case (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021). This is supported by several informants, such as Suka-LO2, Alau-LO4, and Syahid-SO2, stating the same thing that the existence of university technology facilities would encourage them to engage more in digital communication, including aspects of their religious behavior that were widely affected.

Along with the development of technology and its impact on society, technological literacy is a fundamental element many people own. This is important so that they can use it the most while at the same time avoiding adverse effects that have the potential to become a source of problems for modern life, such as fraud and hoax news. Literacy capacity in dealing with technology through digital literacy has and will facilitate optimizing the benefits of technology in every aspect of life, especially in religious practices and behavior (McClure, 2017). The mastery of technology by religious groups has assisted them in disseminating their religious ideas efficiently and maximally. The development of this technology cannot be avoided. People have various perspectives due to differences in social, economic, and religious backgrounds, and so on. However, this difference is only sectoral and microscopic because urban and rural areas are not a significant consideration in the influence of digital technology on their religious behavior. This condition does not mean technology is not essential, but several other variables have reduced its impact on socio-religious practices (Humeira, Sarwono, 2019).

The midpoint of equal access to technology is a significant momentum for the progress of every member of society. The presence of technology with social media facilities creates a dynamic cultural atmosphere. However, this development requires a shared awareness of the importance of technological literacy in their every action. Without literacy, the impact of hoaxes and fraud, as well as other detrimental actions, will cause disharmony and chaos in society (Afrilyasanti et al., 2022). The success of literacy building will encourage the birth of an insightful and civilized society, which will contribute enormously to creating comfortable conditions for building social harmony. This position will spur high social civility in every aspect of their lives. The process of arriving at this status shows the urgency of technology in patterns and practices of religious behavior (Cheek, 2018). Digital literacy encourages a more profound understanding on the one hand and the urgency of religious behavior on the other. This discussion can be seen in the informants as follows.

"... yes, of course, technology is critical in people's lives, including religious affairs, so technology is urgent for religious behavior... (Rafah-L03), people can easily get religious knowledge anytime and anywhere, just open YouTube, whatever is available so that everyone can be influenced to a matter or topic in a religious issue that is, of course, related to everyone's religious behavior in the future... the point is that technology is very urgent to develop religion. However, of course, it must be equipped with technological literacy so as not to get caught in the negative trap of technology, spreading hoaxes and becoming news users - Hoax news or preaching that deviate from the real religion... (Alau-L01)".

The interview results above illustrate the urgency of technology and digital literacy for the religious behavior of the university community. They use technology in various activities, especially religious activities. The use of technology, such as watching lectures via YouTube videos and using Zoom for *Tahlilan* activities and so on, shows the development of religious behavior, which is usually entirely conventional and now uses technology as a complement. Technology increases the quantity of community involvement in religious activities because people who are far away can be involved through Zoom and Google Meet applications, as well as other technological means. They believe that digital technology is unavoidable in today's modern society (Smit et al., 2024). The other informants, such as Syahid-L02 and Suka-L01, described the strategic function of technology in supporting every university community activity.

The urgency of digital technology regarding the university community's religious behavior is evident in the interviews with several informants from the students, among them, Suka-SO2, Alau-SO5, and Rafah-SO4. They believe that the existence of digital technology today is closely related to their religious behavior, even though conventional discourse remains dominant at a certain level because their religious insights still depend directly on *Ustadz* figures as an absolute authority. They feel that more than their religious knowledge is insufficient to filter out what is right and what is wrong, so in addition to using technology as a means of information retrieval, a *Ustadz* is needed to ensure information is available among them through digital technology. The urgency of digital technology occurs in every student, even though the level of urgency differs between them due to differences in culture and other backgrounds that mediate a variety of impacts in society (Horeck, 2018).

Technological developments and digitization in various social domains and practices, including the religious area, have undergone a process of technological mediation, which has slowly created changes in response and behavior towards religious practices. This change from conventional to digital religious practices occurs in the mediation process. The university community is experiencing digitizing activities, such as conventional administration and learning

processes, towards optimizing the utilization of communication technology facilities. These processes eventually give birth to religious behavior dominated by technological means. This phase describes the process of mediating technology, where all activities and behaviors are strengthened by technological means, such as mobile phones and laptops (Groot et al., 2023). Those technological means also bring various applicable facilities in building communication, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and so on.

The emergence of these technological facilities has helped and encouraged the improvement of each individual's results. This achievement played a significant role in shifting people's mindsets. Effectiveness and efficiency have become essential loci of technology discourse in understanding various hoaxes (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021). Communities can give birth to achievements that go far beyond what is produced by conventional activities. Therefore, technology has penetrated almost every area of life more quickly, especially the religious sphere. The rapid development of this technology has played a fast mediation process. As a means of communication, digital technology has succeeded in taking a very strategic position in people's lives. This technological mediation runs as if no changes have been made. The mediation process in this religious practice can be seen in the results of the joint interview with the following.

"... I feel that technology has an extraordinary influence; technology is everywhere; without technology, it seems we cannot live, forget to bring our cellphones when we go to the office, we cannot be calm; all our data, our communications are all in it... Sometimes, people ask about certain things; they can only be answered if the cell phone gets carried away because everything is stored on the cell phone. Therefore, we must keep up with technological developments, because if we do, we will definitely be left behind with information, and so on... (Syahid-Lo3)".

The results of the interview above strengthen the position of the importance of technology in the discourse of technology mediation. Students, as the millennial generation, can be guessed by their answers to the position of technology in their lives. It is just that their answers have something in common when it comes to the realm of religion. They tend to see technology as entertainment only when associated with religious discourse. This is because they think that religion cannot be further intervened by technology because of religion's status as a sacred area, so anything obtained is related to religion; a conventional verification process is needed, as do some other lecturers who already believe in such things. In essence, technology is a mandatory tool for everyone who wants to move abreast of current developments (Fasting, Schofield, 2023). The rapid development of information has spawned new vocabulary, such as big data, data science, and so on. All of this illustrates the dissemination of information that moves very fast and large, so a certain mechanism is needed in technology to be able to overcome this (Tselykh, Levitskaya, 2022).

#### *The Impact of Digital Literacy on Religious Authorities*

Digital literacy is a formulation of technology education in building the foundation of its usefulness for society. Axiologically, technology with all its products can produce adaptation and adoption in the mediation process, which, in the end, the community has the eligibility to exploit for the benefit of humanity (Bajwa et al., 2022). Technological devices, especially digital ones, were born as demands for extending social practices, including religious practices, with all of their trimmings. Digital technology has shown a new discourse in religious life (Campbell, 2013). Does the presence of technology with the formulation of public knowledge have an articulation effect on religious authority, along with an explanation that will explain three main issues, namely the dissemination of religion based on social media platforms, religious and educational literacy, and the emergence of new religious terminologies become important for a variety of issues (Lister et al., 2024).

The presence of information technology, especially in social media, has had a spectacular impact on information struggles and social relations. This impact covers almost all areas of community life, including the religious area (Anwar, Mujib, 2022). Religious dissemination has experienced rapid development due to the emergence of social media platforms, which facilitate the communication process in digital media activities and conventional activities supported by social media facilities (Carah et al., 2022). Conventional and digital interactions have formed a new technology community. On the one hand, conventional activities are maintained and developed through a technological approach; namely, technological means are used to assist these conventional processes (Farlina et al., 2022). This can be seen in the *Taklim* assemblies revealed by several informants who showed how many conventional religious programs are still running; the difference is preparation and correspondence through social media facilities.

Increasingly advanced social media facilities have encouraged increased dissemination of religious discourse via YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. This type of social media has provided different spaces and various choices for audiences to choose according to their needs and chemistry. At this point, social media becomes the most vital choice in following the circulation of information and even knowledge, which includes the religious field (Sazali et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2023). In the religious sector, the community has easy access to religious information and knowledge and conveys and disseminates religious information and knowledge through YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and so on (Agarwal, Jones, 2022). The presence of this social media seems more accurate, although some of it has also been modified or even manipulated, said several informants. However, according to them, with the literacy skills possessed by social media users, the effects of manipulation and hoax problems can be avoided and prevented.

"... social media such as YouTube, TikTok, and others help me when I want to give lectures, especially if the invitation is urgent. YouTube is a solution, and I can get a lot of information and insights... when it comes to differences in religion, I still refer directly to the book... (Rafah-LO1).

However, the point is that this YouTube medium helps to get inspiration for lecture themes. You do not have to spend a long time reading when the invitation to a lecture is approaching... social media is very effective as a source of information. However, you have to have basic knowledge from your own experience of religion so that it is not easily influenced by many views that may not be relevant to our cultural context; it must be filtered so as not to mislead... (Suka-LO4)".

The results of these interviews illustrate that the dissemination of religion through social media is highly favored by the public, including academics (Spinde et al., 2023). The specific reason for using it is efficiency, which is the production engine towards the output of an activity. They make social media an effective and efficient source of information (Kuo, Jackson, 2024) because it is open and can be used anytime. Using social media as religious information and knowledge is a social practice coherent with the instantaneous conditions and needs of modern society. Even though social media is also recognized as having weaknesses, they can be overcome by comparing different media sources. There is internal validation among academics who use social media, in addition to their past knowledge. Digital media as a technological device has metamorphosed into a social tool that builds a new order in people's lives (Masduki, 2021). This social media platform has created three elements of new social community construction among academics, namely social media as a source of information, especially religious knowledge, as a source of religious entertainment, and as an engine for producing outward efficiency of community religious activities. This new social construction embodies the process of technological mediation in the shift of conventional culture towards the late modern ecosystem of society. Such atmosphere subtly becomes a big challenge to a reading culture (Mehmood et al., 2021; Woods, 2023).

Religious literacy is the foundation of religious understanding, which can be a solution to overcome differences. Religious literacy in this context is intended as urgent awareness of the position of religion as a dogmatic guide for society. The status of religion is seen as something other than knowledge based on logic and scientific activity. However, it is seen as subjective-normative knowledge that must be positioned as the possession of belief for every religious owner. So, its position is a transcendental truth owned by every person or group of people, which other different groups cannot challenge. This understanding is considered religious literacy, the impact of which is to give birth to a tolerance for differences in every religion (Zuhdi, Sarwenda, 2020). This situation forms internal and external awareness in an interactional framework amid substantial societal differences.

This substantial difference requires an educational process in society. Education in question is an activity that requires a figure who can be a guide or role model for the community. Figures and excellence in education will be able to give birth to religious literacy. Sources of religious literacy will develop through religious groups or communities in which different views and perspectives grow. These differences can be managed and mediated together to create harmony between them. This condition develops because of the foundation of religious literacy owned by each member of society in the frame of social change (Camarero et al., 2018). The fast traffic of religious information through social media platforms can be distinguished from any differences because there is a disposition of religious literacy traditions among religious community groups that recognize the urgency of being prominent in society.

"... the issue of religious literacy is important in encouraging moderation and tolerance among religious people, even within the same religion, for example as Muslims, of course, they also have differences from other people. We believe that religious symbols such as clerics, *ustadz*,

religious leaders, and so on have a strategic position to provide education to the public... leaders or ustadz are still believed to be people who can be followed in their footsteps, so whatever is considered right, we follow... especially our awareness as religious people and think that religion is a way of life and truth, ... every religion must believe in the truth of their religion ... so we understand each other ... (Alau-So1)".

The interview results illustrate that awareness of differences is needed to build a harmonious society. Religious literacy is critical in creating conducive and comfortable conditions amid the development and progress of communication technology in digital media and social media (Tiusanen, 2023). Media that creates human capabilities beyond the three dimensions of communication flow. The flow points for sending and receiving messages are blurred due to the sophistication of human technology in communication and information. To deal with this technological sophistication, religious symbols need to play their role in educating the public. *Ustadz, Kiyai*, and other religious leaders are essential in dealing with, directing, and creating information. This position is strategic in the current explosion of information and big data. If the information content created and appearing to the public does not carry a good message, then the consequence is that the contents of resistance arguments cannot be avoided. This condition will create an unstoppable situation, and the social effects will result in significant problems that will lead to a chaotic society, and the implications for the religious sphere maybe be fatal (Sazali et al., 2020).

Therefore, according to all informants, digital community early education in modern religious discourse needs to emerge as a stream of public interest. This education will give birth to religious literacy, which encourages every member of society to respect the differences in other people's choices, especially in the religious realm. The choice of a different religion or different schools and perspectives within a religion is the prerogative of every individual. Concerning that choice, religious literacy has become necessary in the modern world of digital technology. Society within this framework will emerge as a group of tolerant and harmonious individuals in different spaces and times. Therefore, religious teachers or religious authorities are essential figures that they are expected to follow. They consider teachers and religious leaders essential in creating conditions for harmony in the digital media technology era, which is open to everyone equally (Abror et al., 2021; Nassiri, 2024). This condition allows everyone to be involved and contribute to every public issue.

Digital religion was born as a result of the development of digital technology, which it refers to as mutually carried out and articulated online – the influence of religion on the one hand and the influence of digital technology on the other. So, this situation was triggered by the dialectical reaction of religion and digital. The integration has no theological impact because both are in their respective positions. Technology is developing as a necessary means of carrying out religious practices. Religion has become a way of life that is increasingly spreading and is being recognized for its strategic position in building harmonious social relations. So, there is synergy and dialectical mutual influence in the struggle for religion and digital technology to realize religious and social practices in this millennial era. Campbell (Campbell, 2013) defined this terminology as a discourse on the state of religion about digital and cultural artifacts, where religion and digital greet each other. The existence of technology with all its facilities has formed a new religious community, religious practices, and behavior shift from conventional practices to digital ecosystems. The emergence of many religious figures in the digital space indicates this new religious ecosystem (Evolvi, 2022).

This digital ecosystem describes a change in the religious paradigm at the level of implementation of religious practices. Both conceptually and ideologically, religious understanding still refers to the substance of religious texts that have been understood so far. So, the emerging changes are at the secondary level, enabling religious practices to be carried out effectively and efficiently through digital technology. Conventional religious authority can be disrupted, but this authority has metamorphosed into digital ecosystem authority. However, this is still speculative because it turns out that mastery of technology is not a determining variable for the transition from conventional to digital ecosystems, even though they are unique (Jitsaeng, Tuamsuk, 2022). This shift illustrates a lot that conventional processes are still working optimally on the one hand, while digital processes are rushing on the other. The emergence of the famous *Ustadz* and *Kiyai* in the digital space is increasingly unstoppable. This is an indicator of digital power on this religious issue.

"... the question about digital religion, I think, is natural because this term has been discussed a lot, and I do not think there is anything strange... it is just that the term picks up the momentum



of an era of very great communication technology,... access to information is so very easy, studying religion is easy with access to the internet, technological facilities for studying many religions... this is what makes fun and influence people to study religion easily, although there are also negative impacts for certain people who have no religious basis... basically, digital religion is a religion in which people uses technological means to carry out his religious activities, such as praying, lecturing, and various forms of religious acts through technological means... (Syahid-So5)".

This interview shows that digital religion is an essential new terminology for religious communities because it provides a dialectical space for meetings between religion and technology. This meeting provides benefits that enable the efficiency of community religious practices. They have equal space of openness to engage in conversations between communities in all their interests, especially religious discourse. The birth of the term digital religion determines the direction of religious discussion about technology (Berger, Golan, 2023). There is a dialectical mix that encourages people to read religion through digital, on the one hand, and understand technology about religion on the other. The presence of the terminology will help people understand the era that is different from previous eras. Likewise, the acceleration of the transfer of religious information and knowledge that occurs within the framework of digital religion is a gateway for community digital literacy, which will eventually give birth to a literacy-based community, not only in the religious realm but also in social and other domains (Siuda, 2021). This issue develops at almost every level of community education, as among students, who also have views that are relevant to the abovementioned views.

The community generally understands the ins and outs of these religious practices, so they have awareness at their respective levels. This relates to social discourse and cultural positions that place self-adaptation efforts towards digital religion. Grieve (Grieve, 1995) stated that digital religion represents a distinct cultural sphere of unique religious practice but is not dichotomous with other forms of religion. This societal understanding of digital religion helps scholars push past discourses that only saw online religion as an innovation in a unique media space to consider how online religious practice is becoming an essential expression of religion in contemporary culture. Therefore, digital religion shows different cognitive qualifications between online and offline religions (Zekrist, 2023). This relationship is reflected in the social structure and cultural practices in a society filled with technology and information. Digital religion seeks to offer a reflection on how religion works in a digital environment, the indications of which can be seen in the key characteristics, which include ideology and new media, which can change not only practice but also the process of making meaning itself (Campbell, 2017; Tsuria, 2020).

#### *The Dynamics of Religious Authority in the Digital Technology Era*

Religious authority is a phenomenon that is widely seen from the sociological realm. Religious authority is understood more as a building or social construction than a theological one (Burge, Djupe, 2022). Even so, religious authority is considered an interconnected issue that influences the construction of beliefs and social reality. Therefore, religious authority becomes a contestative arena for various interest groups (Rumadi, 2012). Authority as a social construction, which in turn is religious authority as a social construction formed from religious foundations, which is based on theological aspects, creates a status quo phenomenon that perpetuates a position in society, such as the religious authority of religious figures, such as *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, and others. Conventional religious authorities in today's millennial society have faced challenges from the digital technology era, which gave birth to technological power to strengthen people's communication positions (Bingaman, 2023). In this regard, this religious authority will be seen in three main discussion areas: conventional religion versus digital religion, religious dialectics with technological culture, and new patterns of actuality of religious authority. These three things will be discussed in the following presentation.

Conventional religious discourse is meant in the context of religious practices that are still intact, or at least there is resistance to the development and use of digital technology in carrying out and promoting religion in society. This conventional religious practice has shown its existence as a space of authority practiced and maintained in carrying out and maintaining religious purity (Osim, Eteng, 2021). In addition, conventional religious authority maintains humanist relations between individuals practicing religion amid a society dominated by digital technology facilities, including social media, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and so on. Meanwhile, digital religion is a religious practice that experiences dialectics with digital technology. Religion is practiced by using technological means,

on the one hand, and digital usage that follows religious preferences. Religion and digital greet each other in religious and social practices (Usman et al., 2023).

Conventional-based religion is not only developing and being maintained in areas far from urban areas but also in urban areas that are still prevalent and practiced by educated people. Technologically educated people do not guarantee their position to use social media technology as a source of religious information. Conversely, on a particular scale, rural people only sometimes use conventional approaches to studying religion (Echchaibi, Hoover, 2023). Therefore, the digitization of religion is still in the process of a long dialogue because the character of digital technology is still developing rapidly, and its stability is very dependent on the literacy competence of the community. This literacy position is a determining factor in digital society (Kazakov, 2022). Social harmony can be realized if people have good digital literacy.

"... digital culture about religion is starting to get busy, such as listening to lectures on YouTube, praying, *Tahlilan*, and so on, we can all follow the digital form... so yes, it is normal and friends have heard of this technology, but it does not mean religious activities the conventional nature is gone, in fact it is still being carried out busily, even more crowded than before, even though the impact of the pandemic is still being felt, but slowly conventional meetings to discuss religious matters... namely Islam is starting to develop and more and more because friends from the village have started to arrive and crowded, and conventional activities are fun... (Suka-SO5)".

This interview shows a tendency to choose conventional methods, even though they are millennials, which is synonymous with the technological era. They have discovered and used digital technology from their childhood. They must be kept from technological facilities for each of their activities. However, in religion, they have a cautious view of technological means. Therefore, they believe that the information and knowledge about Islam must be verified if it relates to substantial religion to avoid misleading things. So, integrated media system needs to play a role in a such issue (Aharoni, 2022). In general, conventional religion and digital religion develop together. Among lecturers, the digital approach is more manageable than that of students. Because lecturers already have previous insight, religious information obtained from digital media is automatically verified. In contrast, students do not yet have adequate religious insight, so they need validation from *Ustadz* and other religious leaders.

Religion and technological culture have dialectics. Religion as a teaching of life runs through religious practices, while a technological culture is a culture that is influenced by technology. Fundamentally, religion, culture, and technology are fundamental entities that are integrally interconnected. These three essential entities emerged as a discourse on socio-religious practices in the life of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 society. Martin Heidegger states that technology is the application of knowledge that connects humans with the intersubjectivity of the material and supernatural world (Alawa, 2017). He believes that technology affects the world outside human existence and uniquely works in the human world. Through technology, humans then manifest differently. Technology has opened up new possibilities for being and becoming, enabling them to relate to others differently. This phenomenon is reinforced by Ross and Nightingale, who say that humans are increasingly becoming integrated with technology. Therefore, when humans depend on technology, technology will also increasingly depend on humans (Siregar, 2021).

The connection between religion and technological culture has illustrated that religion's position has experienced an improvisational process that gave birth to new communities based on digital religious practices. The closeness between technology and religion is getting stronger because of the mediation process of technology through culture (Siregar, 2021). The dialectic between religion and technological culture is reflected in the behavior of modern society. Advances in technology through social media have formed a new mainstream within the framework of optimizing shared opportunities and equal access in the world of information. Everyone has the same right to convey information, not just as a recipient at the end of the information cycle. They can become recipients of information in the first line so that new knowledge can be owned as new as other community members. Therefore, the flow of information that opens up new channels in social media, such as WhatsApp and YouTube, has given rise to technological mediation, shaping society's technological culture (Ferdig, 2018). This process has given birth to a dialectical process of religion with technological culture, which is increasingly showing the phenomenon of digitalization of religious practices. This discourse can be seen in the following interview results.

"...religious practices are indeed colored by a technological culture, where there is religion there is also technology available, so it is no longer pure conventional culture...all technology helps

the realization of religion...for example, we want to give lectures even though we do not have time, with technology we can follow through youtube, so this helps people and has started to become a culture... yes listening to lectures via youtube, or now with TikTok is not boring because it takes certain phases... and still there is the full version, you can watch it anytime... of course, this helps us in religion... (Suka-SO1)".

The interview illustrates a dialectic between religion and technological culture through social media. The informants realized the importance of using technology in socio-religious practices. They illustrate that technology dramatically contributes to the development of religion through technological facilities. However, technology can also be destructive if the need for beauty must be addressed through literacy competence. Open access, both transferring and receiving information, can be used by certain people to spread false information (Ulzheimer, et al., 2021) and knowledge that everyone can access (Lei et al., 2023). At this point, technology can only be destructive if society has a base to deal with today's information explosion. All information flows quickly and can be reached easily by everyone. This flow of information creates a new community within the framework of religion, along with technology. The presence of technology with two sides has created a contest between religion and technological culture. This contest is formed through the interests of religion and technology, which mutually work and produce society's culture through digital technology and religious culture.

The new pattern of the actuality of religious authority has been in the spotlight since the emergence of new media based on social media platforms. Some claim a shift from the old authority to the new religious authority. The new authority is an authority that emerges and takes an important position in the context of preferences for social and religious practices that are different from the preferences of the old religious authority. This position occupies new media spaces, such as the presence of preachers who use digital media to convey their religious messages, which incidentally have inadequate scientific foundations for religion (Permana, Nashrullah, 2022). Furthermore, Haryadi (Haryadi, 2020) said that this shift in authority can be seen in the phenomenon of massive waves in the use of social media, such as YouTube and Facebook, in searching for religious sources. The presence of the internet in this new form of media has succeeded in opening up new spaces for discussion, the process of seeking knowledge, recovering from identity crises, and spiritual experiences, as well as the distribution of religious values not only relying on certain authorities. In this situation, new media in the form of social media has become an essential part of daily life. Internet and new media users see the positive side by referring to digital media as an essential source of information for religious discourse.

In addition, social media is equalitarian, whose quality is controlled by the media users. If the new media users have digital literacy competence, then they have the potential to be safe from misleading information. The phenomena of hoaxes and deception in social media interactions have potential space, which depends on the social media users (Taheri et al., 2023). If this happens, then the condition of society will be fatal because religious knowledge is essential and ritualistic. This shift occurred due to a community of technology lovers who exceeded the limits of reasonableness. Therefore, society must understand the conditions in terms of the use of new technology within the framework of a strategic position of religion in building religious authority (Haryanto, 2022). A new phenomenon related to the popularity of digital preachers occurs because of their ability to show new methodical and populist patterns in religious learning. People are impressed and become followers. The influence of this media shows domination on everyone through its strategic spaces, which are based on their conditions and needs. The social and religious situations of society differ from one another, the output of which gives birth to choices that can be the same or different in actualizing religion. This kind of condition can be seen from interviews with the following informants.

"... I believe that conventional religious authority cannot be replaced by digital authority because conventional authority brings something special that no one else has, except charismatic clerics... these charismatic *Kyai* are always sought after, and people do not think about digital usage. These charismatic figures, like Habib Lutfi and others... are always sought after. People always want conventional ones... indeed, with digital sources, social media platforms have drastically changed the spread of religion. However, again, for charismatic matters, it is not that easy to shift to digital ... (Rafah-LO4)."

This interview shows that conventional religious authority is still the choice among informants. They believe the truth can be held firmly in the lectures delivered directly by *Ustadz*, clerics, and other religious leaders. They consider that lectures still need verification from other

sources because they are still vulnerable to manipulation through the editing mechanism. This means that lectures via YouTube, for example, bring many possibilities that can differ from religion's scientific basis. According to them, religious authority still lies with conventional authority. The religious discourse that occurs in the digital area is only considered an effective and efficient supporting discourse in transferring religious information and knowledge. This digital channel has two types, namely informational and religious entertainment (Lövheim, Hjarvard, 2019). Even though lectures on YouTube and other social media have the power of information, their reliability still needs to be strictly verified, and there are many modifications and edits for specific purposes. This is one of the key reasons why religious authority still lies in the conventional realm, even though the use of social media is already massive.

#### 4. Conclusion

The results of this study can be concluded in three crucial points, namely, the influence of digital literacy on religious behavior, the impact of digital literacy on religious authority, and the dynamics of religious authority in the digital technology era. The first topic analyzes three issues: the discourse of digital technology about modern culture, the existence of digital literacy, which is very important in shaping religious behavior, and the process of mediating technology in the context of university community religious practices. Conclusively, these three issues illustrate that people are aware of the importance of digital technology in every action and practice of their social religion, so there must be a technology mastery mechanism that must be implemented to have competence in utilizing digital technology. This awareness gave birth to the importance of technological literacy in optimizing the results of their socio-religious practices.

The second issue discusses the impact of digital literacy on religious authorities in the context of the dissemination of religion through new social media technologies, the discussion of religious literacy within the framework of strengthening public education in the digital era of religion, and the emergence of new religious terminology, such as digital religion and digital prayer. These issues analytically illustrate that the development and progress of society's digital literacy correlates with the dissemination of religious knowledge on social media; however, until now, social media platforms have not been used as a standard for authorizing religious sources. This happens because digital literacy is still in the same process as religious literacy in finding a suitable literacy model or approach through education from authoritative figures as in the conventional realm. In this regard, the terminological discourse of the combination of religion and digital in the form of digital religion also experiences technological mediation through cultural processes.

The last point is the discourse on the dynamics of religious authority in the context of the digital technology era, which discusses the contestation of conventional religion with digital religion, the dialectical meeting between religion and technological culture, and new patterns of actualized religious authority in today's society. This issue explains that the presence of new technology in the form of social media has resulted in a dynamic community life process. In particular, the dynamics of this society can be seen in their religious practices, which are tug-of-war between conventional and digital areas. On the one hand, religious practices take authority in the conventional realm but take their practice more dominantly in the digital realm. This constellation describes a dialectical process in referring to standard terminology in religious practice. This dialectical process has led to a big question about the actuality of religious authority in society. Explicitly, the interviews show that the actuality of the dominant religious authority tends to be dominated by technology in practice. However, the conceptual grip of authority is in the conventional realm.

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## Representation of Family and Family Upbringing in Soviet and Russian Feature Films: Quantitative and Genre Analyses

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### Abstract

Feature films about family and family upbringing have significant educational potential since they do not only convey aesthetic values but also contain moral principles and contribute to promoting a certain system of norms and ideals of family relationships and family upbringing. The article made an attempt to analyse and present the dynamics of interest in Russian fiction cinema to the theme of family and family upbringing. The chosen research perspective is due to the fact that the study of scientific findings of Russian and foreign scholars on the theme allowed us to identify a contradiction between a relatively detailed elaboration of family issues in feature films and the researchers' insufficient attention to the statistical side of this theme. The analysis revealed that the period of maximum interest in the theme of family and family upbringing on the Soviet and Russian screens occurred between 1992 and 2020 when 167 feature films were released on the country's screens (about 36 % of the total number of films on this theme). In the second place is the period of the so-called "stagnation" era (1969–1985) when 150 films were created in 16 years (33 %). The same period leads in the average annual number of feature films made about family and family upbringing (about 9 films released annually). A significant decrease in the number of feature films about family and family upbringing was noted during perestroika (1986–1991) which was associated with a general decrease in film production in Russia during this historical period. In terms of genre, in the period from 1920 to 2020, family feature films were dominated by dramas – 188 films (41 %), melodramas – 144 films (31 %), and comedies – 91 (20 %). As for other genres, their number on the country's screens was only 1 %. At the same time, the dominant film genres in different periods were supplemented by other genres such as biography, thriller, action, fantasy, and musical. The number of children's films and fairy tales created by Russian filmmakers that were focused on family and family upbringing was 33 films (7 %). The theme of family and family upbringing has always found an active response in Russian feature films of various genres. The transformation of ideas about family and its values is closely related to the socio-cultural context, political and ideological changes occurring in society at different stages of development.

**Keywords:** family, family upbringing, media education, feature film, genre, USSR, Russia.

### 1. Introduction

The increasing importance of preserving and strengthening family values and the objectives of family upbringing in Russia is supported at the state level and determines a dominant vector for modern society. The Concept of State Family Policy in the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 states that "The main priorities for the successful development of the country should be strengthening the family as the basis of the state, as well as the creation of conditions under which

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the family could feel confident in the future and feel protected from risks associated with the birth of a child or several children in the family” (Rasporjazhenie..., 2014). The state policy fundamentals are aimed at preserving the best traditions of the Russian family, one of the most difficult and complex tasks being “preserving, strengthening and promoting traditional family values (including protecting the institution of marriage as a union of man and wife), ensuring the continuity of generations, caring for a decent life for the older generation, the idea of saving the people of Russia as the main strategic national priority” (Ukaz..., 2022). “In order to popularize the state policy in the family sphere, preserve traditional family values” (Ukaz..., 2023), 2024 has been declared the Year of the Family in Russia. All these measures are aimed at strengthening the institution of family and preserving the best traditional educational values that have developed in our country and correspond to its mentality, culture, cultural memory, national customs and traditions.

And a vital role in this process can be assigned to Russian feature films since cinema has a significant impact on the audience thus forming to a certain extent the picture of the world of the mass audience.

Fiction films focused on family and family upbringing have considerable educational potential since they have the ability to broadcast not only aesthetic but also moral postulates, including a certain system of values, norms and ideals of family relationships and family upbringing. This potential is especially significant in the case of Soviet and Russian films, given the peculiarities of the cultural context and the main historical aspects occurring in society today.

Transformation processes associated with representing the family image in film production are closely related to the current social changes. This is because “film art, due to its mass nature, is capable of not only reacting sensitively to changes in social development and emerging acute problems, but also having a socio-psychological, educational impact on the consciousness, worldview, and value ideas of people. Cinema can influence viewers’ values related to their relationships with relatives, children, friends, leisure activities, the level of intellectual, moral and aesthetic development of family members, their worldview, the use of moral norms and etiquette rules by family members when communicating with people around them. This is especially true for the formation of value systems among young people that the future of the family depends on” (Tyulyunova, 2020: 134). Accordingly, it is very important that fiction films should form the correct ideas about the family among the viewing audience, especially the younger generation, thus contributing to the strengthening of family ties and intergenerational kinship ties, promoting family upbringing and mutual understanding between family members.

As is known, feature films contribute to emotional intelligence and moral qualities of an individual, helping to understand various aspects of human relationships and styles of family behaviour. In addition, one can trace some societal transformations associated with the system of public values, social ideals in feature films released in different years which are reflected one way or another in family foundations, and changes taking place in society as a whole in relation to the family as a social institution, to issues of raising children, and to the culture of intra-family relations.

At the same time, it is well worth mentioning that the educational potential of films representing family and family upbringing largely depends on their quality, as well as on the viewer’s ability to critically analyze them and learn lessons from what they see, and in this context the role of film and media education for the viewing audience (especially young viewers) has become relevant (Chelysheva, 2013, 2022; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022).

## **2. Materials and methods**

The material of our research is 458 Soviet and Russian feature films released from 1920 to 2020 about family and family upbringing. The main methodological principles of the study are the principle of theory and practice unity in the study of the family image in Russian feature films in the context of film and media education; a systematic approach to the studied objects including the analysis of representing the family image in feature films in terms of pedagogical, psychological, cultural, and historical approaches.

In the course of the study, we applied a comparative analysis of Soviet and Russian film production related to this theme including the analysis of historical periods and genres. The research methods include theoretical analysis and synthesis, content analysis, comparative historical analysis, quantitative and genre analyses of the above-mentioned audiovisual media texts.

### 3. Discussion

The theme of family and family upbringing has always been in the focus of Russian research in the humanities. Soviet teachers, psychologists, cultural scientists and sociologists thoroughly explored this theme. For example, the research findings of some Soviet scientists who were often very strongly influenced by communist ideology are devoted to analysing the theme of family and family upbringing in fiction cinema. The works written by A.S. Makarenko (Makarenko, 1947), K.K. Paramonova (Paramonova, 1976), Y.M. Rabinovich (Rabinovich, 1969, 1991) and some other authors of that period are not free from these tendencies. In our opinion, this significantly impeded a comprehensive analysis of both cultural and statistical aspects of the theme under study. At the same time, as evidenced by the analysis of the Soviet works, the authors unanimously emphasized the role and importance of films for education, including family upbringing.

A striking example of this is the famous book “Lectures on Raising Children” written by A.S. Makarenko where the famous Soviet teacher emphasized that every film should, at least for a few minutes, become the subject for discussion in the family. In his opinion, parents should ensure that children express their viewpoints, tell what they liked or disliked in the film, or what made a strong impression on them. If parents see that the child is mainly captivated only by some external events, an entertaining plot, the adventures of this or that character, then they should, with the help of questions, explain to the child the deeper and more important aspects of the film. Sometimes there is no need to ask the child any questions but only to express your opinion in their presence. To a certain extent, parents are supposed to choose which film is more desirable for their child to watch (Makarenko, 1947).

At the present stage of development in Russia, a significant amount of research is also focused on the theme of family and family upbringing. Our analysis has revealed that the theme of family and family upbringing in Russian fiction cinema is interdisciplinary in nature and approaches to this theme may vary depending on the specific field of study, methodology, and sociocultural context.

Various aspects of reflecting family in audiovisual media texts can be found in a number of dissertation studies in recent years. As examples, we can cite a number of sociological studies (Leontieva, 2022; Mishchenko, 2014; Tarasov, 2010), dissertations in cultural studies (Glebkina, 2010; Gozhanskaya, 2006), and art dissertations (Abikeeva, 2010; Sputnitskaya, 2010). Also in contemporary Russia, the family image in cinema is actively studied both within the framework of film studies and in sociological, cultural, psychological and pedagogical scientific research (Chelysheva, 2013; Chelysheva, 2022; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022; Obukhovski, 2021; Penzin, 1973; Tyulunova, 2020). O. Posukhova, L. Klimenko and S. Chelyshev presented the analysis of the working dynasties representation in the Soviet cinematography (Posukhova et al., 2021).

As evidenced by the analysis, most authors emphasize the role of cinema in preserving family values, customs and traditions of upbringing in the family: “Cinema, like no other art, in practice reflects the specifics of national identity, namely, it represents the artistic model of society in all its complexity – from its constituent elements – the individual and the family, to the reproduction by means of art of the actual structure of the community of people and the nation as a whole in close connection with national iconography” (Abikeeva, 2010: 3).

The well-known Russian media educators O.A. Baranov and S.N. Penzin analysed the interaction of modern media, family and school, emphasizing the key role of family traditions in education which were historically present in Russian cinema and have not lost their positions on the modern screen: “At the start of the third millennium, cinema makes us think about the order that existed since time immemorial, trying to help save the family – the most precious thing that can be in the life of each of us” (Baranov, Penzin, 2006: 36).

By the way, a few years later S.N. Penzin continued to analyse the educational potential of cinema and its role in fostering moral and aesthetic culture of the younger generation: “Film art helps “to be with everyone” and at the same time “to remain oneself.” If we turn to the three spheres in which the personality formation occurs – activity, communication and self-education, then the sphere of influence of cinema is precisely self-knowledge. Thanks to the screen, a person gets to know himself better, and the path to self-education opens before him” (Penzin, 2010: 47).

E.V. Zhelnina and L.N. Galiullova carried out a content-analysis of the family image in Russian film production where the role of cinema in promoting family values among the younger generation is emphasized: “Today the film industry is the part of mass culture that is largely responsible for shaping

the image of the family. Therefore, it is worth thinking about those images, author's positions, and worldviews that are imposed on us from the screen" (Zhel'nina, Galiullova, 2019: 70).

V.A. Obukhovski, considering the impact of Russian cinema art on the value sphere of modern youth, draws our attention to the ever-increasing role of audiovisual media texts on the modern digital generation: "Cinema is an important factor in promoting family values among young people. Young people, as representatives of generations Z and Y, are primarily readers of media texts; film culture is in demand among them as an almost prevailing form of leisure. Consequently, an emerging personality, faced with seminal problems, with the need to find an example or model of behaviour, is forced to look for solutions in the surrounding information field, including the film industry" (Obukhovski, 2021: 47).

As for foreign research, their emphasis is primarily focused on the political and ideological analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet audiovisual media texts (Dubois, 2007; Lawton, 2004; Shaw, Youngblood, 2010; Shlapentokh, 1993; Strada, 1989; Strada, Troper, 1997) instead of analysing on-screen family themes. We can also state that some foreign scientists focus on the image of family and family upbringing in Western audiovisual media texts (Albada, 2000; Cheung et al., 2022; Douglas, Olson, 1995; Fulmer, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Kerry, 2016; Laurence, 2017; Levy, 1991; Lloyd, 2014; Ousselin, 2016; Potter, A. 2022; Sells, 2016; Staricek, 2011; Tanner et al., 2003; Zurcher et al., 2018, 2020). As a result of exploring different foreign research findings, we did not manage to find any Western studies that would touch upon the statistical aspect of the theme under study.

Thus, despite a fairly wide range of issues touched upon by Russian and Western researchers exploring the family image reflected in feature films, the statistical analysis of Russian feature film production about family and family upbringing remained outside the scope of scientific research in Russia and abroad, although, in our opinion, this angle of view can greatly expand the understanding of the studied issues in sociological and cultural terms.

#### 4. Results

The statistical analysis of Russian film production focused on family and family upbringing can help to better understand the sociocultural evolution of the theme in Russian cinema and compare different approaches to studying it in Soviet and modern Russian historical and sociocultural contexts.

In order to trace the quantitative and genre dynamics of film production of Soviet and Russian feature films about family and family upbringing from 1920 to 2020 (in total, about 458 feature films and series were released in the USSR and Russia during this period on this theme), we followed A.V. Fedorov (Fedorov et al., 2020) and conditionally adhered to the following historical periodization of feature films about family and family upbringing:

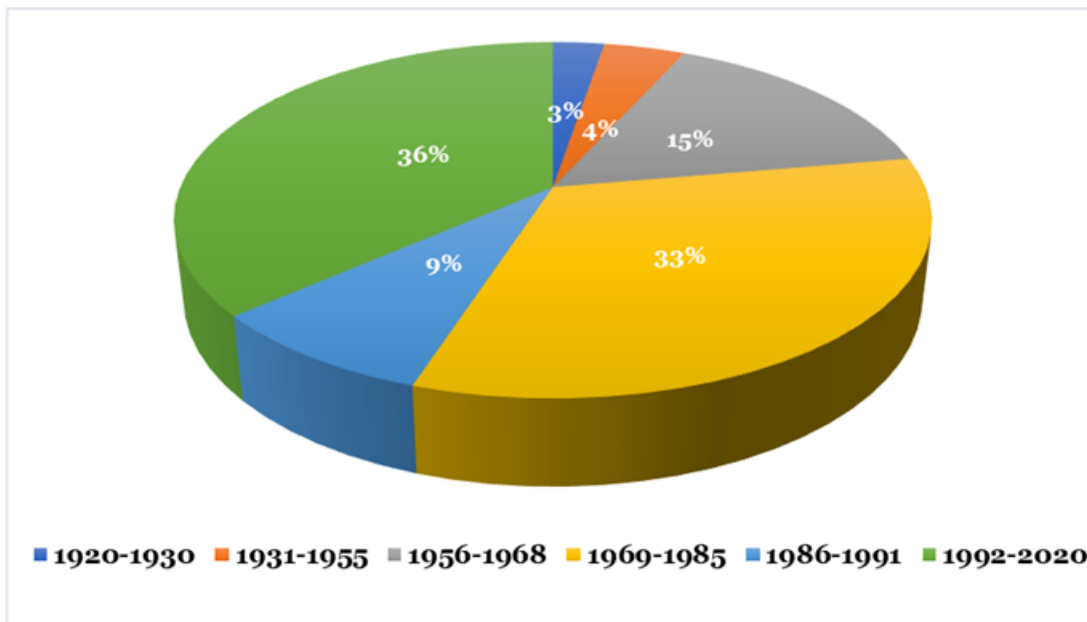
- 1) family issues reflected in Soviet feature films of the 1920–1930s;
- 2) family and family upbringing in feature films of the "Stalinism" era and the first post-Stalin years (1931–1955);
- 3) family and family upbringing in the mirror of Soviet cinema of the "thaw" period (1956–1968);
- 4) family and family upbringing in the mirror of Soviet cinema during the "stagnation" period (1969–1985);
- 5) the family image in Russian feature films during the years of "perestroika" (1986–1991);
- 6) family and family upbringing in Russian feature films at the present stage (1992–2020).

Table 1 provides numerical data on the ratio of the number of feature films about family and family relationships released in the USSR and Russia (1920–2020).

**Table 1.** The ratio of the number of Soviet and Russian feature films about family and family upbringing released from 1920 to 2020

<i>Time periods</i>	<i>Number of years</i>	<i>Number of films (total)</i>	<i>Number of films (per year)</i>
1920-1930	11	12	1
1931-1955	25	19	1
1956-1968	13	71	5
1969-1985	16	150	9
1986-1991	7	39	5
1992-2020	29	167	6

If we summarize the data in [Table 1](#) into a pie chart, it will look as follows.



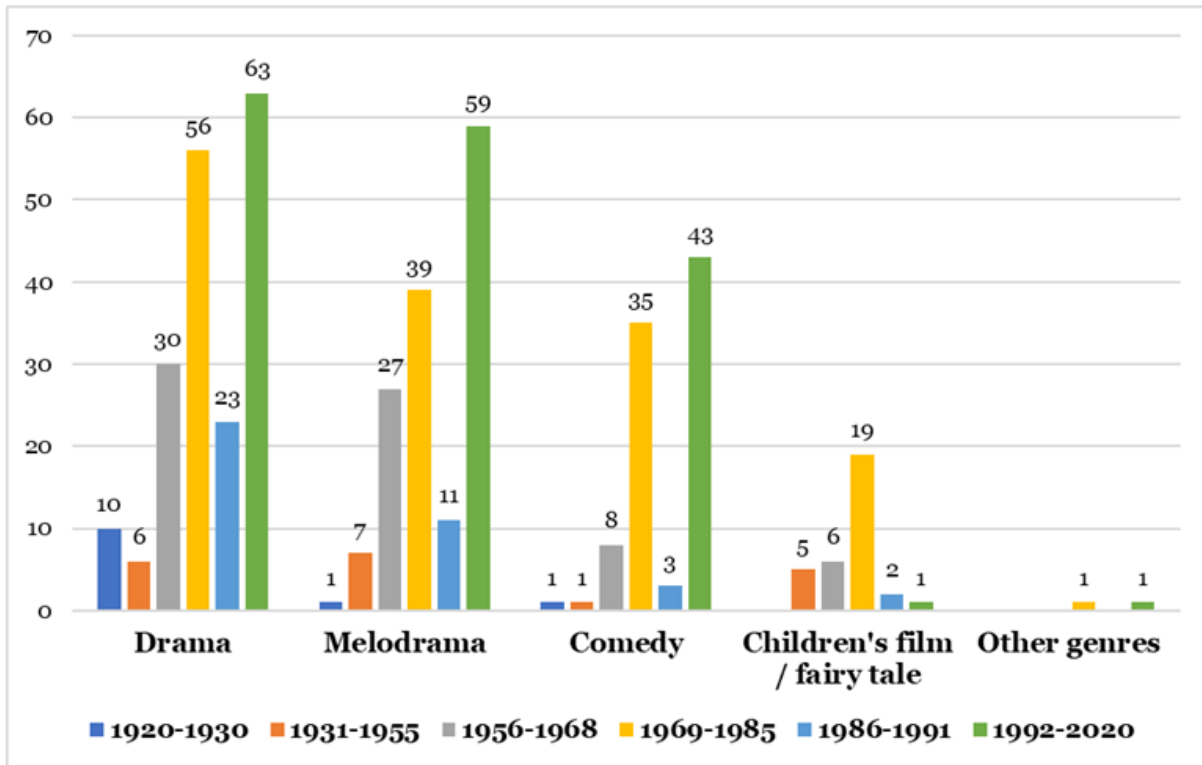
**Fig. 1.** The ratio of the number of Soviet and Russian feature films about family and family upbringing produced from 1920 to 2020

[Table 2](#) presents detailed data on Soviet and Russian feature films related to the theme of family and family upbringing for one to draw conclusions about its popularity and demand in Russian cinema.

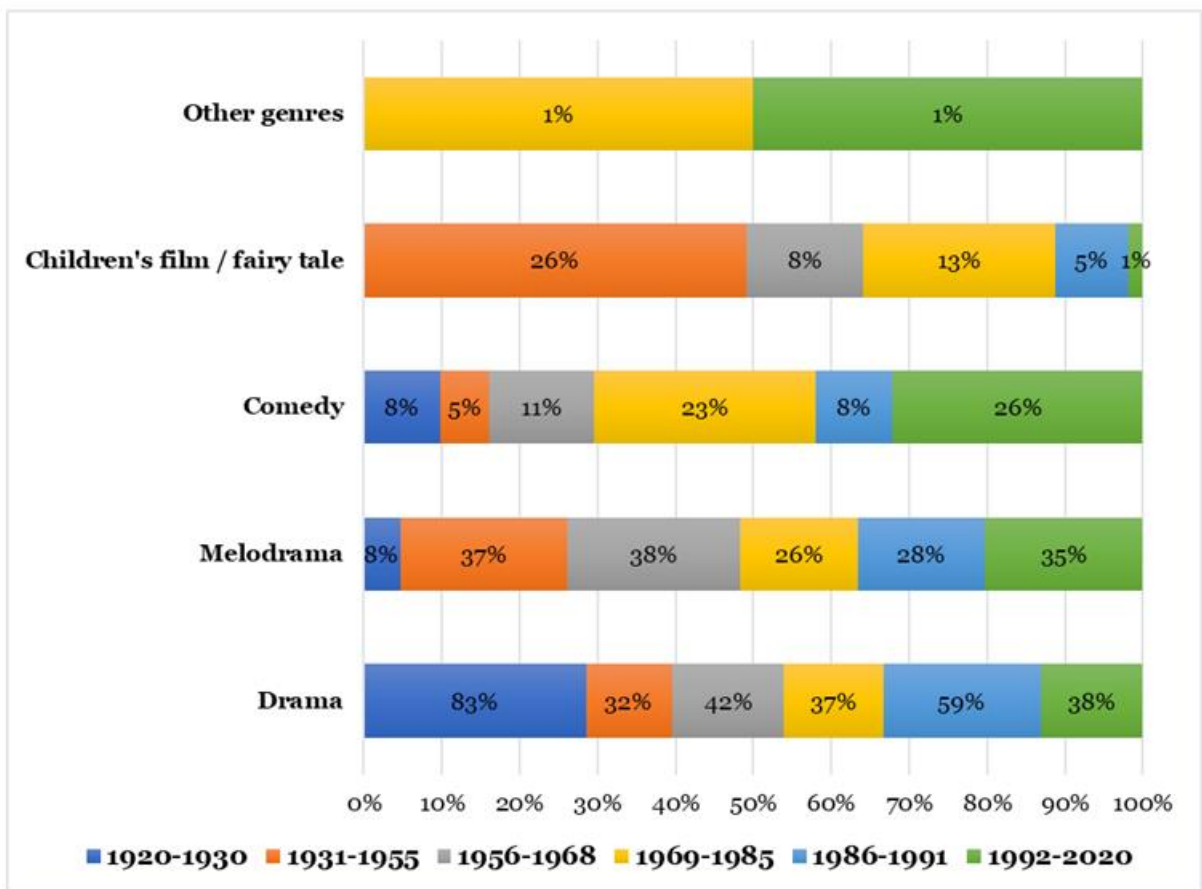
**Table 2.** The number of Soviet and Russian feature films about family and family upbringing distributed by genres (1920–2020)

Time periods	Genres of films about family and family upbringing					Total number of films (number, %)
	Drama (number, %)	Melodrama (number, %)	Comedy (number, %)	Children's film, fairy tale (number, %)	Other genres (number, %)	
1920-1930	10 (83.3)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (2.6)
1931-1955	6 (31.6)	7 (36.8)	1 (5.3)	5 (26.3)	0 (0.0)	19 (4.1)
1956-1968	30 (42.2)	27 (38.0)	8 (11.3)	6 (8.4)	0 (0.0)	71 (15.5)
1969-1985	56 (37.3)	39 (26.0)	35 (23.3)	19 (12.7)	1 (0.6)	150 (32.7)
1986-1991	23 (58.9)	11 (28.2)	3 (7.7)	2 (5.1)	0 (0.0)	39 (8.5)
1992-2020	63 (37.7)	59 (35.9)	43 (25.7)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	167 (36.5)
<b>Total:</b>	188 (41.0)	144 (31.4)	91 (19.9)	33 (7.2)	2 (0.4)	458 (100.0)

If we summarize the data in [Table 2](#) into bar charts, they will look as follows.



**Fig. 2.** The number of Soviet and Russian films about family and family upbringing distributed by time periods and genres (1920–2020)



**Fig. 3.** The number of Soviet and Russian films about family and family upbringing distributed by time periods and genres in percentage terms (1920–2020)

According to the data presented in [Table 1](#) and [Figure 1](#), the period of utmost popularity and interest in the theme of family and family upbringing in Russian feature films occurred in the modern Russian period (1992–2020) when 167 feature films were released (about 36 % of the total number of films on this theme). In the second place is the so-called “stagnation” period (1969–1985) when 150 films were created during 16 years (32.7 %). The same period leads in the average annual number of films about family and family upbringing (about 9 films released annually).

A significant decrease in the number of feature films about family and family upbringing was noted during the perestroika period (1986–1991). This, in our opinion, was due to the crisis and difficulties that led to a reduction in the number of films being made and a general decrease in the pace of film production in Russia in this historical period.

Also, among the issues that we attempted to trace during the analysis were the identification of dynamics and possible areas of change regarding the ratio of the number of feature films related to the theme under study, distributed by genres.

As can be seen from [Table 2](#) and [Figures 2](#) and [3](#), in terms of genre variations in the period from 1920 to 2020, family feature films were dominated by dramas – 188 films (41 %), melodramas – 144 films (31.4 %), and comedies – 91 (20 %).

The number of children’s films and fairy tales about family is significantly less – 33 (7.2 %). As for other genres, the number of such films is only less than 1 %, although it is important to note that the dominant film genres in different periods were supplemented by other genres, for example, drama was sometimes combined with a thriller (*Bear’s Wedding / Medvezh’ja svad’ba*, dir. K. Eggert, 1925; *What Senka Had / Chto u Sen’ki bylo*, dir. R. Vasilevsky, 1984), an action movie (*Deserter / Dezertir*, dir. Yu. Muzyka, 1997; *Brother / Brat*, dir. A. Balabanov, 1997), a biography (*Svetlana / Svetlana*, dir. Ye. Zvezdakov, 2018) or even a fantasy (*Tears Dropped / Slyozy kapali*, dir. G. Daneliya, 1983).

At the same time, several types of films of the dramatic genre were presented on the Russian screen: a social drama (*Son / Syn*, dir. S. Ross, 2014; *Deep Rivers / Glubokie reki*, dir. V. Bitokov, 2018), a military drama (*Legal Marriage / Zakonnyj brak*, dir. S. Mkrtchyan, 1985; *My Little Sister / Sestryonka*, dir. A. Galibin, 2019; *The Cry of Silence / Krik tishiny*, dir. V. Potapov, 2019), a criminal drama (*Voroshilov Sharpshooter / Voroshilovskiy strelok*, dir. S. Govorukhin, 1999).

Soviet and Russian melodramas about family and family upbringing are also sometimes combined with other genres, for example, a melodrama-thriller (*The End of the Season / Konets sezona*, dir. K. Khudyakov, 2019) or a melodrama-fantasy (*He’s a Dragon / On – drakon*, dir. I. Dzhenidubayev, 2015).

Some dramas are based on classical literary works and are their film adaptations (*Fathers and Sons / Ottsy i deti*, dir. A. Bergunker, N. Rashevskaya, 1958; *The House with the Mezzanine / Dom s mezoninom*, dir. Ya. Bazelyan, 1960; *A Nest of Gentry / Dvorjanskoe gnezdo*, dir. A. Konchalovsky, 1969; *The Brothers Karamazov / Brat’ja Karamazovy*, dir. I. Pyryev, 1969; *A Cruel Romance / Zhestokiy romans*, dir. E. Ryazanov, 1984; *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District / Ledi Makbet Mcenskogo uezda*, dir. R. Balayan, 1989; *Heart is Not a Stone / Serdce ne kamen’*, dir. L. Pcholkina, 1989).

Soviet and Russian children’s feature films are represented mainly by fairy tales and adventure films. The examples here include Russian folk tales and films of the adventure genre (*Children of the Partisan / Deti partizana*, dir. L. Golub, N. Figurovsky, 1954; *The Kidnapping / Pohishhenie*, dir. V. Tarasenko, 1984) or a musical film (*Mary Poppins, Goodbye! / Meri Poppins, do svidaniya!*, dir. L. Kvinikhidze, 1983).

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, the analysis allowed us to conclude that the theme of family and family upbringing represents one of the vital areas of social development in our country. Preserving and strengthening the best family traditions, values and foundations that have been accumulated in the history and culture of our people are a priority area of the state policy and have become essential vectors for further development of education, science and culture.

Any social and public changes are reflected in one way or another in culture and art production. Feature cinema is no exception here. At different stages of Russian feature cinema, the theme of family and family upbringing was invariably present. At the same time, emphasis and priorities changed depending on the sociocultural context, historical and social changes occurring in society.

At different stages of development, the importance of issues related to the educational potential of feature films remained unchanged. This is evidenced by numerous studies of the theme under study presented in different years in cultural, pedagogical, sociological, and art contexts.

Meanwhile, the study of Russian and foreign scientific research on the family image reflected in feature films allowed us to note quite close attention to family issues in feature films and, at the same time, insufficient knowledge of the statistical side of this theme. Turning to this side of the study, it seems to us, will make it possible to present more extensive and detailed ideas about the issues under study in sociological and cultural contexts.

Over the years, the theme of family and family upbringing has been presented in different genres of Russian feature films. The interest of filmmakers and audiences in this theme is dictated by the enduring value of family in a person's life, its importance for individual and social well-being. That is why the presented theme is significant in the context of film and media education aimed at developing the skills of the younger generation to analyse, critically perceive and creatively master the media space.

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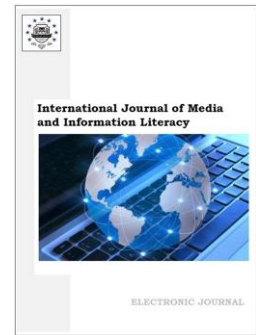
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## Western Cinema on the Pages of the *Soviet Screen* Magazine (1969–1985): Biographies and Portraits of Western Actors and Directors

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### Abstract

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the conclusion that the principle of choosing cinematic personalities to paint portraits of Western actors and directors in 1969–1985 remained stable in the *Soviet Screen*.

This magazine readily wrote about “progressive filmmakers” who went unnoticed in negative statements against the USSR and participation in anti-Soviet films. Especially if these filmmakers came to the Moscow International Festival and spoke positively about the Soviet Union.

One of the favorite subjects of the *Soviet Screen* within the framework of foreign themes is Western actors as “victims of Hollywood”, evidence of the “tragedy of the artist in the bourgeois world.”

But if any of the famous Western actors was involved in the creation of anti-Soviet films and/or films “glorifying the American military,” the magazine could strike him with “heavy artillery” on its pages.

However, there were many less politicized articles about Western actors on the pages of the magazine.

As for interviews with Western filmmakers, as in previous years, the *Soviet Screen* magazine selected interlocutors from among the most “progressive artists.” For example, among American filmmakers, the first place was given to Stanley Kramer. The progressive political position was also emphasized in interviews with Sydney Pollack, Norman Jewison, Ellen Burstyn, Jessica Lange and other Western directors and actors.

In general, during the period 1969–1985, the ideological positions of the *Soviet Screen* magazine remained unchanged.

**Keywords:** *Soviet Screen* magazine, Western cinema, film criticism, ideology, politics, reviews, articles.

### 1. Introduction

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the conclusion that the principle of choosing cinematic personalities to paint portraits of Western actors and directors in 1969–1985 remained stable in the *Soviet Screen*.

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This magazine readily wrote about “progressive filmmakers” who went unnoticed in negative statements against the USSR and participation in anti-Soviet films. Especially if these filmmakers came to the Moscow International Festival and spoke positively about the Soviet Union.

One of the favorite subjects of the *Soviet Screen* within the framework of foreign themes is Western actors as “victims of Hollywood”, evidence of the “tragedy of the artist in the bourgeois world.” In this vein, the magazine wrote, for example, about Judy Garland (1922–1969) and Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962).

But if any of the famous Western actors was involved in the creation of anti-Soviet films and/or films “glorifying the American military,” the magazine could strike him with “heavy artillery” on its pages. This fate awaited the Hollywood actor and director John Wayne (1907–1979).

Of course, about some actors and actresses (for example, about Yves Montand (1921–1991) and Simone Signoret (1921–1985), who were “fined” after the Czechoslovak events of 1968), *Soviet Screen* did not have anything positive to write about before the onset of “perestroika” possibilities.

However, there were many less politicized articles about Western actors on the pages of the magazine.

As for interviews with Western filmmakers, as in previous years, the *Soviet Screen* magazine selected interlocutors from among the most “progressive artists.” For example, among American filmmakers, the first place was given to Stanley Kramer (1913–2001). The progressive political position was also emphasized in interviews with Sydney Pollack (1934–2008), Norman Jewison, Ellen Burstyn, Jessica Lange and other Western directors and actors.

In general, during the period 1969–1985, the ideological positions of the *Soviet Screen* magazine remained unchanged.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research methodology consists of key philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and the social in cognition; scientific, film studies, sociocultural, culturological, hermeneutical, semiotic approaches proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aronson, 2003; Bakhtin, 1996; Balazs, 1935; Bibler, 1990; Casetti, 1999; Demin, 1966; Eco, 1976; Eisenstein, 1964; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; 2011; Lotman, 1973; 1992; 1994; Mast and Cohen 1985; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on a research content approach (identifying the content of the process under study, taking into account the totality of its elements, the interaction between them, their nature, turning to facts, analyzing and synthesizing theoretical conclusions, etc.), on a historical approach-consideration of the concrete historical development of the declared theme of the project.

*Research methods:* complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis, methods of theoretical research: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; methods of empirical research: collection of information related to the subject of the project, comparative-historical and hermeneutic methods.

## 3. Discussion and results

### *Articles on the history of Western cinema*

In general, it can be noted that there were few materials on the history of Western cinematography on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* in the period 1969–1985.

Basically, these were quite positive articles about the work of directors and actors of the era of the Great Mute: Georges Méliès (Yakubovich, 1984b: 22); David Griffith (Yutkevich, 1981: 14-15; Yakubovich, 1984a: 22); Max Linder (Trauberg, 1982: 18); Greta Garbo (Rubanova, 1982: 16-17); Asta Nielsen (Trauberg, 1983: 18).

In rare cases, these were notes about actors of a relatively recent time period: Gerard Philipe (Amlinsky, 1983: 18-19) and Johnny Weissmuller (Krah..., 1983).

In this regard, the materials of the *Soviet Screen* practically did not differ from those that were published on the pages of the magazine in the 1960s.

### *Biographies and portraits of Western actors and directors*

The principle of choosing cinematographers for writing creative portraits of Western actors and directors in 1969–1985 remained the same in the *Soviet Screen*. One could write mainly about “progressive filmmakers” (almost) unnoticed in negative statements against the USSR and

participation in anti-Soviet films. Even better, if these filmmakers came to the Moscow International Film Festival and spoke positively about the Soviet Union.

In this regard, the figure of Charles Chaplin (1889–1977) was still out of competition (Chaplin ..., 1969; Khutsiev, 1976: 20-21; Yakovlev, 1978: 20-21), since a witness to the grandiose changes and cataclysms of modern times, Chaplin was able to see, deeply understand the social processes of our era and reflect them in films (Yakovlev, 1978 20-21). “Chaplin is immortal because he is you and me, that part of our soul where someone else’s pain and disorder, human misfortune and sadness will always find a response” (Khutsiev, 1976: 21).

Film critic E. Kartseva (1928–2002) on the whole respectfully spoke on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* about the creative path of the Hollywood classic William Wyler (1902–1981), praising his films *Dead End* (USA, 1937), *The Little Foxes* (USA, 1941), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (USA, 1946). At the same time, the article by E. Kartseva emphasized that the significance of Wyler's work is not limited to the artistic merits of his films. There is one more, extremely important circumstance. Wyler has staged commercial films more than once, but in all his many years of work in the cinema he has not directed a single reactionary or deliberately tendentious work. On the contrary, during the years of the democratization of public life in the United States under Roosevelt, Wyler was one of those who created critical, social films (Kartseva, 1969: 13).

Traditionally, the *Soviet Screen* also had a positive attitude towards “the most progressive” (after Chaplin, of course) of American directors – Stanley Kramer (1913–2001), since the work of this outstanding master has always permeated and continues to permeate the progressive ideas of humanism, the rejection of cruelty, violence, and the humiliation of human dignity. ... he has always been and remains a decent person and an honest cinematographer, aware of his responsibility to people, to contemporary society (Andreev, 1983: 16-17).

After the drama *The Chase* (USA, 1966) was shown on Soviet screens, its director, Arthur Penn (1922–2010), was also enrolled by the Soviet film press in the ranks of “progressive filmmakers”, although the film critic (at that time not yet a professor and culturologist) M. Yampolsky clarified that “here, Penn's realism was shackled by traditional Hollywood thinking. On the one hand, *The Chase*, which tells the tragic story of how Sheriff Calder tries to resist the collective madness of the inhabitants of a small Texas town who lynch a man and fails, the theme of social injustice, the helplessness of the law in a world of cruelty and violence, is loudly stated. On the other hand, the film sings a hymn to a noble loner, ... a servant of the law, so familiar to the audience from the same Hollywood stereotypes” (Yampolsky, 1978: 16).

M. Yampolsky was even more critical of A. Penn's film *Bonnie and Clyde* (USA, 1967): “The movie is complex, contradictory. ... Everything would be simple if the main characters were not bandits, calmly using weapons. Trying to destroy the mythology of gangster cinema, Penn this time quite consciously created a new mythology. This is especially clear in the example of how a director who is not afraid of violent scenes presents scenes of murder. ... The aestheticization of the material is emphasized not only by the cold visual beauty of the film, but also by the special elegance of the clothes of the characters” (Yampolsky, 1978: 16).

As a result, M. Yampolsky concluded that the struggle with the mythology of American cinema eventually turned into a new myth for the director. The fetters of the system, which Arthur Penn wanted but could not break, led this talented American director to a sad conclusion about the inevitability of these fetters (Yampolsky, 1978: 17).

The work of the director Joseph Strick (1923–2010) was highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*, as his film *Interviews with My Lai Veterans* (USA, 1971) “is impossible to watch without excitement. In it, American soldiers, participants in the massacre of the civilian population of the village of Song My in Vietnam, tell about their crimes from the screen. ... Joseph Strick, one of the famous American directors, turned to documentaries for a reason. His denunciatory American way of life, sharply critical position was determined ... when the unusual film *The Savage Eye* (USA, 1959) was released on the screens of cinema and television ... The theme of man's loneliness in the bourgeois world ran through the entire film. The cruel world was shown with hatred, bitterness and contempt. ... The active social and critical position that pervades Joseph Strick's work, his desire to make maximum use of the expressive possibilities of fiction and documentary cinema make him one of the most brilliant representatives of the new American cinema art, which entered the struggle against reaction and militarism” (Abramov, 1972: 18).

A completely different assessment on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* was received by the work of director David Cronenberg, so it “reflects the deepest crisis of bourgeois consciousness. In his

feverish imagination, monstrous fantasies pass incessantly, interspersed with no less terrifying realities of today. The "free" world is trying to manipulate the feelings and thoughts of millions of viewers. ... Horror films of the "Canadian butcher" are just one of many forms of influence of bourgeois ideology on the mass audience. At all costs, at any cost, they try to distract him from the real problems of the capitalist society of unemployment, social inequality, and the arms race" (Komov, 1982: 18).

The only Western screenwriter about whom two large positive articles were published in the Soviet Screen was one of the "fathers of neorealism" Cesare Zavattini (1902–1989): "First of all, we associate with this name Italian films, works of a progressive direction ... In fact, this outstanding screenwriter, both in Italy and abroad, was rightly considered the "brain of neorealism": after all, about fifty films... Together De Sica and Zavattini created masterpieces of Italian cinema" (Bogemsky, 1972: 14-15).

Film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) emphasized with pleasure that C. Zavattini was not only a screenwriter and theorist of the new Italian cinema, not only the author of hundreds of articles, essays, reports, not only the "brain", but also the "hands" of cinema – he, endowed with a sober, truly popular common sense, a practitioner, an indefatigable worker. ... Cesare Zavattini is faithful to the choice he once made – always and everywhere he is on the side of the new, progressive, just (Bogemsky, 1979: 19-20).

Among the Italian directors of creative portraits on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* magazine of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s, Vittorio De Sica (1901–1974) (Solovieva, Shitova, 1976: 18-19), Luchino Visconti (1906–1976) (Solovieva, Shitova, 1977: 18-19), Francesco Rosi (1922–2015), Federico Fellini (1920–1993) (Bobrova, 1983: 17-18) and Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007) (Bogemsky, 1981: 17).

So E. Victorova, logically emphasized the political/ideological component in the work of F. Rosi: "Politics that became cinema. The civic passion that has become cinema – this, I think, is the pathos of Rosie's work. Many of his films have become a model of political cinema, having a lasting transformative impact on other progressive masters of the West, on young Italian directors. ... This and his consistent appeal to the life of the peasants is a deep interest in the historical, spiritual destinies of people from the people. And next to it is a no less consistent exposure of the bourgeois authorities and the mafia. ... The idea of overthrowing the social evil of exposing Italian and international reaction in the name of the triumph of justice and truth, in the name of a future without weapons, without wars, continues to dominate Francesco Rosi, an artist, a man of great civic courage and talent" (Victorova, 1982: 17-18).

It should be noted here that if the *Soviet Screen* spoke highly of V. De Sica and L. Visconti before (Bozhovich, 1967; Rubanova, 1966: 19; Shitova, 1962), but the frequent criticism of the work of F. Fellini and M. Antonioni, which the magazine allowed itself in the 1960s, was replaced by other trends.

In particular, the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) wrote about the films of Michelangelo Antonioni in a quite positive way, noting that Antonioni's paintings showed the tragedy of loneliness, spiritual callousness, lack of understanding between people in the bourgeois world. Concepts that only psychologists and sociologists had previously used, such as "human alienation", "lack of communication" have come into use in film criticism (Bogemsky, 1981: 17).

And film critic O. Bobrova emphasized that "the recognized masterpieces of Fellini ... are not only the stages of his work, but also the stages of the development of language, poetics and even cinema theory. Becoming a phenomenon of world cinematography, each of these films at the same time became an occasion for fierce disputes about the fundamental problems of cinematography, directly or indirectly reflecting certain aspects of modern Italian reality, refracted through the prism of the personality of a very large and original artist. Fellini is one of the most talented, original and one of the most controversial cinematographers of the West: tragic, gloomy, restless and at the same time bright, life-affirming, poetic; complex, confusing and entangled in the contradictions of capitalist reality, but also one of the most implacable critics of capitalism. He combines full-blooded everyday realism with conventionality, symbolism, and the grotesque. Reality is filtered through the lyrical self of the artist, and is colored now with soft humor, then with sincere and warm sympathy for the poor and destitute, then turns into a terrible phantasmagoria of chaos, angrily satirical exposure of the existing order" (Bobrova, 1983: 17-18).

Among the French directors, *Soviet Screen* also tried to choose, first of all, "time-tested" classics.

For example, film critic A. Braginsky (1920–2016) wrote about René Clair (1898–1981) as follows: “We have before us an amazing example of a director who did not succumb to the temptations of a fast-moving fashion, did not repaint from a “conservative” to an “innovator” and vice versa, who managed to maintain throughout his life a sequence of aesthetic tastes dictated not only by his own positions in art ... All the work of René Clair confirms the idea that cinema, even entertaining, should elevate a person, help him understand himself. Isn't it characteristic that in none of his films René Clair ever humiliates a person. He makes fun of negative characters – and nothing more” (Braginsky, 1979: 16-17). At the same time, René Clair was a true artist-creator. It is not only that he united in one person a director and a screenwriter, but also that his films constitute a special world where everything is connected by the unity of outlook and style, an integral, though changing, evolving conception of reality (Braginsky, 1981: 18).

Film critic V. Dmitriev highly praised the work of Alain Resnais (1922–2014), including *My American Uncle* (*Mon oncle d'Amérique*. France, 1980), including this picture among his best works (Dmitriev, 1984: 20). And N. Pankratova spoke warmly about the films of Jacques Demy (1931–1990) (Pankratova, 1977).

In general, the work of Francois Truffaut (1932–1984) was rated quite highly (albeit with reservations) in the *Soviet Screen*:

“Truffaut is reproached: starting with a masterpiece and from the heights of a universally significant theme – *400 blows* (*Les quadrants coups*. France, 1959) are remembered by all – he embarked on the path of concessions. They reproach him: he makes films for the market. This is true. And not so. Films for the market? Certainly. Sensitive and engaging. Welcomingly accessible in its form. Willingly keeping within the limits of traditional “coffee” genres ... There are dangers here, and Truffaut did not escape them. Sometimes he is cutesy; flirting with unpretentiousness. Flaunts the amount of art spent on trifles. But moreover, this art itself is genuine” (Soloviova, Shitova, 1973: 5-6).

*400 Blows* is his first feature film, “which informed the world about the birth of an outstanding director ... But neither a successful debut nor the opportunity to tell about the sorrows of his childhood in the first work brought complete satisfaction. ... Truffaut said that one must be cunning and dexterous in order to dodge the embrace of sentimentality. But it seems to me that in *Stolen Kisses* (*Baisers volés*. France, 1968) he outwitted himself. In the grace and ease with which the director touches the fate of the young man, there is no pathos, but there is nothing truly touching either. ... *Wild Child* (*L'Enfant sauvage*. France, 1970) seems to be made in opposition to *Stolen Kisses*. There are no smiles in him, no “arts” – he is serious to the point of didacticism, to the point of scientificity. ... Comic form of *Pocket Money* (*L'Argent de Poche*. France, 1976), a seemingly gliding touch on the problem gave some viewers (and experts, perhaps, too) the impression that a kind of bourgeois complacency prevails in the picture ... Truffaut ... shows adults that they, either chuckling or nervously angry, in essence, simply ignore the world of children” (Alexandrov, 1977: 4).

It is interesting to note that the *Soviet Screen* in the first half of the 1980s wrote quite positively about Luis Buñuel (1900–1983), although before the “perestroika” times not a single one of his films appeared in the mass film distribution of the USSR (*The Modest Charm of the Bourgeoisie / Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie*. France-Italy-Spain, 1972) was only released in Soviet theaters in 1987).

Film expert T. Vetrova reasonably wrote that Buñuel’s films resist detailed interpretation, because they embody that magical “secret” in the art of cinema, which, as the director himself repeatedly emphasized, is the essence of poetry for him and is characteristic of every true work of art. ... In his latest films, close in genre to comedies and filled with toxic irony towards the bourgeoisie, the rebellious spirit of denial prevails, however, it does not interfere with a close, vigilant look at things, their essence, their underside. ... Luis Buñuel has a rare gift of constant search, which invariably endows his art with an attractive force. A wise master never teaches with his paintings, using the right of an elder – he simply talks about what worries him in a person, in society, shows what he does not want to put up with, against which he does not get tired of rebelling. His art is imbued with true humanism, although this humanism is expressed, as a rule, in the form of a fierce rejection of the bourgeois world (Vetrova, 1980: 16-17).

In a more traditional for the “ideologically consistent” Soviet film studies, the then editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* D. Orlov (1935–2021) wrote about L. Buñuel, arguing that this figure is complex, contradictory. His work reflected the dialectics of the time that gave birth to him.

It contains the tragedy of skepticism and pessimism, so characteristic of many talented artists of the bourgeois world, but it also contains a vividly expressed protest against everything that prevents a human being from unfolding and blossoming, sincerely expressed compassion, hope, faith in the high ultimate destiny of the individual (Orlov, 1984: 20).

Article by film critic M. Sulkin about the director Wolfgang Staudte (1906–1984) was more ideological. It stated that “The fate of Staudte in Federal Germany was difficult. After all, the main products of German cinema are “commercial films”: westerns, erotic paintings, works that poison the viewer with the poison of revanchism. ... In this situation, in order to get at least some opportunity to implement an important topic, Staudte had to make compromises, yielding to the requirements of the producers” (Sulkin, 1984: 21).

Approximately in the same vein, the *Soviet Screen* wrote about the work of another famous German director Kurt Hoffmann (1910–2001): “In the film *We are geeks* (*Wir Wunderkinder*. FRG, 1958), pamphlet and drama, satire and variety art, lyrics and comedy were mixed. ... in the filmmaker's work, films that combine buffoonery and burlesque with sharp political content are replaced by frankly entertaining films. They have the same techniques, the same brilliant mastery of cinematic form, a cascade of witty tricks, subtle powers of observation. But the object worthy of ridicule disappears, the big social theme, the caustic irony that make up the strength of the director. But in the comedy *Ghosts in the Spessart Castle* (*Das Spukschloß im Spessart*. FRG, 1960) “different genres are mixed, a musical comedy, political satire, a drama from the “count's life”, or, rather, a parody of it, an incredible adventure, an eccentric clowning... But a funny, light and cheerful performance made not only laugh, but also think. what Hoffmann hates and ridicules is burgher complacency, saber-rattling. Kurt Hoffmann once again demonstrated his brilliant ability to talk cheerfully about serious things, funny about sad things, caustically and evilly about, with which it is impossible to put up with” (Vesely..., 1973: 16).

Thinking about creativity Margaret von Trotta, film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005), noted that she “has a feminine insight, she knows how to look deeply into the essence of the phenomena she depicts and is not in a hurry with conclusions and assessments. ... I am attracted by the seriousness and anxiety that permeate Margareta von Trotta's reflections on the complex, contradictory problems of our time ... It is complex and contradictory, this is her path. And it is not easy for her to resist the pressure of commercial cinema. How difficult it is to win your audience, to achieve wide public recognition. I would very much like her to stay in the saddle, so that her name remains among the names of progressive masters of foreign cinema” (Gromov, 1985: 20-22).

An article about the work of the Swedish director Bo Wiederberg (1930–1997) fully reflected the Soviet ideological demands of the 1970s. It emphasized that Wiederberg became one of the greatest filmmakers in Sweden because his film *Crow's Quarter* (*Kvarteret Korpen*. Sweden, 1963) described with documentary veracity about the atmosphere that prevails in a family of ordinary workers, *Odalen-31* (*Ådalen'31*. Sweden, 1969) is dedicated to one of the most significant episodes in the history of the Swedish labor movement, and *Elvira Madigan* (Sweden, 1967) tells about the tragedy of lovers who find themselves in a hopeless situation from – for the sanctimonious morality of bourgeois society (Asenin, 1973: 4-5).

One of the favorite plots of the *Soviet Screen* in the framework of foreign topics is Western actors, like “victims of Hollywood”, evidence of “the tragedy of the artist in the bourgeois world” (Chto..., 1969: 17). In this vein, the magazine wrote about Judy Garland (1922–1969) and Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962) (Chto..., 1969: 17).

And if any of the Western actors was involved in the creation of anti-Soviet films and/or movies “glorifying the American military”, the magazine could strike at him on its pages with “heavy artillery”. Such a fate awaited Hollywood actor and director John Wayne (1907–1979), who made “blacklists” of progressive figures in American cinema and did not hesitate to include his personal enemies in them – people, neither which social movements are not involved (Makarov, 1970: 16-17).

A logical condemnation in the magazine received the film by J. Wayne *The Green Berets* (USA, 1968): “The anti-human nature of the militant was so obvious that a sharply negative reaction from the progressive public immediately followed. ... The essence of this dirty film is the glorification of aggression in Vietnam, an attempt to compose an anthem in honor of the killers and saboteurs from the so-called special forces, wearing green berets, thugs whom even bourgeois journalists compare with the SS. ... The film cost the author nothing – the Pentagon provided free military equipment, people, advisers and the territory of the training camp ... for filming.



The Pentagon bet on the right horse; Wayne repeatedly declared himself "a soldier you can count on", and once even loudly demanded that an atomic bomb be dropped on the Soviet people" (Makarov, 1970: 16-17).

But the work of another famous Hollywood actor – Charles Bronson (1921–2003) was not so unambiguously assessed in the *Soviet Screen*.

On the one hand, it was noted that Charles Bronson's stunning triumph was brought by the lead role in the film *Death Wish* (USA, 1974). But *Death Wish* "impresses fans who like to surround cars crashing into each other in a tight ring and stare at people sprawled on the pavement. ... But with the growth of products like *Death Wish*, the audience with such tastes is becoming more and more" (Chudov, 1975: 13).

But on the other hand, it was emphasized that moviegoers willingly watch movies with the participation of Bronson, because they are waiting for obligatory sharp spectacles, when in the center of everything there is a hero who is fluent in karate or kung fu, throwing a knife with equal dexterity or doing dizzying tricks by helicopter... Yes, Bronson's films did not become an art phenomenon, they did not go beyond genre stereotypes. And yet let us look again at that tired, intelligent face. Behind narrowed eyes, a firm gaze, there is undoubtedly something more than what can be seen in the image of Bronson's hero (Avdeenko, 1979: 18).

But still, as before, the main stake of the foreign department of the magazine *Soviet Screen* was made on the so-called "progressive filmmakers" who were not seen in films that were undesirable for Soviet ideology.

So on the pages of the magazine it was stated that Laurence Olivier (1907–1989) undoubtedly has the reputation of a great artist. Excellent technique, impeccable command of the voice, unusually beautiful and strong. Perfected plasticity of movement. ... The talent of reincarnation. An unlimited range of roles... He is a living classic (Slova..., 1969).

Approximately in the same positive spirit, the articles about Burt Lancaster (1913–1994) were sustained (Kartseva, 1970: 16-17; Frolov, 1979: 18): Lancaster creates a whole gallery of portraits, almost always they are people of active action, strong, courageous: they uncompromisingly defend the ideals of goodness and justice. The actor prefers films that make viewers seriously think about the most burning problems, and in the first place – war and peace. ... The persistence with which Lancaster developed the key theme of his work, anti-war, for many years is truly worthy of admiration and respect (Frolov, 1979: 18).

Anti-war sentiments were also accentuated in the creative portrait of Marlon Brando (1924–2004), who, in the role of the sheriff in *The Chase* (USA, 1966) expressed moods of discontent and protest against the ugly phenomena of American reality (Lyndina, 1972: 16).

Film critic E. Lyndina (1933–2022) further wrote with admiration that in 1969, Brando publicly expressed his protest against the attitude towards blacks that was established in America ... Marlon Brando is not limited to speaking from the podium. He openly participated in Negro demonstrations. He called the assassination of Martin Luther King "the most vile atrocity of the century." He was among the participants in the anti-war campaign against Washington. He starred in *Queimada* (Italy-France, 1969) by Gillo Pontecorvo, a film dedicated to the problems of the national liberation movement. He opposes films that glorify the Vietnam War. Remaining a bourgeois artist, ... he expresses in his works and public speeches the anxieties of today's America, the pain for people maimed by a world of evil and violence, the disappointment in ideals that have proven false and fake (Lyndina, 1972: 16-17).

Recognizing that the singer and actor Dean Reed (1938–1986) was significantly inferior to Hollywood stars in skill, N. Lagina wrote in the *Soviet Screen* that following Pete Seeger, Joan Baez and other singers who gave their talent to the fight for peace, Dean Reed became a frequent visitor to various American (and later not only American) prisons. But it was not possible to hide him in prison for a long time – his courageous art evokes too wide a response (Lagina, 1972: 14).

An active democratic civic position and anti-war activity came to the fore in the materials of the magazine about the actress Jane Fonda (Frolov, 1980; Rezinkov, 1973).

Here it was noted with satisfaction that although Fonda at first fell into the plan of the bourgeois aesthetic concepts of Roger Vadim, who considers cinema a means of emancipating viewers from traditional morality and therefore frankly showing sexual scenes in his films, but then she changed her mind and joined the movement for rights Indians and Negroes, for ending the war in Vietnam (Rezinkov, 1973).

In a very positive and again clearly "ideologically consistent" manner, the *Soviet Screen* also analyzed the creative path of another famous Hollywood actor – Kirk Douglas (1916–2020), one of whose most famous characters is the legendary Spartak, with fighting with society, he does not seek contacts with lies, he denies society, confident that it can become different and will someday become better, more righteous. That is why he is able to rally the people humiliated and crushed by slavery (Lyndina, 1971: 16-17).

Film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) also highly appreciated the work of another Hollywood star – George Scott (1927–1999), the greatest actor of contemporary cinema in the USA: the connection with time, the interest in the problems that American society lives in, characteristic of Scott's work, completely reveal the secret of his success. But Scott's exceptional professionalism cannot be underestimated (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

In connection with the release of the large-scale production of S. Bondarchuk's *Waterloo* (Italy-USSR, 1969), the *Soviet Screen* turned on its pages to the work of the American actor Rod Steiger (1925–2002), who brilliantly played a role in this drama Napoleon: "Turning, turning points of human destinies – this is Rod Steiger's favorite topic. ... In Napoleon, as Steiger paints him, there is no aristocracy, even more so, "gentlemanliness". A heavy body, an unshaven face, a filthy overcoat, heavy boots – all this would fit a soldier more than an emperor. He is impatient, impulsive and passionate. He does not want to wait, he is used to quick and brilliant victories. ... At the same time, the actor shows that the dictator is already internally broken. He is no longer the same as he was during the victorious march through Europe. ... Steiger also avoids another extreme in the depiction of Bonaparte, also quite common – the desire to belittle this image. Steiger is not trying to make a great man small. On the contrary, Rod Steiger's Napoleon is a strong man who survived the inevitable collapse" (Zhezhelenko, 1973: 14-15).

Laudatory articles in the *Soviet Screen* were devoted to the famous actor Dustin Hoffman, whose characters are more likely victims of bourgeois society, rather than fighters against its injustices (Barabanova, 1971: 17). At the same time, about very different in design, Hoffman's best roles are united by a subtle penetration into the spiritual world of the "little man", with his defenselessness and cunning, nobility and courage, with his indestructible hope for the future (Shaternikova, 1984: 18-19).

Positive articles in the *Soviet Screen* were also devoted to other English-speaking actors popular in the 1970s: Paul Newman (1925–2008) (Doroshevich, 1984: 18-19), Robert Redford (Avdeenko, 1977: 14-15), Jack Nicholson (Antonov, 1977), Peter O'Toole (1932-2013) (Belyaeva, 1976: 16-17) and Peter Ustinov (1921-2004) (Tirdatova, 1985: 21).

Among the Hollywood actresses, film critics of the *Soviet Screen* singled out Elizabeth Taylor (1932–2011) (Bereznitsky, 1975: 16-17), Audrey Hepburn (1929–1993) (Dularidze, 1975: 16-17), Barbara Streisand (Avdeenko, 1978: 18-19), Jessica Lange (Glazkov, 1983: 9), Judy Davis (Sulkin, 1983: 9) and Faye Dunaway (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

At the same time, for example, it was emphasized that Faye Dunaway is a talented actress, capable of amazing transformations, able to create deep, psychologically complex images, that perhaps one of the most outstanding actresses in the history of American cinema (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17). And the rise of Jessica Lange's career is gratifying also because the actress disposed of her talent not in the way the movie businessmen "programmed" but as her civic conscience tells her" (Glazkov, 1983: 9).

The same "progressive" principle of selecting people for the publication of their creative portraits was observed in the *Soviet Screen* in relation to French actors.

Of course, about some French actors and actresses (for example, about Yves Montand (1921–1991) and Simone Signoret (1921–1985) who "fined themselves" after the Czechoslovak events of 1968), the *Soviet Screen* could not write anything positive.

But there were relatively many completely or less politicized articles about actors.

So film critic I. Yanushevskaya (1925–1989), co-author of V. Demin wrote in the book *Jean Marais* that "a man of great artistic taste", Jean Marais (1913–1998) understood that the time of his romantic heroes, knights without fear and the reproach passed, and he decided to remain in the memory of the audience the way the screen captured him (Yanushevskaya, 1983: 18-19).

The article about another patriarch of French cinematography, Jean Gabin (1904–1976), was also very positive: "Gabin of the thirties returned to the viewer of pre-war Europe a condensed reflection of his anxieties, his sense of life under threat, and this was the high meaning of poetic realism, of which Gabin was the first actor. ... the current hero of Gabin is a living, in the flesh

manifestation of that very “senior”, “superior”, father and boss, who should be more visible, whom you can rely on – he knows how to do it. He will tell you what to do, and you just do it. This myth has its own charm and its own temptation” (Solovieva, Shitova, 1972: 14-15).

With great respect for the talent of Lino Ventura (1919–1987), an article by film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) was also written: “The previous roles of this famous actor have created a solid pattern in our perception, we are used to seeing him in the guise of a thug and a gangster. Meanwhile, today's Ventura is not at all what he was just recently, and in general, over the twenty years of his work in the cinema, he has experienced a rather serious creative evolution. ... At first he played the pure incarnation of evil, then strong, but doomed, lost people, and in the most recent years he became the character of a farce comedy, almost a hell, where the figure of a superhuman bandit is ingeniously ridiculed and ridiculed” (Demin, 1975: 16-17).

One of the favorites of the *Soviet Screen* was undoubtedly Jean-Louis Trintignant (1930–2022). Film expert I. Rubanova noted that this actor likes to play modesty on the screen, guessing in it unspent kindness, bitterness of loneliness, hidden romanticism, and sometimes carefully hidden complexes. “Modesty, which this actor understands so well, is unequal to dull ordinaryness or dull colorlessness. Behind the inconspicuous, moreover, fundamentally ordinary appearance of his heroes, hidden dramas rage, enthusiastic dreams flare up, and bold claims boil. ... [but] the role of Marcello Clerici in the film by the Italian Bernardo Bertolucci *The Conformist* (*Il Conformista*. Italy-France-FRG, 1970) based on the novel by Alberto Moravia, Trintignant proved that he was able to rise above soothing illusions. ... Previously, the actor played those who, sentenced to conformity by class, were torn from the fetters of conformism. ...

Trintignant's Clerici is not a man who has become a fascist, which in the context of the film is equivalent to a murderer, but a man who aspires to be a fascist, who plays a fascist” (Rubanova 1972: 16-17).

And, of course, I. Solovieva and V. Shitova (1927–2002) are right: Trintignant had his “finest hour” when Claude Lelouch shot him in *A Man and a Woman* (*Un homme et une femme*. France, 1966): it would seem that the actor, who started slowly and modestly, should have finally missed the chance. In *A Man and a Woman* he was received in great demand: the audience, especially the spectators, he gave what they wanted and lacked. He was a “star” – a personalization of the dream of reliability, which enters into your everyday life in the guise of a real man: strong, kind, patient, understanding, with a light and firm character. ... The artist did not take a chance: it's good or bad, but he is not from the material from which “stars” are obtained (Solovieva, Shitova, 1973: 5-6).

At the same time, “if you isolate from the excessively complex and talented picture of Bernardo Bertolucci *The Conformist*... the large, tough and simple thought present in it, if you think about what exactly Trintignant plays in it, you will hear all the same reasoning about reliability. Reasoning from the opposite. Trintignant plays here a traitor and the logic of betrayal. The hero betrays out of fear, out of self-interest, but above all, he, a liberal living under fascism, betrays out of fear of being “not like everyone else.” For fear of being left alone, not betraying where it was supposed to, Trintignant played it, conveying the ferocious “black humor” of such a turn” (Solovieva, Shitova, 1973: 5-6).

Warmly and respectfully, I. Solovieva and V. Shitova also wrote about Alain Delon (Solovieva, Shitova, 1976: 18-19). To some extent, we can agree with the fact that the hero of Alain Delon most often turned out to be a modern individualist who challenged society only in order to take a more prosperous place in this society, a man with a double bottom and double morals, an eternal opportunist, so impudent and reckless that this excitement often fails him, he is so carried away by the game itself, directly by the race, that it often rushes past the prey, unable to stop until the opponent's bullet or the iron hand of the law catches up with him, until he fails to run, to limit of car speed his own heart (Makarov, 1981: 18-19).

Very positively was presented in the *Soviet Screen* and creativity Philipp Noiret (1930–2006) (Polskikh, 1977), Jean Rochefort (1930–2017) (Soviet..., 1976), Michel Piccoli (1925–2020) (Dularidze 1975: 19); Michel Bouquet (1925–2022) (Soviet..., 1976), Victor Lanoux (1936–2017) (Braginsky, 1982: 18), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Chertok, 1973: 15), and Gerard Depardieu (Braginsky, 1981: 17).

In particular, film critic A. Braginsky (1920–2016) perspicaciously argued that in the person of Gerard Depardieu a bright, original actor of a purely modern warehouse appeared on the film horizon of France. An actor in whom young people saw the typical features, signs of today's hero, who outwardly may seem rude, mundane, “simple”, but spiritually sensitive, often easily hurt,

deeply experiencing the contradictions and ugliness of the reality surrounding him (Braginsky, 1981: 17).

But about the work of Jean-Paul Belmondo (1933–2021), a kind of discussion arose on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*.

In 1975, film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) wrote approvingly that one of the most famous French film actors of the post-war generation, Jean-Paul Belmondo, is finally presented in our box office with a picture that, for a first acquaintance, is called promisingly: *Magnificent* (*Le Magnifique*. France-Italy, 1973). And if the epithet given in the title does not fully correspond to the merits of the film itself, then at least it can be attributed to the actor who played the main role (Bogomolov, 1975: 3-4).

A year later, journalist A. Makarov also positively assessed Belmondo's work: “What explains the truly worldwide popularity of Jean-Paul Belmondo? Everywhere he is perceived as one of his own, that's probably the point. ... For all the incomprehensibility of his on-screen exploits, Belmondo is simple and accessible, he is the same person from a legend as the hero of large-circulation comics or grandmother's fairy tales. ... Belmondo is an actor capable of subtle and unobtrusive reincarnation. ... However, Belmondo carries a certain unified atmosphere of his personality through all his films. That is why even his invulnerable adventurers do not irritate him, a constantly living soul shines through the mask of luck and complacency. Which, by the way, often puts the qualities mentioned at the beginning into doubt, in any case, gives them additional psychological complexity. ... In his work, Belmondo brought to the screen the authenticity of the national character, the visible and tangible concreteness of the street, in the pathos of its ordinary, clueless, eternal life” (Makarov, 1976: 16-17).

In a similar vein, an article by film critic A. Braginsky, published in the magazine in 1979, was sustained: Jean-Paul Belmondo: an oblong face with sharply defined lips, a broken “boxing” nose. But the expressive dark eyes of the actor can be both sly, and formidable, and tender, and mocking – in a word, to express the whole gamut of human feelings and moods. Belmondo moves beautifully, his body is trained, he gladly shows his biceps and muscular torso. But there is also “something” in him that Gabin saw, and this “something” makes Jean-Paul a favorite of the audience – he is talented (Braginsky, 1979: 16-17).

But in 1983, the *Soviet Screen* (unexpectedly for Belmondo fans) published an article by film critic A. Plakhov with a telling title “What is “belmondism”?”, where the basic statement reflecting the negative perception of the actor's film images was the following: “I can't help but say what worries me. Increasingly, in films of this kind, we meet the cult of a muscular superman hero, not burdened with either conscience or compassion. Vulgarity, admiration of brute force, and sometimes very sophisticated cruelty characterize a number of other paintings with Belmondo's participation” (Plakhov, 1983: 17).

And here (albeit in 1985), film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004) entered into a polemic with A. Plakhov with very convincing arguments: don't bother yourself. The mill of commercial plots is spinning – after all, Belmondo plays, with insignificant exceptions, and even then at the beginning of the journey, in the films of commonplace, “popular”, “mass”, in other words, undisguisedly entertaining, the same role – a man in danger, one and the same conflict – a man against fate, the same character – a man who can trust only himself, his reaction, his dexterity, his common sense, his muscles. At the same time, it doesn't matter which side of the law his hero is on – and Belmondo in the vast majority of his films plays either a policeman or a criminal. And, a strange thing, if you just put all these different films side by side ... if you peer at them, it turns out suddenly that the hero of Belmondo is not a superman at all, then he is very atypical, losing too often. In other words, a superman inside out, who is extremely uncomfortable in a strange world where good diligently imitates evil, and evil deftly pretends to be good. Moreover, if we ignore the stunning dizziness of chases and shootouts, the abundance of corpses and blood, then it may turn out to be no less unexpected that the hero Belmondo is “burdened” with both conscience and conscience, that somewhere deep inside lives in him an indestructible moral code that from time to time breaks through to the surface of the plot with an instant gesture of compassion, pity, inept and hasty nobility. Breaks through only occasionally – because the hero acts in situations where there is simply no one to turn to with this gesture, no one to give even a small fraction of humanity, kindness, attention. Occasionally – and also because just at such moments the hero of Belmondo is a loser, in a literal and figurative knockdown, because then he is waiting for him, defenseless, forgotten, another blow to the jaw, another pistol bullet, another gangster knife or, at best, police

handcuffs, in the most cruel way reminding him that all these sentiments, all these spiritual "oddities" are punishable in the most direct and immediate sense (Chernenko, 1985: 20-21).

The film critics of the *Soviet Screen* and the work of the famous French comedian Louis de Funes (1914–1983) were ambiguous.

Film critic I. Lishchinsky in an article entitled "The path of finds, the path of loss" wrote that Louis de Funes firmly occupied the comedy of France, making it more ridiculous and ... more monotonous (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

But for all that, behind the mask of de Funes, the audience discovered a figure – a dynamic entrepreneur of the so-called era of consumption, a person not only businesslike, but also intoxicated with efficiency. Everything in this world for him is just a stepping stone to fame, success, wealth. All kinds of plans ripen in his brain with extraordinary and, of course, excessive speed. Here he narrowed his eyes, smiled victoriously, his thin lips stretched to his ears, and he triumphantly looks at the enemy. The plan is ready – whether it is about a profitable marriage for a daughter, about a legitimate commercial operation or illegal transportation of jewelry and drugs. By the way, it does not matter whether de Funes plays a respectable businessman or the leader of a gang of gangsters. In any case, he is exactly adventurous and equally respectable. ... Louis de Funes turned out to be a comedic mirror of another phenomenon, about which Western politicians, sociologists, and journalists write so much today. The cult of things and the pursuit of things – these main features of the "era of consumption" are inseparable from the comic hero de Funes (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

Even more critical of the work of Louis de Funes was an article by film critic M. Yampolsky: "His hero is small, antipathetic, unkind, stupid, sometimes cruel. The plasticity of the actor is emphatically caricatured. Such a character does not at all seek to evoke even a shadow of sympathy. Of all the comic masks, he most resembles Pantalone from the Italian folk comedy – a smug rich old man, mean, evil, unscrupulous and always making a fool of himself. ... Funes introduced into the cinema and for a long time fixed in it a "one-dimensional" comic mask in its configuration. The laughter caused by the actor is laughter at the grotesque conceit and its constant fiasco. ... From the films with his participation, any warmth, humanity disappears, his roles become more and more buffoon, turn into a stream of unrestrained self-singing. An uncharismatic, pretentious character endlessly flickers on the screen, trying hard to make you laugh. Characteristically, that in the last films of Funes, that supply of satirical laughter, which caused the image of this narcissistic bourgeois, is almost completely depleted. External, eccentric comedy obscures the social content that was partly inherent in the work of this actor before. The artistic fate of Louis de Funes is interesting and instructive. The unusual mask created by this magnificent master has certainly contributed to the arsenal of world cinema comedy. But the initial limitations of the image created by the actor also contained the sources of his failures" (Yampolsky, 1978: 18-19).

But another French comedian – Pierre Richard, – according to A. Makarov, in any, the most incredible plot, he is certainly authentic and internally, in the sense that even his eccentric antics are always precisely motivated, and in terms of a purely worldly, one might say, everyday. ... He is ridiculous more than anything because, under the most incredible conditions, he does what he should have done, that he remains true to his human calling, his spiritual type and his spiritual disposition. The notorious softness of the intelligentsia, the anecdotal inability of a book reader and the humanist suddenly turn out to be not such weaknesses, they do not betray our hero, but rather strengthen him in his vitality, they do not serve as his vulnerable spot, but, on the contrary, the weapon with which the hero unconsciously defends his living soul (Makarov, 1983: 18).

Annie Girardot (1931–2011) was the favorite of the *Soviet Screen* in the 1970s, and four (!!!) articles were devoted to her work at once (Alexandrov, 1978: 5; Bernadsky, 1978: 16-17; Rubanova, 1973; Solovieva, Shitova, 1973: 5-6).

I. Solovieva and V. Shitova, in our opinion, rightly noted that Annie Girardot did not create what is called a "permanent actor character" on the screen, as did, say, Brigitte Bardot or Marilyn Monroe. She played women not only of different fates – they are different in her nature ... But every time she respects and conveys the independence of the character of her heroines, as she respects the laws of the genre, whether it be a tragedy or an everyday comic film. There is one thing in common in her heroines: the natural ability and willingness to understand. And one more thing in common in the heroines of the artist: each has its own spiritual self-active force. In a situation where it is easy to become a puppet, a victim of passions, a victim of circumstances, they are not puppets and not victims. Understanding and clarity hold them (Solovieva, Shitova, 1973: 5-6).

Indeed, comedy *Acquaintance by marriage announcement* (*Run for me so that I catch you / Cours après moi que je t'attrape*. France, 1976) could be classified as mediocre without hesitation, if not for one circumstance. ... Annie Girardot managed to not only entertain us, but also captivate us. Without diminishing either the comedy or the cascade of the on-screen plot, she brought to her role something that marks almost every image she created – sometimes not even visible, but quite clearly tangible human authenticity. ... The vital authenticity of the images of Annie Girardot was clarified here by the features of the national folk character (Alexandrov, 1978: 5).

And indeed, very often Girardot is thinner, smarter, more significant than the material offered to her. ... endowing the widespread female type with the features of her individuality, she helps the viewer, who identifies himself with the movie character, to believe in the prevalence, universality of “extraordinary”. Ultimately, grow up in your own eyes. Add to this the amazing skill of the actress, her looseness, naturalness, absolute freedom of existence in the image – without any “gaps” between the performer and the character (Bernadsky, 1978: 16-17).

Romy Schneider (1938–1982) was another famous actress of French cinema, whose work was favorably evaluated by the *Soviet Screen*.

So on the pages of the magazine it was emphasized that this actress owes her success to her own originality, skill and, of course, spectacular appearance. ... The heroines of Romy Schneider, as a rule, fit perfectly within the boundaries of the average person's idea of life and happiness. ... The flowering of Romy Schneider's talent successfully coincided with the appearance of a series of films like *Love Story*, in which purity of feelings, sincerity, some sentimentality and nostalgia for lost ideals are very appealing to the Western audience, tired of both physical and moral nudity (Fomichev, 1978: 20-21).

And film critic I. Rubanova reasonably believed that Schneider's cinematic images from film to film became bolder, richer, more dramatic. ... Radiant beauty, lively and intelligent talent, impeccable professionalism... Romy Schneider deserved great fame, heartfelt veneration and deep respect. ... Morality is the word that best defines the art of Romy Schneider (Rubanova, 1982: 17-18).

The work of another star of French cinema, Catherine Deneuve, was also highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*: deep lyricism, acting intuition and an innate sense of beauty are noted in Catherine Deneuve by many directors with whom the actress has to work. It is this quality that clearly distinguishes Deneuve's individuality from the rich scattering of stars of the French screen (Abdrashitov, 1978: 20-21).

Due to the fact that several films with the participation of Mireille Darc (1938–2017) were released at once in the Soviet film distribution of the 1970s, the *Soviet Screen* found a place on its pages for a creative portrait of this talented actress: Mireille Darc is devoid of a halo, advantages and shortcomings of the acting “myth” – she has nothing to learn from. She is an ordinary pretty woman, elegant, graceful and intelligent. As an example of an ordinary pretty French woman, she is calm, smart, independent, knows her own worth and knows what she needs from life, while she knows how to avoid rational, boring businesslikeness and be extremely natural in her feelings, behavior, movement, tone. ... In essence, Mireille Darc from film to film, regardless of its genre and artistic level, plays variations of one image. Always identical in appearance, with the same short haircut and unchanging bangs, soft, traditionally feminine, she emphasizes the constancy of her heroine (Levashova, 1975: 18-19).

The works of Anna Karina (1940-2019) (Anna..., 1975: 16-17), Marie-José Nat (1940–2019) (Karlov, 1975: 14-15) and Nathalie Baye (Plakhov, 1985: 20-21).

In particular, film critic A. Plakhov wrote that “in the roles of her full dignity, uncompromising provincials, Nathalie Baye comes to one of the central themes of all Western cinema. We are talking about the position of a woman who tries to be independent in everything, but inevitably turns out to be dependent on social conditions and the moral atmosphere of society. ... The drama that colors the best roles of Nathalie Baye is hidden and spills out only at moments of high tension. ... Perhaps, even in the roles of her modest provincials, Nathalie Baye remains romantic – if only because her heroines do not become obedient victims of circumstances, but retain ideals and concepts of honor that seem hopelessly old-fashioned to others...” (Plakhov, 1985: 20-21).

Publishing creative portraits of actors and actresses of Italian cinema, *Soviet Screen* was true to tradition, giving priority to the classics.

In particular, film critic I. Rubanova argued that the legendary Anna Magnani (1908–1973) “became a heroine of the screen when, theoretically, she could least of all become one. Post-war

Italian cinema, in the name of truth, abandoned the canons of traditional cinema, its "stars" and its actors. The creators of the first post-war paintings called themselves neo-realists. They wanted to tell the truth, only the truth, nothing but the truth... Anna Magnani was not inferior to non-professionals in the life and everyday authenticity of her incarnations. Her appearance, gestures, reactions on the screen were exactly like their "raw emotionality". ... In fact, in almost all films she played the care of daily bread, the care of children, the care of her husband. For some reason, in the movies where Magnani starred, the man always needed her support. ... Beloved, her main motive – the motive of motherhood – acquired from Magnani such a wealth of psychological nuances. The second reality was the beginning of a second reality without ceasing to characterize a particular person" (Rubanova, 1975: 18-19).

Quite a lot of materials of different genres were devoted to the *Soviet Screen* and another star of Italian and world cinema – Sophia Loren. It was noted that she often had to play the character of a woman is somewhat vulgar and hectic, simple-hearted and treacherous, vengeful, faithful, sinful, but invariably attractive. ... in these works, Loren managed to demonstrate the mastery of disguise, comedic lightness, tact and great taste ... But, perhaps more importantly, they served as a kind of warm-up before taking off, which ensured Loren's place among the largest dramatic actresses in world cinema (Bernadsky, 1978: 16 -17).

One can also agree that in the first role, Lucia Bosè (1931–2020) albeit half a hint, she stated the main feature of her manner: the more tense the situation, the more restrained the reaction. Bosè's characters always, as it were, "remain silent", do not allow themselves to fully reveal themselves, and this imposes on them the stamp of significance, forcing them to assume an intense inner life. ... The acting "texture" of Bosè naturally attracted the directors of the "hard style". But ... she was often invited to comedy roles in simple pictures telling about "beautiful but poor", "poor but happy", where the same image of a nice girl with honest aspirations and a small dream of marrying a good guy varied" (Kopylova, 1972: 16).

As in the 1960s, *Soviet Screen* continued to write about the roles of Stefania Sandrelli (Basmanov, 1976; Bogemsky, 1979: 16-17).

Film critic G. Bogemsky, in our opinion, very accurately noted that Sandrelli had neither the aggressive beauty of Sophia Loren, nor the soft femininity of Gina Lollobrigida, nor the exotic charm of Claudia Cardinale, but somehow quietly, gradually it was she who became the expressor of the main features modern Italian on the screen... Each meeting with Stefania Sandrelli on the screen is interesting, but "I especially want to see her again in the image of an Italian contemporary – a simple woman with a difficult character and a difficult fate" (Bogemsky, 1979: 16-17).

He positively assessed the *Soviet Screen* and the work of younger Italian movie stars at that time: Florinda Bolkan (Florinda..., 1976: 18), Ornella Muti (Bogolepova, 1984: 18) and Eleanora Giorgi (Bogolepova, 1984: 18).

Among the actors of the Italian cinema of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s, *Soviet Screen*, of course, relied on a prominent representative of the progressive "political cinema" – Gian Maria Volonté (1933–1994).

Film expert E. Victorova wrote about this outstanding actor as follows: "Volonté – communist, actor, fighter. He is hated by neo-fascists – they do not forgive him for participating in the class struggle of the proletariat. ... Gifted with a bright stage appearance, an exceptional talent for impersonation, penetration into the depths of the human psyche, the art of facial expressions, it was in the cinema that he managed to realize his enormous potential as an artist, able to move from heroism and romantic pathos to grotesque, satire, caricature, recreate on the screen authentic, reliable, psychologically accurate characters of people and, above all, images of fighters and rebels against social injustice, violence and evil. ... In the difficult conditions of the aggravation of ideological and class battles in the capitalist world, in the context of the crisis of leftist trends in politics, ideology, culture in Italy, the communist Volonté demonstrates the maturity of civic ideals in art through his life practice, his creative destiny" (Victorova, 1979: 16-17).

There were similar political accents in the article by the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) about the work of another Italian star, Franco Nero. It was stated here that this one of the most significant and serious actors of the Italian screen. ... It seems to us that the role of Matteotti is a kind of ideological program for a young actor and his success in it is a guarantee of further disclosure of the richest possibilities inherent in this interesting, thoughtful artist, who felt the urgent need that the progressive cinema of Italy feels in a positive hero. ... Italian progressive

cinema has acquired another gifted actor capable of embodying the image of an active and conscious fighter for justice (Bogemsky, 1974: 14-15).

At the same time, of course, the *Soviet Screen* did not forget to tell its readers about the work of famous Italian actors who specialized in comedy and tragicomedy in the 1970s: Alberto Sordi (1920–2003) (Lesovoy, 1969; Poklonov, 1976: 18-19), Nino Manfredi (1921-2004) (Bogemsky, 1983: 19-20; Yampolsky, 1977); Ugo Tognazzi (1922–1990) (Yampolsky, 1977: 14-15), Giancarlo Giannini (Bogemsky, 1983: 16-17).

In particular, film critic G. Bogemsky wrote that Manfredi's talent combines elements of sad and funny, tragic and comic, intertwined closely, as in life. Perhaps the main feature of Manfredi's characters is the human warmth they radiate. The heroes of Manfredi are humane, sometimes somewhat simple-hearted, they are distinguished by inner decency and purity, even when they are not perfect in their relations with society, law, and those around them. They are deeply democratic, truly people, they are able to believe in something (with a complete rejection of religion, we note), fantasize, live a dream (Bogemsky, 1983: 19-20).

And the film critic (at that time) M. Yampolsky, in our opinion, reasonably noted that “the ability to turn mediocrity into an object of close study is an unusually rare phenomenon in the world of cinema, because it contradicts the very concept of a movie star. ... The active, dynamic, sharp, almost clownish character of Tognazzi is empty and empty at the same time. Its external activity does not express anything – it is a roaring volcano charged with straw, spiritual amorphousness is hidden under a temperamental gesture” (Yampolsky, 1977: 14-15).

The *Soviet Screen* could not pass by the work of the extremely popular Italian singer and actor Adriano Celentano (Bogemsky, 1979: 18; Mudrov, 1984: 22).

In his article, G. Bogemsky wrote that Adriano is surprisingly plastic, as if thousands of elastic little springs are embedded in it. And this is explained by his innate musicality, which he is all imbued with: even when Celentano does not sing, but only moves around the screen or on stage, he seems to be subject to some kind of internal rhythm, some kind of melody living in him ... A significant event was for Adriano participated in the film *Serafino* (Italy-France, 1968) directed by Pietro Germi. ... he got the opportunity to work under a big director, playing the title role. And the results were significant: Adriano created a kind of comedic image of a country boy, hiding under the feigned rudeness, uncouth natural sharp mind, nobility, rejection of lies, greed and money-grubbing (Bogemsky, 1979: 18).

So, referring to the cinematography of Western countries, *Soviet Screen* in the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s, for the most part, wrote about American, French and Italian actors.

The *Soviet Screen* wrote little about actors from other Western countries. In particular, positive portraits of actors can be mentioned here: Max von Sydow (1929–2020) (Mikhalkovich, 1983: 17), Harriet Anderson (Surkova, 1975: 6-7), Irene Papas (1926–2022) (Chernenko, 1985: 21) and Fernando Rey (1917–1994) (Belenky, 1976: 17).

- interviews with Western filmmakers

As in previous years, in the *Soviet Screen*, as a rule, interlocutors were selected from among the most "progressive artists".

Among American filmmakers, the first place was given to Stanley Kramer (1913–2001) (Bobikov, 1973; Chertok, 1971: 14-15).

The "progressive" political position was also emphasized in an interview with Sidney Pollack (1934–2008) (Chertok, 1972: 14), Norman Jewison (Andreev, 1985: 20-21), Ellen Burstyn (Ellen..., 1977: 16), Jessica Lange (Salner, 1985: 20-21).

And, of course, in an interview with Kevin Brownlow, one of the directors of the anti-Nazi film *It Happened Here* (UK, 1965): “Instead of a historical film from the Second World War, we began to make an anti-fascist grotesque film. In this film, outwardly objective, fascism was supposed to expose itself. But the main theme of the film is not fascists, but collaborators. The picture is addressed mainly to those “passive” people who flaunt that they are, they say, “not interested in politics” (Quoted in: Markov, 1972: 15).

A similar approach was taken to the choice of interviewed French, Italian, Spanish and West German filmmakers.

So the famous director Marcel Carné (1906–1996) told the correspondents of the *Soviet Screen* that “those who take on serious political topics open the way for the revival of French cinema. More recently, French producers did not even want to hear about a political film, but if the commercial success of some of these films opens a new, political direction in our cinema, this will



enable many directors to express themselves and their time” (Quoted by: [Chernenko, Chertok, 1972: 17-18](#)).

Politics and anti-fascist themes also came to the fore in an interview with Juan Antonio Bardem (1922–2002) ([Gerber, 1978: 16-17](#); [Vetrova, 1981: 18](#)), Yves Boisset ([Chertok, 1974: 12-13](#)), Ivo Gorani (1924–2015) ([Markova, 1971](#)), Florestano Vancini (1926–2008) ([Khovrin, 1974: 16](#)), Giuseppe De Santis (1917–1997) ([De Santis, 1980](#)), Valerio Zurlini (1926–1982) ([Chernenko, 1969: 16](#)), René Clement (1913–1996) ([Ignatov, 1983: 18-19](#)), Ricardo Cucciolla (1924–1999) ([Chertok, 1975: 12-13](#)), Giuliano Montaldo ([Montaldo, 1971](#)), Franco Nero ([Sulkin, 1982: 16-17](#)), Francesco Rosi (1922–2015) ([Talov, 1979: 15](#)), Peter Fleishman (1937–2021) ([Krasnova, 1984: 18-19](#)), Volker Schlöndorff ([Nadezhdy..., 1973: 17](#)).

In particular, the *Soviet Screen* quoted the words actor Ricardo Cucciolla: “I wanted to convey to my contemporaries the greatness of the spirit of Gramsci, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party” (Quoted from: [Chertok, 1975: 12-13](#)).

Even in an interview with Sophia Loren, the main focus was on her story about how the Italian fascists opposed the melodrama *Sunflowers (I Girasoli)*. Italy-France-USSR, 1970), in which the actress played the main role: “The film is a huge success. True, there were dissatisfied voices. They belong to those who cannot like the story of simple and honest people torn apart by war. These are the voices of the fascists. Did you know that in 1966 the Italian security service uncovered a conspiracy of South Tyrolean fascists? Hitler's successors marked their plan with the cipher “Sophie Loren” and planned the murder of the most prominent Italian actors and actresses as revenge for their participation in Italian anti-fascist films. They were going to start with me...” (Quoted from: [Senin, 1971: 18](#)).

But, of course, there were also benevolent interviews on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* without accentuated politicization: with Claude Jade (1948–2006) ([Claude..., 1981: 17](#)), Annie Girardot (1931–2011) ([Karaseva, 1984: 20-21](#)), Gina Lollobrigida (1927–2023) ([Markov, 1974: 19-20](#)), Claudia Cardinale ([Claudia..., 1980: 17-18](#)), Marcello Mastroianni (1924–1996) ([Dva..., 1969](#)), Sara Montiel (1928–2013) ([Kudrin, 1984: 19-20](#)), Michelle Morgan (1920–2016) ([Lipkov, 1972: 17](#)), Alberto Sordi (1920–2003) ([Galina, 1985: 20-22](#)) and others.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the conclusion that the principle of choosing cinematic personalities to paint portraits of Western actors and directors in 1969–1985 remained stable in the *Soviet Screen*.

This magazine readily wrote about “progressive filmmakers” who went unnoticed in negative statements against the USSR and participation in anti-Soviet films. Especially if these filmmakers came to the Moscow International Festival and spoke positively about the Soviet Union.

One of the favorite subjects of the *Soviet Screen* within the framework of foreign themes is Western actors as “victims of Hollywood”, evidence of the “tragedy of the artist in the bourgeois world.” In this vein, the magazine wrote, for example, about Judy Garland (1922–1969) and Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962).

But if any of the famous Western actors was involved in the creation of anti-Soviet films and/or films “glorifying the American military,” the magazine could strike him with “heavy artillery” on its pages. This fate awaited the Hollywood actor and director John Wayne (1907–1979).

Of course, about some actors and actresses (for example, about Yves Montand (1921–1991) and Simone Signoret (1921–1985), who were “fined” after the Czechoslovak events of 1968), *Soviet Screen* did not have anything positive to write about before the onset of “perestroika” possibilities.

However, there were many less politicized articles about Western actors on the pages of the magazine.

As for interviews with Western filmmakers, as in previous years, the *Soviet Screen* magazine selected interlocutors from among the most “progressive artists.” For example, among American filmmakers, the first place was given to Stanley Kramer (1913–2001). The progressive political position was also emphasized in interviews with Sydney Pollack (1934–2008), Norman Jewison, Ellen Burstyn, Jessica Lange and other Western directors and actors.

In general, during the period 1969–1985, the ideological positions of the *Soviet Screen* magazine remained unchanged.

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## Adolescent Media Literacy in Social Media Utilization

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### Abstract

World communication media is now increasingly diversified and widespread, especially communication media connected to the internet such as social media. This phenomenon also occurs in Indonesia. Indonesia, as a developing country, is reported to have the majority of teenagers using social media. Teenagers will quickly be affected by negative impacts if they are not equipped with media literacy skills, especially considering the rapid flow of information circulating on social media. This research looks at the condition of digital literacy in rural Indonesia, namely Banyumas Regency, Sumbang District, and Gandatapa Village in Central Java Province.

The Gandatapa Youth Village teenagers who took part in this research came from a variety of different backgrounds, both in their educational and economic levels. This research data was collected through focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews with key informants in Gandatapa Village, Sumbang District, Banyumas.

Based on the findings, the young generation in Gandatapa Village has a high level of digital literacy. This is demonstrated by their ability to search for information according to what they want, the ability to analyze reference sources, and being able to evaluate whether the information is true or a hoax, as well as distributing content that suits their needs on social media.

**Keywords:** media literacy, adolescents, social media, teenagers, media utilization.

### 1. Introduction

The usage of communication media, particularly social media, has become quite normal and perhaps a basic necessity in the modern world. As a result, social media is very popular in society. Social media users in July 2023 were recorded at 4.88 billion or 60.6 % of the global population (Kepios, 2023). Some of the most widely used social media include Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and WeChat.

Communication media in Indonesia is also expanding and diversifying, particularly communication media linked through the Internet. Social media is one of the most popular internet communication media among Indonesians. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) report, social media users in Indonesia increased by 6.78 % in 2022 compared to the previous year. In Indonesia, the number of active social media users will be 210.03 million. APJII also discovered that teenagers account for 99.16 % of all social media users, followed by adults (Bayu, 2022).

The adolescent age group is in the identity crisis period, thus their curiosity is increased, they are interested in trying new things, and they are easily exposed to their surroundings (Sarwono, 2013). Furthermore, the internet service has a function similar to two blades, which might be positive or negative. As a result, experts highlighting this, the use of the internet in adolescents

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must be understood seriously, given the high use of the internet in adolescents and the characteristics of these adolescents (Hakim et al., 2016). Everyone's internet freedom makes it easy to propagate and fabricate information that cannot be accounted for. This creates issues, particularly among young and adolescent users (Novianti, Riyanto, 2018).

The following offers a remedy for adolescent internet use in order to avoid unwanted consequences. One of them is adolescent media literacy. The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create/distribute information on various media platforms for daily life purposes is defined as media literacy (Saputra et al., 2018). Users with media literacy skills can not only consume or receive information from social media in this manner but also filter it, allowing them to be more critical and intelligent in their use of social media.

Adolescents are one of the targets of state empowerment, as they are assets that will decide the continuity of leadership (Fitryarini, 2016). As a result, research on media literacy in teenagers is predicted to be able to make adolescents more critical in their use of media, particularly social media, in order to avoid its harmful impact. The subjects of this study are adolescents from Gandatapa Village, Sumbang Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency who joined the Gandatapa Youth group. The village teens were chosen based on a poll conducted in November 2022, which revealed that the Gandatapa Youth Organization is dominated by teenagers. Furthermore, Gandatapa Village's internet connectivity has increased greatly since 2020, resulting in considerable internet usage among Gandatapa adolescents.

This research is pioneering since there has never been a study that focuses on the degree of media literacy of adolescents in Gandatapa Village. Based on earlier research on the empowerment of catfish farming in the Gandatapa Youth Organization group (Suwarsito, Mustafidah, 2017). The distinction between this research and earlier research is not only in the object of study but also in the research topic. Because the subjects of this study are new teenage members of the Gandatapa Youth Organization who were appointed in 2021. These members differ from the Youth Organization members studied before by Suwarsito and H. Mustafidah.

## 2. Materials and methods

Media literacy, according to the National Leadership Conference on Media Education, is the ability to access, understand, evaluate, and disseminate messages in their different formats (Juditha, 2013). Similarly, there are four basic media literacy skills: 1) access, 2) comprehension, 3) analysis, and 4) production (Livingstone, 2004). The ability to access media technically, the ability to understand the code or symbols of media content, the ability to analyze is the ability to relate the code or symbols of media content to a broader context, and the ability to produce is the ability to create writing/images/video/sound/ combined in the media (Sari, Prasetya, 2022). This ability can also demonstrate how a person can select or filter the content of messages transmitted in the media amid the increase of fake information. A person can tell which message content is beneficial and which is detrimental for consumption (Lestari, Dwijayanti, 2020).

Meanwhile, media literacy skills can be measured by looking at 1) the ability and willingness to make efforts to understand media content, pay attention, and filter out distractions, 2) understanding and appreciation of the power of media messages, 3) the ability to distinguish emotional and rational reactions in responding to media content or acting according to media content, 4) development of higher expectations of media content, 5) knowledge of media content.

Media literacy skills aim to help users develop a good understanding on all sides, especially related to social media. Users can control the influence of the media so that they are not easily exposed to the impact of the media, and media literacy also makes users able to distinguish between media messages that can improve the quality of one's life and media messages that "damage" one's life (Rahmi, 2013).

Social media is an element of the evolution of new media. Social media is internet-based media that allows people to engage with one another. Social media is a technology that boosts a person's ability to share, collaborate with others, and take collective action (Fuch, 2014). Social media can also impact public opinion by delivering media messages (Ardianto et al., 2014). Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideology and technology of web 2.0 which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content, then connect with friends to share information and communicate (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010).

Nowadays, there are more and more types of social media. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information with Katadata Insight Center, the highest

social media used in Indonesia is Whatsapp, followed by Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Tiktok, Telegram, Twitter and Line (Bayu, 2022). Social media users are increasing because in addition to its ease of access, it also functions to provide entertainment and information. Especially with the various increasingly sophisticated social media features that can be utilized for various aspects of literacy within the framework of the educational process (Kazakov, 2021)

Social media is also a necessity for village communities in marketing their superior products to the wider community. Social media is a medium for promoting village potential such as promoting village superior products, marketing MSME products, and promoting tourist attractions. Therefore, the knowledge and skills of village communities are needed so that they can access the internet optimally (Nuryanti et al., 2021).

Adolescence is a psychological transition from childhood to early adulthood (Sari, Prasetya, 2022). Adolescents range in age from 10 to 24 years old and are not married, according to BKKBN. This age group is distinguished by a high level of curiosity, an eagerness to try new things, and an openness to their surroundings, particularly by their peers (Sarwono, 2013). Similarly, adolescents have a tendency to make decisions without thinking them through (Isni et al., 2018). This is what underpins the numerous empowerment efforts undertaken for the adolescent age group to avoid harmful conduct.

Meanwhile, village is a community of less than 2,500 people who live in close proximity to one another (Aziz et al., 2020). Adolescents who reside in rural settings are referred to as village adolescents or rural adolescents. Because many rural adolescents now have decent internet connections, it is vital to investigate the amount of their media literacy in order to make effective use of the internet in the present and future.

This study employs a qualitative approach with data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to thoroughly and comprehensively examine the level of media literacy of teenagers in Gandatapa Village. This study's data sources are separated into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary data sources provide data to researchers directly. Primary data sources for this study were in-depth interviews and focus groups. Meanwhile, secondary data sources in this case that give data indirectly to researchers originate from documents and other materials connected to the research aims (Sugiyono, 2013).

This study used purposive sampling to determine informants since they were chosen based on specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). These variables are 1) members of the Gandatapa youth organization, 2) the age of adolescence as defined by the population and family planning agency, and 3) youth. This study will be carried out in Gandatapa Village, Sumbang Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency, which has had substantially improved internet connection for the past three years. Meanwhile, the focus of this study is on nine village youth members of Gandatapa youth organization who are predominantly of adolescent age. The teens of youth organization are members who were officially appointed in early 2021.

### 3. Discussion

There are four digital literacy skills that can be discussed in this section. This capability is the result of analysis of findings in the field. There are ability to access, ability to analyze, ability to evaluation, ability to create and distribution information. Each part will explain one by one.

*First, ability to access.* Based on the findings of the focus groups and interviews with ten informants, researchers can conclude that all of them are active users of social media. The informants said that they utilize social media to meet certain requirements such as communication, information access, or enjoyment. The informants also stated that they can make accounts on the social media platforms they utilize. This demonstrates that the informants possess one of the digital literacy abilities, notably the ability to operate and successfully access a computer (Sabrina, 2018).

Informants use the following social media platforms: WhatsApp, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, Twitter, and Line. Instagram and WhatsApp are the most popular social media platforms among informants. According to the report, Instagram has a variety of useful and simple features. WhatsApp, on the other hand, is the most popular media platform among the general public at the moment. Adequate internet access is required for using young social media. The use of various social media can be caused by a relationship between content and outcomes (Slutskyi, 2023). Furthermore, informants are from the millennial and Z generations who possess profound mobile device abilities. Generation Z is the first generation to born and live in the digital world,

they cannot imagine their life without gadgets and the internet, this is accompanied by higher literacy rate too (Pechinkina, 2023).

The use of social media research revealed that the factors of social media use vary by individual (Zainuddin, 2006). These variables include the type of medium used, the location of access, and the length and frequency of access. According to another research, the Graphic, Visualization, and Usability Center at Georgia Institute of Technology, there are three types of social media users based on access intensity: heavy users, medium users, and light users (Hamka, 2015). Heavy users are those who use social media for more than 40 hours each month. Medium users are social media users who spend 10 - 40 hours each month on the internet. Light users are social media users who spend fewer than 10 hours a month on the internet. According to the research findings, all informants are medium internet users who spend between 10 and 40 hours each month on the internet. The average time spent per day on the informant's personal social media is 8.5 hours. However, there are research result in one region of the US which actually say that the experience of using social media does not always have a positive effect on media literacy skills (Powers et al., 2018).

*Second, ability to analysis.* Analysis is a skill that can assist a person in describing the shape of messages, structures, segments, message impact, and other factors. An analysis is also related to the ability to edit, seek, and select information that has been tailored to individual needs (Priambodo, 2019).

In terms of information access, informants stated that they choose the information and content they consume on social media. The content and information they consume are tailored to their specific needs in order to support their enthusiasm. According to the informants, everyone's information demands must be different, thus they must be cautious when looking for the information they require. Informants carefully verify the accuracy of the information they receive and the source of the information. The informants also reported multiple instances of bogus news or improper items appearing on their social network sites. There are certain informants who simply ignore anything that does not meet their requirements. This demonstrates that the informants have a critical mindset when responding to and evaluating content. This critical approach is one way to apply the basic elements of digital literacy, such as comprehending different user settings, network performance, and digital communication (Belshaw, 2011). Person has strong digital literacy abilities when they can detect the accuracy of information, pick information, and have more authority and control to choose the most accurate information (Potter, 2001).

Third ability in media literacy is ability to evaluate. The informants recognized that social media has both positive and harmful consequences. Media literacy categorizes in seven qualities of media literacy, one of which is knowledge of the impact of media on individuals and society (Silverblatt, 2007). As a result, they believe that digital literacy is critical for Generation Z. Furthermore, access to all forms of information is now quite simple; digital literacy is required. It would be even better if digital literacy were socialized in schools. The use of social media is a type of internet freedom of expression. On the other hand, social media is frequently used in criminal situations such as hoaxes, hate speech, fraud, and so on (Sabrina, 2018). As a result, education in digital literacy is required for Generation Z in order for them to correctly use social media and minimize the crime rate on social media. Therefore, media literacy education is needed for teenagers both at school and at home (Notley et al., 2018). According to research in Ukraine, the development of media literacy and media culture is very important factor in shaping the moral and ethical qualities and civic position of students (Romaniuk, 2022).

*Fourth, ability to create and distribute information.* Some informants have utilized social media to promote their enterprises. In addition to receiving information, informants actively generate material based on their interests and passions. The content created includes information about agriculture, games, travel, and other topics. According to this assertion, informants are not merely bystanders, but actively research and create works based on their specific knowledge. Media literacy education aims at students' applying their critical thinking skills to media messages and creating media texts (Federov, Mikhaleva, 2020). In our postdigital age, critical media literacy has a crucial role in conceptualization development, and understanding of new forms of intelligence we would like to live with in the future (Jandric, 2019). Social media has been used as much as possible to obtain vital information and to provide beneficial information for others.

The education level of the informants is indirectly related to the level of digital literacy. Informants with undergraduate education tend to have the ability to create and disseminate

messages from digital media more carefully and responsibly. This not only applies to the case of digital literacy, but also affects the level of financial literacy (Aziz, 2021). Education can be said to have an important role in all aspects of human life. Media literacy is an emergent field in developed countries and became an integral part of the school system and has been integrated in the educational curriculum (Munawar, 2021). Generally, all students and education practitioners should pay special attention to factors affecting in improving media literacy as a basic capability in using media (Wang, 2019).

#### 4. Results

Gandatapa is one of the villages located on the slopes of Mount Slamet, precisely in Sumbang District, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia. Sumbang Sub-district has 544 hectares and is made up of eight villages: Banjarsari Kulon, Banjarsari Wetan, Ciberem, Kotayasa, Limpakuwus, Gandatapa, Sikapat, and Susukan. Gandatapa Village has an average temperature of 290 degrees Celsius due to its location on the mountain slopes. Sirapan, Dakom, Karang Petir, Blembeng, Cilwek, Gandatapa, Brubahan, and Legok are the six neighborhoods that make up Gandatapa Village. Gandatapa Village contains natural attractions such as Curug Ceheng as well as historical treasures such as Ronggeng Temple. Gandatapa Village also has a health center, the Sumbang 2 Community Health Center.

According to the Population Administration Information System (SIAK) (Sidesa, 2023), Gandatapa Village had a total population of 8,491 people in 2020, with 4,356 men and 4,135 women. The number of residents by age group is known, with the 60-69 age group occupying the lowest position with 224 individuals, and the 40-59 age group occupying the greatest position with 782 people. The total population of people aged 10 to 24 is 631 people.

Gandatapa Village's internet connectivity has improved since 2020. Switching to social media has also caused changes in communication media. The existence of social media that provides comprehensive functionality makes it easier for users to use as a medium of communication. This has rendered the population, particularly youngsters, reliant on social media.

The informant profiles in this study are youths from Gandatapa Village who use social media on a daily basis. The majority of these informants are known to be digitally literate, as evidenced by their ability to explain and apply their understanding of digital literacy in their daily lives during the interview.

Social media is a communication channel that is inextricably linked to people's lives. To function, social media requires an internet connection. The internet network has now reached all regions of Indonesia, even isolated villages. Gandatapa Village, for example, is located in Sumbang District, Banyumas Regency. Internet connectivity has improved in this town, making it easier for individuals to utilize social media.

According to the findings of in-depth interviews and focus groups, informants have been using social media since they were in junior high school. The utilization of social media is based on digital communication requirements. Informants' communication demands are related to the need to find information, communicate information, and add informants' perspectives to something. According to the sources, social media provides the most up-to-date information faster. Twitter and Instagram are two social media platforms that can deliver up-to-the-minute information. These changes have reduced the usage of traditional mass media as a source of information, such as television and newspapers. Teens can and should be involved in effort to change traditional literacy teaching because they bring perspectives grounded in their own experiences as readers, writers, and learners (Frankel et al., 2018).

Media literacy allows people to judge if something they read or engage with is credible, dealing with both the messages and pressures from advertisers and marketing companies (Gibson, Connolly, 2023). Media literacy include abilities to read and write, to distinguish fake from the truth and check facts: to distinguish opinions from facts: to recognize the emotional background of the message, to think critically, to evaluate the message in terms of the opposition good-bad in contemporary studies. Various measurement instruments, such as New Media Literacy, Critical Thinking, Individual Competence Framework, and the main skills of digital media literacy, can be used to assess the literacy level of rural adolescents. The indications that can be measured in the idea of New Media Literacy are functional consuming, functional presuming, critical consuming, and critical presuming. The Critical Thinking concept can assess the ability to comprehend the content and function of media while also ensuring the accuracy of the information collected.

Meanwhile, the idea of Individual Competence Framework can assess social competence, namely communicative abilities, as well as personal competence, which includes usage skills and critical comprehension. According to research about assessment technology, in order to conduct digital literacy, a technology assessment is also required in order to determine the new technology utilized by the community based on their abilities and conditions (Nuryanti et al., 2020). Current educational practices are becoming increasingly anachronistic within a world in which knowledge, learning, and relationships are being re-defined in digital environments (Burnett, 2010). Gaining insight into young perceptions and experiences is paramount for policymakers and researchers to move beyond top-down development of media literacy initiatives and improve future study designs (Leyn et al., 2021; Zou'bi, 2021).

The informant profiles of nine people who were interviewed about the problems under investigation can be seen in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** General Conditions Related to Social Media

Initials	Gender	Age	Education Level	Jobs
AB	Male	20 years	Vocational High School	Private Employee
H	Male	22 years old	Undergraduate	Student
V	Male	22 years old	Vocational High School	Sailors
DA	Male	20 years	Undergraduate	Student
BP	Male	22 years old	Undergraduate	Student
FA	Male	18 years old	Vocational High School	Private Employee
AN	Male	21 years old	Vocational High School	Private Employee
RJ	Male	18 years old	Vocational High School	Private Employee
PR	Female	18 years old	Undergraduate	Student

Source: Primer Data, 2023

The findings of measuring the level of new media literacy can be split into three categories: low, medium, and high. The results of focus groups with adolescents in Gandatapa Village to assess their degree of social media literacy are displayed in the (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Degree of Social Media Literacy

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Literacy Level</i>
Ability to Access	High
Analyzing Ability	High
Ability to Evaluate	High
Ability to Create/Distribute Information	High

Source : Primer Data (2023)

## 5. Conclusion

Digital literacy is a key provision for social media users. Gandatapa Village teenagers, as a generation raised in the digital era, use social media extensively every day. Of course, this is balanced by their adequate grasp of digital literacy. According to the findings of interviews and focus groups, Gandatapa Village teenagers show a high degree of digital literacy. This is demonstrated by their ability to use gadgets, computers, and the internet. Furthermore, they have a strong ability to locate and respond to information. Teenagers in Gandatapa Village are also aware of the positive and negative effects of the Internet, and they agree on the importance of adolescent capacity building.

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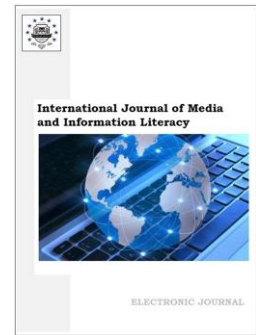
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## Gaps in Media Literacy Education in Turkey and Case Study on a Sample Project Implementation from the USA

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### Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the current status of initiatives launched in the early 2000s in Turkey aimed at media literacy education. This evaluation focuses on the position of Media Literacy courses within the curriculum at different levels of education. Another study objective is to draw attention to the significant gap in this field while examining the policies and practices developed for media literacy education in Turkey. Following the assessment of Turkey, research on media literacy education in the United States has been summarized. In this research, conducted using the case study method, the project titled *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools*, initiated as part of Project Look Sharp (PLS) at Ithaca College, has been examined as a case example. Within the scope of the case study, discussions were held with the implementers of this exemplary project, direct participation was ensured in project workshops, records of various meetings related to the project were transcribed, and data were collected from media content related to the project. The aim was to provide an in-depth understanding of qualitative case study analysis. The researcher endeavors to build a model by evaluating the outcomes derived from the identified situation.

**Keywords:** media, literacy, media literacy, media literacy education, case study, information literacy, libraries, school libraries, school librarians, ML3 project.

### 1. Introduction

This research aims to evaluate approaches, policies, and practices concerning media literacy education in Turkey. Specifically, it examines the positioning of media literacy courses and their integration into the curriculum. Additionally, the study seeks to identify significant gaps in media literacy education policies in Turkey. Following the assessment of Turkey, a brief review of media literacy education research in the United States is conducted. Using a case study method, the analysis focuses on Project Look Sharp (PLS), operating as a media literacy initiative at Ithaca College since 1996, and the *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy Project* initiated in 2021. The objective is to provide an in-depth understanding using qualitative case study methods. By evaluating the situation in Turkey, the research aims to construct a model for media literacy studies in the country, taking into account existing deficiencies.

The research questions/problems addressed in this study, starting from the title, can be articulated as follows:

– When compared with the sample project examined in the case study, does media literacy education in Turkey hold sufficient importance within current educational programs? Are there any gaps in this regard?

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- What is the level of media literacy education received by teachers currently teaching Media Literacy courses in Turkey and those who will become future teachers?
- How can an evaluation be made regarding school libraries and librarians in Turkey when compared with the sample project examined in the case study? Upon examination of the outputs of the sample project, what role can libraries and librarians play in the process of media literacy education?

#### *Media and media literacy*

The significance of media literacy stands out in societal life. Understanding its definition is crucial in comprehending its impact on daily practices. Media is typically defined as technological tools that convey messages, categorized as print or electronic mediums (Potter, 2004; Sperry, Scheibe, 2022). Media content should involve a message conveyed through language, visuals, or sound, produced via technology, and disseminated to large audiences. This definition indicates the frequent encounter with media content in everyday life.

When posed the question what is media to different groups, it is often described as a list containing mass communication tools. Media is characterized by the transmission of messages through visuals, language, or sound. These messages are distributed to large audiences collectively, and recipients and producers may be in different locations. Books and maps can also be considered as media. However, some technologies (e.g., personal emails, and text messages) may not fit this definition. Media literacy should focus on the content of the message (Scheibe, Rogow, 2012).

Media serves as a fundamental tool for cultural expression and communication today. Utilizing media is essential for active participation in public life, as it functions as a significant resource in managing relationships, interpreting them, and defining our identities. Media functions as a significant resource in managing relationships, interpreting them, and defining our identities (Butler, 2020). Therefore, media literacy and education are of vital importance.

Literacy is associated with effective communication and requires reading and writing messages using various symbols. Nowadays, every form of communication requires specific skills (Hobbs, Cooper Moore, 2013).

As media transforms us today, media literacy emphasizes analyzing and interpreting messages. These analyses should be based on practical analyses and integrated with various disciplines (Lewis, 2021). Media literacy education should be based on a multifaceted approach and integrated with different disciplines.

#### *Media literacy education and current situation in Turkey*

Media literacy education aims to reach broader goals beyond the skills of accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating media content, as defined in the concept of media literacy. C. Scheibe, F. Rogow (Scheibe, Rogow, 2012) noted that many media literacy educators primarily define their tasks as teaching media by emphasizing the analysis and critique of media messages. However, they also emphasized that media literacy education should encompass much more than just the ability to analyze various media formats and content. Rather than merely teaching media, it is crucial to foster questioning skills among students within the framework of media literacy's core objectives, enabling them to learn how to use new information effectively and providing an environment conducive to effective communication through various media content. In such a process, it can be said that students and teachers learn how to become literate in the media world from each other in a rich and integrated environment. This environment will also help to prevent potential mismatches between media literacy goals and classroom practices. This approach, which elaborates on the importance of media literacy education in contemporary times, can be observed in various countries, particularly through projects implemented in educational settings. However, this study first provides information about media literacy education in Turkey.

The inclusion of media literacy on the educational agenda in Turkey does not date back many years compared to global developments. It began with the organization of a Communication Summit in February 2003 under the auspices of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), with contributions from the Directorate General of Press and Information and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). One of the recommendations presented was adding a Media Literacy Course to primary and secondary school curricula to raise awareness among children and youth and protect them from harmful content. Subsequently, in 2004, the issue was again raised within the Media and Violence Working Group established under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In May 2005, the RTÜK, Ministry of National Education (MEB), and

Marmara University Faculty of Communication collaborated to organize the First International Media Literacy Conference, which also drew attention from academia (Sezer, Yılmaz Sert, 2019).

It is not incorrect to state that the initiation of media literacy education by state-affiliated institutions coincided with the rise of private television channels in Turkey, particularly during the 1990s, and the observed impact of their broadcasting activities and content. Until that period, the content transmitted by state television transformed, particularly with the introduction of entertainment and gossip-oriented content, as well as the portrayal of violence, prompting the need for preventive measures regarding its infiltration into household environments and emphasizing the imperative to protect children from harmful content.

In August 2006, a protocol signed between RTÜK and the Ministry of National Education's Board of Education designated Media Literacy as an elective course in the primary education curriculum in Turkey. Initially, the course was introduced as a one-hour elective for grades 6, 7, or 8, following a pilot implementation. The first pilot implementation in 2006 involved a four-day training session in Ankara for Social Studies teachers who would deliver the course, accompanied by school visits from experts to evaluate the course through surveys. Survey results indicated significant interest in the course, prompting a need for further content elaboration. During this process, an *Elementary School Media Literacy Course Teacher's Handbook* was prepared (Altun, 2008). In 2012, the course was integrated into the curriculum for grades 7 or 8, with two hours per week allocated as an elective. However, until 2013, it was found that the course, when taught by class teachers, Turkish language teachers, or Social Studies teachers, was not effectively delivered, leading to a decision in the 2014–2015 academic year to use instructional materials instead of textbooks (Altun, 2014). Presently, as of 2023, Media Literacy remains an elective course in the primary education curriculum in Turkey, albeit not extensively included in school programs in practice. The course is not included in the secondary education curriculum (MEB, 2023). A survey of private schools in Turkey revealed that some schools implement practices related to media literacy at the middle school level within the scope of Turkish language classes, while courses such as digital content design are offered as club activities at the middle school level (TED Istanbul College, 2023; Ari College, 2023).

In addition to discussing the current status of Media Literacy education in primary and secondary education programs in Turkey, statistics related to formal education in Turkey should be shared. This would enable a broader evaluation of the course's current position in formal education. According to the latest National Education Statistics-Formal Education Report released by the Ministry of National Education, in the 2021–2022 academic year, 19,155,571 students received formal education in Turkey. These students were educated in 56,200 public schools and 14,179 private schools (MEB, 2022). Therefore, given the 19 million students engaged in the education process, the accurate analysis and evaluation of media, which holds a critical position in today's world, are of utmost importance.

#### *Media literacy course in education faculties in Turkey*

Following the general evaluation of the position of Media Literacy courses in primary and secondary education programs in Turkey, it is important to focus on the educational levels of teachers who play an active role in teaching the course. Initially, arrangements were made for the course to be taught by social studies teachers (Altun, 2008). In this section, an assessment was conducted to examine the position of Media Literacy courses in Education Faculties since 2006, along with whether they are included in relevant undergraduate programs.

Media Literacy courses at the primary and secondary education levels are observed to be taught by teachers who have graduated from the classroom teaching, Turkish Language, and Social Studies Teaching Undergraduate Programs in initial implementations. According to the data from the Council of Higher Education (YÖKATLAS, 2023), as of March 2023, there are 102 Classroom Teaching programs in the Faculty of Education, Department of Basic Education; 66 Social Studies Teaching Programs in the Departments of Turkish and Social Sciences Education; and 104 Turkish Language Teaching Programs in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The examination of the lesson plans of undergraduate programs in classroom teaching, Turkish Language Teaching, and Social Studies Teaching at the Faculty of Education first accessed the information from the Higher Education Council (YÖK) Education and Teaching Department sources, referred to as the Former Curriculum-Lesson Plan (YÖK, 2023a, 2023b, 2023b). In this research conducted on these plans, it was determined that the Media Literacy Course was not

included. These lesson plans, which were implemented before 2018, were replaced with the use of "new curriculum" plans after 2018.

Different faculties of education were selected for the new lesson plans, and the shared new curriculum plans of the relevant departments were examined. During this review, lessons were categorized as Vocational Knowledge (VK), Field Education (FE), and General Culture (GC). For example, in the undergraduate lesson plans of the Department of Classroom Teaching at Marmara University, the keyword media literacy was searched, and it was observed to be included in the Turkish Teaching course within the IV. Semester. Furthermore, the Media Literacy Course was included among the Elective General Culture Courses (Marmara..., 2023a). However, in the lesson plans of the Turkish Language Teaching undergraduate program in the same faculty, it was observed that the concept of media literacy or the course itself was not included (Marmara..., 2023b). In the lesson plans of the Social Studies Teaching undergraduate program at Bursa Uludağ University Faculty of Education, no information regarding media literacy was found (Bursa..., 2023). Some faculties of education in certain universities have a mandatory Media Literacy Course, which differs from the standard lesson plans (Anadolu..., 2023).

At this stage of the study, a general review has been conducted on the topics of media, media literacy, and media literacy education in Turkey. Subsequently, to establish a connection with the ML3 Project conducted by PLS in the United States and to enable a comparative evaluation, a literature review will be presented on the relationship between media literacy education and school libraries in Turkey, which has been selected as a case study.

#### *School libraries, media literacy education and libraries in Turkey*

In Turkey, school libraries have played a contributory role in the educational process. Particularly during the Republican era, this has been considered a significant topic and examined with the involvement of expert scholars in the field. For instance, in 1924, John Dewey from Columbia University, while examining the construction process of school buildings, emphasized the need to determine the locations of libraries. Similarly, in 1951, Professor Kate Wofford from the University of Florida highlighted the importance of libraries within the education system through her research on village primary schools. Furthermore, Dr. Lawrence Thompson, invited to Turkey by the Ministry of National Education between 1951 and 1952, prepared a report emphasizing the importance of school libraries in democratic life (Yılmaz, 2015). Along with these evaluations, it is now acknowledged that school libraries should not only serve as information centers but also undertake various other roles.

In recent years, along with debates about the concept of information literacy, the importance of libraries in schools has increased further. It is argued that school libraries have a positive impact on student performance and play an important role in increasing the rate of book reading (Lance, 2007). In Turkey, there are also research studies and legislative regulations on this issue.

The Regulation on School Libraries published in the *Official Gazette* in 2001 specifies the establishment of school libraries and classroom libraries in primary school institutions, the requirement for technological infrastructure readiness, and the appointment of a librarian in school libraries with a book count exceeding 3000 (Regulation..., 2001). When statistics on school libraries in Turkey are examined according to TÜİK 2021 data, there are 32,690 libraries in formal and non-formal educational institutions, and these libraries contain 34,325,612 books. According to the 2021–2022 Formal Education Statistics of the Ministry of National Education, there are 56,200 public schools and 14,179 private schools, totaling 70,379 (MoNE, 2023).

In addition to this information about school libraries in Turkey, problems encountered in practice should also be evaluated. As highlighted by the School Librarians Association in an interview, most schools lack libraries, and the physical facilities of existing libraries are inadequate (Education..., 2019).

When establishing a relationship between school libraries, librarians, and media literacy, it is necessary to involve teachers in an educational process. School libraries should support not only information literacy but also media literacy. Especially concerning accessing accurate content, school libraries should become important centers by bringing librarians and teachers together.

#### *Media literacy education, policies, practices in US*

In the United States, media literacy education has been attempted to be integrated into the curriculum aimed at teachers. These efforts have been supported by various organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English. The Institute of Media Education, established in 1993, has been one of the significant initiatives in this field. Efforts dating back to the 1970s have led to

the inclusion of media literacy elements in the educational standards of many states. However, efforts continue to inform more teachers and students (Kellner, Share, 2005).

Historically, G.M. Chen (Chen, 2007) has examined media literacy education in three stages since the 1960s: inoculation, confrontation, and transition. Educators initially adopted a protection-focused approach against the harms of media, later emphasizing the importance of a critical perspective. Since the 1980s, educators have engaged in national and international conferences to share media education curricula. Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of media education teachers and academics in the United States have been actively engaged in the global media literacy movement, participating in international, national, and regional conferences, and organizing meetings to share media education curriculum. The scale and scope of national conferences and media education have rapidly expanded during this period. In addition to organized groups in different states, the Aspen Institute, in 1992, convened the inaugural National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, bringing together educators to develop guidelines for enhancing media education in the United States. Alongside this development, various associations have begun to emerge nationwide (Chen, 2007).

In the United States, national conferences organized by institutions such as the Aspen Institute have supported the expansion of the media literacy movement. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) stands out as one of the most important organizations in this field, having published the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, 2023).

#### *Project Look Sharp (PLS) and ML3 Project*

In this study, information will be shared regarding Project Look Sharp (PLS), which has been conducting its activities as a media literacy initiative of Ithaca College since 1996, within the framework of a case study methodology, focusing on the *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools* project that began in July 2021. PLS, a non-profit, mission-oriented social assistance program based at Ithaca College in New York, USA, aims to assist educators (K-16) in developing students' critical thinking and civic engagement through media literacy materials. Founded in 1996, PLS has become an internationally recognized organization by communicating with educators from different parts of the world after its initial focus on schools in the state of New York. The PLS team conducts activities to enhance learning through media literacy. Within PLS, experts in curriculum design, research, media production, psychology, social studies, environmental education, and project management continue their research (PLS, 2023a).

With the belief that fake news and media bias polarize the country and threaten the essence of democracy, PLS considers its work to be increasingly important in recent years. PLS prepares and implements projects to share its experience of over 25 years first in schools in the state of New York and then throughout the United States. The project titled *ML3: The ML3 Initiative – ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools* is one of these projects (PLS, 2023b).

In July 2021, PLS initiated the ML3 project with a two-year grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation in collaboration with the School Library Systems Association (SLSA) of New York State. The project aims to empower librarians working in K-12 school libraries in the state of New York as leaders in media literacy education. The project also aims to ensure the integration of media literacy into the curriculum and to enhance critical thinking skills through collaboration between librarians and teachers. Initially, 19 school librarians were engaged to develop strategies and gain experience with the Constructivist Media Decoding (CMD) process. In September 2021, PLS issued a call for applications for school librarians to become ML3 librarians across the state. Within the first 5 days, over 100 school librarians applied for ML3. Initially, training sessions were conducted with the participation of 16 school librarians and 4 library managers. Throughout the remainder of the 2021/2022 academic year, participants continued to share their experiences and recommendations with ML3 Project Coordinator Susan Allen. School librarians continued to meet online and in person with PLS directors Cyndy Scheibe and Chris Sperry in small groups at different levels of education to produce lesson content on various topics discussed during the training sessions. During the project events, newspaper articles and podcasts related to the topic were shared, and a panel was organized in July 2022 (PLS, 2023b).

## **2. Materials and methods**

In this study, the method of case study was employed, starting from the approach of qualitative research that focuses on understanding a single concept or idea (Creswell, 2013).

The case study, designed to investigate real-life contexts, was evaluated as a qualitative research method. It is emphasized that in a case study, the researcher should first review the literature related to the subject, evaluate the situation in relevant environments, determine the boundaries and objectives of the research, and then commence the study (Gillham, 2000). Another important aspect of case studies is determining research questions along with establishing a general research framework. Research questions are to be answered in environments related to the examined situation (Gillham, 2000). Within the scope of the research questions and the established research framework, a descriptive approach was adopted for the analysis of data aimed at evaluating the situation.

In this study, the process of gathering information through multiple sources was employed in conducting the case study. Accordingly, observations and in-depth interviews were conducted, and records and documents related to the situation were reviewed. Thus, the aim was to depict the situation (Creswell, 2013). R.K. Yin (Yin, 2009) indicated that researchers construct models or explanations as a result of case studies (cited in Creswell, 2013). In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted by the identified topics, aiming to develop a model.

#### *Data analysis*

Descriptive analysis aims to characterize the world or a phenomenon. In the analysis process, emphasis is often placed on causal understanding and causal relationships. Descriptive analysis plays an important role in the scientific process in general, and particularly in educational research. In descriptive analysis, researchers transform raw data into findings reported in a useful format aligned with the research objectives. Through descriptive analysis, the nature of the environment related to interpreting the findings can be defined. Researchers can interpret causal research findings through the analysis process and assist practitioners and policymakers in diagnosing issues (Loeb et al., 2017). Qualitative descriptive data analysis aims to summarize specific issues experienced by individuals in everyday terms. Qualitative descriptive analysis tends to examine a subject in its natural state as much as possible within the research field context. Additionally, in qualitative descriptive analysis, there is no intention to generate or create theory from the obtained data (Lambert, 2012).

In qualitative descriptive research, data collection focuses on exploring the nature of specific events under study. Therefore, data collection may include structured, open-ended, individual, or focus group interviews. However, data collection may also involve examining observations, records, reports, photographs, and documents. The data analysis of qualitative descriptive research does not use a pre-existing set of rules derived from the philosophical or epistemological stance of the discipline that forms a specific qualitative research approach, unlike other qualitative approaches (Lambert, 2012). In this study, the analysis of data collected through observation, interviews, and recorded data within the framework of research questions focuses on three main areas using the descriptive analysis method.

#### *Data collection*

In this study, the primary aim was to utilize the observational technique suitable for description. Data was collected through observational methods, focusing on predetermined evaluation and analysis criteria. In this context, participation was ensured in the "Teaching Students to Decode the World" workshop held at ERIE 1 Boces in Buffalo West Seneca, New York, on February 9, 2023, as part of the ML3 Project. Additionally, observations were conducted during the Media Decoding events held online on February 15-16, 2023, and the iEARN-2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange Program where Chris Sperry shared information about the ML3 Project on March 8, 2023.

In the case study, one of the data collection techniques, interviews, is typically conducted with a small number of individuals who hold significant views on the subject. Interviews generally involve open-ended questions and explanatory responses are evaluated as data (Gillham, 2000). In this study, interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with educators and coordinators of the ML3 Project. Additionally, discussions were held with stakeholders, including librarian Bridget Crossman and 6th-grade teacher Kelly Catarelli from Lake George School District, to gather information.

To protect the rights of participants in the interviews, informed consent was obtained before the discussions. Subsequently, these consents and details of the research were submitted to the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board in the Social and Humanities Sciences Field at Çukurova University, and approval was obtained from the relevant Ethics Committee.



Following the observations and interviews, three different video contents prepared for the ML3 Project were analyzed. These videos include a 2-minute 62-second video titled *Through Constructivist Media Decoding*, a 1-minute 20-second content titled *Librarians as Leaders for This Work*, and a 1-minute 26-second content titled *The Impact of This Work*.

### 3. Discussion

This study aims to offer a different perspective on the debates surrounding media literacy education in Turkey. Particularly, the inclusion of media literacy as an independent subject in the curriculum has been regarded as a significant step. However, in the present day, educational processes regarding media literacy and similar emerging literacy areas are undergoing renewal globally. In many countries, curriculum definitions of media literacy aim to enhance the creative and communicative capacities of young people. Additionally, during this educational process, they are encouraged to become critical media consumers. Media literacy also plays a significant role in defining the capacity of adults to function as citizens in media-saturated societies (Pangrazio, Sefton-Green, 2020). In recent years, particularly with the influence of social media, discussing popular media has also gained significant importance in the establishment and negotiation of social relationships (Buckingham, Sefton-Green, 2020).

The concept of media literacy also encompasses various other literacies within its scope as a comprehensive umbrella term. For instance, news literacy, health media literacy (Rasi et al., 2021), and advertising literacy are some of these literacies. The definition of media and information literacy by UNESCO has also provided a specific perspective on media literacy. Throughout history, media literacy has been used to define various educational practices. Each definition highlights different theoretical perspectives and diverse viewpoints remain prominent in contemporary media education programs (Leaning, 2019). However, beyond all these different definitions and approaches, the dominant role of media in everyday life necessitates a more comprehensive evaluation of media literacy education. In this context, it is emphasized that media literacy should be integrated into various subjects rather than being taught as a standalone course to students. Emphasis is placed on the need for practical infrastructure to enable individuals to analyze media content accurately and exhibit a conscious approach to producing content. In the sample project examined in the study, a questioning-based approach to media literacy has been adopted, highlighting critical thinking.

In this section, responses and recommendations have been formulated in the form of bullet points, along with the research questions of the study, with the aim of discussing these recommendations through relevant literature review.

The first research question of the study is stated as follows: Is media literacy education in Turkey considered to be of necessary importance within the existing curriculum frameworks when compared to the sample project examined in the case study? Is there a gap in this regard? The conclusion of the study indicates that media literacy education in Turkey is not considered to be of necessary importance within the existing curriculum frameworks, as this education does not find a place within these programs. There is a significant gap perceived in this regard. When offering recommendations for media education in the 21st century, H. Jenkins (Jenkins, 2009) has noted that defining the mission of education should, in general, focus on the idea of enabling all students to benefit from learning to fully participate in public, social, and economic life. Today, active participation in public, social, and economic life requires young individuals who can accurately interpret media content and are socially responsible content producers. Literacy is evaluated through a socio-cultural perspective, considering it not merely as an individual, psychological achievement but as evidence of participation in social and material practices. This perspective referred to as New Literacy Studies, posits literacy as a practice tied to community norms and suggests that multiple forms of literacy develop through various social practices (Manca et al., 2021).

Citizenship practices have now evolved and developed. While citizenship was previously limited to an individual's physical environment, advancements in digital technologies and Web 2.0 communication technologies have transformed citizenship practices into digital citizenship. Digital media tools also play a significant role in this transformation (Erdem et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding media content accurately is among the requirements of citizenship in the digital age.

Another research question of the study is as follows: What is the level of media literacy education received by current and future teachers who teach Media Literacy courses in Turkey?

Unfortunately, this question can be answered negatively, as reflected in the conceptual framework of the study. The education received by teachers who teach media literacy courses in Turkey, as well as future teachers, is extremely limited in this regard. Furthermore, the resources prepared in the form of course materials and teacher handbooks, which cover highly comprehensive topics and require regular updating, are insufficient in addressing the needs of this field.

In our era, media and information literacy signify much more than the ability to read text due to the dominance of visual images in media and information environments (Dame Adjin-Tetty, 2022). In this new environment, it is crucial for pedagogical knowledge related to media literacy to be imparted to teachers from all disciplines at some level of their education.

Teachers play a critical role in ensuring that students leave school with the necessary skills to be critical consumers of media and thoughtful and knowledgeable producers of mediated messages. To effectively teach media literacy to students, teachers must also have a solid understanding of media literacy education. Media literacy education goes beyond simple interpretation and analysis of messages. It should also encompass broader contexts that are part of digital culture (McNelly, Harvey, 2021).

When highlighting the importance of media literacy education in teacher training, the requirements of the digital age should also be emphasized. In teacher education, future educators should be equipped with digital skills that will support their use of new and emerging technologies in their classrooms (Falloon, 2020).

The study also aimed to answer the following research question regarding the sample project examined: How can school libraries and librarians in Turkey be evaluated, and what are their roles in media literacy education based on the outcomes of the sample project? The research findings for the conceptual framework of the study indicate that school libraries and librarians in Turkey constitute an important area requiring the development of numerous projects. Improvements such as the placement of libraries in schools to address the employment issue for graduates of the Information and Document Management Departments are among the significant elements of the proposed model. However, in these projects, prioritizing the evaluation of libraries as genuine information centers is essential. School libraries play a crucial role in various new literacies, including media literacy, visual literacy, news literacy, and information literacy. Therefore, there is a need for school librarians who have received education in these centers.

As observed in the examined sample project, it is generally expected that school librarians take on a literacy support role that may also encompass literacy education. Additionally, it is believed that qualified school librarians can have a positive impact on students' literacy achievements (Merga, 2020).

### 3. Results

#### *Observational findings*

Within the confines of the case study, the researcher participated as an observer in the ML3 Project's project workshops (both face-to-face and online workshops) to evaluate the project. By taking notes during these workshops, the researcher compiled observation reports to collect research data. Accordingly, it is appropriate to first provide the bibliographic details of the attended workshops (Table 1).

**Table 1.** ML3 Project face-to-face and online workshops (February-March 2023)

ML3 Project Workshop	Place	Date
Teaching Students to Decode The World	West Seneca Erie 1 Boces, NY	Feb 9, 2023
New Librarian Created Lessons for Integrating Media Decoding	Online	Feb 15, 2023
Online Media Decoding Activity	Online	Feb 16, 2023
iEARN -2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange	Online	March 8, 2023

The observational notes regarding participation in these events as an observer have been compiled in Table 2 in line with the aim of the case study to conduct in-depth exploration, and

these notes have been analyzed descriptively. These analyses have been associated with three themes identified within the research boundaries (Media and Media Literacy, Media Literacy Education, and Media Literacy Educators), aimed at constructing the model intended to be developed as a result of the case study.

**Table 2.** Workshops and observation notes

<p>Teaching Students to Decode The World:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The active role of librarians in education was emphasized throughout the workshop.</li> <li>- The mission of school libraries in terms of media and information literacy was emphasized by participants and the project team.</li> <li>- The aim of the project was stated as "integrating media literacy into the curriculum.</li> <li>- The importance of critical thinking about all media messages was emphasized.</li> <li>- The role of cultural perspective in media content analysis, the existence of different perspectives, and the utilization of evidence were highlighted, with librarians being noted as capable of being active in this regard.</li> <li>- Guidance on how to proceed according to different grade levels was provided.</li> <li>- Information was provided about the history of newspaper sources, and examples were given on how to analyze these contents.</li> <li>- Librarians shared their experiences with students.</li> <li>- Statistics on children and adolescents' social media usage were shared, and sample contents for media decoding were provided.</li> <li>- The second part of the workshop involved practical application. Discussions were held on possible analysis questions to be directed at students regarding prepared media content.</li> </ul>
<p><i>New Librarian Created Lessons for Integrating Media Decoding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four librarians, who work in schools at different education levels (primary and high school), participated in the online event.</li> <li>- The librarians conducted their presentations on media content analysis, which they had prepared in advance.</li> <li>- An example of "book cover analysis" prepared for primary school students was shared.</li> <li>- Participants asked Chris Sperry about copyright issues related to media content and how to approach the analysis of political content.</li> <li>- Consensus was reached on the production of lesson content for special occasions.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Online Media Decoding Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The event, attended by school librarians from three different schools, commenced with examples from various subjects (art, mathematics, social sciences).</li> <li>- Chris Sperry provided recommendations to the participants regarding evidence-based media analysis.</li> <li>- It was conveyed that mere usage of media in lessons is insufficient, and during this usage, analyses that prompt questioning and critical thinking need to be conducted.</li> <li>- It was explained that in the preparation of analysis-based content, consideration should be given to the questions, objectives, and characteristics of the student group, and that content should be limited to a maximum of 7 minutes.</li> </ul>
<p><i>iEARN-2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chris Sperry served as a speaker at the seminar attended by teachers from Russia, Bolivia, Latin America, and the United States, providing information about the ML3 Project.</li> <li>- Video content prepared for the project was shared with the participants.</li> <li>- A media analysis activity was conducted with the participants, where a critical analysis was performed on a discount coupon purportedly distributed by Amazon.</li> </ul>

During the observed events, no sharing was made regarding the technological capabilities of the libraries or the resources they possess; instead, the focus was on how librarians could actively utilize these resources in their relationships with teachers, centering on books. Similarly, during the online media analysis activities, librarians specifically focused on how to analyze content within lesson contexts, such as how a book cover could be analyzed within the scope of a Social Studies lesson.

It has been observed in all activities that librarians, who serve in school libraries, actively participate in the educational process to at least the same extent as teachers. They engage in

sharing with teachers, develop examples using their media literacy skills regarding lesson contents, and actively contribute to the process. In this context, when a comparative assessment is desired, it should be emphasized that in Turkey, media literacy education should not only be included as a mandatory course in the lesson contents of teacher candidates in the Faculty of Education but also the importance of librarians having an educational background in this field should be emphasized.

#### *Findings from the interviews*

Within qualitative research methods, interviews aim to gather information about events and activities that cannot be directly observed. The interview method, which allows for in-depth exploration of the researched topic, enables the researcher to collect data that cannot be obtained through observation (Taylor, 2015). In this study, interviews were conducted with project managers and stakeholders of the ML3 Project to obtain more detailed information about the project.

The first interview was conducted with Professor Cyndy Scheibe, the founder of Project Look Sharp. During the interview, questions were directed toward the establishment of Project Look Sharp, the application process for the ML3 Project, the advantages of PLS as a civil organization in the United States, and the challenges they faced during the project application process. Accordingly, the findings obtained from the interview, along with corresponding evaluations, can be presented in line with the research objectives as follows:

In the 1990s, discussions regarding the negative effects of media, especially television, on children have been ongoing in the United States. Contrary to the protective attitude developed against the effects of media during the establishment of PLS, there was a significant influence towards a perspective that encourages children to think critically about media content. Following the contact with NAMLE in 1996, PLS, supported by Ithaca College with a small budget, did not define its goals as "making changes to the system, regulating the curriculum, ensuring regulation in schools." Instead, PLS's goal was defined as "educating children as media literate individuals, providing them with education on this matter."

The ML3 Project started as a significant initiative developed by PLS to reach school librarians in the state. Furthermore, this project was considered a step towards reaching the entire United States. At the beginning of the ML3 Project, school librarians were considered important communication points to reach a larger audience for media literacy education.

The specific focus of the ML3 Project on school librarians was also associated with their active role in the information literacy process. The fact that school librarians are at the center of the information source in schools was considered highly effective in providing proper guidance in media literacy education. Therefore, the ML3 Project was regarded as a significant step in media literacy education.

The second interview was conducted with Chris Sperry, the Curriculum and Staff Development Director of Project Look Sharp, who played a significant role in the preparation of the ML3 Project. Due to Sperry's involvement in implementing the project activities, questions were aimed at gathering information about these implementations. Evaluations regarding the findings from the second interview can be outlined as follows:

- The importance of critical thinking and the analysis of media content through this thinking have been emphasized in the materials prepared for PLS over many years. The ability of these materials, which will serve as resources for curriculum lessons, to reach teachers is a significant achievement for PLS. In this regard, the ML3 Project has been considered a highly important project for enabling direct communication with school librarians who will reach out to teachers.

- School librarians hold a significant position in bringing together various disciplines within schools and can also lead the process of information literacy. Unlike teachers, they have the opportunity to access different topics and reach different students, rather than working on a limited group or a limited subject.

- Before the ML3 Project, various implementations were made with teachers regarding media literacy. However, in the implementations with school librarians, it was assumed that they could be more active in this regard compared to others.

- The feedback from school librarians in the ML3 Project implementations has positively influenced the success and sustainability of the project. Especially in CMD (Constructivist Media Decoding) applications, their ability to quickly analyze media content has been found quite impressive.

- In the project, beyond media literacy being an independent course or a unit topic within a course, the aim has been to integrate the analysis of media content and the ability to produce this content into all subjects within the curriculum.

The third interview was conducted with Professor Susan Allen, who has extensive experience as a school librarian and also serves as the Project Coordinator and project coach for school librarians in the ML3 Project. During the interview, questions were directed towards understanding how the ML3 Project was perceived by school librarians. Based on the responses obtained from the interview, the evaluation of the findings can be outlined as follows:

- School librarians can be identified as the most influential figures in media literacy in schools. The ML3 Project is a significant initiative aimed at reaching out to these individuals over a period of two years. Upon the announcement of the project in the state of New York, more than 100 school librarians expressed interest in joining the project.

- Throughout the project, it has been possible to observe the positive effects of continuous engagement with school librarians and conducting practical work. As a result of group activities, school librarians have become more proficient in the project's subject matter.

- School librarians also have a leadership role in guiding teachers during the educational process. While teachers specialize in specific disciplines and topics in their communication with students, school librarians possess expertise in various fields. In the United States, school librarians operate according to certain standards established by the American Association of School Librarians, many of which are related to a media literacy perspective.

- The ML3 Project has been a significant endeavor in imparting fundamental strategies of media literacy to school librarians. Consequently, school librarians will be able to guide all students and teachers, including disadvantaged students, in media literacy within schools.

The fourth interview in the study was conducted with Bridget Crossman, the school librarian at Lake George Elementary School located in the state of New York, and Kelly Catarelli, a 6th-grade teacher at the same school:

- When asked about their familiarity with media literacy, teacher Kelly Catarelli mentioned that she had not encountered coursework on this topic during her undergraduate studies. Bridget Crossman, on the other hand, mentioned being initially introduced to media literacy through the work of Project Look Sharp.

- Regarding the utilization of the school library by students and teachers at the institution where they serve, Kelly Catarelli began her response by stating that they were extremely fortunate. She particularly emphasized the availability of resources related to writing and reading in the school library, which support the curriculum. In her role as a school librarian, Bridget highlighted their continuous collaboration with teachers. She mentioned how their information literacy skills aided teachers in integrating curriculum topics, stating that they worked together to develop some units, reviewing them together at the beginning of each semester.

- Crossman indicated being informed about the ML3 Project through a conference she attended. Additionally, she participated in coaching sessions and training for school librarians by following the calls in the emails sent by PLS. Crossman mentioned working with teachers in various grade levels at the school where she currently serves to develop units on this topic, stating that teachers would now be able to take leadership roles in this area. At the same time, she would continue to provide support in the background. She also added her belief that teachers now possess sufficient skills to enhance the curriculum. This finding from the research highlights a significant difference between the two countries in terms of curriculum development. This approach highlights a significant difference in media literacy education between the two countries. When considering a model for Turkey, a more comprehensive approach may be necessary. Primarily, faculties of education must provide necessary training in media literacy.

- Kelly Catarelli shared her experiences with students after the ML3 Project, mentioning that in a lesson where they shared visuals related to Africa, the students' reactions were surprisingly insightful. She noted that after they realized their own biases, the lesson demonstrated to them the existence of different contexts. Bridget Crossman echoed a similar example, emphasizing the importance of teaching critical thinking and analysis, which they observed during this lesson.

#### *Findings regarding recorded data*

Analysis of recorded data or document analysis is less preferred compared to observation and interviews in case studies. However, recorded data can also be utilized to describe, enrich the context, and contribute to the analysis of topics in case studies. These data provide guidance to researchers in revealing policies, values, beliefs, and attitudes related to the research topic. Recorded data here refers to visual contents such as documents, bulletins, videos, and audio materials that can provide clues related to the situation (Simons, 2009).

The analysis of recorded data is generally considered useful as a precursor to observation and interviews to suggest potential issues that may be beneficial for the exploration of the situation and to provide a context for interpreting the data collected through interviews and observations (Simons, 2009). In this study, the latest data for the case study included three different video contents prepared with various headings after observation and interviews, including stakeholders' views on the ML3 Project.

The video content titled "Through Constructivist Media Decoding" features footage of classroom listening sessions of students at the K-12 levels reflecting their attitudes during media analysis activities. In the video content titled "Librarians as Leaders for This Work," the perspectives of school librarians on media literacy are conveyed through their own experiences in line with the information they have acquired from the project. The final content, titled "The Impact of This Work," is structured as the last of the three video contents. In this third video, students' views are included to assess the effects of the project. Representatively chosen students from different classes express their thoughts on the constructivist media decoding technique as described in the ML3 Project.

Upon examining the data related to three different contents, it was generally observed that information describing the objectives, target audience, topics, and impact of the ML3 Project was obtained. Accordingly, the following findings regarding the project can be specified based on the data obtained from the contents:

- The project aims to cultivate a generation capable of questioning, critiquing, and analyzing media content.
- To achieve the objectives of the ML3 Project, it primarily seeks to integrate media literacy principles into the educational process in schools across various subjects.
- It is believed that librarians, who hold significant positions in schools and are selected as representatives of information centers, will take the lead in integrating media literacy.
- Librarians are also considered crucial points of access for reaching teachers.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In Turkey, initial initiatives regarding media literacy education have been undertaken by governmental institutions. Upon examining local literature, it becomes evident that academic initiatives in various domains could also contribute to this effort. Implementing academic studies, alongside civil society involvement, may lead to a broader impact. Yet, modifying the current system may pose challenges regarding both time constraints and financial resources. A more effective approach may involve educational institutions directly reaching out to students and teachers, and developing customized content to meet their specific needs.

The Media Literacy Course should be included as a mandatory subject with diverse topics in the undergraduate education of teacher candidates. The inclusion of Media Literacy Courses as mandatory subjects should be implemented across all departments within Faculty of Education. In addition to receiving education on media literacy, teacher candidates must engage in project work and conduct applied research. It is crucial to monitor ongoing debates regarding the integration of Media Literacy Courses by graduates of Communication Faculties into schools in Turkey, and to devise appropriate solutions. Regarding media literacy education, it is recommended that students from both the Communication and Education faculties receive education on a common platform and that both academic units engage in mutually supportive practices.

With the advent of the 21st century, school libraries, redesigned as "collaborative learning" spaces, are now perceived not only as repositories of information but also as information hubs. School libraries, repositioned within schools, should be highlighted as spaces where students can freely express themselves, explore, and empower themselves to become more active and engaged participants in their daily lives (Mihailidis, Diggs, 2010). At this point, it is crucial to highlight two key functions of school libraries, particularly given the current context. One is to provide dynamic contexts for young people to learn with digital media and to offer opportunities for them to learn and apply new media literacy skills (Tripp, 2011). Given the convergence of information literacy and media literacy concepts, initiatives aimed at enhancing the infrastructure and resources of school libraries in Turkey are essential.

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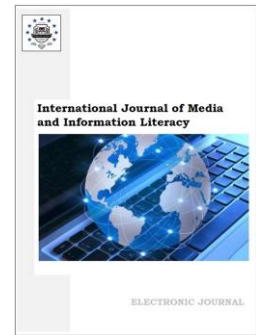
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## Impact of Digitalization on Undergrads Entrepreneurs Performance in Sindh, Pakistan

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### Abstract

Digitalization is an advanced platform of success for undergrad entrepreneurs. This study aims to explore the impact of social media on undergrad entrepreneur's performance. The paradigm of the technology acceptance model was adapted and modified in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was employed. The sample of the study was three public universities, the University of Karachi, the University of Sindh, and the Institute of Business Administration of Sindh, Pakistan. The data was collected from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The total 278 respondents were analyzed while using Partial Least Squares, Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to the results, the variables; student entrepreneurs' ability, and perceived usefulness have a significantly positive  $p < 0.05$  impact on student entrepreneurs' performance. The results of the study indicated social media play a vital role in the development of young entrepreneurs. Hence, government and non-government organizations play a vital role in fostering online entrepreneurship. This study would support more effective entrepreneurial programs and promote business among students. A similar study can be applied in other universities of the world.

**Keywords:** entrepreneur's performance, impact, undergraduates, social media, Digitalization.

### 1. Introduction

Undergrad entrepreneurs have a major concern about the growing economy of the country. The development of undergrad entrepreneurs is a global issue. In developed countries, undergrad entrepreneurs support their economic transformation into a technological knowledge-based economy (Martin-Rojas et al., 2023). Additionally, graduates have a significant opportunity to increase their entrepreneurial activity (Kolbre, Piliste, 2006). However, the majority of undergrad entrepreneurs show a little bit of interest in starting their businesses (Shambare, 2013). However, the accumulation of information regarding entrepreneurship is vital for skills and abilities (Zreen et al., 2019). Another study proposes to evaluate student entrepreneurship performance from multidisciplinary universities (Katz, 2008).

The notion of online entrepreneurship has been highly debated in Pakistan. Since, the country has adopted policies to encourage entrepreneurs, and contribute to economic and social growth to the country (El-Gohary et al., 2023). The current state of business and labor markets in emerging economies has resulted in role transformations and instability. Graduate entrepreneurs learn the skills required to become self-employed and start new businesses. As a result, higher education institutions have changed how they teach students about entrepreneurship (Von Arnim, Mrozewski, 2020).

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Digitalization has generated a new concept of online entrepreneurs (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022). In Italy, Italian Contamination Labs (CLabs) are effectively accepting emerging digitalization to nurture their entrepreneurship practices among university undergraduates. Digitalization can be defined as ‘social networking, mobile, or embedded devices to facilitate significant business improvements; such as streamlining operations, enhancing customer experience, or creating new business models’ (Fitzgerald et al., 2014). Social media contributes to business. Which is currently one of the key features of digitalization platforms (Fitzgerald et al., 2014). They have found that digitalization is still weakly utilized among undergrads (Secundo et al., 2020), because of less interest, and weak online access to the internet in developing countries (Shambare, 2013). Besides this, the extensive use of the internet has captivated consumers as well as enterprises in the global world. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has explained the advantages and drawbacks of using social media to mitigate the challenges of entrepreneurs (Salam et al., 2021). Social media has proliferated as a powerful tool in marketing, communication, and boosting business in the modern day (Wu, Song, 2019; Veldeman et al., 2017).

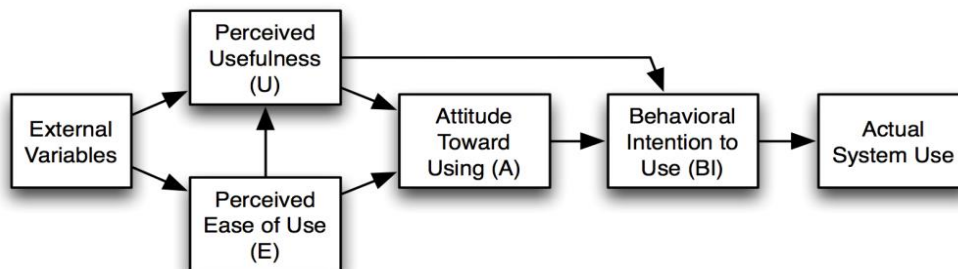
Researchers analyzed social media’s impact on student entrepreneurs in academics and other organizations only in Asia, Africa, and Europe (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Oppong et al., 2020; Slutskiy et al., 2023; Song et al., 2022). Nowadays, undergraduate entrepreneurs are using Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat to sell their products (Delbaerre et al., 2021). The study by Katz (Katz, 2008) has recommended further analysis of social media from different perspectives of entrepreneurship. However, there has been very little research examined to determine the usage of social media in the context of undergrad entrepreneur’s performance (Rippa, Secundo, 2019).

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ‘The government of Pakistan launched the ‘Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program’, under which Rs144 billion was allocated to twelve million families as daily wage earners (KPMG, 2020). According to the Small Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) 920 SMEs were approved in Pakistan, which were not adequate to generate income and revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic (SMEDA, 2020).

Student entrepreneurs have launched new online businesses. Students are more dependent on parents to fulfill their expenditures and needs. They do not have enough time to do their job and study simultaneously. So, students have selected an alternative way to do online entrepreneurship and earn money. Student entrepreneurs encountered significant effects of social media use despite their insufficient financial resources and limited access to outside sponsorship.

The fundamental attempt of this study is to explore the relationship between the impact of social media on student entrepreneurs’ performance. Previous studies have been less found that explored these constructs in a similar mode. Secondly, the purpose of the study is also to analyze the mediating impact of social media use on the TAM model (See Figure 1). Thus, in the context of Pakistan, the present study contributes to the body of knowledge and insight into new theoretical paradigms in existing literature and government youth programs of the country.

Researchers evaluated the mediated impact of social media use on the TAM model. To address the gap and objective of this study, researchers adapted and modified TAM’s model.



**Fig. 1.** Technology Acceptance model by Davis (Davis, 1989)

TAM Model focuses on five Indicators: (Indicator 1) Student Entrepreneurs Ability (SEA), (Indicator 2) Perceived Usefulness (PU) (Indicator 3) Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU), (Indicator 4) the moderating impact of Intention to Use (IU), (Indicator 5) the mediating impact of the Uses of Social Media (USM), and (Indicator 6) the Student Entrepreneurs Performance (SEP). These five

indicators highlighted the impact of social media on the performance of undergrads at entrepreneurship platforms. In the following sections, we discuss TAM's model and use the SEM approach to evaluate a model of adaptation. We tested the model with sampled 278 undergrads. We concluded the paper by discussing our findings, limitations, and suggestions for further research and practice.

**Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis:** When considering the impact of social media in business contexts. It is critical to address the abilities, uses, and performance of students to accept social media. The purpose of this study is to analyze the mediating impact of social media use among undergraduate entrepreneurs' performance into the well TAM model. The TAM model proposes that the impact of the usefulness of social media and ease of use are fundamental factors in acceptance (Arbaugh, 2000). Scholars choose the technology acceptance model (TAM) when studying new technology adoption by (Davis, 1985), perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have been identified (De Graaf et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2003). The popularity of the TAM model cannot be declined (Choe, Noh, 2018). In the last two decades, TAM has been regarded as a concise and powerful theory in communication technology (Venkatesh, Davis, 2000). It is a technology-based model that shows how businesses can successfully integrate new communication technology, despite having a cultural diverts population (Chatterjee et al., 2022). This model is highly predictive (De Graaf et al., 2019).

A conceptual research model was suggested in light of the study's goals, literature analysis, and research theory. An overview of the new insights in the model is shown in Figure 2. The first frame of the construct is the Student Entrepreneur's Ability (SEA), secondly, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU), Intention to Use (IU), and Use of Social Media (USM), last but not least Student Entrepreneur's Performance (SEP). The usage of any social media site is significantly influenced by all the constructs included in this study. By using the TAM model, it will be easier to understand how important social media applications are for Pakistani students' entrepreneurial achievement.

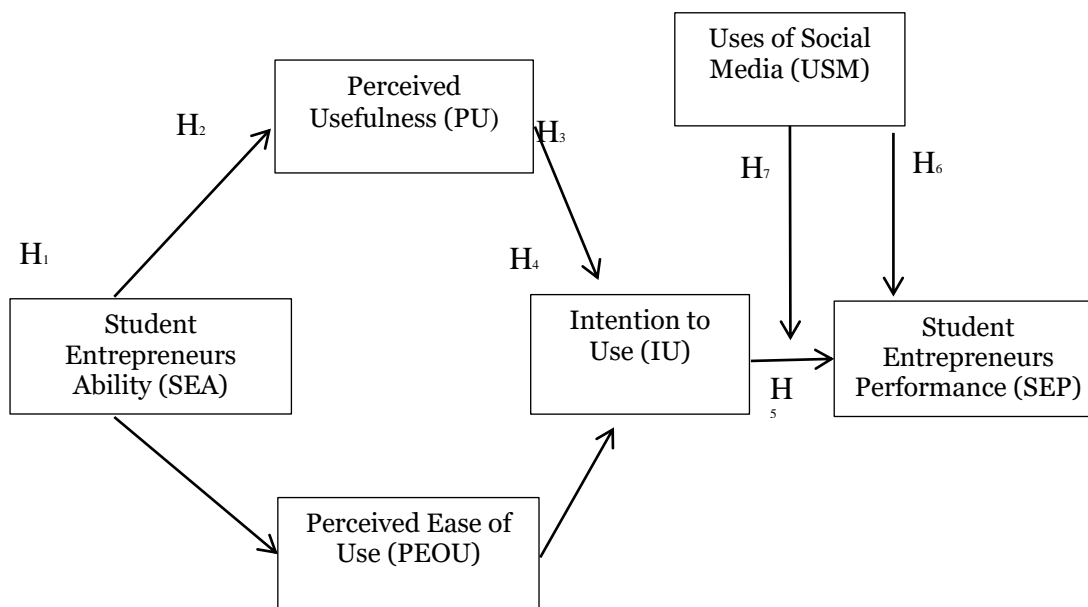
**Student Entrepreneur's Ability, Perceived Usefulness, and Perceived Ease of Use:** It is the basic requirement for undergraduates to have the ability to start up or run a business successfully (Shaowei et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial knowledge and ability are referred to as entrepreneurial ability (Ma, 2020). The student's exposure to cutting-edge technology and critical thinking, creativity, and integrative learning abilities provide value in the world (Crittenden et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs take entrepreneurial skills and fundamental marketing knowledge to create websites and present items online (Yasir et al., 2021). 'Perceived usefulness is defined as an intangible measurement of an individual perception' (Davis, 1989). 'Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will improve his performance' (Dwivedi et al., 2019). 'Perceived ease of use is viewed as the degree to which a person believes that the use of digital technology will be effortless' (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Thus, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are considered two different dimensions (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Research studies have found that student entrepreneur's abilities have a positive relationship with perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Dwivedi et al., 2019). In light of this information, thus, we hypothesize that the student entrepreneur's ability can act in the business. So, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Student entrepreneur's ability has a significant impact on the perceived usefulness of the undergraduate entrepreneur's performance.

H2: Student entrepreneur's ability has a significant impact on the perceived ease of use to the undergraduate entrepreneurs' performance.

Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), and Intension to Use(IU). This model aims to predict the user's acceptance of a particular communication technology and to pinpoint the impact that must be made on the system to embrace business performance. According to this concept, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the two key components that affect an individual's decision (Scherer et al., 2019). Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the most effective factors of TAM modeling to identify the acceptance of innovation in communication technology (Gangwar et al., 2015). The definitions of perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) are given above (Davis, 1989; Dwivedi et al., 2019). Besides this, an individual's perception ascertains the intent to use social media for business purposes. According to Davis (Davis, 1989) and Venktatesh, Davis (Venktatesh, Davis 2000), in the TAM model technology use is determined by an intention to use social media about perceived usefulness and

perceived ease of use. The students believe that using social media would enhance business performance (Fatima, Bilal, 2019).



**Fig. 2.** Adaptive and Modified Technology Acceptance Model

An individual has an intention to utilize a system or new technology, if they perceive it to be simple to use (Chatterjee et al., 2022). According to the study by Kim and Chiu perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) have a positive relationship between intention to use social media (Kim, Chiu, 2019). The hypothesis is the following.

H3: Perceived usefulness (PU) positively impacts on intention to use social media (IU).

H4: Perceived ease of use (PEOU) positively impacts on intention to use social media (IU).

Moderate impact of Intention to use social media on students' entrepreneurial performance: The model used to understand people's intentions to use new technologies is the technology adoption model (Brando-Jones, Kauppi, 2018; Mahfud, et al., 2020) identify the intention to use social media for the enhancement of the students' entrepreneurial performance by the entrepreneurial perception and atmosphere. Student entrepreneur's performance refereed by Shaowei et al. (Shaowei et al., 2022) 'to the pioneering activities of undergraduates discovering and taking advantage of opportunities, establishing enterprises based on their knowledge, skills, and novel ideas, making decisions, creating wealth, and realizing their self-worth'. To measure in terms of level of success in running the commercial enterprise and output (Huang, Zhang, 2020). Student entrepreneur's performance may also refer to the outcome of an entrepreneur's efforts in the business, the degree of profit, and the volume of sales, among other things, which is influenced by a variety of circumstances (Nneka, 2015). Intention to use while integrating digital technology has a positive relationship with entrepreneurial performance (Siddiqui, Khan, 2019).

Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H5: Intention to use social media (IU) has a significant impact on student entrepreneurial performance (UEP).

Mediate impact of social media usage on student entrepreneur's performance and intention to use: Facebook is a cutting-edge digital platform that is frequently employed in day-to-day Indonesian enterprises (Talukder et al., 2013). Another researchers (Nawi et al., 2019) study found that Facebook is the most popular platform, followed by Twitter and Tumbler among student entrepreneurs. Social media was a component of the fourth industrial revolution, which allowed for the entry of business people (Barrera-Verdugo et al., 2022; Kusumawardhany et al., 2020). Social media as a tool of communication motivates people to succeed in business (Huang, Zhang, 2020). Moreover, this model helps us to understand undergrads intention to use social media. How they feel about social media and how much they value it (Ramkumar et al., 2019). Therefore, the impact of social media usage platforms highly correlates with undergrad entrepreneur's performance.

H6: social media usage has a positive impact on the student entrepreneurs performance.

H7: social media usage has a significantly moderate impact on the intention to use and student entrepreneur's performance.

TAM is an excellent theoretical technique for determining user acceptance of an entrepreneur's performance, particularly for undergraduates (as you can see in [Figure 2](#)).

## 2. Materials and methods

A quantitative research methodology has applied in this study, to measure the student entrepreneur's ability, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, social media uses, student entrepreneur's performance, and intention to use social media as a digit platform among undergraduate entrepreneurs in Pakistan. A semi-structured close-ended questionnaire was constructed. Each question was designed an unbiased words for the full-time undergraduate entrepreneurs to understand the questions easily. The questionnaires were based on the Likert scale of measurement on five (5) points in all variables, such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The structure and number of questions have been constructed from the reviews of the previous literature. In this study, the snowball selection of the sampled population comprised students, who run their own business by using social media. In an empirical study, undergrad entrepreneurship research was carried out in three public universities of Pakistan that run entrepreneurship programs and have entrepreneurs incubators. These are the University of Sindh Jamshoro, the University of Karachi, and Institute of Business Administration (I.B.A) Sukkhar (Sindh) Pakistan. A total of 278 samples of questionnaires were collected based on the sampling technique ([Krejcie, Morgan, 1970](#)).

The data was collected from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. Through, face to face interaction with student entrepreneurs at universities. A total of 400 questionnaire forms were distributed to undergraduate entrepreneurs in sampled universities. However, 300 forms were returned. A total of 278 forms were analyzed and 22 forms were excluded due to incomplete data. The questionnaires were based on six dimensions by referring review of the literature. The partial least square (PLS) technique was employed to empirically analyze the data via SmartPLS 3 software to test the hypothesis and measure the valid findings. SmartPLS has been used to find accurate predictions and prominence in the entrepreneurial field ([Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018](#)). SmartPLS is advantageous software to avoid problems with data normality and limited sample size, making it a versatile tool for building models and producing targeted outcomes. The bootstrapping method is used to complete the SmartPLS algorithm and tests the validity and reliability by using loadings, significance levels, and path coefficients ([Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018](#)). The structural model evaluation was examined to assess the measurement model. It is still essential to consider the normal distribution of data while applying inferential statistics. PLS-SEM is a non-parametric analytical approach ([Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021](#)). According to earlier research, when using PLS-SEM, a thorough collinearity test may be employed to ascertain impact by the issue of common method bias. The variation inflation factors (VIFs) were suggested by Kock ([Kock, 2015](#)).

## 3. Discussion

Young Entrepreneurs in Pakistan: The World Bank reported that real Gross Domestic Product is expected to fall by 0.6 percent in FY23 after increasing by 6.1 percent in FY22 and 5.8 percent in FY21. Additionally, According to the Global Innovation Index ([Global..., 2023](#)) reported that Pakistan ranked 88<sup>th</sup> out of 132 countries. According to the World Economic Forum 2019, Pakistan ranked 110<sup>th</sup> out of 140<sup>th</sup> in economic development ([Adamkiewicz-Drwillo, 2019](#)). However, in the Global Competitiveness Index, 2017-2018 ranked 115<sup>th</sup> out of 137<sup>th</sup> (World Economic Forum). In the last decade, Pakistan has not sufficient economic development. In addition to this, Pakistan requires a dynamic digital platform to strengthen the economy and assist in offering new jobs for the two million individuals to establish a competitive digital ecosystem ([Ibrahim, 2017](#)). In Pakistan, approximately 60 percent of it's 220 million population under the age of 15 to 29<sup>th</sup> provides significant human and intellectual capital ([Sangji, 2022](#)). According to the Global Entrepreneurs Monitoring Report (2012), 'Pakistan's start-up entrepreneurial activity (the sum of the nascent entrepreneurship rate and the new business owner-manager rate) increased 11.57 percent than 9.07 percent in 2011. In 2021, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, Government of Pakistan has approved many projects like the Pakistan Sindh Development Program, Higher Impact Skills Boot-camp,

Establishment of I.T Park at Karachi, I.C.T Internship Program, Blended Virtual Education National Center for Research Innovation and Prime minister youth program, Digital youth development centers, national incubation centers and entrepreneurship, and allied technologies in 2020 for the potential of youth entrepreneurship (Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunication). Moreover, many non-government organizations are also working at national and international levels in Pakistan. Surprisingly, rural entrepreneurs do not have the availability of online entrepreneurship, because of a lack of potential, technological devices, and communication networks (SAFWCO, 2021). Their business is based on mobile phones, interpersonal communication, manual mobile communication, and middlemen pass updated information to other groups of people in the village (SAFWCO, 2021). However, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) has the effective execution of an entrepreneur, who encourages youth to increase entrepreneur's performance and economic development. Which are components of the basic sustainable development goals 8 (SDG) and 9 (SDG).

The Digital Data Portal (2022) reported that there were 82.90 million internet users in Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Report (2022), Pakistani entrepreneurs have mitigated \$322 million in 2022, and \$350 million entrepreneurs were record-breaking in 2021 (Tariq, Younus, 2022).

Additionally, entrepreneurs and potential consumers communicate and engage through social media also promotes awareness of marketing expertise and client attitudes (Park et al., 2017). Gilani et al. (Gilani et al., 2020) reveal in their study that the use of social media has a significant relationship with young entrepreneurial leadership. Moreover, social media users account for 49.4 percent of the variation in entrepreneurial leadership (Gilani et al., 2020).

In light of the above studies, it has been assumed that young entrepreneurs' use of digitalization, such as social media, for the goal of entrepreneurship, might result in profitable businesses. Young entrepreneurs have the potential to significantly contribute to the rapid economic growth of a country like Pakistan. Students in higher education frequently utilize social media (Shi et al., 2022). Social Media Uses among Entrepreneurs: Much researches have evaluated the uses, adoption, and invention of communication technology. These factors influence social media usage among entrepreneurs in the developing countries (Kimuli et al., 2021; Titko et al., 2020). Undergraduates of universities are widely using social media platforms (Muhamad, et al., 2009; Shi, et al., 2022), in respect of social and academic (Slutsky et al., 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023). Undergrads chose social media apps to connect and read the content (Shi et al., 2022).

They mostly prefer Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube and Twitter are the least selected. Most of the students use YouTube for self-education purposes (Holden, Rada, 2011; Zreen et al., 2019). They have gained knowledge from their university studies by turning that knowledge into profit-generating new products and services with the aid of cutting-edge technology (Bailetti, 2011). Higher exposure to various social media sites is associated with improved entrepreneurial attitudes and perceptions. This association varies by gender and age group (Barrera-Verdugo, Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022). Facebook greater favorable associations in younger and male students, but Whatsapp and YouTube show more positive correlations in older and female students (Barrera-Verdugo, Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022). Social media are Web 2.0 platforms for exchanging user-generated content (Kusumawardhany, Dwiarta, 2020), and can be utilized effectively to promote a value-based perspective toward international relations (Chelysheva, 2021). Hence, business performance is improved through social media at the international level (Rideout, Gray, 2013). The primary subjects of entrepreneurship study include social media's economic benefits and business applications (Nawi et al., 2019). Social media usage shows a significant response to the students' entrepreneurs, with the 'affordable technology and knowledge required to produce a media content' (Khajeheian, 2017), and positive relationship with entrepreneurs (Emmanuel et al., 2022).

#### 4. Results

**Demographic Profile of Respondents:** A descriptive analysis has provided in the demographic profile of respondents. As can be seen in Table 1 the majority of the participants 192 (69.1 %) were male, while females accounted for 86 (30.9 %) remaining. The data shows that males find more opportunities than females. The three universities (University of Sindh Jamshoro, University of Karachi, and I. B. A Sukkur) were equally represented. Each university has comprised approximately one-third. For the study mode, the highest level of education of undergraduate entrepreneurs had 97 (34.9 %) BSIV, 69 (24.8 %) BSIII, 62 (22.3 %) BSII, and BSI 50 (18 %).

The participant's largest age group was between 21 to 25 years 187 (67.3 %), followed by less than 20 years 81 (29.1 %), and above 26 years 10 (3.6 %). Meanwhile, 197 (70.9 %) participants were from urban areas, and the remaining 81 (29.1 %) belonged to rural areas. Regarding fields of study reported were business administration, commerce, information communication technology, and social sciences 99 (35.6 %), followed by multidisciplinary 82 (29.5 %) and art & humanities 23 (8.3 %). Notably, the majority of respondents have less than 2 years of business experience 193 (69.4 %), while 73 (26.3 %) have 2 to 4 years of business experience, and only 12 (4.3 %) have 4 to 7 years of business experience. Moreover, the majority of student entrepreneurs had more than 16000 (130, 46.8 %) of the distribution of monthly income, followed by less than 5000 (53, 19.1 %), 6000 to 10000 (47, 16.9 %), and 11000 to 15000 (48, 17.3 %). For business startup finance, 215 (77.3 %) student entrepreneurs used personal capital, 18 (6.5 %) used debt finance from government organizations 18 (6.5 %) used debt finance from private organizations. Moreover, the majority of participants operated their business solo 132 (47.5 %), while 91 (32.7 %) had two partners, 44 (15.8 %) had three to four partners, and only 11 (4 %) had more than five partners. In addition to this, most respondents had worked part-time 217 (78.1 %), remaining 61 (21.9 %) full-time. Additionally, the more time-consuming business operations via digitalization were 3 to 6 hours 121 (43.5 %), followed by less than 2 hours 75 (27 %), more than 6 hours 60 (21.6 %), and 22 (7.9 %) participants consumed digitalization all day. See [Table 1](#) for details.

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 278)

Items	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	192	69.1
Female	86	30.9
<i>Universities</i>		
University of Sindh	93	33.5
University of Karachi	93	33.5
I.B. A Sukkhar	92	33.1
<i>Education</i>		
BS - I	50	18.0
BS-II	62	22.3
BS - III	69	24.8
BS - IV	97	34.9
<i>Age Group</i>		
less than 20	81	29.1
21 to 25	187	67.3
Above 26	10	3.6
<i>Area of Living</i>		
Urban	197	70.9
Rural	81	29.1
<i>Major field of Study</i>		
BBA/Commerce/IT	99	35.6
multidisciplinary	179	69.4
<i>Business Experience</i>		
less than 2 years	193	69.4
2 to 4 years	193	26.3
2 to 4 years	12	4.3
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
less than 5000	53	19.1
6000 to 10000	47	16.9
11000 to 15000	48	17.3
more than 16000	130	46.8
<i>Business Start-up Finance</i>		
Finance from the concerned university	27	9.7
Finance from Government Organization	18	6.5
Finance from a private organization	18	6.5



Personal Finance	215	77.3
<i>Number of Partners</i>		
Solo	132	47.5
2 Partner	91	32.7
3 to 4 partner	44	15.8
more than 5 partner	11	4.0
<i>Employment Status</i>		
full time	61	21.9
part-time	217	78.1
<i>Time consumption</i>		
Less than 2 hours	75	27.0
3 hours - 6 hours	121	43.5
More than 6 hours	60	21.6
All Day	22	7.9
<i>Main Product in Business</i>		
food service	51	18.3
selling of fabric	42	15.1
Accessory	48	17.30
Digital Contents	28	10.1
Others	109	39.2

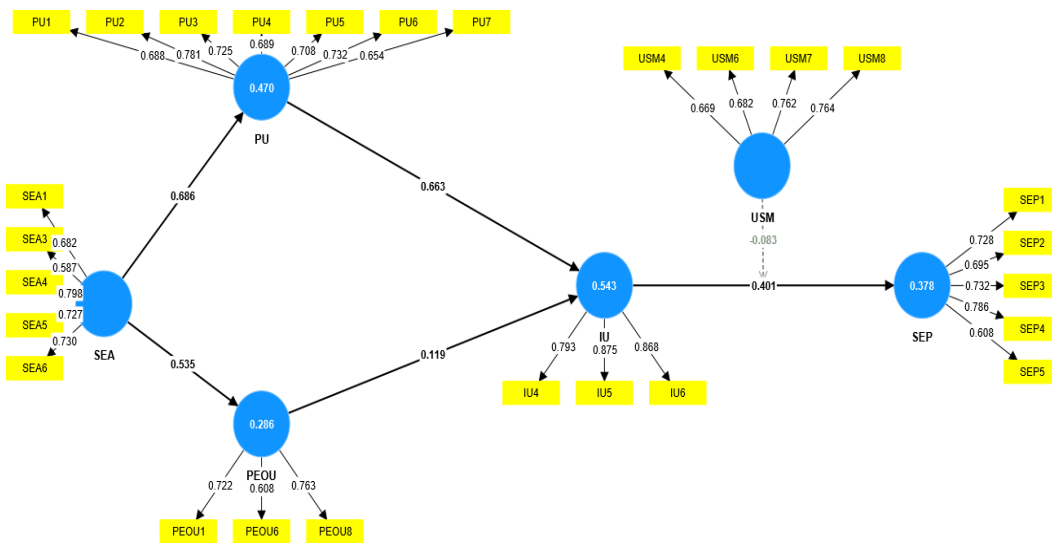
Regarding the main product in the business noted 109 (39.2 %) teachers, and content writing followed by food service 51 (18.3 %), accessories 48 (17.30%) such as cosmetics and jewelry, selling of fabric 42 (15.1 %), and digital content 28 (10.1 %) such as video graphic and photographic. See [Table 1](#) for details.

Using Smart Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS) for data analysis, the PLS-SEM was used to test the hypotheses because of its sophisticated estimates in the entrepreneurial field ([Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018](#)). The study has been constructed and described through a supporting model. The bootstrapping method is used to complete the SmartPLS algorithm, and it tests the validity and reliability by using loadings, significance levels, and path coefficients ([Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021b](#)). The structural model assessment evaluates the measurement model.

**Table 2.** Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability (Calculation based on SmartPLS)

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
SEA (Students entrepreneurs ability) ( <a href="#">Shaowei et al., 2022</a> ; <a href="#">Bosma et al., 2004</a> ; <a href="#">Fatoki, 2011</a> ).			0.748	0.757	0.833	0.501
	SEA1	0.682				
	SEA3	0.587				
	SEA4	0.798				
	SEA5	0.727				
	SEA6	0.73				
PU (Perceived usefulness) Fred D. Davis, Jr. (1980), Davis, F.D. (1989).			0.837	0.839	0.878	0.507
	PU1	0.688				
	PU2	0.781				
	PU3	0.725				
	PU4	0.689				
	PU5	0.708				
	PU6	0.732				
PEOU (Perceived ease of use) Fred D. Davis, Jr. (1980), Davis, F.D. (1989).			0.488	0.502	0.741	0.491
	PEOU1	0.722				

	PEOU6	0.608				
	PEOU8	0.763				
IU(Intention of Use Digitalization) (Sieger et al., 2019)			0.801	1.801	2.801	3.801
	IU4	0.793				
	IU5	0.875				
	IU6	0.868				
SEP (Students' entrepreneurs performance) (Hasan, Almubarak, 2016).			0.757	0.768	0.836	0.507
	SEP1	0.728				
	SEP2	0.695				
	SEP3	0.732				
	SEP4	0.786				
	SEP5	0.608				
USM(Uses of social media) (Hawamdeh et al., 2022; Davis, Jr., 1980; Constantinides, Romero, Boria, 2009)			0.69	0.69	0.812	0.519
	USM4	0.669				
	USM6	0.682				
	USM7	0.762				
	USM8	0.764				
	USM x	1				
	IU	1				



**Fig. 3.** Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement model Assessment: as you can see in Table 2 the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to assess the measuring model and convergent validity. Tables 2, 3 and Figure 3 show that, with a few exceptions, the loadings were higher than the advised value of 0.60. In a similar vein, Table 3's Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values were often higher than the suggested value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The variables' average variance extracted AVE values were higher than the suggested level of 0.50 in exceptional cases of PEOU and IU. The factor loadings were the lowest (<0.50) for the eliminated items. To assess the validity and reliability of the data, the hetero-trait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio is a new criterion that was developed in discriminate validity (See Table 3 for details). Consequently, the HTMT ratio assesses the notions' discriminate validity. Discriminate validity is present when values are less than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017).

Structural Model Assessment: Following the evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model assessed the hypotheses for validity and reliability. Indicators of the model's relevance were the standard errors, path coefficient, and t-value. Based on the path coefficient value as a basis, SmartPLS's bootstrapping technique determines, if the hypotheses are supported (Ringle et al., 2005). The structural model was also evaluated after the measurement assessment.

The result formulated seven hypotheses, out of which five are concerned with the moderating of SEA, PU, PEOU, and IU on H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7. The results depict SEA, PU, PEOU, and IU as having an impact on SEP with the moderator of USM.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity (HTMT ratio)

	IU	PEOU	PU	SEA	SEP	USM
IU						
PEOU	0.774					
PU	0.887	0.883				
SEA	0.805	0.867	0.864			
SEP	0.689	0.89	0.815	0.812		
USM	0.629	0.805	0.732	0.826	0.677	

Table 4 represented that student entrepreneurs' ability impacts perceptual usefulness significantly, hence H1 is supported ( $\beta = 0.686$ ,  $SD = 0.036$ ,  $t = 18.898$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Moreover, the impact of students entrepreneurs ability on perceived ease of use, hence H2 supported ( $\beta = 0.535$ ,  $SD = 0.047$ ,  $t = 11.37$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Thus, H2 is supported. A statistically significant impact of perceived usefulness on intention to use digitalization was revealed, therefore H3 is supported ( $\beta = 0.663$ ,  $SD = 0.053$ ,  $t = 11.37$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The impact of perceived ease of use on intention to use social media was significant and therefore H4 is supported ( $\beta = 0.119$ ,  $SD = 0.059$ ,  $t = 2.034$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, the intention to use social media positively impacted student entrepreneurs' performance ( $\beta = 0.401$ ,  $SD = 0.067$ ,  $t = 5.957$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), thus H5 is supported. Secondly, last, the impact of the uses of social media on student entrepreneur's performance is insignificant ( $\beta = 0.312$ ,  $SD = 0.061$ ,  $t = 5.145$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), thus H6 is non-supported. Lastly, the impact of uses of social media and intention to use digitalization was indirectly presented as insignificant impact on students entrepreneurs performance ( $\beta = -0.083$ ,  $SD = 0.062$ ,  $t = 1.332$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ), hence indicating H7 is non-supported. Furthermore, the direct hypothesis was tested for further empirical analysis (See Table 4, 5 for details and Figure 2).

**Table 4.** Path Coefficient Indirect Effect

H	Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	t values	P values	Decisions
H1	UEA -> PU	0.686	0.689	0.036	18.898	0	supported
H2	UEA -> PEOU	0.535	0.541	0.047	11.37	0	supported
H3	PU -> IUSM	0.663	0.663	0.053	12.553	0	supported
H4	PEOU -> IUSM	0.119	0.123	0.059	2.034	0.042	supported
H5	IUSM -> SEP	0.401	0.407	0.067	5.957	0	supported
H6	USM -> SEP	0.312	0.316	0.061	5.145	0	supported
H7	USM x IUSM -> UEP	-0.083	-0.085	0.062	1.332	0.183	significant

**Table 5.** Path Coefficient Specific Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (STDEV)	P values	Results
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UEA -> PU -> IUSM -> UEP	0.182	0.187	0.04	4.591	0	supported
PEOU -> IUSM -> UEP	0.048	0.051	0.028	1.725	0.085	non-supported
UEA -> PEOU -> IUSM	0.064	0.067	0.033	1.914	0.056	non-supported
PU -> IUSM -> UEP	0.266	0.27	0.049	5.402	0	supported
UEA -> PU -> IU	0.454	0.458	0.049	9.245	0	supported
UEA -> PEOU -> IUSM -> UEP	0.026	0.028	0.016	1.61	0.107	non-supported

## 5. Conclusion

This study has found the significant impact of social media on undergrad entrepreneur's performance with the effects of social media use during study at three public universities in Sindh, Pakistan. Moreover, the previous literature was reviewed, focusing on social media as a new communication technological impact among undergrad entrepreneurs. Besides this, the proposed TAM model has a significant modification, which focuses on the association between student entrepreneur's ability, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, social media use, and intention to use social media among undergraduates for the enhancement of their entrepreneurship performance. The results of the structural model are shown in [Figure 2](#).

Overall, the significant association between SEA, PU, IU, USM, and SEP was strongly shown by the model except PEOU (See [Table 5](#)). This demonstrates how undergrads are motivated to utilize social media for business as determined by SEA and PU. Because of the perceived ease of use (PEOU), flexibility, and accessibility of the Internet students can run their businesses with social media. A significant association between perceived usefulness and the uses of social media in terms of learning outcomes was also found by Al-Rahmi et al. ([Al-Rahmi et al., 2018](#)).

Using structural equation modeling, this study investigated seven hypotheses. It is worth noting that this analysis supports all seven hypothesis-stated possibilities with a perfect model fit, reliability, and validity. The first and second hypotheses of the study reveal that SAE has a beneficial effect on PU and PEOU (H1 & H2 supported). This finding supports earlier research ([Davis, 1989](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2019](#); [Ma, 2020](#); [Shaowei et al., 2022](#); [Yasir et al., 2021](#)). When using social media as a marketing channel for their businesses, students understand the possibility of bad consequences and take risks. Perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) have also been found a significant and positive effect on the intention to use social media disclosing that hypothesis (H3 & H4 supported) has been confirmed and supported in a review of the literature ([Gefen et al., 2003](#)). Another variable is the intention to use social media has been found a positive and significant impact on the undergrad entrepreneur's performance in Pakistan (H5 supported). The results support the literature that undergrad entrepreneurs have realized the advantages and fun related to the uses of social media on entrepreneur platforms ([Guo, 2015](#)). This can be revealed despite the lack of information that many young entrepreneur owners have non-availability of technology and institutional frameworks that support the beneficial impact of social media as a business platform ([Nawi et al., 2017](#)). Despite the favorable impact noted among the undergrad entrepreneurs. The impact of social media use on students' entrepreneurial performance to apply intention to use social media is statistically significant. Hence H6 and H7 are supported.

As you can see in [Table 6](#) the path coefficient was found to be a non-supported and indirect support of student entrepreneurs' ability towards perceived ease of use (PEOU), intention to use (IU), and student entrepreneurs performance (SEP). This could be due to the most of the undergrad entrepreneurs belong to rural areas of the country and have a lack of facilities in their hometowns ([Nawi et al., 2017](#)).

A further question in the study was whether adding additional components of use of social media (USM) and a mediator to the TAM could help explain the phenomena in the study's setting more effectively. The findings as they have been described thus far can be seen as a partial endorsement of the study's paradigm. Except for one item perceptual ease of use, all of the factors were able to discern the comprehension of undergrads entrepreneurs towards social media as a

tool of digitalization. Additionally, it demonstrates the promise of social media as seen by students and their potential will lead to usage and acceptance.

The majority of undergrad entrepreneurs know about the uses of social media in their business. Such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram are the popular apps of social media, mostly used by undergrad entrepreneurs to do their online business.

In a nutshell, the application of social media has empowered youngsters by giving them benefits and opportunities. However, undergrad entrepreneurs have flourished as food services, fabric sellers, jewelers, accessories, content writers, teachers, audio-video graphics, and photographers. They are still discovering new opportunities for economic development. However, student entrepreneurs are intelligent enough to promote their businesses to the global world. The social media platform makes self-reliance and confidence in progressing their business and abilities.

There are a few limitations in this study. At first, this study evaluated the usage of social media only among undergrad entrepreneurs in only three universities in the Sindh state of Pakistan. The study has applied TAM, which was adapted and modified to carry out further research. This study was focused only on public universities of Sindh state of Pakistan, where poor students belonging to rural regions already lack information technologies, facilities, and knowledge of using new innovative technologies. Nevertheless, they are making the possibilities of startups of entrepreneurs in critical circumstances. Thus, it would accumulate a more constructive model or apply the same modeling in various geographical and cultural settings with the large sample size of the study for more generalization, and understanding of social media's impact on young entrepreneurs.

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## Digital-Megastory in Online Journalism: The Prevailing Situation of Digital Transformation of Journalism in Vietnam

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### Abstract

This qualitative research study investigates the phenomenon of Digital-Megastory and its role in the digital transformation of journalism in Vietnam. The study utilises in-depth interviews with 35 Vietnamese online journalists to explore their perspectives on the adoption of Digital-Megastory formats and the overall impact of digital transformation on journalism practices in the country. The research design involves purposive sampling to select 35 online journalists from various media organisations and backgrounds, ensuring a diverse representation of the online journalism landscape in Vietnam. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insights into the journalists' experiences, challenges, and opportunities in integrating Digital-Megastory into their reporting practices. Through thematic analysis, key themes emerged, shedding light on the role of Digital-Megastory in engaging audiences and fostering interactive storytelling experiences. Participants highlighted the benefits of using multimedia elements, such as videos, infographics, and social media integration, to enhance the depth and breadth of news coverage. The findings also reveal the influence of digital transformation on the newsroom workflow, with journalists adapting to real-time reporting demands and employing data-driven storytelling techniques. The research underscores the importance of equipping journalists with multimedia skills, ethical guidelines, and strategies to navigate the challenges posed by the digital revolution.

**Keywords:** digital-megastory, online journalism, digital transformation, qualitative research, in-depth interviews, Vietnam.

### 1. Introduction

The advent of digital technology has profoundly impacted the landscape of journalism worldwide. The emergence of online journalism has transformed how news is produced, distributed, and consumed, and Vietnam is no exception. As the nation embraces the digital age, this study seeks to investigate the current state of digital transformation in Vietnam's journalism sector, with a focus on the phenomenon of 'Digital-Megastory.' This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research and key insights related to digital transformation in journalism, focusing on the Vietnamese context.

The concepts of Digital-Megastory, Online Journalism, Digital Transformation of Journalism, and Journalism are interconnected and reflective of the ongoing evolution of media practices in the digital era. Digital-Megastory represents a prominent storytelling approach in Online Journalism, leveraging the capabilities of digital technology to engage audiences. The Digital Transformation of Journalism is reshaping the news landscape and how journalists

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gather and present information. Through these changes, the fundamental role of Journalism in informing and empowering the public remains essential in fostering an informed citizenry.

*Journalism:* Journalism is the process of gathering, verifying, and disseminating information and news to the public through various media channels (Ward, 2004). It serves as a vital component of democratic societies, providing citizens with information that informs their decision-making and fosters public debate. Journalism aims to uphold principles of accuracy, fairness, and accountability, presenting objective and unbiased information (Deuze, 2005). Traditional journalism encompassed print, radio, and television, while modern journalism extends to online platforms. It plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse and promoting transparency in society.

*Digital Transformation in Journalism:* Digital transformation in journalism refers to the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of news production and dissemination. This transformation has been driven by the increasing adoption of digital platforms, changing consumer preferences, and advancements in technology (Radhakrishnan, 2018). As traditional media outlets face challenges, digital platforms have emerged as vital tools for journalism to engage with audiences and remain relevant in the digital age.

The digital transformation of journalism is an inevitable trend that press agencies must follow swiftly and decisively to avoid lagging behind, losing readership, and facing inevitable consequences for their survival (Nguyen, 2021). In Vietnam, the government has approved the strategy for digital transformation in journalism until 2025, with a vision towards 2030 (Loi, 2014). The strategy aims to cultivate modern, professional, and ethical press agencies that effectively communicate and advance the goals of the government and the country's reform efforts. It will enable the sector to properly perform its role in guiding the public's opinions and firmly safeguarding information sovereignty in cyberspace. It will also improve readers' experience, create new revenue sources, and help promote the development of the digital content industry (Giang, 2018).

By 2030, the objective is for all press agencies to have released their content on digital platforms, with emphasis placed on domestic digital platforms. About 90 % of agencies should have used concentrated data analytic and processing platforms and applied artificial intelligence (AI) to optimise operations. Moreover, 100 % will have operated in the converged newsroom model and others matching scientific and technological development in the world and produced content in line with digital media trends. The strategy entails that press agencies should aim to maximise their revenue streams, with the goal of having 50 % of them increase their revenue by a minimum of 20 % (Giang, 2017, 2018; Van Krieken, 2019).

The Vietnamese press has been undergoing significant changes due to digital transformation. COVID-19 has changed the way society consumes news and content in the last two years, forcing the journalism industry to go digital (Lassila, 2014). The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation across all sectors of society including journalism. The Vietnamese press has been quick to adapt to this change by embracing new technologies such as social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter as well as mobile applications (Van Krieken, 2019). These platforms have enabled journalists to reach a wider audience than ever before.

Digital transformation is an inevitable trend that press agencies must follow swiftly and decisively to avoid lagging behind. In Vietnam, the government has approved a strategy for digital transformation in journalism until 2025 with a vision towards 2030 (Binh, Hong, 2020). The strategy aims to cultivate modern, professional, and ethical press agencies that effectively communicate and advance the goals of the government and the country's reform efforts (Wolf, Godulla, 2016). By 2030, all press agencies should have released their content on digital platforms with emphasis placed on domestic digital platforms. The Vietnamese press has been quick to adapt to this change by embracing new technologies such as social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter as well as mobile applications (Smith, 2019).

*Online Journalism in Vietnam:* Vietnam has witnessed significant growth in internet penetration and mobile device usage in recent years, leading to an increase in online journalism platforms. Studies suggest that online journalism has become a preferred source of news for the younger Vietnamese population (Binh, Hong, 2020). This shift in consumption patterns has compelled traditional media outlets to embrace digital technologies and adapt their newsrooms to meet the demands of the digital-savvy audience.

*The Rise of 'Digital-Megastory':* The concept of 'Digital-Megastory' has emerged as a dominant trend in online journalism, characterised by the production and distribution of in-depth, multimedia-rich narratives on digital platforms (Smith, 2019). This format allows journalists to

present comprehensive stories with various media elements, including videos, interactive graphics, and social media integration, enhancing audience engagement and understanding.

The research team focused on surveying articles from leading online newspapers with a substantial readership that are known for their multimedia journalism products. Specifically, the study selected three newspapers for analysis (<https://www.vietnamplus.vn/>, <https://laodong.vn/>, and <https://zingnews.vn/>). The aim of this study is to conduct a survey on prominent online newspapers in Vietnam, namely VietnamPlus.vn, Laodong.vn, and ZingNews, in order to examine the process of creating multimedia newspaper products. The study also aims to identify the differences between traditional and modern online newspapers, analyse the actual content production and form of longform products on these platforms, and provide sample processes for producing longform content on online newspapers.

ZingNews (<https://zingnews.vn/>), with its large following, has embraced the concept of multimedia journalism by establishing a dedicated Longform page, distinguishing itself from other newspapers. Notably, Zing.vn has made significant investments in high-quality visuals, employing skilled photographers to create detailed and artistic images and videos. The newspaper utilises various writing styles to give each story a unique expression. Zing.vn consistently produces longform content on a weekly basis. According to Comscore's ranking of newspapers and online information sites in Vietnam in August 2018, Zing.vn emerged as the top online newspaper site in Vietnam, with 14.632 million views, constituting 33 % of the total readership of regular online newspapers (Nga, 2018).

VietnamPlus (<https://www.vietnamplus.vn/>), as a pioneering newspaper, has introduced new trends in journalism to Vietnam. Megastory is a form of longform storytelling, and each newspaper in Vietnam gives it a different name. On average, VietnamPlus publishes 2-3 multimedia works per week. Although it has been in operation since 2008, the newspaper has achieved numerous successes. It was the first to produce a masterpiece, laying the foundation for the country's press development. The newspaper effectively applies techniques to enhance the appeal and novelty of longform articles, keeping pace with global press trends by incorporating various elements such as infographics, interactivity, video, and audio to offer readers a fresh experience (Kartveit, 2018).

Labour Newspaper (<https://laodong.vn/>): Labour Newspaper serves as the communication agency of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour and is one of the oldest and most influential newspapers within the Vietnamese government's media system. After the emergence of multimedia journalism in Vietnam, Labour Newspaper also ventured into integration and launched several multimedia journalistic works in different formats.

*Factors Influencing Digital Transformation in Vietnam's Journalism:* Several factors have influenced the digital transformation of journalism in Vietnam. These include the rapid expansion of internet infrastructure, growing mobile internet usage, increasing social media penetration, and the rise of citizen journalism (Nguyen, 2017). Additionally, the changing expectations of the audience and the need for news outlets to monetise digital content have further accelerated this transformation.

*Challenges and Opportunities:* While the digital transformation of journalism presents numerous opportunities, it also comes with challenges. Adapting to digital platforms requires significant investments in technology and training for journalists (Duong, 2018). Additionally, there are concerns about maintaining journalistic ethics and integrity in the digital realm, particularly in the era of 'fake news' and misinformation (Tran, 2019). However, digital journalism also offers opportunities for more personalised and interactive storytelling, increased reach, and greater audience involvement.

*Impact on Journalistic Practices:* The shift towards digital-megastories has impacted traditional journalistic practices. Journalists are now required to possess multimedia skills and an understanding of audience engagement strategies to succeed in the digital landscape (Le, 2021). Furthermore, the pressure to deliver real-time news on digital platforms has influenced the newsroom workflow and editorial decision-making processes (Vu, 2020).

The literature indicates that the digital transformation of journalism in Vietnam is an ongoing and multifaceted process, with the rise of 'Digital-Megastory' being a prominent trend. The challenges and opportunities presented by this transformation necessitate careful consideration of the implications for journalistic practices, ethics, and audience engagement. As Vietnam's media landscape continues to evolve, further research is needed to understand the long-term impact of digital technology on journalism in the country.

## 2. Materials and methods

*Technological Determinism:* The study adopts a technological determinism perspective to understand the role of digital technologies in shaping the landscape of online journalism in Vietnam. Technological determinism posits that advancements in digital technologies have a profound impact on social structures, including journalism practices (McLuhan, 1964). In the context of this study, digital-megastory, as a dominant trend in online journalism, is influenced by the affordances and constraints of digital platforms, which reshape the production and consumption of news content.

*Media Ecology Theory:* Media ecology theory is utilised to analyse the intricate interactions between media technologies, journalistic practices, and the cultural environment in Vietnam. The theory emphasises the interdependence of media forms, highlighting how the emergence of digital platforms alters the ecosystem of journalism (Postman, 1970). By employing this framework, the study seeks to explore how the integration of digital technologies has led to the rise of digital-megastory and how it coexists with other media formats in Vietnam's media ecology.

*Convergence Culture:* The concept of convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006) is applied to examine the transformations in journalism driven by the convergence of media technologies and practices. As online journalism in Vietnam increasingly adopts digital-megastory formats, this framework aids in understanding how journalism converges with other forms of media, such as social media, multimedia content, and interactive storytelling. Convergence culture encourages a comprehensive investigation of how traditional journalism practices intersect with digital trends to create innovative storytelling experiences.

*Audience Participation and Engagement:* This study also incorporates the theoretical lens of audience participation and engagement in the context of digital-megastory in online journalism. Drawing upon work by Anderson (Anderson, 2011) and Hermida (Hermida, 2017), the framework examines how the participatory nature of digital-megastory encourages active audience engagement and co-creation of news narratives. This perspective explores how audiences in Vietnam interact with digital-megastories, share content on social media, and become integral to the dissemination of news.

*Cultural Imperialism and Glocalisation:* To contextualise the impact of digital transformation on journalism in Vietnam, the theoretical framework considers cultural imperialism and glocalisation perspectives. Cultural imperialism (Tomlinson, 1991) addresses concerns of global media dominance and its potential influence on local journalism practices. Glocalisation (Robertson, 1995), on the other hand, examines the process of integrating global media with local cultures. These concepts aid in understanding how digital-megastory, which may draw inspiration from global media trends, is adapted and localised to meet the specific information needs and preferences of Vietnamese audiences.

By adopting a theoretical framework comprising technological determinism, media ecology theory, convergence culture, audience participation, and cultural imperialism/glocalisation, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the actual situation of digital transformation and the emergence of digital-megastory in online journalism in Vietnam. This multi-dimensional approach enables a nuanced analysis of the interplay between digital technologies, journalism practices, audience engagement, and cultural dynamics in shaping the media landscape of the country.

*Research Design:* This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the actual situation of digital transformation in Vietnam's online journalism, with a specific focus on Digital-Megastory. In-depth interviews are employed to gain insights into the perspectives and experiences of 35 Vietnamese online journalists.

The survey method aimed to gather statistics on longform products across the surveyed newspapers, enabling an assessment of the current situation, content, and format of longform products on online newspapers. In-depth interviews were conducted with journalism experts who possess knowledge of longform trends or have experience in multimedia journalism. Additionally, reporters and editors directly involved in producing longform content were interviewed. The analytical-synthetic method was employed to deeply analyse the characteristics, limitations, and advantages of longform content, as well as its role in contemporary journalism.

*Sampling Technique:* The snowball sampling technique is used to recruit participants for the study. Initially, a small group of online journalists familiar with the topic is identified, and they are asked to recommend other relevant participants from their networks. This process continues

iteratively until the desired sample size of 35 is achieved, ensuring a diverse representation of the online journalism community in Vietnam.

*Participants:* The study includes Vietnamese online journalists working across various media organisations, with different levels of experience and expertise in online journalism and Digital-Megastory.

*Data Collection:* Face-to-face interviews are conducted with the participants at their places of work or homes, based on their convenience. This approach fosters a comfortable and conducive environment for open and candid discussions about the topic. The interviews are semi-structured, allowing flexibility for participants to share their perspectives and experiences related to Digital-Megastory and the broader digital transformation of journalism.

*Data Recording:* To ensure accuracy and completeness of data, the interviews are carefully recorded using the audio recording function on smartphones. Detailed field notes are also taken during the interviews to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.

*Data Analysis:* Thematic analysis is employed to analyse the collected data. The audio recordings are transcribed verbatim, the transcripts are reviewed multiple times to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to Digital-Megastory and the digital transformation of journalism in Vietnam. The analysis follows a systematic process of coding and categorising the data to develop comprehensive and meaningful themes.

*Ethical Considerations:* The study complies with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent is obtained from all participants before the interviews, clarifying the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants are assured of anonymity, and pseudonyms are used in the reporting of the findings to protect their identities.

### 3. Discussion

*The Influence of Digital-Megastory on the Advancement of Online Journalism:* In the current era of technological breakthroughs, online journalism is experiencing rapid development. A new trend in journalism is emerging as a solution for online journalism. Although the longevity of this trend is uncertain, it has shown promise in the immediate future. The public has responded positively, spending more time on each article of this kind (Giang, 2014). Online journalism provides readers with the benefits of saving time and money while obtaining up-to-date news. It has brought about a turning point in information transmission and reception. The public actively engages in information feedback, provision, and even contributes to writing. This fosters stronger relationships between journalists, the public, and news sources, ultimately increasing the social impact of journalism (Giang, 2018).

Digital-megastory represents a form of multimedia article that incorporates innovative design elements such as title effects, flexible text with beautifully arranged quotes, and full-screen horizontal images. Reading a Digital-megastory article feels akin to perusing a mobile version of a newspaper on a computer or enjoying a sophisticatedly designed magazine page. These articles often span several thousand words, combining general information, narrative, commentary, and in-depth analysis (An, 2018).

One advantage of Digital-megastory articles is their ability to engage readers for longer periods of time. While the average time spent on e-newsletters or shorter news pieces is typically five to twenty seconds, readers spend an average of five to six minutes on each E-magazine article on platforms like Vietnam Plus. Some articles even captivate readers for 10 to 15 minutes due to their in-depth content, accompanied by numerous images and videos. Notably, time spent on site is an important criterion for website classification (Duong, 2016). Furthermore, digital-megastory articles alleviate the annoyance of advertisements for readers. Gone are the banners and pop-up ads that startle readers; instead, the content is displayed without any distracting ads. These factors contribute to readers' desire for an improved reading experience (Lassila-Merisalo, 2014; Menke, 2019).

Digital-megastory has recently emerged in Vietnamese online journalism, making strides in the past five years. It is considered a new category of journalism, offering high-quality content as an alternative to information-saturated online newspapers. Longform, as a new journalistic content format, has arisen from news agencies' recognition of the importance of producing high-quality content rather than focusing solely on breaking news, which is readily available on social media platforms. News agencies possess an advantage in creating in-depth, elaborately presented content that most individuals lack the skills or resources to produce (Hiippala, 2017).

Digital-megastory articles need not be extensive journalistic works that employ numerous multimedia techniques or encompass all aspects of a global event or crisis. Unlike traditional journalism, digital-megastory articles can be created from stories anywhere, delivering the essence of the message through a new style of writing and presentation techniques. This approach allows the story to resonate with readers personally, enabling them to interpret and contemplate the topic in their own way (Lassila-Merisalo, 2014). Digital-megastory sets itself apart from conventional media stories through its focus and its impact on readers' thoughts. This aspect facilitates a deeper connection between readers and the story, inspiring curiosity, and encouraging readers to discuss the story with others, leading to its contagious spread.

The emergence of Digital-megastory, a trend in multimedia journalism, has opened new doors for the field of journalism in the country. In contrast to what is commonly referred to as "regular articles" on online newspapers today, longform represents a high-quality journalistic product that embraces multimedia technology. Unlike conventional journalistic works that rely on text and still images, Longform incorporates various media elements, such as images, videos, and graphics, to make the information more captivating and vivid. This combination enhances truthfulness, objectivity, and reader comprehension.

Digital-megastory offers two key advantages (Nga, 2017).

Firstly, it excels in the visual aspect. As newspapers are visual mediums, visually appealing articles are effective and well received by readers. Special articles can be likened to visual feasts, with designers meticulously selecting and arranging images, coordinating title colors, and carefully designing layouts. Once the visual aspect is ensured, viewers begin to engage with the content more attentively. Secondly, digital-megastory seamlessly synthesises multiple media types into a single article. Sophisticated longform articles may incorporate videos, infographics, drawings, and stylised text. This approach enables statistical information to be easily understood and compared, while stylised text emphasises specific messages or focal points that the article aims to highlight. Although future journalism formats may emerge, digital-megastory is highly regarded and appreciated by readers.

Since the introduction of digital-megastory, online journalism has found its unique way to compete with social networks in terms of authenticity and the visual appeal of information. This innovative approach has opened new possibilities for the development of national journalism. Readers can now engage with stories on a deeper level, piquing their curiosity and prompting them to share and discuss these stories with others.

*Characteristics of Content in Digital-Megastory Articles:* To create a successful digital-megastory article, it is crucial to meet the criteria of a high-quality article. The news must possess significant value, timeliness, and discoverability. Typically, articles in the digital-megastory format need to offer something unique or organise data in a systematic manner. Therefore, articles featuring profiles of notable individuals or summarising annual events or information on trending topics are often chosen for presentation in a magazine-like format.

Furthermore, digital-megastory serves as a means to capture and retain readers' attention and loyalty towards articles and newspapers in various newsrooms. It is crucial for "longform" journalism to clearly convey the intentions and purposes of articles to readers, going beyond mere information provision. While Digital-megastory requires substantial effort, considering it as a modern form of journalism necessitates a systematic approach to understanding and mastering it. This poses significant challenges for modern online journalists.

Despite some drawbacks, such as being impractical at times, requiring substantial time and effort, and employing various presentation techniques, Digital-megastory has emerged as a new genre of journalism that attracts a large and interactive audience, contributing to a vibrant global journalistic environment. Producing a Digital-megastory can be likened to creating a magazine, demanding meticulous attention to both form and content depth, surpassing the scope of daily newspapers. Hence, the cost of production, including content creation and display technology, poses an initial challenge. A comprehensive Digital-megastory article entails meticulous research and captivating accompanying visuals, often taking weeks or even months to complete, involving stages such as photography, video editing, graphic design, and interactive graphics for complex articles.

However, it cannot be denied that this form of journalism paves the way for realigning the field with its mission of guiding readers and delivering core journalistic values, instead of solely chasing after news in the realm of social networks. The era of journalism where readers consume

whatever is provided has passed, as they now yearn for valuable information amidst an abundance of sensational content.

Moreover, amidst countless newspapers and websites, it has become challenging to readers to remember specific publications or authors due to the confusion and uniformity among them or their adherence to prevailing news trends. In the social media environment, information constantly evolves, with subsequent waves superseding previous ones. Consequently, traditional reporting methods have become tedious. Differentiation is crucial in leaving a lasting impression. Delving deeper into the underlying issues behind new events is an essential function of contemporary journalism.

Creating a digital-megastory is comparable to designing a magazine, requiring meticulous attention to both form and content depth, surpassing the scope of daily newspapers. Hence, the cost of production, including content creation and display technology, poses an initial challenge. A comprehensive Digital-megastory article entails meticulous research and captivating accompanying visuals, often taking weeks or even months to complete, involving stages such as photography, video editing, graphic design, and interactive graphics for complex articles. The technological aspect also incurs substantial costs. While conventional articles can be managed through a content management system (CMS), a complex Mega Story necessitates dedicated design and coding processes involving multiple individuals. Time consumption remains a significant hurdle, as meticulous and thorough work requires considerable effort. Even for simple articles, utilising online tools takes several hours.

Despite the challenges, the rewards are significant in an era where information becomes outdated within seconds. VietnamPlus stands as a prime example of success in implementing special products within its newspaper through Megastory. The newspaper has achieved considerable success in recent years and has received numerous prestigious press awards, with many of their works adopting this style. While other newsrooms are also embracing the Digital-megastory format, VietnamPlus remains the pioneer in this regard. Journalists aspire to be recognised by readers and peers, earning accolades and making positive contributions to society. These achievements cannot be measured solely by the number of page views.

Digital-megastory caters to a distinct audience within the realm of online journalism. In addition to the common characteristics shared by online journalism readers, such as having qualifications, curiosity, and an eagerness for exploration, Digital-megastory readers possess modern technology skills and the ability to comprehend and process information. Their information needs are high, but their time is limited.

Digital transformation within journalism presents specific requirements for journalists. In online journalism, the primary objective is to disseminate information to the public as swiftly as possible. However, Digital-megastory products contradict this objective, as they cannot be rapidly consumed. Organising a longform product is a costly endeavour. Prior to creating a Digital-megastory product, newsrooms need to consider inherent contradictions. Firstly, there is the conflict between speed and quality. Producing high-quality products is time-consuming. Secondly, there is a contradiction between efficiency and cost. The production cost for a Digital-megastory product starts at 2.5 million VND (with 1.2 million VND allocated for the writer and 1.3 million VND for the designer), which is 5-8 times higher than conventional products, while the average number of views after 24 hours is only around 50,000 to 60,000.

Major online journalism players cannot overlook the production of Digital-megastory products and can approach it in two ways. Firstly, they can target niche audiences, particularly those with a deep interest in and reading habits aligned with longform content, primarily entrepreneurs. Secondly, they can popularise Digital-megastory by designing separate templates for each topic, allowing for the swift creation of products by pouring information into the template and formatting it accordingly. Digital-megastory represents modern journalism, demanding suitable methods, skills, and styles.

Creating updated longform products with a modern writing style will attract significant reader attention. In a society where living standards are improving, the public's demand for information is increasing. Information knows no national boundaries in a globalised world. Therefore, journalists must possess a multidimensional perspective and adhere to professional ethics. Professional ethics exist not only in journalists' consciousness and their work but also in practical activities and relationships.

Proficiency in foreign languages strengthens journalists' capabilities. With access to foreign sources, they can acquire more information and better understand global journalism practices,



thereby enhancing their design skills. Designers with experience contribute to creativity, refreshing articles to be unique and captivating to the public. Therefore, designers must continuously learn and enhance their knowledge to contribute effectively to the production of multimedia journalistic works.

Negotiation skills are essential for Corporate PR topics. Enterprises aim to present their issues in a longform format, targeting a broad public audience rather than a niche market for their products (such as cars, cosmetics, dietary supplements, health protection devices, etc.). Thus, creators of longform content must negotiate with enterprises. Effective longform production occurs when online newspapers engage in prior negotiations with enterprises regarding relevant topics.

#### 4. Results

*The Influence of Digital-Megastory on the Advancement of Online Journalism: Characteristics of Content in Digital-Megastory Articles:* In the current era of technological breakthroughs, online journalism is experiencing rapid development. A new trend in journalism is emerging as a solution for online journalism. Although the longevity of this trend is uncertain, it has shown promise in the immediate future. While content is a necessary element, it is not sufficient for a successful Digital-megastory article. Eye-catching design is also essential, and this is achieved through close collaboration and specific exchange between the content and design teams as shown in [Table 1](#).

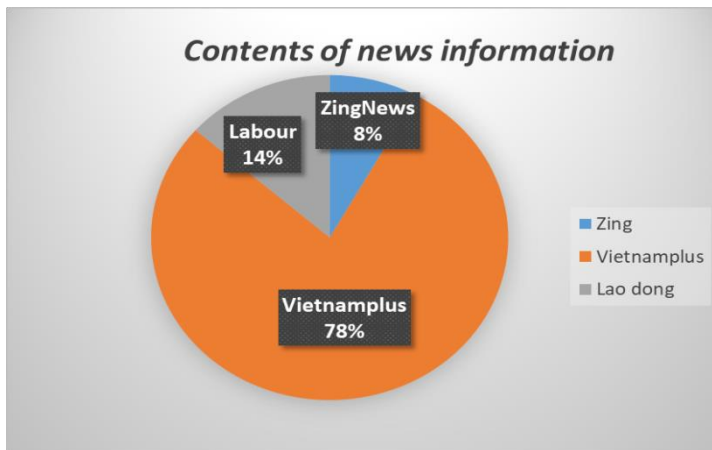
**Table 1.** Ratio of information in online journalism

S/No	Topic	ZingNews	Vietnamplus	Labour Newspaper	Total
1	News	8,11	78,38	13,51	100
2	Corporate PR	18,7	71,4	9,9	100
3	Spreading lifestyle	16,3	55,8	27,9	100

*Regarding News Content:* Digital-megastory articles are content-intensive, with a strong emphasis on investing in images and graphics. They are presented in a distinct interface style, prioritising the readers' reading experience. One advantage of Digital-megastory articles is that they increase the amount of time readers spend on a website. For instance, readers typically spend five to ten seconds on an e-newsletter or 15 to 20 seconds on longer news pieces. However, when it comes to E-magazines articles on platforms like Vietnam Plus, the average viewing time is 5 to 6 minutes, and some articles even captivate readers for 10 to 15 minutes. This is due to the in-depth information provided alongside numerous images and videos. It is worth noting that the time spent on a website is an important criterion for website classification.

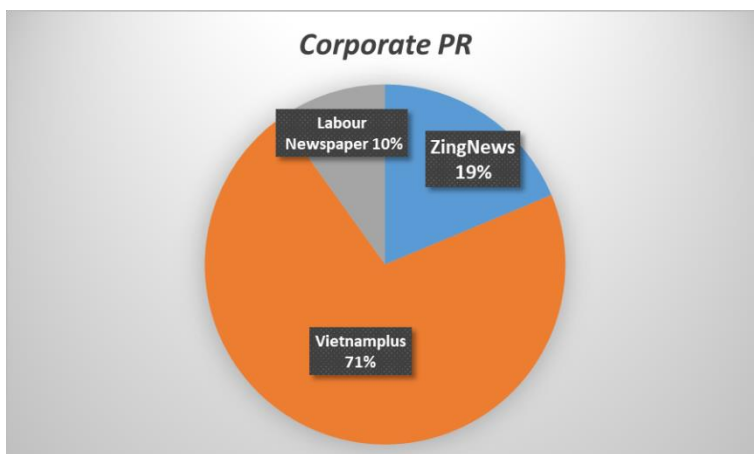
In this type of article, newspapers worldwide employ diverse font styles and sizes. Some articles feature font sizes as large as 18 points, ensuring legibility. As a result, both serif and sans serif fonts are popular choices. Notable quotes are dispersed throughout the article and can be inserted within full-screen images (see [Figure 1](#)).

Observing the usage level of news topics, VietnamPlus.vn newspaper prominently features Digital-megastory content, accounting for 78 % of its offerings. Labour Newspapers follows with a share of 14 %, and ZingNews concludes the list. Digital-megastory content caters to a selective group of readers, with potentially less than 10 % out of 100 readers expressing a preference for this type of content. However, these readers generally fall into the category of "quality readers" who engage in extensive and in-depth reading. Thus, this type of content holds significant value for this particular audience. A key advantage of Digital-megastory lies in its ability to extend the time readers spend on a website. While conventional news pieces are often read briefly within 10-20 seconds, the average time spent on VietnamPlus' Digital-megastory articles ranges from five to six minutes, and some articles even surpass 10 minutes. Reader engagement and time on site have become more important evaluation criteria than mere page views.



**Fig. 1.** The chart shows the level of content on news topics in digital products – megastory

Digital-megastory differs from traditional news categories. Many people mistakenly associate it with sensational and groundbreaking news, but in reality, Digital-megastory represents a new style of journalistic work, both in terms of content and presentation, aimed at generating widespread interest and rapid dissemination. It features engaging content and compelling stories that captivate the public. The writing style is flexible and attractive, skilfully connecting and delving into the depths of the narrative.

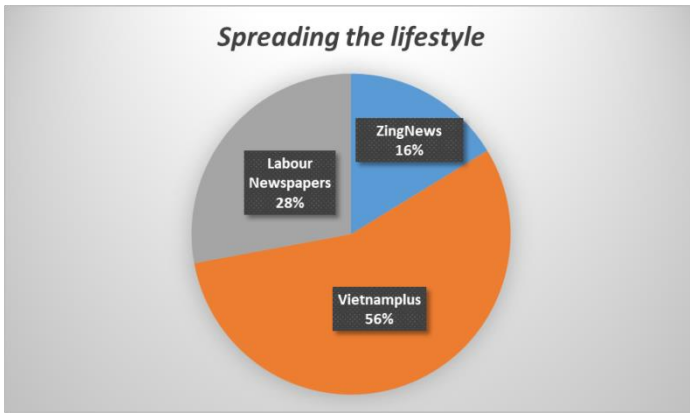


**Fig. 2.** The chart shows the level of use of the Corporate PR topic

*Analysis of Corporate Public Relations Content with a Focus on Public Benefit:* Looking at the chart provided, it is evident that VietnamPlus.com remains the leader in the field of Public Relations (PR), comprising 71 % of the share. Public Relations has become a prominent area within journalism today, as it involves promoting specific individuals or enterprises to the public (see Figure 2). Given the trust that the public places in journalism, the content published is assumed reputable. Thus, Public Relations plays a significant role in the continued development of journalism. Notably, Public Relations articles are often presented in an eye-catching longform format that captivates readers, making them less likely to find the content monotonous or dull.

*Promoting Lifestyle, Philosophy, and Perspectives through Content:* Digital-megastory content caters to individuals with a profound interest in life and philosophical perspectives (Le, 2021) (see Figure 3 and Table 2).

Table 2 presents the ratio of image and title usage in Digital-Megastory products. A survey on the use of subtitles reveals VietnamPlus.vn newspaper's significant investment in this area. Each journalism product is allowed to incorporate a minimum of two titles or more. The use of multiple titles enhances the depth of Digital-megastory products, sparking curiosity among readers.



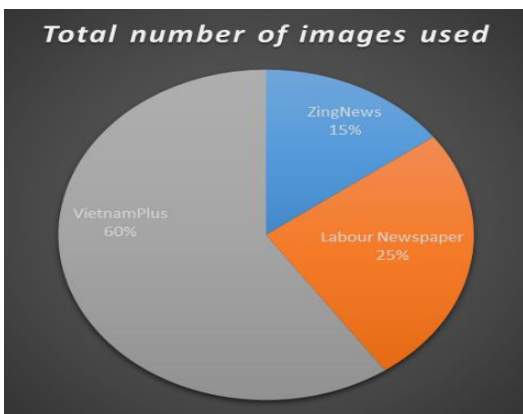
**Fig. 3.** The chart shows the level of use of the Spreading Lifestyle topic

**Table 2.** Utilisation rate of images and titles in digital-megastory products

S/N		ZingNews	Labour Newspapers	Vietnamplus	Ratio
1	From four titles or more	24,17	20,87	54,96	100
2	Number of images to insert text	30	24	46	100
3	Total number of images used	14,9	25,4	59,7	100

In traditional journalism products like printed newspapers, the use of images is relatively limited. However, online newspapers have the advantage of incorporating numerous images to provide deeper illustrations and captivate readers’ attention. The inclusion of more images clarifies information about the products, provides visual relief, and increases overall product appeal (see [Figure 4](#)). In terms of the number of images inserted alongside text, VietnamPlus newspaper ranks first among the three newspapers compared. This indicates the newspaper’s strong emphasis on image design for their products.

The inclusion of images is crucial in Digital-megastory, as it signifies the emphasis on using visual elements as a foundation for designing text in multimedia journalism products. Digital-megastory does not necessarily have to be a long-form journalistic work, nor does it require an excessive application of multimedia techniques or cover all topics and information related to global crises or events. For instance, news topics such as the ISIS crisis, the Ebola outbreak, and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have often been mistakenly considered as examples of Longform. However, in reality, longform is not limited to “hot” events or issues but can encompass any story commonly found on the internet or other media platforms.



**Fig. 4.** Comparison chart between newspapers in terms of total number of images used

Currently, digital-megastory articles may incorporate various media elements such as audio, video, images, and data to highlight the subject matter. Another distinctive feature often observed is the presence of non-linear storylines in longform journalism. Digital-megastory also encompasses special reports and slow journalism presented in a captivating and innovative style that aligns with the latest trends in global journalism. Our reporters, who possess diverse skills, are capable of working on multiple fronts, including writing articles, capturing footage, taking images, conducting data analysis, design, coding, and more. They adapt to new forms of journalism such as data journalism and visual journalism.

Diverging from traditional journalism, digital-Megastory can emerge from any story and continues to help the public grasp the essence of the conveyed message, akin to traditional journalism but with new writing and presentation techniques. This approach significantly personalises the story for readers, allowing them to engage in their own unique way and form their thoughts more clearly on the topic at hand.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research results presented here offer valuable insights for researchers, journalism students, and practitioners. It enhances understanding of multimedia journalism, enriches the knowledge base of press agencies, and contributes to the improvement and advancement of the country's press industry. Readers gain an overview of this new genre, fulfilling their information needs and providing valuable data for researchers. Developing Digital-megastory within the journalism field is the right path, as it fosters critical thinking and delivers slow journalism combined with multimedia elements. Technological advancements have empowered journalism and communication activities, meeting diverse and complex public needs by providing highly visual and interactive information.

Thanks to technology, journalists can promptly and conveniently deliver creative products that satisfy various societal interests. However, technological advancements require journalists and reporters to possess multidisciplinary skills, expanding beyond traditional roles such as photojournalism or news reporting. Photojournalists, for example, not only provide visual documentation but also conduct interviews, record audio and video, edit multimedia content, and even engage in graphic design. Technological progress presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance individuals' creative potential. Those actively engaged in the press and media during this multimedia era possess general skills derived from creatively applying information technology achievements.

Additionally, the study uncovers challenges faced by journalists in maintaining ethical standards, addressing misinformation, and managing audience feedback in the digital landscape. Furthermore, the research examines the cultural adaptation of Digital-Megastory, as journalists strive to strike a balance between global trends and the preferences of Vietnamese audiences. Glocalisation emerges as a significant theme, emphasising how Digital-Megastory formats are localised to align with Vietnamese culture and values. The study concludes that Digital-Megastory has become a prominent trend in Vietnam's online journalism, representing a significant aspect of the ongoing digital transformation in the country's media landscape. Online journalists are navigating a dynamic and rapidly evolving digital environment, integrating multimedia storytelling, audience engagement, and ethical considerations into their reporting practices. The implications of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the actual situation of digital transformation in Vietnamese journalism, with digital-Megastory serving as a critical element in enhancing audience engagement and information dissemination.

**Limitations:** It is important to acknowledge potential limitations of the study. The snowball sampling technique may introduce some degree of bias, and the findings may not be generalisable to all Vietnamese online journalists. Additionally, the use of audio recordings may have an impact on participants' responses, as they may modify their communication due to being recorded.

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## Media Educational Potential of the Television Industry in Improving Media Literacy of Broad Audience

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### Abstract

Media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is represented in the article. The complex of theoretical and empirical methods such as: modeling; case-study; classification; design; testing (n=276) is used. The conclusion is made according to the results of the study, that is media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is mostly laid in the opportunity of modern television channels to make an off-air interaction with real audience (realizing it in on-line and off-line spaces), thus attracting the audience. Using of media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience increases confidence to television channels and also makes the television content more demanding and competitive. That is the reason why media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is interpreted as a special model of media culture development of modern neo-information society, based on principals of media responsible approach (according to media ethnic rules and standards) to realization of media communications by all actors of media space – media producers and media consumers (taking into account the combination of these media roles in modern sociocultural realities).

**Keywords:** media, media education, media educational potential, television, television industry, media communications, media literacy, media culture, audience, modeling.

### 1. Introduction

The importance of the television industry in the development of media culture of neo-information society is obvious. In modern sociocultural and media communication functions of the television industry can be considered in the connection with the formation of media educational practice (Fedorov, 2019; Ibrahim, Abdullahi, 2022; Johnson, Williams, 2019; Levitskaya, 2022; Mohammed, Abubakar, 2023; Oleshko et al., 2021; Sharikov, 2016; Shesterkina et al., 2021; Smith, De Los Santos, 2022; Smith, Johnson, 2023; White, Green, 2022).

As a result, we can declare about media educational potential of the television industry, that is defined as “the combination of technical means of television company, knowledge, skills of television workers, aimed at training the staff and forming media culture of the audience with developed communicative capacities and high level of media competence” (Yefanov, Pugachev, 2023a: 198). By previous studies we have realized the modeling of media educational potential of the television industry (MEPTI) singling out three distinctive models: MEPTI in the media training

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of professionals; MEPTI in the qualification improvement of professionals; MEPTI in improving media literacy of broad audience (Yefanov, Pugachev, 2023b). However, the meaning of MEPTI in improving media literacy of broad audience has not been revealed completely till now, it needs to be studied in accordance with media educational practices.

## 2. Materials and methods

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience as a special model of the development of media culture in modern neo-information society. The complex of theoretical and empirical methods are used such as: modeling; case-study; classification; design; testing (n=276).

The design method is focused on developing of media educational courses on the base of a television company. An experimental base is *STRC Orenburg*, where the author's media educational project is being implemented.

To make the realizing media educational project effective, the method of students' testing is applied, where the students are from Orenburg secondary schools. The entrance and final tests let us see the dynamic of media literacy of students from media educational courses and reflect on implementable media teaching practices.

Sampling: continuous. Chronological framework of the study: 2020–2023 years.

## 3. Discussion

In the article *The Role of Organizations of Journalists in Promoting Media Literacy – Building Credibility and Trust* the authors I. Kanižaj and S. Lechpammer did a survey inside journalists' organizations of the European Union to find out how deep the representatives of different mass media are engaged in the work against disinformation, fake news and the audience manipulation (Kanižaj, Lechpammer, 2019). It has turned out that the majority realizes the importance of it, but not everyone does anything in this respect. The representatives from 11 organizations of 19 ones, that took part in the study, agreed that journalists must be more active in improving media literacy.

It is no use arguing that the democratic society needs qualified journalism, which in its turn needs media literate audience (Ahmed, Ali, 2022; Bender, 2023; Brown et al., 2023; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2023; Loos, Ivan, 2022; Mensah et al., 2023; Savchuk, 2020; Sidorov, Melnik, 2021; Suzina et al., 2020; Vandeyar, 2020). Expectations and requests of the audience define the professionalism of media and its content that is why media competence of broad audience is so important for impartial and socially responsible journalism. Media literacy improvement is the investment in democracy, while for media resources it is an opportunity to enhance the confidence of the society. At times of strong competition on the information market, the question of confidence is a defining one in choosing the channel to get the news. Mass media can take more active role in popularizing of professional journalism principles that might help to control disinformation and different companies, which manipulate the social opinion.

## 4. Results

Fast developing social media has formed the demand of the society in media self development and in getting skills to make and consume the content on a higher level. Everyone wants to navigate on the information market, however nowadays only media professionals can do it well. The given situation is the first reason of the projects' success which satisfy the demand of the society.

One of the examples is a satiric television program *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, that has been broadcast for many years on the American channel *Comedy Central*. The program is based on the deconstruction of the mass media information, when a TV presenter satirizes incorrect journalists' work in covering political news, thus making the audience think critically. A TV presenter – comedian broke journalistic rules deliberately to attract the audience attention. In the article *The Effects of Media Literacy of Daily Show with Jon Stewart* the author D. Donaldson says: "Either comedian or teachers know that the best way to attract attention to the rule is to break it. Breaking journalistic rules in the context of journalism, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* teach the audience media literacy, that is to take into account the language and the rules that are used to make media messages" (Donaldson, 2024).

There is one more interesting approach that is used in this program – the authors fulfill the tasks that journalists must fulfill but they do not do it, for example they sometimes do not check



the information. D. Donaldson describes one of these editions, where the reporter of the show went to South Africa to tell about the racial tension. Some mass media claimed that South Africa was suffering from racial tension and from mutual hatred between white and black people. The reporter interviewed many people on the streets and found out that there was not any hatred, while mass media gave incorrect information. The program presenter showed shock when he heard that journalists had misrepresented the situation. This show is not about making news, it is about consuming it.

Blaming journalists in subjectivity, Jon Stewart does not demand objectivity of TV channels, but he asks the audience not to consume every news as the objective one, he says that the audience should have their own opinion on everything. Sometimes it can be enough just to check the facts. Let us show it with the edition about the conflicts in the Middle East. In the beginning of the program we see politics claiming that “the USA try to make peace, democracy and stability in the Middle East”, “we are spreading peace in the Middle East”, “everyone wants peace”, but then there are some fragments of the TV news with the message about the supply of arms to Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain. “It seems that there are not any obstacles for our plan to send arms for billion and billion dollars to the most unstable region of the world with the purpose of making peace there. It is so nice that we have supplied our allies with high-tech arms, because they might need them to defend from our new high-tech arms” (*The Daily...*, 2017), – sneers Jon Stewart, saying that there are many countries in the world, that “have not been completely pacified” by the USA yet.

By using satire the TV show appeals to very important ideas of media education: any media text is the construction, made according to certain rules; mass media have rooted values; the aim of media business is the profit; different people consume the same news in different ways. *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* – is not the only TV project of such a format. This way of educating the audience in media might be the example of realizing of some media educational ideas: the *protectionist* one, as satirizing, it can defend the audience from the negative effect of the fabricated news; the *practical* one, as it tells about the ways of working with information; the *interactive* one, when the journalist is a TV presenter-comedian; the *cultural* one, when it explains different meanings of the same media text for different kinds of the audience; the *ideological* one, when politicians are satirized.

The denunciation of people’s vices, the whole society or the political system can be estimated by adult audience. We should mention children, giving the examples of media literacy improvements for broad audience with the help of TV channels. Many media teachers are sure that the main efforts of media education must be directed to the young audience.

The German TV channel for kids and young people *KiKA (Kinder-Kanal)* performs this task successfully. There is a special editorial *Audience*, where the editors answer messages of all children. Popular programs have chats, where kids communicate with the editorial office, TV presenters and the guests of the channel. The broadcast program consists of cartoons, feature films, TV series, TV games and also kids news. The channel has kids’ editorial office, its editors make editions and tell the audience about their work in children editorial board, showing the backstage of television. In promotional video on the official website of the channel children answer the question “Why is there the kids’ editorial office?” with the following words: “This is because *KiKA* would like children to not just communicate well, but to participate in programs making” (*KiKA*, 2024).

From media educational point of view, their participation in this process as well as topics of TV programs are valuable. For example, they tell how the life of a streamer and a web-video producer looks like, they show the process of musical and mind game making. The audience can get to know what is happening off-screen not only while broadcasting. The editorial office of *Audience* invite school children over 12 to take part in the channel’s projects, they can see with their own eyes the process of preparing live broadcast. There are also excursions in the television company for school children where they can see the studios and meet TV presenters. The students of primary school are taught with the basis of making cartoons.

As for putting programs, films, TV series and cartoons on the air, there are age recommendations for parents: from 3 years; from 6 years; from 10 years. The program director of the channel Astrid Plenk explains the *KiKA* channel policy in the following way: “We want to understand children, their world and experience, we want to entertain and inform them in the best

way and guarantee safe media space for them” (KiKA, 2024). The given examples show systematic work of German kids channel in the sphere of children and parents’ media education.

Speaking about media literacy in broadcasting, it will be wrong not to mention television of Canada, where they have always paid a lot of attention to the spread of media education. In the middle of XX century a media theorist M. McLuhan developed the first in the country training course to study media culture. Today media culture has been being studied since secondary school in this country. The Canadian channel *CHUM Television* made a special media educational department to develop media training programs in 1989 and it was the first in the world. The TV channel belonged to a big media company that stopped working after their merge with another television company in 2007, however media educational potential has been still being realized in Canada.

A *Canadian Center of Digital Media Literacy* was created in 1994 under the auspices of *Canadian National Council*. “Media teachers base on key ideas of media literacy which gives effective basis for studying mass information and popular culture. These key ideas work as filters that are necessary for any media texts to be reacted to” (Mediasmarts, 2024), – it is said on the official website of the centre. The work is done in the collaboration with media companies, there are videos for every key idea of media education that have free access on the Internet under the name of *Media Literacy 101*.

In many academic systems the number 101 defines the introductory course to the subject. Thus, the name *Media Literacy 101* shows that videos are focused on broad audience and there is no need to have deep knowledge of the topic. The Canadian TV channel *CBC* uses the same name to make educational videos for *CBC Kids* in their two-hour morning program. The characters of the videos discuss the behavior in social networks or personal information that is kept on the Internet (Media..., 2023). The working process with these videos is also the content of *CBC Kids*.

In the end of October in Canada the *Week of Media Literacy* is held. The TV channel posted the video *How we Make Explaining Videos* (Explore..., 2023), where they showed the process of work from the topic discussion to necessary video editing and approving it by kids who are the target audience.

The Canadian television pays much attention to the work against fakes in social networks and tells its audience what platforms are the most dangerous for getting information. The Canadian television and radio broadcasting company *CBC* in its news with the heading “90 % of Canadian people have been got caught with fake news” makes the conclusion that the Canadian trust social networks less than cyber criminals. According to the opinion poll survey, *CBC* notes that 68 % of the Canadian face fakes in *Facebook\**, 65 % blame social networks, while 49 % single out *YouTube*. According to the same survey, 45 % of the Canadian claim that they face fake news on television too (Thompson, 2019). Such material on broadcast of television channels can improve their image, as television is considered to be professional media that is doing its best to protect the audience from low quality content off-air. Fake exposures on air and posting social surveys are the message for getting information thoughtfully that is also the basis of media education.

Television channels have many different formats. In the Philippines the *National Children Television Council* established *National Charity Fund for Children Television* in 2021, it finances the production of programs for young audience. This fund studies the content that is so popular with kids, it analyses possible risks and develops effective educational programs.

The educational and entertaining TV series for children *Meriam’s Online-World* (Garcia, 2021) was produced with the help of *National Charity Fund for Children Television* in 2022. The series tells about the life of ten-year-old Meriam who studies in the sixth grade and whose parents live abroad. The girl lives with her aunt Marla, she spends much time in social nets and likes online-games. The guardian Marla is good at social platforms, so they often chat with Marian and this support helps the girl feel herself comfortable in the digital world. The first broadcasting of five-episodes series was timed to the celebration of national day of kids television and radio broadcasting and was shown on the television channel *TVUP*.

*TVUP* was initially the Internet-channel of the *Philippines University*, it became satellite broadcasting channel in 2022 due to partnering with telecommunication company *Signal TV*. The TV series was shown again in the broadcast of free educational channel *IBCEM13*. By words of the project’s author M. Garcia, who is the specialist in media education sphere and the assistant professor of human sciences in the *Philippines University*, this series is recommended for school children as extracurricular work: “Discussion will help them to realize their daily experience and

the current circumstances on the Internet, it will also help to communicate with another kids about the way of solving problems in the digital sphere and it will let them develop critical thinking, respect and care for the others” (Garcia, 2023).

This format was chosen because series are popular with school children. The project *Meriam’s Online-World* was marked by *International Media Literacy Council* that is located in the USA, for developing media literacy in such an innovative way. *Meriam’s Online-World* is called “the first educational and entertaining material for developing digital media literacy” on official website of *International Media Literacy Council* in the projects’ description of winners of M. Row award *Innovations in Media Literacy Improving*.

We have considered the cases when television channels popularize media literacy in their broadcasting. However, television industry has the potential for working off-line in this sphere. The British television and radio company *BBC* in their official website launched the game for young people *Ireporter*, the participants are tested to distinguish fakes and make the difference between truth and lie. This interactive game is for children and teenagers at the age between 11 and 18, it gives them a chance to be a news journalist. Using mobile phones and computers, their task is to make quick decisions whether they trust resources, political declarations, comments in social nets and photos or not.

According to the script, the participant takes part in making the news edition, gets information from different sources and must show the skill of working with the data. It is necessary to broadcast credible reports and be fast otherwise the contestants will do it quicker. Placing participants in conditions that are very close to reality, *BBC* shows the work of the news service, helps realize the importance of data verification and shows different ways of checking the information. For example, a possible TV viewer sends a photo to e-mail of an editorial office, where he is standing near a large metallic construction in the courtyard of the house. The man gives his address in e-mail and says that a piece of a spacecraft has just fallen down in his courtyard. The participant plays the roles of the editor assistant and he is supposed to publish the news on *BBC* resources until contestant have announced it. If he does the task, he gets penalty points, as even the initial check should alert – there is a sunny day on the photo, but according to weather forecast it is rainy there. Having sent the photo to specialists, they find out that the piece of the spacecraft is placed next to the man thanks to the graphics editor program. The only correct decision is to check before publishing.

Another tasks demand to post the news immediately, if there are certain data from reliable source such as official services. The game makes people think critically and analyze the sources of getting information. It was created for young people, however it will be useful for adults too, as everyone risks posting fake news on social net without realizing it. This kind of media literacy spread can be referred to the *practical* idea of media education that is based on media texts making. It is easier to deal with the content, knowing the technology of its production, – M. McLuhan wrote about it, explaining that training of video editing and voicing helps the creators become more critical audience (McLuhan, Fiore, 1967). However, the *practical* idea unlike the *consuming* one trains to make own media texts but not use media for meeting needs. We can claim that this approach is demanding nowadays, as modern consumer is active, while media literacy helps him in creativity, giving chance to get closer to the world of media industry, taking part in the production together with professionals.

We should pay attention to the experience of Russian TV channels in media literacy improvement of broad audience. There is *Stop Fake on Russia 24* and *Antifake* on the *First Channel*, moreover, there is *Infoshield* on *NTV* – by authors’ words, this program “using certain examples, shows real motives and aims of aggressive info wars that are so popular in the collective West” (Infoshield, 2023). We should also mention a special documentary project *Be Careful, Fakes!* on *Ren TV*. All these projects appeared at the time of the war conflict between Russia and Ukraine and were the result of an information war. Fakes’ analysis and their obvious revelation is a useful content for media literacy improvement of broad audience.

News leaks and false messages must teach the audience to choose the news resources thoroughly and analyze media text before sharing it in social nets. However, these projects of Russian TV channels are aimed at the analysis of the information field at the time of war conflict and they will not be interesting in the future. Aggressive infeed, many emotionally charged words and expressive vocabulary can be used while the information opposition at the time of the war conflict, but they are not appropriate for system work of media education.

Summarizing described above experience of television channels in media literacy improving of broad audience, we can single out several directions of this process:

1) *fake news disclosure on air* (*Stop Fake on Russia 24*; *Antifake on the First Channel*; *Infoshield on NTV*; *Be Careful, Fakes! on Ren TV* and so on);

2) *public analysis of unprofessional journalistic work* (*Daily Show with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central*);

3) *getting acquainted of the audience with the content making process* (*KiKA*; *CBC Kids*);

4) *broadcasting the content about main ideas of media literacy* (*Meriam's Online – World on TVUP and IBCEM13*; *Media Literacy 101 on CBC*);

5) *off-air training of content making* (the game *Ireporter on BBC*; excursions to television company and training for animation making on *KiKa*);

6) *spread of professional television*. We will not claim that professional work of television channels itself is the spread of media literacy. However, we have mentioned this thesis in the context of well-prepared informative policy of the channel. In periods of crisis, when there are many alarming news, some channels pursue gentle informative policy or offer the audience so called “informative diets”.

*STRC Orenburg* (branch of *RSTRC*) uses different ways of media literacy improving of broad audience with the help of MEPTI. It is about on-air and off-air work. Speaking about gentle informative policy, there is an example of *News Disinfection* campaign. At the time of pandemic there were many fakes about coronavirus infection, so *STRC Orenburg* carried out *News Disinfection* campaign in 2020. Journalists released one newscast without the news about coronavirus every day. On a plan of editorial office, it let the audience take a break in a huge flow of frightening stories and help not panic as it stops from getting the information, using critical thinking.

The company conducts explanatory work, telling the audience how programs are made. The example can be the talk-show *It is all Double-Bass Fault* that is broadcast on regional television channels of *Russia 1* and *Russia 24*. The technology of combining real and virtual images is used in the program, which is popular in films and TV production. However, unlike feature films, chroma key operating principles are shown to the audience in this talk show. Virtual decorations behind TV presenters sometimes disappear, showing a real atmosphere of the television studio. This method is used in the scenery and is linked to the topic of every program edition. The program is shown in the recording the spectators in the studio have a chance to see the process of making the program before TV audience see it. There are screen to show graphics that will be used for TV audience while editing. The preparation for the talk-show is organized in such a way that any TV viewer can become the guest in the studio and take part in program making, so it is necessary for producers to tell about the principles of virtual studio work.

The company shows the real work of television programs production in another projects as well. In the program *TV Tower* that is broadcast on *Russia 24*, the audience can see the prompter that is used by TV presenter for reading the text, the viewers can also see a big creative team behind a TV presenter, there is director, sound engineer, technician and others. Such methods are used by journalists of *STRC Orenburg* to attract the audience attention; they also show the production process which is one of the media education tasks. According to the opinion of the project producers, showing the process of programs production to the audience makes the television company be closer to its viewers that is valuable in terms of hard competition in the world of media. Trust is important for audience activity; it is difficult to imagine modern television without it.

The consumption idea of media education is based on the audience that is conscious, active and uses media for meeting their own demands. There are scientific facts about the demand of belonging. Describing it, A. Maslow explains that frequent moving of family has negative influence on children, while the lack of good neighbors leads to disorientation. The reason is in “animal” desire of a person to unite – “to flock together”. In the work *Motivation and Personality* A. Maslow explains why groups of social and psychological training and different communities, united with one aims, are so popular (Maslow, 2019: 74). This is the result of people’s desire to cope with the feeling of alienation and loneliness.

Social networks are popular for the same reason, while there are television channels to make the audience bigger. However, social nets are popular platforms for communication, but we can use their potential only by keeping the platform specificity. *YouTube* is a very good case, as it has passed the way from video hosting to community. There are new comments and discussion even under the videos that were posted long time ago. This video hosting that gives users the service of

posting, storing and showing their videos, appeared in 2005 and they presented their new function *YouTube Community* in 2016. The video hosting users made a conclusion that *YouTube* can be considered as a social net. *Twitter\** followed the same way in 2021. The social net let its users set up communities.

Speaking about interactive projects of *STRC Orenburg*, we should mention the channel *STRC Orenburg LIVE* – the platform for live broadcasts in *Telegram*, *YouTube* and *Vkontakte*. The television company are on-air hand-in-hand with television broadcast, moreover, they post exclusive content such as failed shoots from programs recording or the audience survey before and after broadcast. However, the most valuable and innovative thing is using the system of automated collecting of messages. The program *TV Tower* broadcasts at the same time on television air, social nets, while there are messages and comments of viewers on the TV screen and it does not matter what platform they use to watch this media product. The users of *Telegram*, *YouTube*, *Vkontakte* and TV viewers see messages of each other and the resource the information comes from during broadcasting. In other words, the program has turned into community, having united TV viewers with soul mates from different social media. There is information on the description account of *STRC Orenburg LIVE* how to send a message to the TV air and it can be considered as improving communicative skills.

In social media television channels can have the audience communication after broadcasting and it might be the reason to come back to published material, thus having given a story in development. There was such a case with broadcast live on *STRC Orenburg* with a problem of homeless dogs. The stream was on *Russia 24* channel and in social nets. After the air, that was recorded, the users of social media started discussing it. The editorial office of *STRC Orenburg* took part in the discussion too via their official account and encouraged the audience to be more active. There were many stories of dogs' attacks on people in messages. The news editorial office shot the story where the authors of these messages, who suffered, took part.

The material was shown on the regional air of TV channel *Russia 1* and in social media, where there were many comments, using these comments, the editorial office found out new problematic places with aggressive animals. New information was used in the final weekly analytical program *News of Orenburg. Events of the Week (Vesti..., 2023)*. Encouraging discussions of the materials in social media, *STRC Orenburg* increases the coverage, gets new ideas for making content, while the audience get new communicative skills with professional media.

Via TV broadcasting the company promotes their accounts in social nets, explaining the audience how they can take part in programs making. Getting closer to social nets, television makes stylistics and material presentation easier, however television channels should not copy “the language of the street”. They must not do due to moral and legal restrictions. Channels are interested in showing the audience a possible model of behavior and develop high moral standards.

Journalists can not be considered the only specialists in media sphere anymore. Media are not just “traditional” mass media, there are also network publications, social media, messengers, cinema, music, computer games and etc. However, the experience of professional mass media must be taken into account. It is valuable when we speak about the analysis of media texts, ways of influence on people and also informing people about the most modern technical tools. Searching for interactivity, modern mass media have to keep balance between difficult, rich vocabulary and simplified language of social networks. Keeping balance is the only way possible, as the core of the social networks audience differs from the one of television channel. The psychology of interaction with the content is different as well.

*Cultural* idea of media education explains that the audience is various and can put different meanings, analyzing the same media texts. It is necessary to take into account cultural, social and other differences. Mass media should realize it and try to develop media education. In 2010s in Russia the question of school teachers training was very up-to-date, as a result, specialists are of the opinion that “reverse correlation of digital literacy level of school children and teachers is the main collision that prevents from balanced development of media competence in the society” (Yefanov et al., 2020: 392). Without reducing such a gap, media education will not be effective. The whole Russian society is interested in media literacy improving, therefore any practices in this direction are worth being thoroughly analyzed.

*STRC Orenburg* works with media literacy improving of broad audience off-air, focusing on school children. The company regularly invites excursion groups to show its studios, equipment,

the company gives children the opportunity to talk with professional journalists. To do this work regularly, some staff members of the company hold the excursions and it is their job duties.

About 2000 children visit *STRC Orenburg* every year. Journalists show them the process of production, tell them about fakes in social networks that appeared due to verification. Such kind of work can reduce the spread of fake news and professional journalists are interested in it, as they have to check every “loud” news. The employees of the company tell about the promotion of the content in social networks, show the algorithm of their work. *STRC Orenburg* is concerned with this process, as the company posts the content not only in TV and radio broadcasting, but also in social media, where the competence and activity of the audience is especially valuable. *STRC Orenburg* gives such master classes to adults as well, it happens when children come to the excursion with their parents.

On its platforms *STRC Orenburg* discloses fake news and myths which are published by other users. After the tragedy in Orenburg when a pack of dogs bit a small boy to death, one of the local animal rights activist claimed in *Vkontakte* that the boy burned dogs on the fire, put polyurethane foam in their mouths, having thus provoked their attack. *STRC Orenburg*, having made a material about the tragedy before, immediately started the campaign against the spread of this message which was not proved with any facts. In the *Telegram*-channel of *The News of Orenburg Region*, where there are about 20 000 followers, the company informed people that under the law such publications and their reposts might be punished. When the mother of the killed son could find strength and went to court, *STRC Orenburg* was covering the process, explaining the legal aspect of the case. The court obliged the defendant to post disproving information in the social net *Vkontakte* and recovered 700 000 rubles as the compensation of moral damage (Blogger..., 2023). Covering such cases with explanations the essence of the claims to be more responsible in keeping their accounts in social nets.

*STRC Orenburg* realized a high demand on getting skills that gives media education in the process of developing the communication with the audience. In 2019 on the base of *STRC Orenburg* two-months journalistic courses were launched for those who want to plunge in media industry and learn to work with media texts on a high level. About 100 students of different age do the course annually. The course program supposes making TV and radio programs and analysis of information messages, including fake ones.

On one of the lessons children make the news edition in a game format, everyone receives an anonymous audio message with the information that medical masks are infected with coronavirus in pharmacies as they come to Russia from China, being already infected. Such fakes really took place at the time of pandemic from some anonymous resources. Children, in their turn, have to take a decision whether they should tell about it in the news edition, in case if they decide to check this information, they have to find the way to do it. In the result of working with data it turns out that some mass media have already called the news about sending infected masks fake, while there is still panic in social nets. Such lesson help children develop critical thinking and know how to check the information.

While doing the course, students communicate with practicing journalists and with a lawyer of the company, who explains the cases when people have been fined for posts and reposts. In the process of education students understand the difference between informative program from publicistic one, why emotions are needed in the news and how to see video editing when it is hidden. When children are explained how commercial advertising works, they have the task to analyze the reasons of their desires – to possess the promoting item. The students of the course try to make rills which promote a healthy lifestyle and they really understand how the promotion works. As a result, children get valuable knowledge that might help them not be affected by destructive propaganda, not to be manipulated, but become more demanding media consumers and have a more professional view on media production.

The project of school children education on the base of *STRC Orenburg* is a kind of experiment, where its quality is being measured by testing methods to get high results. School children are of different age in a group that is why to improve the program we took a decision to offer entrance test for every group. The task was to define what knowledge in the sphere of media education and what skills children have. We collect metrics of the training effectiveness with the test, there are certain numbers – points for the done test. The entrance test is done after the first introductory lesson where we explain the reason for knowledge testing to minimize possible protests of children and have serious attitude to the exam.

Testing might be used to check knowledge before and after the training course, that is why we decided to do it after the course finishes too. The main task of the entrance exam is to collect metrics to improve the course program, but not to define the level of a child. That is the reason why children specify their age while the testing is done anonymously. There are 25 questions in the test and they can be divided into three blocks: journalism; specificity of television; skills for working with information in social nets. While the second testing, students are asked to write about the advantages of this course for them. We have tested 276 students from 7 to 16 years old at the period of between 2020 and 2023. It is important to mention that the knowledge level of school children in the sphere of media communications before and after two-month course is especially interesting in terms of the study. This approach lets us fix media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience.

Testing before the start of the course shows that school children, who have decided to do it, get news mostly from social nets – 57 %. 25 % of children watch TV news listen to radio or read fake websites. 8 % of respondents get the news from their friends and relatives. It is seen from the test that respondents know a little about the history of journalism and even less about the specificity of television (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Media literacy diagnostic of students from media educational courses in *STRC Orenburg* (entrance testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	n	%
One television channel differs from another one mostly....	66	24
What is the main thing that differs the audience of one TV channel from another one?	88	32
The invention of printing press in ... was an important event in mass media development.	33	12
A journalist recorded five viewers for doing the story about the premiere, but he left just two of them. Why?	69	25
What must the news story must be like?	69	25
When did TV broadcasting start in Orenburg region?	28	10
What programs can a TV presenter express his own opinion, feelings and ideas in?	28	10

There is such a low level of the students in media theory because this module is not included in the educational program of secondary school. However, children got new information for two months, doing the course in *STRC Orenburg*, moreover, theory was given as a part of practice. This approach helped us involve children in problems considered.

The testing method did not suppose the following informing students about the correct answers they were told that all information would be given in the process of education. After the course children were offered to do the test again. The difference in answers before and after the course is shown in the Table 2.

Getting this knowledge not just broaden mind, but also lets school children be more demanding media consumers. When students of the course learn the rules and demands for journalistic materials and try to make them themselves, they start feeling the prejudice of the reporter and subjective attitude to the news. Students become more demanding to the content in social media, as they meet the same formats: interview, report, information article and etc.

While entrance testing, it turned out that the course students on the base of *STRC Orenburg* understand the language of social nets and rules of behavior on these platforms. 86 % answered correctly that opinion leaders are called the people who influence the opinion of the others, expressing their ideas in public. 88 % gave the correct answers why the author of text message writes in capital letters. 72 % know that Gif is the image format.

**Table 2.** Media literacy diagnostic of students from media educational courses in *STRC Orenburg* (entrance and final testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	before the course, %	after the course, %
One television channel differs from another one mostly....	24	100
What is the main thing that differs the audience of one TV channel from another one?	32	100
The invention of printing press in ... was an important event in mass media development.	12	86
A journalist recorded five viewers for doing the story about the premiere, but he left just two of them. Why?	25	100
What must the news story must be like?	25	100
When did TV broadcasting start in Orenburg region?	10	92
What programs can a TV presenter express his own opinion, feelings and ideas in?	10	98

The authors of the entrance test were pleased to know that 98 % of school children are ready to block the account at once if they get threats from it and they immediately tell about this threatening message to their parents. Only 2 % of children can ignore a threat. However, no one said that they would start texting with the unknown account. All respondents showed low resistance to manipulating via media texts and showed weak knowledge in this sphere. In the [Table 3](#) there are questions that school children answered, there are also answers before and after the course.

**Table 3.** Knowledge dynamics of students from media educational course in *STRC Orenburg* in the sphere of media communication theory (on the base of entrance and final testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	before the course, %	after the course, %
Evaluation, formed in advance, which is based on widespread and simplified notion of the subject, phenomenon or type of a person, – it is ...	12	90
What can indicate the prejudice in the text?	10	9
Show the case of propaganda	16	94
The fact – it is...	30	100
Suggestions – they are...	24	96
Why they make representative sampling for surveys?	16	98
What is the difference between propaganda and advertisement?	24	98

Students analyzed commercial advertisements of children goods on lesson after getting the theory, then they try to make the advertisement attractive for their potential target audience. Working with rills, that promoted a healthy lifestyle, school children singled out what exactly formed a relevant opinion, what caused emotions and why the authors chose a certain image to represent the characters of the video.

These lessons helped school children implement rational thinking in watching emotional content. The students showed intuitive and analytical approaches that prevent from being manipulated. Media educational project of *STRC Orenburg* lets us claim that such media literacy lessons must be systematically used in secondary school, when there will be certain media pedagogical approaches that are suitable for kids.

After media literacy improving course on the base of *STRC Orenburg*, school children were asked to give a feedback and say what useful knowledge and skills they got. The students gave full answers; we would like to single out some of them:



1) “I have improved my skills of using information resources, keeping the rules of copyright. I have learned to single out the main information in the text and now I can write informative notes quickly”;

2) “I have learned what the news production is and what kind of information should be in the edition. I have tried myself as a TV presenter and a reporter and now I understand his duties”;

3) “I have worked a lot with my voice, now I know that it is possible to give the news in different ways, using intonation, tempo and pauses. I liked acting classes very much”;

4) “I have understood that a journalist must be very educated and that being a journalist is a big responsibility. I was fond of giving and taking interviews”;

5) “When I am reading the news publications, I always pay attention to the resource of information. I never read the news if I do not know where it comes from”;

7) “Now I understand the news better, I know the structure of TV spot. I was keen on making TV reports”;

8) “I liked thinking up and searching for topics for the news. Now I know that the main news should be in the beginning of the program”;

9) “Now I know how to make an advertisement and now I understand why I like watching toys advertising so much”;

10) “The most important thing is that I have finally chosen the profession. I will become a journalist. I wanted to be a blogger, however I need journalistic education”.

Summing up everything, mentioned above, we can single out the main directions of *STRC Orenburg* activities from the positions of media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience:

- a) disclosure of fake news from social nets in the broadcasting;
- b) showing the process of TV programs making to TV viewers;
- c) switching to comfortable communicative platform for communicating with viewers;
- d) excursions for school children;
- e) spread of high-qualitative television content;
- f) off-air media literacy education in terms of media educational courses.

Taking into account the popularity of media educational courses on the base of *STRC Orenburg*, we will keep on working in this direction. It is important to keep in mind that any television channel of professional media company has a big media educational potential, but it should not be just on-air work.

## 5. Conclusion

Media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is laid in opportunities of modern television channels to make systematic off-air interaction with real audience (which is realized in on-line and off-line spaces), thus attracting potential audience. Modern media consumer has become more active – he takes part in content making and watches educational videos with a big interest. The usage of media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience increases the confidence to television channels and makes television content be more demanding and competitive.

Media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is interpreted as a special model for developing media culture of modern neo-information society, based on principles of media responsible approach (according to media ethical standards and rules) in implementation of media communication on behalf of all actors of media space – media producers and media consumers (taking into account considerable combination of these media roles in sociocultural realities).

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## Travel-Blogs and Content Features for Blogs about Travel

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### Abstract

Tourism and travel are one of the most popular topics for blog readers on the Internet. Some people watch travelers because they are unable to travel to distant countries on their own, while others, on the contrary, choose a place to travel based on reviews from bloggers and their recommendations.

Travel blogs have become a real mainstream in journalism and the blogging sphere, and the development of social networks only contributes to the further spread of blogs and bloggers. However, the content that bloggers create does not always become popular. The main types of content that travel bloggers use are videos, hash tags, and text comments. The most popular type of content for the travel category is videos, however, the dynamic development of the blogging sphere, the blocking of some social networks on the territory of the Russian Federation forces travel bloggers to constantly change content and adapt to the current situation in the world.

In this research, the authors analyze the concept of a Travel-blog and its difference from travel journalism, provide a detailed analysis of the platforms on which travelers publish their content, as well as the features of creating content for travel blogs.

**Keywords:** travel, tourism, blog, content, tour, travel blog, blogger, social networks.

### 1. Introduction

The modern world is highly communicative and very mobile. After the Covid-19 pandemic, many travelers switched to remote work and now, in order to make a decision about a trip, sometimes it's enough just to see an interesting video about traveling on a social network. It is this phenomenon that drives the development of travel blogs, because it is this category of blogs that attracts the most subscribers every day. Potential tourists now choose a vacation spot not in the offices of travel agencies, but on their smart phone. To influence the decision to purchase a particular tour, a travel agency needs to present bright pictures, memorable traveler stories, reviews and other content that can be broadcast on a social network. However, in the current circumstances, it is important to be able to quickly adapt to the needs of the audience and provide them with the necessary and interesting content in a timely manner (Bosangit et al., 2015; Karabacak, Genç, 2019).

Another indicative fact according to the number of different blogs is that there are no academic requirements for travel blogging. In fact, there is no university that produces bloggers, however, there are universities that produce journalists. However, in travel blogs and travel journalism there are fundamental differences in the approach to creating content and generating materials for the audience (Banyai, Glover, 2010: 269; Mikryukov, Sarkisova, 2020: 97).

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## 2. Materials and methods

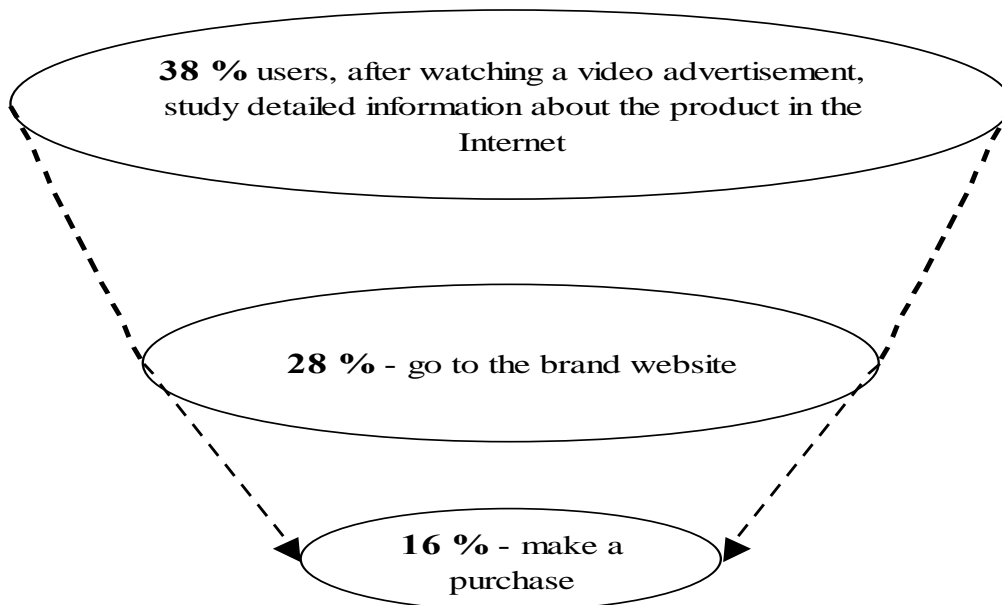
The research materials included scientific publications devoted to travel journalism as the fundamental basis for the development of travel blogs, social media and the specifics of creating content for social networks of various types, as well as Internet sites. The research methodology is based on fundamental research in the field of journalism as a basic phenomenon, as well as theories of information literacy and development trends in modern society. The work used methods of collecting and analyzing information, theoretical analysis, synthesis, generalization.

## 3. Discussion

Recently, the number of studies related to the analysis of travel blogs and travel journalism has increased significantly. There are a number of objective reasons for this: firstly, travel blogs are gradually replacing travel journalism, and secondly, the dynamics of changes taking place in social networks are such that bloggers need to adapt and adopt content in a short time.

Experts highlight the theory that sharing travel experiences through social networks can work as an independent process of social communication and contribute to the creation of a separate value of the travel destination (Xu et al., 2022: 580).

According to research from GfK, CINT and SSI, the right content on YouTube motivates people to take action.



**Fig. 1.** Brand awareness funnel depending on published content on YouTube (Medianation, 2024)

As can be seen from the above Figure 1, YouTube is one of the effective channels of communication between the user and the company since after watching the video one third of users go to the company's website and study information about the product.

Travel blogs are one of the important categories of content published on YouTube. Russian-speaking travel bloggers publish a wide variety of content from classic travel reports, to austerity travel or trips to abandoned places.

Modern realities, such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic, which significantly affected the quality of content that users are willing to consume, as well as the imposed sanctions and blocking of some social networks in the Russian Federation and the inability to monetize income from YouTube – forced bloggers to reconsider their content and adapt to demands of modern audiences.

According to the authors, it is advisable to conduct a study that will make it possible to determine the fundamental differences between a travel blogger and a travel journalist, as well as to understand what kind of content modern users need, identify its structure and features of creation.

## 4. Results

Modern life has long been taking place in two parallel worlds – real and virtual. It is not surprising that travel has become one of the most popular areas for virtual reporting, because it is

the most popular and viewed type of content. Every network user can visit remote corners of their homeland, see amazing natural phenomena, and travel bloggers help develop this direction. A travel blogger is a traveler (more rarely, a group of travelers) who collects data (videos, photos, texts) to create content about trips and travel, and receives income from various sources for publishing it on the Internet. Essentially, a travel blogger is a traveler who receives money for his travel recommendations. However, today, with the development of the Internet and the growing popularity of social networks, it is not enough to simply give advice and write a travel note; it is important to share emotions, tell the nuances of travel, reveal life hacks, etc.

#### *Differences between travel blog and travel journalism*

Let's try to figure out the fundamental difference between a travel blogger and a travel journalist. A travel blogger is a person who creates content based on his travels. A travel blogger conveys to the audience information about own travels and own experiences gained on a particular trip. The content that a travel blogger produces is highly personalized and aimed at the audience of a specific blog. For example, if a blogger talks about how to save as much as possible while traveling, then this is unlikely to be of interest to people who are used to vacationing on an all-inclusive basis.

On the contrary, a travel journalist aims to reach the widest possible audience. The content published by a travel journalist is informational in nature. Essentially, the task of a travel journalist is to provide the reader with facts, for example, about the country's inhabitants, culture, language, customs, etc. (O'Conner, 2008: 51).

The methods that bloggers and journalists use for their work also differ. Journalists, as a rule, use academic methods of presenting information, searching for reliable facts and proving them. Bloggers, on the contrary, actively broadcast feelings and emotions, less often check the authenticity of information and do not adhere to textbook approaches to writing or expressing thoughts.

So, a travel blogger is not always a travel journalist, and vice versa, a travel journalist is not always a travel blogger. Let's look at the fundamental differences between these categories:

1. *Education.* As a rule, a travel journalist has an academic education – philological, historical or linguistic degree. A travel blogger can have any education or none at all.

2. *Experience in journalism.* Of course, a travel journalist has experience working in the media, and not necessarily related to travel. The blogger does not have such experience. Usually, bloggers become people who have learned to shoot beautiful videos, feel great in front of the camera, conduct a confident monologue, etc.

3. *Permanent job.* A travel journalist often has a permanent job in some media. The main work task of a travel journalist is to prepare high-quality materials about travel for publication in one or another journal, for example, "Around the World" or "National Geographic". In addition, the content that a travel journalist creates usually goes through editorial corrections and remarks and only then a decision is made about its publication. Another important criterion for a travel journalist is the frequency of materials' submission stated in the calendar plan. A travel blogger is the complete opposite of a travel journalist, there is no connection to a specific work place (although some combine freelancing and blogging), there are no deadlines or plans for the amount of content, and there is no editorial team that makes decisions about the materials' release, except for the social network policy in which the blog is maintained. Of course, in order to monetize your blog as much as possible and earn money, you need to set your own plans and deadlines, and monitor the audience's reaction.

4. *Information presentation.* A travel journalist, having an academic education, usually builds material according to certain standards (short story, description, culmination, denouement, etc.), which fully corresponds to the chosen genre (diary, essay, show, notes, etc.). A travel blogger writes without observing the laws of the genre and the principles of text composition.

5. *Information filtering.* A travel journalist is subject to the norms and rules that are accepted in the media for which he creates content. A blogger has only own personal opinion and can talk about whatever he wants, since the Internet is a zone of free thoughts' expression. A journalist will never cite unproven facts; he will certainly refer to an existing study or publication, but a blogger will be quite satisfied with even the opinion of a local resident (Pokozanieva, 2015).

On the contrary, one of the key differences between a blogger and a journalist is the manner of presenting and filtering information. It is the "live" communication that a blogger gives to his audience that forms loyalty, trust and empathy for him personally. However, there are times when it is precisely this virtual freedom that leads to carelessness, factual or grammatical errors that are

noticed and noted by users. A journalist has no right to make such mistakes, and editors will not pass a report containing gross violations.

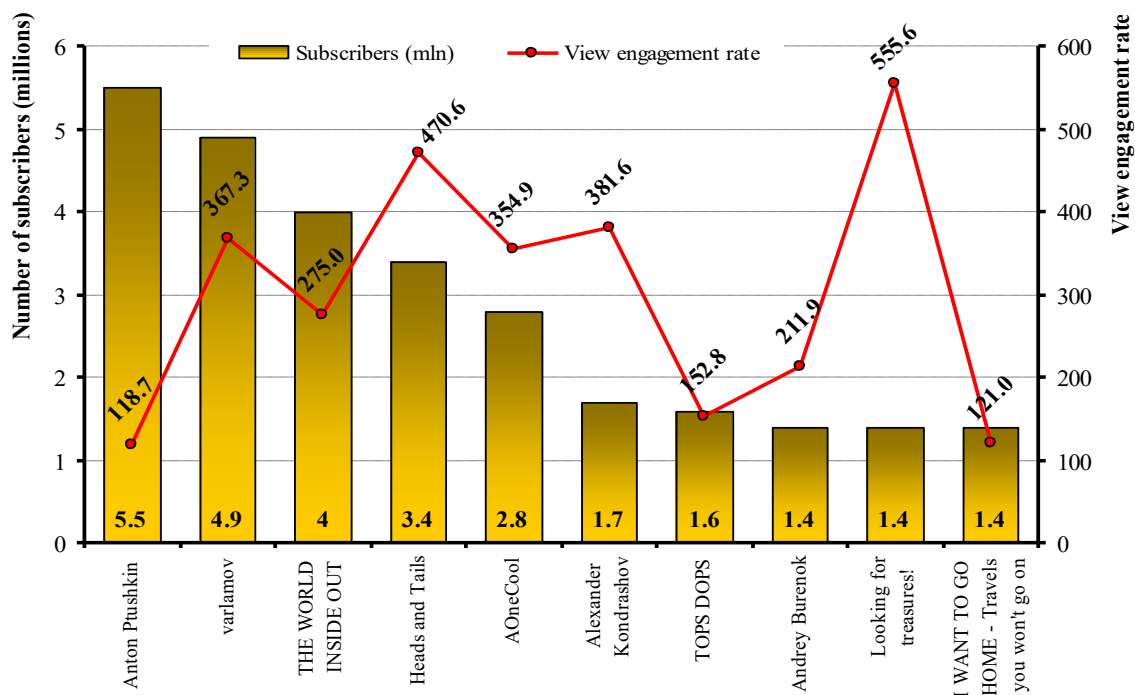
It is important to understand that the tasks and methods that bloggers and journalists use are quite different, however, they have the same key goal – to get maximum audience coverage by preparing useful and high-quality content.

#### Modern travel-blogs

As noted earlier, some social networks are currently prohibited in Russia, so the main platforms on which bloggers publish their content include the following: *YouTube*; *Telegram*; *VKontakte*; *Odnoklassniki*; *Dzen*.

It is important to note that the listed sites have significant differences in target audiences. For example, *VKontakte* is actively used by young people, but *Dzen* and *Odnoklassniki* are read by people of the older generation - 35 years old and above. *YouTube* and *Telegram* have a more universal structure and, accordingly, a different target audience. Due to the above, the authors, in their study, focused on studying the content of these sites.

Today, the *YouTube* audience in Russia has reached 95 million users, although it is not a full-fledged social network, rather a video hosting service. The average daily audience reach (DAU) of *YouTube* in Russia (as of October 2023) exceeds 53.3 million people. Every day, Russians spend about 100 minutes watching videos on YouTube. YouTube became the most popular application used by Russians during Christmas holiday season in 2024. One of the popular trends viewed by users on YouTube is travel blogs (PPC world, 2024).



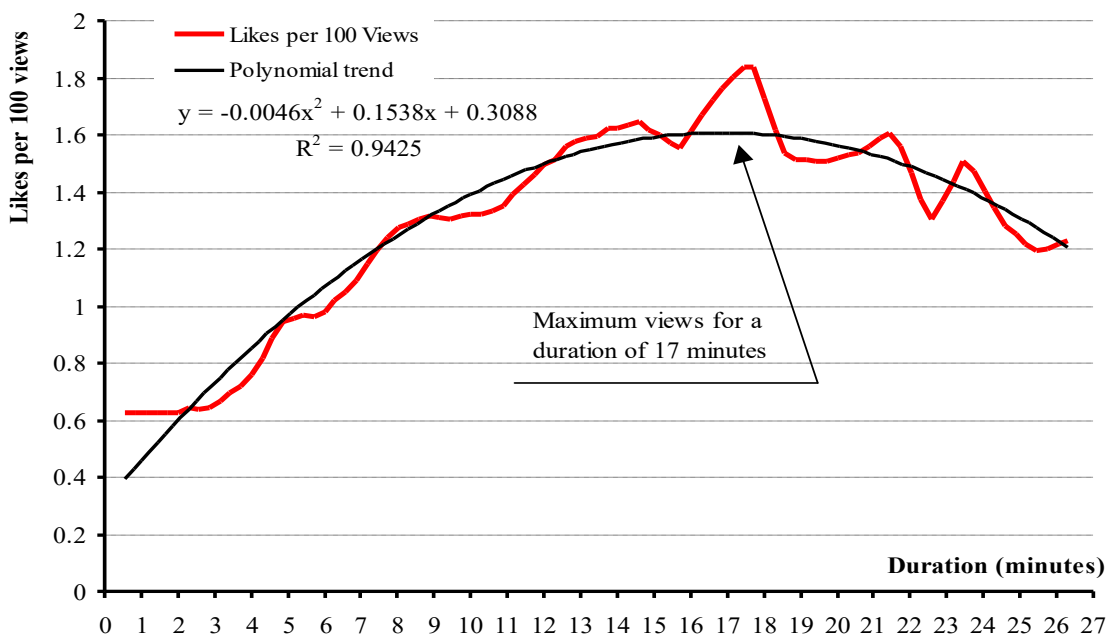
**Fig. 2.** Travel blogs on YouTube (WhatStat, 2024)

The authors analyzed popular travel blogs that post their content on *YouTube*. The analysis was carried out by the number of subscribers, as well as the engagement rate by views. It is worth noting that the number of subscribers does not always guarantee a high level of engagement and views of video content. For example, a blogger with 5.5 million subscribers has lower engagement than a blogger with 1.4 million subscribers.

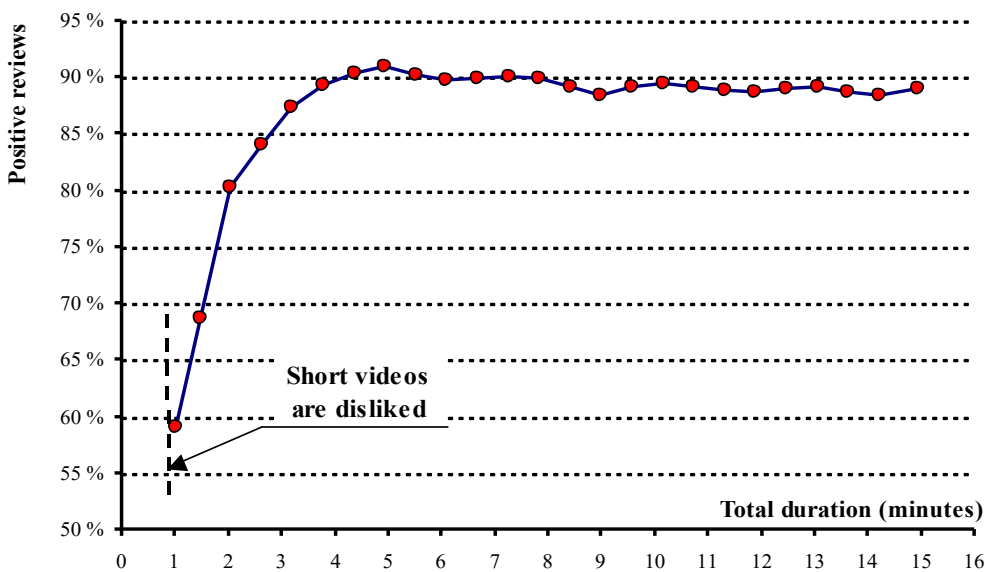
Content for a video blog is subject to cinematic genres, and, as a rule, consists of 5 elements: introduction, summary of the main topic, arguments that the blogger proves or refutes, conclusion and a call to subscribe to the channel. All these elements are interconnected by screensavers, interruptions and inserts from popular videos or films. Almost any video in a travel blog is subject to these requirements.

For genre characteristics, video blogs can be classified as follows:

1. Travel-blog is a journey through the eyes of the author. Essentially, the author makes a film where the main emphasis is on the places the author has been to, the events he has visited, the sights he has seen, etc.
2. A documentary film is an original film that reflects the real picture of what is happening at the travel destination. In reportage films, as a rule, the author does not express his position, which creates the neutrality of the video and attracts a large number of views.
3. A report is a prepared and carefully planned thematic report that is dedicated to some event (for example, a festival or the opening of a museum, etc.). As a rule, reporting videos work well with professional journalists who know how to structure a video, how to convey the necessary information, and what facts should be cited as evidence.
4. Essays are short videos that are viewed through the prism of the authors' vision of certain facts and events of the trip.
5. Travel shows are a popular genre of entertainment journalism. A series of videos united by one idea (for example, how to travel with 100 dollars in your pocket or where to find national cuisine).



**Fig.3.** Dependence of likes per 100 views on length in minutes (Utify, 2020)



**Fig. 4.** Briggsby Statistics on the Correlation of Dislikes and *YouTube* Video Length (Utify, 2020)



If we talk about the duration of the video, then on YouTube you can find videos about travel from 5 minutes to several hours. If you look at statistics, you will notice that YouTube videos 15-20 minutes long are the most popular in terms of viewing (Utify, 2020). In addition, videos with a length of 10 to 17 minutes receive more likes, in contrast to videos of up to 5 minutes and over 20-25 minutes. Audience engagement tends to decrease when watching videos longer than 20 minutes.

An interesting fact is that the so-called Short-videos, up to 1 minute long, which are filmed in a vertical format to make it convenient to watch from a smartphone screen, demonstrate the highest engagement of participants in terms of views, but they also hold the record for dislikes. It is worth noting that such videos are mainly of an advertising nature or do not have a logical ending.

To summarize the analysis of the content that is necessary for promoting travel video blogs, we can say the following: to increase blog recognition, increase coverage and views, it is better to publish short videos that are most often watched, and if you want to create good content that will attract a large number of likes and comments, then you should shoot a video from 10 to 17 minutes long, and you need to understand that artificially “delaying” the time of the video has the opposite effect.

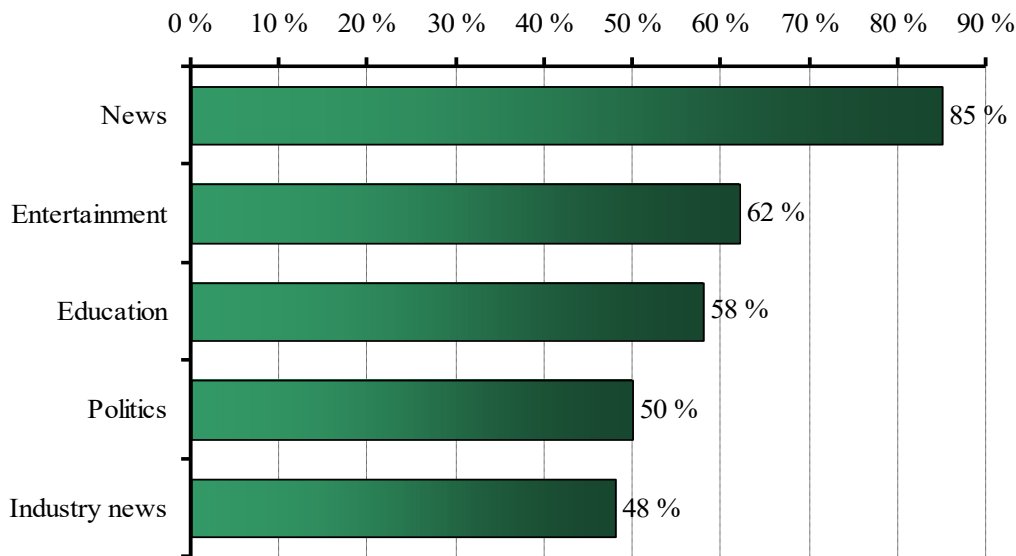


Fig. 5. Channels that users subscribe to (PPC world, 2024)

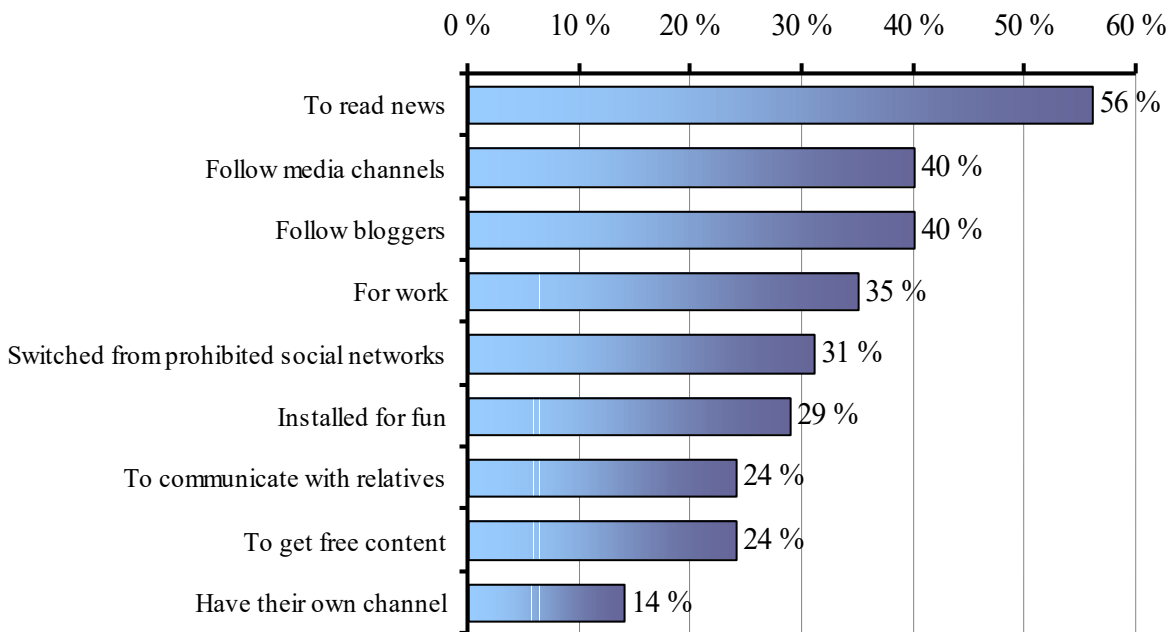


Fig. 6. Top 9 reasons for Telegram installation (PPC world, 2024)

Summarizing the information about text blogs, the most popular social networks for them are Telegram and VKontakte. As noted earlier, Telegram has a wider audience, so let's look at view statistics and the specifics of writing texts for Telegram channels.

In 2023, Telegram entered the top three most downloaded applications. The monthly active users (MAU) of Telegram in Russia reached 82.3 million users by October 2023. Over the past two years, this figure increased by 13 %. In Russia in October 2023 the daily active users (DAU) of Telegram reached 56.6 million people. By the end of 2023, almost every second Russian (47 %) used the messenger daily (PPC world, 2024). The majority of users subscribe to news, entertainment or educational channels on Telegram, as can be seen from Figures 5 and Figures 6.

Unlike video content, text content is characterized by such an indicator as the citation index. The Telegram citation index is calculated based on the analysis of all mentions of the channel in other Telegram channels. This indicator makes it possible to quickly assess the volume and quality of advertising mentions of a channel; accordingly, the higher the citation index, the better the channel performs and the more expensive advertising in this channel will cost.

The authors analyzed popular Telegram channels about travel (Figure 7).

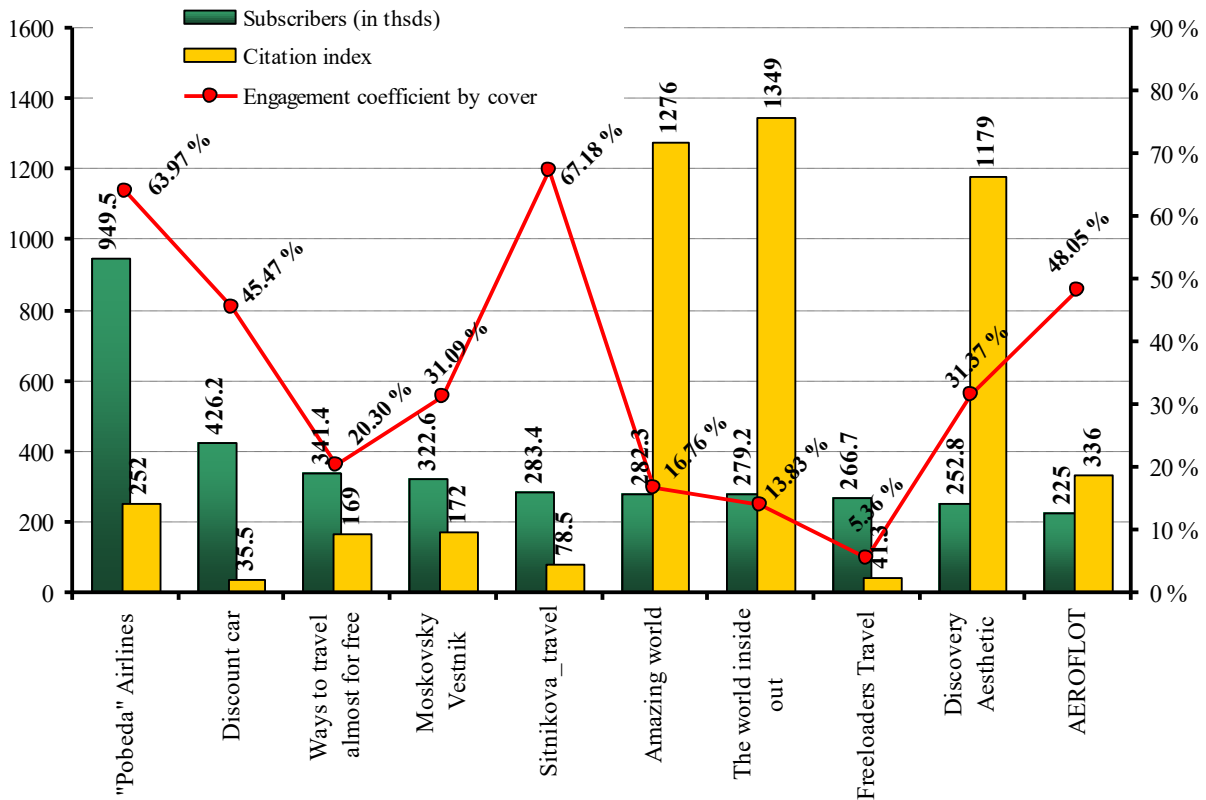


Fig. 7. Telegram-channel rating (TGStat, 2024)

As can be seen from Figure 7, the number of subscribers does not always guarantee a high citation index and high subscriber involvement. Some channels, for example "The World Inside Out," have a high level of citations, but at the same time its coverage is significantly lower than that of the less cited Discovery Aesthetic. This fact suggests that it is the quality of published content that plays a significant role in the promotion of the channel.

It is worth noting that Telegram also has the ability to publish video content, but this network is not very popular in terms of video views, and most of the videos that are on Telegram are links to YouTube channels.

Speaking about text content, it is important to say that one of the most important statistics that indicate the quality of the text and the channel itself is the reach of one post and the average channel engagement rate. Today, the average engagement rate is around 60 % (VC, 2018). Views and reposts on Telegram are not indicative, since they can be "boosted" relatively easily.

In order to increase the level of subscriber engagement, you need to write and publish high-quality texts. A good text is distinguished by the presence of:

- a short but meaningful title that forces the user to start reading the text;
- main idea formulation of the entire text in the first 3 sentences;
- facts evidence that were stated in the title;
- calls to target action (for example, subscribe to a channel, follow a link, etc.).

Only a small proportion of readers usually read the entire text. Data on sites from the Chartbeat analytics system indicate that most visitors read 60 % of the material, 10 % of visitors do not scroll the text at all, remaining on the first screen of the device. 52.4 % of users on mobile devices and 66.9 % on personal computers view the page to the end (Manjoo, 2013). That is why it is important to attract the reader's attention from the first lines of your publication, so that he understands the idea that the blogger wanted to convey to him, even if he does not read the text to the end.

In travel blogs, this is especially important because the reader usually wants to know evidence of the fact stated in the title. For example, the author included the phrase "I'll tell you how to relax in Italy for 100 Euros" in the title. This headline attracted the attention of the reader and he, going to the channel, wants to find out how he can relax in Italy for only 100 Euros. It is important that the information contained in the text is truthful and the reader receives an answer to his question, otherwise the blogger risks being branded a deceiver and losing subscribers.

Another important part of the content in Telegram channels is photographic materials. For travel bloggers, a high-quality picture is the calling card of the channel and an element that attracts the attention of the audience. The genre of travel photography involves photographing interesting places, landscapes, peoples, customs, etc. during the trip. There are several types of travel photography:

- landscape – when the photo shows static natural landscapes, without the participation of people;
- street photos – photos reflecting the dynamics of city life;
- portraits – photographs of local residents;
- reportage – the author's vision of his journey (Solovyov, Skoblikova, 2017: 580).

The choice of photograph type usually correlates with the content of the text that is planned for publication. For example, when talking about the indigenous peoples of the Far North, it is good to publish their portraits, and in an attempt to describe the dynamism of the metropolis, present street photos.

## 5. Conclusion

To summarize all of the above, it should be emphasized that the active development of social networks, the popularity of travel journalism and the increase in the number of various travel programs, as well as the state travel policy (for example, tourist cash back or the Student Tourism program) contribute to the active development of such an area as travel blogs. Forming their vision of the world of travel, finding their own style and zest for presenting information, bloggers demonstrate their content to the audience.

Modern travel-journalism, which is gradually including bloggers, combines a wide range of varied content from short notes to documentary videos. To find your audience and create quality content for them, it is important to understand for what purpose a blogger goes on a social network. The key indicator when assessing the quality of a blog is the number of views on YouTube and the number of coverages of a particular post in Telegram.

The right content, well-chosen pictures, competent text, and high-quality video help bloggers reach the top on different platforms. In addition, high-quality content directly affects the volume of reach of bloggers, and, as a result, the number and cost of advertising that can be placed on a blog.

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