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## The Implications of Instructors' Digital Literacy Skills for their Attitudes to Teach Critical Media Literacy in EFL Classrooms

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### Abstract

We nowadays are heavily reliant on media and information technology. With the proliferation of technological media, easily accessible information, and people's dependence on technological tools, it is critical to cultivate critical attitudes among internet users. Hence, at schools, teachers should assist students in acquiring critical media literacy (CML) skills. Having this consideration, teachers need to become more digitally literate. This study aims to: 1) inspect teachers' digital literacy skills; 2) investigate teachers' attitudes toward the application of CML based on their different digital literacy abilities; and 3) scrutinize the implications. We collected data from EFL teachers at a high school in East Java, Indonesia, through interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. We used theme-based analysis to identify and categorize the data before presenting the findings. The findings show the instructors are computer literate. However, not all instructors are proficient in digital literacy. There are instructors who exhibit insufficient digital literacy skills, as seen by the teachers stumbling when using technology. The competent digital literacy teachers show positive attitudes for teaching CML abilities. Meanwhile, the less digital literate teachers display negative attitudes for teaching CML abilities. Finally, the study suggests that instructors should strengthen their digital literacy and CML skills.

**Keywords:** media literacy, critical media literacy, CML, digital literacy, EFL teachers, information technology, teacher attitude.

### 1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has had a far-reaching effect on many aspects of modern society including the needs for educational innovation (Byundyugova et al., 2022). The confluence of media and technology has ultimately transformed the way individuals learn and perceive about the world and undermining the basic foundations of education. Furthermore, the characteristics of digital natives who regularly interact with technology and rely on more on-screen resources rather than on-page materials (Galik, 2020; Galik, Oprala, 2021) requires epistemological adjustments in the educational system pertaining to pedagogical and technological goals, considering that the internet has revolutionized generating the content, interacting, entertaining, and accumulating information (Rayna, Striukova, 2021). Moreover, the pandemic that began in 2020 has had significant effects for the educational system (Afrilyasanti, Basthomi, 2022a; 2022b) and has hastened the digital transformation significantly by driving us to adopt digital realms in our day-to-day school and job.

Therefore, teaching should include strategies for identifying various types of skills that students must attain in order to prepare for their career paths and regularly analyze whether their

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teaching suited students' competencies and learning methods (Gonzalez-Perez, Ramirez-Montoya, 2022). Teachers should also be technologically literate in order to develop students' digital literacy and other abilities needed at this age (Pratolo, Solikhati, 2021). Digital literacy refers to the ability for accessing and using digital tools and applications in their classrooms (Koltay, 2011), which comprises cognitive, social, motoric, and emotional abilities, to give what individuals intended (Eshet, 2004), as well as the ability to digest information from a range of computer-based sources (Gilster, 1997). Similarly, digital literacy skills enable teachers to use digital technology successfully, responsibly, and ethically, in collaboration with critical thinking skills or conscious information analysis skills, both of which are unquestionably at the heart of media literacy.

Digital literacy skills that encompass computational thinking help students gain essential informatics skills, such as problem analysis, problem solving, human behavior understanding, etc. (Svensson et al., 2022; Wing, 2006). There have been various studies on educational technology; nonetheless, the results indicate that the major barrier to digital literacy education is a lack of time in designing technology teaching (Hosseini, 2018). Besides their limited time, teachers also have many duties other than teaching during school hours (Skaalvik, 2016) as well as technical problems (Shatri et al., 2021). Therefore, most instructors prefer using a practical approach to integrating technology. However, it is not only teachers' limitations in using technology but also the students' inability to learn through technology (McCord, 2015). This verifies that both, instructors and students need to understand how digital tools communicate information via language (McCord, 2015), because websites and computers have all been acknowledged as beneficial technologies for improving and altering education (Howard-Jones, Jay, 2016).

However, the urge to master technology for instructors is considered being tough since adult learners can hardly be focused in the absence of new technologies (Wiseman et al., 2016) that connect the classroom to the outside world (Wilson et al., 2014). Therefore, media platforms and libraries play an important role in investing teachers in digital literacy practices because the emergence of self-assured information assembly reinforces thinking process in generating and using information, while also preparing them for the digital transformation of the various methods (Deja et al., 2021). Additionally, fostering a digital environment for the development of teachers' digital competence within pedagogical conditions is required (Fursykova et al., 2022; Tahir et al., 2021). By enhancing their digital competencies, teachers can help students learn more effectively by utilizing digital media. Teachers can also assist students improve important hands-on language skills required for success in subsequent education and future career (Ugur, 2010).

Furthermore, with the explosion of media and the spread of fake or misleading information (Lazer et al., 2017; Vziatysheva, 2020), instructors must integrate digital media instructions to promote digital and media literacy abilities to students. The media literacy skills can only be actively nurtured in students by teachers who are media literate (Hobbs, 2017; Ugur, 2010). The term 'media literacy' corresponds to the eligibility, socialization, and perspective of the growing media consumers, who are seen as democratically active, critically evaluative, culturally expressive community members prepared for a professionally mediatized society (Forsman, 2018; 2019). Learning from that term, it can be concluded that media literacy is employed not just personally, but also communally throughout the media community. Thus, there is a close-fitting connection between media literacy and social life and society. When learning media literacy, it is then equally essential to be able to respond to the veracity of the information and to raise students' understanding of the danger of media use, which involves awareness, analysis, judgment, and action skills (Lebid et al., 2020; Riesmeyer et al., 2019; Ugaling et al., 2022).

Therefore, it is critical for instructors to be both digital and media literate in order to support students in their media literacy skill development. Prior research (Rivkin et al., 2005) has shown that teachers' competencies have substantial effects on students' accomplishment, with teacher effects accounting for up to three quarters of school effects on students' results. Concerning teachers' digital literacy abilities, some studies (Inan, Lowther, 2010; Seraji et al., 2017) found out that younger or less experienced instructors have more positive technology attitudes and lower computer apprehension than older instructors. It is verified that teaching experience has a detrimental influence on teachers' digital literacy, beliefs, and technology use (Karaca et al., 2013). Hence, teachers' professional development program in using technology must continue. Teachers with more teaching experience must determine the trainings they require for technology use. Interestingly, some other studies (Baek et al., 2008; Lau, Sim, 2008; Russel et al., 2007) revealed that senior instructors use computer more often than newer teachers or teachers with less teaching

experience, and are more enthusiastic about implementing technology in education. These results suggest that factors besides teaching experience influence teachers' attitudes toward the use of technology in their instruction.

The previously mentioned studies validate how teaching practices in integrating technology positively influence teachers' attitudes toward the use of technology in education (Inan, Lowther, 2010; Karaca et al., 2013; Ocaik, Akdemir, 2008; Sadik, 2005; Seraji et al., 2017), which in turn influences their teaching of media literacy. When teachers enhance their digital literacy, they are more likely to teach media literacy skills that will assist students to digest information amid media proliferation. A research is needed to determine whether instructors' digital literacy skills and attitudes affect CML education. Therefore, this article aims to discover EFL teachers' digital literacy skills, teachers' attitudes toward the application of CML based on their various digital literacy abilities, and the implications.

## 2. Materials and methods

We carried this descriptive qualitative research out in a public senior high school in East Java, Indonesia. We could not meet the large sample size because of time and resource constraints. As a qualitative research design is concerned with how representative the population's participants are; hence, fewer participants with diverse and rich experiences, such as those in this study, were adequate in order to properly extract relevant data from each participant (Dornyei, 2007). The detailed for the participants of the study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Participants' demographic information

Participant (P)	Age	Educational Background	Length of Teaching Experience
1	24	B.A. in English Language Education	Less than 5 years
2	34	M.A. in English Language Education	10-15 years
3	37	M.A. in English Language Education	5-10 years
4	54	M.A. in English Language Education	Over 30 years

In order to derive relevant findings from our research questions, we considered a purposely constructed semi-structured interview that was executed through a focus group discussion (FGD) and field notes as the outcomes of classroom observations to be the primary measuring method for our study. We used a semi-structured interview since it enabled us to customize the nature and flexibility of the interview (Rabionet, Lauderdale, 2009). Teachers' perspectives on the role of digital literacy integration in CML instructions, teachers' digital literacy skills and practices, teachers' perspectives on CML instructions, and the internal and external conditions related to implementing digital literacy in CML instructions were all covered in the instruments. Individual and group interviews were conducted with the participants. In addition, the data was analyzed using theme analysis approach in which all replies from the participants were classified and sorted into the same themes and investigated further (Braun, Clarke, 2006).

## 3. Discussion

### *EFL Teachers' Digital Literacy Skills and Practices*

According to the results of the FGD and observations on teachers' CML instructions, two teachers (P.1 and P.2) exhibited good digital literacy skills. Meanwhile, the other two participants (P.3 and P.4) demonstrated poor digital literacy skills, as evidenced by the teachers stumbling when using technology. Further, when we compare on the teachers' ages and their digital literacy skills as shown by their classroom teaching performance and the interview results, we find a similar finding to the earlier study (Seraji et al., 2017) in which young instructors have lower computer anxiety than older instructors.

However, in terms of laptop use, all four participants used laptops frequently. The teachers showed their digital literacy skills by teaching using laptops and mobile phones. However, P. 3 and P. 4 mostly only use simple writing tools like Microsoft Word and PowerPoint presentation tools to carry out their administrative tasks in the classroom. Furthermore, neither of them explored or learned about various applications and other technologies that could be used in their teaching.

According to the findings of those two participants, teachers are digitally literate but insufficient because they have not used digital media as a creative means of teaching.

During the interviews, when P.3 and P.4 were asked about their reasons for not using technology extensively during instruction during the interviews, those two participants stated they would like to learn about various applications for CML instructions but could not do so because of insufficient time allotment and energy as well as excessive administrative tasks besides teaching. This finding confirms the previous research (Hosseini, 2018; Shatri et al., 2021; Skaalvik, 2016) on factors affecting teachers' lacking of digital literacy skills, including insufficient time for attending professional development program, excessive work-loads besides teaching, and the insufficient facilities as well as technical issues.

Furthermore, the results of the interview and observation, we found that there are still teachers (P.3 and P.4) who are anxious about using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the classroom. This anxiety then prevents them from learning and integrating digital tools and applications. The other two participants, on the other hand, actively used technology in their instructions. They also explored and tried various applications that could be used in their teaching instructions. Moreover, when it comes to the devices they use, they stated they are comfortable using laptops and mobile phones in their classroom.

Teachers' contented use of laptops and smartphones for teaching is consistent with an earlier study (Howard-Jones, Jay, 2016) on the beneficial technologies for improving and transforming education. Then, when we analyze these results further, we perceive that younger instructors have more positive digital attitudes and lower levels of digital anxiety than older instructors. Furthermore, as the teachers stated in the interview, it was discovered that using technology for instruction could indeed benefit their students as digital native generations. Teachers' perceptions of the importance of integrating technology into their instruction are consistent with previous research (Galik, 2020; Galik, Oprala, 2021; Pratolo, Solikhati, 2021), which emphasizes the benefits of digital media instruction to aid the learning of our digital native students.

Regardless of students' technological needs, there are still teachers who are inadequately digitally literate and are hesitant to explore and then use digital tools and applications in the classroom. Furthermore, some teachers also show that they prefer using a practical approach to classroom instruction over technology-based instruction. In addition, the teachers assert it is not only from their side that they do not integrate technology into the classrooms, but it can also be from the students' side. This could be because of restrictions on using smartphones during school hours, which contribute to the inability to use technological learning media, confirming McCord's previous findings (McCord, 2015).

#### *EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward CML Instructions based on their Digital Literacy Abilities*

The findings of a content analysis of interview data, which resulted in descriptions of prominent attitudes among teachers regarding their perspectives and intentions to present CML instructions based on their digital literacy skills. There are three categories of the findings on the teachers' attitudes, including behavioral component, normative component, and control components.

Behavioral component is the first category. The behavioral component includes distinguishing characteristics that portray attitudes, which result in favorable outcomes (Underwood, 2012). The interview findings reveal specific behavioral attitudes held by the instructors to implement CML instructions based on their digital literacy skills, namely: media proliferation, response to Z-generation characteristics, and future world needs (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Teachers' attitudes observed from the behavioral component

Categories	Intention to implement CML Instructions
Media proliferation	Media proliferation necessitates teachers' awareness in order for students to access and share information wisely; thus, CML instruction is required. Teachers' digital literacy skills allow them to access a variety of media that can be used for CML instruction. Teachers' digital literacy skills enable them to assist students in developing skills in managing unlimited information and generating creativity when using digital media for learning.
Response to Z-	Teachers should have digital literacy skills in order to meet the needs of the Z-

generation characteristics	generation, who are digital and media natives. Teachers can increase students' motivation by integrating digital and media literacy instruction, which is aligned with their z-generation characteristics.
Future world needs	Digital and media literacy are two essential skills for preparing students for future careers. Students who are digital and media literate are more likely to succeed in today's media-saturated worlds.

Table 2 revealed that teachers' intention to implement CML instructions based on their digital literacy skills is because of media proliferation, student characteristics and Z-generation, and future world needs. Data from interviews show that teachers are aware of the easy spread of media and information as a result of technological advancements. All four teachers stated during the interview that they need to improve their digital literacy skills to provide better CML instruction. They also emphasize how digital and media literacy can facilitate students develop their problem-solving, creativity, communication, and critical thinking skills. They consider students must learn to be wise digital media users and responsible media sharing participants. Similarly, all teacher participants believe that incorporating digital tools and information media into their lessons teaches students to perceive information and think critically about the whole picture.

Furthermore, all teachers see the importance of developing their digital literacy as urgent because they are teaching 21st century learners who are typically digital natives, as stated in earlier studies (Galik, 2020; Galik, Oprala, 2021). Instructions tailored to the characteristics of the learners will keep them engaged and motivated to learn. Furthermore, despite the fact that P.3 and P.4 are inadequately digitally literate, they agree that they must evaluate whether the learning methods they provide are suited to assisting students in achieving their learning goals and that they should always develop their digital literacy skills. This finding echoes earlier findings (Gonzalez-Perez, Ramirez-Montoya, 2022) explanation of the need for teachers to analyze and reflect in order to adapt their instruction to 21st century skills.

The teacher participants also agreed that incorporating digital and media literacy can assist students to learn essential skills necessary for their career paths, which will require them to use technological tools and access various media and information to research specific topics, communicate, interact, and improve their work efficiency. Moreover, all the teacher participants believe that those who are digitally and media literate are more likely to succeed in today's media-saturated worlds, which is consistent with previous research (Deja et al., 2021; Ugur, 2010). It is not apparent, then, that P.2 emphasized the importance of incorporating digital and media literacy into the school curriculum.

The second category is the normative component. The normative component characterizes how many individuals believe germane to what others anticipate them to carry out the desired manners (Ajzen, 1991). The interview results (see Table 3) revealed that social demands from schools, parents, and students were the most frequently reported impacts on teachers with varying levels of digital literacy to implement CML instructions.

All the teacher participants acknowledged CML has not been integrated into the school curriculum. As it was previously mentioned hence, P.2 stated that it is required for schools to incorporate digital and media literacy into their curriculum. Furthermore, while the government intends students to develop critical thinking and problem solving-skills, as well as digital and media literacy skills, the school supports implementation of the most important one. Not only the government and teachers recognize the significance of digital and media literacy, but so do parents and students.

The four teacher participants agree it is their responsibility to respond to parents' and students' expectations for the students' learning outcomes and the preparation for future education and career.

**Table 3.** Teachers' attitudes observed from the normative component

Categories	Social demand to implement CML Instructions
School and Curriculum	CML has not been integrated as the main focus in the curriculum. The government has been encouraging students to develop their 21st century



Parents	skills, as well as digital and media literacy. Parents expect teachers to be creative in their teaching by incorporating technology as well as CML learning. Parents also expect teachers assist students' development of their self-awareness and critical thinking skills in order for them to face the digital and media-free era.
Students	Digital native students have certain expectations regarding the use of technology in learning.

As a result, the teachers asserted they should be technologically literate. They believe that by becoming digitally literate, they can help their students develop their digital and media literacy skills, as well as other important informatics skills. Previous research (Koltay, 2011; Pratolo, Solikhati, 2021; Wing, 2006) found that teachers' digital literacy skills and practices affect students' abilities to gain digital and media literacy skills, as well as other crucial skills necessary in this age.

The third category is the control component. Table 4 shows how, with their diverse digital literacy skills, the teacher participants showed three categories influencing their attitudes toward implementing CML instructions.

**Table 4.** Teachers' attitudes observed from the control component

Categories	Factors influencing CML Instructions
Knowledge and Self-motivation	The ability of teachers in integrating technology in their instructions affects their ability to carry out CML instructions There is no teacher who believes that CML teaching is unnecessary.
Resource and Facility supports	Technology accessibility has become a critical concern for teachers in order for them to be competent of digital literacy and integrate media literacy into their instructions. The lack of workshops, seminars, and guidance in using technology for learning and generating CML skills can have a considerable impact on CML instructions.
Peers and community support	The availability of peers, family members or other people who are capable of using technologies and are willing to share and guide, influences the teachers' digital literacy skills and the frequency with which they teach CML.

CML instructions are important, according to the teachers. However, teachers' digital literacy skills limit their ability to effectively implement CML instructions. Similarly, they stated that updated technology, as well as credible and accessible information sources, could be favorable in CML integration. Furthermore, they stated they must always stay current with technology, so workshops, seminars, and other supports to develop their abilities in accessing and using technology for teaching are critical. The availability of digital technology professional development programs, as well as a supportive digital environment represented by support from institutions, peers, and communities, is essential for the growth of teachers' digital literacy skills (Fursykova et al., 2022). Although the teachers also mentioned having limited time and energy to learn due to excessive administrative tasks and other responsibilities, they admitted that supports to develop teachers' digital literacy skills is urgent. As a result, regardless of their preference in technology integration, teachers should become acquainted with various types of technology in order to teach CML more effectively.

#### 4. Results

This study focuses on understanding teachers' attitudes toward CML instructions based on their digital literacy skills in order to assist teachers and educational institutions in delivering enhanced CML instructions and preparing students for 21st century skills. Teachers' digital literacy skills should be developed so that they can effectively integrate CML instructions. Teachers should be digital and media literate in order to aid students develop their 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, creativity, collaboration, media literacy, and

engagement. Strenuous efforts to promote digital and media literacy skills, and also develop lesson plans with CML and 21st century skills as key components, would help teachers reflect how digital and CML could be implemented and integrated. Similarly, these initiatives allow teachers to consider the benefits and challenges of technology and media integration in classrooms. Furthermore, teachers must have sufficient media literacy competencies, learn some basic skills in using technology, and own pedagogical knowledge of how the technology can support their instructional strategies and present CML instructions effectively (Hobbs, 2017).

Moreover, teachers can model practices for improving their own digital literacy skills and integrating CML instructions. These practices can be done by assisting teachers in learning when, how, and why digital literacy skills are integrated for the development and betterment of the students' media literacy and 21st century skills. Besides, more teacher professional development programs focusing on transforming instructional practices to digital media learning in incorporating digital literacy skills and media understanding into EFL teaching would make integrating digital and media literacy easier. Schools' support and participation provide a significant impact on teachers' CML integration in their classrooms once they have learned the tools, applications, and pedagogies. Schools, parents, and communities that impact teachers' decisions must provide implementation support for developing teachers' digital literacy skills and integrating CML in the classrooms. Furthermore, teachers should have easy access to technology as well as resources and examples of successful CML instructions in order to improve their digital literacy skills. With such access and developed digital literacy skills, they are more likely to effectively integrate CML in teaching, allowing students to own digital and CML skills as well (Ugur, 2010).

This finding echoes the findings of the previous research (Atsoglu, Jimoyiannis, 2012; Fursykova et al., 2022), which found that personal support from school administrators influenced teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, this finding indicated that, when teachers received support from their school administrators, parents, and communities, they were ultimately integrating digital literacy into their instructions. The availability of technological devices and access to them were also mentioned to be able to affect teachers' attitudes positively that in turn drive them to implement digital and media literacy instructions. This is in line with the previous theories, which mentioned that the accessibility of specific technology as well as supportive digital environment has an important effect on the effective implementation of intentions into practice (Fursykova et al., 2022; Sadaf, Johnson, 2017; Tahir et al., 2021).

Future research can also identify specific intervention strategies that correspond with teachers' attitudes and may aid teachers' preparation for CML instruction as well as professional development programs to improve their skills in integrating CML into their teaching. Future research could look into whether these attitudes toward integrating CML instructions based on teachers' digital literacy skills translate into actual classroom use. To achieve more accurate results, it would be favorable to observe more classrooms implementing CML instructions. More comprehensive focus group discussions, and other documentation besides interviews.

## 5. Conclusion

This study sheds light on teachers' attitudes toward integrating CML based on their digital literacy skills. The study confirmed that the instructors are computer literate. However, not all instructors are digitally literate. Two participants have insufficient digital literacy skills, as evidenced by the teachers stumbling when using technology. Competent digital literacy teachers are enthusiastic about teaching CML skills. Meanwhile, teachers who are less digitally literate have negative attitudes toward teaching CML skills. As a result, these teachers' attitudes emphasize on the need for professional development programs for teachers to focus on facilitating digital and media literacy as well as 21st century skills to prepare for CML integration in classrooms, providing strong administrative support to integrate CML into school curriculum, and giving access to resources, media, and technology to make it easier for effectively incorporating CML.

Teachers are the catalysts of educational change; thus, teachers' competencies should be reviewed regularly in tandem with changes and reforms. The data from the interviews and observations show it is necessary to improve teachers' understanding and skills in digital literacy, as well as to boost motivation, in order to increase the number of teachers who recognize the significance of digital and media literacy. Teachers' lack of digital literacy expertise, as well as their lack of motivation to improve their digital literacy skills, can be viewed as a significant threat to introducing transversal skills, which

in turn can have a significant impact on the transition to a competence-based learning approach and content. Changing the situation necessitates systematic educational work, including the development of digital and media literacy didactics and methodologies, as well as the organization of training and professional development from various fields.

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## Personality Traits, Narcissism and TikTok Addiction: A Parallel Mediation Approach

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### Abstract

Short-form video apps have gained huge success and popularity in recent years. The addictive behavior towards these short-form video apps has not been fully explored yet. This study focused on the personality traits and narcissistic behavior of university students about whether they use TikTok or make a short-form video for getting attention to have self-esteem, need to belong, or need for admiration and how much time they spent on these social sites. The study focused to examine TikTok addiction by surveying 350 university students through a purposive sampling technique. The study found that a positive correlation exists between independent, dependent, and mediating variables. In addition to this, the results showed that only grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism have a direct effect on the TikTok addiction. On the other hand, the need for admiration has also a direct effect on TikTok addiction. For the specific indirect effect, neuroticism, which is a personality trait, has no indirect effect on the addition of TikTok through the mediators like need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem. This study highlights the contribution towards the media-related research that can be identified by the general public. Hence policymakers can make strategies for social media users to overcome addictive tendencies.

**Keywords:** TikTok addiction, narcissism, personality traits, short-form video, self-esteem, need to belong, need for admiration.

### 1. Introduction

With the help of short video making films, nowadays people are getting attention on TikTok where they can make 15 seconds videos by using different tools of editing and filters. This short film-making mobile application is a Chinese creation that has already gained momentum in the whole world (Schellewald, 2021, Yurieff, 2018). According to the google play store record, 2 billion+ users have downloaded TikTok worldwide (Schellewald, 2021). This shows that this short video mobile application has also gained popularity and people use it due to its vast and multiple functions of creating one's desire form of video while showing different kinds of activities. TikTok has provided a function of self-promotion but its addiction may cause psychological problems and further addiction to social networking sites has been associated with personality traits (Ho et al., 2017). The content of TikTok is based on music in which users just need to make videos and act on different dialogues and songs; subsequently, it expanded the user's tenacity.

A recent study has found the relationship between social media addiction and traits of personality of the users (Blackwell et al., 2017). They have found that the difference in the personality of individuals in terms of attachment can increase their knowledge and the potential level of addiction. Due to the increase in the means of communication and usage of social media,

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there is a dire need to analyze the situation according to the demands of the era. So nowadays it is common that people spend time on social networking sites that ought to spread different aspects of communication and information among people (D'Arienzo et al., 2019, Ryding, Kuss, 2020). Social media have been used by many organizations to communicate their messages and information among their users. Hence the success and usage of social media have depended on the phenomena of its usage as it is a platform that encourages learning and sharing information through its different features (Oh, Syn, 2015).

People use this short form of a video application for their self-promotion through various forms of filters and video editing tools that can cause addiction as this application has also offered its users some sort of customized content as per their preference (Blackwell et al., 2017; Fabris et al., 2020). Generally, social media is used to minimize social distances. Similarly, addiction to social networking sites can cause poor psychological, psychosocial, poor quality of educational attention as well as a decline in the quality of an individual's relationships (Ho et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2020). By doing communication on social media, it has made life easier, but it has made anxious people more insecure, and they seek reassurance in terms of their relationships. Life on social media gives chance to people to uncover their aspirations as well as their accomplishments to enormous quantities of individuals and consistently people who are high on narcissism are probably going to utilize social media for self-promotion (Burnay et al., 2015).

Personality traits such as neuroticism and extraversion are antecedent to addiction and excessive usage of social media as these two traits are likely to adopt or develop social media addiction excessively (Ho et al., 2017; Müller et al., 2016). So, by keeping this information, this study further aims to study the direct or indirect link of these two personality traits with the addiction to using TikTok. Although the short-form video application has soared in ubiquity, thus this extremely quick improvement has incited open worry about the danger of unreasonable use. The immediate impact of neuroticism via social networking media use and dependence hence utilizes neuroticism as a directing variable that presently cannot seem to be led. Exceptionally neurotic people might be sensitive to the social and specialized components because these components assist them with creating connections to short-shape video applications and satisfy the voids in their lonely lives. Hence there is a positive link between the satisfaction with life and trust among users and are significant phenomena with the basic connection, characteristics, and information sharing conduct on social media usage (Pour, Taheri, 2019).

This era has been marked by the growth of social or new media which is now trending under the title of new media. This form of media has been using by many people for many years as it is a unique way of sharing information under the title of infotainment. It has become a fundamental part of people's daily life as it has become a way to communicate and connect with other people for making lives better in the context of communication. Usually, people use social media via smartphones and laptops. Different people use different social media sites according to their needs and wants (Scott et al., 2018).

With the rapid development in technology and the field of programming software, many mobile applications have formed and are paying more attention to attracting the attention of their users. In the underlying phase of its usage, it begins from the necessities of target users and structure and features highlights that meet the prerequisites of their loyal users. At that point, it has connected with the procedure of growing with the market strategy thus involves a powerful piece of effective market plans (Oyibo, Vassileva, 2019). Hence the formation of the short-form mobile application, TikTok aimed to target the broader level of the young people market, and according to the needs of media users and trends this mobile application, design to produce useful and attractive features.

Social media has become the prevalent phenomena hence it has contributed its role while causing addiction in which personality trait such as extraversion and neuroticism has positively associated with the media use and internet addiction (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020, Tandon et al., 2020). Extraverted individuals tend to use social media for social interaction which can lead to addiction as they have craved for this interaction whereas neuroticism is also a predictor of addiction. Thus, people with high neuroticism may have high anxiety hence their attachment style may affect social media addiction (Gao et al., 2017).

Previous studies have identified two types of Narcissism. Grandiose (explain by high in self-esteem and attitude or arrogance) and vulnerable (explain by hypersensitive, more interested in controlling privacy). Narcissism, grandiose, and level of Facebook addiction is mediated by the

need for admiration and need to belong while Vulnerable narcissism is not found to be linked with Facebook addiction level (Casale, Fioravanti, 2018). Here narcissistic individuals use social media to post selfies that are associated with the motive of taking admiration from others because they have considered it a positive outcome for them.

The basic cognitive role of social media in terms of self-esteem tends to appear as a key role in addiction that may trigger core beliefs related to attributes of activating behavior. At this stage, sometimes having a large of followers on a social networking site may conclude as an addictive use of social media hence previous research have shown that person has low self-esteem may regard social media as a safe place where they can easily express themselves thus it has created a negative link between self-esteem and addiction while using of social media (Andreassen, 2015; Botou, Marsellos, 2018; Hong et al., 2014).

Social networking sites usually offer their users a platform to gain admiration from others as this level exhibiting self-promotion to gain attention hence can create a dependency on other users of social media (Andreassen et al., 2017; Casale, Fioravanti, 2018). The need to belong is a powerful, major, and incredibly unavoidable human inspiration, which has numerous effects on individuals' feelings, discernments, and practices. People high in the need to belong usually work more earnestly to increase fulfilling social relations. Given that the essential reason for cell phone use is to permit individuals to speak with one another (Wang et al., 2017). It is logical to accept that those teenagers who are high in the need to belong usually utilizes smartphones more than those teenagers who are low in the need belong which puts them at more danger of getting dependent on the usage of a smartphone (Newman, Smith, 2016).

Mouakket (Mouakket, 2018) by using two models which are Five-Factor Model and Expectation-Confirmation Model claimed that Extraversion has a positive influence while using Facebook and perceived usefulness while users having Neuroticism has a negative influence while using Facebook and perceived usefulness. This indicated that both extraversion genders male females found Facebook as a continuously influential platform and they continue to use Facebook if this platform influences their satisfaction level and if they found it useful.

The excessive use of social networking websites has reflected so many negative psychological impacts giving hype to factors that lead you towards the complex. One way or the other people fear that they have been missed out hence termed as FOMO (i.e fear of missing out) (Blackwell et al., 2017). The increase in social anxiety and change in habitual concerns has shown the negative side of social networking.

The emerging themes of short video applications tend to manage some aspects of issues as according to the literature review, studies discussed mobile applications and social websites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter. TikTok is a new form of mobile application and now by using this platform, users can easily discuss their views and show their skills by making 15 seconds' video. TikTok is a new platform for users as now it is also creating initiatives for creating awareness on different issues by generating videos. Hence this study also tends to remove a gap while discussing themes of TikTok such as generating 15 seconds video using different tools and its link with the addiction in terms of personality traits. Thus, this study further discusses gaps while focusing on the addiction of TikTok by correlating variables such as personality traits, narcissism, and self-esteem, which need to belong and admiration as a mediator (Hern, 2019; Omar, Dequan, 2020).

Self-determination theory initially focused on the perspective that in the context of social networking sites users have a diverse range of self-promotion hence they have a distinct possibility of affording these actions. This theory distinguishes different types of motivation that have based on reasons hence individual's motivation acts in a certain way to gain personal interests. The theory also argues that the inputs related to rewards and feedback help to enhance the autonomy for those actions that allow satisfaction in terms of psychological needs (Deci, Ryan, 2000). Self-Determination Theory contends that usually attachment style urges to discuss and relatable to individuals for their social association among people and a significant predecessor factor in social media networking platforms.

Uses and gratification theory describes a psychological perspective of individuals that how they use mass media and what they do with it (Katz et al., 1973). The perspective of this theory determines that what people do with media hence conceive individuals as goal-directed in response to certain needs. Further, these needs can be indicated as the motive for using specific a social media medium and in this case, if that certain medium fulfills a particular need of the social media



of the user, then it can create a factor of attachment. Based on the above literature following are the objectives. The first objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between Neuroticism, Extraversion, Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism, and the addition of the TikTok mobile application. The second objective of the study is to identify the mediating role of self-esteem, need to belong, and need for admiration between independent and dependent variables. The below hypotheses are constructed with the help of the above literature.

H1 – Extraversion has a direct effect on a) need to belong b) need for admiration c) self-esteem.

H2 – Neuroticism has a direct effect on a) need to belong b) need for admiration c) self-esteem.

H3 – Grandiose Narcissism has a direct effect on a) need to belong b) need for admiration c) self-esteem.

H4 – Vulnerable Narcissism has a direct effect on a) need to belong b) need for admiration c) self-esteem.

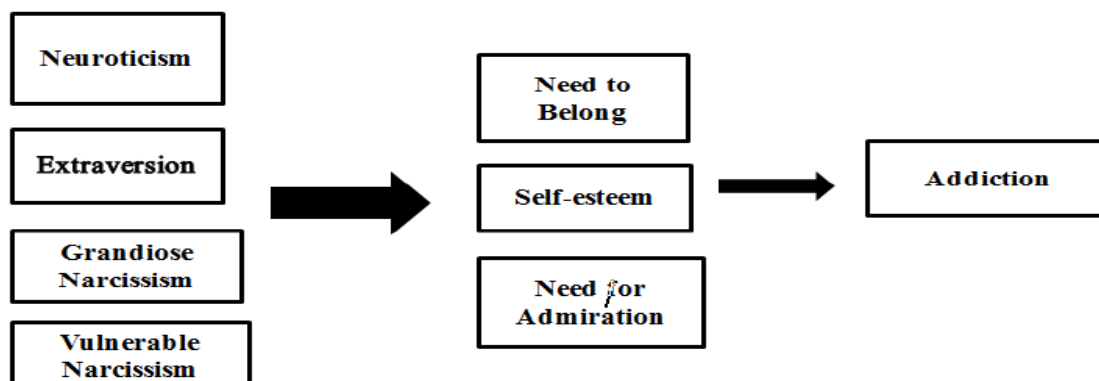
H5 – Need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem is a significant predictor of TikTok addiction.

H6a – Need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of Neuroticism and TikTok addiction.

H6b – Need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of extraversion and TikTok addiction.

H6c – Need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of Grandiose Narcissism and addiction of TikTok.

H6d – Need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of vulnerable Narcissism and TikTok addiction.



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Model

## 2. Materials and methods

The study is intended to validate an instrument related to a survey that assesses the addiction of TikTok among university students. The survey instrument was developed under the educational recommendations hence research literature had indicated several factors. The survey method measures the mediating role of variables such as self-esteem, need of belonging, and need for admiration between the independent variables which are Extraversion, Neuroticism, Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism, and the dependent variable which is addiction. Power analysis indicated the need for a sample size of 350 both males and females. Due to the inability to easily identify the entire population, true random sampling was not conceivable; because of that problem, purposive sampling had to be identified to test the model. Data had gathered from students aged 18-30, such as undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate with the help of a survey. Eight instruments have been employed for data collection in this research.

*Neuroticism.* This scale was measured by a five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and on which or how participants agreed or disagreed with the characteristics. The measure was adapted from a previous study (Benet-Martínez, John, 1998). The seven items in each sample have been created to composite indices, with higher or low scores indicating higher or low levels of neuroticism.

*Extraversion.* The scale was measured by a five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and on which or how participants agreed or disagreed with the characteristics. The measure was adapted from an existing study (Benet-Martínez, John, 1998) and the scale showed high reliability. The eight items in each sample have been created to composite indices, with higher or low scores indicating higher or low levels of extraversion.

*Grandiose Narcissism.* The scale was measured by the abbreviated version of the narcissistic personality inventory (Ames et al., 2006). This scale has used to assess grandiose narcissism NPI-16, originally by R. Raskin and H. Terry (Raskin, Terry, 1988) which is NPI-40. NPI-16 is shorter that has been designed to measure grandiose narcissism. It contains 16 pairs of items; each consisting of two conflicting proposals that is one reflects narcissism and the other non-narcissistic. But here the researcher had only taken 16 statements regarding Grandiose Narcissism characteristics and it has been measured by the five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Vulnerable Narcissism.* The scale was measured by the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (Hendin, Cheek, 1997). The scale is comprised of 10 items capturing narcissistic hypersensitivity such as “My feelings are easily hurt by ridicule or by the slighting remarks of others”. Participants have indicated the extent to which the items have characteristics of their feelings and behaviors, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

*The need to belong.* The scale was measured by a five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and on which or how participants agreed or disagreed with the characteristics. The measures were adapted from an existing study (Leary et al., 2013). The scale showed high internal consistency.

*Self-esteem.* The scale was measured by a five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and on which or how participants agreed or disagreed with the characteristics. The measures have been adapted from a previous study (Patchin, Hinduja, 2010). A high score indicates high self-esteem on the scale.

*Need for Admiration.* The scale was measured by a preliminary Italian version of the 11-item Admiration-seeking Behavior Scale (Brown, 1988) that has assessed the tendency to adopt behaviors motivated by the conscious or unconscious need to gain admiration from others. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = “never” to 5 = “always or almost always”).

*Short-form video app addiction.* The scale was measured by the 6-item scale developed by an existing study (Choi, Lim, 2016) namely the short-form video app addiction scale that has measured by the five-point Likert scale which is 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and on which or how participants have agreeable with the characteristics.

The researcher had developed a questionnaire and collected data through an online survey. Participants had approached by their classes’ respective teachers/instructors. To avoid a social desirability response set, participants did not inform about the specific focus of the study. Undergraduate students, graduate, and postgraduate filled surveys, and this process were continued until the minimum sample size of 350 had reached or surpassed.

### 3. Discussion

The goal of the study was to find out the reason behind the TikTok addiction with personality traits concerning mediators’ variables. The purpose of the study was to test a model that defined a preliminary relationship between personality traits and narcissism with the TikTok addiction so there is an underlying relationship between these variables that are mediated by self-esteem, needs for admiration, and need to belong. The present study has focused on the short film video application that focuses on how massively the video-sharing app TikTok has gained attention and has impacted the generations. As the objective was to investigate the relationship between independent variables such as Neuroticism, Extraversion, Grandiose and Vulnerable Narcissism, and the addition of the TikTok mobile application. To identify the mediating role of self-esteem, need to belong, and need for admiration between independent and dependent variables.

Previous studies have found that extraversion is a predictor of social media usage and its addiction which is also supported by the recent study (Choi, 2017; Choi et al., 2015; Hawi, Samaha, 2019; Islam et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2018; Moon et al., 2016; Nardis, Panek, 2019; Thelwall, Vis, 2017; Yu, 2019). On the other hand, neuroticism has the only predictor under some personality variables such as age hence it was not found predictor of social media which has also supported by the result of the recent study that neuroticism has not an indirect effect on the addition of TikTok

through the mediator of need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem (Blackwell et al., 2017; Ho et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2016). Grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism have a direct effect on the need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem. Previous researchers have found that there is a significant relationship between TikTok addiction, need to belong, need for admiration, and vulnerable narcissism but there is no direct relationship between them. Whereas there was no significant relationship between TikTok addiction need to belong, the need for admiration, and grandiose narcissism. There is an indirect relationship between grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism and TikTok addiction, mediated by the need for admiration, which is also supported by the present study (Casale, Fioravanti, 2018). Social media applications may differ in their features and tools hence it can be a possibility that other than Facebook; several other social media platforms can be satisfying narcissism's need (Andreassen et al., 2017; Casale, Fioravanti, 2018). There was a mediating role of self-esteem, need to belong, and need for admiration in extraversion, grandiose narcissism, and vulnerable narcissism but on the other hand, there was no mediating role of neuroticism. On the other hand, TikTok addiction has a significant and has an indirect effect on narcissism and self-esteem (Pantic et al., 2017). The results of the study also determined that self-esteem has a direct effect on TikTok addiction, but it is not significant. These results are in line with a recent study that self-esteem is not related to the time spent on social networking sites, even activities perform such as posting selfies on it are also related to self-esteem (Pantic et al., 2017). Self-esteem can indicate the usage of social media but not always as it depends on the different platforms. Social networking sites may perceive as a chance to provide a narcissist to increase its usage, but it has also expanded their behavior of getting admiration on it. Previous studies also showed that mediators such as the need to belong and the need for admiration were found to be correlated with the TikTok addiction (Casale, Fioravanti, 2018; Sicilia et al., 2016).

This study has several practical contributions or implications that can be useful for future research, practitioners, social media users, youth, teachers, and parents. This study further contributes and proves that many individuals may get personalization and entertainment directly from the effect of using TikTok. Therefore, findings can also contribute to media-related research that can be identified by the general public hence policymakers can make strategies for social media users to overcome addictive tendencies. The recent study has also some limitations as due to the pandemic situation of coronavirus, data was collected online, and it was purposive sampling. Future studies can take other variables such as attachment and relatedness. Future studies can also use another platform or by using the same platform, the sample size can be changed. Demographic variables can be varied and may also raise a concern so further, the effect of culture as a mediating role can be explored.

#### 4. Results

A correlation analysis was performed to check the correlation among neuroticism, extraversion, grandiose narcissism, vulnerable narcissism, need to belong, self-esteem, need for admiration, short-form video app. The results showed that neuroticism is positively related to extraversion ( $r = .54, p < .01$ ). The results showed that extraversion is positively related to grandiose narcissism ( $r = .53, p < .01$ ). The results showed that grandiose narcissism is positively associated with vulnerable narcissism ( $r = .57, p < .01$ ). The results showed that vulnerable narcissism is positively associated with the need to belong (NTB) ( $r = .56, p < .01$ ). The results showed that the need to belong (NTB) is positively associated with self-esteem ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ). The results showed that self-esteem is positively associated with the need for admiration (NFA) ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ). The results showed that the need for admiration is positively associated with short-form video applications (SFV App) ( $r = .64, p < .01$ ).

After performing the analysis in Smart PLS 3.2.9 version, the researcher found that extraversion has a direct effect on the need to belong and it was not significant ( $\beta = .097, P = .179$ ). Extraversion has a direct effect on the need for admiration, but it was not significant ( $\beta = -0.024, P = .0641$ ). The results have not supported the direct relationship of extraversion with self-esteem, but it was not significant ( $\beta = 0.179, P = 0.052$ ). Hence this result has not supported H1 in which extraversion has a direct effect on three mediators which are the need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem but is not significant.

Neuroticism has a direct effect on the need to belong and it was not significant ( $\beta = 0.009, P = 0.881$ ). Neuroticism has a direct effect on the need for admiration and it was not significant

( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $P = 0.058$ ). Neuroticism has a direct effect on self-esteem, and it was not significant ( $\beta = 0.071$ ,  $P = 0.347$ ). The result has not supported H2 in which neuroticism has a direct effect on three mediators which are the need to belong, the need for admiration, and self-esteem hence it is not significant.

**Table 1.** Correlations Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Neuroticism	1	.54**	.34**	.36**	.27**	.31**	.35**	.27**
2. Extraversion		1	.53**	.51**	.42**	.47**	.43**	.37**
3. Grandiose Nar			1	.57**	.49**	.46**	.65**	.49**
4. Vulnerable Nar				1	.56**	.49**	.64**	.52**
5. NTB					1	.55**	.51**	.37**
6. Self Esteem						1	.43**	.33**
7. NFA							1	.64**
8. SFV App								1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Grandiose Narcissism has a direct effect on the need to belong and it was significant ( $\beta = 0.227$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Grandiose Narcissism has a direct effect on the need for admiration, but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.409$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Grandiose Narcissism has a direct effect on self-esteem, but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $P = 0$ ). The result has supported H3 in which grandiose narcissism has a direct effect on three mediators which are the need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem hence it is significant.

Vulnerable narcissism has a direct effect on the need to belong, but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.388$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Vulnerable narcissism has a direct effect on the need for admiration, but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.391$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Vulnerable narcissism has a direct effect on self-esteem, but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.333$ ,  $P = 0$ ). The result has supported H4 in which vulnerable narcissism has a direct effect on three mediators which are the need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem hence it is significant.

The need to belong has a direct effect on TikTok addiction but it was not significant ( $\beta = 0.023$ ,  $P = 0.738$ ). The need for admiration has a direct effect on TikTok addiction but it was significant ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Self-esteem has a direct effect on TikTok addiction, but it was not significant ( $\beta = 0.095$ ,  $P = 0.111$ ). This result has only supported H5's one mediating variable which is the need for admiration, thus only the need for admiration is a significant predictor of TikTok addition.

**Table 2.** Direct Effect

Direct Effects	$\beta$	Mean	SD	T	P
				Statistics	Values
Extraversion → Need To Belong	0.097	0.096	0.072	1.345	0.179
Extraversion → Need for Admiration	-0.024	-0.027	0.052	0.467	0.641
Extraversion → Self Esteem	0.179	0.175	0.092	1.952	0.052
Grandiose Narcissism → Need to Belong	0.227	0.223	0.063	3.579	0
Grandiose Narcissism → Need for Admiration	0.409	0.413	0.06	6.88	0
Grandiose Narcissism → Self Esteem	0.168	0.168	0.069	2.436	0.015
Need to Belong → TikTok Addiction	0.023	0.024	0.069	0.335	0.738
Need for Admiration → TikTok Addiction	0.58	0.578	0.055	10.543	0
Neuroticism → Need to Belong	0.009	0.015	0.06	0.15	0.881

Neuroticism→Need for Admiration	0.092	0.091	0.048	1.896	0.058
Neuroticism→Self Esteem	0.071	0.078	0.075	0.941	0.347
Self Esteem→TikTok Addiction	0.095	0.101	0.06	1.598	0.111
Vulnerable Narcissism→Need to Belong	0.388	0.394	0.053	7.312	0
Vulnerable Narcissism→Need for Admiration	0.391	0.394	0.058	6.686	0
Vulnerable Narcissism→Self Esteem	0.333	0.335	0.078	4.293	0

After the direct effect when the researcher checked the indirect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediators of need to belong, need for admiration, and self-esteem. So, the researcher found that neuroticism has no indirect effect on the addition of TikTok through the mediator of need to belong. The researcher found that neuroticism has no indirect effect on the addition of TikTok through the mediator of the need for admiration ( $\beta = .053$ ,  $P = .06$ ). Neuroticism has no indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.007$ ,  $P = 0.494$ ). Thus, the results are not supported by H6a which is needs to belong, the need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of neuroticism and TikTok addition.

On the other hand, Extraversion has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of need to belong ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $P = 0.802$ ). Extraversion has also an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of the need for admiration ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $P = 0.802$ ). Extraversion has also an indirect effect on the addiction to TikTok addiction through the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.017$ ,  $P = 0.247$ ). Thus, the results are supported H6b which is the need to belong, the need for admiration, and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of extraversion and TikTok addition.

Grandiose Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of need to belong ( $\beta = 0.005$ ,  $P = 0.738$ ). Grandiose Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of the need for admiration ( $\beta = 0.238$ ,  $P=0$ ). Grandiose Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.016$ ,  $P = 0.201$ ). Results have shown and supported H6c need to belong, the need for admiration, and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of Grandiose Narcissism and addiction of TikTok.

Vulnerable Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of need to belong ( $\beta = 0.009$ ,  $P = 0.746$ ). Vulnerable Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of the need for admiration ( $\beta = 0.227$ ,  $P = 0$ ). Vulnerable Narcissism has an indirect effect on the addiction of TikTok through the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.032$ ,  $P = 0.154$ ). The results state that 6d is supported hence it has shown that the need to belong, need for admiration and self-esteem are mediating between the relationship of vulnerable Narcissism and TikTok addition.

**Table 3.** Specific Indirect Effects

Specific Indirect Effects	$\beta$	T Values	P Values
Extraversion→Need to Belong→TikTok Addiction	0.002	0.25	0.802
Grandiose Narcissism→Need to Belong→TikTok Addiction	0.005	0.335	0.738
Neuroticism→Need to Belong→TikTok Addiction	0	0.047	0.962
Vulnerable Narcissism→Need To Belong→TikTok Addiction	0.009	0.324	0.746
Extraversion→Need for Admiration→TikTok Addiction	-0.014	0.467	0.641
Grandiose Narcissism→Need for Admiration→TikTok Addiction	0.238	6.016	0
Neuroticism →Need for Admiration→TikTok Addiction	0.053	1.882	0.06
Vulnerable Narcissism→Need for Admiration→TikTok Addiction	0.227	5.47	0
Extraversion→Self Esteem→TikTok Addiction	0.017	1.159	0.247
Grandiose Narcissism→Self Esteem→TikTok Addiction	0.016	1.28	0.201
Neuroticism→Self Esteem→TikTok Addiction	0.007	0.685	0.494
Vulnerable Narcissism→Self Esteem→TikTok Addiction	0.032	1.426	0.154

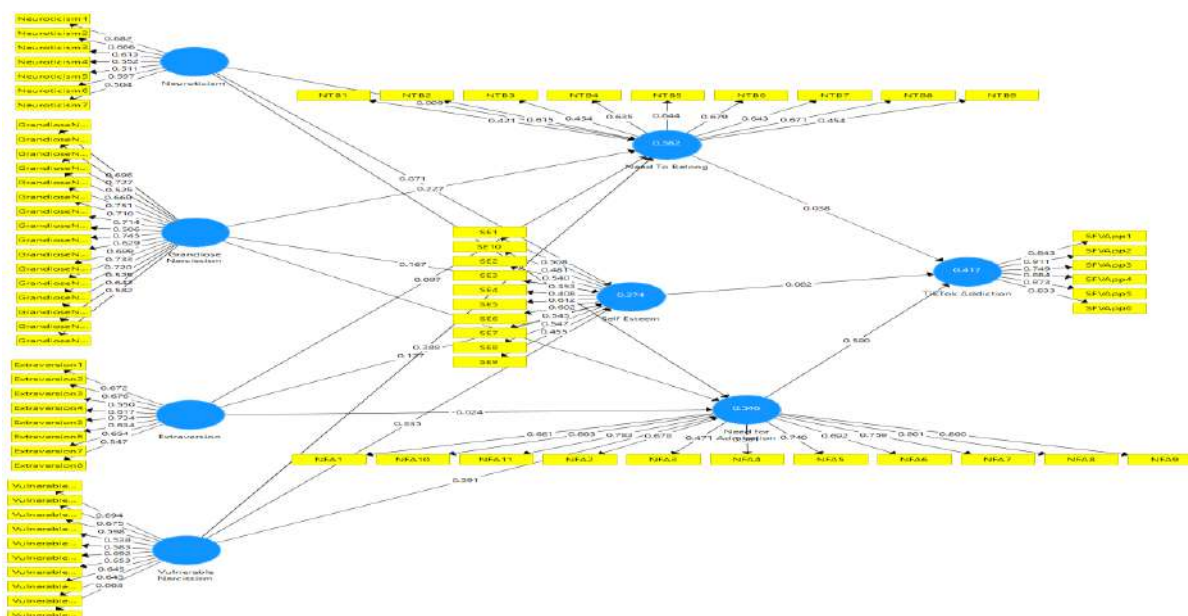


Fig. 2. Structural Model

## 5. Conclusion

The perception of the study aimed to develop a clear understanding of the topic under the affirmation to the TikTok's addiction. TikTok is popular with young people is also get affirmation from the participants. The present study discussed the basic association use of social media, personality traits, and narcissism with the mediating variables. The current study has drawn some indications that personality traits and narcissism have some reliability with the usage of social media and further findings play an important part while maintaining the crucial point of addiction. Thus, this study further discusses gaps while focusing on the addiction of TikTok by correlating variables such as personality traits, narcissism, and self-esteem, need to belong, and admiration as mediators. The study plays a significant role in studying some useful variables that depict the nature of human nature and its relation to the usage of social media. The insight way of learning some points regarding the influence of social media especially the focused platform of TikTok concluded that only Neuroticism which is a personality trait is not significantly related to the addiction of TikTok.

Future studies can also take some other variables just to compare them with the results of this study. The results can vary from the perspective of cultural or socio-cultural factors, but it has provided a way of observing this topic from a different perspective which can be useful as in Pakistan, the phenomena of TikTok is new. The suggested studies can build up strong actions of developing a useful stance on the topic as the focused topic derived and discussed constructive ways of using variables according to the situation and nature of the study. The future vision of the study intends to enable and can confront the projection of findings by measuring other variables to increase the factor of generalizability.

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## Role of Social Media in Perspective of Media Information Literacy During Pandemic Covid-19

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### Abstract

Emphasizing the significance of media information literacy, social media is playing a pivotal role in disseminating information and creating literacy among users. This research offers a momentous contribution to both researchers and policy makers as it sheds light on how social media creates awareness among masses during pandemic. This Study ensures to understand the relationship between social media and information literacy and also analyze the association between media literacy and youth behavior. The study employs quantitative research by using survey method to find out the behavior of youth towards disseminated information by social media regarding pandemic COVID-19. Convenience sampling benefits the research to draw a sample conveniently in relevance to social media usage and an exposure to the information of COVID-19. Theoretically, uses and gratification along with media literacy theory has been applied to analyze the current study which intends to focus the need to understand that how behavior of youth changes after getting exposed to the disseminated information regarding COVID-19 in terms of start taking precautions i.e wearing masks, using sanitizers, maintaining social distance. It clearly concludes that social media shows a great contribution in creating literacy among masses which eventually helps people to use precautionary measure against COVID-19.

**Keywords:** social media, media information literacy, Covid-19, youth.

### 1. Introduction

Internet has transformed communication and always been a source of information for people. Internet is a place where people can find everything what they need. Internet transmits data formed through web based social networking sites i.e. Facebook and Instagram through web enabled devices to large number of people (Westcott, 2008). Globally number of people using internet is 57 percent of the total population and because of that there is lot of consumption of social media which leads to consumption of different content social media sites related to any topic. In Pakistan there are 76.38 million people who are using internet (Kemp, 2020).

Social media is a term used for all the interactive websites, apps and social networking sites which allows the user to produce, share and consume content and to interact with other people instantly. Social media allows people to connect with the world through internet (Fuchs, 2021).

In support of the above argument, the growth of social media influences the way people think, behave and perceive the information what they want to perceive. In social media, there is bundle of information which can be found easily on different Facebook and Instagram pages. In Pakistan, social media has seen a growth despite the lack of interest and resources. Now almost all TV stations have online websites and also YouTube channels for its digital citizens. Social media is a great and instant source of information for the people. Education and awareness can be

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promoted through social media. Social media plays an important role in bringing global information into one place which helps the people to understand what is happening in the world (Hussain, 2020).

Furthermore, facebook and instagram hugely followed by the youth in Pakistan. There are 37.70 million Facebook users which is largest of all the social media apps usage in Pakistan which is 90.37 people of the total population and Instagram which has been used by 3.2 percent people of the total population in 2020 (Napoleoncat, 2020). In relevance to the study, the researcher analyzes the content of different pages on Facebook and Instagram. The reason for selecting these pages is their huge subscribers.

Pakistan has seen a wide growth in internet and its importance is increasing day by day. Every information is available for the people on internet. People can consume, produce and share information easily and become more aware about the current affairs. Many social media apps and websites are developing day by day to ease the flow of information and business. Internet has also increase the trend of freelancing and working on different social media apps for ease of people (Wolcott, 2020).

Media information literacy defines as the set of skills to be used for using consuming digital content by using information communication technologies and social media apps. It is very important to understand the content written in social media and to be used for learning, work and also to get literate. The youth develop the skills which in turn help them to be more capable than other in consuming digital technologies and also in understanding content in the social media (Livingstone, 2020).

Media information and literacy has always been seen with two perspectives one as a consumer of information and the other as producer of information. Being a media literate, it is important to identify the information in social media either it is worth sharing or not because we are now also the producers of information so we should know what is the context, motives and source of the particular information then we can be called as literate in digital age (Koslow, Stewart, 2021).

Media information literacy gives people knowledge and skills to understand the content disseminated by social media. As a consumer of information, it's very important that people should know about the different contexts i.e. (social, historic and economic) of information to interpret and make informed judgments. Being information and media literate helps the people to understand the hidden message in the communication and to effectively evaluate the content. This helps the people to know whether information is authentic or not and sharing with others (Moto et al., 2018).

In this study we are taking media and information literacy from consumer perspectives to find out whether the disseminated information has created the literacy among youth or not.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced COVID-19 to be a pandemic when it turned out to be certain that the illness was severe and it was spread rapidly over a wide region. COVID-19 is an infectious virus that that spreads in general through droplets of saliva from the nostrils when an infected person coughs or sneezes (WHO, 2020).

Spread of COVID-19 in China firstly and then other countries, it is confirmed to have reached Pakistan on 26 February 2020, when a student in Karachi tested positive upon returning from Iran. On 18 March, cases had been enlisted in all areas of Pakistan. Pakistan has seen a peak of COVID-19 in Month of May 2020 to July 2020 (Shabbir, 2020). Government of Pakistan has taken various steps towards pandemic for instance imposed different forms of lockdown in the country, making mask and sanitizers compulsory for every citizen, announced different economic packages for poor people and also financial bonuses for the front line workers and use technology to create awareness like developing different apps for citizens which help them in being aware and information literate about COVID-19 (Shaikh, 2020).

Youth can be defined as the period between childhood and adult age particularly persons between the age of 18 to 30 (Belmonte, McMahan, 2019). The study focuses on youth as participants in this research. Social media is the only platform that is being used by everyone, particularly youth in the time of pandemic and lockdown as everyone had too much interaction with social media. Youth particularly use social media i.e. Facebook and Instagram in the time of pandemic and lockdown because everyone was available at home with their mobile phones. There is bombardment of information social media sites regarding COVID-19 and to be media literate in this digital age required skills to identify the source of information and also to evaluate the media texts.

The study reveals the role of social media in the dissemination of information and creating literacy in perspective of media information literacy regarding the COVID-19. It also analyzes that how media is being used to create awareness and literacy among youth of Pakistan regarding COVID-19. Further, it also evaluates that disseminated information by social media regarding COVID-19 and its preventive measures affect the behavior of youth in terms of taking precautionary measures. The study focuses on two social media apps i.e. (Facebook and Instagram) on basis of huge number of subscribers. Pakistan has been able to incite a growth-oriented, advanced society with web and social media usage blow up in numbers and scale. There are 37 million social media users in Pakistan (Kemp, 2020).

Moreover, the study helps in tracing information provided by social media sites. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the role of social media in providing literacy and information regarding COVID-19 among youth.

- To find out the relationship between the behavior of youth and the literacy provided by social media regarding COVID-19.

The study evaluates the impact of social media in providing information and literacy regarding COVID-19 among youth and to evaluate the behavior of youth after receiving such news and information regarding COVID-19 on social media. The study contributes to the existing literature in the perspective of media and information literacy. The study also helps in tracing information disseminated by the social media sites in order to educate people regarding the global spread of COVID-19. The study also analyzes the behaviors of youth in terms of taking precautionary or preventive measures to avoid COVID-19 after reading such information on social media.

## 2. Materials and methods

A reviewed study focuses how social media platforms are educating people in terms of mental health problems during Covid-19. It highlights the role of social media in creating awareness towards coronavirus-related newsfeeds and disclosing death numbers which considerably results in global mental health issues i.e anxiety and panic. The study also dictates that social media is creating literacy but also disseminating excessive information that creates anxiety and panic among people (Abbas et al., 2018).

Social media is creating literacy among people regarding the rapid spread of COVID-19 and also educating people about its preventive measures to combat the disease. Many studies on COVID-19 have disclosed the irresponsible act of social media producers by spreading false information which is damaging the health systems and affecting the mental health of social media users (Radwan, 2020).

Despite the emergent body of literature examining social media in the context of information literacy and mental health of its users, few insights have been observed in respect of people's contribution towards social media platforms that can enhance public health awareness by providing them information regarding precautionary measures against COVID-19. Undoubtedly, coronavirus has aggressively affected people worldwide which shows considerable impacts on our health care systems. A lack of research has also been noticed for the role of social media campaigns on public protection against the COVID-19 in developing countries (Al-Dmour et al., 2020).

A study "Identifying Credible Sources of Health Information in Social Media: Principles and Attributes" says that social media is a great source of collecting and consuming information about different issues in the society and world. In today's age there is excess of information on social media and to deal with Social media provides different tools through which people can search the desired the information. Researcher proposed that social media is like an ocean from where different species are living; some are beneficial and some are harmful for the people same goes for Social media where we can find bundles of information but not every information is necessary for people. People filter the information and consume what they searched for (Kington et al., 2021).

A study "Digital Entrepreneurship via Sustainable Online Communication of Dentistry Profession, Oradea, Romania: A Longitudinal Analysis" says that social media is vast medium and source of information. There are different applications and websites that provide different information to the people. They study found that social media is not regulated by government or any other private authority for controlling the content. In the pandemic situation social media have not played the role of responsible and accurate medium of information in the past. Youth

consumed the information on social media regarding pandemic without knowing the source of information which led them to panic (Constantin, Kavoura, 2022).

Another reviewed study on the role of digital transformation addresses that social media tools are used to create awareness among people and highlights the importance of different issues in the society. Social media has the wider reach to audience therefore more people can be informed about latest happening in the society and the world. Social media makes people informed about different diseases and their cure and also what to do in the situation of pandemic as people make less use of print and electronic media in pandemic so the role of social media becomes more in terms of informing and guiding people about pandemic (Elgohary, 2022).

A study “Editor’s introduction: Media and information literacy research in countries around the Baltic Sea” says that media information literacy is always important to identify source of information and to critically evaluate the text. In digital age, media education or media and information literacy has changed and now we have to tell the youth about media dangers; that is to make them able to critically evaluate the information and not to think that every source of information is credible. One has to identify source of information, motives and context of particular information (Jaakkola, 2020).

The study addresses that social media literacy is a central resource of information and entertainment for youth in their everyday lives. The reviewed literature focuses on a new standardized instrument to investigate the online behavior of youth in terms of relating components of social media literacy and aspects of social contexts. The results show that adolescents’ social media literacy has a higher level of impact on their education and online participatory behavior which clearly indicates the influential role of youth and their affected behavior while using social media. (Festl, 2021).

A study “*Media and information literacy in news feeds and education*” says that media and information literacy is very important for creating, disseminating and consuming information on social media especially for youth. Being social media literate, the youth can be more socially responsible. They will think thousand times before posting any information that can mislead the people. Misinformation has adverse effects especially in situation of pandemic therefore the youngster’s needs to be media literate for producing the information and also to be selective in dealing with abundant information (Nygren, 2018).

A study on “What predicts adolescents’ critical thinking about real-life news? The roles of social media news consumption and news media literacy” states that adolescents are becoming the most enthusiastic social media news consumers. The study aims to find out the relation between social media consumption and news media literacy along with critical thinking to make sense of real life news stories. The findings indicate that there is a unique relationship of social media consumption and news media literacy in predicting critical thinking for a real-life sense of news stories. The present study also relates with the reviewed research in order to find out the relation between social media news consumers and media literacy in respect to the disseminated information regarding COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights mental health problems of social media consumers when they get exposed to the disseminated information regarding high death numbers due to COVID-19 and the outbreak spread globally as it creates anxiety and panic among people according to Kong et al., 2019.

A study on “*COVID-19: immunopathogenesis and Immunotherapeutics*” on COVID-19 is an infectious disease that spreads from one person to another through sneezing or coughing. Its structure is changing day by day due to which it causes increased number of deaths in the world. The current structure and outbreak of COVID-19 is very dangerous and it’s a worldwide emergency which needs to be controlled through proper communication and preventive measures. COVID-19 patients develop stress as they exposed to multiple sources of information especially social media. To control this global pandemic effectively everyone have to behave according to instructions of government and their doctors (Zhang, 2020).

“*A Comparative Study on the Clinical Features of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Pneumonia With Other Pneumonias*” says that COVID-19 symptoms relates to Pneumonia which is why sometimes it’s difficult for the doctors for doing a treatment. A severe case of COVID-19 has to be dealt carefully as it has sometime other symptoms of diseases as well. The disease spreads from one person to another and from one place to another and it have different structures and shapes in different countries. There are several medicines that are given to COVID-19 patients for increasing

their immunity but still only be controlled if people apply preventive measures and stop travelling unnecessary (Gao, 2020).

Uses and gratification theory relates to the current research study as people especially youth use the social media for the sake of information and entertainment on the different issues. They have different interests and motive of how to consume that information and what content they find credible. The theory seeks to determine the relationship between youth and their usage of social media and how it affects the behavior of youth after getting exposed to the information of their own choice (Alhabash, Ma, 2017).

Social media has allowed the youth to consume the content from various mass medium outlets. They can use Facebook, Instagram or other networking site to consume information of their own choice according to Canfell et al., 2020. The theory study provides strong statement that youth can have access to various source of information on social media and they really feel the sense of being aware and connected to the situation which leads to gratification of their needs for information.

Media and Literacy relates to the current research study as youth uses the social media more and they encounter the information bombardment more than other people. They find every piece of information on the social media as authentic and think that it makes them literate because they mostly like the content from their favorite journalist (Prandi, Primiero, 2022). The study seeks to determine the relationship that how youth make the decision of information filtering and the meaning they get out of them. The theory provides the strong statement that youth can use the media and evaluate the information instead of media using them.

People especially youth mostly don't verify or cross check the information they consumed on social media; they share the information to other peoples or in a group which can lead to misinformation and can create panic in the people if it has that much importance according to Walling et al., 2022. The theory study provides the strong statement that being media literate is very important to differentiate between information and misinformation; during global issue like Covid-19 pandemic, people have to rely on the media to receive information and youth use the social media more so that's where media literacy comes to helps them filter and verify the information.

H1. The usage of social media increases media literacy among youth regarding COVID-19.

H2. There is a difference between male and female towards media literacy.

H3. There is a positive relationship between media literacy and behavior of youth regarding COVID-19.

Quantitative research has been employed in the study with survey method. It uses convenience sampling to conveniently draw a sample of youth who are social media users and gets an exposure to the information of COVID-19.

RQ1. Does the usage of social media increase media literacy among youth regarding COVID-19?

RQ2. Is there a positive relationship between behavior of youth and literacy provided by social media regarding COVID-19?

### 3. Discussion

The study highlights the role of social media in providing information and literacy among youth. The study explores the behavior of youth in terms of adopting preventive measures after reading posts on social media regarding the global spread of COVID-19 (Haque, 2013). In this study majority of the respondents agree that they use social media for consuming and sharing information and follow the pages that posts regarding COVID-19 with the intent to read the content for consuming and sharing information on social media and majority of participants commenting on different posts of social media regarding COVID-19 (Miller, Barlett, 2012).

The present study highlights that information disseminated by social media has created awareness among youth. Youth believe that social media provide information regarding global spread of COVID-19 and literate them about the sensitivity of disease (Livingstone, 2004). The study shows that information disseminated by social media not only educate but also create awareness regarding the sensitive disease of COVID-19 and also inform people about the preventive measures (i.e. maintaining social distance, avoid social gathering, using sanitizer) that are important to adopt in this COVID-19 situation (Koltay, 2011).

In relation with a reviewed study, the current research highlights that behavior of youth affected after reading content and consuming disseminated information by social media regarding

COVID-19. It depicts that youth start maintaining social distancing after reading different posts on social media. Majority of the participants also agree to the statement that they always wear mask after consuming information disseminated by social media regarding COVID-19 (Ittefaq et al., 2020). The results show that information disseminated by social media also creates hype among youth and they become more panic by reading the content on social media. Majority of the participant agrees that they started feeling fearful after knowing about the figures of COVID-19 patients (Abbas et al., 2021).

The present study also highlights that behavior of youth affected after reading content and consuming disseminated information by social media regarding COVID-19. It depicts that youth start maintaining social distancing after reading different posts on social media. Majority of the participants also agree to the statement that they always wear mask after consuming information disseminated by social media regarding COVID-19. The results show that information disseminated by social media also creates hype among youth and they become more panic by reading the content on social media (Gancho, 2017). Majority of the participant agrees that they started feeling fearful after knowing about the figures of COVID-19 patients.

The results of the study relate to our existing literature review “*Role of Social media*” believes that social media makes people informed about the diseases and they become more socially responsible in pandemic (Al-Dmour et al., 2018). As people especially youth dependent on social media for consuming and sharing information in COVID-19, they become more literate and aware about the situation and global spread of COVID-19.

In relation the reviewed study, “*Media and information literacy in news feeds and education*” believes that social media has always been important in pandemic or widespread disease as people become dependent on social media for news and information related to diseases (Garcia et al., 2013). Being literate helps the youth to identify the source, motives and context of information related to pandemic. So, the study highlights that majority of participants get to know the spread of COVID-19 and conditions of hospital due to social media (Nygren, 2018).

*RQ1. Does the usage of social media increase media literacy among youth regarding COVID-19?*

Social media play role in providing literacy among youth regarding COVID-19. The results of the study show that the usage of social media helps in educating youth regarding the global spread of COVID-19. They become more aware about the intensity of the disease due to information disseminated by social media. Social media educate them about the preventive measures to avoid COVID-19 (Brady, 2010). Social media helps the youth in creating literacy that how to remain safe from COVID-19. They get more informed about the different cures to avoid COVID-19 and remain safe from numerous unsafe treatment methods to remain safe from COVID-19. Social media play an active role in educating youth regarding hospital conditions and increasing figures of death toll due to COVID-19. Information disseminated by social media helps the youth to become more sensible and literate in COVID-19. As cited in the above literature review from the study says that media information literacy is always important to identify source of information and to literate people regarding several issues happening around (Festl, 2021).

*RQ2. Is there a positive relationship between behavior of youth and literacy provided by social media regarding COVID-19?*

The study finds out that there is a strong and positive relationship between the behavior of youth and media literacy. The information provided by social media affects the behavior of youth regarding COVID-19 as they start taking preventive measures in order to avoid the disease. They become more responsible and adopt all precautionary i.e. (maintaining social distance, wearing mask, using sanitizer) after getting to know about the situation of COVID-19 in country (Alhabash, Ma, 2017). The results shows that majority of participants start following government directions and doctor advice of avoiding social gatherings as it is harmful in COVID-19. Youth consume and share the information regarding COVID-19 on social media in right direction but social media has also created panic among youth regarding outbreak spread of COVID-19. Youth often get worried to know the global and fast spread of COVID-19 and to know about the increasing number of victims, youth start strictly implements on advice of not going into rush or in different social and public gatherings due to information disseminated by social media (Radwan, 2020).

#### 4. Results

The study reveals the role of social media in the dissemination of information and creating literacy among youth regarding COVID-19. It also analyzes the relationship between behavior of youth and media literacy regarding COVID-19 in terms of adopting precautionary measures to avoid COVID-19. The study highlights the difference between male and female behaviors towards the literacy provided by social media relevant to COVID-19.

The results of the study are given below:

**Table 1.** Correlations test between usage of social media and media literacy

Correlations			
		<i>Usage of social media</i>	<i>Media Literacy</i>
Usage of social media	Pearson Correlation	1	.202**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Media Literacy	Pearson Correlation	.202**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2.** Correlations test between media literacy and behavior of youth

Correlations			
		<i>Media Literacy</i>	<i>Behavior of youth</i>
Media Literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.162*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
	N	300	300
Behavior of youth	Pearson Correlation	.162*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	300	300

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to the results of the above table, the r value .202 indicates a positive relationship between usage of social media and media literacy. The corresponding p.000 is less than 0.05 which shows that there is a significant relationship between both variables and concludes that the usage of social media increases the literacy among youth regarding COVID-19. Hence, the results show that there is a large size effect between the variables and the hypothesis has been proven that social media increases the literacy among youth regarding COVID-19.

By analyzing the above table, the findings show the r value .162 indicating a positive relationship between the behavior of youth and media literacy regarding COVID-19. The corresponding p value .018 is less than 0.05 which means that there is a significant relationship between both variables and it concludes that the behavior of youth changes by the literacy provided by social media regarding COVID-19 in terms of taking precautionary measures to avoid COVID-19. Hence, there is a large size effect between the variables and the hypothesis has been proven that there is a strong and positive relationship between behavior of youth and media literacy regarding COVID-19 in terms of adopting precautionary measures to avoid COVID-19.



**Table 3.** STD deviation of Media Information Literacy (MIL)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MIL	Male	186	24.7581	2.35511	.17269
	Female	114	24.8947	2.64196	.24744

**Table 4.** Independent Samples Test of Media Information Literacy (MIL)

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
MIL	Equal variances assumed	1.402	.237	2.466	228	.042	1.3667	.29354
	Equal variances not assumed			2.463	218.25	.051	1.3667	.30174

According to the results, the p value under sig. (2-tailed) .051 which is less than 0.05 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between male and female behaviors towards the literacy provided by social media regarding COVID-19. The behavior of male is different than female towards literacy provided by social media regarding the pandemic  $t(2.463) = p < .05$ ,  $d = 0.29$  which dictates that there is a difference but the effect size is small.

## 5. Conclusion

Social media, media information literacy and behavior of youth have strong positive correlation (Khan, Idris, 2019). Social media disseminates information and in the perspective of media and information literacy, social media has created awareness and literate the youth regarding COVID-19 which in turn changes the behavior of youth i.e. wearing masks, maintaining social distancing and use sanitizer as preventive measures to remain safe from COVID-19. The study concludes that the social media has created literacy among youth regarding COVID-19 and the information disseminated by the social media changes the behavior of youth regarding COVID-19 (Akindehin, 2011). The study also indicates that youth get panic and feel fear to know about increasing cases of COVID-19 so they start using precautionary measures for safety against this pandemic.

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## Visualization in Learning as a Factor in the Development of Motivation for Self-education of Adults

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### Abstract

The global trend of digitalization of all spheres of human life significantly changes the requirements for professional competencies of employees of modern organizations implementing the latest technologies. Digital technologies are constantly evolving, the total costs for them are growing, which means that the demand for workers with both digital technology skills and skills combining cognitive abilities and behavioral aspects is increasing. Realizing this, organizations are actively using employee training programs in the workplace. The data obtained during a series of surveys of over 350 employees who were trained at corporate universities or specialized centers were collected from 2019 to 2021, the results contain information about the problems of adult vocational training in the system of corporate universities or specialized centers: firstly, employees have a low level of motivation (there is no desire and emotional involvement in training); secondly, employees have difficulties with applying the acquired knowledge and skills in the practice of activities, and, finally, one of the key difficulties is a decrease in the level of application of the skill of processing and analyzing information that was presented as part of the training. All these survey data confirmed our earlier studies on the effectiveness of using visualization techniques as a form of working with information in the process of teaching people of different ages. In this regard, in this paper, a study of corporate learning processes based on visualization is conducted, which is an effective learning tool and contributes to the development of digital skills of employees.

**Keywords:** digitalization, digital skills, digital literacy, visualization, corporate training, information technology, e-learning, intellectual capital, adult education, modern educational technologies, student personality.

### 1. Introduction

In the conditions of constant evolution of digital technologies and progressive innovative development of organizations, employees should be able to adapt to new ways of organizing activities, in other words, develop existing skills and acquire new ones. Now it requires not only the ability to work with information technologies, search for and use the necessary information, create content, but also critical thinking, the ability to online cooperation and online communications, because the COVID-19 pandemic forced not only personal events to be transferred online in a short time, but also organizations to switch to remote work format (Ciarli, et al., 2021). As a driving force, digital technologies are changing the economy, creating new industries and spheres of activity, changing the internal environment of an organization in which intellectual capital is the

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basis of competitive advantage. Organizations are changing their business models by introducing digital applications, big data analytics, cloud technologies and others, while employees with the skills to work with these technologies are changing the organization of work and as a result, the organization is evolving. The necessary skills of employees that contribute to the digital evolution of the organization should include the ability to creativity and innovation, initiative, logical and creative thinking, the ability to manage organizational changes, readiness to gain new experience. (Sousa, Rocha, 2019). Realizing the need to increase the digital skills in demand, organizations strive not only to hire specialists with the necessary competencies, but also to organize corporate training of employees, using the latest technologies for this, one of which is visualization. Visualization in the corporate training system allows you to optimize the data perception system due to its structuring and clarity (the use of symbols, signs, sketching and infographics), maximize cognitive skills through constant work with abstract thinking, various forms of generalizations, which generates interest and the desire to apply the data in practice. Visualization as a form of data representation in the corporate training system allows you to analyze data as systematically as possible, easily explain all the changes made to the algorithms of work. The visualized data easily interprets the logic of any process, it is quite simple to manage them – to change and transform if necessary, in addition, they are reproduced as simply and accurately as possible in any new environment.

The need for visualization of educational information is dictated, among other things, by the fact that modern adults are maximally focused on visual perception, therefore, difficulties arise in processing information during the educational process, which leads to an increase in errors and a decrease in the percentage of those who completed training and passed the final exams. The depicted data makes any information much more accessible and understandable, since the visualization format can be very diverse – graphs, diagrams, infographics, posters, videos, intelligence maps, pictographic images, diagrams, visualized instructions and collages. Visualization allows the materials provided to students to be reflected in dynamics and interrelation, which also contributes to their more complete assimilation. From the point of view of the teacher, among the key goals of visualization in corporate training are the following: correct and clear presentation of the material, compliance with the formal logic of presentation of data or algorithms of work, management decisions, as well as the use of visualization of information for interpretation or explanation of the text, data structuring.

Also, the teacher studies in more detail all the data that needs to be presented in a visual format, which allows him to analyze the material more deeply from new points of view and aspects. From the point of view of the student, among the key goals of using visualization in working with educational information are the following: clearer and deeper analytical work on the topics discussed, the search for common points of intersection among different opinions, theories, approaches. In addition, any imaginative information (when images and signs are invented by the student himself) makes it possible to better assimilate information, store it in long-term memory and fit it into the inner picture of the world. Visualization maximally contributes to the in-depth study of any innovative ideas by students, helps to present them to others, understand them at the level of logic, accept them at the emotional and value level. It is visualization that allows you to "grasp" the key points of ideas, learning in general, the possibility of applying the acquired knowledge and skills in practice, and also allows you to maintain concentration and focus of attention by maintaining interest. Visually presented data makes it easy to switch from one discussed issue to another, which also increases the effectiveness of training.

Currently, there are quite a large number of ways to use visualization and explain its effectiveness in terms of obtaining the final result in the form of the possibility and desire to apply the acquired skills and knowledge in work practice. Nevertheless, nowadays adult education is becoming more individualized, the "pedagogy of subjectivity" is becoming relevant, when it is important to build a route and trajectory of learning taking into account the individual characteristics of information processing. Naturally, it is impossible to take into account all the individual characteristics and adapt to each student, but there are current trends in working with visual information and using visualization, taking into account the style of thinking and the specifics of mental representations ("casts of information").

Also, the use of visualization during training allows teachers, trainers to prepare and explain the material more efficiently, especially if it is overloaded with diagrams, algorithms, complex terms and abstract systems.

Thus, the analysis of the personal characteristics of students will allow, on the one hand, to use visual material more efficiently in teaching, on the other hand, it will increase the proactivity, awareness and degree of motivation of students and teachers.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research materials devoted to the use of visualization in adult education in the corporate education system as a technique that promotes the development of their desire for further self-education are based on a number of theoretical positions, the analysis of which contributed to the selection of materials and the construction of the logic of the study.

1. The hierarchical theory of successful intelligence R. Sternberg ([Sternberg, 1996](#)), which includes a combination of analytical and practical abilities and creativity. Successful intelligence allows a person with an active position to transform and adapt the environment to achieve their goals. The criterion of successful intelligence is the presence of significant personal achievements due to the use of one's intellectual potential. The author describes intelligence from three interrelated positions: the inner world, the existing empirical experience and the external selective context, which allows to correlate the experience and positions of the inner world with external conditions.

2. The theory of mental representations by A.P. Lobanov ([Lobanov, 2010](#)). The author notes that human intelligence is a mental experience that allows you to organize mental representations of varying degrees of complexity and formation. This is a system that exists in dynamics, based on mental representations, which are organized as dynamic systems that can be activated by external conditions (cognitive tasks) or internal cognitive experience (curiosity, the desire to learn new things). Which leads to variability in the cognitive strategies used.

3. R. Gregory's ideas ([Gregory, 1970](#)) that perceptual constructs arising on the basis of polysensory and mnemonic are combined into independent constructs that influence the possibilities of application and development of intelligence.

4. The mechanisms of perceptual learning, highlighted by E. Gibson ([Gibson, 1975](#)): abstraction, filtering and indirect mechanisms of attention. The analysis and differentiation of promising constructs are carried out by abstracting (generalization of the received information into mental constructs) and filtering (separation of insignificant information). Indirect attention mechanisms allow you to keep focus on a specific object, subject, task. There are three components of perceptual learning: active perception, action and cognitive (research) activity. Perceptual learning and development are connected due to the fact that the subject of learning develops the ability to independently extract the necessary information from experience and thereby learn in the future. Learning through perception allows the student to receive information in the format of completed perceptual constructs and to learn in the form of assimilation of a certain mental experience through observation. This allows you to learn specific concepts and algorithms, which is relevant for corporate training, which is often implemented in the format of specific instructions, which is significant for a person, since he often thinks within specific categories.

5. Ideas of A.N. Leontiev ([Leontiev, 2000](#)) about the development of personality. The formation of the trajectory of a person's individual development is determined by his effective connections in the environment: the ability to establish contacts, hear the interlocutor, work in a group, «read» the nuances of what is happening in the environment, as well as the ability to implement existing practical experience and norms of behavior in various situations.

6. V.I. Andreev's concept ([Andreev, 2013](#)) self-development-oriented learning is based on the idea that any educational processes should, first of all, be based on students' awareness of their value and significance, understanding of the unlimited personal and professional potential, on the possibility of realizing it within the framework of creative freedom. The author calls self-management, self-knowledge and the ability to interact with the educational environment one of the basic criteria of self-development. Andreev notes in his works that at certain moments of accumulation of quantitative changes in the personality's «I» after interaction with the external environment, a qualitative transition occurs, after which the development of the personality, its desire for learning, cognition, interaction begins to be determined by itself, its internal conditions and needs.

7. The concept of self-education by T.V. Minakova ([Minakova, 2008](#)) it contains the idea of the presence of a number of conditions that contribute to its appearance:

– the formed basic level of cognitive skills that allow you to solve a wider range of tasks, variability of goals and results obtained within the framework of training;

– diversity of values: a wide range of conscious motives, among which the expressed one is the motive of achievement; the value of learning itself; the value of developing independence in cognition;

– the dominance in the learning process of situations of independent critical analysis of data, search for solutions, especially in situations of lack of information, as well as the ability to build students their own educational route independently.

Visualization as a form of corporate training allows you to assimilate various opinions, ideas, systems and algorithms as quickly as possible, as well as find a common language with other participants (when studying in microgroups). In addition, visualization is an easy way to provide students with feedback and show the degree of their progress in learning, as well as the level of assimilation of the material. All this leads to the formation of a key skill that is necessary for self-realization in professional activity – self-education.

Personal self-development is a result of corporate training (as a private factor) that allows a person to consciously change qualitatively in the existing conditions of professional activity, clearly realizing their goals, values, attitudes and ideals that lead to the growth of personal competitiveness and efficiency in work through, among other things, creative and non-standard solutions to typical situations in activities.

As a result of the analysis of theoretical concepts, ideas and current research of the adult education system, a study was conducted aimed at studying the personal characteristics of students in the system of corporate education based on visualization, which are associated with its effectiveness and the emergence of a motive for self-education.

*The object of research:* the system of personal characteristics in corporate training.

*Subject of research:* personal aspects of the development of the motive of self-education of students based on the use of visualization in the learning process.

*Research hypotheses:*

– aspects of the emergence of the desire for self-education of students in the corporate training system are: motivational (development of internal motivation, the presence of a pronounced motive for success), as well as personal (a high degree of personal competitiveness, a sufficient level of self-acceptance, orientation to the formation of professional competence) and interpersonal (the ability to show cooperation in teamwork, dominance in communication with a pronounced friendliness);

– when using visualization in the corporate training system, its effectiveness increases and the desire for self-education manifests itself.

*Research objectives:*

– to select diagnostic methods for individual aspects of the desire for self-education, as well as to conduct a self-assessment of the effectiveness of training and the desire for self-education in groups where visualization techniques were a priority form of training and where there is no;

– to measure various motivational, personal and interpersonal aspects of the desire for self-education, stated in the hypothesis;

– to identify the interrelationships and differences between the manifestations of these aspects of the desire for self-education among students in groups where visualization techniques were a priority form of learning and where they are not.

The study was conducted on the basis of diagnostic results of adults who were trained during the year at the place of work in training centers that exist in organizations. 94 people were interviewed, 50 men and 44 women, all have higher education, work in organizations and are trained there. 4 organizations participated in the study, each with more than 500 employees, and has its own training centers. Two organizations used mainly visual technologies as part of the training, while the other two did not.

*Stages of the study:* selection of methods for the diagnostics of all respondents, preparation of a questionnaire to assess the desire for self-education and the effectiveness of training; diagnosis of respondents; implementation of corporate training for 3 months according to different programs (some respondents had visualization as one of the dominant forms of training, the other part did not); re-diagnostics in order to evaluate hypotheses put forward earlier.

Within the framework of the study, the following methods were used, which made it possible to analyze the individual personal parameters of students: a test for studying behavior strategies; a

method for diagnosing interpersonal relationships; a test of socio-psychological adaptation; a method for diagnosing professional activity; a test for diagnosing motivation for success, a test of "Career Anchors".

### 3. Discussion

A study of the literature on corporate training issues shows that every year the need for organizations to implement digital transformations increases, which requires updating the digital skills of their employees, who need to manage their careers as best as possible in order to remain in demand (Egorova, 2022). Modern studies of the problem of what skills and abilities are needed by employees of organizations show the existence of a connection between the level of digitalization of the industry and the perception of technological changes by employees as opportunities for personal growth (Ostmeier, Strobel, 2022). Taking into account the promising trends of technological development, the most demanded skills of employees are over-subject skills, for example, problem-oriented thinking, the ability to act in conditions of uncertainty, emotional intelligence. In addition, meta-competencies are needed: flexibility, adaptability, the ability to self-development and lifelong learning. It also requires supra-professional skills, such as systems thinking, working with artificial intelligence and other digital technologies, the ability to work in a team, the ability to be creative. The development of corporate staff training models within the boundaries of the digital transformation strategy of the organization will contribute to the individual independent development of the necessary skills, strengthen the desire of employees to actively improve themselves. Modern organizations are constantly improving their corporate training programs in the direction of developing not only digital skills, but also other professionally oriented skills that contribute to improving organizational efficiency (Barthakur et al., 2022).

The relevance of the development and use of corporate training programs to improve staff skills is confirmed by the fact that on-the-job training programs are closely related to the practical activities of a particular organization, while training programs and technologies used in the formal educational environment do not take into account some opportunities for integrating work and training. The applied technologies of on-the-job training focus on the professional context in which the training takes place. Modern intellectual learning tools are precisely aimed at creating and developing a knowledge structure in the workplace and improving corporate training programs so that they are suitable for both beginners and experienced employees, developing the necessary skills (Ley, 2020).

Corporate personnel training programs should be balanced, and focus primarily on the skills that the organization needs in the first place. To do this, it is necessary to compile a list of skills that need to be taught, select those employees who need training first of all and select effective training methods based on digital technologies. For example, the perception and analysis of visual information in the learning process, in addition to the development of professionally oriented skills, also improves digital competence, as visual technologies are becoming more developed and complex. When choosing a corporate training method, the main criterion is the effectiveness of the chosen method, and given that the skills associated with the introduction of the latest technologies are the most in demand, it means that the training methods should also correspond to the trends of digitalization. The use of e-learning has become the first step towards the digital transformation of learning.

Online courses, virtual reality, augmented reality technologies, gaming technologies, visualization are actively used. The advantages of e-learning in corporate training are the availability of technologies, convenience, and opportunities for individualization, and the disadvantages may be related to the organizational difficulties of a particular organization and are insignificant (Kimiloglu et al., 2017). This is confirmed by the fact that despite the different intensity of e-learning in various fields, the global corporate e-learning market is growing rapidly. Thanks to the possibilities of co-education in a problem-oriented environment, online technologies have become quite popular (Saleh et al., 2022).

Modern technologies of asynchronous online discussions have proven their effectiveness not only in the academic sector, but also in corporate learning processes. Online discussions successfully involve all employees in the joint execution of tasks, as a result of which, in addition to creating a new product, new knowledge is jointly formed, the intellectual potential of the organization increases, and the basis for the transition to a qualitatively new level of cooperation is created (Schaefer et al., 2019).



Another technology that can be useful in corporate training is visualization technology, which is the basis of virtual and augmented reality. Virtual reality technology is the most effective way to improve practical skills that are in demand in the digital age, for example, the ability not only to receive information, but also to transform it. The advantages of using virtual reality by universities are the ability to simulate real production situations simulating work processes, then graduates receive not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills. The use of virtual reality in corporate employee training contributes to the involvement in the learning process, the development of critical thinking, and also reduces training costs (Matsika, Zhou, 2021).

The effectiveness of virtual reality as a technology for corporate training is also due to the fact that it helps to overcome the difficulties of motivation, concentration on the part of the trained personnel, who, due to age characteristics, lack confidence or basic knowledge. The employees participating in the research noted that they are often distracted, it is difficult for them to focus on voluminous texts, they have a growing sense of anxiety when they see large theoretical materials that need to be processed and thought about independently. Augmented reality technology can make the corporate learning process more informative and interactive.

This technology helps to develop conscientious work skills, achieve better results through visualization and full immersion in the problem area, it can be applied to various subject areas, developing professionally oriented skills. The experience of using this technology for training shows that it is well used both in an educational organization and in the workplace, it is equally effective for different age categories and in various industries (Christopoulos, et al., 2022; Hekele, et al., 2022; Roopa, et al., 2021).

The analysis of the literature showed the interest of scientists in the problem of using digital technologies in teaching. Online learning, virtual and augmented reality are studied a lot. A limited amount of research is devoted to corporate training and on-the-job training. There are not enough publications devoted to the use of visualization techniques in the learning process in general, and the use of this technology in corporate training, in particular. Nevertheless, it is obvious that training using data visualization allows you to: combine formal and informal methods of work and assimilation of knowledge, mastering skills; maximize creativity and emotional involvement in learning; combine visual presentation and a high degree of fullness of data and information in a concise form. Given the undeniable advantages of visualization, this study examines how the perception and processing of visual information increases the effectiveness of a corporate training program.

#### 4. Results

Respondents who participated in the study of personal characteristics of students in the system of corporate education based on visualization, related to its effectiveness and the emergence of a motive for self-education, were differentiated into two groups: those who studied effectively and rated their desire for self-education as high and those who studied less effectively and rated their desire for self-education as low.

The analysis of changes in the level of learning effectiveness and evaluation of the desire for self-education after were based on the following parameters:

- individual parameters: motivational (development of internal motivation, the presence of a pronounced motive for success), as well as personal (a high degree of personal competitiveness, a sufficient level of self-acceptance, orientation to the formation of professional competence) and interpersonal (the ability to cooperate in teamwork, dominance in communication with pronounced friendliness);

- parameters directly related to the effectiveness of training and the emergence of the desire for self-education: a small number of mistakes made; the implementation of at least 50 % of independent individual projects and group assignments; the absence of conflict interaction during group work; the manifestation of initiative when offered to join additional research practical projects; the development of additional competencies within the framework of the activity.

Changes in the parameters that showed shifts in the effectiveness of training, as well as individual parameters were the basis for testing the hypotheses put forward.

Prior to the implementation of the training programs, the analysis of parameters related to the effectiveness of training made it possible to differentiate all respondents into two groups with varying degrees of severity of the effectiveness of training and the emergence of a desire for self-education:

– a group with high learning efficiency and an assessment of their desire for self-education as high (29 %): a small number of mistakes made; implementation of at least 50 % of independent individual projects and group assignments; absence of conflict interaction during group work; taking the initiative when offered to join additional research practical projects; development of additional competencies within the framework of activities;

– a group with low learning efficiency and assessment of their desire for self-education as low (71 %): a large number of mistakes made; implementation of less than 25 % of independent individual projects and group assignments; presence of conflict interaction during group work; low level of initiative when offered to join additional research practical projects; low level of development of additional competencies in as part of the activity.

The number of respondents with a low level of efficiency in training and lack of desire for self-education is 71 %, which indicates a low effectiveness of educational programs. Consequently, there is a need to change them from a methodological point of view, taking into account the individual characteristics of the respondents.

As for individual parameters, in the two groups described above, the most pronounced among them are:

– in a group with high learning efficiency and an assessment of their desire for self-education as high among individual parameters, the following are expressed: high internal motivation, a high level of motivation for success, as well as a high degree of personal competitiveness, a sufficient and adequate level of self-acceptance, a pronounced orientation towards the formation of professional competence, the ability to cooperate in teamwork, dominance in communication with pronounced friendliness;

– in a group with low learning efficiency and an assessment of their desire for self-education as low, the following are expressed: low internal motivation, low level of motivation for success, low degree of personal competitiveness, insufficient level of self-acceptance, lack of orientation to the formation of professional competence, low level of ability to cooperate in teamwork, dominance in communication with low friendliness.

All these results confirm the first hypothesis that the aspects of the emergence of the desire for self-education of students in the corporate training system are: motivational (development of internal motivation (remp = 0.229), the presence of a pronounced motive for success (remp = 0.112), as well as personal (a high degree of personal competitiveness (remp = 0.106), a sufficient level of self-acceptance (remp = 0.211), orientation towards the formation of professional competence (remp = 0.114)) and interpersonal (ability to show cooperation in teamwork (remp = 0.104), dominance in communication (remp = 0.178) with pronounced friendliness (remp = 0.203)).

A high level of efficiency in learning (remp = 0.125) and the desire for self-education (remp = 0.138) are directly correlated with all the parameters listed in the hypothesis at a significance level of 0.01.

To test the second hypothesis that when using visualization in the corporate training system, its effectiveness increases and the desire for self-education is manifested, different training formats were implemented for respondents – with and without visualization. The training was implemented in the format of mini-lectures, round tables, interactive sessions, but at the same time some respondents actively used visualization, while the other part did not.

Repeated diagnostics was carried out only among respondents who, before the training, were in a group with low learning efficiency and an assessment of their desire for self-education as low, 71 % of them were among the respondents. After repeated diagnosis, two key parameters were measured: the effectiveness of training and the assessment of one's desire for self-education. Out of 71 % of respondents, the effectiveness of training and the assessment of their desire for self-education increased in 54 %, namely:

- the effectiveness of training (was low in 73 %, remained low in 11 %)
- assessment of their desire for self-education (was low in 69 %, remained low in 7 %).

All the differences were checked using the Mann-Whitney criterion, the differences are significant at the level of 0.01.

## 5. Conclusion

The significance of the research is quite high in the applied aspect: the use of visualization helps to develop the effectiveness of adult education in a corporate format, as well as to develop

their desire for self-education (proactive attitude in training, high internal motivation, conscious choice of courses and programs, the desire to apply them in practice).

The conducted work has shown that the skill of self-education is formed only if the teacher and the student are interested in the educational process to the same extent. The activity of a subject who is capable of self-education can be described using four main parameters: independence, objectivity, joint participation and creativity. These key parameters can be developed using visualization, which is based on various personal characteristics of participants in the educational process.

It was revealed that the process of self-education begins to form from the moment of understanding one's own goal as meaningful, easily presented in the format of a visual image, emotionally colored and meeting the values of the individual. This leads to the formation and maintenance of a strong-willed effort that allows you to focus attention and support actions to achieve the goal. Self-education leads a person to the fullest possible disclosure of potential, taking into account all her abilities and capabilities. All this is aimed at the appearance of a motive for a person's self-realization in life, in general, and in professional activity in particular.

Among the personal parameters, the effectiveness of training and the desire for self-education are determined by: high internal motivation, a high level of motivation for success, as well as a high degree of personal competitiveness, a sufficient level of self-acceptance, a pronounced focus on the formation of professional competence, the ability to cooperate in teamwork, dominance in communication with pronounced friendliness.

The hypotheses of the study were confirmed, the purpose of the study – to study the personal characteristics of students in the system of corporate education based on visualization, which are associated with its effectiveness and the emergence of a motive for self-education – was achieved.

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## Investigating the Impact of Instagram Application on Algerian Individuals' Self-Identifications: The Case of Algerian Teenagers

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### Abstract

Modern media creates for young people a desire to change them with a subsequent loss of personality. It has influenced its users, particularly adolescents because it carries different contents that attract their attention; therefore, they escape to the world of dreams where they can find a suitable place for themselves through being an influencer and/ or following media content creators who share what is attractive to gain more followers. To this end, adolescents are the intended age segment because they get influenced easily owing to their sensitive age period. In this regard, the present paper aims at studying the impact of Instagram on Algerian adolescents' self-identifications. It focuses on how individuals interact within Instagram as a virtual community and how it affects their real lives due to the unbalances between the real and the virtual worlds. To do that, we employed mixed-methods research relying on an online observation and an online questionnaire as research instruments. The participants were 161 Algerian adolescents known to be Instagram users. Final results indicated that 57,8 % of their real and virtual identities are the same, and 42,2 % have declared that there is a contradiction between both identities, which has amplified the phenomenon of double personality or schizophrenia with 61 % among Algerian teenagers. Therefore, the Instagram app has hidden individual and psychological effects on its users.

**Keywords:** Algerian teenagers, Instagram application, self-identification, media.

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, social media becomes rooted and indispensable in societies and cultures; it has become a glass that reflects universal ideas and cultures transmitted from one society to another. Therefore, the rapid spread of social media has made it take significant roles within human societies by transforming new patterns, values, behaviours and identities through the communication and interaction of individuals in the virtual world. This fact confirms that the services of these sites constitute a threat to the values and identities of Eastern and conservative societies, especially among young people. Algerian youths find themselves trapped between a social reality that does not suit their aspirations and foreign media entertainment, making them prefer to stay in a virtual world where they express themselves freely, which leads to a sudden loss of identity and self-identification. Therefore, there is a rebellious behaviour on the social system, values and identities that govern and regulate the behaviour of young users within the Algerian society. This phenomenon makes us wonder about Algerian youths' access to the virtual world and its different practices, particularly Instagram in relation to the self-identification because the youth stage is considered as a transitional phase, a passage from childhood to adulthood, thus, it is a developmental life step. For this reason, youths are well-known for some characteristics that distinguish them from other age groups, including their rejection of old and aspiration to social

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freedom. Therefore, they are the most affected by the ideas they receive in the stages of their identity formation from various institutions of socialization mainly media contents; they have attracted adolescents' attention because it suits their age dreams and desires. Youths express themselves verbally or nonverbally in this virtual space; that affects them and disturbs their identity formation in all its dimensions. They cannot fully adapt to real life because they live in two distinct spheres with different standards. In this regard, adolescents' digital presence has become more important than the real one; they enjoy pictures and videos more than the time itself. Besides, their virtual success has become their real success, that is why users rush to collect views, likes, and shares from their fans and followers to feel the joy of a fake accomplishment, and if it does not happen, their confidence and psyche will be seriously damaged. To this end, social media is considered as an integral space for youths' self-identification formation.

On the other side, identity represents how people view themselves and others might see them. It has two different types that are distinct but closely related: social identity refers to the characteristics that are attributed to an individual by others, and self-identity is the one that sets people as distinct individuals (Giddens, 2005; Flourish, 2013). It refers to the process of self-development through which we formulate a unique sense of ourselves and our relationships to the world around us, whereas identification means uniqueness, and it is not a ready and final system; instead, it remains open to the future. Identification involves the principles and values that direct people to achieve certain goals because of their importance in shaping individual and societal identities (Ogibi, 2015). Henceforth, self-identification is distinguishing one person from others and the uniqueness of one person among other persons, it is the quality that makes a person different from other people while consciously recognizing the uniqueness of those self-qualities (Ogibi, 2015).

Thus the main problem that Algerian adolescents face as a result of their abusive use of social media, particularly Instagram, is a contradiction between their true identities in their real social dealings with their families and learning environment and how they act and identify themselves in Instagram because they are living in two different environments simultaneously. Accordingly, they have two distinct identities, one real and the other virtual. This arrangement between what is real and virtual has created complex virtual identities that reflect users' acts. Therefore, the current study revolves around the effects of Instagram on Algerian youths' self-identifications; it seeks to find an answer to the following question:

- To what extent are the virtual interactions and the online practices on the Instagram platform able to influence Algerian teenagers' self-identifications?

Based on this question, we have hypothesized that:

- The virtual interactions on Instagram can influence Algerian teenagers' self-identifications due to the difference between online and offline practices.

## 2. Materials and methods

The main objective of conducting this study is Algerian individuals' abusive usage of Instagram application; they share their routines with their followers, thinking that they are influencers that impact others' lives. On the other hand, other individuals prefer to keep their digital presence on Instagram private; they contact the influencers to share their talents and advertise their products. Therefore, Instagram has become an application that presents virtual job opportunities to Algerian individuals. To do that, they spend all their time in this virtual platform, and they show only their positive side, which has influenced their self-identification because of their presence in two dissimilar environments (natural and virtual). To reach the research goal, we implemented mixed-method research using online observation and online questionnaire to investigate this topic. The mixed-method is the associated combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches; hence, it is research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using qualitative and quantitative techniques in a single study (Tashakkori et al., 2007).

Algerian adolescents known to be Instagram users were selected to be the participants in this research because youths are well-known for some characteristics that distinguish them from other age groups. We have deliberately selected a representative sample that serves the aims of the study to reach objective results that are compatible with the nature and goals of the inquiry. Therefore, Algerian teenagers aged between 13 and 24 years known to be Instagram users have been chosen; they were 161 informants.

We contacted some Algerian influencers to share the questionnaire with their followers to reach the targeted sample. We have deliberately selected this age group because the adolescence stage is associated with the identity construction of individuals; according to Erikson's psychological theory, adolescents face the challenge of identity versus confusion; they try to achieve their identity and their identity role in the society. Nevertheless, they adopt negative attitudes and identities if they do not reach this goal. Moreover, they find themselves in a state of disturbance or depression of identity (Erikson, 1968).

The observation is the basic research instrument of the current study; it is the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts. In this context, we have undertaken the online observation of the Instagram application through a personal account, and we were in the setting under study as observers. We have started following, randomly, Algerian teenagers' accounts, males and females from different Algerian regions, as well as we have followed several pages, profiles, videos, comments, and the content in order to cover almost everything in detail.

Based on the observation, which lasted more than three months, we have observed that Instagram has eradicated the geographical and spatial barriers since it provides its users with different types of interaction through reading status, audio and visual communication. Hence, it gives its users the opportunity of connections and friendship through giving opinions, analyzing, criticizing, exchanging ideas, files, images, and videos. Besides, there are plenty of pages, and each page has its own content that serves the intended objectives and interests of its users. We have also observed that Instagram has become a platform for advertisement. Moreover, it is characterized by suggesting profiles and pages to follow. Hence, Instagram is a virtual environment categorized by the charity of ideas and desires despite age, gender, or educational level differences. There is even the possibility of interaction and communication with friends through sharing stories option and informing them about the work that he/she is currently doing so that they remain in constant contact through this virtual site. Instagram users can also share direct videos with their followers to interact directly and exclusively. The person organizing the online meeting appears to followers reads and responds to their comments. Hence, a virtual meeting and interaction with different followers and users occur. They talk about different topics; sometimes, the interaction is planned before and has some social or individual goals to achieve; other times, it contains random discussions. On the whole, Instagram has the same features as Facebook.

However, Instagram also has a negative side that cannot be neglected. It shows the Algerian social classes imbalances; it leads users to waste their time, isolate them from their existing society, lead them to live in a virtual community, and weakens their skills. Moreover, Instagram has become an addiction that takes its users from reality to a world full of imagination.

Consequently, it leads to the loss of social communication. It has profound impacts on the self-identification of its users. Many users do not expose their true identity; instead, they impersonate a character they may admire to deal with several people. In general, Instagram contributes to achieving imaginary harmony and interconnectedness.

### **3. Discussion**

The current paper addresses the changes that Algeria is witnessing as a result of the global openness and the excessive use of Instagram app by Algerian teenagers and the consequences of this usage on their self-identifications. It focuses on how youths interact within the virtual community and the effects of this communication on their real lives because the increasing popularity of social media has become the hallmark of modern human societies, especially among teenagers who find themselves addicted in front of imported technology that responds to their age needs (Dekhil et al., 2021). Algerian young users in front of this media influx lose the ability to manage and control social networking sites; they seek to liberate themselves from all kinds of social restrictions to satisfy their needs by joining social media with its various applications. Thereby, their digital presence is more important than their real social presence. This affects the sociological structure, including the self-identification of individuals because they are in the position of the receivers and imitators.

Instagram is regarded as a virtual addiction, its users are obsessed with receiving and sending messages, sharing and following stories option every moment (Ginige, 2017). Therefore, Instagram has become a window through which people overlook peoples' worlds through pictures and videos and narrate the facts of their daily lives with details. In other words, Instagram, as a part of the technological revolution with its different applications, has brought up foreign patterns

and behaviours. Algerian social media handlers are active participants. They share their everyday practices with their virtual followers through live or stories options. Hence, their lives are no longer private though privacy was highly valued, especially regarding family confidences. However, Algerian Instagram users imitate all what they follow; there is a kind of virtual contamination or competition in the foreign virtual spheres. Besides, Instagramming is an activity that most youths, the Digital Natives, would certainly fall into since it gives a diverse range of any images starting from beautiful scenery up to beauty products. Therefore, Instagram posts tend to have minimum texts that are quite rich in image presentation (Purnama, 2017) in order to present memorable moments that are positive, reinforce life ideals for the followers and present gratifying reflection of themselves with the digital community (Nurzilinet al, 2020).

Yet, smartphone use in general and Instagram app in particular are associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression (Elhadi et al., 2017) due to the inequalities between the natural and virtual spheres and they can cause self-identification harm to users because they don't know to which environment they really belong, even the face-to-face communication will be affected because they depend more on watching videos, writing messages and voice recordings, therefore, the feeling of loneliness is increased (Dacrin et al., 2017) for the reason that they escape to the world of dreams which is a suitable space that enables them to show only what is positive and perform multiple virtual identities.

In this regard, Junco (Junco, 2014) introduced the concept of "*digital identification*" in ways that individuals choose to present their identity in a social and digital context; unlike what is possible in the physical world, users can choose to reveal themselves or not to varying degrees and can have one or multiple online identities because social media handlers who present their true identities must be highly motivated to manage their self-presentation and must make decisions about how to react to the comments and wall posts that others contribute (Hollenbaugh, 2021). Therefore, most of the relationships and partnerships in virtual societies are anonymous. Accordingly, individuals engaging in these interactions are hidden behind virtual names, photos, and filters. According to Schau (Hope et al., 2003), every time we choose a nickname for an online service, we are doing an act of self-presentation. In the same vein, Donath (Donath et al., 2004) claimed that the networks of connections are displayed as an integral part of individuals' self-presentations and that an extended network may validate identity information presented in a person's profile. The dramaturgical theory of Goffman (Goffman, 1956) reinforces this idea in his book *The presentation of self in everyday life*, it discusses the idea of the presenter and audience in a theatre play as a metaphor to explain the interactions in social media behind the screens. Each individual would act, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to represent himself and aims to create a picture impression (Krisnawati, 2020). In other words, the interactions that occur in the virtual world differ from the natural ones, which can influence social media handlers' psyche, produce new virtual identities, and affect their self-identification.

Social and digital technologies allow individuals to create a different online persona and digital identifications. One individual might have multiple persona or identifications: some anonymous, some pseudo-anonymous, and some explicitly tied to their true-physical world selves. Individuals can quickly switch between these personas and different social and digital spaces through a smartphone or other technologies that let them move between one network or application to another within minutes (Brown, 2016).

In the same vein, the notion of digitized selfhood becomes important; it denotes the extent to which individuals see in their digital world themselves as part of, or separate from, their physical world selves. Digitization is the extent to which individuals see themselves as living their lives in digital spaces. Individuals may use technology to varying degrees, but they also integrate it into their lives to different extents. Those with more intimate relationships with technology tended to conceptualize their physical-world only contexts (Brown, 2016).

#### 4. Results

The questionnaire is divided into two main sections: the socio-demographic data of respondents and Instagram application use by Algerian teenagers. The former provides the age, gender, educational level, and the location of the participants; the latter contains seven questions that yield the research findings that will answer the research question.



*Section one: socio-demographic data of respondents*

The purpose of this section is to have a general idea about our respondents' age, gender, educational level, and location. Through this initial information, we ensure that people participating in this research have the required conditions to complete the process of answering the remaining questions that will provide the final findings.

**Table 1.** The Instagram App Use according to Participants' Age

Age	From 13 to 16 years	From 16 to 20 years	From 20 to 24 years	Total
Percentage	02 %	20 %	78 %	100 %

This table stands for a high percentage of 78 % of the total number of respondents aged between 20 and 24 years who use the Instagram application. 20 % of them are aged between 16 and 20 years, and only 02 % have between 13 and 16 years old.

**Table 2.** The Instagram App Use according to Participants' Gender

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Percentage	20.3 %	79.7 %	100 %

**Table 2** reveals that Algerian female teenagers use the Instagram application more than males; females represent 79.7 %, whereas males denote only 20.6 %. It means that most Instagram users are females due to two main reasons; first of all, the percentage of females is higher than the one of males in the Algerian society. Second, Instagram as a virtual community gives females complete freedom as opposed to the real society's restrictions.

**Table 3.** The Instagram App Use according to Participants' Educational Level

Educational level	Middle school	Secondary school	University	Total
Percentage	5.5 %	5.1 %	90.4 %	100 %

This table demonstrates that the majority of participants are university students; they symbolize 90.4 % of the entire sample. However, middle school and secondary school pupils are minorities, 5.5 % and 5.1 %, respectively. This question is related to the first question of age because whenever individuals get old, they become familiar with digital devices and encourage each other to use them. The findings of this question are logical; university students represent a large proportion of Instagram users because they possess their own smartphones. Therefore, their importance to use social media with its various applications increases as it becomes a part of their daily activities. By contrast, most middle and secondary school pupils, especially middle school, do not have smartphones due to their young age.

**Table 4.** The North and West Participants' Use of the InstagramApp

Location	North	South	East	West	Total
Percentage	34 %	6.3 %	37 %	22.7 %	100 %

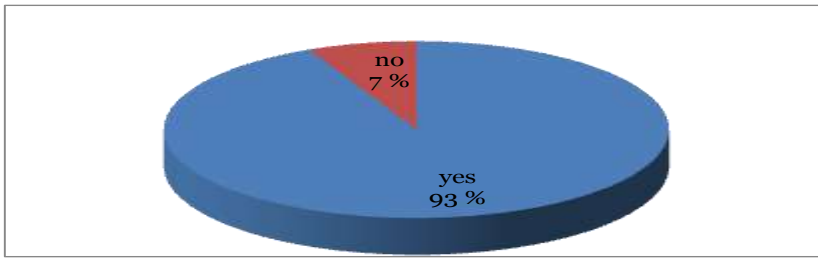
The results indicated that the most considerable fraction comes from the East with 37 %, followed by 34 % from the northern part and 22.7 % from the western part. However, only 6.3 % are from the South. We have observed that the majority of our participants are either from the East or the North, followed by the West. As people from the South are a minority, this is owing to one main reason: the problem of internet influx.

*Section two: the use of Instagram by Algerian teenagers*

This section is the continuance of the first stage of this questionnaire. It is an introduction that discloses key information about the use of the Instagram application by Algerian teenagers to

know the frequency of using the application, which is one of the main concerns of the study and the perceptions of its users towards their interactions in this virtual platform.

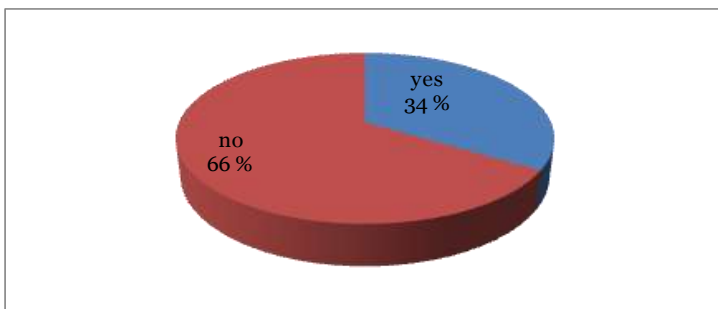
*Question one:* Do you use the Instagram application?



**Fig. 1.** The use of the Instagram application by Algerian teenagers

As the question of having an Instagram application was asked to 161 respondents, the findings show that the responses of the large proportion were positive, exactly about 93 %, it is widely used by Algerian youths. By contrast, only 7 % do not use the application.

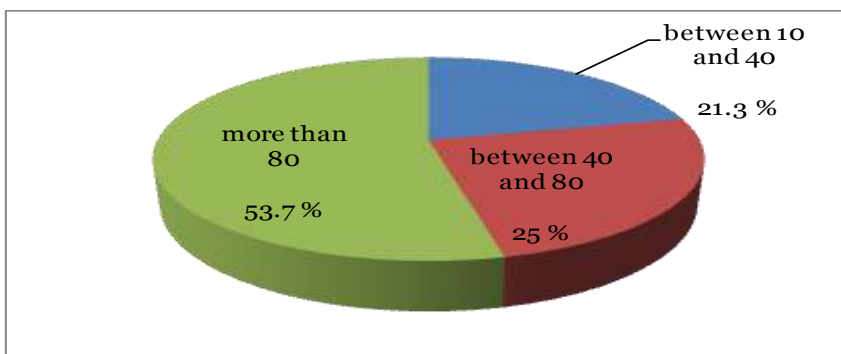
*Question two:* Do you share your personal life on Instagram?



**Fig. 2.** Algerian Teenagers' Broadcasting of Personal Life on Instagram

Instagram is a social networking platform where people can share their details with other virtual users to build virtual relations. In this regard, this question refers to sharing coordinates, for example, the educational level, the academic institution, the full name, the profession, and the list of followers, as well as sharing stories to be viewed by other followers or by everyone if the profile is public and hence, giving people the opportunity to know them. Based on the graph shown above, it is clear that 66 % of respondents do not share their personal lives and issues on social media, precisely the Instagram platform; they prefer to keep their lives private. However, the remaining percentage, 34 % do not find problems in sharing their coordinates publically as a kind of self-demonstration.

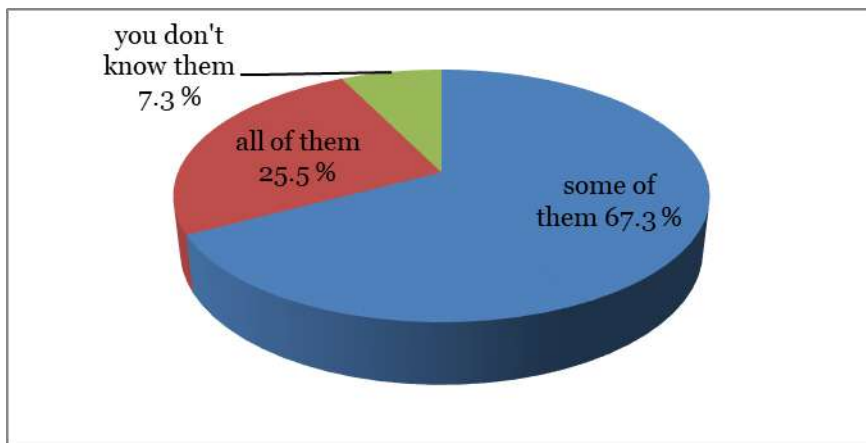
*Question three:* How many followers do you have on Instagram?



**Fig. 3.** The number of Instagram followers

This question is related to the virtual relations that Instagram users build with other people through the option of "follow," which allows them to keep an eye on the profiles and personal lives of others as well as to interact and communicate with each other. The pie chart above indicates that the largest fraction of participants (53.7 %) show that they have more than 80 followers, while 25 % revealed between 40 and 80 followers. Finally, 21.3 % have less than 40 followers. From these responses, we deduce that the majority of Instagram users build random relations because if the number of followers gets large, it means that they are in contact with strangers, and maybe that is why they do not share their personal information and photos because they cannot trust all their followers since they do not know them.

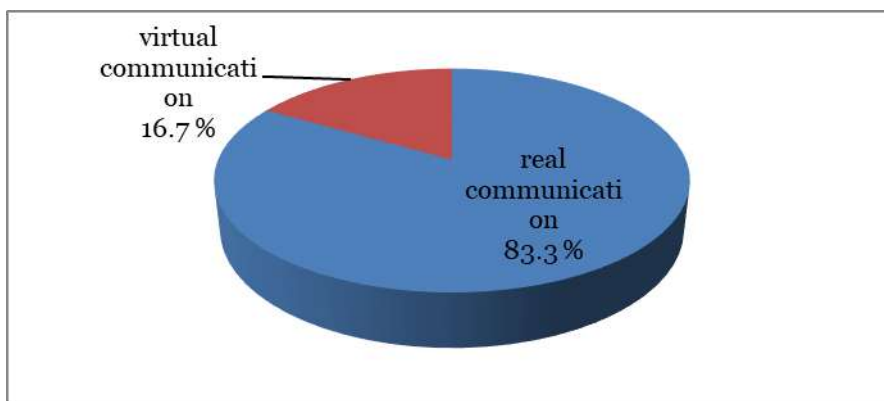
*Question four:* Do you know all of them, some of them, or you do not know them?



**Fig. 4.** Algerian Teenagers' Familiarity with their Followers

As the previous question was about the number of followers, this question is about whether they know people they follow or not. The findings demonstrate that a very large proportion of respondents know some of their followers, exactly about 67.3 %. However, 25.5 % are acquainted with all their followers, it means they are in contact only with their relatives. Finally, 7.3 % do not know the people they are interacting with.

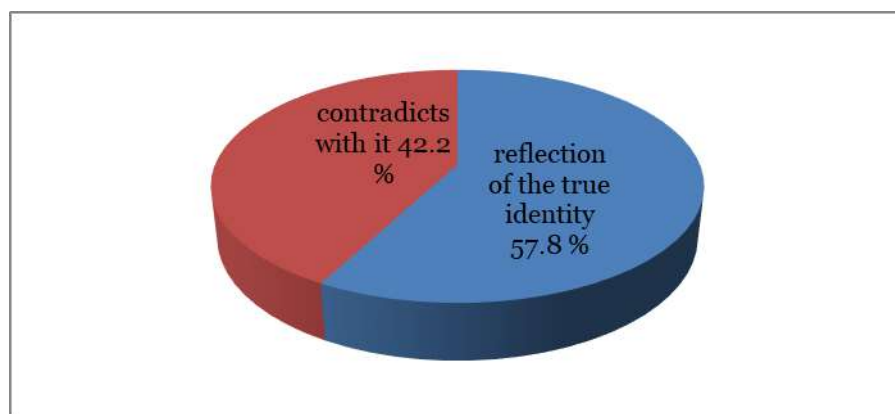
*Question five:* Do you prefer the real communications and interactions or those that occur in the virtual space, particularly in the Instagram platform?



**Fig. 5.** Comparison between Face-to-face and Virtual Communication

We seek to compare two types of communication, real and virtual, through this question. The figure above demonstrates that 83.3 % of the population prefers real, natural, or face-to-face communication. However, people who prefer virtual communication and interaction count for 16.7 %.

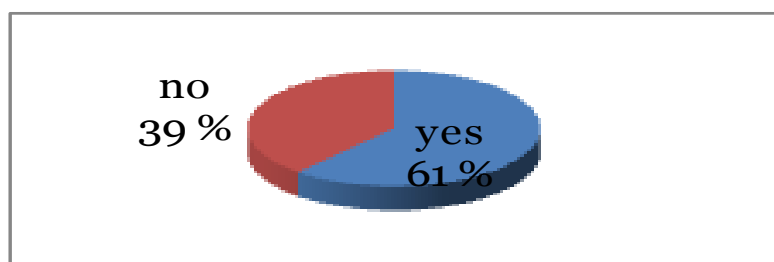
*Question six:* In your opinion, is Instagram a reflection of your true identity or contradicts it?



**Fig. 6.** Instagram Identity vs. the True Identity

As for the question of Instagram users' identity, whether the identity presented on Instagram is a reflection of the true identity or it opposes it, most Instagram profiles of Algerian teenagers (57.8 %) are a reflection of their true identity and give a true first impression to other people. Nevertheless, 42.2 % do not show their real identity. The significance of this answer is that those people know that there is a dissimilarity between both identities. Hence, there are two possibilities: they do not show their real identity on purpose and prefer to keep a distance between the virtual and the real world, therefore, their virtual interactions are not serious, or they are influenced by other people and try to imitate them.

*Question seven:* Do you think that Instagram contributes to increasing the phenomenon of double personality or schizophrenia?



**Fig. 7.** The Effects of Instagram on its Users' Psychological Side

We are investigating Algerian individuals' identities on Instagram. We have asked our participants about the phenomenon of double personalities or schizophrenia. The greatest percentage, precisely 61 %, demonstrates that Instagram is a social media platform that increases this social phenomenon since we have previously observed a contradiction between the real and virtual identity. On the other side, 39 % perceive that Instagram does not produce schizophrenia or double personality and show that they have a stable personality either on Instagram or the real sphere.

## 5. Conclusion

In this research study, we attempted to investigate the effects of Instagram app on individuals' self-identifications due to their presence in two distinct spheres, natural and virtual; this fact yields to a contradiction in their identity formation process and even schizophrenia. Therefore, research on social media has become imperative. Based on the responses of the informants in this research illustrated in the tables and graphs above, we obtained the following findings:

To begin with, Algerian teenagers aged between 20 and 24 years, exactly about 78 % and thus university students who count for 90.4 % use Instagram more than any other age group. Additionally, females use the application more than males, most of them are from the East and the North with 37 % and 34 % respectively, followed by the West (22.7 %) and finally the South with the lowest percentage of 6.3.

Second, the results of the second section that have to do with the use of Instagram by Algerian teenagers disclosed that 93 % of the population have Instagram application in their mobiles; however, only 7 % do not have the application because it is almost similar to Facebook.

Third, regarding sharing personal information and photos on Instagram, findings demonstrated that the majority prefer to keep their information private and avoid posting their photos. Hence, they post fake profile photos. Besides, 53,7 % have more than 80 followers on Instagram, and 67,3 % know only some of their followers. Therefore, they are dealing with people they do not know because it is one of the main characteristics of social media; Yet, most Algerian teenagers prefer natural communications (83,3 %).

Results confirmed that most Instagram handlers (48 %) like more natural relations and prefer the natural world (67 %). On the other hand, according to other participants, 51,3 % said that Instagram is an instrument that allows them to know other people and 57,8 % of users' real and virtual identities share the same opinion, and 42,2 % have declared that there is a contradiction between both identities, which has amplified the phenomenon of double personality or schizophrenia with 61 % among Algerian teenagers.

To sum up, we confirm the research hypothesis; Instagram application highly influences Algerian teenagers' self-identifications because of the imbalances between natural and virtual practices.

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## Students' Attitude Towards *Ruanguji* Mobile-Based Assessment: An Explanatory Case Study in Tangerang, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This qualitative study aims to unveil the junior high school students' attitude towards *Ruanguji* mobile-based assessment. It uses an explanatory case study design engaging 225 students in Tangerang, Indonesia as the respondents. To analyze the data got by the questionnaire, the study uses the multi-component model of attitude and one-dimensional perspective. The study reveals that their attitude towards *Ruanguji* comprises the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components with different degree. For the students, *Ruanguji* is a supplementary media offering various tests and assignments to help them face the national examination. With the application, they feel convenient to prepare themselves for the examination. If they have chances, they will use it to explore testing materials and assignments. Their attitude is identified as a positive one that impedes the existence of the negative one. Its positivity degree is determined by internal factors, like their perception and emotion; and external factors, like the application's user-friendliness. In addition, their positive attitude towards the application also contributes to their success in their school's summative tests and national examination. The result of the study leads to the conclusion that a positive attitude towards the mobile assessment can be a determinant factor of their success in the study.

**Keywords:** attitude, mobile-based assessment, *Ruanguji*, multi-component model, one-dimensional perspective.

### 1. Introduction

Many mobile applications are now installed on smartphones, offering users such substantial convenience in terms of accessibility, mobility, and entertainment that people scarcely ever want to be without them (Mwantimwa, 2019). They can satisfy the users' requirements to complete their duties in various spheres of life, including the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), since they become more sophisticated and are constantly updated. For instance, they are employed in the teaching-learning process, evaluation, task delivery, presentation, translation, class grouping, or other administrative services (Karthikeyan et al., 2022). These applications used in EFL are beneficial because they can provide students with more authentic learning materials, engaging and interactive learning exercises, and more effective assessment (Lin, 2019). As a result, the users often update the various applications on their cellphones to gain more advantages from them (Correa et al., 2020).

One of the educational applications which are mostly used in Indonesia is *Ruanguru* released in the Google Play Store in 2016. It is a trending educational application awarded as a number one domestic application which has millions of users. *Ruanguru* provides the users with various services; one of them is *Ruanguji* as a mobile-based assessment (MBA). It offers online

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assignments and tests for primary, junior, and senior high school students for different purposes, like simulations on summative tests, national examination, or joint entrance test of state universities (Devara, Usman, 2016). As an application, *Ruanguji* has been used by the students to prepare themselves for the national examination. However, its effectiveness has not been identified because there have been few studies on it. It depends not only on its operating systems but also on its users' psychological factors, like their cognitive ability, skills, and attitude. Among them, the students' attitude becomes one of the determinant factors that contributes the effectiveness of a mobile application in educational practices. Attitude means the way a person thinks, feels, or acts towards someone, thing, or situation (Getie, 2020). It, under the multi-component model, comprises cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Haddock, Maio, 2012). Cognitive component deals with thoughts and beliefs about an attitude object; affective component concerns with feelings and emotions associated with it; and behavioral component refers to actions an individual has done (or might do in the future) regarding it (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993; Haddock, Maio, 2019). For example, if the students think that a mobile educational application is not user-friendly, it will discourage them from using it for learning. Conversely, if they think it is a user-friendly, they must be encouraged to use it for learning. Therefore, its operating system and its users' attitude influence the effectiveness of a mobile educational application, like *Ruanguji*. Despite its tremendous acceptance and potential, *Ruanguji* is still a new application which needs to further investigation, especially in its user-friendliness and other features.

In their research, F.K. Ting and K.H. Tang (Ting, Tan, 2021) point out that all mobile educational applications, as well as those that are still relatively new and developing, need to be assessed or studied. Therefore, there are still rooms to conduct studies on mobile applications used in education, like *Ruanguji*. This can be about the students' attitude towards the application interface, assessment materials, tests' lay-out, users' responses, and real-time feedback offered by the application. The result of the studies would be beneficial for the teachers to conduct more effective learning activities and assessment for EFL students and the company to enhance the quality of the application.

In English assessment using technology, there are studies conducted in the primary or secondary schools with different results. One of them is experimental research involving three intact classes of the intermediate EFL learners in Iran. Its overall findings shows that MBA improves the EFL learners' writing ability because of partnerships between them and the instructor via text- and voice-based mediation (Ebadi, Bashir, 2021). This shows that MBA is an effective media in measuring the students' writing ability because they can get the real time feedback that assistances them improve their writing. Similarly, another study claims that matters, like comfort, instant feedback and personal safety are most efficiently controlled by the MBA, like Moodle quizzes (Buczek-Zawila, 2021). This shows that the use of technology in English assessment has a positive impact on the students' performance compared to the use of traditional assessment.

There are studies that are contradictory to the previous ones. Some claim that paper-based test is more effective than the MBA in measuring the students' English ability because they can read the test easily without connecting to the internet. A recent study reports that the students who read printed texts get higher score on the reading comprehension test than those who read the digital texts (Schwabe et al., 2021). Similarly, another study reveals that the paper-based test is more effective than the computer-based test. It is because students who do tests on screen have a variety of concerns and problems on computer-based examinations, such as noisy keyboards, assessment of spelling, and unfairness rather than those who are less comfortable with the technology (Yeom, Jun, 2020). In addition, research by W. Yu and N. Iwashita (Yu, Iwashita, 2021) indicates that the students' attitude towards MBA does not have a positive impact on their performance. Complementarily, in their research H. Öz and T. Özturan (Öz, Özturan, 2018) show that there is not any significant difference in test scores between the participants who take the computer-based test and those who take the paper-based test.

Differently from the previous studies, the current research uses the qualitative approach, with a case study design engaging the junior high school students as the participants. It presents the novelty that covers *Ruanguji* as a local application, and its focus on the users' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude. Therefore, this research aims mainly to identify and elaborate the students' attitudes toward *Ruanguji*. It concerns with their cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude towards *Ruanguji*; and whether their attitude is positive or negative.

## 2. Materials and methods

The study uses a qualitative approach because it relies on verbal data that does not need any statistics to analyze. It adopts an explanatory case study design that elaborates the students' attitude towards *Ruanguji*. The study engages 225 junior high school students in Tangerang Banten Indonesia who enrolled as users of *Ruanguji*. Its primary data are their perceptions on the attitude objects gathered using a Likert-type five scale attitude questionnaire comprising 19 items or statements. It is designed under the theory of a multi-component model consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects (Haddock, Maio, 2019). Each item contains a statement of an attitude object and five options, namely strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The questionnaire is distributed using Google Form to help the respondents access it easily in their homes. The collected data then are analyzed qualitatively under one-dimensional perspective of attitudes stating that the positive and negative elements are stored in memory at opposite ends of a single dimension, and people experience either end of the dimension or a location in between as illustrated in Figure 1 (Maio et al., 2019).

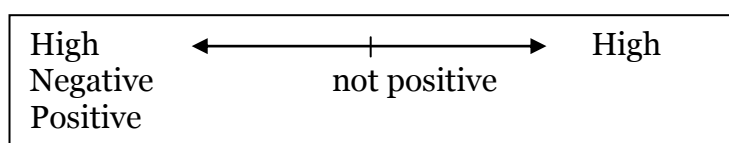


Fig. 1. One-dimensional Perspective of Attitude

## 3. Discussion

Using the data gathered by the questionnaire, the researchers can present the discussion of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that construct the students' whole attitude towards *Ruanguji*. The cognitive attitude in this study concerns more with the students' opinion on *Ruanguji* after they have experienced using the application. These include its test layout and appearance, access flexibility, test content, its role, and benefits the students can get. The students' responses towards the cognitive component of attitude are available in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Responses towards Cognitive Component

No	Statement	Responses				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Ruanguji plays as a supplementary/supporting assessment media for its users.	0 %	0 %	0 %	30 %	70 %
2	Ruanguji offers more flexible access than other computer-based tests.	0 %	11 %	23 %	43 %	23 %
3	Ruanguji contains tests that have better lay out and appearance than paper-based tests do.	0 %	13 %	20 %	53 %	14 %
4	Ruanguji contains tests that have similar quality to the school made tests.	0 %	0 %	27 %	60 %	13 %
5	Ruanguji helps its users to keep motivated to take the tests.	0%	0 %	13 %	40 %	47 %
6	Ruanguji can enhance its users' self-confidence in attending the tests.	0 %	7 %	20 %	60 %	13 %
7	Ruanguji helps its users to improve their scores on the subjects they take at schools.	0 %	0 %	27 %	40 %	33 %
8	Ruanguji helps its users to have their learning activities well planned and organized.	0 %	0 %	33 %	47 %	20 %
	Average	0 %	4 %	20 %	47 %	29 %

Referring the students' responses to the cognitive component items as seen in Table 1, the researchers can elaborate their perception of using *Ruanguji*. As showed by their responses to statement one, 30 % of them agree and 70 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* plays as a supplementary assessment media for them. Using *Ruanguji*, they can attend test simulations that



are identical to the tests they get at schools. They can learn the feedback and item discussion about how to identify the problems and seek the most possible answer. So that they are accustomed to identifying the intended responses and answers effectively. They can know to what extent they have mastered the learning materials and achieved the learning outcome by taking the test simulation available in *Ruanguji*. As a supplementary assessment media, *Ruanguji* contributes to the student's success in their learning. This finding is in line with the study by O. Ozer and F. Kılıç (Ozer, Kılıç, 2018) revealing that the acceptance of mobile technology, like MBA has influenced the students' learning achievement both directly and indirectly.

As a supplementary assessment media, *Ruanguji* should be armed with flexible access that helps the students to explore testing and assignment materials. About the flexible access, the study prepares statement two the students to respond. From the total responses, 11 % of them disagree, 43 % of them agree, and 23 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* can be accessed more flexibly than computer-based tests. Although both used information and communication technology (ICT), *Ruanguji* is more flexible because its users can access through their smart phones whenever and wherever. This finding confirms a previous study revealing that MBA is more innovative, efficient, and thorough than others (Ningsih et al., 2022; Zubanova et al., 2021). In addition, it confirms another study highlighting that flexibility and capability of mobile phones make them valuable tools even for high stakes testing (Lestary, 2020), like university entrance test, national examination, a scholarship selection, or a license to practice a profession. In connection to its flexibility, the study reveals that *Ruanguji* provides tests which have better layout and appearance than paper-based tests. It is known from the students' responses to statement three, inclining more to 'agree' (53 %) and 'strongly agree' (14 %). It is because *Ruanguji* makes uses of ICT to present its tests embedded by pictures, videos, and other media that their appearance become more attractive. It is also consistent with the previous study showing that MBA is more attractive because questions are augmented with pictures, clues, and explanations (Alharbi, Meccawy, 2020).

Besides the layout and appearance, *Ruanguji* also pays attention to the test quality, which is known from the students' responses to statement four. 60 % of them agree and 13 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* provides its users with the tests that have similar quality to those that the schools make; while the rest of them (27 %) do not decide yet. What the students find in *Ruanguji* teaches them how to identify the problems the items questioned in objective or subjective test types. They also learn how to determine the most correct option or answer for multiple or short-answer test; or to explain the answer and description for the essay type of tests. As they learn how to respond to the tests available in *Ruanguji*, they find it easy to do the real tests at schools. This finding is consistent with the previous research finding pointing out that the familiarity with the similar test type decrease the psychological and technical burdens in the real tests (Suzani, 2021). It implies that taking-test experiences helps the students cope with psychological burdens, like anxiety or worry; and technical burdens, like time management in doing the tests.

As a MBA, *Ruanguji*, provides its users with benefits and advantages to promote their learning and testing activities. Although there are benefits that test applications can offer, the research only focuses on the important ones. They include the students' high motivation, self-confidence, self-directed learning, and test score improvement. Motivation is one of the psychological aspects that influences the students' success in their learning. There are internal and external factors that contribute significantly to the increase or decrease of their motivation, one of them is the use of a MBA in learning and assessment. That is why the study also focuses on the impact of *Ruanguji* on the students' motivation to attend the test by preparing statement five. Responding to this statement, 13 % of the students do not decide; while, 40 % of them agree and 47 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* helps them to become more highly motivated to keep finishing the tests and other assignments. It is because the MBA places them in more joyful situation that they feel motivated to do the tests happily. What the study finds out is in line with the previous study that highlights the importance of MBA to sustain the students' motivation that influences their learning success (Rassaei, 2021). Motivation is an essential factor frequently used in explaining why some students perform better than others in their learning. It also determines the degree of effort and struggle which students spend at various stages in their learning.

Related to motivation is their self-confidence influenced by various factors, like availability of applications, or their habit of using the ICT. Apparently, the study shows that *Ruanguji* can enhance the students' self-confidence in taking the tests as evidenced by their responses' distribution to statement six (D = 7 %; N = 20 %; A = 60 %; SA = 13 %). Using MBA enhances

efficiency and ease in responding to test items, and provides the real time scores and feedback. So that they can identify their potential by analyzing their strengths and weaknesses; and determining supporting and non-supporting factors. As the students get such experiences individually, their self-confidence increases significantly. This finding is consistent with a previous study pointing out that the MBA is one factor that enhances of the students' self-confidence in their learning activity (Lin et al., 2019). It is also what V. Persson and J. Nouri (Persson, Nouri, 2018) infer that there is a relationship between the use of technology and self-confidence. Self-confidence increases or decreases along with the students' experiences in using any applications to support their learning and testing activities. If they find it easy and enjoyable doing learning activities and assignments, they must be more confident in achieving learning outcomes or targets. Another research reports that self-confidence is one of factors that allow someone to move forward and achieve his/her goal (Ghasemi et al., 2020; Hava, 2021). To achieve even the smallest goals, the students must have a self-confidence. Obviously, *Ruanguji* can help the students enhance their self-confidence in attending the tests administered both in the application and at schools.

Another benefit *Ruanguji* offers to its users is the score improvement of subjects tested at schools as shown by the students' responses distribution to statement seven. Evidently, 27 % of them does not decide; while, 40 % of them agree and 33 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* enables them to get a higher score on tested subjects at schools. Their scores of tested subjects increase because they have already been familiar with the test types and items discussion available in *Ruanguji*. They are accustomed to identifying problems of test items, to managing time answering the questions, or to effectively retrieving the stored information. They become more focused on doing the tests and performing assignments and task correctly. As they have performed well in their tests, they can get the higher scores. This shows that *Ruanguji* can help them increase the scores of the tested subjects at schools. This finding is not different from the previous study stating that there is a positive effect on students' test score and exam pass rates after an online self-assessment test is introduced (Rezaee et al., 2020).

The ability to plan and organize the study is the last benefit the students get from *Ruanguji*. It is measured by statement eight stating whether *Ruanguji* helps them to have their learning activities well planned and organized. Although 33 % of the students do not have any decision on it, 33 % of them agree and 20 % of them strongly agree that *Ruanguji* enables them to plan and organize their learning activities well as they get more flexibility in attending the testing service application. They access *Ruanguji* asynchronously that they can attend all tests if they feel convenient. Therefore, they have times to manage more efficiently to engage all learning activities at schools; and avoid having activities to happen coincidentally. They can still put school programs and activities as their top priority to do. This means that flexibility in attending tests in *Ruanguji* enables them to organize their school learning activities as well. What the current study reveals is like the finding of previous research pointing out that MBA could help the students to organize their learning activities more efficiently (Barrett et al., 2021).

The second component of attitude discussed in the study is affective one. It concerns with the students' feeling and emotion associated with *Ruanguji* after having experiences using it. These comprise like, satisfaction, anxiety, and challenge for the application. The students' responses towards the affective component of attitude are available in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Students' Responses towards Affective Component

No	Statement	Responses				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I like to use Ruanguji because of its mobile compatibility feature.	0 %	0 %	14 %	53 %	33 %
2	I am satisfied with Ruanguji's connection and fast load of times.	0 %	3 %	7 %	50 %	40 %
3	I feel comfortable and excited about doing the school's tests and assignments using Ruanguji.	0 %	0 %	15 %	44 %	41 %
4	I do not feel anxious doing tests and national examination simulation in Ruanguji	0 %	6 %	17 %	60 %	17 %
5	I am challenged to do many test forms available in	0 %	0 %	7 %	53 %	40 %

	Ruanguji.					
	Average	0 %	2 %	12 %	52 %	34 %

Using the information available in [Table 2](#), the researchers can explicate the students' affective perception of *Ruanguji* after having used the application. Based on statement nine's responses distribution, 14 % of the students do not decide; while, 53 % of them agree and 33 % of them strongly agree that they prefer using *Ruanguji* to other testing application because of its mobile compatibility. It is about how an online resource can be accessed using mobile phones and personal computers. It offers the students a better interface that enables them to access testing materials, testing simulations, and test items discussion. In addition, all instruction to reach its features uses Indonesian language that makes the access to its features becomes more effective. The finding is consistent with a previous study pointing out that online learning platform should not be limited to personal computer but compatible with smartphones ([Qu et al., 2022](#)). For online assessment, like *Ruanguji*, mobile compatibility becomes one of the important user-friendliness to attract its users to access from their smartphones. They also want fast load times when they visit online applications as another characteristic a user-friendly platform should fulfill. About this characteristic, using the data of statement ten, the study reveals that 50 % of the students agree, and 40 % of them strongly agree that they are satisfied with *Ruanguji's* fast load times. If an application cannot fulfill this characteristic, its users must leave it. This is what a previous study highlights that due to lack of user-friendliness, including fast load times, students tend to not use online resources much ([Rahim, Sandaran, 2020](#)). Therefore, it can be understood that students like to use mobile application because they find it convenient and user-friendly ([Alghamdi, Shah, 2018](#)). They are more satisfied with mobile application than those without it ([Zhonggen et al., 2019](#)). Therefore, the MBA, like *Ruanguji* should care with fast load times as a part of user-friendliness to help the students access learning and testing materials more conveniently.

Another affective component that the study investigates concerns with comfort the students feel. As shown by statement eleven's responses distribution, 44 % of them agree and 41 % of them strongly agree that they feel comfortable and excited about doing school's assignments using *Ruanguji*. They do assignments conveniently with no pressure from their peers as they experienced at schools; and are more enthusiastic about finishing them. Feeling comfortable and excited enables the students to retrieve stored information or knowledge necessary to answer the questions or doing the assignments. What the current study points out is in line with the finding of a study showing that a MBA places its users in a peaceful situation or comfort ([Gao, Shen, 2021](#)). Complementarily, the students do not either feel anxious when they do tests and national examination simulation in *Ruanguji*. They do not feel disturbed by their peers asking to do some cheating and dishonest in answering the questions. They do not even worry about the scores because they can take another similar test in other opportunities. That they do not feel anxious is evidenced by their responses to statement twelve. Though 17 % of the students do not decide, 60 % of them agree and 17 % of them strongly agree that they do not feel anxious doing the tests in *Ruanguji*. This supports the previous study showing that using mobile application contributes to reduce its users' anxiety in learning activities, including doing tests and assignments ([Kacatl, Klimova, 2019](#)).

The last affective attitude the study investigates is about the students' being challenged to do many test forms, as shown by statement thirteen. It seems 53 % of them agree and 40 % of them strongly agree that they are challenged to do many test forms available in *Ruanguji*. It is because its features help them cope with the difficulties in completing the tests with more alternatives. This finding confirms the previous study pointing out that the students are challenged to creatively cope with currently real-world issues by the help of mobile application ([Imelda et al., 2019](#)). In addition, its features do not either make them bored spending a longer period to complete the tests. Similarly, Chi-Jen Lin and colleague ([Lin et al., 2018](#)) and Bacca-Acosta and Avila-Garzon ([Bacca-Acosta, Avila-Garzon, 2021](#)) in their research reveal that students endure for longer periods of time when they do the tests and assignments using MBA.

The third component of attitude in this study is behavioral one. It is about actions the students have done or might do in the future regarding *Ruanguji* as an attitude object. It covers making uses of the application, doing tests and national examination simulations, learning feedback, and other supplementary materials. The students' responses towards the behavioral component of attitude are presented in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3.** Students' Responses towards Behavioral Component

No	Statement	Responses				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I will be a licensed user of Ruanguji if I afford to pay the charge.	0 %	7 %	13 %	40 %	30 %
2	I will take a test in Ruanguji if I have leisure time	0 %	6 %	7 %	56 %	31 %
3	When I am visiting Ruanguji I will try to do more test forms my assignments.	0 %	7 %	11 %	50 %	32 %
4	I have taken national examination simulations in Ruanguji before attending the real tests.	0 %	0 %	14 %	46 %	40 %
5	I learn item feedback and discussion videos in Ruanguji to cope with difficulties in my tests.	0 %	0 %	5 %	58 %	37 %
6	Besides the testing service, I have learned other supplementary materials available in Ruanguji.	0 %	7 %	9 %	48 %	36 %
	Average	0 %	4 %	9 %	52 %	35 %

The students' responses towards statement fourteen are distributed mainly into three options. 7 % of the disagree and 13 % of the them do not decide whether they will be licensed users if they afford to pay the charge. While, 33 % of them agree and 30 % of them strongly agree that they will be licensed users if they afford to pay the charge. This implies that majorly they care about getting licensed membership or premium access to get more advantages in preparing themselves to attend national examinations. Getting premium access becomes their priority if they have financial support from their parents because they know how important this application is for their success in examination. In addition, the comfort that *Ruanguji* provides for its users also triggers them to get premium access. This is consistent with what the previous study founding out that learning and doing assessment become more convenient and easier when they have premium account to access the application (Hegarty, Thompson, 2019).

How they use *Ruanguji* if they have a premium account is understood from their responses towards statement fifteen. 56 % of them agree and 31 % of them strongly agree that they use this application if they have leisure time. It means that they do not set any definite time to use it because they still have regular classes at schools. So, a more flexible schedule after having regular classes becomes their choice. They do not either have any burdens to accomplish because it functions to support their learning. About this finding, a previous study has identified that the students like to use learning application which they can carry and access in their preferred time and place (Klimova, Polakova, 2020). They use it to reinforce what they have learned at schools by doing available tests and assignments in *Ruanguji*. They then become more motivated to engage in learning and testing resources and develop individual learning goals, like passing from national examination (Hasan et al., 2021). If they are highly motivated, they must be more curious about learning materials that will be tested, and doing various types of test and assignments. According to the students' responses to statement sixteen, some of them disagree (7 %) and some of them (11 %) do decide their option. However, 50 % of them agree and 32 % of them strongly agree that they will do more assignments and take various types of tests when visiting *Ruanguji*. They are engaged with more test types because they want to get more experience in doing tests and more be familiar with test items.

In their research, M.M. Asad and his colleague (Asad et al., 2021) mention that electronic assessment usually contains various forms of assessments, including collaborative approach-based assessment, interactive assessment, portfolios, and group projects for its users to access. Such forms of assessment open its users' perspective on how to attend the national examination. That is why it is necessary for the students to take national examination simulation that *Ruanguji* offers to help them realize the test types, test materials, item types, and item difficulty. If they are well acquainted with test simulation content, they will feel comfortable attending the real examination. That the students take the test simulations is evidenced by their responses towards statement seventeen. 46 % of them agree and 40 % of them strongly agree that they have taken national examination simulation in *Ruanguji* before taking the real tests; 14 % of them do not decide. It also shows that taking test simulations makes their self-confidence increases.

Their self-confidence can increase if they get real time feedback on the incorrect response to the questions or from a video discussion about the testing materials. This feedback helps them cope with the difficulties they have got or will get in finishing the tests. It is what statement eighteen unveils based on their responses to it. It is known, 58 % of the students agree and 37 % of them strongly agree that they learn something from the feedback and get new insights as solution for the problems. Similarly, recent research also highlights the importance of assessment feedback for the students to identify their weaknesses (Hung, 2019). Feedback becomes an effective way helping the students promote their learning and pass in the exams. However, they still need other supplementary learning materials because the feedback only concerns with the difficulties the students get in the test. Other learning materials become necessary for them to enrich their knowledge and skills and be ready to enter the national examination.

In this study, the students have already accessed other supplementary learning materials in *Ruanguji* as shown by their responses towards statement nineteen. 48 % of them agree and 36 % of them strongly agree that they have learned other learning materials. They focus not only on testing materials, but they also explore all *Ruangguru's* learning services, like *ruangguru* private (individual learning with the best teacher), *roboguru* (discussing difficult assignment with the best tutor), *ruangbelajar* (learning from video resources), or *ruangkelas* (free distance learning). So, they must find a solution if they get a problem in their tests. This is in line with the previous study asserting that, with the support of mobile devices, students can access various learning materials (Shadiev et al., 2020). Similarly, F. Rosell-Aguilar (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018) in his research also acknowledges the students could improve their knowledge and skills through mobile learning resources they access.

#### 4. Results

Regarding the discussion of the data available in Table 1-3, the study uncovers two important results, namely the content of their attitude and the attitude valence (positivity versus negativity). The students' attitude content is seen from the concept of a multi-component model conceptualizing attitude as summary evaluations that have affective, cognitive and behavioral components (Haddock, Maio, 2019). Using this concept, the researchers can assert that the students' attitude towards *Ruanguji* comprises cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude with different degree. The degree of each component is determined by their intension of experience, emotion, and cognition. For example, if they experience more using *Ruanguji*, their behavioral attitude will be greater than another two attitudes. However, it does not inhibit the existence of both cognitive and affective attitudes; they together make up their attitude towards *Ruanguji*.

Complementarily, to explain their attitude valence (positivity versus negativity), the study uses one dimension perspective. It postulates that the positive and negative elements are stored in memory at apposite ends of a single dimension, and people experience either the end of the dimension or a location in between (Maio et al., 2019). This means if the students' total responses accumulate in the area between the center and the right end (or agree and strongly agree), they must have a positive to high positive attitude. Contrarily, if their responses incline to the area between the center and the left end (or disagree and strongly disagree), they must have a negative to high negative attitude. While if their responses gather in the center, they must have no negative nor positive attitude. As the students' average responses towards the cognitive component (SD= 0%, D= 4 %, N= 20 %, A= 47 %, SA= 29 %) congest in the area between the center and right end, the researchers can claim that they have a positive cognitive attitude towards *Ruanguji*. This cognitive attitude shows that they are eager to accept innovation in learning activities, like the use of MBA. In short, the students have a positive cognitive attitude towards the use of mobile devices as learning tools, including *Ruanguji*, if they have experienced using the application (Tra, 2020).

Similarly, for the affective attitude, the study reveals the students' average responses (SD=0%, D=2 %, N=22 %, A=52 %, SA=34 %) get together in the area between the center and the right end. This means they have a positive affective attitude towards *Ruanguji*; and, to some extent their cognitive attitude determines it. The higher the students' cognitive attitude, the higher their affective attitude will be. This means the students' engagement with *Ruanguji* is expressed as like, preferences, satisfaction, or pleasure with it. For example, they prefer to use *Ruanguji* after they have experienced using some mobile assessment application. They use it because it has interesting features, like a user-friendliness, usability, or portability that become determinant factors of their positive

affective attitude. This result is consistent with the previous studies revealing that the students' positive affective is influenced by the applications' interesting features (Haleman, Yamat, 2021).

While, for the behavioral attitude the students' average responses (SD= 0 %, D= 4 %, N= 9 %, S= 52 %, and SA= 35 %) fall in the area between the center and the right end showing that they have the positive behavioral attitude towards *Ruanguji*. The behavioral attitude is about actions that the students have done or will do. The students will use a mobile based learning application, like MBA if they have experienced using it, and get more advantages to promote their knowledge and skills. Otherwise, if they do not experience well and get benefits, they will not use any applications. (Mun, 2018). They learn knowledge and skills conventionally with no technological support, and they do not use modern tools either when taking the assessments.

As the students have a positive attitude cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally towards *Ruanguji*, the study can claim that wholly they have a positive attitude towards this application. Their positive attitude is determined by many internal and external factors. Internally, its positivity is influenced by, for example, their experience, preferences, emotion, or perception of it. Externally, its positivity depends on its user-friendliness, like the ease and speed of access. Their positive attitude also contributes to their success or failure in their study. The higher their positive attitude towards *Ruanguji*, the more efforts they do to reach their target, and the bigger their opportunity to succeed in their examinations (Botero et al., 2018; Mukhallafi, 2018; Yarahmadzahi, Goodarzi, 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

The study aims to identify the students' attitude towards *Ruanguji* offering its users assignments and test simulations for national examination in Indonesia. Both discussion and result lead the researchers to draw some conclusion. Simultaneously, the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components construct the students' attitude towards *Ruanguji*. It is a positive attitude that sees *Ruanguji* as the supplementary media to face the national examination in Indonesia's secondary education. Their positive attitude impedes the occurrence or existence of their negative attitude towards this application. The domination of the positive attitude over the negative one enhances their intention to use the application, prepare and arm themselves with the quality test simulations. Therefore, maintaining the positive attitude in their memory becomes necessary by considering internal and external influential factors.

Besides the conclusions, the study also addresses recommendations for further studies. Those who are interested in the same topic can conduct studies with the different focuses, like research design, respondents, level of education, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary perspective. A study using correlational designs can be conducted to determine the relationship between the attitude and cognitive abilities. Experimental designs can also be done to know the influence of attitude on other variables, like performance and psychomotor ability. Other researchers can conduct similar studies in primary or higher education involving more learners and teachers as the participants.

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## The Beauty Commodification on Instagram Community Account of University Student in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study is concerned with the commodification of beauty that occurs on the @uicantikganteng Instagram account. This study aims to explore the cultural practice on @uicantikganteng that is interrelated in the Circuit of Culture so that it can form commodification. By using the method of virtual ethnography, the data analysis is obtained by observing critically of the content on @uicantikganteng which contains the commodification. This study is conducted by employing the cultural studies approach through Circuit of Culture by Stuart Hall and Commodification by Vincent Mosco. By emphasizing the several concepts of the circuit of culture which are production, representation, and consumption, the content on @uicantikganteng can form commodification of beauty. The results of this study shows that the photos uploaded on the @uicantikganteng Instagram account are seen as cultural practices that show aspects of production. Public who respond to the photo through follow, comment, like, and share show the consumption aspect. The uploaded photos represent the beauty stereotype that has long been believed by Indonesia's society. Those three interrelated elements contain commodification of beauty on Instagram account @uicantikganteng which can gain profit from the content by conducting paid promotion and selling Uii brand jackets. The forms of commodification that is found are audience commodity and content commodification.

**Keywords:** Beauty stereotype, circuit, culture, commodification, Instagram, Indonesian university student, media.

### 1. Introduction

In the current period of digitalization, people can hardly escape from what is called social media in which the users come from various walks of life. Through social media people can communicate with each other, and share stories. Besides functioning as a communication tool, social media is also considered an effective means of delivering information (Shimp, 2003). Given the large number of social media users today, almost everyone uses social media both in terms of friendship and business (Evans, Bratton, 2012).

Social media can be said to become part of the lifestyle of Indonesian people in which one of the popular social media platforms is Instagram. Instagram is a platform to share photos and videos in which attract the media social users to use Instagram. Based on Monthly Active Users (MAUs) in 2019, Instagram has 2.23 billion users monthly active (Pramanti, 2020). This popularity is due to the unique features of Instagram in uploading photos and videos in which it has various filters to change the image appearance. Instagram also allows the users to add captions and hashtags and also mention the other users, then the post can be shared instantly to other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr (Drenten et al., 2020). In addition, as a visual-based platform that focuses on the

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picture or the video, this encourages people to present themselves in Instagram (Lee et al., 2015). Uploading photos on social media can be used as the tool of self-presentation or it is often called as impression management. This self-presentation includes the presentation that is done either by individuals or groups in order to achieve their expected self-image (Boyer et al., 2006).

The high number of Instagram usage is also followed by the rise of Instagram accounts that repost someone's self-picture that is considered as beautiful or handsome. Berg, Kelly, and McKillop in Harris and Bardey (Harris, Bardey, 2019) stated that the aspect of self-presentation or self-picture tends to modify themselves to be more desirable. This kind of case is contained in many Instagram users that show beautiful and handsome people as the self-representation of the user. In @galericowokhits Instagram account indicates a collection of male public figures in Indonesia who are classified as handsome according to the admin criteria and people that participated in it. Another account that shows the beautiful faces can be seen from the account @maduragantengcantik that uploads Madurese who are beautiful and handsome. This phenomenon also happened within the several universities that show the student self-picture that is categorized as beautiful and handsome such as @ugmcantik, @unj.cantik, @unpad.geulis, and @mercucantik (Makarim, Dimiyati, 2020). Furthermore, in this research, the researchers analyze @uiicantikganteng which represents the beauty of UII students. These accounts generally upload photos from the student's Instagram page which are considered interesting and reflect Indonesia's beauty stereotype.

The beauty stereotype is previously affected by advertising and television and now it also includes the influence of social media based on fashion, culture, politics, religion, and economy (Verrastro et al., 2020). Indonesia's beauty stereotype itself, as stated by Prianti that analyzed the advertisement of female beauty products, it is found that female beauty standard accepted by society is having fair skin, glowing face, and slim body (Prianti, 2013). Male beauty standards in Indonesia is based on physical appearance (Putranto et al., 2020). The physical appearance that is considered as the handsome standard is having fair skin, sixpack body, and tall body. These photos which are regarded as beautiful and handsome attract the society to follow the account so that the admin can get income through paid promotion. For instance, in @maduracantikganteng and @galericowokhits as stated before, they also conduct paid promotion because the account has many followers due to the society's attention to follow the account. This desire to get income as a lot of attention to those accounts indicates that capitalism also plays a role here. As stated by Zulli, in this modern-capitalism, attention is the most powerful resource (Zulli, 2018).

The high attention of the society to follow those such accounts proves that there is a high consumption to see beautiful and handsome faces on Instagram. This also means that the beauty stereotype is still strongly believed by the society. We also argue that plenty of accounts that show handsome and beautiful faces will never be created if the admins do not consider the advantages in creating the account such as to gain profit and to gain popularity of the account itself. Hence, those accounts contain issues about beauty stereotypes and commodification. In addition, the admin's way to gain the popularity of their account through increasing followers, likes, and comments is done by setting the criteria of the photo and providing interesting captions, thus it has relation with economic, culture, and social purposes.

The Instagram account @uiicantikganteng posted the first photo in August 2014. When it was first posted, the photo had already received 24 likes and 9 comments. Currently, the Instagram account has 60.6k followers with a total of 1,745 photo uploads. The uploaded photo is based on the UII's student recommendation of the other student that suggested it to be posted in @uiicantikganteng through sending a message to the admin. However, the admins do not directly accept the recommendation, the admins have to select the recommendation based on their own criteria. Thus, the admins subjectively upload photos that show the beauty and handsomeness of UII's students that are accepted by the society. Within the uploaded photo, the caption that created by the admin describes the beauty and handsomeness of UII Students' faces, so it validates beauty stereotypes in society. In this case, the more beautiful or handsome the person in the photo, the more like that the account gets. As there are many followers on the @uiicantikganteng, the researchers argued that there is a form of commodification in which beautiful and handsome students' photos are used as the main subject to generate income through paid promotion and the admins' business. Thus, the Instagram account @uiicantikganteng is chosen as the corpus analysis due to the account actively conducting paid promotion and the admins' business along with posting beauty and handsomeness of UII students.

In order to elaborate beauty stereotypes in relation to form commodification, this study is analyzed using Circuit of Culture Theory by Stuart Hall and Commodification Theory by Vincent Mosco. In the relation between circuit of culture and commodity, the things that must be considered are interrelated acts on it such as intention, interpretation, consumption and desire, consumers and producers, wanters and wanted, customer and product, management and legality, laws and lawmakers, price and competition, on the other words it can be said as the ongoing processes of commoditization (Leve, 2012).

Regarding the cultural phenomenon that contains commodification within Instagram platform, there are several previous researches that also discuss it. The first research is conducted by Horta entitled *The Commodification of Body Positivity Movement on Instagram* (Horta, 2016). It was published in 2016. In her research, Horta explains how the body positivity movement can form a commodification that is created by the corporation. This finally leads to the change of the body positivity movement's goals which previously to motivate people, especially women, to accept their body as what it is, into a movement to get profit for the corporation. The second research is done by Afifah entitled *The Commodification of Devout Muslim Identity through Endorsement Pictures Posted on Oki Setiana Dewi's Instagram* (Afifah, 2017). This was published in 2017. This research explains how the devout Muslim celebrity shows her/his identity to promote Islam as a commodity by performing devoutness through their post on Instagram. Then, the theories that are used are celebrity endorsement theory by Grant McCracken and Anti essential identity theory. The third research entitles *Komodifikasi Perempuan dalam New Media: Analisis Media Siber terhadap Komodifikasi Perempuan dalam Akun Instagram @uns.cantik di Kalangan Mahasiswa UNS* (Cininta, Utari, 2018). This research aims to determine the form of commodification in the Instagram account @uns.cantik by using the theory of commodification by Vincent Mosco. The result of this research is that female students do not mind if their photos are uploaded in @uns.cantik then @uns.cantik account can grow to be famous because of uploading such contents.

This research also examined commodification but it has a different discussion of each substance that showed exchange value. The previous studies do not explore the interrelated cultural phenomenon within the development and the emergence of an Instagram account, especially the account that focuses on uploading beautiful and handsome faces. The discussion analysis of Instagram account @uicantikganteng uses circuit of culture by Stuart Hall to reveal that there is a form of commodification as proposed by Vincent Mosco. In this case, circuit of culture is a significant theory to explore and interpret the commodification form contained in @uicantikganteng. The concept of a circuit of culture has been discussed by Stuart Hall (Hall, 1997) as a cultural process consisting of: representation, production, regulation, consumption, and identity. According to Mosco, commodification is a changing process of goods and services that previously only assessed from its use value into a commodity that is demanded by the market (Mosco, 2009).

This study then aims to explore the cultural practice on Instagram account @uicantikganteng that interrelated in the Circuit of Culture so that it can form commodification. The research stated the research question is how beauty stereotype is seen from the Circuit of Culture to form a commodification on the Instagram account @uicantikganteng.

## 2. Materials and methods

The study was analyzed with the observation on the Instagram account @uicantikganteng using virtual ethnography method. The data was obtained by observing critically on the content of @uicantikganteng that contains commodification of beauty stereotypes. In analyzing this study, we applied a cultural studies approach in the theory of Circuit of Culture by Stuart Hall and Commodification by Vincent Mosco. The circuit consists of the production, representation, consumption, regulation, and identity which emphasizes the understanding of cultural practices meaning and indicating the processes of meaning that are constructed within cultures (Hall, 1997). Commodification is the process of changing the use value into the exchange rate (Mosco, 2009). Since the researchers examined commodification, the concept of circuit of culture only focused on production, representation, and consumption. Commodification is the ongoing process of commodities that can be seen from the interrelated process of the circuit of culture (Leve, 2012).

### 3. Discussion

In order to explore cultural practice on Instagram account @uicantikganteng, the three interrelated elements in the circuit of culture which are representation, production, and consumption are employed to show the commodification form. @uicantikganteng is an Instagram community account operated by several admins. The account content contains photos of UII students, both male and female, which are regarded as beautiful or handsome faces as well as the paid promotion and the admins' business. Aside from uploading beautiful and handsome faces, sometimes this account uploads entertaining content such as confide and horror stories in order to attract the attention of the followers.

The discussion of the circuit of culture in this study focuses on the beauty stereotype that relates to commodification. Therefore, the sequence of circuit of culture elements that are employed in this discussion are started with production, consumption, and representation as a method to reveal the commodification of beauty stereotypes on @uicantikganteng.

#### *Production*

The production means the process of creating the message, product, and campaign which generally focus on the practice within the society (Han, Zhang, 2009). The content that is uploaded by the admins can be seen as a cultural practice which obviously shows the production aspect. The uploaded photos are produced subjectively by the criteria of the admins. The admins create certain regulations for the students who want their photo to be uploaded and also for the students who want to recommend their friend. The regulation requires the student to send a direct message to the account by mentioning the name, major, class of year, Instagram username, and also attaching the best photo. On the other hand, the admins sometimes will also search it by themselves to find the photos which are in accordance with their criteria by sending a direct message to the students that are regarded as beautiful or handsome. In this process of production, the admins emphasize their criteria by maintaining the quality of the photos that want to be uploaded, on the other words the admins do not carelessly upload the photos as the admins should sort it out first before uploading the photos.

*"If the admins do not reply to your message, please do not spamming. We are going to read all of your messages, but we also have considerations"* (uicantikganteng, 2019).

The actual criteria of the photos that will be reposted by @uicantikganteng admins is not mentioned, however the uploaded photos clearly reflect the beauty stereotype in Indonesia, so that it can be said that the production in this account is influenced by the society's standard which successfully construct the meaning of beauty. The act of maintaining the quality of the photos that the admins upload also can be seen from their response towards their followers who ask about the term and requirement to make the photos uploaded on the account. The admins explain that if the photo is not uploaded, it means that the photo does not fulfill their criteria. Hence, the researchers argue that maintaining the quality of photos they upload is important in order to gain more followers, so that the admins are willing to do their best in managing the account.

Furthermore, according to Hall, production also includes imbuing or encoding the process which is affected by many factors, for example, certain circumstances, the availability of technology, and economical factors. In this case, the cultural practice is influenced by technology and economic factors (Hall, 1993). The availability of technology by the emergence of Instagram as the platform to share pictures encourages the society to upload the pictures which show their beautiful or handsome faces. Then, from the economical factor, the admins attempt to only upload the picture which reflects the beauty stereotype in Indonesia. By doing this, it will make people interested to follow the account which then it can be the admins' tool to get income through paid promotion and selling several products. The desire of the admins to get income is shown through the admins that usually announce that they conduct paid promotion that is shared through their *Instagram Story*. The language they use explicitly indicate that there is a desire to get income by stating that there will be increase in the price of paid promotion so that the admins ask their followers to be hurry to order their paid promotion service:

*"For your information, for those who want to do paid-promote, you can contact the number which is placed on our Instagram bio. There will be an increase of the paid promotion price for the next month and also there will be new rules"* (@uicantikganteng, 2018).

The promotion that they conduct also can be said as economically successful because the account often uploads the paid promotion pictures, both in the *Instagram feed* and also *Instagram story*. The profit-oriented tendency of this account also can be seen from the testimony given by

their customers in which those are saved on the *Instagram Highlight*. The admins provide a positive testimony in order to gain more customers. Other than that, the admins also sell their own products in a form of jacket and clothes which then proves that @uicantikganteng has an economic motive behind uploading the beautiful and handsome faces of UII students. Hence, by presenting the photos of the student that reflect the beauty stereotype in Indonesia, the emergence of this such Instagram account will re-emphasize the belief of the beauty stereotype itself which has been constructed for so long in Indonesia.

#### *Consumption*

According to Curtin and Gaither as quoted by Mohd, consumption means the product that is produced whether it will be accepted or rejected by the consumers and this is based on the consumers' belief, perception, and values (Thaker, 2018). In this research, the photos of beautiful and handsome faces of the UII students as the product is highly accepted by the society. Then, the consumer here refers to the followers of @uicantikganteng account that they are also involved towards the development of the account. The involvement of the followers can be seen from their action in giving recommendations of photos, giving like on the post, leaving the comments, and also sharing the pictures.

The account @uicantikganteng through their posts provide content that is highly demanded by UII's students. The high total followers that has reached 60,700 followers indicated their enthusiasm to follow this account. On the other hand, the paid promotion of @uicantikganteng is impossible to be conducted if they only have a few followers because followers are an important thing to be considered when an account has a desire to conduct paid promotion. The measurement of the Instagram account to do promotion is the total number of followers. The more followers we have means the more profit we get (Noah, nd).

These followers are also highly active by leaving their comments to compliment the beauty of the person in the picture uploaded. Other than that, the viewers tend to give many likes to the picture which represents most of the beauty standards today. The more beautiful the person in the picture is, the more likes that will be given in which the average likes is between 1500-5000 likes. Here, the followers strengthen beauty stereotypes to this society through this account. This finally leads people to be as beautiful as the beauty stereotype, so that their photos can be reposted in @uicantikganteng.

Furthermore, according to Leve, when the consumers consume the cultural object, it can empower, demean, disenfranchise, liberate, essentialize, and stereotype (Leve, 2012). In this research, the consumption towards the photos presented by the admin of @uicantikganteng can empower and stereotype the beauty concept simultaneously. The meaning of beauty is generally different from one to another country and in this case the admins of @uicantikganteng are indirectly trying to create a beauty stereotype in which the stereotype itself is based on the beauty standard in Indonesia. Therefore, besides of stereotyping the meaning of beauty, the account also empowering the belief in beauty stereotypes.

In addition, the followers of the account @uicantikganteng tend to give a bad comment on the photos which are regarded to not fulfill the standard of beauty. This means that the beauty stereotype has so much empowered on the belief of beauty stereotypes. However, it cannot be denied that the total number of positive comments are more than the negative comments. This can be seen from their response on the comments, such as: *"Wow, you are so beautiful"*; *"a handsome man from the Law major"*; *"finally my sister's picture is uploaded on this account"*; *"you are so charming"*; *Hello, admin, why my friend's picture is not uploaded? can you please check her account? (@mentioning the username)* (@uicantikganteng, 2021). There are still a lot of comments that is uttered to compliment the picture that is uploaded and also the comment to ask the admin in order to recommend the photos to be uploaded on the next time and it can be seen from the comments above that there is a tendency to feel proud if their photos or their friend's photos are uploaded on @uicantikganteng account.

Moreover, if we look deeply at the comment in the @uicantikganteng account, we can see that the female students' photos tend to get flirting from the man. On the contrary, the male students' pictures rarely get flirted. According to Denzin, consumption can present a set as gender, ideology, power, and social class are circulating and also shaping to one and another (Denzin, 2001). In this study, the ideology and gender are shaping and circulating to each other in terms of patriarchal ideology that see women as the object so that is why the female student's picture tends to have so many flirting from the opposite gender in order to compliment her beauty. In line with

this statement, according to Haryanto and Suwito, the traditional notion about gender sees women positioned merely as an object to be enjoyed by the male's gaze (Haryanto, Suwito, 2020).

#### *Representation*

Hall states that Representation is the process when language and other symbolic systems can be used to represent a potential meaning. Generally, representation is in a form of text which is created by the participant of the culture and it can serve to share the cultural space. Furthermore, according to Rosida, representation can be seen from system, thought, and language (Rosida, 2021). Here, we can see how the admin serves a caption on the photos they upload to describe how beautiful or handsome photos of the student are. As for example we can see below:

1. "Your smile looks like pepperoni on pizza that makes people to be addicted"

2. "Oh, this is the reason why people can get diabetes"

3. "Do you guys agree that all of the law students in UII are good looking?" (@uicantikganteng, 2021)

From that quotation, in the example (1) and (2), the admins explicitly admit that the person in the photo is regarded to have a beautiful or handsome face. Then, in the example (3), the admins clearly stated that the person in the picture has a beautiful face. The caption served by the admins as if they want to validate that the person in the picture is as beautiful or handsome as they said. Here, even though, the admins do not state clearly on their Instagram regarding the criteria fulfillment to be uploaded on @uicantikganteng, but the picture that the admins upload clearly reflect how beauty standard in Indonesia. This is because the admins generally upload the picture of female students who have fair, light, and glowing skin, pointed nose, and also has a slim body. Other than that for the male students, generally the admins upload the picture of the students who have an ideal body which includes a tall body, both light skin and tanned skin.

The emergence of this account within the UII students absolutely marginalizes the other students who do not reach those standards. Furthermore, for the female students themselves, it is shown that there is the construction of beauty that is done by the admins in categorizing the female students' beauty. The beauty construction is regarding the construction towards the beauty of Indonesian women. According to Evita, Indonesia is known as a nation with the diversity of tribes and culture which makes the beauty of Indonesian women are different from one to another area and it contains its own uniqueness (Evita, 2010). However, like what has been stated previously within Indonesian society, people believe that being beautiful means having fair skin, straight hair, and a lean body. Therefore, this beauty construction believed by the admins obviously makes the other students feel marginalized. The low self-esteem of teenagers can be caused by the consumption of the content promoted by the media (Silva et al., 2014). O'Brien then added that media can influence people because media becomes the strongest tool to present something that is presented through social media (O'Brien, 2015).

#### *Commodification*

After identifying the circuit of culture, @uicantikganteng relates to the commodification aspect that is interrelated within circuit of culture. The account @uicantikganteng presents content containing beautiful and handsome faces of UII's students according to the admin's criteria which is based on the beauty stereotypes. Furthermore, a lot of people are interested to follow the account, then supporting the account by giving their likes and comments so that the @uicantikganteng becomes a popular account within UII students and Yogyakarta regency where the UII campus is located. Due to the popularity of this account, it attracts people to promote their business by participating in paid promotion through @uicantikganteng. As previously explained, commodification is the process of changing the value of goods or services from use value into exchange value which is profitable. According to Mosco (Mosco, 2009), commodification is divided into three types, namely content commodification, audience commodity, and labor commodification. Thus, this case is categorized as the content commodification and the audience commodity.

#### *Audience Commodity*

From the economic aspect, the mass media is a business institution that was formed with the aim of obtaining material benefits for its founders (Sunarto, 2009). Nowadays, digital media, especially social media, have a global impact in business growth and it has become a necessary part of promoting the business product. The function of social media is largely easy to communicate with more than hundred people to inform them about the company product which the particular product has beneficial to them (Pourkhani et al., 2019). Furthermore, the impact that the company had due to running the business through social media is significantly increased. The such case is

led, according to Fournier and Avery, by the exploration of social media that branding the cultural landscape and focusing on marketing to consumers which in People's Web (Fournier, Avery, 2011). Other than that, in this digital era, the increase of the business is caused by the high number of social media users because according to Clarfloaty in Chianasta social media has the most influence towards people in human lifestyle (Chianasta, Wijaya, 2014). Therefore, many entrepreneurs whether the company or start-up business are interested in promoting their business products through social media.

In order to promote the commodity in social media there are several ways to conduct the promotion. Particularly in Indonesia, the promotion methods which are mostly found are using influencer or public figure marketing concepts and paid promotion in certain user accounts which have reached a high total number of followers. This discussion is focusing on social media on Instagram which is in the user account @uicantikganteng is conducting paid promotion. Paid promotion is a service to promote a business whether for good products or service products on social media. Generally, paid promotion is conducted by the social media account which has many followers and engages in frequent interactions with their followers. The high number of followers and its interaction is the requirement to attract entrepreneurs to use the paid promotion service to promote their product. This can be said that the number of followers in @uicantikganteng is important to conduct the paid promotion. It led to the term audience commodity reflected in @uicantikganteng which means the audience in @uicantikganteng categorized as followers.

The followers of the Instagram account @uicantikganteng until now in December 2021 have reached 60.700 followers. Based on the researchers' observation, during October until December, the number of followers had increased around 2000 followers in which previously it only had 60.500 followers. It means that this account successfully attracts many people to follow and interact through the features that are provided by Instagram which contains the content that attracts the attention of followers to be active. The content is related to the name of the account and the purpose of this account is beauty and handsome faces of UII students that are posted by turn with paid promotion service.

As stated before, the requirement of conducting paid promotion which successfully attracts many entrepreneurs to promote their product is obtained in the account @uicantikganteng which had conducted a successful paid promotion. Thus, the researchers argue that this account @uicantikganteng utilizes the amount of followers to gain income through conducting paid promotion and success by attracting many entrepreneurs using the paid promotion service to promote their products. In addition, not only entrepreneurs' paid promotion but also the admins promote their own business as well, that is UII jacket. It led to the term audience commodity reflected in @uicantikganteng which means the audience in @uicantikganteng categorized as followers. As it stated from Dallas Smythe in Mosco the audience commodity makes the audiences as commodity products which deliver them to advertisers (Mosco, 2009). The use of new media by the audience is possible because of the position of the audience no longer as part of the mass that can be controlled (McQuail, 2011)

#### *Content Commodification*

Commodification has become part of today's social life. Almost all aspects of culture from objects to traditions can be turned into traded commodities (Pröschel, 2012). The first commodity of the mass media is media content. The @uicantikganteng Instagram account presents student photos that have an appeal to their followers as the main content. Indirectly, this account seems to send thousands of followers to freely express various content that they find interesting. The interesting thing here is that it is visually pleasing to the eye as the beautiful and handsome faces of UII students. The comment column and likes feature that is provided in Instagram features seems to be a tool to trigger the followers in giving reactions to the content of the Instagram account which actually aimed to gain the interactions of followers. As stated before, the importance of followers can encourage the admins to gain income by conducting paid promotion. Vincent Mosco stated the concept of commodification as the use of media content seen from its usefulness as a marketable commodity (Mosco, 2009). In this case, commodification is defined more broadly as a process transformation of goods and services from their use value to commodities that are oriented towards their exchange rates in the market, because exchange rates relate to markets and consumers, then the commodification process is basically changing goods or services to suit the wishes and needs of consumers.



Based on one of the elements of the circuit of culture which is production the UII students' beauty is produced by the criteria of the admin so that the Instagram account is well organized which only posts the beauty faces that are accepted by the society. This statement leads to the term ideology of beauty stereotypes. Beauty stereotype here is also reflected in the comments of the interaction of the followers that commented in the uploaded photo which shows the consumption in circuit of culture. From the representation in circuit of culture the uploaded photo is representing the beauty stereotype that is attached in the @uiicantikganteng. The content of commodification depicted in the account @uiicantikganteng is not only uploaded photos regarding the beauty and handsome faces but also is in the other content in Instagram story feature which can gain the interaction of the followers.

Here, the content of @uiicantikganteng, which contains the beautiful and handsome faces, encounters the transformation of use value into a commodity which has exchange value. The use value of content containing beauty faces of UII students is to inform the beautiful and handsome faces of UII students to the followers. That value of beautiful and handsome faces is transmitted into a commodity or exchange value which is a tool to gain profit through conducting paid promotion and the admins' business. The paid promotion and the admins' business is posted by turn with the beautiful and handsome photos of UII's students which means the content is as a tool for gain profit. Thus, it can be argued that there is content commodification in which the UII's students uploaded photos on the @uiicantikganteng. In here, the admins actually exchange the UII students' beauty to get income so that it is formed as commodification. The content of commodification depicted in the account @uiicantikganteng is not only uploaded photos regarding the beauty and handsome faces but also is in the other content in Instagram story feature which can gain the interaction of the followers to conduct paid promotion.

#### **4. Results**

Based on the interrelated elements in the circuit of culture, it shows how the uploaded photo of university students on @uiicantikganteng can be produced, consumed, and represented. This finally leads to the meaning construction of beauty as it is showed on @uiicantikganteng account. The uploaded photos of university students are produced by the admins with a tight regulation of beauty standards that clearly reflect the stereotyping of beauty in Indonesia's society right now. Next, the uploaded photos are consumed by the followers based on the strong belief in the ideology of beauty standard itself and it then empower the other students to reach this standard. Further, the representation in this case is representing Indonesian university students who have beautiful and handsome faces. Besides that, seen from the element of production and consumption, the commodification appears in two forms which are audience commodity and content commodification. The audience commodity occurs when followers of @uiicantikganteng as the audience is utilized by the admins to get income through paid promotion and sell their own product. Then, the content commodification occurs as the admins emphasize the account on uploading photos of the beautiful and handsome faces of the students to get the audience's attention so it can be profitable for the admins.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Providing virtual-based, Instagram gives cultural practices. Especially in @uiicantikganteng account, the uploaded photos or the content contain interrelated elements of the circuit of culture. The elements of the circuit of culture led to the content of the account having beauty stereotypes and commodification substance, due to the contents showing the beauty and handsome faces of UII students that are posted by turn with paid promotion service. The commodification which means changing process values of things from use values into a commodity occurred on the Instagram account which the admins conduct paid promotion and selling their own business, UII jacket brand. This kind of Instagram account emphasizes the beauty commodification which is marked at the aim of the account, the response from followers which indicate beauty stereotypes, and the content itself.

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## Theoretical Concepts of Film Studies in *Cinema Art* Journal in the First Post-Soviet Years: 1992–2000

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### Abstract

Throughout the 1990s, the content of *Cinema Art* depended quite substantially on political and economic developments in the world and in Russia; theoretical articles about cinematography very often occupied a very modest place on the pages of the journal.

The frequency of theoretical articles in the journal *Cinema Art* in the post-Soviet 1990s ranged from six to thirty-five per year. At the same time, due to the sharp politicization and focus on non-film texts, the minimum of film theory in the journal's texts occurred in the first three post-Soviet years.

Our analysis of film theory concepts (in the context of the sociocultural and political situation, etc.) of the existence of the journal *Cinema Art* in the first post-Soviet decade (1992–2000) showed that theoretical works on cinematic subjects during this period can be divided into the following types:

- articles, discussions devoted mainly to theoretical analysis of the heritage of the classics of Soviet cinema, directing, the problems of Cinema and the Spectator, film criticism and film studies, etc. (L. Anninsky, O. Aronson, Y. Bogomolov, S. Dobrotvorsky, E. Dobrenko, D. Dondurey, V. Matisen, K. Razlogov, M. Turovskaya, M. Zak, M. Zorkaya, and others);
- articles on the theory of foreign cinematography (D. Komm, M. Trofimenkov, N. Tsyrukun, etc.).

On the whole, in the 1990s, as well as during the Perestroika period, *Cinema Art* drastically re-evaluated the history of Soviet and world cinematography and tried to objectively analyze the development of the current cinema process.

**Keywords:** cinema art journal, film studies, film criticism, theoretical concepts, cinema, film, cinematography, Russia.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper we focus on the analysis of theoretical concepts of film studies in the *Cinema Art* journal in the first post-Soviet years (1991–2000), when its executive editors were K. Scherbakov and D. Dondurey (1947–2017).

Until May 1993, the editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* was K. Shcherbakov, who was then appointed Deputy Minister of Culture of Russia. Since July 1993, the sociologist D. Dondurey (1947–2017) became the Editor-in-Chief of *Cinema Art*.

**Table 1** provides statistical data reflecting the changes in the journal's scope, circulation, and frequency between 1992 and 2000; the names of the editors-in-chief, the length of time they were

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in charge of the publication, and the number of articles on film theory for each year of the journal's publication are also provided.

**Table 1.** Journal *Cinema Art* (1992–2000): statistical data

Year of issue of the journal	The organization whose organ was the journal	Circulation (in thousand copies)	Periodicity of the journal (numbers per year)	Editor-in-chief	Number of articles on film theory
1992	Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, the staff of <i>Cinema Art</i>	34,6–50,0	12	K. Scherbakov	8
1993	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee on Cinematography under the Government of the Russian Federation, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, Cinema Center, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal, Editorial Board of <i>Ogonyok</i>	15,0–25,0	12	K. Scherbakov (№ 1-4) Editorial Board (№№ 5-6) D. Dondurey (№ 7-12)	6
1994	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee on Cinematography under the Government of the Russian Federation, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, Cinema Center (№ 1–4), Editorial Board of <i>Ogonyok</i> (№ 1-6), Unions of Russian Cinematographers (№ 3–12), Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	10,0 *	12	D. Dondurey	9
1995	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, Unions of Russian Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	15
1996	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, Unions of Russian	*	12	D. Dondurey	35

	Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal				
1997	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers, Unions of Russian Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	24
1998	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography, Confederation of the Unions of Cinematographers (№ 1–2), Unions of Russian Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	7
1999	Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography, Unions of Russian Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	9
2000	Committee of the Russian Federation on Cinematography (№ 1–10), Cinematography Service (№ 11–12), Unions of Russian Cinematographers, Editorial Board of <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	19

\* Starting in 1994, the circulation of *Cinema Art* ceased to be officially listed in the imprints of its issues. According to data available on the Internet, the circulation of the journal from 1995 to 2000 was about two thousand copies, i.e. even lower than in the 1930s-1940s.

## 2. Materials and methods

The methodology of the research consists of the key philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and social in knowledge; scientific, cinematological, sociocultural, cultural, hermeneutic, semiotic approaches, proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aristarco, 1951; Aronson, 2003; 2007; Bakhtin, 1996; Balázs, 1935; Bazin, 1971; Bessonov, 2012; Bibler, 1990; Buldakov, 2014; Casetti, 1999; Demin, 1966; Eco, 1975; 1976; Eisenstein, 1939; 1940; 1964; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; 2011; Kuleshov, 1987; Lotman, 1973; 1992; 1994; Mast, Cohen, 1985; Metz, 1974; Razlogov, 1984; Sokolov, 2010; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on the 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, appeal to the facts, analysis and synthesis of theoretical conclusions, etc.), on the historical approach – consideration of the specific and historical development of the declared topic of the project.

Research methods: complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis; theoretical research methods: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; empirical research methods: collection of information related to the project topic, comparative-historical and hermeneutical methods.

### 3. Discussion and results

Theoretical Concepts of Film Studies in “Cinema Art”: 1992–2000

History of Soviet Cinema

Articles on Soviet film classics published between 1992 and 2000 have undergone significant revision of previous views on the work of S. Eisenstein, A. Dovzhenko, D. Vertov, and other famous Soviet directors (Dobrenko, 1997: 59-73; 117-131; 2000: 96-111; Khokhlova, 1992: 21-25, Kleiman, 1992: 9-21; Kleiman et al, 1996: 10-21; Levin, 1996: 27-33; Malkova, 1996: 66-72; Podoroga, 1994: 90-102; Roshal, 1994: 104-113; Vertov's *The Jump*, 1992: 96-108; etc.).

An article by the film scholar E. Levin (1935–1991), for example, argued that “a common misconception led S. Eisenstein to an anticultural conception of art and the spectator, to the conviction that the enlightener in the name of bright ideas can treat the spectator as he sees fit, for he knows what he needs, while the spectator himself must not think. Thus enlightenment without a true understanding of culture and man is associated with arrogance, a kind of aristocratism, with contempt for the masses, with the imposition of ideas, with a tyrannical intolerance of other ideas, with the proclamation of the exclusivity of his concept: the only true, scientific, etc. ... The dictatorship that has been carried over into the realm of culture as a result of a lack of culture (not to be confused with a lack of education!) inevitably destroys culture from within with its totalitarian monotony, whereas culture is above all tradition, diversity, tolerance and respect for the spiritual independence of the individual. That is why for many years S. Eisenstein viewed art as violence! ... Aggressiveness was for S. Eisenstein the essence of the new art not through aesthetic incomprehension, but through the general understanding of society, where violence in the course of the class struggle was beyond any doubt considered the only and universal form of existence, the natural system of relations and the complete system of all values. But this was not everyone's understanding of history and modernity. Why did S. Eisenstein not rise above time, but merrily dissolved into it, coincided with it? Precisely because he was part of the anti-cultural movement. And why did he become part of it? There are many reasons. Not the least of them: the temperament, the rebellion against patriarchy in the broad sense, the sadistic complex, the absence of artistic roots and personal position in culture, ambition, the desire to get ahead, to play the first role, to take the lead – all this mixed up with a fiery enthusiasm, with faith in the people and in the revolution, with the desire to create for millions, to dissolve in them, with the search for their roots, kindred traditions” (Levin, 1996: 33).

The view that S. Eisenstein was a brilliant artist who consciously concluded an alliance with the forces of evil was also discussed in a discussion of his work, which was launched by the journal *Cinema Art* in 1996 (Kleiman et al., 1996: 10-21).

Film historian E. Dobrenko wrote rather harshly about the work of A. Dovzhenko, a “poet of the screen” who was so praised not so long ago. He believed that if his films (especially of his last period) are treated without “breathing air”, then “the shining world of Alexander Dovzhenko will appear before us in all its gaping emptiness” (Dobrenko, 1997: 73).

In a previously unthinkable perspective in relation to Soviet film classics was the article by S. Gurko's “Pudovkin's Erotic Films” (Gurko, 1993: 61-64), which boldly argued that *A Simple Case* and *Vasily Bortnikov's Return* are “really two erotic films, in the sense that they aim to attract my emotion, to capture me entirely, and offer me, on the one hand, to consume them, while, on the other, they consume me themselves” (Gurko, 1993: 61).

In the 1990s *Cinema Art* journal repeatedly returned to the work of I. Pyriev (1901–1968) and G. Alexandrov (1903–1983).

Film historian E. Dobrenko wrote that “Ivan Pyriev created not films but a genre in the Stalinist era. Not only did Pyriev create his own space, but as a talented and passionate mythological storyteller he also created his own mythology of Soviet space. These spatial models germinated in his films out of an outstanding social responsiveness, out of a truly irreproachable cultural sensibility, which was almost always defined by the word conjuncture, and which may seem strange in the context of a discussion of Pyriev, whose films are almost synonymous in

contemporary consciousness with kitsch and blunt tastelessness. But this famous blandness of Pyriev's films, and the often monstrous farce of his directorial decisions, was also, it seems, the result of his cultural super-sensitivity. Pyriev, apparently lacking artistic taste, never betrayed his intrinsic sense of time" (Dobrenko, 1996: 109).

Analyzing Alexandrov's film *Circus* (1936) the film critic K. Dobrotvorskaya noted that "the basis of the collective worldview of the 1930s is reality that turned into a myth, and one of the dominant motives of this mythology is the advent of the Golden Age. There is no point in talking about the contradiction between reality and its screen reflection – the form of conventionality is already embedded in the very consciousness of the time. On this path the traditional genres, already declared a bourgeois relic by theorists of the twenties, are being discarded. The needs of the viewer and his stereotypes of perception are reprogrammed by ideological reality, while life itself offers a formal-mythological system. At the same time genre mechanisms continue to function, producing specific formations: a historical revolutionary film, a funny comedy with a collective positive hero, a defense film. The peculiarity of G.V. Alexandrov's film *Circus* against this background is that the Soviet mythology, formed as if outside the field of culture, "meets" here the cultural mythology of the traditional genre of melodrama, which includes the film in a number of general cultural archetypes and associations" (Dobrotvorskaya, 1992: 28).

Referring to G. Alexandrov's last feature film, *Starling and the Lyre* (1974), film historians M. Kushnirov and A. Shpagin very accurately stressed that in it director G. Alexandrov and actress L. Orlova created "the last and most explicit variation on their favorite theme – 'the world of our dreams'. Its ideality is emphasized above all by its lack of time – a sense of "beginnings" and "ends". We have here three impressively extended chronotopes: a three-hour chronotope of the film itself, a long chronotope of the action taking place in the film (the 1940s and 1970s), and a certain chronotope of eternity, in which Orlova's heroine resides, remaining "eternally young" in all eras. This is indeed eerie, like any sense of timelessness, of the abyss. ... Without even wanting to, Alexandrov mirrored the phenomenon of Soviet consciousness and subconsciousness. ... This world – in its ideal state – did not suggest in its inhabitants any true, non-minimal passions, hobbies, priorities... except one, to be among the chosen by power – first and foremost, and consequently, by wealth, fame, honor. But certainly not ideology. This is the world our entire elite sphere has tried to live in, trying to build a paradise on earth for itself and at the same time not tired of fighting against the things that provided this "paradise" with proper comfort and "legality" – the pernicious influence of the West. ... Indeed: the only living purpose of all these espionage games and political intricacies was only one: to enable a beautiful woman and her chosen one to live up to her ambitions and innermost desires. Among bankers, generals, aristocrats, capitalist ministers. In chic mansions, ancient castles, fashionable hotels. In the most picturesque corners of Europe" (Kushnirov, Shpagin, 1993: 11).

The cinematic view of the work of the leading Soviet filmmakers of the 1960s and 1970s was also unorthodox.

Literary scholar and film critic L. Anninsky (1934–2019) analyzed religious motifs in V. Shukshin's works. He emphasized that "Vasily Shukshin became an iconic figure of Russian self-consciousness, torn for a thousand years between his mother's feminine, Christ-embodied "gentle" human-loving culture and his father's tough, warlike, rebellious, not yielding to any "gentle" male temperament" (Anninsky, 1990: 90).

Literary scholar I. Zolotussky wrote that in his films "Tarkovsky prefers culture to civilization. In his opinion, the divine plan reveals itself most of all in it: in the Gospel, which he considers the greatest creation of poetry, in music, in painting. At the center of the convergence of this plan with man is the image, which, unlike the symbol, cannot be comprehended to the end. Of course, such an interpretation is very far from the Church's interpretation of Christianity. But the artist is unable to express his view of the idea of God other than through paint, sound, or the silence of film. Tarkovsky confirmed this with his experience. And let the orthodox say that this is not pure faith but "mixing," there is no other way for the artist to comprehend God" (Zolotussky, 2000: 69).

Musicologist S. Sarkisian was convinced that "the peculiarities of the subconscious world of Paradzhanov's art are in the developed system of mythological thinking, and archetypal thinking, not specifically national thinking. ... Paradzhanov's methodological approach to texture is similar to the described musical approach. The composition of shots in his films can be analyzed through the prism of musical texture. In expository episodes Paradzhanov prefers to use a type of melodic texture that allows him to individualize individual lines of imagery or subject sequences, switching



the viewer's attention from one to another. "Skips", fixation of vision on different objects are natural for cinematography and do not look as abrupt a method of material development as in music. The polyphonic and harmonic types of texture used to develop or develop the material are more favored by Paradzhanov. ... Sergey Paradzhanov entered the history of cinema as a reformer of its language. Overcoming the literary narrative, he brought the poetics of painting, music, choreographic and pantomimic plastics into his films, thus enriching cinema with new patterns of art synthesis" (Sarkisian, 1995: 140, 142, 145).

A new cinematic perspective was also presented in the *Cinema Art* in relation to the work of L. Gaidai (1923–1993).

Film scholar M. Zak (1929–2011) insisted that in L. Gaidai's comedies "traditional "masks" only ostensibly remained unchanged, in fact they changed, moved toward voluminous comedic characters. The energy of movement stemmed from our way of life, their screen biographies were in their own way typological. Three comedy characters, like all Soviet people, worked hard in the sweat of their brow, even though their "occupations" were not listed in the social register. This trio was a comic projection of very serious concerns and problems" (Zak, 1996: 19).

And film critic S. Dobrotvorsky (1959–1997) was sure that "Gaidai, who never explained his own work, had a completely Hitchcockian attitude toward cinema. That is, if you recall Hitchcock's famous maxim, not as a piece of life, but as a piece of cake. Only this attitude, quite cynical, is capable of giving rise to the inescapable "pleasantness" of the film factuality, the heightened playfulness and technicality of the image as unconditional and authentic" (Dobrotvorsky, 1996: 13).

On this "monographic" and thematic background the film critic Y. Bogomolov dared to make bold generalizations, daring to publish on the pages of the *Cinema Art* an innovative "Brief synopsis of the long history of the Soviet cinema" (Bogomolov, 1995: 16-23).

In this article Y. Bogomolov convincingly argued that "pre-revolutionary cinema in Russia (as well as all over the world) was folklore-mythological (in the common parlance of the time – fairground). And in this sense it was a collective unconscious artistic creation. It was not yet to the full extent of the individual-author. As a consequence, the screen was dominated by archetypal heroes, archetypal motifs and mass, "low" genres" (Bogomolov, 1995: 17).

But then, gradually, the "collective stylistic myth-making transformed into an individual author's myth-making. Next to the fairground attraction, together with it (but not instead of it) and directly out of it, a spectacle was born that proved capable of forming the crowd's vague dreams of happiness, its latent notions of beauty and nobility, its social complexes, humanistic instincts and political reflexes. The viewer gradually begins to distinguish the films not only by their genre and the names of their (usually archetypal) protagonists, but also by their individual authorship, that is, by the direction. This is when the outlines of what would later be referred to as "auteur cinema" began to emerge" (Bogomolov, 1995: 17).

Y. Bogomolov argues that the confrontation of individual artistic consciousness and the collective-mythological subconscious largely determines the nature of the development of aesthetic motifs in world cinema in general and in Soviet cinema in particular, but it is in Russia that the 1917 Revolution gave this collision an exceptional tension, a level of conflict uncharacteristic for other cinemas (Bogomolov 1995: 17), which was soon manifest in the films of the 1920s leaders of Soviet cinema: S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin, A. Dovzhenko and others.

Evaluating the situation in the Soviet cinematography of the 1930s, Y. Bogomolov came to the conclusion that during this period, "first, the myth world is thoroughly material and sensual. Everything mental in it is material. In it metaphors, tropes, abstract concepts are things, physical beings. Sleep is a being. And death is a being. And memory is a being. In view of this, everything supernatural is natural, the contingent is unconditional. Second, the foundation and consequence of mythoworld is the absolute freedom of desire. Then there is the freedom to deal with Time and the freedom to move in Space. Freedom from moral tendentiousness. Mythic creation is, in a sense, an inverted universe. What in the latter was regarded as a superstructure acquires the meaning of the basis, and what was called the basis turns out to be a completely ghostly superstructure" (Bogomolov, 1995: 19).

In this connection, film scholar V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that Stalin's myth as the Father of Nations is not an obsession, not a malign invention of the System; this myth is of folkloric origin. In the art and press of the 1930s Stalin acquires all the features of the folklore Ancestor (Mikhalkovich, 1996: 111).

And film critic S. Dobrotvorsky argued that “myth is a direct and natural product of total realism, which declares reality completed and frozen. Turning to the aesthetics of the 1930s, we find in it just such a stable cosmogonic model of the world, where there is a place for the founding demiurge (Lenin) and his deputy on earth (Stalin), where the myth of creation (revolution and civil war) and the coming "golden age" (modernity) is present, where the pantheon of heroes and their antagonists (the myth of "pests") is formed. Ideology itself becomes mythology, forming a special kind of worldview, close to archaic ideas about the world and man's place in it. In this situation ideology also absorbs history, rewriting it in accordance with the demands of the "social order" (Dobrotvorsky, 1992: 25).

And then, in the post-Stalin era, as the mythocracy withered away and the mythoworld increasingly lost its former monolithic character, opportunities for legal artistic dissidence also emerged, the first manifestation of which was the so-called Thaw cinematography. That was the real rise of auteur cinema (Bogomolov, 1995: 21).

Analyzing cinematic trends in the Soviet cinema of the 1970s, Y. Bogomolov draws readers' attention to the abundance of screen adaptations of classic literary works in this "stagnant" era because “for major masters the classics served not only as a shelter from thought- and feeling-drying ideological dogmas, but also as a tool of polemic (often unconscious) with the establishment clichés of socialist humanism and Soviet patriotism” (Bogomolov, 1995: 23).

In addition, another tendency emerged at this time – “it could be called meticulous or pedantic historicism combined with an equally meticulous and equally pedantic psychologism. The most indicative example in this regard is the films of Alexei German... Historical authenticity and meticulousness in depicting the past is an inadvertent and disguised challenge to the social imaginaries and moral ambiguities of the present, which dated back to the birth of the pictures” (Bogomolov, 1995: 23).

M. Brashinsky, a film critic and film director, generally agreed with this point of view. He believed that in the USSR of the 1970s “the idyllic 'Chekhov-Goncharov' style was so pure that it permitted the spirituality, psychology and morality in general to unfold without having recourse to ideology – this was exactly what the Soviet retro was trying to achieve. It sought not to be composed, not to participate, but to disappear into the psychological detail, into the timeless experience, into the sunbeams on the open curtains, into the spicy expressiveness of the Art Nouveau style. It must be said that our retomakers were excellent at it” (Brashinsky, 1999: 92).

In this context, film scholar O. Aronson wrote that “there is a special realism of 'Soviet film'... Realism is not as a direction in art or a style mimicking reality, but a special situation, perhaps social – or rather social – which finds its embodiment in the insignificant details of the image itself. Their insignificance at the moment of watching the film is due to their habituality, to the already formed automatism of not seeing them, to the working mechanism of exclusion. The result of this neurotic sociality turned into an image, an image smoldering, fading, disappearing at the very moment of perception, turns out to be surprising and strange: the image of "Soviet film" is as if deprived of the most important thing – a sense of visibility, the ability to connect it with a certain imaginable whole. This image disintegrates into a series of titles of specific films by specific directors, into rare stylistic and pictorial successes. Each of us can easily list these individual episodes of that film era. But they remain mere facts, exceptions from which history is made. For example, the history of cinema” (Aronson, 1996: 147).

In his article, the writer and publicist D. Bykov harshly revises one of the flagship themes of Soviet cinema – labor – emphasizing that the main task of all Soviet art – and cinema art above all – was to prove “that joy can also come from an activity which is charged as an obligatory duty. Moreover, it was the obligation of the process that was supposed to evoke joy – the elation of fusion with a kind of collective body and collective work. Here, too, there is a common-sense moment, since it is precisely labor that allows for that collective fusion that, for a time, is truly capable of saving us from existential loneliness. Labor was a patented remedy for reflection, a panacea for superfluous reflection, and in this sense it faithfully fulfills its role in all Soviet films... The idea of competition is an intuitive attempt to replace the altruistic motive of labor with an egoistic desire for superiority and fame. It is not that stupid. Only ascetics and saints can work for altruistic reasons, while any normal person can work out of egoism, and he cannot help but enjoy the apotheosis of national recognition. The Soviet cinema of the 1930s was not stingy with such apotheosis” (Bykov 1996: 123-124).

D. Bykov went on to show that the subject of labor was gradually transformed and the "thaw" Soviet cinema of the 1960s poetized the process of labor, abandoning the pathos of tearing heroics and replacing it with a more "civilized lyricism. ... From a work first heroic and then festive, labor becomes a romantic-poetic affair, and thus its portrayal either acquires a deliberately theatrical, conventional character... or is diluted with a landscape, the taiga construction sites contributing to it" (Bykov, 1996: 123-124).

And then, as D. Bykov rightly argued, the labor themes of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s were subjected to considerable corrosion: "An outlook crisis of the seemingly secure proletarian became apparent: work brought no joy or consciousness of its heroism. ... Labor as a monotonous, tiresome and ultimately fruitless process is on full display in the cinematography of the 1970s, where the heroes work hard to fulfill the ruling ideology's aims, but this labor brings them neither joy nor satisfaction, for it does not remove the traditional psychological problems" (Bykov, 1996: 125).

In this context, film critic V. Matizen gave a sweep of the Soviet ersatz-genre "production-labor" film scheme, which looked as follows: 1) the hero comes to the production object "from outside," usually as a result of a "new assignment"; 2) notices a "separate defect" in the object and tries to eliminate it; 3) encounters the opposition of the antagonist "pest" or conservator; 4) meets an assistant and overcomes opposition; 5) produces the object improvement he seeks (Matizen, 1993: 125).

Film scholar V. Fomin lamented that during the period of "perestroika" in Soviet cinema, in fact, remained untapped spectacular possibilities of folk traditions: "Not only the "author's" movies, but also films popular spectator genres have not guessed or did not want to accept the true social order of its audience. Perestroika film did not find sufficient strength and courage to confront the tragic reality. With few exceptions, it was ruled by the same destructive moods of despair, horror and pessimism that swept society. Instead of confronting the gathering gloom, Perestroika cinematography itself continued to exacerbate and aggravate it, usually limiting its task to a superficial depiction of the horrors and nightmares of a collapsed Soviet civilization. The public was already fleeing the cinema, while detectives, melodramas and action movies about the all-powerful mafia just as stubbornly and blindly continued to pour salt on the wounds that were already bleeding, and to heighten fear, despair and revulsion of life. What people needed in these years was a Fairy Tale – mischievous, kind, full of faith in life, in the victory of the good. These were the years when our cinema could have benefited from the lessons of folklore culture, its spiritual and aesthetic experience of confrontation with harsh reality. Unfortunately, it did not happen..." (Fomin, 1997: 49).

Some journal articles on the history of cinema were devoted to the pre-revolutionary period (Kazakova, Kazakov, 1995: 62-68; Turovskaya, 1997: 108-113; Yangirov, 1995: 56-61), the Great Mute of the 1920s (Mikhalkovich, 1995: 4-9; 218-221; Nusinova, Tsivian, 1996: 30-26; Turovskaya, 1997: 108-113), the sound cinema of the 1930s (Dobrenko, 1996: 97-102), the phenomenology of Soviet cinema (Anninsky, 1996: 95-96), Soviet films forbidden by censorship (Margolit, Shmyrov, 1992: 26-36), ideological film mythology (Matizen, 1996: 141-143), the themes of heroism (Dobrotvorsky, 1996: 113-116), espionage (Tsyrukun, 1996: 131-134), and love (Abdullaeva, 1996: 135-140), Lenin as a hero of the *cinematic thaw* (Margolit, 2000: 84-94), etc.

The article by the film critic E. Stishova, "Cinderella's Adventures in the Land of the Bolsheviks" (Stishova, 1997: 99-107), where she reasonably stresses that in Soviet cinema as well as in Soviet cultural policy in general the prototype of Cinderella as a sign of an oppressed woman liberated by the Soviet power for a new happy life was actualized in the consciousness of society at the instigation of the revolutionary leader himself, when he made his careless remark about a cook who is not weak to rule the state (Stishova, 1997: 99-100).

The problem of film mythology in its concrete refraction was also touched upon in the article by the film critic S. Dobrotvorsky (1959–1997), "Film *Chapaev*. The Experience of Structuring Total Realism" (Dobrotvorsky 1992: 22-280), in which he suggested that the term myth-making that now frequented the Soviet art of the 1930s should be concretized in the sense of "total" or "universal" realism. This reveals the main characteristic of the realist method-its claim to the absolute and final authenticity of the depicted, the mandatory for all plausibility, which is in principle characteristic of the classic myth, which interprets the world in unconditional, perfect forms that transcend experience and logic. "Chapaev by the Vasiliev brothers is an impressive example of the fully realized possibilities of totalitarian aesthetics" (Dobrotvorsky, 1992: 22).

A new perspective on Soviet films of the 1930s-1950s intended for children's audiences was presented in an article by film critic V. Pritulenko (Pritulenko, 1993: 98-107). She noted that these films for children were dominated by a “cult-like reverence for living 'gods' – members of the government or, at worst, 'demigods' – shock workers, Stakhanovites, record-breakers who embodied the possibility of a 'bright way' for every ordinary citizen” (Pritulenko, 1993: 99).

It was in these kinds of films that the Bolshevik morality was vividly “distorted, parodied Christian morality: it is not enough to see the log in your own eye, it must be found in the eye of your brother... Most of its "principledness" (especially in the films of the 1930s) extended to the attitude toward adults, mostly toward parents. This inherently monstrous distortion of centuries-old morality is presented as a necessary component of the new mentality. The goal is simple and obvious: a totalitarian regime is by nature bound to permeate everything, including the family. This is why the family is erased as a value in the mind. In cinema this is not always done directly and blatantly. Very often the action takes place in a collective, non-familial environment: in an orphanage, a commune, a pioneer camp, a school class. Thus, the family becomes a collective... If the conflict unfolds in the family, then in the overwhelming majority of cases it has a destructive force” (Pritulenko, 1993: 100-101).

One can probably agree with the fact that up until the early 1960s, “the young viewer was constantly indoctrinated: 'one is zero'. Dozens of plots varied the conflict of the arrogant loner with the team. Perhaps no other postulate (with the exception of the sacramental "beware!") has not been hammered into children's heads with such consistency as a categorical demand not to break away from the majority in any way. Any aspiration to independent manifestation of personality was seen as an opposition to the majority, subordination to its interests and equal possibility for all to be crushed, ground up at the slightest attempt of personal confrontation” (Pritulenko, 1993: 102).

We also agree with V. Pritulenko that “totalitarian ideology seems attractive also due to the fact that it rests as if on a healthy basis. However, it reflects the generally accepted moral norms as in a crooked mirror. Whereas, for example, patriotism is the love of one's homeland and thus service to the call of conscience, the totalitarian system requires not so much love for the fatherland as for the political system and the ruling party. Patriotic education thus becomes demonstrative propaganda, open recruitment under the banner of the System, whose dark sides are constantly being hidden. But despite the fact that the world on the screen of the 1930s-1950s appears stable, joyful and radiant, it is constantly exposed to the machinations of hidden enemies” (Pritulenko, 1993: 104).

The *Cinema Art* journal of the 1990s published many film critics of the relatively younger generation. However, the "old guard" of the 1960s did not give up their positions either. For example, cultural studies scholar and film critic M. Turovskaya (1924–2019) published one of her best works on the history of Soviet cinema: “Cold War Films” (Turovskaya, 1996: 99-106).

In it she reminded readers that “cinema as a state monopolistic branch of culture had to respond – and did respond – to the style of the Soviet empire. Costume, historical and biographical films about national genius made up an essential part of the production... Although the "Cold War" movies in templar offered as if a sharp modern, publicistic counterpoint to the historical films, in fact they represented the same costume, setting part of the repertoire. Between the newspaper, propaganda acuteness of the task and the individual handwriting of the director (and these films were directed by masters) lay a layer of ideological and aesthetic stereotypes, very precisely dated by the last "five years" of Stalinist rule. The agitational purpose of the films was to present the yesterday's ally in the anti-fascist struggle as an enemy. ... The identification of Americans with Nazis is the only "secret" of the whole package of Soviet Cold War films” (Turovskaya, 1996: 100).

On the other hand, “what we know now about relations in the upper echelons of power”, M. Turovskaya continued, “is rougher and scarier than the fictional squabbles of the 'sharks of capitalism. But the atmosphere of mutual suspicion, boorishness, cynicism, fear, complicity, and dissociation that colored the final years of Stalinism and was completely displaced from domestic themes, could only be realized in the construction of an enemy image. The possibility to speak in plain language about experiments on human beings, to provoke riots and arrests, and to blackmail one another was a real consequence of totalitarian regimes, a depletion of the cultural and moral layer, of the natural resources of man” (Turovskaya, 1996: 106).

Discussing the history of Soviet cinema in the 1970s, literary critic and culture expert M. Lipovetsky discussed the image of the protagonist of the famous Soviet film series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973) and explained his "long-lasting" popularity: “Stirlitz was not lost in

folklore and not lost in the era that gave birth to him. This character has formalized the paradoxical archetype of our non. The main thing in Stirlitz is the contradiction between what we know about him and how he behaves. We know that he is "ours" and that he works for "us." And yet in everything – in the way his civilian suit or his SS uniform sits, in the way he talks to his superiors with dignity, in the way he drives his car, in the way he drinks coffee and cognac, and of course in the way he smokes elegantly... – in all this one can sense a non-Western man, or rather, the way this Western man is drawn in the Soviet collective subcortex. ... Stirlitz also embodied such a Western trait as rationality (everyone remembers how he plays with matches) with maximally subdued emotionality (meeting his wife), which is archetypically equivalent to "Russianness". Emphasized "non-ours" Stirlitz expresses itself in the undisguised admiration with which the camera follows him in the bars where he sits, on the clean streets on which he walks, in the office and home interiors, which pass his life. We almost forget that it takes place at the end of the war, under bombs, etc. Here there is a desolation of form characteristic of myth, what Roland Barthes called the "decay of historicity": in the myth of Stirlitz the destroyed Berlin and the defeat of the very "ordnung" that is so persistently aestheticized disappears" (Lipovetsky, 2000: 73-74).

All this, according to M. Lipovetsky, "allows us to see in Stirlitz a second archetypal plan, which uses the model of the spy as a metaphor: this hero created a symbolic alibi for the ideal Soviet intellectual, justifying and heroizing his metaphysical non-membership of the system (not Nazi, but Soviet, of course) to which he physically and historically belongs, his carefully cultivated "our", which, in fact, is meaningless and empty outside the gravity of "our". In a word, Stirlitz is an ideal mediator who unites the Western and the native Soviet world... He proves that it is possible to combine service to "ours" and being "not ours"; it is possible to serve but not to belong, and vice versa, it is possible to belong but to serve something else. ... This whole Stirlitz mythology proved to be surprisingly necessary today, when practical attempts to combine the skills of Soviet existence ("our") with Western style and relations ("not our") proved their problematic, to put it mildly, when the Perestroika dream of Russia immediately becoming America, if it got rid of the Communists in power, painfully proved its groundlessness repeatedly. On the ruins of these utopias, the Stirlitz archetype gained unprecedented relevance" (Lipovetsky, 2000: 74).

#### Theoretical Film Concepts

Articles on film theory in the *Cinema Art* journal in the first post-Soviet years were quite rare.

Film critic V. Matizen offered his readers a "Brief course in the paratheory of Soviet cinema" (Matizen 1993: 122-126), reminding them that, beginning in the 1960s, the Soviet "bureaucracy permitted vulgar sweetening of ideological pills. Of course, this could not but affect the quality of partisanship. A typical example of this degeneration (not without pernicious Western influence) are the historical revolutionary films, which have become mere action movies in which "ours" won by apt shooting and slyly playing with the enemy, rather than with the all-powerful-but-true ideas of the author of Communist Party Organization and Communist Party Literature. By the mid-seventies, as a result of the blurring of the single Communist Party channel, three class streams had formed in Soviet cinema: "Party" educational cinema (PC), "author's" intelligentsia cinema (AC), and "genre" democratic cinema (GC). (Note that the most powerful flow was that of 'grayness' or 'light', which arose from the mixing of these organically incompatible substances and occupied up to four-fifths of the repertoire)" (Matizen, 1993: 122).

Further, V. Matizen gave rather clear definitions of the concepts he highlighted: "PC can be defined as ersatz folk. It also prefers answer to question, result to process, optimism to pessimism, simplicity to complexity and clarity to vagueness. AC corresponds to the innovative function that intellectuals perform in society: it is the art of doubts and agonizing reflections, of last questions and the search for the meaning of life. It is eternally searching and not finding, denying itself, and from time to time throwing its ancestors off the ship of modernity. GC, on the contrary, is the art of affirming the old and repeating the past. It prefers truth to fiction, reflection of life in the forms of life itself to frank conventionality, final questions to final answers, complexity to simplicity, knowledge to entertainment" (Matizen 1993: 123).

As a result, Matizen concluded that "on the whole, Soviet PC expressed the dominant Bolshevik mentality – the ideological myth of transformation, which created a stable model of a world constantly changing for the better, and which expressed a sense of social optimism and an irrational confidence in the all-powerfulness of the will, which the Bolsheviks shared with the Nazis and which went back to the occult. This ideological myth, which became a video myth in cinema,

had three aspects: the transformation of nature..., the transformation of civilization... and the transformation of man” (Matizen, 1993: 125).

In contrast to V. Matizen's article, which to a large extent continued the critical film trends of the "perestroika" era, the publication of an article by film scholar N. Izvolov entitled “What is a Frame?” was quite unexpected (Izvolov, 2000: 26-33). As we noted earlier (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2022), this kind of subject matter was very characteristic and relevant for the *Cinema Art* journal in the 1930s, but then for many decades went into the shade.

However, this did not embarrass N. Izvolov, and he offered his own definition of "frame": “The frame is a psychological barrier that separates the viewer from the spectacle. A frame is a system defined by the geometry of a rectangle. Frame is a system which preserves the illusion of three-dimensionality, but is able to instantly destroy it by focusing the viewer's attention on the flat surface of the screen, that is, on the frame itself. The frame is a system stretched in time... Since a single snapshot from the film produces a certain momentary effect (residual vision), it should be taken as a starting point for further reasoning. The frame is a system that changes the real relations of objects to each other and their movement in life. Frame is a minimal material piece of film structure. The frame is a criterion for the "documentality" of cinema, a document of a pre-camera fact. ... Thus, the frame is one of the possible structures of human consciousness, gravitating toward the mutual substitution of perceived time and space in a geometrical frame, balanced by the mechanical pressure of external interference tending to decompose the visual message into minimal units, and the internal pull toward expansion, the accumulation of natural changes. The frame is definitely an out-of-film formation” (Izvolov, 2000: 120, 126).

But then N. Izvolov passed to the point in which the "frame" in cinematography differs from the "frame" in videosphere noting that the videotape “moves continuously, there are no phase skips. Discretization does not occur between frames, but within frames (lines). This is important for speed-changing effects. There is no optical image on the film. ... There is no sense of the viewer's inclusion in the box-camera, which means that there is no identification of consciousness with the mechanism of fixing reality and, as a consequence, other reactions of the viewer to the intraframe movement. A different sense of a still frame... In general, the texture of a video image has a very different nature than that of a film image. Brownian arrangement of photoemulsion microcrystals is replaced here by mathematically boring lines” (Izvolov, 2000: 126-127).

And further, moving on to digital audiovisual technologies, N. Izvolov reminded that a “digital signal can be recorded on any magnetic carrier. Of the three components of the film frame (time, space – length and speed) only time remains. Space is replaced by capacity, and speed can be anything. The texture of the digital image is close to the cine-image in its richness but there is nothing "Brownian" about it. Each point of an individual frame has its own once and for all established place. Thus, the natural world itself becomes discrete, its image is deprived of internal borders, "seams", it is fluid and can be easily falsified. This image has no defects of mechanical origin. Any digital image can be copied an infinite number of times without loss of quality just as a computer file is copied. The internal "cultural layer" ceases to exist. ... The nature of digital video is remarkably reminiscent of the possibility of cloning living organisms – hardly a coincidence” (Izvolov, 2000: 127).

The theoretical article by the film scholar O. Aronson, “Kant and Cinema” (Aronson, 2000, 96-99; 75-78; 95-99), in which he argued that “Kant's reflections today are interesting because they imply language as only one of the possible mechanical means of art, whereas we still cannot get beyond the notorious 'language of art'. By "notorious" I mean only that language is preserved as a condition of the continuity of meaning, as a certain technological foundation for the production of truth in the form of a representation or image, which itself is the limit of technology. This is the way Heidegger thought about language and this language ignores cinematographic specificity. He archaizes any art, turning it into an art of the past, and if he speaks of contemporary art, then as a word in a state of extinction, even in the act of extinction leaving ways for the revelation of the hidden, in which Heidegger's "techné" is involved, thought of not just as production, not just as work, but as "production of truth", as "poisis”” (Aronson, 2000: 98).

From the analysis of Kant's philosophical views O. Aronson moves on to the notion of “the image in cinema”, concluding that it “is not produced by montage, perspective, light, but dictates montage, perspective, light, since it is images that constitute the very matter of cinema, which – and in this we can agree with Pasolini – is the same as that of visible reality, dream, and fantasy. It is a matter in which the image is not a rhetorical figure, not a metaphor, not a trope, but

a momentary affect, a fluidity of the world not held in any language. This is why there is so little in the way of technology, the construction of the frame, the movement of the camera to understand the pleasure that comes from film. We make the mistake of looking for cinematographic complexity in technology because we think that technology is language, that is, a set of tools for the production of images, but we forget that the images of cinema are different, they are directly related to perception and are prefigured by the word. If the image is thought of as pro-produced, then we are dealing with metaphorization, symbolization, etc., which, of course, is not uncommon in cinema, but has to do with a very different tradition of understanding art – the tradition of continuity of meaning, primarily literary or, at least, literary-centric” (Aronson, 2000: 99).

Thus, – made a logical conclusion O. Aronson, – that “making in cinema is more 'natural' in the Kantian sense, more related to feeling and instinct. And this is not surprising, since cinematic emotion is not the experience of value... of the work, as in traditionally understood art, but the experience of an image that is not perceived as produced. These images and emotions are not individual, they are actualized only as affecting another, these images are always shared (no matter how "authorially" they are presented), which is what allows them to be film images. The individuality of the filmmaker, who constructs a cinematic statement, is always at odds with the imagery that is used for this purpose. One might even say that the filmmaker-author uses images as a tool always by accident, thinking he is using technology. It is this randomness, being repeated more than once, that allows it to connect with the private phantasm of an individual author or an entire school of cinema. "Made" turns out to be immersed in the realm of the kind of private efficiency that can become an affect-for-everyone. It turns out to be the unthinkable source that feeds our ability to call something art. Such "madness" is technologically irreproducible (though it lacks a Benjamin's aura), but remarkably repeatable. It is repeatable not by virtue of authorship, but by virtue of perception, which no longer belongs to each particular "I", but is common” (Aronson 2000: 99).

It is curious that A. Birger, who turned to the topic of the mutual influence of cinema and theater, so fashionable in Soviet film studies at the turn of the 1950s, argued in his article that “approaches to the new hero in cinematography have been found. They are found thanks to the "theatricalization"... It is a paradoxical situation – in this very respect the theater lags behind the cinema. The theater has everything except a hero, except a living person, without whom the hypnosis of texture will always leave the spectator with a feeling of a certain emptiness, dissatisfaction and resistance to the hypnotic influence of the play” (Birger, 1992: 33).

Reflecting on the current cinematic process, film critic Z. Abdullaeva noted important and very typical post-Soviet tendencies when “contemporary cinema eye – no matter how sharply different specific films and the professional skills of their authors – fixes exactly a subconscious rejection of the matter of everyday life in its unpredictability and otherworldly domesticity. And ultimately, the rejection of human relationships. As if "the exit to the human experience" is closed, and, therefore, the possibility of interpretation of this experience. As if the people who write the stories, making films and playing in them, do not live here. Although you can't call them aliens either. After all, they are not so alienated from the new, long ago natural scenery as to describe with an outside eye what people can dream today, what to talk about, think about, experience, how to dress and what to feel outside of extreme events. The time of human life has been reduced to the time of day, and space to the privatized square meters of new Russians and old nags. But the excited craving for extreme everyday life evaporates one insensibility from perception. That's why it's impossible to discern the fragments of any present and future subjects, self-developing behind the scenes. ... Probably, professional stereotypes blur the gaze that lacks pseudo-fearlessness, since no organic link with reality is given, and everyone is tired of grotesque conventionality, and they induce us to be satisfied with the image - the famous art of our cameramen that is always visible, an aestheticized picture that cancels the ability of non-violent immersion into phenomenal film reality, devoid of stable contextual connections, meanings and implications” (Abdullaeva, 2000: 108-109).

Z. Abdullaeva was sure that this kind of “ban on reality is a cultural ban, not a political one. At the same time, spontaneous or deliberate disdain for reality not only pre-empted hypnotic dependence on it or promoted "free speech", but also determined a hard-to-explain discrepancy between the gaze (the gaze) and the essence (of things). There was no desire to look. The vision had to be extinguished both in exemplary projections of pink, washed-out "realism" and in so-called "black". Not only the instinct of self-preservation was triggered, but also an inner conviction of the

need to decorate (or even disfigure), poeticize or spiritualize the "unaesthetic space". But the main thing is to beat or skip it. Now it seemed reasonable – as a reaction – to abolish the aesthetic relationship with reality, to rinse the film eye from its former conventions. But the boundaries between the imaginary and the hyper-real had been blurred long before postmodernism... But the principle of simulating reality was never as irritating as it is now for some reason. Perhaps this is due to a sense of a new cultural hierarchy. For some people it smacks of another totalitarianism, for others it means a search for a constructive (mythogenic?) assemblage point" (Abdullayeva, 2000: 110-111).

One of the articles of film critic A. Plakhov was dedicated to the theme of grand style in world cinema (Plakhov, 1995: 51-55): "Not so long ago it seemed obvious: grand style has decided to die together with the values of classic humanism and such of its mastodons as Visconti. On the other hand, the grand style in twentieth-century culture remained linked to the attributes of heavily ideologized, let's face it, totalitarian societies. Since nostalgia is a total feeling, it also embraced phenomena once considered avant-garde. To put it in mental quotation marks, the grand style of Antonioni, Truffaut, Godard and, finally, Fassbinder somehow reconciled culture, counterculture, commerce, ideology and authorship. But the efforts of geniuses were not enough, and the bond of time dissolved. There came a post-epoch of conveyer myth-making" (Plakhov, 1995: 51). Moving on to specific examples of cinema from the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, A. Plakhov sees a revival of the "grand style" in the films of B. Bertolucci and N. Mikhalkov.

The film critic A. Doroshevich attempted to theorize about the relationship between such traditional film genres as detective and thriller (Doroshevich 1994: 73-81).

He argued forcefully that "as the film detective as a genre has constantly acquired additional colors in order to be more in line with the cinematic principle of exciting interest and emotional involvement of the viewer at every moment of the unfolding of the action. The main thing becomes not the resolution of the mystery of the past, but the intense anticipation of what will happen in the near future. This technique, which corresponds to "retardation" in literature, is called "suspense" in cinema... Empathizing with the action, the viewer has to be in a kind of "suspended state" all the time. The emotional curiosity about the mystery of the detective is countered by an emotionally colored anxiety about the resolution of the character's next move" (Doroshevich, 1994: 76).

Turning further to the notion of *film noir*, A. Doroshevich wrote that "it is most often the drama of lonely, outcast people, equally alien to both official social institutions and the criminal world. The hero – as a rule, a private detective, a marginal personality, a man of the former, cynical, but possessing certain moral principles. As a character he possesses the same attributes as the outcast tramp, the "cowboy gunfighter" from the western, alone in the fight against evil. However, unlike the hero of the western, the detective in the *film noir* turns out to be a pawn in someone else's game, from which he leaves after discovering the total corruption of society, where rich and respectable people are connected with gangsters and corrupt politicians" (Doroshevich, 1994: 80).

As a result, A. Doroshevich concluded that the thriller in the cinema of the 1990s "embraces all trends simultaneously, addressing audiences with varying degrees of cinematic preparedness. All the techniques of "spice" are carefully worked out according to the plot layer. The subject-matter layer depicts something middle-class and bourgeois, with no particular deviations from the average American standard. The more spectacular is the story's departure from this standard into the realm of the macabre and irrational" (Doroshevich, 1994: 80).

The philosopher V. Podoroga (1946–2020) turned to the theory of the so-called "blockbuster" (Podoroga, 1999: 65-75), emphasizing that "the poetics of blockbusters is the poetics of destruction. Perhaps we are dealing here with a profound archetypal sense of domination over the world (nature), which man has always sought. To dominate is to possess the invulnerability of an outside observer, an alien, while the outside world appears fragile, disappearing, easily rearranged and destroyed by the power that guides the eye of the cinematic camera. What distinguishes the Spectacle from the Non-Spectacle? Probably the obviousness of the impossible (the strange, the monstrous, the horrifying and disproportionate, etc.). You see not just as in a dream or in a dream, but in minute detail what, for example, remains inaccessible when you change dream images.

Of course, all these significant details are deliberately chosen and with a long-range aim – they capture the eye and lead it rigidly to the final scene, leaving the viewer with an extremely narrow range of possibilities for free perception. And what can be an authentic Spectacle? Well, of course, the Event (as in) Catastrophe! Catastrophe is both the plot and sufficient motivation for a



film (as) a Spectacle. You are forced to see, hear, touch as if you were too close to the scene of the catastrophe, so close that it is more our body that knows about it than we ourselves. The shocking discrepancy between what our body "knows" and perception, which lags behind the activation of the defense mechanism, is what creates the matrix of any special effect. After all, to perceive is first of all to protect ourselves from what we perceive. By defending ourselves, we see. If perception lags, we find ourselves at least for a moment in a place where we are unprotected, open. But later we experience this lag as actual, it shocks us. ...In the Hollywood blockbusters of the 1990s, a great deal of importance is attached to the technology of direct impact. Now, along with the "open, watching eye," everything that surrounds him before, during and after the session gets an exchange value. The screen image no longer simply expresses or reflects, it is a target for images. ... Psychogenic can be called artificially compressed time, which speeds up the succession of events, which we experience not so much from within, as from too close to our everyday organic time, unable in these moments to distance ourselves from its crushing magic. It is not about identification – not about psychomimetic experience or imitation – but about the effect of presence” (Podoroga, 1999: 66-67).

B. Podoroga was sure that “blockbusters, turning cinema into an instrument of pure Spectacle, reveal again its forgotten nature (quite sinister for all its naivety and childishness): to be an instrument of psychokinesis. ... It is not the story that is being told "as it really was," but the possibilities of destroying the distant perception (which, incidentally, guaranteed us security, i.e. allowed us to give meaning, to attach or not to attach significance to what we see, and, finally, simply not to accept too crude means of influence on the spectator) are being sought. ... No matter how we feel about Hollywood blockbusters, we probably need to acknowledge: their filmic value is determined by the power of mass shock (impact) and the capture of the pre-screen space (the auditorium) for the sake of achieving this goal” (Podoroga, 1999: 67).

Turning to the cinematic legacy of S. Eisenstein, V. Podoroga came to the conclusion that in the film blockbuster “the montage of attractions replaces the montage of special effects. Yes, we can say that Hollywood has declared a war on images and somehow in its own way is trying to return to the utopia of the 1920s "cinematography as violence" (S. Eisenstein)” (Podoroga, 1999: 68).

In post-Soviet times, the *Cinema Art* journal for the first time addressed even such a film genre as pornography on the level of theoretical concepts. Of course, Soviet film critics were not forbidden to write about pornography in the Soviet Union either, but up until the late "perestroika" stage, film porn was discussed only in the context of the "decay of the bourgeois West" and its categorical unacceptability to the Soviet way of life.

But as early as 1992, in the *Cinema Art*, the priest Y. Krotov analyzed pornography from a conceptual perspective, affirming the opposite of pornography and erotica: “Eroticism only creates a myth of a sublime man, because there exists a myth of a base man. Eroticism and pornography are two ends of the same stick. No other culture, except modern European culture, has known this dualism in the perception of man. And it cannot be that pornography is bad and erotica is good. It cannot be that there is "high art" and there are pictures for the satisfaction of lust. ... Now this is impossible. There is a tragic split in man's self-consciousness. Morality commissions, censorship, asterisks can be established, of course, but the bifurcation does not come from sexuality. Sexuality (like physics and literature) only reflects a spiritual bifurcation. It is possible to delay a child's acquaintance with pornography and erotica, but from the time he is in diapers he will learn to constantly balance between consciousness of himself as an angel and consciousness of himself as a beast, consciousness of himself as a spirit and a steak with blood. The stick of erotica and pornography will tread on us, our culture and our civilization, until we have solved for ourselves the problems of self-knowledge as a being whole, whole in all its manifestations, falls and ecstasies. And in this sense, the influx of pornography, the lifting of the last prohibitions on sex is a sign not of "depravity," but of a desire to experience everything, to bring everything to its logical end and see what is there. Since logical ends are always dead ends, dusty and boring there, then eroticism, pornography, industrial aesthetics and love of cogwheels will soon be in a different and new form, depending on how we and the future generations determine the basic questions of life” (Krotov, 1992: 112).

Film scholar M. Trofimenkov believed that in cinematography “porn solves first of all not aesthetic, but physiological and psychological problems. But it is no more functional than a flowing Western or a standard karate film, just as distant from Creation with a capital letter, just as

predictable, just as much following iron rules: what, how, and in what quantity should be represented on screen” (Trofimenkov, 2000: 73).

And then M. Trofimenkov rightly points out a typical tendency of the second cinematic century in the question of representation of sexual life: “either to abandon imitation altogether, or (which is basically the same thing) to introduce elements of hard-porn into traditional, narrative, actor's, authorial cinema” (Trofimenkov 2000: 73-74), which, in fact, was already done at the turn of the 21st century.

Film critic V. Matizen devoted his article to another relatively new tendency in cinema – banter as a cultural phenomenon (Matizen 1993: 59-6). He defined stoicism as “parody and playful myth-making on the once-sacred material of past cultures” (Matizen 1993: 62) and insisted that “the banter is an original cultural form, and that it became a cultural phenomenon thanks to the generations of the 1970s and 1980s, even if some of its rudiments had been observed before”, and many works of this kind “are either parody remakes or resemble parodies of a non-existent original. This, of course, suggests that banter is an element of postmodern culture that ironizes other people's object languages. But the further into the past the culture on whose wreckage the banter is built, the more obvious it is that the parody is not self-sufficient, is not central, and may not be read at all by people who are not familiar with the original cultural material from which the work is created” (Matizen, 1993: 60).

As before, the *Cinema Art* journal published articles on television theory.

For example, the film scholar and culture expert K. Razlogov (1946-2021) wrote that the existing “state monopoly on television broadcasting in most countries of the world, with the exception of the United States, should seemingly have nullified the subversive effect of the little-respected 'box'. Today, however, it is clear that it has become a catalyst for the rapid transformation of a multitude of interrelated social, cultural and artistic processes that have led to a fundamentally new balance of power in world culture. One of the signs of these changes was the reading crisis, when the written word for the first time in several centuries ceded some of its functions to the audiovisual series. What was only in the cinema was possible with the advent of television, which put the communicative process on its feet. Whereas cinema was dominated by feature-length fiction as a form of fiction and a predominantly artistic phenomenon, television was dominated by communication as such, allowing artistic forms as well, but not reducible to them. And the current structure of television programs in multivoiced screens testifies to the fact that the expansion of the functions of the audiovisual series is proceeding at a rapid pace, literally in geometric progression, “swallowing” more and more spheres of natural language” (Razlogov, 1997: 58).

In this regard, film scholar N. Tsyrukun noted that “long-running” daytime television series – “soap operas” – are an indicator of a certain level of television development. If there are no “soap operas,” then “television has not yet reached the stage of maturity. If there are, it means that, on the one hand, TV has joined the general industrial stream and has become necessary for producers of goods and for sponsors, and, on the other hand, it has itself felt the need and possibility of detailed development of morning and afternoon programs, that is, it has begun to acquire “meat”. In affluent societies the main audience of “soap operas” are well-to-do pensioners and housewives to whom advertisements inserted in the soap are addressed, while in our country pensioners are the poor class, and housewives for the most part are forced to be such, having lost their jobs. It is ridiculous to address advertising to them. That is why “soap operas” seem to be an eyesore for us and we subconsciously want to impute some other social function to them. To make it weighty. To introduce a supra-objective. That is, to cross the “soap” with the TV series we are used to” (Tsyrukun, 1999: 83).

Film scholar O. Aronson turned to one more relatively new phenomenon for the post-Soviet 1990s, music video television (Aronson 1999: 27-29), believing that here “MTV is essentially a 'background' channel that does not claim to capture attention completely, but thanks to this it is in direct contact with everyday life itself, becoming a necessary complement, on a par with the morning cup of coffee or the daily newspaper in the mailbox” (Aronson 1999: 27).

“Now, basically, this field belongs to those young people whose slang, gestures, intonations are reproduced by presenters, whose music fills the airwaves..., – O. Aronson continued, – And this focus on young people is not at all accidental. “Youth” (here) is that community that is open to passive (meaningless) pleasure, open to those signals that carry no information other than purely communicative. A minimal form of reflection introduces criteria of meaning, taste, etc., which are destructive to the perception of this channel” (Aronson, 1999: 29).

The tradition of discussions was continued in the 1990s by the *Cinema Art* journal.

In particular, in 1994, the journal published the discussion “After Empire: National Cinema on Market Conditions” (After..., 1994: 121-128).

In particular, film scholar L. Kozlov (1933–2006) opined that “the slogan that is needed is not the national idea, but the cultural idea. The idea of culture should be the leading one. And the retreat before the flow of foreign, mostly American film expansion, the flow of lowbrow production, which flooded our screens, is not so much the result of some national weakness as of a weakness of culture... Simply put, this lack of culture, which has been exposed, exposed, blossomed in lush color and manifests itself in various forms. This includes the psychology of “temporary workers”, petty pragmatism in deciding the problems of film production, and much more” (Kozlov, 1994: 121-122).

Film critic I. Shilova (1937–2011) reminded us that “when perestroika began, we all got terribly excited that art would finally gain freedom and we would be able to deal with aesthetic problems proper, but now we see where this led. The aesthetic problems were not solved. ... Indeed, the period of freedom did not meet our expectations. Art was deprived of the main thing – the self-discipline of the artist, his inner responsibility for what he produces. What have we discovered in this new reality? That our viewers proved to be unworthy of our attention, that we did not provide a production that could compete not just with American cinema, with Mexican cinema or with God knows what kind of cinema. ... We tested our audiences and found that, on the one hand, our cultural layer was very thin, very thin! ... Now everything has exploded and we have entered the space not of national cultures but of nationalism – something that is absolutely hostile to culture as such. This situation really, I think, needs to be dealt with, because when we talked about universal values, we did not think about the fact that they were suddenly detached from the lower layer of national problems” (Shilova, 1994: 125).

Two years later, similar problems were raised by film scholars and critics in the discussion “Post-Soviet Art in Search of a New Ideology” (Post-Soviet..., 1996: 154-173; 156-173).

Here D. Dondurey (1947–2017), editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* journal and film sociologist, rightly noted that “with the collapse of the communist doctrine the established notions of social being, of artistic creation collapsed. Tectonic fluctuations have affected ideals, myths, goals, types of heroes – the very principles of terrain orientation. Films are made that the public refuses to see, festivals are held that only their organizers want. Many works are denied the status of relevance and significance. Television ratings for films made during the Yeltsin era, for example, are ten to fifteen times lower than those produced under the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee. As a consequence, movie attendance dropped twentyfold. Since 1988, cinematographers have been living under the exclusive conditions of self-commissioning. The only editor is the artist himself. The professional stereotypes of the so-called “creative intelligentsia” also have an impact on artistic consciousness. After all, it is the intelligentsia that in recent years has obtained all the rights of the fourth estate and exercises control over the content of TV channels, radio broadcasts, the circulating press, and mass culture. Finally, intellectuals have been given a long-desired legitimate right to any form of opposition, to a variety of program statements. But these statements turned out to be extremely simple (or, more precisely, expected): total catastrophism, confusion, despair, and hopelessness. There is no lacquering, but there is no tragic catharsis. It is simply that the ‘light way’ has become ‘dark’; pseudo-aestheticism and a departure from reality flourish” (Dondurey, 1996: 154-155).

D. Dondurey ruefully points out that post-Soviet cinema has failed to fulfill a very important psychotherapeutic function that is necessary for any socio-cultural process: it has failed to pull its viewers out of the reservoir of fear and psychological subterraneanism on the level of mass positive mythology. The heroes of the pictures are mostly criminals, drug addicts, prostitutes... – people with deviant behavior. One cannot seriously think that the wretched, the neurotic, the rapists are the heroes of our time and that the plots in which these characters act are a condition of commercial success. ... Audiences are horrified that artists are forcing them to identify with disadvantage, with suffering, forcing them to reconsider the values for which generations have lived and died. At the same time, Hollywood productions of every level respond admirably to the needs of our mass audience (Dondurey, 1996: 155).

Film critic E. Stishova was in fact in agreement with D. Dondurey's opinion, emphasizing that the consciousness of Russian post-Soviet cinema “is catastrophic. There is a gaping hole in the place of the future, a blackness decorated with the seductive image of a beautiful life abroad. The thing is that the very idea of cognition and gnosis is absent from our new cinema. Here the past

is not a cognizable object at all, and the author – a mediator who gives free rein to his fantasies by projecting them onto the past, frozen in ruins – takes center stage. Only one parameter is clear: this past was hell on earth, a terrible fairy tale... But how should all this be understood – for good or for bad? ... The Soviet universe has done everything to engender indifference and then nihilism toward native history. Nature demands a breather, to forget the forcible training. So the new myth-consciousness, perhaps, is a way of forgetting, or maybe a way of displacing that memory of the past, which negatively affects self-esteem. Hence the identity crisis, the desire to rewrite one's own lineage and to be different in general” (Stishova, 1996: 169).

On the other hand, the characters of the so-called "New Russians" emerged on the 1990s screen, but, as E. Stishova has noted, it is quite difficult to rationalize the poetics of the 'New Russians'. It is rather dissolved in the semantics of the image than revealed in intellectually conscious images. This poetics consists of subconscious proverbs and spontaneous outbursts, but it is not the result of conceptual thinking, philosophical and world outlook comprehension of life (Stishova, 1996: 169).

However, as E. Stishova continued, “there is a parallel development of another subject, polar to the one described above. ... there is a cinema in which the very code of national mentality becomes the subject of reflection. ... These films do not recognize themselves as a trend, but they are united by a philosophical and worldview commonality that goes back to the fundamental values of national existence. I would like to pay attention to the fact that the Russian discourse had drastically changed, becoming dominated by a merciless self-criticism. This kind of cinema opposes the idea of cultural protection and the right-wing or left-wing national-patriotism or neo-patriotism... At the same time it is sharply polemical towards the Western fashion and westernization. It, this cinema, is identical to the process of acquiring a new consciousness, a new soul that is going on in the depths” (Stishova, 1996: 169).

By the end of the 1990s, the "black" trend analyzed in the two above-mentioned discussions began to gradually recede from Russian cinema. In this connection, the *Cinema Art* journal published the materials of another debate among filmmakers (The End..., 1998: 162-174; 158-174).

In the course of this discussion, D. Dondurey reminded us that “despite its prevalence, the concept of 'blackness'... is quite crude, from the publicist lexicon. This is more of a metaphor, a euphemism, even a pseudonym for a range of problems concerning the mindset of our society. It captures the state of the crisis of values as the dominant paradigm of world perception. Blackslide (they have not found another, more successful term) – a kind of convenient attributive spanner for analyzing the semantic potential of contemporary Russian culture: mass consciousness, author's art, relations between the intelligentsia and the authorities, with show business. "The end of black" is an even less apt phrase, since no end to this ideological coordinate is in sight yet. All recent years have been dominated by an almost unified attitude toward catastrophism, a rejection of the future, a negative interpretation of the present, an attitude that is inherently and functionally repressive toward all other value systems” (Dondurey, 1998: 162-163).

Film critic V. Matizen reminded us that “as soon as after 1986 the cinematographic authority weakened, black films began to appear, and this was, as Marxists put it, a dialectical negation of Soviet cinema, a primitive reaction to its optimism and luminosity. This day's "light" is already the negation of negation. The black stuff of the time only made sense in the last Soviet years, while the viewer, after a long film-paradise, still wanted some film-hell. And they did. And then he was so badly punched that he ran out of theaters like a hematoma. That wasn't the only reason for his escape, and maybe not the main one. Blackness is a work in which the mundane is not purified by the form, and since the purification of affect is catharsis, blackness is a film which pushes affect without purifying it. So blackness can also be naked truth, i.e. devoid of artistic cover” (Matizen, 1998: 173).

A. Plakhov, a film critic, insisted in his presentation that it is in fact still very early to talk about the end of "dark cinema," all the more since similar tendencies were observed in Western cinematography in the 1990s (Plakhov 1998: 174).

Film critic L. Karakhan noted that “black reality shoots and explodes because it is a derivative of our socially closed consciousness. Life has collapsed because we have left no room in it for ourselves. In this situation, art is most often incapable of restoring the distance we have lost. For the most part, authors unwittingly follow the dictates of the social field. In so doing, the cinema screen becomes as flat, dreary, and blackish as reality itself, which it not so much reflects as repeats. A semblance of depth and a tangible presence of authorship tend to emerge only when

artists begin to programmatically insist on their own lack of inner perspective and even, in a sense, to brag about their spiritual emptiness, when social fixation turns into a self-righteously ruinous ideology. A dead end is a dead end in order to bang your head against the wall. This is not a way out, however, but only a way of being deadlocked, bordering sometimes on masochistic pleasure. The way out means, above all, realizing that we ourselves have turned social freedom into a social dictatorship. And only we ourselves can get rid of it by returning to ourselves, to a personal scale” (Karakhan, 1998: 160).

On the problems of film criticism and film studies

Quite a significant volume in the *Cinema Art* journal of the first post-Soviet decade was occupied by theoretical articles on the problems of film criticism and film studies.

Here it was very important to comprehend the experience of Western film studies that had already become classics.

So cinema expert A. Doroshevich devoted his article to the analysis of the creative legacy of A. Bazin (1918–1958). In it he noted that in contrast to Bazin's assertion that editing is violence against the viewer's perception, a conscious imposition of predetermined meanings upon him, which is the main characteristic of the so-called "Russian editing" of the 1920s, that is editing by Eisenstein and his associates, – critics of Bazin himself accused him of a totalitarian imposition of a supposedly objective, but in fact a classically colored picture of reality (Doroshevich, 1993: 64).

A. Doroshevich believed that “in the spirit of Romantic aesthetics, Bazin would like to see cinema as an embodiment of the organic unity of the world, when an organically created work would reproduce the organics of all Creation. Only then does the ordering will of the artist appear invisibly present in the visible chaos, and additional meanings do not arise from the manner of showing, but come from the reproduced reality itself, from what Bazin calls "facts". Only they, these meaningful "facts", must affect the viewer. They create a unified picture of reality, even though they are connected to each other with forced temporal and spatial gaps... Bazin rejects the predominant attention to the connection between "facts" at the level of plot (especially in its Hollywood version) or psychology. In his eyes it looks like an imposition of artificial logic on a living reality (montage, he believes, serves such an unseemly purpose). Therefore, those who reduce his aesthetics to artless pictorial naturalism are wrong” (Doroshevich, 1993: 66).

A. Doroshevich then analyzed the structuralist approaches to Bazin's work, insisting that “if Bazin compared the screen with a window, behind a transparent canvas of which reality is visible, the structuralists with a frame, within which the author's consciousness constructs values and effects, then modern poststructuralism (also deconstructivism) uses another metaphor – a mirror. It reflects only the author and the spectator, who project into it the entire complex of knowledge, notions and unconscious desires of which they are themselves mere reflections and products of reality. Art which corresponds to these perceptions is left with an endless game of mirrors, a labyrinth of mutual reflections that impress the imagination, but only make us dizzy. In the current fog of deconstructive constructions, Bazin's clean-sounding word metaphysics can be a support and help to many people” (Doroshevich, 1993: 68).

The analysis of A. Bazin's legacy was continued in an article by film critic S. Dobrotvorskyy (1959–1997): “For Bazin, who considered the depth of field to be a fundamental property of the ontology of the film image, the spatial construction of the frame means a certain worldview position – the director will allow the viewer to participate in the flow of reality, not focusing on individual imposed details, but choosing the meaning of what happens in accordance with his own ideas. Bazin compares "ontological" cinema to Quattrocento portraits, where the landscape in the background is painted as clearly as the facial features; such cinema does not let the viewer evade the necessity of choice; involuntary reflexes are destroyed, and attention must give an answer in the face of consciousness and conscience. Bazin's concept has not lost its relevance to this day, because it directly linked the spatial construction of the frame with the activity and freedom of perception, with the inner work of consciousness in reading this or that cine-text. The correctness of Bazin's "ontology" as applied to the laws of reception is directly confirmed by the fact that the screen image, designed to manipulate the viewer's attention and its underlying attitudes, seeks to bring its significant elements into the frontal plane of the frame, to arrange them along the axes of two-dimensional movement. For example, in analyzing Soviet films of the 1930s it is easy to see that the work with the second plan, the construction of the mise-en-scene, the lighting and the focusing of the lens are done in such a way that a two-dimensional sign grid is as if superimposed on the three-dimensional space. Plunged into the state of this semantic norm, the viewer's

attention is guided by archetypal subconscious representations, where it is not the deep transformations of space that seem meaningful, but the archaic hierarchies and opposition of top and bottom, larger and smaller, right and left sides. It is natural that concrete faces and figures "inserted" into such a signifier are accepted by the audience beyond logical control or – at any rate – with a considerable weakening of it, but in a subconsciously-valuable quality” (Dobrotvorsky 1994: 80).

The work of another Western cultural theorist – R. Barthes (1915–1980) – was analyzed in the journal by the philosopher M. Ryklin, who notes that “the first rule of Barthes' political semiology: no meaningful limits can be set to myth; there is no speech in society that cannot be mythified by its content. Everything can become a myth: not only any manifestation of language, but any image, photo, cinema, advertising. In other words, myth is a form that can be arbitrarily superimposed on any content. Mythic images, which Barthes equated in their semiotic form to writing, even have an important advantage over language: they are naive, immediate, and mastered with minimal cost” (Ryklin, 1995: 11).

Two years later, M. Ryklin turned to an analysis of the theoretical heritage of the philosopher and film critic G. Deleuze (1925–1995), rightly pointing out that Deleuze had a broad interpretation of montage: “What happens in the editing room for him is only one aspect of montage. Montage, moreover, exists in the very act of shooting, it is necessary for the viewer in the process of watching the film and for the critic in the process of discussing it. The situation of "remounting" becomes permanent, in some ways even banal. It turns out that no one has ever seen the same film. Any feature film can be stripped of its plot in favor of other, less visible but more essential aspects (lighting, camera movement, plasticity, editing rhythm, etc.). Many of these aspects are not envisioned by anyone, including the official creator of the picture. Every kind of montage works for both the fable and the incidental. If, as structuralist criticism shows, there is no unified mode of reading literary texts, then even a hint of such a mode is absent in the case of cinema, which is multiple in nature” (Ryklin, 1997: 135-136).

The discussion of the problems of Russian film criticism in the 1990s, published in the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal, involved representatives of different generations, including film scholars whose (ideological) influence had been quite significant in the 1960s and 1970s, but was then lost due to perestroika and post-Soviet trends.

For example, G. Kapralov (1921–2000) lamented that criticism is not in demand in a society whose blood vessels have not been completely cleaned of the sludge that has accumulated over decades. “And what use is criticism to it, to society, when viewers do not see films around which they clamor? Post-Soviet criticism, having previously starved itself of party-ideological food, greedily satiated itself with semiotics, psychoanalysis, theory of intertextuality, etc., nibbling now on one, now on the other, now it seems to have been satisfied and is returning to a rational diet of all the healthy vitamins of the classical diet, with the seasonings of the postmodern menu. The dish is curious, but not always edible”. And then he stressed that he felt “liberated, having thrown off the weight that crushed and etched with the censor's pencil everything personal, demanded obligatory references to socialist realism, quotations from decisive speeches and resolutions, but without them there was no way to protect another film and its artist from the 'shelf' fate” (Kapralov, 1995: 50-51).

In contrast to the super-influential and supported in every way by the authorities in Soviet times G. Kapralov, film critic N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) was punished by the authorities in the 1970s for her views, which did not necessarily coincide with those of the ruling ideology (she was expelled from the Communist Party in the late 1960s). But in the mid-1990s, she, like G. Kapralov, was not too optimistic about the role of film criticism in post-Soviet society: “Like the ex-Soviet film industry, its criticism leads a miserable existence. In the former totalitarian period, cinema and criticism as a subordinate part of it (I'm sure of it) performed two diametrically opposed functions, but both, so to speak, relative to the regime. True honest criticism was, like all great Soviet art, a form of resistance, a kind of comprehensive, rich and persuasive Aesopian language. The further we go, the clearer it becomes, how much there is still unappreciated-although that is up to posterity. Let's not mention the lackey criticism of the troubadours, the right-wingers, and those who sold out for lentil stew. Let us instead remember the activism of cinema critics during the final years of the stagnation and the prologue of perestroika, when, for a brief period of the struggle for democratization, they took almost the lead, and their voice resounded so loudly at the Fifth Congress of Revolt. ... When the struggle with the regime became pointless, because the regime

itself turned out to be blurred (although internally it is quite clear) and indifferent (for now!) to such a trifle as cinema, let alone any critical chirp, – then reigned in our cause disintegration, a general craving for division and fragmentation, and, most importantly, emptiness. Today's critics, especially young critics, are characterized by a monstrous disconnection from film studies, from even a minimal knowledge of the history of cinema. A certain sociology of cinema as "mass culture", as "commodity", as "market" has come to the fore. And although I myself made some efforts to do something of this kind and consider this direction necessary, I am sorry that it eventually superseded "pure" film criticism, inconceivable without a coordinate of historical depth, without a solid film studies base, without the traditions of Bazin, Shklovsky, Truffaut-criticism" (Zorkaya, 1995: 46-47).

In principle, film scholar L. Anninsky (1934–2019) agreed with this kind of assessment of the role of film criticism and film studies, reminding us that “while literature replaced "everything" for us, literary criticism was involved in "everything". As long as the cinema meant 'social life' for us, and the unity (or disunity) of people in the cinema hall was more real than in the boardroom, film criticism could safely consider itself a phenomenon of reality. Now the balls were rolling in the holes. Literary and film criticism are invited to do their precise and narrow business: analyze and evaluate texts and films. Whoever continues to do so actually works for a narrow circle of professionals. It's like "in the whole civilized world. It is not that it is boring (absolutely everything is interesting with a proper approach), it is suffocatingly oxygenless. One has the feeling that no one reads us critics, and that if they do read us, they are looking for something other than what we are capable of giving” (Anninsky, 1995: 40).

And then L. Anninsky presented his understanding of the term "methodology", that is, the field where the technical methods of analysis, which are often intuitively perceived, become like a rational system and lend themselves to reflection (Anninsky 1995: 41).

Another representative of the older generation in film studies, V. Fomin, wrote as a characteristic trend of the 1990s about the trend of film critics turning into TV presenters, producers and festival programmers. In addition, a “multitude of new people flooded into film criticism. Almost all of them came from the outside, not only without a professional (i.e. university) education, but even without a general education in the arts. Not just to analyze the mysterious course of the film process, but even to write a competent review, select persons, stories, or even the most interesting fragments for a TV program, was clearly an impossible task for most of the "new converts”” (Fomin, 1995: 60-61).

S. Rassadin (1935–2012), a literary and film critic, notes that “it is an unpleasant feature of contemporary criticism... An impersonal, generalized style (or banter) is emerging, a general fear of falling behind the train, of being caught out of fashion – I note this with surprise even from my colleagues, who could afford the luxury of being independent of fashion at least in their age” (Rassadin 1995: 55-57).

Film critic N. Zarkhi (1946–2017) also wrote about this: “Criticism today is perceived as an indecent occupation, and therefore an incompetent critic bustles about trying to prove his usefulness with every word. In a situation where there is no cinema (Russian) and no viewer (and thus no consumer of criticism), the easiest and most natural thing to do is to take up circular self-defense. Occupy. We assert our self-sufficiency. That, apart from everything else, leads to the writings of many of us a kind of provincial fussiness mixed up with a boorish (defend yourself by attacking) swagger, understood as the freedom of self-expression” (Zarkhi, 1995: 92).

Film critic L. Donets (1935–2016) was convinced that “criticism is an aesthetic conversation about the aesthetic, an effort to define correctly the value of art, the place of a work in time, in the row of culture. ... Criticism is precisely a science, a note that knows how to discover the beauty of art, that is, it is equal to art in the nature of its emotional impact. At the same time, criticism is not self-contained. Changes in criticism are always connected with changes in society. We are moving from socially significant, catholic values to the values of private, individual life. Obviously, there are pluses and minuses here and there, but that's not what I mean. ... Art now, in the atmosphere of our total instability, takes second place to the vital material things: a roof over our heads, silence in the city, a six-month salary. Naturally, criticism in this situation has little to do. If art becomes a widespread drug, a way to entertain” (Donets, 1995: 89).

Film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004), on the other hand, notes ironically that “there never was a more favorable, fruitful, and independent time for film criticism. Independent from practically everything – from the authorities, from the public, from filmmakers, and, finally, from

specific films. To put it simply, a critical article, a reportage, even a short piece of information in the press today, in the overwhelming majority of cases, is the only real form of film's existence in public consciousness. Moreover, the only form of the film's existence on the pages of some future history of cinema. This is not an exaggeration, but a direct consequence of society's (and the people's!) total disinterest in its own culture and art. ... An indisputable phenomenon of our days is the practical disappearance of traditional, purely educational, review criticism. Today it leads a miserable existence outside the framework of spectator and reader interest, in the extremely small-circulation (even taken together) *Cinema Art*, *Screen*, *Kinoglaz*, *Seance*, and *Screen and Stage*. Film journalism reigns today in the media, which practically did not exist a decade ago" (Chernenko, 1995: 62).

Film critic I. Rubanova, like M. Chernenko, who specialized in Polish cinema in Soviet times, reminded us that the film critic "serves the work. The vulgar serves, indulging in eulogy or joining in the pogroms. The ideal critic, without lowering himself to evaluative conclusions, prescribes the thing or its author in culture. For me, the royal genre of criticism was and still is the review, only it is followed by the literarily more winning portrait and analytical review. ... Mass society does not need criticism par excellence. The repertory of cinema and television requires informed guides. That's all. Any individual, authorial beginning of the guide is not in demand. We would be well advised to realize that full-fledged criticism today can only take place on the pages of special editions" (Rubanova, 1995: 58-59).

Film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) was convinced that film criticism in the 1990s was "roughly the same thing it has been for many years. For some people it was a source of self-expression, for others it was a source of at least minimal material well-being, for others it was an opportunity to extend their messianic complexes to the world around them. ... The situation of the past, when, in keeping with the task of the moment, criticism readily serves the general line, and the situation of a possible future in which it will gladly smear a work of art that it does not like and condemn it to the role of a pariah" (Dmitriev, 1995: 45-46) are equally repugnant.

Film scholar A. Toroshin (1942–2008) concluded that film criticism is "a form of film self-consciousness. A mirror into which cinema looks. Of course, the mirror may be cloudy and crooked or, on the contrary, uncomfortably objective. Although cloudy and crooked is also "objective" in its own way. In general, the interdependencies between cinema and criticism are not arithmetical, but algebraic. Today, neither film production needs criticism, nor film distribution, nor the audience. Advertising is a different matter: it is needed and paid for. And criticism, in fact, is kept at court (if it is kept!) as a kind of advertising. Besides, cinema criticism itself is guilty of its current lack of demand. It cries out incessantly to all the above-mentioned addresses: "Love me!", "I am the fourth power!", instead of doing its quiet, but infinitely important work for film culture with dignity and responsibility" (Troshin, 1995: 59-60).

Film critic Y. Bogomolov pointed out that if, in Soviet times, film criticism was, "on the one hand, an ideological toolkit of the party and state, and on the other, a semi-legal form of artistic creation and political struggle, then it should inevitably become an element of the market mechanism. And this is normal. ... Why should film criticism shape public opinion? Let it shape or organize the audience's attitude to film production" (Bogomolov, 1995: 42).

K. Razlogov (1946–2021), a cultural scholar and film critic, was convinced that, in the 1990s, criticism continued to exist primarily as public relations work: "It (just like the printed word as a whole) was no longer perceived as a mouthpiece for ideology, but became an expression of a private or (less frequently) group position. Rarely, because cinema ... rarely becomes an object of political strife. In methodological terms, post-Soviet critique is both variegated and traditional. Thrown off the "donkey's skin" of Marxism-Leninism..., criticism has returned to descriptiveness, publicism (in the context of political pluralism), aestheticism... Critical exhibitionism has become a new word, making some works more readable and amusing, but further distancing them from any kind of cinematic process. Criticism continues to be unclaimed, now by the authorities as well. It has no influence whatsoever on public opinion, on repertoire and cinema attendance, or even on the priorities of the film community, be it the distribution of state funding or the *Nika Awards*, etc. Film criticism remains a thing in itself, existing primarily for self-satisfaction (criticism), so that everyone's sense of self depends on how well one or the other has settled in" (Razlogov, 1995: 55).

Film critic A. Plakhov was also far from optimistic about the role of Russian film criticism in the post-Soviet period: "Criticism (including film criticism) today practically does not exist. In any case, if we understand it by what was understood yesterday. There is also no social function.



At least there are still professionals left in the cinema. From our non-prestigious profession, the most capable people go into business, promotion, distribution, behind-the-scenes criticism, into the service of the film community. The field of main actions is left to the poorly educated and brought up” (Plakhov, 1995: 53-54).

Z. Abdullaeva was rather pessimistic about Russian film criticism in the 1990s: “The social function of film criticism has changed, not in a professional sense, but in the extent of the echo, the scale of the resonance with which it used to voice this space. ... The main thing is that those critics who review foreign cinema are engaged in more or less real professional work. Those who, for whatever reason, remain in the post-Soviet ghetto risk being deprofessionalized. In the best case (which is, in my opinion, the worst), such a critic is forced to mobilize all the 'gun power' of his arsenal in order to camouflage the imaginary (painful, tragicomic – depends on the attitude) of the subject itself” (Abdullaeva, 1995: 39).

N. Tsyrukun, a film critic, believes, in contrast, that the situation in domestic film criticism in the 1990s looked, “If not particularly fruitful, then at least very favorable. The possibility finally materialized which any kind of intellectual activity in this country aspires to – to exist in a completely apragmatic way. This aspiration, which has always had to be camouflaged by forcing criticism to take the guise of teacher of life, guide, denouncer, or provocateur, can now be calmly realized by letting criticism develop in a sui generis genre that has its ideal in literature as the purest embodiment of disinterested activity” (Tsyrukun, 1995: 88).

D. Dondurey (1947–2017), a film sociologist and editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* journal, rightly noted that in the 1990s “the Russian tradition – the once great mission of thick magazines – began to disappear. In the society of electronic communications no one vibrates anymore about an article, for example, in *New World* that the do-gooders gave us to read at night. Something most essential has changed in the meanings, priorities, and the very mechanism of culture in the broadest sense. And this has been followed by a transformation in the relationship between critics and creators, and between critics and the public within the cultural movement itself. On one hand, domestic filmmakers are convinced that critics earn their daily bread by making a name for themselves based on a known hatred of their work. ... On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore critics in the current sociocultural situation, since they now control an important sphere of the film business. Today it is critics, not artists or even officials, who curate and patronize festival life, practically the only form of public existence for Russian cinema. But it's not just a matter of selecting pictures, appointing juries, and awarding prizes. Ultimately, they act as the leading image-makers – the creators of statuses, the verifiers of destiny. The biographies made by their hands and on their computers, the scandals, the plume of fame-the whole package design in which the work is presented affects the end result just as much as the thing's own quality. Future projects, royalties, the very possibility of existence in the profession are behind it. This is the way it is all over the world. And – gradually – in our country. But for now, in a very clannish way, based largely on friendly relations. Thus, the critic, with the exception of a few independents, becomes a political figure in cinema” (Dondurey, 1995: 87).

The film critics and film critics whose opinions are cited above debuted in the profession quite a long time ago: some in the 1950s-1960s, some in the 1970s.

But of course, the discussion also included relatively young film critics whose publications focused on the Perestroika period and the early post-Soviet years. Nonetheless, the evaluation of the film critical situation by "youth" largely coincided with that of "old" critics.

L. Arkus, editor-in-chief of *Seance* journal, believes that “the phrase "social function" in relation to film criticism should now be put in quotation marks because it is no more than a quote from our former usage. "The public function," as we used to understand it, implies a direct and close relationship with society, or rather, with society's accepted ideology. In those days, when there was both society and ideology, the relationship to them, with all its subtleties and nuances, was defined by the well-known dilemma: liberal criticism, which was, in one way or another, the spiritual opposition to the regime, or officious criticism, which was in the service of the regime. Criticism does not form public opinion to the extent that there is no public opinion about cinema. And to the extent that it does not exist as a fact of social life. Does criticism claim this role? It seems to me that individual and not the smartest members of our profession do. The smart ones prefer to save their strength for the preservation of common sense, intuition, taste and independence of judgment. And also for writing good, high-quality texts: it is quite a hard work in an absurd, devoid of any logic and completely uninspiring professional situation” (Arkus, 1995: 40).

Film critic S. Lavrentiev described in detail the extremely low level of knowledge of Russian journalists who write about film in the mainstream press (Lavrentiev, 1996: 36-39).

In the same context, film critic A. Kagarlitskaya draws the attention of readers of *Cinema Art* journal to the fact that, “having escaped control from above, the Russian press—in our case, cinema journalism—has come under control from below, becoming almost the main tool of the hangout. The notion of a film gathering should be differentiated, distinguishing its multi-level nature. There are hardware hangouts, festival hangouts, newspaper hangouts, magazine hangouts, television hangouts, restaurant hangouts, office hangouts, telephone hangouts, and other hangouts” (Kagarlitskaya, 1995: 80).

At the same time, literary scholar and film critic A. Shemyakin believed that film criticism in the 1990s “remained what it was – a professional judgment of works, located in a very fluid space between art proper and the science of it. The social function has changed as the risk zone regarding censorship has shifted: formerly one was looking for allusions, now one is looking for the purpose of one's own activity, the metaphysical basis of which is tabooed. Before, art was neglected in the name of “life,” now it has avenged itself. But: the process of differentiation of the original functions of criticism, which were held by the substitution of the humanitarian culture with its ideological correlate, begins. ... The degree to which criticism is needed is minimal. Film critics were no longer a science; journalists became a force in their own right. Film journalism plays the same repertoire – it's boring” (Shemyakin, 1995: 63).

Film critic E. Margolit emphasized that “criticism is always ‘today’. It is already history the day after tomorrow. That is why I see no fundamental difference between a critic and a historian. They have a common subject, and they differ only in the time of its existence. Unfortunately, our criticism, especially at its zenith, in the 1960s, had as its subject the real state of society, which meant sociology, political science, culturology, and economics, since in their official variant, these sciences were designed to do the opposite – to obscure the meaning of what was happening. Since in this capacity, the criticism of the “sixties” was a phenomenon of the utmost vividness, the following generations had only one additional possibility: to express themselves at its expense. In fact, it was not until the early 1990s that our criticism got a chance to engage directly with cinema, just like all other industries” (Margolit, 1995: 51-52).

D. Gorelov, a film critic, was, as always, lexically flamboyant: “Unfortunately, I don't know much about methodologies... as for the glaring difference between the creative styles of ‘youth’ and ‘seniors’, it came about as a result of the sharp distortion of perestroika by angry young men who were quick-tongued at youth and spat on authority. Twenty years later, my generation will be just as lethargic and demagnetized a fish flounder as the previous ones, for they have seen enough film classics to be no longer surprised by anything, have gotten to know enough filmmakers to try not to offend anyone, and have had enough black coffee in the White Hall buffet to think about the interests of the clan and not of the reader. That is the end of film criticism, because the conditional youth is already approaching forty, and there is no younger generation in sight: if any of the younger generation has any brains, they take them away to more profitable branches of the human spirit. ... In connection with the end of the era of fervent repentance in the newspaper and magazine business, a general course has been set for erasing creative individuality in favor of a competent presentation of the facts in the manner of the given edition: in *Moscow Komsomoletz* – boorish, in *Today* – sarcastic, in *Kommersant* – metal-constructionist. Criticism in this situation is doomed to a slow death, because its facts do not touch anyone” (Gorelov, 1995: 44-45).

However, Gorelov's “free creativity” was rather sharply criticized by the film critic A. Kagarlitskaya (Kagarlitskaya, 1995: 78-82). She noted that D. Gorelov, the “enfant terrible” of the Russian film press, “rose in the pages of *Moscow Komsomoletz*, but his work reached its highest point when he was working with *Today* newspaper. That periodical ... welcomed Gorelov's extremist style, which was based on remarkable adolescent readiness, mastery of verbal juggling, and unquenched childhood complexes. These features, as applied to cinema, prove utterly inadequate. The equation of text and subject, which is quite appropriate for a discussion about a summer vacation in the Crimea or about the rats in the Moscow streets, looks like the graphomania of a “loosened-up” teenager unaware of the simplest textual information about the subject in Gorelov's works about cinema. ... Obviously, in both cases no aesthetic, cultural or any other way of analyzing films is implied; Denis Gorelov's texts are usually a stream of words composed of puns, quotations, apocrypha and slightly cultivated folklore, and all this has very little to do with the

subject. But it is extremely correlated with the sadomasochistic passion to radiate and consume negative energy, which is characteristic of many writers and readers today” (Kagarlitskaya, 1995: 79).

The film critic V. Matizen, as a consistent supporter of generalizations and systematization, ventured to create a kind of typology of film criticism: “The critic-politician is naturally partisan. Being partisan, he cannot be an expert, because his evaluations are always distorted by non-artistic factors and demagogic. Of course, all critics are distorted to one degree or another (the thing is that while the inferred judgments are logical and therefore objective, the admissible ones are intuitive and thus subjective), but these distortions are subjective-personal, and not partisan and planned. Here we can make another distinction: the film critic appeals to reason (which is an extra-personal substance), the literary critic to feelings, the political critic to interests” (Matizen, 1995: 69).

In addition, according to V. Matizen, there is "hangout" or "secular" criticism. It needs neither influence nor writing, but participation in secular cinematic life, preferably in the international hangout. “Once they have achieved this position, which they will do legally and illegally (there are many ways to do so, for example by organizing their own magazine or television program, let us remain silent about the illegitimate ones), these "secular critics" no longer write, but "unsubscribe". Or "talk back. But although they pursue purely personal goals, their activities can be socially significant. ... Film critics. They, in principle, only need to watch movies. Writing, oral discourse, only insofar as, though this "insofar" can be quite significant. ... Oratorian critics, or talkers. Oral speech is their natural element; writing is less organic to them. ... generational criticism ... represents the interests of a pseudo-party of young subversives. The approach here is as simple as a mooch: "Olds must be killed!" To make room for the young. ... The operations that the critics of this group carry out on films and their creators require no film education, but they do require cleverness, venomousness, and sharpness... of style. One might consider that this is no longer criticism but film journalism. ... Aesthetic criticism, which regards cinema exclusively as an aesthetic phenomenon. ... Ethical criticism. Among young people there are not noticeable representatives, but among the elder ones there are quite a lot of them. ... Expert criticism. ... They try to be correct in their evaluations and are in this sense close to cinema experts... Critics-writers who are fascinated by writing as a process of weaving words and expressing thoughts. They simply cannot not write” (Matizen, 1995: 69-70).

V. Matizen quite provably argued that Russian film criticism in the 1990s “prefers not to be bound by any methodology... Methodology is a strong word, but it is possible to distinguish several methodologies: a) cultural-historical (correlating with the diachronic context); b) synchronic-associative (correlating with the inner circle); c) social (correlating with reality); d) moral (relating the morality of the author to some reference group for the critic); e) conjunctural (beating everyone who is not from our hangout); f) generational... g) symbolic (taking film's realities to mean other realities, performing substitution and extracting metaphysical meaning); h) psychoanalytic (finding traces of authorial complexes in the picture and exposing them for all to see); i) formal, which is called postmodern without a proper reason. It perceives film as a text, art as a technique, so it seems cynical; j) humorous (looking for only a clue for banter in the film)” (Matizen, 1995: 52).

Reflecting on "complex film studies", V. Matizen ironically described a number of techniques by which any film can be enclosed in a system of additional assumptions (frame) that allow one to understand (interpret) the text in almost any direction: “An example of a paradigmatic frame is given by Freud: by applying the postulates of psychoanalysis to pictures, we can derive from them completely arbitrary (but admissible) judgments about the author's complexes. Spectacular results are obtained by framing the cine-text with French things. Cocktails of Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Deleuze, Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, Bataille and Baudrillard (add to taste and stir), capable of spewing (or expelling) wondrous texts from the film critic. ... The postmodernist paradigm that allows us to see any film as a collection of parallel places is still in vogue. This approach allows the critic to demonstrate a film educational background and can be seen as a kind of qualifying competition for entry into the big leagues. Knowing the basic frames, reading film as a system of connections, and mastering discourse, criticism becomes an algorithmic activity whose mechanistic character is tempered only by uncontrollable outbursts of emotion. But these, if interpreted through the Freudian paradigm, become an invaluable source of information about the unconscious complexes of the critic himself. Therefore, the cultural creative process at present is neither criticism nor film studies, but the invention of new frames or paradigms” (Matizen, 1995: 70).

The modern state of film studies, but already on a global scale and without any irony, was also written by E. Davydova and S. Shpiker, stressing that “the three components of aesthetic

knowledge – theory, criticism and art history – are in different relationships at different times, rarely harmonious and balanced, as each level of description seeks to capture the dominant position. Now in America we can state the unconditional victory of theory. Criticism and art history have surrendered to the mercy of the triumphant victory: the former to the point of almost losing its face, the latter to the point of almost disappearing altogether. Impassioned theory could not be better suited to a leftist university system. Moreover, the universality of many fashionable theories imported into American art history from the heights of French poststructuralism makes specialized knowledge of art unnecessary. Following Barthes, current art criticism prefers to deal with texts rather than works. The devilish difference is almost as great as the difference between the structuralist claim to scientific objectivity and the poststructuralist conscious rejection of it” (Davydova, Shpiker, 1995: 120).

#### *Television studies*

Reflecting on Russian TV in the 1990s, the film scholar V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) was convinced that television's main achievement on its road is probably that it no longer perceived its viewer as a target for bombardment with messages and saw in him an ethereal body, that is, a higher and freer being (Mikhalkovich, 1996: 57).

However, film critic V. Kisunko (1940–2010) believes that the main problem of Russian TV in this period was that it did not recognize itself as part of culture, while the problem of culture itself is the same: “it has not recognized television as its organic part, it keeps sticking to TV... As a result, for example, the identification of "culture" with "artistic culture" becomes perniciously enduring. Science, technology, and engineering are left out of the equation. "Culture on TV" has become a parade-alley of subcultures or their fight for a place in the sun” (Kisunko, 1998: 98).

In this context, media scholar S. Muratov (1931–2015) was right that “the transition from the dictatorship of ideology to the dictatorship of ratings only at first might have seemed to the domestic public almost like a leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. The reality was much sadder. As soon as ratings turned into a decisive factor in the formation of broadcasting schedules, fierce battles for airtime broke out between broadcasters. Programs that did not pay for themselves through advertising were immediately relegated to the ranks of pariahs. High-quality enlightenment programs, productions by outstanding directors, and documentaries that had maintained television's artistic reputation were pushed into unviewable hours or disappeared from the screen altogether. The chase for ratings and, therefore, the focus on undeveloped taste led to the "washout" of works of national culture from the airwaves” (Muratov, 1996: 128).

#### *Problems of documentary and popular science film*

The *Cinema Art* journal wrote considerably less about documentary and popular science films in the 1990s than in previous decades.

One of the few theoretical articles devoted to non-fiction cinema belonged to the screenwriter and film scholar L. Roshal (1936-2010) wrote that drawing on the methods of neo-realism, we can note a pattern which is peculiar to it and which also applies to non-fiction cinema, especially if we consider the proximity of many approaches: art, reflecting the real world, does not impose poetry on reality, but reveals the poetry which is hidden in reality (Roshal, 1993: 126).

#### *Film and Media Sociology*

With the appointment of D. Dondurey (1947–2017) as editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art*, the volume of articles on the sociology of cinema and media increased dramatically.

In particular, film historian N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) tried to return to the analysis of "cinema and spectator" in the Soviet era from a new perspective: “There was no sphere in Soviet cinematography more closed, frozen, entangled with lies, fake, illusions, blindness, stupidity, sphere more watchfully guarded and censored than the distribution, than the relationship of cinema and the Soviet audience in cinemas. ... It was only decent to write feuilletons about "spectator", "box-office", "commercial" films. And wrote them – sharp, dashing, talented, not hesitating in expressions. ... It is time to bid farewell to the myth of the golden age of the twenties and the enthusiasm of the proletariat, which supposedly applauded the *The Land* or the *End of St. Petersburg*. Alas! The deception and the long game had already begun: there were about 300 American films alone, purchased cheaply, and a great many European films in cinemas. It was these and, most importantly, especially the beloved domestic action films like *The Bear's Wedding* or *Women's Victory* that attracted audiences” (Zorkaya, 1995: 119).

On the basis of many years of research N. Zorkaya convincingly argued that “mass, box office, and commercial success are synonyms, everything else is just casuistry, professional critical and

sociological illiteracy that confuses the matter. But – and this is the most important thing – we are talking only about mass success and nothing else. ... Any qualified sociologist of film polling will explain to you that the success of leaders, of action films, is ensured by secondary and more viewings. At this point we put an end to it. The box office figures are not dependent on artistic quality (and if they are, they are rather inversely dependent)” (Zorkaya, 1995: 121).

N. Zorkaya further drew the readers' attention to the closeness of mass tastes and tastes of teenage audiences: “an eventful storyline, the completeness of the plot, the polarization of characters into 'good' and 'bad', material for laughter, elevation over reality – these are the first requirements of mass teenage taste for the spectacle of the screen. These tastes and aesthetics are constants, and one can clearly see the tradition of folklore tastes, the aesthetic system peculiar to folk art. Or, even more precisely, the cheap popular read at the turn of the last two centuries, those kopeck mass "issues" and "series"... Indeed, mass taste does not accept genre uncertainty, it tends towards firm structures, reliable stereotypes” (Zorkaya, 1995: 123).

And “incontrovertible evidence that decades of propaganda-dealing have failed to dislodge what has been branded 'bourgeois relics' and 'hostile influences,' could be the integral mass success (from bum to president) of little Veronica Castro in the 1990s in television narratives on the level of the cheap popular series of the 1900s and the aesthetic before the Lumière brothers' cinema. It is true that the audience of millions of people on television was fickle in its enthusiasm, and the rich, in tears martyr Marianna was replaced by *Just Maria*, the active, passionate, irresistible and indefatigable businesswoman” (Zorkaya, 1994: 135).

In 1993, D. Dondurey wrote that in Russian cinematography many years of existence between two chairs, socialism and the market, as it were, have led to the situation where no one in particular, from the producer to the bank clerk, from the director to the lighting designer, bears any real (i.e. economic) responsibility for the results of their work. There are never any specific culprits for losses or bad work. Any losses are written off. Credits are still given under buddy connections, illusory entrepreneurial actions, status satisfaction from communicating with "stars", under tax evasion, hard currency game. But almost never for actual spectator success! (Dondurey, 1993: 4).

One was not at all surprised, therefore, that this system of film business had a significant impact “on the content of the artistic processes themselves. The ideals of the creative intelligentsia were practically embodied: all the limitless criticism of the government and social and moral foundations were mastered; many fundamental mythological structures and sexual and thematic taboos were destroyed. One might say, any whim or fancy was put into production, as long as someone financed it. Artists in what is perhaps the most risky activity in the world have lost a sense of any social danger. They gained the right to make mistakes, to waste, to fiction. And without any responsibility. ... Film production and distribution quickly became accustomed to the safety of patronage infusions of "dirty money" ... Both professionals and the public acquired a remarkable skill: to believe that the ways in which the costs of supplying, purchasing and distributing a film are recovered have nothing to do with the audience, with the film's real success. ... And the producers, convinced that they were making a box-office movie, were in fact indifferent to the fact that the favorite characters of the Russian directors – Chekists, racketeers, Afghans, prostitutes, lesbians – had long been of no concern to mass audiences. A figment of the usual sociological ignorance! All of these characters have long been boring. Time dictates different demands. Therefore, the potential audience stays at home, switches from soap opera to soap opera, immersed from birth in the world of American production” (Dondurey, 1993: 4, 6-7).

A year later, D. Dondurey continued to sound the “cinematic sociological alarm. There is not a single national film among the box office champions over the past four years... But it is our films that join the ranks of outsiders. They are the ones who are taken off the screen because there are a few people in the audience. As proof of the population's unsatisfied craving for Russian cinema, they often cite the high ratings of Russian films shown on TV... But among TV favorites are exclusively old pre-Gorbachev and pre-Eltsin films. Of course, a lot depends, as always, on the criteria. After all, you can assume that no tragedy of the national culture is taking place. We are simply documenting the consequences of the ongoing "here and now" process of radical modernization of Russia's cinematic system, which simply cannot proceed painlessly. A fundamental redistribution is taking place: the principles of investment and production, distribution mechanisms, and distribution channels; the priorities of film-makers; and the attitudes of viewers toward these priorities. The state of the cinema, as a multidimensional, holistic system, is a product of real-world conditions that have changed fundamentally since 1988:

all forms of censorship have disappeared; state-independent film-makers, unrelated to film factories have appeared; centralized distribution has differentiated by region, and has split into private distribution and local state distribution; the film market is semi-criminal, theatrical, television, and absolutely criminalized video productions; the supply of film products has grown enormously; and a fire has disappeared.

At the same time, in the 1990s, Russian filmmakers learned to ignore these and a thousand other innovations that literally plowed through the entire space of cinema reality. ... It defended itself with the armor of a cheap phrase: 'The market will destroy art' and took up the entire front. Not having sacrificed its main "freedom" – the freedom from the audience – the creators of Russian cinema feel no need to interact with the public. And it's not just the grimaces of distribution. The film will be made solely at the will of its creators. This situation is not an evidence of economic traumatism, but a norm that meets the principles, to put it politely, of our national authenticity. ... Every tenth family in Russia has a VCR. Add to this almost ninety local on-air television stations, two hundred and sixty local independent TV stations, and hundreds if not thousands of cable channels. And the whole thing is showing stolen movies! Hundreds of billions of rubles are circulating in this business. The time has come, finally, to distinguish between the signs and effects of modernization of the film industry and not to confuse them with the froth whipped up by the phony market which we rightly curse. It is this market which, strange as it may seem, has committed a real crime against our film industry, depriving it of the slightest responsibility for the results of its activities. In essence, no one today is accountable to investors, employers, the state, or such an important – and stunted – institution as criticism" (Dondurey 1994: 15).

Alas, in 1996 the situation in Russian cinematography did not improve at all, and the same D. Dondurey stressed that "the indicators of national film production in five years decreased tenfold! Cinema attendance during the same time has fallen by fifteen times! ... In Russia as a whole – less than one ticket per statistical citizen per year. The most popular of the arts is on par with the elite theater by the number of tickets sold. At the cinema we go less often than in all other European countries... Disastrous for the domestic film industry anti-market, in fact, not only misinterpreted the nature of economic processes taking place in our country and prevented the formation of viable organizational mechanisms, but also generated representations of deception. As a result, a dodgy quasi-market emerged. Or a movie market in Russian, with all of its semi-criminal and super-costly properties. Neither in the government, nor in scientific research, nor in production, nor even in journalistic publications, is there ever a single problem discussed-just tabooed-only one: methods of cost recovery" (Dondurey, 1996: 28, 30).

D. Dondurey, a sharp-eyed sociologist, also noted one more important Russian cinematic trend of the mid-1990s: "There is freedom, the absence of any censorship, and even some films shot for little money. But there are no new aesthetic ideas that could be proud of on a European scale. It is strange. Russia has been on the front pages of the newspapers for years. History is made here, there are cataclysms of planetary scale. And what is in the movies? Almost nothing. Emptiness of secondary character, amorphousness" (Dondurey, 1996: 31).

But time has shown that the way out of this situation that D. Dondurey proposed has not come true in practice at all: "You know what to do. Cardinaly change the priorities. To realize the inevitability of market relations in our film industry. To stop resisting this verdict inwardly, but on the contrary – to try to see creative perspectives in the new social conditions. This means shifting the main focus of film policy from the first link of film economics – the decision to finance the idea – to the last: the cost recovery scheme. The analysis of any initial development or proposal should begin, as it were, with the end result and the specifics of how the work will be consumed: to whom will it be sold or shown, and for how much money? Filmmaking, like any other commodity or service, should be considered in terms of potential consumption" (Dondurey, 1996: 32-33).

Film critic M. Turovskaya (1924–2019) agrees with D. Dondurey's opinion: "All we can say today is that in Russia, 'consumer' trends tend to prevail over 'production' trends: money spinning over production, publishing over writing, current journalism over literature, festivals over film. It does not mean the refusal of the viewer from the cinema. The forms of consumption are changing. TV as well as video market, unlike the cinema process, has all the available fund of films" (Turovskaya, 1996: 27).

Reflecting on the relationship between the cinema and the audience, in 1996 film critic S. Dobrotvorsky (1959–1997) pointed out to readers of *Cinema Art* journal that in Russia in the 1990s "the role of terrestrial television has noticeably increased. Essentially it became the only

alternative to the ruined film distribution. I think that there is no point in discussing some kind of specificity, structure or prospects. The "blue screen" has taken over the functions of its decrepit counterparts by right of strength. To put it simply, a film had to be seen somewhere, and it began to be seen on TV. At first the interest was also and still is largely repertory – for a while TV combined the features of a free video salon and an elite cinema club. Sin to complain, his advantages television is not too much abuse and even tries to build some generally meaningful models. For example, in the year of the film centenary we watched almost half of the world's film classics" (Dobrotvorsky, 1996: 55-56).

However, as early as 1997, media scholar K. Razlogov (1946–2021) wrote that on Russian TV, "as one would expect, the abundance of outstanding western films soon ceased. Films were bought in "packages" in which two or three masterpieces were packed with tons of junk that had to be screened for a reason – the money was there. It was here that the costs of cinema's uncultivated nature manifested themselves: an illiterate broadcaster, guided by the preferences of an illiterate audience and narrow-minded economic expediency, began to repeat the mistakes of the film distributors, and certain masterpieces, brought to the fore in the centenary year, began to sink again into a flood of mediocrity and total junk" (Razlogov, 1997: 46).

In addition, as K. Razlogov reasonably stated, although cinema was talked about on Russian television, it appeared in television programs "almost exclusively as an element of advertising, scandalous chronicles, or show business. It was part of the "extra-cultural" context. ... It is no accident that the programs that were supposed to "re-cultivate" film programs like *Cinema Museum*, *Cinema Age*, *Cinema Marathon* were gradually ousted from the programming schedules... This way the type of art, whose works can be completely and minimally distorted by television, moreover, forming a significant part of the programming, is purposefully stripped of its status of artistic value. ... The current crisis of cinema on television is also a peculiar payback for taking cinema out of the scope of culture" (Razlogov, 1997: 47).

In this context, media scholar S. Muratov (1931–2015) reminded us that "when our viewers were paid for by the state itself, they were deprived of information on behalf of which propaganda influenced society. Now, when broadcasting costs are paid by advertisers, we have been deprived of a culture in whose name mass culture broadcasts. And the more openly television commercials pursue material interests, the weaker are the moral judgments in their texts. However, a society deprived of real information or culture loses itself as a society. It becomes either an object of manipulation by politicians or a crowd of crime and soap opera fans, when every viewer, will have eyes the size of a melon and no brains. In essence, centralized propaganda and pop are of the same order. Both are a sure means of standardization. In one case the output is notorious people-screws, in the other – uniform Barbie dolls. Television creates citizens who are easy to control. Nomenklatura television consciously pursued this goal. But as we became convinced, commercial broadcasting which has no goals at all could achieve the same result. No objectives other than ratings. Except attracting the public with catastrophes and sensations, heart-breaking melodramas and astrological predictions. That as much as possible spectators appeared in front of a screen, absorbing the daily dose of fear in criminal plots. And, convinced of the incorrigibility of the world around us, escaping reality into the illusory passions of the heroes of Latin American soap operas. And for the appetizer we would get another abruptly twisted thriller or erotic program" (Muratov, 2000: 110).

Critic A. Anastasiev also wrote about this: "Entertainment programs cannot afford to get ahead of average demands, to focus only on a hypothetical audience with good taste, because that would mean a loss of their existing audience for them. In this sense, they are like advertising boards, giving out only dry information about the state of popular culture. The vulgarity of showmen is the vulgarity of society... And they only register it. And they do it all over the world. Hence, there is, in essence, no uncertainty: what is demanded is what our information and analytical programs, our artists, our beloved and hated showmen give out" (Anastasiev, 2000: 105).

In 1998 K. Razlogov, using the results of sociological surveys, wrote that "the pendulum of the air has swung from movies to TV movies. ... I think that over the next two to three years, the rise in the production of domestic television films and television series is inevitable. The reorientation from the diktat of film screenings to the predominant role of TV films and serials (Russian and foreign) will inevitably happen in us, but again with a delay compared to other countries. The "golden age" of the cinema man on television is behind us" (Razlogov, 1998: 95).

And here, as the next two decades showed, K. Razlogov was absolutely right in his prediction: it is soap operas, and Russian ones at that, that form the basis of film screenings on the leading TV channels today.

Sociologist I. Poluekhtova's article was devoted to a more detailed analysis of the film audience of the 1990s, this time of its teenage segment: "In contrast to previous film-goers, today's moviegoers hardly ever go to theaters. Twenty percent of high school students surveyed had last been to the movie theater a year ago, and 50 percent had been in even more than a year. ... However, this does not mean that the new generation likes movies less than previous generations. Simply today there are many more alternative ways of watching movies on video, on television, in recent years the number of television channels ... is rapidly increasing. But cinema also remains "the most important of the arts" for the current generation, holding the primacy even in competition with popular music: 71 percent of teenagers declared an interest to it, and 84 percent to cinema" (Poluekhtova, 1997: 110).

At the same time it turned out that "about 70 percent of the followers of American movies among high school students consider the most important in life "to work and earn a lot of money," and every fourth would like "to have a lot of money, lead a 'beautiful' easy life, but not to work. Interestingly, among that portion of the younger generation of viewers who do not like American movies, there are significantly fewer of both those oriented toward jobs that bring good earnings (48 percent) and supporters of the "easy life" (13 percent). On the other hand, among the opponents of American cinema almost every second (48 percent) considers it important to have a creative, though low-paying, job, and among its fans only every fifth (21 percent)" (Poluekhtova, 1997: 111).

As a result, I. Poluekhtova comes to the following important conclusion: "The principal socio-cultural consequence of the loss of competitiveness of Russian cinema is that the Americanized image of the film hero is establishing itself as a personal model in the minds of young viewers. Under such conditions, to break through to this generation of viewers, to find and strengthen their competitiveness, the Russian cinema needs to find its own, unique cinema hero. It is clear that this complex task cannot be successfully resolved by simply "copying" the American model. ... the formation of a new typological image of a cinema character capable of captivating the young generation of the Russian film audience, a character close and understandable, reflecting the goals and values of the modern youth, on the one hand, would increase the sociocultural role of the Russian cinema, and on the other hand, would help to attract viewer attention to the Russian cinema and thereby enhance its economic competitiveness in the Russian market" (Poluekhtova, 1997: 114-115).

The problem of "cinema and the audience" was so acute in the first post-Soviet decade that the editorial board of *Cinema Art* journal devoted a special discussion to it in 1999 (Secrets..., 1999: 5-21).

D. Dondurey noted in this discussion that "when they say 'mass culture', everyone understands that the problem is more than a terminological one, that there is a different understanding of reality, functions of art, correlation between high and low culture, and many other consequences behind the familiar notion. There is this myth that our population adores Russian cinema. We support this myth because of a number of very important tasks that face the people who serve the cinema process. We have to prove to our bosses and potential sponsors that people are hungry for our domestic cinema. The funny thing is that the audience is also convinced of this, while objective indicators suggest that they still choose American films. ... The second point has to do with the changes in the very principles of cinema creation. Our cinema has always developed according to the pan-European, directorial model: the director is the king, the master, the demiurge of this activity. Today we have attempts to institutionalize the concept of production cinema. It's clear to everybody that this is the only possible chance to rebuild the entire film industry, to reconfigure it to produce commercial pictures that people will pay for. ... Audience expectations are the exact opposite of what our film industry produces. ... As you know, before 1986 we had at least twenty or thirty "million-dollar" a year. Now only those who really entered the video market have a chance to make a profit and return the money to the producer. ... A study of the video market has revealed very interesting processes. According to experts, the function of Russian mass cinema should go to cheap serials on television. Only through serials is the institution of stars resuscitated in Russia. All the movies that we traditionally perceive as auteur cinema are becoming



marginal, going either to the video market in small prints or to elitist film centers” (Dondurey, 1999: 6-7).

Film critic L. Karakhan reminds us that in Soviet times, “an unbiased, non-judgmental attitude toward mass culture was a real feat of art history. Today everyone is concerned about mass culture, and simple indifference to it can be considered a feat. Legitimate consumer goods had to behave decently. Today there is no longer such a need, the filters have been destroyed. Low culture literally fraternizes with its consumer. And, perhaps, for the first time in the history of domestic culture on such a scale, we got the grassroots forms that we really deserve” (Karakhan, 1999: 9).

Film critic E. Stishova stressed that “the creators are not to blame for the fact that our mass cinema cannot be called “cinema of quality,” they only fulfill the mass order. It is the audience that is to be blamed, the masses that place this order. The root cause is the lack of an attitude toward film quality in the audience's expectations. The rest is consequences, distant results of a historically long process which began much earlier than the advent of Soviet power, on which it is customary to blame everything. ... It is not a social order but an installation of the unconscious, an archetypal structure. It is not film critics but social psychologists, philosophers and culturologists who are needed to get a slight insight into how to change these attitudes and whether they need to be changed. There is a concept of “other” taste – not to be confused with bad taste! – according to which we are in a labyrinth with our mass cinema and there is practically zero chance of getting out of it. The archetypal layer of the available public is much more powerful than its cultural layer” (Stishova 1999: 20-21).

Then E. Stishova asks a reasonable question: “What should be the strategy of film producers, based on this? How should producers who want to make box-office movies act today? Feed and reproduce the voracious unconscious, making knowingly bad but box-office cinema, thereby deepening the gap between the mass and the elite, turning the Russian mass screen into a preserve of monstrous provincialism?” (Stishova, 1999: 21). And quite logically she answered it: “This strategy, which exists, as we can see, even today, will continue to recruit to film directing people whose business acumen and cynicism prevail over professionalism. People who will easily concoct a “people's movie” if only they had an order. And they will defend the ‘special way’ of Russia as the ideological basis of bad cinema” (Stishova, 1999: 21).

And further on we suggest an idealistic (and, in our view, unrealistic) way out of this impasse: “The time has come to work together again. Russian producers, working together with a ‘support group’ – film critics, sociologists, culture experts, public relations specialists – should undertake a long-term act of will and hit the mass audience with a series of ‘quality films’ in which the highly professional directing and other components of good cinema would be combined with the social expectations of the mass audience. And these expectations can and should be predicted, not by coffee grounds, but quite rationally, scientifically, with the help of appropriate services, sociological and others” (Stishova, 1999: 21).

#### *Theoretical articles on foreign cinema*

The *Cinema Art* journal wrote a great deal about foreign cinema in 1990s, but as a rule these were reviews, interviews, and endless articles about Western film festivals. There were very few theoretical articles on foreign cinema.

For instance, the film critic M. Chernenko (1931-2004) reminded us that “cinema as an instrument of contemporary, and also “Atlantic” Judeo-Christian civilization is at the forefront of culture and art as long as the country, the nation, and the people are not integrated into universal civilization. There are many examples of this, I will cite only two of the most striking – the great cinema of Japan in the 1960s and 1970s and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the new cinema of Brazil. Having served their purpose, the cinemas of these countries have actually retreated to the far periphery of social and cultural life, although as an industry, as individual names and films, of course, continue to exist” (Chernenko, 1996: 58).

Film critic M. Trofimenkov noted that in the West “an amazing metamorphosis is taking place with postmodernist cinematography. Without abandoning the whole gentlemanly set of ironic games, it refutes all... stereotypes. The frank quotation brings tears to the eyes, the cold minimalist or redundant baroque texture not only admiration for formal brilliance, but also sympathy for the characters. A frank feeling grows through the elaborate formal fabric, reaching almost to the point of obscene sentimentality. Contrary to what has been said by both the opponents and the snobbish defenders of postmodernism, the directors are able to love their characters and are capable of conveying the finest shades of feeling” (Trofimenkov 1993: 58).

He further rightly emphasized “another aspect of postmodernism that is usually overlooked. The phenomenon of ‘modernism’ was not limited to the storm and onslaught of avant-garde movements. It included the whole way of life oriented towards scientific and social progress (and not only novelty in art), the split of the world into hostile camps (and not only the split of art into tradition and innovation), and the experience of wars and dictatorships (which influenced the social and psychological orientation of artists). Thus, postmodernism is not limited to the cultural “game of beads,” but includes on an equal footing all forms of modern civilization. “Postmodern conditions” are the mixing of all tribes and peoples in former colonial metropolises, sexual indifference and ambivalence, the reality of cities transformed by the third wave of the Science Technical Revolution into graveyards of old factories, the rituals of street gangs, new ways of war, the fear of AIDS, new drugs, and the wanderings of young people who forgot the word “frontier.” And that is why cinema that reflects the new reality, whether or not it is diluted with cultural myths, by definition belongs to the field of postmodernism” (Trofimenkov, 1993: 59).

Being in the same thematic field, the music critic D. Ukhov wrote that “speaking of film music of the postmodern era, it is necessary to specify that it is in it that the notorious ambiguity of postmodern admiration of the past as opposed to avant-garde aspiration for the future is particularly clearly manifested. For postmodernist discourse there is no difference between deservedly forgotten artistic values and historical kitsch” (Ukhov, 2000: 99).

Musicologist and culture expert T. Cherednichenko (1955–2003), once again proving the dominance of television over traditional cinema, believes that, for example, “the cyclism embodied in the multiseriess of *Santa Barbara* is a formula for a new world time. The world has come to the absence of a fundamentally new with the ideology of possibility and the need for renewal. ... The thousand and one nights of history have come. We need not be sad about Americanization. It began long before the end of the “struggle between the two systems. ... For there is neither Americanization nor Sovietization, but the eternal middle age of the philistine. The philistine could not but win in the system of modern understanding of progress, since the market exists thanks to him, the philistine, the mass consumer. Universal medievalism could not but win, because the philistine is a man of the middle, also in the stadial-historical sense. The dreamers, as always, got screwed. And the philistines, as always, got their way” (Cherednichenko, 1997: 49).

As before, thematic and “image” approaches to foreign cinema were in favor in the *Cinema Art* journal of the first post-Soviet decade.

In this respect the article by sociologist M. Kosolapov “Bond: A Mythogenetic Analysis” (Kosolapov, 2000: 53-58) is quite typical, which convincingly argues that “every element of Agent 007’s image is constructed in the cinema in accordance with this or that myth or heroic tradition. ... It is impossible to associate James Bond with any particular mythological hero or type of hero; he is an absolutely syncretic character-primal, cultural hero, trickster, epic hero, blessed and many more in one person. It is precisely the blurred secularized mass idea of the “hero in general” that is concentrated in the image of Bond. The cinema has endowed Bond with so many explicit and implicit mythological properties and attributes that his image, like a powerful collecting lens, focuses a whole layer of archetypal representations for all occasions, which are automatically perceived by the viewer to the extent of his awareness (or ignorance)” (Kosolapov, 2000: 54-55).

M. Kosolapov quite reasonably, in our opinion, believes that “cinematic Bond is a carrier of the humanitarian ideals of the romantic era of European culture – the Renaissance. He is the ideal ‘Renaissance man’. He is non-religious in the sense that he believes in Man and in the attainability of a finite world, about the preservation of whose just democratic values he tirelessly cares, not disdaining to “barbaric” methods for this purpose. Well, “natural law” gives him license to kill any Leviathan. Bond recognizes the right of ordinary people to life and is always able to calculate the value of their lives (it is directly proportional to the number of people interested in saving them). Bond does not consider the value of his own life, rightly believing himself to be a “fluctuation of positive probability”... Every move he makes is conditioned and automatically brings doom to his enemies and salvation to humanity. ... It almost doesn't matter who will direct the next Bond film, what matters is the new film's consistency with the canon and the level of professionalism (read: mastery of film technology) that will allow the director to best formalize this consistency. Cinematic Bondiana is on a par with... the Iliad, the Odyssey, and other epics and epics” (Kosolapov, 2000: 58).

James Bond is a vivid example of “macho” in cinema. In this regard, an interesting article by film critic A. Plakhov, “Machismo as a Mirror of the Sexual Revolution” (Plakhov, 1997: 39-46). It draws attention to the transformation of machismo in Western cinema: “Cinema, having ceased

to be the avant-garde of mass culture, has retained a greater variety of male types. New angels have filled the Hollywood movie sets: they are young, charming, romantic, and do not flaunt their masculinity. They don't put themselves on a mythological pedestal like their predecessors, as if to say, *I'm a pretty face, but not a myth*. They are models, but not symbols, and they want to be themselves without concealing their weaknesses and frustrations. This is the stark difference between today's situation and that of the pre-TV and pre-computer era. Back then, every prominent character in popular culture was obliged to play the role assigned to him throughout his life, a role that was largely social. The masculinity of the Screen Hero was always associated and combined with notions of Law, Struggle, Justice, Integrity, Challenge and Rebellion. As a result, the male hero was overwhelmed and overly engaged. And he was gradually pushed to the periphery, turning into an anti-hero, and then returning to his own circle, but in a playful, parodic version. Hypermasculinity in cinema appears today in its postmodern innocence, its schematic naivety, its buffoonish levity, its varied nuances of irony. Modern machismo is a mirror in which the contradictory results of two sexual revolutions are reflected and refracted. The first one – of the 1960s – brought the desired freedom of manners, but destroyed the balance between genders, generations, and classes of society. It also finally buried the system of stars and cinematic images. What is happening today can be called the painless virtual sex revolution of the AIDS era. The good old macho man fits into it as a romantic, nostalgic value, always sought after by the conservative part of society. And the fact that the ideal macho turns out to be a divine androgynous, should probably be put down to total self-irony, which permeates modern culture” (Plakhov, 1997: 43, 46).

Film critic N. Tsyrukun, on the other hand, ventures to explore the Western film image of a businesswoman, pointing out proof that by the 1990s, “here everything was turned upside down. The shy secretary, who only thinks about pleasing her boss and (the limit of her dreams!) making him fall in love with her, has been replaced by a young man, and the roles of his overbearing, enterprising bosses, whose love he seeks, are assumed by women” (Tsyrukun, 1997: 51).

The “teenage” theme in foreign cinema was the focus of an article by film critic S. Kuznetsov. He wrote that, “like a pedophile, the viewer in the 1990's wanted to get a film about teenagers sense of freshness and purity, appropriating it in voyeuristic act of film viewing. Teenagers always have hope. Seeing how much teenagers value sex and social success, adults can tell themselves that their lives have not been lived in vain. They have achieved what they wanted at sixteen. Or almost. The price they had to pay was hope. After all, adults are different from adolescents because they have long ago lost faith in the existence of the threshold beyond which Real Life begins” (Kuznetsov, 2000: 86).

Referring to his favorite horror film genre, the film critic D. Komm emphasized that “even a cursory glance at European films reveals the existence of another, opposing Hollywood tradition of horror. This tradition can be called poetic or elitist – as opposed to the American horror in the ordinary. European horror films are related to the “terrible” not as an anomaly, a random deviation from the divine norm, which is the ideology of the American horror film, but as a result of the discovery of the secret mechanisms of existence. They belong to high, ‘cosmic’ horror... The literary basis of these films may suffer from logical failures, special effects are usually absent altogether, but their hypnotic beauty and mystery do not weaken with time, remaining a sign of a truly poetic worldview” (Komm, 2000: 101).

On this quite postmodernist background an article by the film critic O. Surkova on the work of director I. Bergman (1918-2007) looked the most traditional. She asserts that the cinematic “world presented by Bergman is always disharmonious – only brief moments of the presence of the divine defuse the oppressive, viscid atmosphere of many of his films. ... Throughout Bergman's life and work, there is faith and unbelief, doubt and entreaty... and the clarification of the relationship with the Christian God which, like a confession, his cinema presents” (Surkova, 2000: 76, 78).

## 5. Conclusion

Despite the editorial board's best efforts to publish sensational materials that turned *Cinema Art* in 1992-1994 into a social, political, and literary journal (which published not only screenplays and memoirs, but also novels and philosophical treatises with no direct relation to cinema), its circulation steadily declined from 1992 to 2000. In 1992 it dropped from 50,000 to 34,600 copies. In 1993, it dropped from 25,000 to 15,000 copies. In 1994 – up to 10 thousand copies. No data on the journal's circulation was published since 1994, but according to the data

which appeared on the Internet, from 1995 to 2000 it was about two thousand copies, i.e. even lower than in the 1930–1940s.

However, at that time the circulation of all Russian publications was falling. The "perestroika" surge of interest in the press was replaced by a desire on the part of the general public to somehow adapt to the new conditions of economic shocks and instability.

After a sharp increase in film production in the early 1990s, a prolonged decline set in by the mid-1990s; however, *Cinema Art* journal continued to publish dozens of film reviews (though mostly foreign) and plenty of reviews of Russian and foreign film festivals. At the same time, the writer and publicist D. Bykov irritatedly wrote about the postmodernist editorial approach to "mass culture as a potential object of serious and thoughtful analysis", claiming that "this approach does not elevate trash to the classics, but profanates the very notion of criticism" (Bykov 2001: 42).

Throughout the 1990s, the content of *Cinema Art* depended in a fairly significant way on political and economic developments in the world and in Russia (see Appendix); theoretical articles about cinematography very often occupied a very modest place on the journal's pages. The journal also witnessed a generational change among film scholars and critics with the older generation appearing quite rarely, and some of them, once the epitome of the "state viewpoint", disappearing altogether; while the "middle generation" (which began their careers, mostly in the 1980s) was well represented and varied.

The frequency of theoretical articles in the *Cinema Art* journal in the post-Soviet 1990s ranged from six to thirty-five per year. However, due to its sharp politicization and focus on non-film texts, the minimum of film theory in the journal's texts occurred in the first three post-Soviet years.

Thus, 143 theoretical articles were published in the first decade of the journal's existence (1931–1941), 194 in the second (1945–1955), 220 in 1956–1968, 264 in 1969–1985, 66 in 1986–1991, and 132 in 1992–2000.

Our analysis of film studies concepts (in the context of the sociocultural and political situation, etc.) of the existence of the *Cinema Art* journal in the first post-Soviet decade (1992–2000) showed that theoretical works on cinematic subjects during this period can be divided into the following types:

- articles, discussions devoted mainly to theoretical analysis of the heritage of the classics of Soviet cinema, directing, the problem of "Cinema and the Spectator", film criticism and film studies, etc. (L. Anninsky, O. Aronson, Y. Bogomolov, S. Dobrotvorskyy, E. Dobrenko, D. Dondurey, V. Matisen, K. Razlogov, M. Turovskaya, M. Zak, M. Zorkaya and others);

- articles on theoretical aspects of foreign cinematography (D. Komm, M. Trofimenkov, N. Tsyrukun, and others).

On the whole, in the 1990s, as well as during the Perestroika period, *Cinema Art* journal radically re-evaluated the history of Soviet and world cinematography and tried to objectively analyze the development of the current cinema process.

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## Appendix

Key dates and events relevant to the historical, political, economic, ideological, sociocultural, and cinematic context in which *Cinema Art* journal was published in 1992–2000.

**1992**

January 2: the beginning of economic reform in Russia. Abolition of state regulation of prices in Russia, which caused hyperinflation of the ruble and a sharp increase in the flow of emigration of Russians to the West.

January 29: Russian President B. Yeltsin issued the decree "On Freedom of Trade".

January 31 – February 1: the meeting in the Presidents J. Bush and B. Yeltsin.

February 7: The Maastricht Treaty is signed, on the basis of which the European Union is formed on the basis of the European Community.

February 14: Declaration of the CIS Heads of State on the principles of cooperation.

April 6–22: The VI Congress of People's Deputies.

Festival "Kinotavr"-1992. Grand Prix: *Sleepless Sun* (Georgia), directed by T. Babliani, *Smile*, directed by S. Popov.

June 17: the visit to the U.S. of Russian President B. Yeltsin, the signing of the agreement "On mutual understanding" between Russia and the United States.

August: the U.S. adopts the "Freedom Support Act: Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets", creating a framework for economic aid to Russia's crisis-weakened economy.

November 3: B. Clinton wins the U.S. presidential election.

December 1–14: Seventh Congress of People's Deputies.

**1993**

January 20: B. Clinton becomes president of the United States.

April 3–4: The meeting of B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Canada.

Festival "Kinotavr"-1993. Grand Prix: *Anchor, Another Anchor!* directed by P. Todorovsky, *Island of the Dead*, directed by O. Kovalov.

July 1–12: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Moi Ivan, toi Abraham* (France–Belarus, directed by Y. Zoberman).

September 21: Boris Yeltsin's television address, outlining a decree on "phased constitutional reform" (on the dissolution of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet of Russia and the appointment of elections to the State Duma, empowering the Federation Council to function as the upper house of the Federal Assembly). A TV appearance by R. Khasbulatov, the Chairman of the RF Supreme Soviet, assessing the president's actions as a coup d'etat. Extraordinary sessions of the Presidium and the chambers of the RF Supreme Soviet. Resolution of the Presidium of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet on the termination of Yeltsin's powers. Assignment of the duties of the president to Vice President A. Rutskoi.

September 23: Beginning of the blockade of the building of the RF Supreme Soviet. Opening of the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia.

September 27: The building of the Congress of People's Deputies and the RF Supreme Soviet surrounded by troops on Yeltsin's order.

October 3–4: B. Yeltsin disperses the Russian Parliament (Supreme Soviet). American television station CNN broadcasts live coverage of the armed assault on the rebellious White House (Supreme Soviet building) in Moscow by Russian special forces units and tanks. Supporters of the rebel parliament attempt to seize the Ostankino television building.

December 12: The new Constitution of the Russian Federation is adopted by a majority vote. Elections to the Federation Council and the State Duma of the first convocation – the new legislative body of the Russian Federation – take place.

**1994**

January 11: The State Duma of the Russian Federation begins its work.

January 12–15: The visit of U.S. President B. Clinton to Russia.

January 14: Presidents of Russia, the United States and Ukraine signed in Moscow a trilateral statement on the procedure for transferring nuclear warheads from Ukrainian territory to Russia, on compensation and security guarantees for Ukraine. Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton signed the Moscow Declaration on Mutual Non-Targeting of Strategic Nuclear Missiles, effective May 30, 1994.

February 1: The Schengen Agreement, signed by EU countries, entered into force and provides for the introduction of full freedom of movement of citizens between the member states of the European Union.

May 27: writer A. Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008) returned to Russia from the United States.

Festival "Kinotavr"–1994. Grand Prix: *Angel, Make Joy* (Russia-Turkmenistan), directed by U. Saparov.

June 22: Russia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

September 1: withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany.

September 27–29: Russian President B. Yeltsin in the United States.

December 11–31: start of the first war in Chechnya.

### 1995

March 1: assassination of Russian TV anchor and journalist V. Listiev (1956–1995).

May 10: meeting of U.S. and Russian political leaders in Moscow, at which a number of statements were made, including the irreversibility of the nuclear arms reduction process.

June 16: a meeting between B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Canada.

June 14–19: Chechen terrorists take hostages in Budennovsk hospital.

Film Festival "Kinotavr"-1995. Grand Prix: *Peculiarities of National Hunting*, directed by A. Rogozhkin; *Passenger's Play*, directed by V. Abdrashitov.

July 17–28: Moscow International Film Festival. Gold George was not awarded. Silver George for directing: *The French Woman/Une femme francaise* (France – Great Britain – Germany), *Thanks for Every New Morning* (Czech Republic).

October 23: Meeting of B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in the United States.

### 1996

April 21: meeting between B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Moscow.

Festival "Kinotavr"–1996. Grand Prix: *Prisoner of the Caucasus*, directed by S. Bodrov and *Summer People*, directed by S. Ursulyak.

June 16 – July 3: Presidential elections in Russia, at which B. Yeltsin defeated Communist leader G. Zyuganov in two rounds with great difficulty.

August 31: end of the first war in Chechnya, signing of a peace agreement, beginning of withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

December 31: Completion of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

### 1997

May 27: Russian President B. Yeltsin, the Secretary General of NATO and the heads of NATO nations and governments signed in Paris a "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation".

Festival "Kinotavr"–1997. The Grand prix: *Brother*, director A. Balabanov.

July 19–29: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Marvin's Room* (USA, directed by J. Zaks).

November 9–11: B. Yeltsin's visit to China, signing a number of cooperation agreements.

### 1998

May 17: a meeting between B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Birmingham.

Festival "Kinotavr"–1998. Grand Prix: *Time of the Dancer*, directed by V. Abdrashitov.

May 17: The meeting of B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Birmingham.

August 17: a sharp drop in the ruble exchange rate against world currencies, the default.

September 1–3: U.S. President B. Clinton's visit to Russia.

December 16–19: the United States launched air strikes against Iraq.

### 1999

March 24–June 10: U.S. and NATO military invasion of Yugoslavia.

Festival "Kinotavr"–1999. Grand Prix: *Blockpost*, directed by A. Rogozhkin, *Moloch*, directed by A. Sokurov.

July 19–29: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Lust for Life* (Japan), directed by K. Shindo.

September 30: the beginning of the second war in Chechnya.

November 18: meeting between B. Yeltsin and B. Clinton in Istanbul.

December 31: B. Yeltsin resigns as President of Russia.

**2000**

March 26: V. Putin is elected President of Russia.

June 3–5: President B. Clinton's visit to Russia.

Festival "Kinotavr"—2000. Main prize: *Moonlight Daddy*, director. B. Khudoynazarov. Grand Prix: *His Wife's Diary*, directed by A. Uchitel.

July 19-29: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Life is a deadly sexually transmitted disease* (Poland–France), directed by K. Zanussi.

September 6: The meeting of Presidents V. Putin and B. Clinton in the United States. Joint Statement “Strategic Stability Partnership Initiative”.

A gradual increase in world energy prices led to the beginning of Russia's economic growth, which lasted until August 2008.

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## How Universities Communicate their Corporate Reputation to the World Using Students' Citizenship as Promotional Tool in the Context of Higher Education Information Literacy

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### Abstract

The literature demonstrates that higher educational organisations perceived corporate reputation soars and gains global reputation with rising international recognition and patronage. Therefore, in an era when higher education is increasingly becoming globalised with the rising internationalisation of university education, a university's students' citizenship may be a tool to promote and enhance the standing of its corporate reputation both locally and internationally a process we refer to as 'globocation'. However, the dearth of literature in this area of research particularly in the context of Malaysian higher education industry prompted the present study to be conducted. A simple random sampling technique was used to recruit 331 international (foreign) students from the Malaysian Infrastructure University of Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) who completed a 21-item questionnaire with very high reliability of  $\alpha = 0.92$ . Only one correlation hypothesis was tested which was formulated on the citizenship dimension of the RepTrack™ model and it was accepted. Data were analysed using SPSS version 23 and moderate correlation (Person's  $p = 0.00$ ,  $r = 0.55$ ) was found between citizenship and reputation. In addition, reputation is expressed as high esteem, love, respect, and trust. The study concludes that international students will tend to recommend to others (their friends, peers, colleagues, etc.) educational institutions they found very reputable. Future research should explore comparative studies between international and local students on the reputation assessment of their institutions.

**Keywords:** citizenship, corporate communication, corporate reputation, higher educational institution, information literacy, IUKL, RepTrak model, university student.

### 1. Introduction

The World is witnessing a high increase in the population of international students moving from one country to another (Alam et al., 2020; Song, McCarthy, 2018; Tan, 2022; Tran, Marginson, 2018). According to the United Nations International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) report 2020 (IOM, 2020: 80), *The number of international students from Eastern Asia, particularly at the tertiary level, has increased rapidly in recent years, while the number of foreign students within the subregion also continues to grow.... However, Eastern Asia is not only a major origin of international students, [but] it is also gradually becoming an important destination for foreign students...*

In 2018, there were over 490,000 international students enrolled in Chinese higher educational institutions. In 2018, students from the Republic of Korea made up the largest

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proportion of international students in China. Eastern Asia is becoming a popular destination for international students, particularly from the region (IOM, 2020). The IOM's 2022 World Migration Report also shows that China is the world's largest source of international students, with the majority residing in North America. Eastern Asia is becoming more popular as a study abroad destination for international students. The Republic of Korea and Japan both saw an increase in international student numbers before the COVID-19 pandemic (IOM, 2022). This may have suggested why many emerging economies such as Malaysia are trying to attract foreign students (Cerna, Czaika, 2021; Mok, 2012) with the aim of globacating their universities' corporate image and reputation. Globacation refers to "all the strategic tools deployed, and deliberate efforts embezzled by an organisation toward promoting and enhancing the standing of its corporate reputation both locally and internationally." In achieving this, reputation is very important because students tend to go to countries where they feel their demands and expectation can be adequately met (Khoi, 2021) in this regard,

Britain has recently announced that it is working to attract 600,000 international students by 2030 which shows a sharp rise from the about 460,000 currently enrolled (ICEF Monitor, 2019). The United Kingdom is the second most popular EU destination for students from Russia, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, after Germany. Former Soviet Union countries accounted for approximately 4 % of international students in the United Kingdom. While the number of degree-mobile students from former Soviet countries to the United Kingdom has nearly doubled in the last two decades, the number of students enrolling in UK higher educational institutions varies greatly by sending country. The top sending countries are currently Lithuania, Russia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan (Chankseliani, 2018: 54; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2020).

As Malaysia serves as a strategic contender for these recent developments, it is equally necessary for its institutions to demonstrate high commitment which should create a good mindset for the psyches of its foreign students. According to Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOE), their vision is "to make Malaysia a centre of higher educational excellence by the year 2020". These should align with the hope of many international students who come to Malaysia for the enrichment of their expertise. To come to term with this reality, it should be observed that the world high ranking institutions are such as Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford, etc. "have their rankings not by mere accidents but by the reputation they have built over time [through] research, innovation, quality teaching, commitment, and good services." Their identity matches with their brands and so the image and reputations. Therefore, reputation assessment uncovers whether organisations have maintained their covenanted promise or not (Knight, Morshidi, 2011; Shahjahan et al., 2022; Subbarayalu, 2022).

Over the last decade, Malaysia has witnessed a growing number of international students (Ahrani et al., 2019; Chin, 2019; Nadeem et al., 2020). "This increase was noted some years after the United States 9/11 attack, especially among Arab students" (Alzubaidi, Rechards, 2010; Sirat, 2008). However, Malaysia has also taken measures to handle the new challenges which could help to reposition the country's role in the world, and which will certainly enhance its economic prosperity. MoHE set up an international student's division to cope with the increasing number of foreign students pursuing higher education which is gradually turning the country into a centre of educational pursuit. The division has been operating since 2007 to facilitate and manage the entrance of foreign students which is appreciably increasing (Asari et al., 2017).

According to Chin (Chin, 2019) and ICEF Monitor (ICEF Monitor, 2016), Malaysia's recent recognition as one of the top ten destinations for post-secondary education by UNESCO bodes well for the Malaysian government's goal of increasing the number of international students to 250,000 by 2025. Malaysia has risen from 12th to 9th place in the latest international student mobility survey by UNESCO since 2014. At the end of 2014, about 135,500 international students were studying in public and private higher educational institutions and international high schools in Malaysia. This was a 16.5 % increase from 2013, with Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Yemen, Sri Lanka, and Libya being the top sending countries for Malaysian institutions.

As of 2014, Malaysia had sought to position itself as a regional education hub in Southeast Asia, with rising international enrolments and increased government investment in the sector. Regional hubs are beginning to attract greater numbers of internationally mobile students, according to UNESCO and others. Malaysia, along with China, Korea, and Singapore, is beginning to compete with destinations such as Australia and Japan for students from a variety of Asian



markets. Working with private partners, the Malaysian government has helped establish two higher education zones: EduCity Iskandar and Kuala Lumpur Education City. Investment in education infrastructure is also linked to the country's economic development strategies (Chin, 2019; ICEF Monitor, 2016).

Thanks to these zones, Malaysia has become a popular host country for international branch campuses. Foreign institutions such as Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia, University of Southampton Malaysia Campus, Netherlands Maritime Institute of Technology and the University of Reading Malaysia are currently based at EduCity Iskandar Campus. Organisations such as the British Council have recognised Malaysia as a world leader in transnational education because of its internationalisation efforts. The University of Nottingham celebrated its 15th anniversary in September 2015 as the first UK university to open a campus in Malaysia. "In the 1990s, the University of Nottingham made the internationalisation of higher education a priority... The Malaysian government liberalised its higher education sector by inviting foreign universities to set up campuses" (ICEF Monitor, 2016).

In the pursuit of these goals, Malaysian educational institutions need to consider how reputation is given attention to by research today (Fauzi et al., 2020; Hira et al., 2021). Against this background, the work is timely and necessary for the Malaysian universities such as Infrastructure University, Kuala Lumpur (IUKL), which is the focus of this study, to have an objective insight on how they are being perceived by the foreign students, which if carefully studied would among other measures help this institution in achieving its vision.

*Research Gaps and Objectives:* Furthermore, it can be noted that a growing body of research today examines reputation in the field of private manufacturing and service companies. The importance of this is only lately discovered by the public sectors and remains many under-used resources (Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020). What is more relevant is the observation by Aula et al. (Aula et al., 2011) that there is no adequate attention by researchers to measure the reputation of universities. Thus, this has created a gap that this researcher has found interesting to fill. The essence of conducting this research work is to determine the reputation of Malaysian Universities as perceived by their international students. It is to be measured by the level of trust, admiration, respect, and positive feelings of the respondent. Organisations with strong reputations have this emotional connection and they can increase support from their key stakeholders (Nielsen, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) provide the descriptive data analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics and (2) determine the relationship between IUKL's student citizenship and its perceived reputation.

*Conceptual Review of Extant Literature:* A growing body of research has been using reputation indices to judge how good organisations are. Reputation has to do with the internal feelings of individuals about organisations. That organisation can be a profit or non-profit venture; a country or a state; a university or a company; a school or even an individual (Balmer, 2012; Dominic et al., 2021; Esa et al., 2022; Khoshtaria et al., 2020; Ponzi et al., 2011; Tay et al., 2020). Reputation is the overall evaluation often expressed as the admiration and esteem in which an organisation or company is held. It answers whether one is good or bad (Brenneke et al., 2020). It also determines the extent to which people trust an organisation (Adebessin, Mwalugha, 2020; Al Shobaki et al., 2020; Golata, Sojkin, 2020).

Reputation is described as the "collective representation of multiple constituencies, the image of a company [or organisation] built up over time and based on a company [or organisation's] identity programs, its performance and how constituencies have perceived its behaviour" (Argenti, Druchenmiller, 2004; Pires, Trez, 2018). Reputation is also described as intangible (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Rindova, Martins, 2012; Shah, Abdullah, 2016). "Thus, it is very difficult to measure" (Taamneh et al., 2022; Shah, Abdullah, 2016).

Still, scholars have tried in their ways to describe what reputation means and how best it can be measured. Past research has variously defined reputation one of which is "the emotional connection between people and companies. Reputation can be measured by the level of trust, admiration, respect, and good feelings" (Rashid, Mustafa, 2022). Companies or organisations with strong reputations have this emotional connection which they attract increased support from their key publics. According to Singh and Misra (Singh, Misra, 2021), corporate reputation is the overall (often expressed as admiration, respect, and esteem) in which a company is held. Thus, he posits that corporate reputation answers the question, are you good or bad. It determines if people trust the company. Therefore, discussing this in connection with universities would tell how some of

their attitudes and practices lead to criticisms and reputational injury. According to Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013), corporate reputation can also be defined in terms of several attributes that form a buyer's perception as "to whether a company is well known, good or bad, reliable, trustworthy, reputable, and believable." Corporate reputation is concerned with how people feel about an organisation based on whatever information (or misinformation) they have on the organisation's activities, workplace, past performance, and prospects (Singh, Misra, 2021). "A good reputation creates a favourable operating environment, but it demands continuous maintenance and demonstration through good practices." It delivers promise; this is how organisations will behave in the future (Pires, Trez, 2018; Ponzi et al., 2011; Rimkutė, 2018). Many tend to interchange the three concepts of reputation, image, and identity. Anything that has to do with the painting of the good values of an organisation is identified with one of the three concepts. But scholars have distinguished the three concepts though they are not without relationships, namely corporate image, corporate identity, and corporate reputation.

1. *Corporate image*: this is intangible; it is the belief and impressions held by stakeholders about an organisation (Singh, Misra, 2021). Stakeholders can be students, employees, community and so on. Gołata and Sojkin (Gołata, Sojkin, 2020) posit that "image is a reflection of an organisations reality." This means that the stakeholder examines what the organisation is all about, what the organisation is doing and the direction it is heading to (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Ponzi et al., 2011). Hence the corporate image answers the question of what people think about you (Singh, Misra, 2021).

2. *Corporate identity*: this has to do with attributes, symbols, nomenclature, and behaviours used by an organisation to express and identify itself (Singh, Misra, 2021). Managing identity is vital to portray a good image of the organisation (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013). Unlike the image, identity is tangible. It should be made unique, unambiguous, thrilled, and simple. In other words, the actual identity should match the covenanted identity which is the corporations promise to its stakeholders (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2020). The role of corporate identity is to measure who you are (Boafo et al., 2020; Melewar et al., 2018; van der Rijt, 2021).

3. *Corporate reputation*: corporate reputation is the overall evaluation often expressed as admiration, respect, esteem, and good feeling (Adebesin, Mwalugha, 2020; Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021; Esa et al., 2022). Like the image, reputation is also intangible. It is the emotional connection between people and organisations. Therefore, corporate reputation answers the question, are you good or bad? It determines if people trust the organisation (Singh, Misra, 2021; van der Rijt, 2021).

However, it should be observed that three concepts are related. Some scholars have given further definitions which show how identity and image are attached to reputation. Adebesin and Mwalugha (Adebesin, Mwalugha, 2020), and Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013) have defined corporate reputation as "a collective term referring to all stakeholders' views of corporate reputation, including identity & image." Related to that definition is the one which sees reputation as "the collective representative of multiple constituencies, images, of a company built up over time based on a company's identity programs, its performance and how constituencies have perceived its behaviour" (Burke, 2016).

Furthermore, according to the 2018/2019 report of an online higher education statistics agency' "Study in UK", there are currently 485,645 international students pursuing degrees in the United Kingdom. The total number of people has risen from 458,520 in the previous year's statistics. In the fiscal year that ended in September 2019, the UK government announced that 276,889 students were granted a Sponsored Study (Tier 4) visa. This represents a 16 % increase over the previous year, and it is the highest level of Tier 4 visas granted since 2011 (Liu, 2021; Study in UK, 2021). Study in UK (Study in UK, 2021) further noted that as of 2018/2019, "there are 2,383,970 students enrolled in higher educational institutions, including international students as well as students from the United Kingdom." This represents a 2 % increase over 2017/2018. International students from China account for 32 % of first-year non-UK students, or 86,485. A total of 342,620 students from countries outside the European Union came to the UK to further their education. Other European Union countries, excluding the UK, account for 143,025 students enrolled in UK higher educational institutions (Liu, 2021).

Most international students coming from non-EU countries, according to Study in UK (Study in UK, 2022), "come from China, with a total of 120,385 students enrolled in higher educational institutions in the UK." This means, 35 % of all non-EU students are from China, as of 2018/2019 statistics. With a total of 26,685 students, India ranks second among the top countries of origin for

non-EU students in the UK. The United States is right behind, sending a total of 20,120 students to the United Kingdom to pursue a qualification. When it comes to international students' countries of origin, Hong Kong and Malaysia are fourth and fifth, respectively, with the former sending 16,135 students and the latter sending 13,835 students. Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Canada, and Thailand are the top five non-EU countries sending the most students to the UK (Liu, 2021; Study in UK, 2021).

Furthermore, Liu (Liu, 2021) and Study in UK (Study in UK, 2021) noted that the total number of international students from other EU countries, excluding the United Kingdom, is 143,025, with 13,965 of them hailing from Italy. The scholars further noted that after Italy, France is the EU country that sends the most students to the UK to study. According to statistics from 2018/2019, there are 13,675 students from France studying in the United Kingdom. According to them, with a total of 13,475 and 10,380 students respectively, Germany and Spain are among the EU countries with the highest population of students in the UK. They also pointed out that Greece, Romania, Ireland, Cyprus, Poland, and Bulgaria are among the other countries sending the most students to the United Kingdom.

Levatino et al. (Levatino et al., 2018: 3) noted that UK and France ranked second and fourth among the leading host countries to international students in 2014. Spain, however, has been the main destination for foreign students from Latin America. Further, statistics show that during the same year (2014), the UK hosted 428,724 international students, France hosted 235,123, and Spain hosted 56,361 international students (Levatino et al., 2018: 4). According to Lassegard (Lassegard, 2016: 47), Japan's government planned "to accept 300,000 international students by the year 2020 as part of its global strategy and international commitment to expand flows of human resources." According to Trilokekar and El Masri (Trilokekar, El Masri, 2019: 29), in OECD countries, "IS [international students] are the fastest-growing immigrant group among all groups of immigrants, including labour migrants, family migrants, and refugees." It was observed that as of 2015, "45 per cent of Canadian institutions of higher learning identified the recruitment of IS [international students] as among their highest priorities, and 70 per cent included IS recruitment among their top five goals" (Trilokekar, El Masri, 2019: 27).

According to Hirschmann (Hirschmann, 2020), about 13,450 students from China studied in Malaysia in 2019. However, most of the international students that study in Malaysia hail from Muslim countries, "with most of them enrolled in private higher educational institutions." Nearly 234,080 male students and 358,600 female students are expected to enrol in public higher educational institutions in 2020. Even though the number of male students enrolled has been steadily declining since 2016, female students still outnumber male students in 2019. This reflected a global trend in which women are more likely than men to pursue higher education (Hirschmann, 2022). According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), as of the Second Quarter of 2018, however, there were 27,766 international students (representing 5.16 %) and local students 510,789 (representing 94.84 %) of the total enrolment of 538,555 students spread across various public higher educational institutions in Malaysia (Chin, 2019; MOE, 2018).

*Empirical Review of Extant Literature:* A study by Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013) found that "90 % of senior executives agreed that stakeholders especially customers [or students in our case] will consider corporate reputation as a strong determinant to purchase products or services." That study is corroborated by Aula and Mantere (Aula, Mantere, 2020). The abstract nature of the concept of reputation has made it very difficult to be measured in visible terms (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021; Kaur, Singh, 2018; Keller, Brexendorf, 2019; Singh, Misra, 2021; Tahir et al., 2021). Thus, recent studies have witnessed the development of different measurement scales which have made reputation management more visible. Some include Reputation Quotient by Fombrun et al. (Fombrun et al., 2000) such as Angliss (Angliss, 2021), and Jie et al. (Jie et al., 2019), while others include AC4ID test (Balmer, 2017), and more robust RepTrak model developed by Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011), among many other emerging scales.

Most of the corporate measurement bodies such as fortune 500, Reputation Institute's RepTrak 100, Clarin Magazine's most 100 admired companies, and so on, focus largely on measuring companies' reputation (Kaur, Singh, 2018; Khan, Digout, 2018; Pires, Trez, 2018). However, nowadays we have witnessed how research is conducted to access the reputation of public sectors which is seen as a source of accessing performance and getting ways to improve it. For example, Kotková Strítešská and Sein (Kotková Strítešská, Sein, 2021) conducted a study to

define a set of key characteristics of organisational culture that contribute to reputation, effective performance measurement and management of public sector organisations. A study found that measuring the reputation of an educational institution helps to uplift the rankings of the institution, meet students' demands, boost the socio-economic nature of a state, and proactively manage risk and crisis before they occur (Dominic et al., 2021). A study conducted by Najimdeen et al. (Najimdeen et al., 2021: 89) which examined how students' satisfaction is impacted by service quality discovered that "moderate positive perceptions of overall university quality service and satisfaction with a low level of satisfaction for some dimensions of quality service such as empathy and assurance."

Another critical factor that prompted university reputational studies is its relevance in the attainment of a good ranking (Angliss, 2021; Gutiérrez-Villar et al., 2022). For example, the QS University ranking for Asia which is published annually since 2009 uses criteria like "academic reputation, employer reputation, and student/faculty ratio", among other things. Chais et al. (Chais et al., 2018: 20) and Mascarenhas et al. (Mascarenhas et al., 2018: 708) examined why corporate university relations are important. Outcomes of the study highlight the importance of understanding by universities and corporations that "working in collaborative technology research contributes to the transformation of applied research into technological innovations that can transform society." This further provides some hints about the growing relationship between universities and corporations.

Moreover, universities need support for programmes, research, and student development (Heller, 2022; Jacob et al., 2021). However, one fundamental question that should agitate our minds is, who would risk investing in an institution that has no good reputation? When an institution builds a good reputation, everyone would be flocking to its doors. Rebuilding a damaged reputation is more difficult than building a new one entirely. That is why proponents of corporate reputation always emphasise on companies to take control of their reputations (Burke, 2016).

Against this background, we can understand that studies on reputation are very necessary, not only to Malaysian universities management but also to the Malaysian Government as a whole. According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), Malaysia anticipates raising the number of international students from 93,000 previously in 2012 to 150,000 in 2015, 200,000 in 2020, and 250,000 in 2025. In addition, Malaysia is among the top 10 destinations for international students (Chin, 2019; MOE, 2015). Ahmad and Buchanan (Ahmad, Buchanan, 2017) confirm that institutional reputation is one of the top two factors that contribute to students' enrolment. Hence, it could be important to globalise the reputation of Malaysian universities as well.

It can further be observed that focusing on institutional reputation studies also links to the economic wellbeing of a country. According to Chin (2019) and MOE, Malaysia's economy earns an average range of RM46,000 (£ 9,944) to RM88,000 (£ 19,000) per international student per annum. Generally, however, Malaysia earns about RM7.2 billion (£ 1.4 billion) per annum from international students. "Given the rising cost of education and other related costs at 10 % per annum," this higher education sector is expected to generate not less than RM15.6 billion (£ 3 billion) when it achieves its target of 200,000 international students by 2020. As of March 2019, the enrolment of international students in Malaysian universities is 127,582 with about 70 % of this population of international students enrolled in private higher institutions (Chin, 2019; Malay Mail, 2019).

Organisations perceived to be having "a weak reputation, risks losing its customers" according to research (e.g., Maor, Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2016; Rimkutè, 2018). Hence, the findings of the present study are expected to provide the Management of IUKL a view of how they are being perceived by their international students. This study examined international students because of their recent influx in Malaysia which boost its education enterprises and globalise their standing. International students have proven to be very important to any university across the globe. Only a university with a growing number of international students can be termed as an international university (Soliman et al., 2019).

Mbous et al. (Mbous et al., 2022) assert that international students are enormously beneficial to the United States and bring knowledge and skills to the classrooms, new experiences to the laboratories, provide campuses with a good level of diversity, and create and promote a long-term relationship between American educational institutes and abroad. To provide an understanding of the impact of mutual export of international students for higher education between Asian and OECD countries, Beghin and Park (Beghin, Park, 2021) employed "a gravity equation approach

using panel data from 1998 to 2016.” However, Mbou et al.’s (Mbou et al., 2022) study found no evidence that the reputation of a country’s universities explains student flows.

What probably leads to growing studies on corporate reputation in recent times is the fact that it has become an inter-disciplinary construct with conventional meaning. It thus attracts research in fields as diverse as economics, marketing, management, psychology communication (Eger et al., 2021), among others. In management alone, Christensen and Gornitzka (Christensen, Gornitzka, 2019) recognise the numerous theories that contribute to our understanding of this construct. Expectedly, corporate reputation definitions and operationalisation are muddled (Ponzi et al., 2011).

Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011) revealed that corporate reputation continues to gain interest among scholars and practitioners. According to them, the average number of scholarly articles published between the years 2000 to 2003 was five times the average between 1990 and 2000. This indicates a tremendous increase of interest in corporate reputation among scholars and other commentators on social issues. Ponzi et al. (2011) further posit that all scholars agree that corporate reputation is a valuable, intangible asset because they influence consumers decisions about the companies whose products and services they will buy, creditors and investors about both the companies to which they will lend and job-seekers decision about the companies for which they are prepared to work (Ponzi et al., 2011). Various authors have also suggested that reputation is an economic asset because it influences the profitability of companies and is unique and inimitable (Esa et al., 2022; Ponzi et al., 2011; Singh, Misra, 2021; Subbarayalu, 2022).

It has been shown that CEOs perceive the importance of reputation management with utmost importance. A study found that 90 % of CEOs prove that stakeholders especially customers, will consider corporate reputations importance when they decide to purchase a product or service (Abdallah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Taamneh et al., 2022). According to Global Corporate Reputation Index (GCRI, 2020: 2, 7), reputation has a different importance to organisations. Most world company executives that were surveyed by GCRI (GCRI, 2020) believe that the reputation of their companies is strong, with 45 % of them reporting ‘very strong.’ Only 3 % of them reported a ‘very weak’ company reputation. A similar opinion was reported by global businesses. Some company CEOs “attribute at least 76 % of their market value to company reputation.” GCRI (GCRI, 2020: 2, 7) also made a critical finding that reputation is regarded as ‘omnidriven’, meaning that “a company’s reputation is influenced by a variety of factors, with no one driver having a greater impact than all of the rest. This lack of distinction suggests that companies can no longer solely focus on and prioritize just a few key drivers of reputation but on many. From quality of employees to quality of products, to financial performance, to corporate culture, everything matters to managing corporate reputation today.”

Furthermore, GCRI indicates that reputation approximately accounted for about \$ 750 million for the organisations accruing large revenues in both developed and less developed of about “\$ 500 million” and “\$ 250 million” respectively. GCRI’s (GCRI, 2020: 11) findings also underscore that “Reputation is important to the governing board in all industries. More than nine in 10 executives in six industries say reputation is important to their board: consumer goods at 95 %, telecommunications, IT, technology (93 %), energy, natural resources (93 %) retail (93 %), and media and industrial, manufacturing both at 92 %.”

Nielsen (Nielsen, 2012) argues that an organisation is perceived as having a weak reputation when only 16 % of people say it would buy its product or services. Those with an average reputation might attract up to 41 % and those with an excellent reputation can be up to 64 %. However, it can be noted that much of the literature that is available today discusses reputation in the field of private manufacturing and service companies. The importance of this is only lately discovered by the public sectors and remained many underused resources (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019).

A study on the corporate reputation of public sector suggests that reputation does not feature directly in law, but the “stakeholders can freely voice their opinions on the competence and trustworthiness of public sector organisations” (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019). Kuoppakangas et al.’s (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019) study found five reputation factors which include authority, trust, service, esteem, and efficiency. They conclude that the reputation of public sector organisations among frequent stakeholders was quite neutral except for a rather high trust. Hence it can be argued that the reputation of the public sector can be assessed, and it is important for public organisations to take their reputation in high esteem.

In their study on the consumer perspective of the high education service sector in Malaysia, Ali et al. (Ali et al., 2016) suggest that “the reputation values of institutions are deeply established on the mind of the students.” In addition, stability of organisations, loyalty of employees and performance, easy recruitment, decreased cost of transaction, profit, and decreased transaction costs are found to be impacted by reputation (Beghin, Park, 2021; Pires, Trez, 2018) all of which are particularly attractive attributes to public sector organisations struggling with financial and political pressure. Reputation assessment uncovers whether organisations have maintained their covenanted promise or not (Knight, Morshidi, 2011; Shahjahan et al., 2022; Subbarayalu, 2022).

However, unlike Nuseir and El Refae (Nuseir, El Refae, 2021) who studied the factors that led to enrolment of students to UAE universities; Rashid and Mustafa (2022) who investigated the effect of corporate reputation antecedents and stakeholder loyalty on enrolment in Malawian universities, Adeyanju et al. (Adeyanju et al., 2020) who studied factors that influence students’ choice of public universities in Nigeria, Christensen and Gornitzka (Christensen, Gornitzka, 2019) who studied the reputations of public sectors, Cao et al. (2022) who investigated the correlation between developing countries’ population and their universities’ international reputation with a focus on Chinese universities, Sugiharto et al. (Sugiharto et al., 2022) who studied correlation between student loyalty reputation of higher educational institution focusing on a polytechnic in Bandung, Indonesia, Ajayi and Mmutle (Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021) who investigated how to create corporate reputation through strategic communication of corporate social responsibility in South African corporate organisations, Eger et al. (Eger et al., 2021) who examined how universities communicate with publics using social media platforms, Gruzina et al. (Gruzina et al., 2021) who examined the creation of effective cooperation between Russian youth and foreign higher institutions in research and development, Chernikova et al. (Chernikova et al., 2021), who investigated the adaptation of foreign students at South-Russian universities, Kozyrev et al. (Kozyrev et al., 2019) who empirically studied “special aspects of management of higher educational institutions through the use of correlation analysis, Mascarenhas et al. (Mascarenhas et al., 2018) who performed systematic literature review on cooperation in university-industry, Pestereva et al. (Pestereva et al., 2019) who studied internationalisation of education focusing on “Eurasian education and research ecosystem”, and similarly, Aula and Tienari (Aula, Tienari, 2011) whose study also focused on the formation of educational ecosystem by university conglomerates for the purpose of boosting their reputation, the present study investigates perception of university reputation by foreign students.

*Theoretical Framework:* The concept of reputation has received great attention from scholars of various fields. Literature on reputation is appreciably piling up (e.g., Aula, Tienari, 2011; Kaur, Singh, 2018; Khoi, 2021). In addition, scholars have developed different research models which help us to quantify the intangible nature of companies. To this end, it can be found suitable to use a new model designed by Reputation Institute called the RepTrak model (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016). “RepTrak is a tool developed from extensive international research which provides organisations with a standardised framework that can be used to quantify their reputation.” RepTrak has seven dimensions and 23 drivers. It also has a pulse that determines what reputation is. Based on the assessment of the seven dimensions, six of the dimensions are not applicable in the present study, only citizenship is. However, to provide comprehensive literature on the model, a review of the literature on the five of the most related dimensions is performed (Chan et al., 2018).

The dimensions of the RepTek model are as follows:

(1) *Leadership:* this is the act of a leading a group of people or organisation. It is part of the success of any organisation to establish a competent and focused leadership. Any organisation that has failed to establish good leadership, such has planned to fail from the beginning. Leadership is very important; it reflects the capacity to direct, support and strategic competence to create value for an organisation. In this model, leadership has three drivers, which include: the establishment of a strong and respected leader, a clear vision for the future and well-organised leadership.

First, it adds to the reputation of an organisation for its leader to be responsible. Reputable leaders must establish legitimacy, trust, credibility, and emotional connections with their constituents. The legitimacy of a leader is described by two factors which are authority and validity. Authority permits leaders to lead; leaders of the universities got authority from the senate or employers. Whereas validity has to do with what a leader is a period or which a leader is expected to stay in office. Credible leaders need to establish a vision, communicate effectively, build strong

teams, and empower employees. In addition, a leader will create trust with his stakeholders when he acts in honour best on morality and ethics. His management should transmit and create an ethical and conducive working environment as research has shown that “31 % of employees said that unethical culture in business will lead them to act unethically too” (Chan et al., 2018; Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

Second, a leader should have a clear vision, in the discharge of his duties. Vision answers why University is established. It identifies what universities are set to achieve. Following the visions of the Malaysian Universities by their leadership would build more reputation to the institutions as their covenanted identity matched their actual and perceived identities. The third point under leadership is for the universities to be well organised. The seriousness of an organisation can be perceived in how well it is having organised itself. The qualities of being well organised are both internal and external. The internal has to do with how well their leadership is emotionally connected to the followership. Vision must be translated to the understanding of the employees, ensure good downward communication, allow for upward communication for feedback, as well as the adoption of a win-win situation between the leadership and employees (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

(2) *Products and services*: the nature of products and/or services also adds to the reputation of the employee. A client should be treated very well. An organisation should have good value for finance, high quality goods and services, satisfactory manner of handling complaints, best ways to meet the clients’ needs. In the case of this study, universities largely deal with services that are teaching the students and research. Malaysian universities have been a reservoir to students across the globe; these different students should be treated well so that they enjoy their stay in the universities and this by implication adds to the good reputation of the universities. This can be done through different gestures such as employing of qualified teachers, enough teaching aids, well-furnished classrooms, functional library, laboratories, research tools, hostel accommodations and residential colleges, social centres and cafeterias, sports facilities and transportation, market and above all good employer student relationship (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

(3) *Innovation*: the RepTrack’s model suggests that innovation can be used to examine organisational reputation. According to Prado and Ballabriga (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016), “Innovation is the process of translating an idea or invention into goods or service that creates or for which customers will pay. To be regarded as an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. Innovation involves the deliberate application of information, imagination, and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources and including all processes by which new ideas are generated and converted into useful products.” Freeman’s Innovation Theory describes “innovation as “the main growth factor for an organisation, producing competitiveness that would be achieved through investment in R&D [Research & Development] and other intangible efforts” (Lundval, 2016). Similarly, Vargo et al. (Vargo et al., 2020: 527) describe innovation as “the [work of] several managers that interact with each other and during the interaction process, they are designing, emerging, and exchanging knowledge with each other.” This dimension also has three drivers, which include: being first to market, adapting to changes and innovative company (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016). “It is part of an organisation’s reputation to be innovative” (Balina et al., 2020; Lundval, 2016).

(4) *Governance*: governance is about how transparent the management is, whether cooperation behaves ethically and fair in the way they do business. In other words, effective governance improves financial and operational transparency. This is because it decreases the information asymmetries between insiders and outside investors. By adopting governance provisions, it may improve financial transparency because it accentuates information disclosure (Hlel et al., 2020). Jang et al. (Jang et al., 2016) defined governance as a company’s policy in which the policy is presented in standard writing that accentuates the company’s code of ethics. In other words, it is to create a high-level normative principle and redefine how a business should be conducted in a moral context of business.

According to Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011), governance has three dimensions. The first is transparency, which is defined as “a principle that allows those affected by administrative decisions, business transactions or charitable work to know not only the basic facts and figures but also the mechanisms and processes.” It is the duty of civil servants, managers, and trustees to act visibly, predictably, and understandably. In this sense, a university organisation needs to be more transparent as the contract between the university and students does not end with the students’

graduation. The second driver is ethical behaviour which “concerns acting in ways consistent with society and individual typically feels are good values. Ethical behaviour tends to be good for business and involves demonstrating respect for key moral principles that include fairness, honesty, equality, dignity, diversity, and individual rights” (Balina et al., 2020; Aryati et al., 2018; Pires, Trez, 2018). The third driver is fairness. Napoli (Napoli, 2021) defines fairness as “providing [people] with a balance of opposing viewpoint.” The notion of fairness rests on the assumption that each person matters in them and is more than a number – to put it formally, persons are separate bearers of dignity and rights. Thus, fairness adds to the university reputation.

(5) *Citizenship*: corporate citizenship is “the extent to which businesses are socially responsible for meeting legal, ethical, and economic responsibilities placed on them by shareholders. The aim is for businesses to create higher standards of living and quality of life in the communities in which they operate, while still preserving profitability for stakeholders” (Campopiano et al., 2019; Homer, 2021; Singh, Jamil, 2021). Corporate citizenship is a business leadership process that focuses on a company’s impact on society and its relationships with stakeholders (Waddock, 2017) as well as its “strategies on the operationalisation of its relationship that have an impact on stakeholders and the natural environments” (Homer, 2021). Lewis et al. (Lewis et al., 2019) while defining citizenship according to institution theory said it is a business that has a long-term existence in the industry; it has to do with the area of economic, legal, and ethical responsibility of industry. However, the RepTrak drivers of citizenship are not different from what the above scholars said. Citizenship has three drivers: supporting a good cause, contribution to society, and protection of the environment (Campopiano et al., 2019).

*Conceptual Framework of the Study*: This study focuses on the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model. Therefore, the independent variable of the study is only one, which is, citizenship (excluding the remaining variables). The dependent variable, which is, reputation, was measured based on four sub-variables, namely esteem, feelings, admiration, and trust (e.g., Fombrun et al., 2000) (see Figure 1). Hence, only one hypothesis was tested, and it is formulated as below.

*Hypothesis of the Study*: Given the preceding literature review, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H1: There is significant relationship between IUKL citizenship and its reputation.

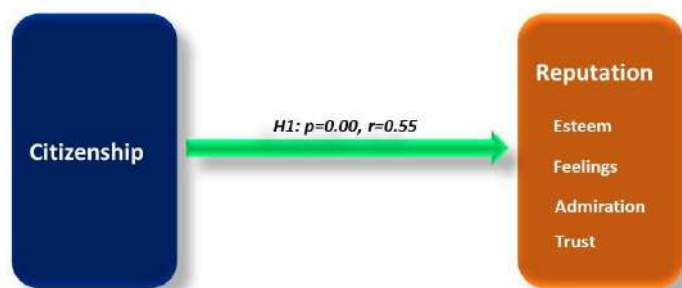


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework of the study

## 2. Materials and methods

*Research Design and Population*: Given the nature of this study, which focuses on providing an understanding of the influence/correlation of the population of foreign or international students on/with the reputation of the Infrastructure University, Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) reputation as a corporate academic organisation, survey research approach was deemed suitable especially given that a large sample of the international students was involved (e.g., Singh, 2022). The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The population of this study was the international students at IUKL, Malaysia. A student was considered international once he/she is not an indigene of Malaysia and had registered at IUKL.

*Sample and Sampling Technique*: Surveying a whole population of foreign students at IUKL “may be practically impossible, hence the need for the selection of a representative sample from the sampling frame” (Singh, 2022). That permits the generalisation of data and “elements of the population have the probability of having equal chances of being selected in the sampling process” (Singh, 2022), a simple random sampling technique was employed to recruit the respondents of the study. Because the sample is chosen randomly, “the result is assumed to be the reflective view of all the respondents” (Wimmer, Dominick, 2013). The population of this study was 1,852.



However, using the Krejcie and Morgan's (Krejcie, Morgan, 1970) sampling calculator, 319 respondents are enough to represent the population.

*Location of the Study:* This study was conducted at IUKL. IUKL was established in 1998 and it was the centre of Kumpulan Ikram tertiary education activities. In 1999, Ikram College had its name changed to Ikram College of Technology (ICT). On 13th September 2003, ICT was upgraded by the Malaysian Ministry of High Education "to the status of a university college with a new name Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College (KLIUC)." In 2012, KLIUC has further upgraded to a full-pledged university with the name Infrastructure University, Kula Lumpur. IUKL's vision is to be a world-renowned infrastructure university, and its mission is to strive for excellence "in various fields of infrastructure by providing quality education, advanced knowledge, state-of-the-art technology, and excellent professional services." Consequently, many international students prefer to study there. International students constitute (1,850) more than 40 % of the student population (4,550) in the university. Thus, they are presumed to be important publics through whose opinion IUKL's reputation can be measured (IUKL Website, 2022).

IUKL was chosen because of the following reasons. First, unlike most public universities which provide admission to international students mainly at postgraduate levels only, IUKL is a private university that admits both undergraduate and postgraduate international students. Second, the population of International students at the university is very significant – it constitutes up to 40 % of the entire population of the students. Thus, because of cultural and social differences, it is important to assess their perception of the university's reputation. Third, IUKL witnesses an important landmark in its history. It used to be a college and now a full-pledged university. It is undergoing massive transformation including in the areas of the rebranding of its name, logo, corporate colour(s), identity, image, etc. Finally, physical infrastructures are rehabilitated, and new ultra-modern buildings are under constructed. Hence, this study deemed IUKL's reputation is worth assessing to determine whether these have any influence on the students (IUKL Website, 2022).

IUKL has been in the education industry for more than 20 years providing quality education and various professional services excellently well. It also has a global affiliation with top-ranking universities in the United Kingdom, Nepal, Indonesia, Australia, China, Pakistan, etc. It was rated 5-star in the teaching and facilities category in the 2020 QS rating (IUKL Website, 2022).

*Research Instruments, Adaption, Pre-Testing, and Organisation:* The research instrument used in this study was RepTrak, which measures seven dimensions: leadership, financial performance, workplace, innovation, governance, products and services, and citizenship. The model was adapted because measuring 'workplace' and 'financial performance' do not apply and are irrelevant to students. Financial performance is confidential and cannot be assessed by students while the workplace has to do with the feelings of the staff. To obtain a reliable result, only five dimensions were adopted. In addition, RepTrak pulse was also tested, which serves as the dependent variable, and it encompasses esteem, feelings, admiration, and trust.

*Pilot study:* a pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the RepTrak model. Twenty-one (10 %) questionnaires were administered to international students on campus – at the Café, the Postgraduate School and Bloc A. The result shows a reliability score of 0.92 Cronbach's Alpha as shown in Table 1.

*Operationalisation of Variables:* The adapted dimension of the RepTrak model in this study is citizenship. The dependent variable is reputation, which is based on the emotional appeal of the students' high esteem, admiration, respect, and trust as well as their good feelings toward IUKL. Thus, to determine IUKL's reputation, the citizenship dimension was tested.

*Validity and Reliability of Instrument:* The instrument employed a 7-point Likert scale. The respondents' choices were ranked in order from 1) strongly disagree, 2) partially disagree, 3) disagree, 4) not sure, 5) partially agree, 6) agree and 7) strongly agree. Likert scale was employed because it is very precise and presents no ambiguity, it can lend itself to various statistical manipulation and analysis and can be used in both natural and behavioural research. It has all the attributes of a good scale: definite order and standardised distance. Besides, interval ratios such as the Likert scale have high validity than ordinal or nominal scales. They can be measured in arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and variance (Ponzi et al., 2011).

The RepTrak model has strong scale reliability (Ponzi et al., 2011). This means that it has steady and stable measurements across time and the various items in the instrument. The model has convergent validity with the variance extracted from all the independent variables to the latent

variable as 0.92, which has exceeded the benchmark of 0.50 (e.g., [Ponzi et al, 2011](#)) as shown in [Table 1](#), above. “Convergence validity is assuring that the variables are valid to be measured and corresponding to the concept” ([Wimmer, Dominick, 2013](#)).

**Table 1.** Reliability of the Test of the RepTrak Model-Based Instrument

Scale's Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha of RepTrak Model	Number of items
0.92	0.96	21

*Data Analysis and Statistical Significance:* The study measures the data from descriptive data such as the central tendency to inferential data. Frequency analysis was adopted to describe each of the datasets. Inferential data were also measured to identify the relationship between two variables. The interval scale is a continuous variable; hence the statistical tool that was used is Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis. The value for a Pearson's correlation can fall between 0.00 to 1.00. Pearson's correlation is best and largely used in linear relationships. It shows whether the relation is positive or negative. The relationship is said to be positive when both variables increase or decrease; whereas it is also said to be negative when one variable is decreases and the other increases. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23.

### 3. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between IUKL's international students' citizenship and its corporate reputation. Only the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model was examined, hypothesised, and tested in the study's conceptual framework. Malaysia has grown in popularity as a higher education destination, particularly among Asian, Middle Eastern, and African students, over the last decade. IUKL is a Malaysian private university located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city, with approximately 40 % of its students coming from various countries around the world. As a result of Malaysia's advantageous position in the educational ecosystem, many research studies focusing on international students, including the current study, have been conducted.

The study used a survey method to recruit participants, who were chosen at random. As a result, the discovery can be generalised ([Singh, 2022](#)). Our lone hypothesis has confirmed that there is a positive correlation between citizenship and IUKL reputation. This also demonstrates that IUKL international students have a high regard for their institution of study, have a positive attitude toward it, and love and trust it. The RepTrak model used in this study was tested in various countries around the world and found to be suitable despite cultural differences. As a result of the pilot study, the instrument is found to be valid with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.92. to collect data for analysis, 350 international students at IUKL were chosen at random from a total of 1,582 to participate. In light of the two objectives of the study, the respondents' demographics are discussed first followed by the correlation dimension of the study.

*Respondents' Sociodemographic Characteristics:* This sub-section discusses the findings of the study on Objective 1, which seeks to provide descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents of this study.

Some of the most important sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are gender and age. By gender, 293 (88.5 %) of the respondents are males, 38 (11.5 %) females. This is not surprising as most of the students are from Muslim dominated countries, and in Islam, women have some restrictions on travelling without Mahram (male companion) (e.g., [Nisha, Cheung, 2022](#)). However, this is contrary to Wan's ([Wan, 2018](#)) study which found that female students' enrollment in Malaysian higher educational institutions is higher than that of male students. Arguably, there could be no contradiction if his study were on local Malaysian students. While by age, most of the respondents (203, 66.9 %) are aged 21-25 years while the remaining 61 respondents are aged 26-30 years. While this indicates that most of the respondents are under the age of 30, all of them are youth (young people). On marital status, a vast majority of them (304, 91.8 %) are single, with only 24 of them married. Thus, the survey questionnaire was largely completed by single international students.

Moreover, of the 331 respondents, 158 have been studying at IUKL for one to two years while 98 of them have been studying there for three to four years. Hence, most, or virtually all the respondents have some experience with the university's modus operandi. While most of the respondents are from non-Arab countries, many of them are. Most of the respondents (85 %) are undergraduates. It has been observed that since the September 11 attacks in the United States international students, especially those of Arab origins enroll in Malaysian universities (Ahrani et al., 2019; Alzubaidi, Rechards, 2010; Chin, 2019; Nadeem et al., 2020; Sirat, 2008). Although the respondents are enrolled in various faculties of IUKL, most of them are enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering with a sizeable number of them enrolled in faculties of business and information technology. This suggests that courses related to engineering, business management and information and communication technology (ICT) are the most popular among international students at IUKL.

*Correlation between Citizenship and Reputation:* In this sub-section, findings of the study regarding Objective 2 are discussed, which seek to provide empirical evidence on the correlation between citizenship and reputation.

*The citizen dimension of the RepTrak model:-* corporate citizenship is a business leadership process that focuses on an organisation's impact on society, and its relationships with stakeholders (Waddock, 2017), as well as the strategies used in the operationalisation of its relationship with and impact on stakeholders and the natural environment (Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020).

This study focuses on an area that is not substantially researched, which is measuring the corporate reputation of a university considering the citizenship of its public (students). International students who are from diverse countries were recruited as respondents. The importance of having a well-defined reputation using the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model was examined. International students will tend to globally recommend to others (their friends, peers, colleagues, etc.) educational institutions they found very reputable. Reputation is expressed as high esteem, love, respect, and trust. Building on these foundations would lead to the growth of not only universities but also other educational institutions and similar organisations.

Both international and local students tend to seek to gain admission in educational institutions they perceive as having quality teaching and a good reputation (Ahrari et al., 2019; Khoshtaria et al., 2020; Najimdeen et al., 2021). Moreover, according to the RepTrak model, we can understand that quality education is even part of reputation itself (e.g., Ponzi et al., 2011). Thus, when higher educational institutions have diversified citizenship, it is much likely that such institutions would be held with high esteem by their publics – they would be respected, loved, and trusted. Corporate reputation is supposed to be measured continuously to determine the strengths or weaknesses of an educational institution, and most importantly to ascertain which aspect of it needs changes. IUKL should invest more in its reputation through the creation and sustenance of academic programs and an environment capable of attracting more international students. With this, it can attain the highest level of corporate reputation in the higher education industry. As employees are changed, priorities and strategies are also changed. These changes can affect the reputation of an educational organisation at any time. Thus, reputation management should be relentlessly pursued.

According to the RepTrak model, the concept of citizenship has at least three drivers, and it is not a complete departure from what was amplified by precited scholars. The first is to determine the extent to which IUKL is committed to the environment. The second is to determine whether the institution supports a good cause, while the third driver focuses on the positive influence of the university in society. After all, the finding, which is consistent with the existing literature (e.g., Campopiano et al., 2019; Homer, 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020), shows a positive correlation between IUKL citizenship and its reputation at a very strong significant level. Hence, we can say that this finding suggests that IUKL is perceived by international students as an educational institution that contributes toward the development of society. Similarly, we can confidently argue that when IUKL prioritises the citizenship of its students, there is a tendency that its reputation would be elevated higher its fame globally – thus, it could attract more international students to enroll in its various academic programmes something that could enlarge its revenue drive. In other words, this study's hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is retained, that there is a positive relationship between IUKL citizenship and its reputation (refer to Fig. 1 in Section 1, under Sub-Section *Conceptual Framework of the Study*).

### 3. Results

*Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents:* This sub-section answers Objective 1 of this study, which seeks to provide descriptive analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.

As can be seen in Table 2, of the 331 respondents, 293 (88.5 %) are male international students with the remaining 38 (11.5 %) being female students. On the age of the respondents, Table 2 shows that 203 (61 %) of the respondents are aged from 21 to 25 years, 61 (18 %) are aged from 26 to 30 years while 56 (17 %) are aged from 16 to 20 years. Concisely, all the respondents are young people below the age of 30 years.

**Table 2.** Respondents' Demographic Data (n = 331)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	293	88.5
Female	38	11.5
Total	331	100
<i>Age</i>		
16-20	56	16.9
21-25	203	61.3
26-30	61	18.4
31-35	8	2.4
36 or older	3	0.9
Total	331	100
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	304	91.8
Married	24	7.3
Divorced	2	0.6
Widow	1	0.3
Total	331	100
<i>Duration of Stay</i>		
Less than 1 year	48	14.5
1-2	153	46.2
3-4	98	29.6
More than 4 years	32	9.7
Total	331	100
<i>Respondents According to their Nationalities</i>		
Sudan	86	26.0
Nigeria	55	16.6
China	35	10.6
Yemen	43	13.0
Somalia	10	3.0
Libya	32	9.7
Mauritania	1	0.3
Bangladesh	2	0.6
Oman	4	1.2
Syria	4	1.2
India	4	1.2
Indonesia	3	0.9
Iraq	9	2.7
Iran	3	0.9
Pakistan	5	1.5
Maldives	3	.09
Kenya	2	0.6
Jordan	2	0.6
Bhutan	3	0.9
Palestine	2	0.6

Chad	4	1.2
Djibouti	2	0.6
Egypt	3	0.9
Myanmar	2	0.6
America	1	0.3
Bahrain	1	0.3
Saudi Arabia	3	0.9
Sri Lanka	1	0.3
Belize	1	0.3
Kazakhstan	1	0.3
Tunisia	1	0.3
Ghana	3	0.9
Total	331	100
<i>Respondents based on their Levels of Study</i>		
Undergraduate	283	85.5
Postgraduate	48	14.5
Total	331	100
<i>Respondents based on their Faculties</i>		
Engineering & Technology	142	42.9
Architecture & Build Technology	5	1.5
Communication & Languages	34	10.3
Business Infrastructure	78	23.6
Information Technology	70	21.1
Applied Science & Foundational Studies	2	0.6
Total	331	100

Regarding marital status, [Table 2](#) shows that 304 (91.8 %) of the respondents were single and that only 24 students (7.3 %) were married. Two students were divorced while only one was a widow. Regarding how long students stayed in the institution, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that 152 students (46.2 %) stayed for one to two years. Most (98, 29 %) of the students stayed for three to four years, 48 of them (14.5 %) stayed for less than a year, while 32 of them (9.7 %) stayed for more than four years. Regarding the respondents' countries of origin, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that of the 331 students, 86 (26 %) were from Sudan, 55 (16.6 %) from Nigeria, 43 (13 %) from Yemen, 35 (10.6 %) from China, 32 (9.7 %) from Libya, and 10 (3 %) from Somalia. The remaining 70 (21.1 %) hail from other 26 countries with less than 10 students each. These include nine Iraqis, five Pakistanis, and so on. Regarding the respondents' level of studies, [Table 2](#) shows that 283 (85.5 %) students participated in the study with 48 of them (14.5 %) postgraduate. Regarding the respondents' faculty of study, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that 142 (42 %) are from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology Infrastructure. The remaining high percentages include 70 (21.1 %) respondents from the Faculty of Information Technology Infrastructure and 35 (10.3 %) from the Faculty of Communication and Language Studies.

*Measurement for the Correlation Variables:* This sub-section answers Objective 2 of this study, which seeks to determine the correlation between the citizenship dimension of the RepTek model and reputation.

The RepTek model's dimension that was used to assess IUKL's reputation is citizenship. Respondents responded to the statement whether IUKL is responsive to the environment differently. Most of them (116, 35 %) agreed that the institution is responsive to the environment, 106 (32 %) of them partially agree while 52 (15.7 %) strongly agree. However, 30 disagree, 7 partially disagree and 52 of them agree. The mean score of the responses in this question is 5.38 as shown in [Table 3](#).

Regarding the statement whether IUKL supports a good cause, 129 (39 %) of the respondents agree that the institution supports a good cause, 100 (30.2 %) partially agree while 62 (18.7 %) strongly agree. However, 26 of them indicated they are not sure, 6 disagree, 6 partially disagree and 2 strongly disagree. The mean of the total responses is 5.57 as shown in [Table 3](#). Regarding the statement whether IUKL has a positive influence on society, 112 (33.8 %) of the respondents agree that the institution influences society, 103 (31.1 %) partially agree, 77 (23.3 %) strongly agree, 20 of them are not sure, 12 partially disagree, and only 3 of them strongly disagree as shown in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3.** Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Perception of IUKL's Citizenship (n = 331)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Partially disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
IUKL is responsible for the environment.	0.6 %	2.1 %	5.4 %	9.1 %	32 %	35 %	15.7 %	5.38 %
IUKL supports a good cause.	0.6 %	1.8 %	1.8 %	7.9 %	30.2 %	39 %	18.7 %	5.57 %
IUKL has a positive influence on society.	0.9 %	1.2 %	3.6 %	6 %	31.1 %	33.8 %	23.3 %	5.60 %

Table 4 contains data that were generated from measuring the dependent variable, reputation. Regarding the statement whether the international students have high esteem toward IUKL, 109 (33.9 %) of the respondents agree that they have high esteem for the institution, 107 (32.3 %) of them partially agree, and 69 (20.8 %) strongly agree. However, only 28 of them indicated they are not sure, 13 disagree, 3 partially disagree and 2 strongly disagree. The mean score of all the responses is 5.53 as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Percentage Distribution of the Students' Perception of IUKL's Reputation (RepTrak pulse) (n = 331)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Partially disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Partially agreed	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean Score
I have high esteem for IUKL.	0.6 %	0.9 %	3.9 %	8.5 %	32.3 %	33.9 %	20.8 %	5.53 %
I admire and respect IUKL.	0.6 %	0.9 %	1.8 %	4.8 %	33.5 %	36.9 %	21.5 %	5.66 %
I trust IUKL.	0.6 %	0.9 %	1.8 %	5.4 %	43.4 %	37.5 %	19.3 %	5.62 %
I have good feelings toward IUKL.	0.6 %	0.9 %	1.5 %	3.3 %	32 %	32 %	29.6 %	5.60 %

Regarding the statement, whether the respondents admire and respect IUKL, 122 (33.9 %) agree that they admire and respect IUKL, 111 (32.3 %) partially agree, 71 (20.8 %) strongly agree, 16 are not sure, 6 disagree, 3 partially disagree, and 2 students strongly disagree. The mean of the total responses is 5.56 as shown in Table 4. Regarding the issue of trust, 124 (37.5 %) of the respondents agree that they trust IUKL, 114 (34.4 %) partially agree, 64 (19.3 %) strongly agree, 16 indicated not sure, 3 disagree, and 2 strongly disagree. The total mean of the responses is 5.62, which is quite high (see Table 4). The last statement was whether the respondents have good feelings about IUKL. Many of them (106, 32 %) agree that they have good feelings toward the university, 106 (32 %) partially agree, 98 (29.6 %) strongly agree, 11 of them are not sure, 5 disagree while 2 strongly disagree. The mean score of the responses is 5.80, which is the highest (refer to Table 4).

*Determining the Correlation between Citizenship and Reputation:* Table 5 shows that IUKL citizenship is moderately correlated with its reputation, where Person's  $r = .55$  and the significance level is  $p = .00$ . Hence, we can say that H1 was accepted. This result is also reflected in Figure 1 (refer to Section 1, under Sub-Section *Conceptual Framework of the Study*).

**Table 5.** Relationship between IUKL Citizenship and its Reputation

Variables	<i>P</i>	<i>r</i>
Citizenship → Reputation	0.00	0.55**

Note: \*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

## 5. Conclusion

The implications of the findings of this study highlight the importance of reputation in an organisation as inevitable. For instance, Ponzi et al. also reiterate that reputation “can be incorporated with other measures of interest; be standardized cross-culturally; gathered perceptual data from a large sample of diverse participants; and survey can be distributed by both traditional and modern way that distinguish corporate reputation construct and its drivers” (Ponzi et al., 2011).

IUKL’s reputation was rated very high by the respondents even though only moderate correlation was found between the variables. This suggests that when IUKL reaffirms its commitment to a diverse student citizenship, incorporating more international students, its reputation would be favourably globacated and tremendously soar among its peers, especially those educational institutions that admit only local students. Moreover, the research was conducted in IUKL, which is a new generation private university. Even though the reputation of one educational institution may not be overtaken by another, it manifests that “studying large public universities could yield better results in terms of research importance because of their popularity.”

*Limitations and Recommendations:* This study focuses on an international private university in Malaysia, IUKL and the sample is limited to the international students at the university. Although because of the research design that was used and sample size the findings of this study can be generalised, the findings should, however, be interpreted with caution. In addition, this study only examines one of the five dimensions of the RepTrak model, which is, citizenship and only correlation study were performed between the variables (citizenship and reputation), caution should be maintained considering the limitations mentioned above while interpreting the data.

Future research should focus on postgraduates rather than undergraduate students. This is because of their advanced knowledge and maturity. This is also in line with Dahari and Abduh that “more research has been focusing on undergraduates; hence future research must focus on postgraduate students” (Dahari, Abduh, 2011).

Finally, curious researchers should explore other angles in reputation research including comparative studies between international and local students on the reputation assessment of their institutions, measuring the reputation of two or more universities to compare the differences between students’ rating of different institutions, and conducting a qualitative or quantitative study focusing on lecturers, policymakers, and independent writers or researchers to measure the reputation of at least top Malaysian universities.

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## Identity Construction of the New Face of Social Justice Warrior on Indonesian Twitter Users

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### Abstract

Social Justice Warriors are now experiencing a shift in meaning, from positive to negative labels. This change occurs through a long process of identity construction. This study explores the construction of a new SJW identity on Indonesian Twitter users by implementing Hecht's communication identity theory. It aims to investigate the four identity frames of SJW based on this theory. The study applied a descriptive qualitative method by using virtual ethnography since the data are taken from social media. The study found that the evolution of SJW's new identity construction in Indonesian Twitter users provided clear evidence to form the characteristics of SJW pejorative labels. The construction undergoes four stages of frames, namely (1) the personal frame, which focuses on individuals-related, (2) the enactment frame, which focuses on social interaction-based, (3) the relational frame, which focuses on social relationship-based, and (4) the communal frame which focuses on group interaction-based. In conclusion, SJW identity will keep evolving and constructed within the dynamic development of times, which is related to people's ability to absorb or adapt to a condition or situation, so it is widely possible that the SJW's meaning is easily shifted over time.

**Keywords:** identity construction, four frames of identity, social justice warrior, social media, Twitter.

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the identity of Social Justice Warrior (SJW) has been labeled increasingly negative (Golbeck et al., 2017; Hartanto et al., 2020). There was a very significant difference between the meaning of the term SJW identity when it was first used with what is now commonly known. This does not happen without some reasons. J.H. Majcher (Majcher, 2017) explained that SJW is a phrase used to refer to people who engage in online discussions about social justice. Based on its terminology, SJW is used as a reward for people who have fought for social issues, which means a good way. However, the term SJW is recently used to label people who have fought for social issues in an opposite way. The researchers believe that SJW is a phrase that refers to good people who uphold social justice both online and offline. Unfortunately, its term has been poorly used in today's internet climate. The label of SJW on Twitter tends to describe the person as someone who claims themselves always right and would blame other people with different perspectives (Eckert et al., 2015). It refers to a person who uses the name of social issues to achieve their personal desire. This negatively affected actual social justice activists who are already struggling to voice social justice, especially in Indonesia.

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The phrase SJW has been used in the past 20 years positively. However, as it developed in an online environment, the phrase gained a pejorative connotation. A phrase cited as early as 2009 in a blog called "Social Justice Warriors: Do Not Engage" later appeared in an Urban Dictionary entry and on the something Awful forums in 2013. The term "keyboard warrior" may be a precursor to the phrase "social justice warrior" since it refers to a person who is unreasonably angry and hides behind their keyboard, typing tirades directed at an obscure audience (Massanari, Chess, 2018). The term is seen today as a negative identity toward people who voice social justice opinions because it is more like individual perceptions (Eckert et al., 2015; Reicher et al., 1995).

Twitter is one of the largest social media and most powerful tools to share ideas and opinions, interact with each other, and discuss virtually (Singh et al., 2020). Since its first launch in 2006, Twitter has not stopped releasing its ever-expanding features. Used by millions of users worldwide, Twitter allowed people to have freedom of expression. This freedom is also used by those who are labeled as today's SJWs. One of them is a Twitter user, @haronamd, who criticizes someone's value regarding manner standards. In fact, according to anti-paternalism, someone's value is subjective, and no one should intervene in others' values (Conly, 2016). Twitter user @haramona criticizes someone's value who thinks that the best partner is those who internalized three magic words: please, sorry, and thanks. She claimed that the three magic words are basic manners that are supposed to be a common thing to do rather than thinking it is a special thing to do with people. This study will explore this phenomenon because we saw that the construction of her identity as a Twitter user was contained by her perspective and principle, which she had personally experienced before. The researchers realized that the aspect of what she poured upon her tweets are the characteristics of SJW identity nowadays. On that note, the other Twitter users who responded and interacted with the SJW's tweet have formed a huge proof of the existence of identity construction within the tweet as an SJW (Oden et al., 2020; Marwick, Boyd, 2010).

There are several previous research regarding the corpus. The first previous research is about SJW memes as the monstrous feminine by A.L. Massanari and S. Chess, arguing that SJW is implied as a monstrous feminist who is unwieldy and out of control. It also claimed that the SJW meme that described them as having problematic bodies and different brains is potentially dangerous (Massanari, Chess, 2018). The second previous research was written by J.H. Majcher, which discussed exploring the nature of social justice discussions on the social networking site Tumblr. Using at least one of five common hashtags, which are #BlackLivesMatter, #Feminism, #Racism, #SocialJustice, and #SJW, the researcher claimed that these hashtags are related to social justice commonly identified on Tumblr with 15,160 public posts created by 8,794 users across the two weeks. The research argued that not all posts reflect a positive attitude toward social justice, with 8.6% of posts expressing disagreement or even hostility toward movements promoting equality (Majcher, 2017).

Other scholars exploring the SJW issue are Hartanto, Subandi, and O. Pavlova. They examined netizens' opinions about SJW and the dynamics of conflict or support in more detail. The research defined SJW as a pejorative term for individuals who struggle for the right of equality, environment, and gender. The researcher argued that the cause of controversies sparked by SJW is because their progressive morals differ from the predominant values (Hartanto et al., 2020). Furthermore, Phelan examined possible ideological and communicative affinities between neoliberalism and online media practices indicative of the empowerment of racist, misogynistic, and authoritarian discourse. He analyzed two distinct contexts in which social justice has been articulated: the disparaging representations of "social justice warriors" that originally circulated in "alt-right" subcultures but which have since become increasingly mainstream, and the neoliberal critique of social justice introduced by Friedrich Hayek (Phelan, 2019). Besides, V. Sehijpaul examined how Generation Zs (Gen Zs) can adapt to reduce slacktivism potentially. The research argued that SJWs might benefit from online activism, and Gen Zs generally find social media useful for easy access to information and can navigate it relatively easily (Sehijpaul, 2021).

There are significant differences between the previous research and this research. The first research discussed how the offensive SJW meme portrays SJW as a horrific creature while suggesting that feminists can still turn SJW into a positive image. The second research discussed shared posts regarding social justice issues on Tumblr and its receptions. The third research discussed netizens' opinions regarding SJW which showed more negative sentiments towards SJW. The fourth research is about the disparaging representations of SJW in an alt-right subculture. The fifth is about how Generation Z people can potentially adapt to reduce slacktivism and if



slacktivism is relevant to current social issues. In contrast, this research mainly discusses the construction of the new identity of SJW in Indonesian Twitter users.

This study argues that the former identity of SJWs as agents of positive justice both in real life and on social media has shifted to negative labels that impact the construction of new SJW identities, one of which is reflected through tweets on Twitter users. To prove this statement, this study has two research questions; how the term SJW develops and constructs a different identity through tweets from Twitter, and how the construction of SJW identity on twitter can affect the socio-cultural life of the community.

To answer the research questions, this research used the concepts of four frames of Identity from Hecht's communication theory of identity. Hecht argued that these concepts, which are the personal frame, enactment frame, relationship frame, and communal frame, attempted to understand a characteristic of a person, the enactment, the relationship, and the community that constructs the identity (Hecht, 1993).

The importance of this research is to explore how the identity of SJW is constructed on Twitter, especially through Indonesian Twitter users by analyzing the identity construction of SJW in Indonesian users' tweets using Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity. Moreover, theoretically, the research will contribute to the field of cultural studies of identity construction. Also, practically, this research will be beneficial for reference in applying the theory to achieve identity construction analysis of social media literacy.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research method that we are using is a qualitative method that concerns the specialties in cyberspace which differentiate it from the things happening in online spaces and explains the phenomenon with deep understanding by saturating the facts presented in the screenshots of the source persons, which are Indonesian SJW on Twitter (Lambert, 2013). Based on these statements, the qualitative approach used in this research has the purpose to identify the types of related devices that appear in the tweets of Indonesian SJW. The data was collected by applying these three steps: 1) searching some Indonesian tweets through Twitter; 2) sorting the data relating to social justice warriors' behaviors; 3) selecting the data dealing with the purpose of the research. While exploring, analyzing and comprehending the tweets, we attempted to deploy a qualitative approach and work within the framework of virtual ethnography. By ethnography, we are allowed to view a discourse from the point of view of the source persons (Saukko, 2003). It is a methodology for studying small society beliefs, social interactions, and behaviors, including long-term participation, observation, and data collection interpretation (Denzin, Lincoln, 2011). Christine Hine (Hine, 2000) states that ethnography in social media, namely virtual ethnography, is intended to give a deep and particular understanding of the significance and implication from the Internet users, which would give an extensive and theoretical comprehension and determine the continuity of relationship dynamics in the online world. To explore, analyze and understand deeper about the text, we attempted to use the framework of the communication theory of identity by M.L. Hecht. Hecht stated that identity could be defined as a characteristic of the person, the enactment, the relationship, and the community. In addition, these frames can be used to understand their layering, juxtaposition, interpenetration, and dialectical tensions: identity as the personal frame, enactment frame, relationship frame, and communal frame (Hecht, 1993). Based on these statements by Hecht's theory is used to analyze how the features and frameworks of Twitter would provide identity construction of SJW by viewing how these four frames operate collectively within the tweets and their responses.

## 3. Discussion

Construction within identity is a thing that might happen when any identity has emerged from any kind of new developed environment, situation, and culture, which encourages creating new ideas and forms of meaning. Identity is an essential label about how the individuals' existence is noticed while they stand alone and/or within a group in a social community (Darmastuti et al., 2019). It means clearly that identity helps an individual to be recognized by the surrounding of who they are. Thus, the identity construction we try to identify is SJW Twitter which recently has been discussed on Twitter, and how its identity developed within new meanings.

First of all, the evolution and construction of social justice warrior term significantly affect how social activists' identities form in society and online media. Before Twitter had the term SJW

become a pejorative term, activists and protesters were voicing their opinions in real situations. An article written by Abby Ohlheiser from the *Washington Post*, stated that more than 20 years ago, the term SJW in fact was used as a neutral or even described as a compliment. Another fact showed that, later in 2007, an SJW named Monsignor David Cappo was honored with an award (Ohlheiser, 2015). Besides that, in a study done by J. Urla and J. Helepololei (Urla, Helepololei, 2014), radical activists in the past were characterized as modern-day "Robin Hoods". Robin Hood is a popular folk that is known because of his generosity to the poor people and peasants. He also dislikes the authoritative figures who enforced oppressive forest laws. Because of this, Robin Hood is considered a hero who fights for social justice. This means that social justice activists in the past are regarded as positive, having their movement to achieve good common goals.

As the views on social justice activists developed until today, especially in the online world, social justice activists have taken their actions to a different medium. According to Crowder (Crowder, 2021), nowadays, protesters and activists may take their actions to a social media platform. For instance, social activists use Twitter to organize mobilizations. In an event called Black Lives Matter, social media protestors or activists showed solidarity by posting pictures of themselves carrying protest signs (Crowder, 2021). However, these online protestors or activists were characterized as anti-system, a pejorative term that suggests protesters that lack understanding regarding political-economic critiques or reasonable demands (Urla, Helepololei, 2014; Brown, 2019). From that example, we can see that people's perception of social activists on online platforms might have several assumptions and subjectivity in positive or negative ways, spreading the term massively across the social media network (Eckert et al., 2015). Therefore, activists' identities might have an identity crisis and how the public sees their identity, which mostly forms a community.

As the era progressively developed, from another perspective, Massanari also has done an extensive study regarding the today's characteristics of social justice activists. A.L. Massanari and S. Chess (Massanari, Chess, 2018) characterized the use of online platforms among social justice activists as a meme culture. He claimed that social justice activists that were regarded as strong warriors are now characterized as monstrous feminine (Massanari, Chess, 2018). Based on the study, A.L. Massanari and S. Chess mainly characterized today's social justice activists as having non-hegemonic bodies, regarded as emotional beings, diseased, and monstrous. They also explained that social justice activists with ambiguous gender, childlike, soft, have different types of brains, emotionally dramatic, irrational beings with mental illness, and have two heads (Massanari, Chess, 2018). The characteristics described by A.L. Massanari and S. Chess here show how the people see the SJW, mainly from the meme culture. Meme culture characterizes SJW negatively and how its negative characterization causes widespread use of the term across online media. In this case, the term is spread through memes across the internet and social media mediums.

Besides, in a meme based on the explanation above, we found an example of SJW on Twitter that is currently used as a term for an identity of a social activist, which most have negative assumptions of its existence. In addition, the meaning of the term in public is already formed as what they believe in whether it is a social justice community or individual. Recently, the use of the term SJW is more aimed at individuals, whether they uphold social justice or are considered SJW. We assumed that there is degradation in the meaning of the SJW term caused by how SJW activists proceed with their activity in negative behaviors which in turn created characteristics of SJW nowadays. Moreover, it can also be seen by the development of human thinking which is an understanding of something related to the social environment and how they react to the situation of recent updates. Furthermore, the initiation of social media culture has subjectively emerged and massively developed in constructing the identity of SJW.

According to username @Batman\_Monyok on Twitter, SJW is a pejorative term for someone who upholds social progressivism views. The phrase first appeared at the end of the 20th century as a neutral or positive term for people who fight for social justice. In 2011, when the term 'SJW' started appearing on Twitter, its meaning changed from positive to overwhelmingly negative. SJWs today, according to @Batman\_Monyok, imply that they are looking for self-justification, not because of their convincing views and pretending to join a debate. So, it can be said that SJW is a pejorative term that is considered neutral or positive at first, but when it appears on an online social media such as Twitter, the meaning changes to a negative impression (Monyok, 2021).

In other words, according to @Batman\_Monyok, SJWs don't have strong principles, but pretend that their principles are the strongest. The problem today, he continues, is that SJWs are

not a real community group. It is just a way to silence everyone who brings up the topic of social justice. Furthermore, currently, the supporters of "social justice" are divided into two; left-wing groups and right-wing groups. According to @Batman\_Monyok, the characteristics of the left and right wings are the same; like to rage, claiming to be a victim, and labeling the opposition as evil and vandals (Monyok, 2021; Saint-Louis, 2021). @Batman\_Monyok explains that SJW is a digital-politics phenomenon with its main activity taking place in cyberspace.

Here are some characteristics of SJW Twitter that @Batman\_Monyok puts forward in a Twitter thread. Usually, the people who are called SJW are those who have a view on a social issue where they feel the most correct, the smartest and the most caring so that they can be considered heroes or "warriors" (Bay, 2018). If someone is against their opinion, they will automatically get angry or curse at those with different opinions because they like to criticize but don't like being criticized. They always impose their standards on others by being sadistic critics. Actually, they are not interested in discussion and always pretend to have strong principles. When in fact they are only obsessed with self-reputation, they don't even accept it if someone doesn't like it. For SJWs this is a mind game to train or encourage people's critical thinking, especially in Indonesia who are still not used to critical thinking. But this is done in a way that invites netizens' controversy.

Besides explaining about SJW, a Twitter user with the username @Batman\_Monyok explained that SJW Twitter is described and identified as above. He described SJW as someone with weak principles, not a real community group, and is divided into two groups which are left-wing and right-wing. This user's tweet proves that people use the term SJW to identify people who uphold progressive social views.

As we have mentioned before, Social Justice Warrior (SJW) is an identity within individuals who shows their existence by voicing their awareness about social justice without actually having a deep attentiveness to the subjects that they are trying to speak on behalf (Foy, 2018). Therefore, SJWs only demand validation, which is only favorable to themselves (Quatrini, 2022). As the era and culture are developed, it can change identity and evolve a certain meaning in available space-time. In this research, we provide the example of SJW identity constructed in one of the Indonesian tweets.

@haronamd tweeted,

*"basic manners kaya bilang 'makasih, maaf, tolong' kok bisa dibilang the best mba",* to reply the original tweet from @gadissmelayu,

*"punya pasangan yang bisa bilang kayak 'maaf ya sayang' ketika salah, 'sayang tolong dong' ketika butuh, dan ga lupa bilang 'makasih ya sayang' is the best relationship ever."*

It has attracted the community, becoming a heated discussion that gained 1336 Retweets, 258 Quoted Tweets, 6068 Likes, and many kinds of replies (Onaa, 2021).

The Twitter user @haronamd claimed that basic manners should be a common thing to do rather than thinking that is a special thing to do from other people. User @haronamd's way of expressing an opinion is opposing the original tweet. Based on the above example, @haronamd claimed to have more knowledge of basic manners. This tweet was a response to an original tweet that said, *"Having a partner that can say something like 'sorry, babe' when he is wrong, 'babe, help me please' when in need, and not forgetting to say 'thank you, babe' is the best relationship ever"* (Gigi, 2021).

Which was tweeted by @gadissmelayu on November 20th, 2021. Twitter user @haronamd appears to disagree with @gadissmelayu on November 21st 2021, tweeting a response saying *"basic manners, such as 'thank you, sorry, please' is not the best, Sis"* (Onaa, 2021). Her tweet then gained traction and heated arguments from other Twitter users. We argue that this Twitter user by @haronamd belongs to the characteristics of SJW nowadays.

This proves that SJW is an identity that sticks to its own principles that have several special characteristics. On Twitter, SJW can be researched through tweets because tweets are the main medium of communication on the Twitter platform. The characteristics of SJW raised by @haronamd can be seen through how she acts through his speech on Twitter and how the content and meaning of the speech.

Next, to seek the identity construction of social justice warrior Twitter, Hecht's theory is used to discover and identify how SJWs build their identity. As the tweet of user @haronamd about basic manners on the Twitter platform, it is considered a tweet from a SJW based on some factors. The first factor is the high engagement from other Twitter users. As shown from the quoted tweets from the original tweet, this tweet gained 1336 Retweets, 258 Quoted Tweets, and 6068 Likes.

The other factor is that she insists that her opinion is the rightest one compared to the tweet she quoted, which contains the exact opposite opinion. Thirdly, there is a sign of political correctness based on how she responds to some other users that agree with her tweet, which shows that @haronamd demands validation from others. According to Hecht, it can be seen that there is an identity construction of Social Justice Warrior through the four frames which form the identity itself.

The personal frame is the first identity form to recognize SJW identity. L. Gusri et al. (Gusri, et al., 2020) state that an individual would capture some feelings and ideas. In short, they would see how they are in the society that they live in. Besides that, within the online community, the individual roles can easily be self-centered and prominent (Yang et al., 2019). Based on her tweets, we can assume her personality regarding her identity as SJW. One of her tweets shows that she considers three magic words to be basic manners, which are common in her environment. This assumption shows how the social situation affects her identity. It is also shown that @haronamd was born in a good environment where the standard of virtue is set higher. Therefore, there is a hierarchy in which @haronamd stands as an individual with higher standards. We can also assume that she is already shaped like a figure with a great awareness of manners, leading her to be an SJW who views other opinions that object to her principles as invalid. In this case, her identity is affected by the other societal individuals. As stated by E. Jung and M.L. Hecht (Jung, Hecht, 2004), the personal frame is how a person understands his own identity through personal concepts or images. @haronamd sees herself as having the level of "the best thing," which is far from just the "basic thing" that @gadissmelayu expressed. @haronamd wants to build an image that she comes from a well-mannered environment so that, according to her, three magic words are common. @haronamd's personal frame about her is that she is not happy enough if she just has a boyfriend who only has these three basic manners. The personal frame in analyzing identity is obtained from oneself (Pang, Hutchinson, 2018).

The second identity form can be shown by the enactment frame. In communication, people can tell a person's identity from how they act towards others. Other people can judge a person by seeing how that person does things. In this case @haronamd forms her identity through the views of others towards her who see or know how @haronamd acts. This can be seen in reply to a tweet from someone who said that @haronamd was "salty" and then @haronamd showed her SJW characteristics by behaving by rejecting that opinion and feeling that her opinion was the most correct, she forced her opinion by saying "everyone should be able to have basic manners". Using the same sentence as the previous reply, @haronamd seemed disinterested in the wider discussion. @haronamd does not issue any other views that can support the previous statement, it seems that she does not actually have strong principles so that she does not have additional ideas to strengthen the previous idea which some people dispute. Social Justice Warriors are also accused of offering only superficial arguments to support their claims. This also shows the main trait of SJWs that they are emotional rather than rational beings (Massanari, 2018) @haronamd does not accept the fact that some do not like her opinion so she insists on upholding her views by repeatedly voicing the same words, this also indicates @haronamd's attitude of avoiding discussion and pretending to have strong principles. This supports the statement about the enactment frame that people will get information about the identity of others by knowing the form of their actions (Gusri et al., 2020). Here is the example of how SJW responds to someone's reply to her tweet.

@khrsm\_ replied her tweet,

*"Karena gak semua orang bisa... Salty banget sih... Bilang the best itu bentuk rasa syukur..."* (Not everyone can do it... you're being so salty... saying the best is used for being grateful...), and @haronamd also gives her response to it,

*"yg namanya basic manners tu semua org harusnya bisa"* (well, everyone must do basic manners well) which intentionally claimed her will. Another response also reacted to her tweet reply,

*"E ko maksa"* (Wow, why are you forcing it) from user @radjagopali.

People can also see @haronamd's SJW identity through the expressions she makes. One of @haronamd's behaviors that identify SJW characteristics is when she indirectly justifies other people's replies that demean @gadissmelayu with a sentence that essentially assumes that @gadissmelayu's taste in "the best thing" is very low. @haronamd replied to the tweet using several exclamation points which meant that she strongly agreed with that opinion. @haronamd agrees that @gadissmelayu's view of "the best thing" is very common and should not be included in "the best thing". In this case, @haronamd lowered @gadissmelayu's point of view on something. This is in line with the opinion of Jung and Hecht that identity can be seen from how a

person expresses or presents him/herself in communication (Jung, Hecht, 2004). Here is the example of how SJW gives enforcement to her beliefs.

@ayambberkah replied her tweet,

"*the bar is low!!!*" and @haronamd also gives enforcement to her beliefs by replying the tweet, "*!!! !!!*" and accepting the statement with some exclamation marks.

According to the analysis above, it can be concluded that other people can infer @haronamd's identity through how she acts, expresses and presents. In the enactment frame, @haronamd has several SJW characteristics, namely rejecting opinions, feeling the most correct, forcing opinions, not interested in discussions, not having strong principles, not being able to accept the fact that some people don't like them and demeaning other people's points of view.

As the third identity form, the relational frame helps to identify the interaction and connection of any identity in society. According to E. Jung and M.L. Hecht (Jung, Hecht, 2004), there are four levels of relational identity, the first is when a person makes other people's views of himself the center of his identity, the second is to make relationships with other people such as partners or friends as a way to identify his identity, third is identity exists when a relationship is forged between different identities, the four relationships themselves can become the center of the identity. In her tweets, @haronamd does not show her relationship with anyone. But her interactions on Twitter have led to a connection between @haronamd and those who agree with her. In this case, @haronamd has people by her side. @haronamd shows her SJW characteristics by putting one's reputation first. She tries to look humble by saying "what do I know about people's relationships." She did that after again repeating her opinion that basic manners are something that everyone should be able to do and it's nothing special. She did this to get a good image and validation of his opinion. She does it to people who have the same views as him. In social media, the similarity of opinions can lead to an implied relationship in an understanding. K. Pang and C. Hutchinson (Pang, Hutchinson, 2018) argued that relational identity is formed through relationships. So, it can be concluded that relational identity is formed, arises and emerges from existing interpersonal relationships. Here is the example of how someone who agrees with @haronamd's tweet.

@febrinasugianto also replied her tweet,

"*Yes pretty normal. Kalo dia ngerasa itu special harus mikir lagi deh kayaknya bergaul dengan manusia2 yg salah.*" (Yes, pretty normal. If she feels it special, I guess she should think twice to hang out with the wrong people.), and @haronamd replied with her agreement,

"*sebenarnya 3 magic words itu udah common banget, tp tau apa aku soal hubungan orang 😊*" (Actually, 3 magic words is very common. But, do I know about people relationship 😊). Another response also reacted to her tweet reply,

"*You know the answer. Lu tau apa 😊*" (You know the answer. Do you even know it 😊) from user @dellasabar.

In another tweet reply, @haronamd got someone who agrees with her. That person teased @gadissmelayu that three magic words were nothing special to be proud of because they were basic things. @haronamd replied with the same sentence; she confirmed the person's ridicule. She "agrees" with the joke. In this case, the characteristic of SJW that can be seen from @haronamd in the relational frame is that he mocks or demeans the opinions of others who do not agree with her. Here is the example of how @haronamd is mocking the original tweet with another replier.

@DiajengLrst tweeted her reply,

"*Three magic words : "D"*, and replied back by @haronamd,

"*makanya kok dibilang the best : "D"* (That's why it called as the best : "D"), that showed her emotion with an emotion of how she laughed at it.

Therefore, in the relational frame, @haronamd's SJW characteristic is prioritizing reputation by trying to look inferior to get validation for her opinion. Then the next SJW characteristic that can be seen from the relational frame of @haronamd's tweet is agreeing to demean the views of others who have different opinions from him.

The last identity form is called communal frame, which focuses on how one big community helps to notice the formed identity. The identity of @haronamd can be analyzed by how others from a larger group or collectivities respond to her tweet. In this case, her identity can be analyzed using one of Hecht's frames in his Communication Theory of Identity, which is the Communal Frame. According to L. Gusri, et al. (Gusri et al., 2020), communal frame is a form of someone's interaction with other individuals which is bounded by a bigger group or culture. Furthermore,

communal identity deals with how collectivities formed an identity. The communal frame goes beyond the individual and is considered a characteristic of the group (Jung, Hecht, 2004).

K. Pang and C. Hutchinson (Pang, Hutchinson, 2018), similar to Gusri, et al.'s understanding, define a communal frame as an individual's identity which is bounded to a larger group. Oftentimes, group identities are created through common characteristics and experiences as a supportive community is formed. So, based on the explanation above, communal frame is an individual identity that is bounded or attached to a larger group or culture. In this particular case, the identity of @haronamd as an SJW can be identified through other individuals' tweets which are attached to a much bigger group. Here is the example of how someone's reply gives a neutral response to her tweet.

@tidaktiduk replied her tweet,

*"Hi bestie here's a friendly reminder that it's not cool to invalidate other people's experience. Seremeh apapun itu di mata kita, bisa jadi itu hal yang berarti buat orang lain, karena who knows itu adalah kualitas yang sulit di lingkungannya. Let her have her moment."* to give her two-sided perspectives.

The above tweet by Twitter user @tidaktiduk can be read as, *"Hi bestie, here's a friendly reminder that it's not cool to invalidate other people's experiences. No matter how trivial it is in our eyes, it could be something that means a lot to other people because, who knows, that is a rare quality in her environment. Let her have her moment."*

Based on the tweet, the characteristic of @haronamd as an SJW is identified as someone who invalidates other people's experiences. This is related to the characteristics of SJW, which was also explained by @Batman\_Monyok, which identifies SJW as having the mindset of being the most correct out of anybody else. Twitter user @tidaktiduk, in this case, is an individual who is attached to a larger group or culture. The identity of @haronamd as an SJW can also be found in another tweet quoting @haronamd's original tweet. Here are the other examples of someone giving a neutral response to her tweet.

@Hirumaaaaaa also replied her tweet,

*"Maaf ya, tapi anda terlalu julid, tolong diperbaiki lagi perilakunya, terima kasih."*, and she added that,

*"Justru karena itu hal basic makanya perlu diapresiasi, kalo hal yang basic aja gak bisa mengapresiasi, apalagi yang gede."* (Precisely because it's a basic thing, that's why it needs to be appreciated. Even if it's basic and small, if you can't appreciate it, how do you appreciate the big one.) to emphasize her points.

The above tweet by @Hirumaaaaaa can be read as, *"I'm sorry, but you are too mocking, please fix your behavior, thanks."* The same Twitter user then replied to his own quote tweet which can be read as, *"Precisely because of that, basic things need to be appreciated, if you can't appreciate basic things, you won't appreciate the next big thing."* Based on his quote tweet, @haronamd's characteristic as an SJW is identified as a person who is too mocking. This is related to how SJW activists proceed their activity in negative behaviors which in turn created characteristics of SJW nowadays as mentioned before. Twitter user @Hirumaaaaaa is the individual attached to the larger group which considers @haronamd's behavior as too mocking. The last proof of how another person constructs the identity of @haronamd as an SJW from a larger group can be found in another quote tweet. Here is an example of someone's reply gives a neutral response to her tweet.

@mikazukiaaugusxx also gives her neutral tweet reply,

*"Basic manner kaya mind your own business kok bisa ga dilakuin mba?"* (Why are you not doing a basic manner such as 'mind your own business', Sis?).

The above tweet by @mikazukiaaugusxx can be read as, *"How about basic manners like minding your own business, which you didn't do."* What can be interpreted from this tweet is that Twitter user @mikazukiaaugusxx claimed that @haronamd herself didn't do basic manners. In this case, the characteristic of @haronamd as an SJW is imposing her standards on others without actually doing it themselves. This is related to the characteristics of SJWs identified by Twitter user @Batman\_Monyok, who characterize SJWs as individuals who always impose their standards on others. The Twitter user @mikazukiaaugusxx is an example of an individual bound by a larger group or culture.

In the communal frame, the SJW characteristic of @haronamd is defined by individuals which are bound or attached to larger groups or cultures. These characteristics are invalidating others' opinions, mocking others, and imposing their standards on other people.

To sum up, while these four frames of identity may be considered independently for analytic purposes, they are not really independent of one another. A person's personal identity is bound up with their enacted, relational, and communal identities, just as these identities are bound up with their other identities. In examining a person's gender identity (personal identity), it is important to take into account how society defines gender roles (communal identity) and how others view them (relational identity). CTI calls this interpenetration of frames (Jung, Hecht, 2004). Based on this explanation by Hecht and Jung, it can be concluded that interpenetration of frames is a way to examine someone's identity by connecting one or two of the four frames of identity; personal, relational, enactment, and communal frame. Therefore, the characteristics of SJW can be seen by connecting the relation of four identity frames of SJW Twitter. Its relation explains one another which describes how SJW identity and its characteristics existed within @haronamd's as an individual and identity.

Interpenetration occurs in a variety of ways. One of those ways is dialectical interpenetration. Identity is not always compatible with other identities. In fact, they may be in opposition to one another or may be exclusive. Although the frames contradict each other, they still function as parts of identity. As a result, they interpenetrate each other and are entangled in dialectical tensions. An example of a discrepancy or contradiction between the personal and relational frames can be seen between the personal and the enacted frames. Despite the contradictions between these frames, they coexist and work together to form an individual's identity (Jung, Hecht, 2004). Therefore, even if, at first sight, the frames are not compatible with each other, they still function as parts of identity. We found that there are no contradictions in this research in which all the frames depict the completion of one another that described SJW's Twitter identity.

#### 4. Results

As a result, the evolution and construction of the SJW term are developed over time and technology. From its first appearance until today, the identity of SJWs has kept evolving. A new identity formed in an SJW is not only a community group but a negative label that was inserted for people who struggle to voice their views or paradigm while ignoring other people's opinions. This negative label which spread massively across internet media, makes it hard for actual social justice activists to voice their opinions. Besides that, Hecht's theory of identity, which includes four frames of identity as explained above, pictured the SJW identity of @haronamd through her personal frame, enactment frame, relationship frame, and communal frame.

First of all, the result of the personal frame analysis is that she is not happy enough if she just has a boyfriend who only has these three basic manners so that a lot of reactions happen to be agreed or opposed to her. It concludes that SJW Twitter showed her behaviors toward one of Twitter user's tweets by doing an intervention to mention her personal value, which resulted in bridging a special social concept to diverse communities and presenting her identity.

Second, SJW Twitter gained much attention from the online community and delivered her defense to validate the existence of her identity construction is a normal thing. The enactment frame analysis shows that she prioritizes her reputation by trying to look inferior to get validation for her opinion by replying to those who reacted to her intentional tweet.

Third, it is shown by the result in the relational frame analysis, one of which is that she mocks or demeans the opinions of others who do not agree with her. She tried hard to affect others that she was doing the right thing. This means that SJW Twitter constructed her identity to prove their personal self-concept; principles, values, and life experience, instead of seeking the opposed situation, and retaining her identity as the standard.

Lastly, the result in the communal frame analysis is invalidating others' opinions, mocking others, and imposing their standards on other people. So, it can be concluded that the characteristics of SJW shown by @haronamd are very tied to her principles. It also includes that SJW Twitter engaged to the wide communities to maintain how her identity will definitely be common to others as she reacted to original tweets.

The interpenetration of frames also took part in identifying the relation of SJW characteristics and the identity of @haronamd. All frames are integrating @haronamd identity construction as SJW, how she is personally, she acts, she communicates, and she interacted in the

online discussion in the online community. And, it is resulting in herself being suitable for being defined as SJW Twitter of what the public has been known nowadays.

## 5. Conclusion

SJW identity will keep evolving and constructed within the dynamic development of times, which is related to people's ability to absorb or adapt to a condition or situation so that it is widely possible that the SJW's meaning is easily shifted by times. Besides that, SJWs themselves are essentially people who fight for something social based on what they think is right, and many audiences and communities welcome them as a basis for validating their existence and the social values they stand for. This makes SJWs have an important and influential role. However, in online communities, such as the scope of Twitter as a social media, the shifts in SJW's meaning are very visible based on what is believed by the public regarding the attitudes they are taken, thus polluting the SJW name with other meanings that turn into a negative conclusion. The characteristics of genuine SJWs faded with the development of online SJWs, both those who reveal their identity as SJWs or those who do not show them, and/or even not SJWs, can be labeled as SJWs negatively because they are identified as based on what meanings are constructed and believed by the general public today. As we know, Twitter is one of the social media mainly used for the online community to discuss a lot of social contexts by stimulating the identity of oneself. Therefore, it is also reflecting users' personal life and reality which flows within their tweets and the reflected negative label built from how they define themselves through online media. Then, the identity SJW constructed based on what they fight for a self-reputation. In the end, the construction of SJW identity and the SJW's values are no longer a context for social justice, but the formation of any social concept as a reference for the existence of SJW identity, especially on social media in Indonesia, which prioritizes self-values, principles, models as the standard on a social justice concept.

This study became important for the further development of identity construction analysis. The results provided in this research can be proved as the identity construction of SJW in recent times, and moreover Hecht's theory described the SJW characteristics very well. Also, using the communication theory of identity by Hecht will help the relation of the individual to their identity. Furthermore, the suggestion for the next research can be using Twitter SJWs' identity in any case study and phenomenological study which is specifically discussed, such as cultural appropriation, since its urgency will be beneficial for cultural studies.

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## Modelling the Challenges of News Media Engagement in Community Flood Disaster Management: Preliminary Research Evidence from Yobe State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

In a time when the devastating effects of climate change are undeniably experienced in communities across the world, multifaceted means of mitigating those effects are nowadays much sought after – and news media (both traditional and new) have been identified as one of those means. Because of its apparent inevitability, flood disasters have become a phenomenon that many communities in Yobe State experience virtually on an annual basis. Even though the literature has shown that effective engagement of news media especially before and after the rains could help manage flood disasters, this may not have yielded effective results – a situation that suggests the existence of factors hindering the effective engagement of the news media in the management of flood disasters in Yobe State. If yes, what are those factors? How could the challenges be overcome? This study seeks to answer these research questions to close the research gap. A qualitative research method of key informant interview was employed to collect first-hand information from experienced people and experts. A total of 19 participants were interviewed including relevant journalists from notable media organisations in the state, relevant staff of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA Yobe), and those of other disaster management agencies in the state including Nigerian Metrological Agency (NMA). Atlas.ti version 8 software was used to analyse the data. The study yielded a bi-thematic model with four internal (predicting) factors and external (moderating) factors in each of the model's two themes as the preliminary results. The internal factors are news characteristics, funding, unprofessionalism and profit orientation, skilled labour and funding all impact the active participation of the media in flood risk reduction while the external factors are the lack of information, mistrust, inadequacies on the part of government and citizens and community perception of media's role in flood disaster management. This study which is limited to descriptive methodology recommends that key stakeholders should prioritise media relations during pre-rainy season period and prioritise pre-disaster management strategy.

**Keywords:** community engagement, flood, risk disaster management, media engagement, media relations, news media.

### 1. Introduction

The frequency, magnitude, and scale of destruction of flood in the recent time have been a source of concern to stakeholders. It was agreed that collaboration of stakeholders can reduce the risk of flood (Aronu et al., 2014; Ganiyu et al., 2017; van Niekerk, Nemakonde, 2017; Yaji, Daura, 2010). However, research suggests that the relationship between journalists, disaster management

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organisations and other stakeholders need improvement (Adekola, Lamond, 2018; Adekunle, 2018). Media and disaster management organisations play a crucial role in disaster management. Both disseminate information to the public about natural and artificial disasters (Aronu et al., 2014; Lamond et al., 2019). Ganiyu et al. (Ganiyu et al., 2017a, b: 152) opine that, *In Nigeria, flooding displaces more people than any other natural disaster with an estimated 20 % of the population at risk. This perennial problem consistently results in death and displacement of communities. The number of flood-related fatalities has varied significantly from flood-to-flood with the percentage of displaced versus killed persons not conclusive in the literature. Flood is a result of many conditions working singly and in synergy. These conditions are mainly natural and anthropogenic.*

Natural causes of flooding are generally a result of heavy rain and downpour (Ganiyu et al., 2017 a,b; Mashi et al., 2019; van Niekerk, NemaKonde, 2017).

Statistically, flood takes 83.3 % of all disasters that happened in Nigeria from 1990 to 2014 and 84.4 % of deaths recorded during the same time. Similarly, 99.8 % of economic issues from disasters are due to flood (Ganiyu et al., 2017 a, b; Mashiet al., 2019). These show that there is urgent need for collaboration of stakeholders to reduce flood disaster risk and save the nation. This study aims to identify and proffer solutions to the problems that are affecting Nigerian news media's involvement in disaster risk reduction in Yobe State (Mashi et al., 2019; van Niekerk, NemaKonde, 2017).

In 2012, rivers burst their banks and submerged vast swaths of land in 30 of the country's 36 states, killing over 400 people and displacing an additional 1.3 million (Mashi et al., 2019). The disaster caused \$17 billion in damage, according to the Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). In 2019, floods affected 277,555 people, killing 158 people. The number of people affected by floods increased to 2,353,647 in 2020, according to Muhammadu Muhammed, NEMA's former head, at the unveiling of the 2021 annual flood outlook, resulting in 69 deaths (NHSA, 2021).

A report on flooding in Yobe in August 2021 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (OCHA, 2021a) shows that 2,899 households (17,394 persons) living in lowland communities across 11 local government areas (LGAs) in the State were affected by severe flooding. The affected LGAs are Gulani, Damaturu, Fune, Gujba, Bursari, Karasuwa, Nguru, Jakusko, Fika, Nangere and Tarmuwa. There are fears of increased flooding and inundation of more communities in the days to come as more rains are expected. The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) has verified and provided some emergency food support to 42 % of the affected households. The Executive Governor of Yobe State, Mai Mala Buni directed the Ministries of Environment, Humanitarian Affairs, and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to liaise with vulnerable communities to relocate them to safer locations to ensure their safety. There are warnings from the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET) indicating heavy rainfall with massive floods that will affect some states including some parts of Yobe state. Furthermore, OCHA (2021b) report shows that on 21 July 2021, over 200 families were affected by heavy flooding which destroyed more than 100 homes in Jakusko LGA.

The paper presents the preliminary findings of a study which aims to identify and recommend solutions to challenges militating against news media and disaster managers "performing their roles in disaster risk reduction in Yobe State, Nigeria." The study aimed to answer these research questions: what are the factors hindering the effective engagement of new media in flood disaster management in Yobe State? How could the challenges be overcome?

Yobe State is located in the North-East part of Nigeria that lies in the desertification frontline of the country. although rainfalls are limited, heavy rains in the peak months of July and August give rise to "a lot of flood disaster in several towns and villages in the state" (OCHA, 2021a, b).

## 2. Materials and methods

A qualitative, key informant interview (KII) was used to select 19 key participants (aged from 25 to 54 years; 11 men, 8 women). KII provides the researcher with the leverage to select and interview important participants that are relevant to the study and that have the requisite knowledge of the research problem (Wimmer, Dominick, 2013). The participants are 5 journalists and relevant editorial management staff from each of Yobe Broadcasting Corporation (YBC), Yobe State Television (YTV), and NTA Damaturu as well as the head of disaster risk reduction department of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA Yobe), and those of four other

disaster management organisations based in the state namely, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Yobe State Command, Nigerian Metrological Agency, and Yobe State Fire Service. The interviews were analysed using Atlas.ti version 8 software.

### 3. Discussion

The preliminary findings of the study are concisely discussed in this section, which answer the two research questions mentioned at the end of Section 1.

*Internal Factors:* In this section, the key internal (predicting) factors that militate against the “effective media engagement in the management of flood disasters in Yobe State” are briefly discussed.

*News characteristics:-* News is one of the major outputs of the media. It is an essential content that attract people to news media: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and other form of media of mass communication. The informants gave insight into this present state by citing the nature of news which thrives on suddenness, destruction, drama, shock among others as the push factor that make coverage of disaster during its occurrence a staple food for media. “These elements are lacking at pre-disaster stage”, according to Participant A5. Participant C1 also complains that “the media often puts temporary, narrow interest under the guise of ‘news characteristics’ above its contribution to sustainable development which disaster risk reduction presents.” The participants further complain that disaster managers do not supply disaster risk reduction materials to the media; people are overtly interested in tragic and current incidents; government fails to take determined steps to prevent flood and stop it from being a perennial problem and its reportage routine stories for the media.

However, participants stressed that Governor Mai Mala Buni’s Administration is successfully on top of the situation by empowering SEMA and revolutionising it with the appointment of Dr Mohammed Goje as its head.

*Unprofessionalism and profit-centredness:* Journalists and media practitioners as professionals have ethics and rules guiding their profession. Ethics guides best professional practices and enhances quality service delivery. However, participants identified “unprofessional attitudes and commercialisation” as one of the hindrances to media involvement in flood disaster risk reduction. But it is instructive to note that both disaster managers and media practitioners accused each other while identifying these hindrances.

*Skilled workforce:* Skilled workforce refers to the number of competent workers available for a task. The views of participants on the negative impact of workforce on media participation in flood disaster risk reduction shows that “the media organisations employ professionals” to gather, process and disseminate news and other editorial materials to mass audience through their media. However, “the dwindling economic situation, selfish interest, and private media owners’ desire to maximise” profit and other interests “have been affecting quality and quantity of journalists available” to cover events and present news professionally. But participants are of the opinion that the Mai Mala Buni Government can overcome this teething challenge.

*Financing:-* News is the primary commodity of news media (Rachel, Efrat, 2022; Simonov, Rao, 2022). News production and distribution are a process that costs a lot of money just like many other media activities (Obaje, Ebinuwale, 2022; Oberiri, 2016; Ryfe, 2021). Most of the participants identified financing as a critical challenge to media participation in flood disaster management, stressing that, “with the media-friendly Government of Governor Mai Mala Buni, the news media in Yobe, especially state government-owned ones will face lesser funding challenges to cover and report flood disaster risk reduction.” Participants also believed that since the creation of Yobe State 30 years ago, no government has ever prioritised disaster management as Governor Mai Mala Bunis’ Government. Participants cited “the transformation of Yobe SEMA by Dr Mohammed Goje as unprecedented” who has been “the cynosure of attention to all international NGOs, CSOs, and media” in the state. Some of the media expert participants identified that “it costs more to produce disaster risk reduction stories than cover response disaster stage stories.” While response stage stories are mostly visible and ready-made stories, disaster risk reduction stories involve investigation and follow ups. It costs money and other resources.

*External Factors:* In this sub-section, preliminary findings on external (moderating, or mitigating) factors that pose challenges to effective media engagement in the management of flood disaster in Yobe State are discussed concisely.

*Information deficiency:* Media thrives on the availability and quality of information at its disposal. Media content such as news, programmes and features are generated from verifiable sources. The hindrance posed by lack of information, according to the participants, is largely blamed on disaster managers especially the Federal Government's NEMA. According to the participants Yobe SEMA is doing its best with the support of Governor Mai Mala Buni but NEMA's aid is a bit far away from the ordinary people's reach. Nonetheless, the participants believed that 'complementary' role the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) plays in cushioning effects of disasters in Yobe State may cover the inadequacies of NEMA.

*Mistrust:* Trust is one of the ingredients of good relationship. Partnership requires honesty, trust, teamwork, mutual understanding, and other positive attitudes. Participants alleged "others of distrust, dishonesty, dubious character, corruption, conflict of interest" and operation among other constraints to effective relationship.

*Inadequacies of government and people:* Apart from disaster management agencies and media organisations, there are other stakeholders whose actions and inactions could promote or hinder disaster risk reduction campaign. Government, people in the disaster-prone and non-disaster-prone areas, experts, scholars, CSOs, NGOs, and others are crucial to flood disaster risk reduction. Participants identified "the failure of other stakeholders to act proactively, implement policies that will reduce flood, desist from attitudes that trigger flood, prioritise media relations during pre-flood periods," among others as a major impediment.

*Community perception of the role of the media:-* Supported by the 2015 report of Associated Programme for Flood Management (APFM) (APFM, 2015: 15-16), the findings indicate that when there is a natural disaster in a community, such as flooding, the community has certain expectations about the kind of information that should be provided by the media, especially during an emergency. People usually look for news that has the following characteristics.

- Constantly and promptly updated, especially during or immediately after a disaster.
- Clear and unambiguous – although they may convey inaccurate content, audiences often prefer unambiguous and even absolute language because it is easier to understand and sets some standards for dealing with unfamiliar and complex issues.
- Relevant to their needs and preferences – during an emergency, for example, people want to know if, when and where they should be evacuated, if their relatives and acquaintances are among the scattered people, when the flooding will end, etc.
- Accurate - for example, the names of the flooded streets and places, the exact number of victims and the exact date when they can return to their homes.
- Accurate and trustworthy – over the years, "the media has been heavily criticised for allegedly distorting information or favouring certain theses or parties in public debate."

Society expects the media to report facts and figures neutrally and leave the judgement to the recipients. When opinions are expressed, they should be attributed to their authors and reproduced verbatim (e.g., APFM, 2015; Asad et al., 2021).

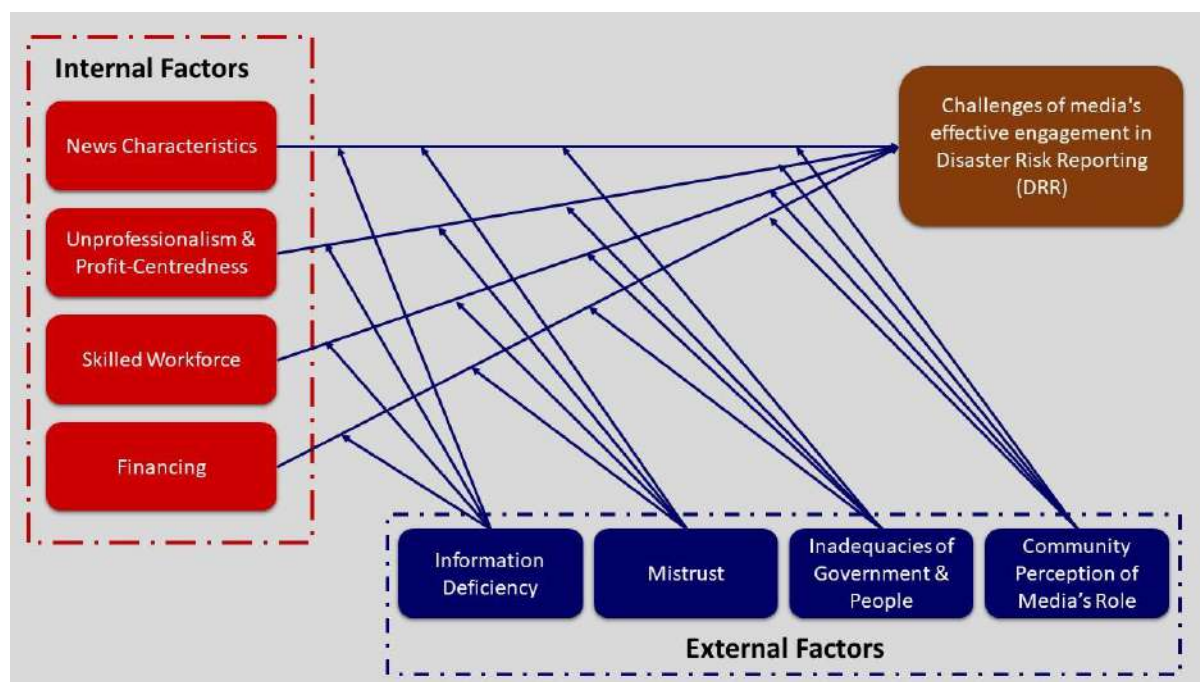
In line with these requirements, community members usually select media on the basis of the quality of the information, the way it is presented and its immediate availability. These selection criteria put pressure on the media to gather as much news as quickly as possible, even though they are constrained by the need to sell their products in a highly competitive and crowded market. According to the principles of the political economy of the media and commercial rules, the only special obligation of journalists is to satisfy media consumers as effectively as possible, resulting in broader social benefits, guided by the "hidden hand" of the media market (e.g., APFM, 2015).

Journalists and other media professionals, on the other hand, often see themselves in a social role, a moral obligation to "serve the public good", as public informants, minority advocates, critical watchdogs or open forums for the expression and exchange of opinions. This self-perception challenges the notion that the relationships between the media and their audiences are self-regulating because the demands of society are the ultimate measure of performance. On the contrary, for communicators this can pose a potential threat to their autonomy and professional standards, especially when audience satisfaction may conflict with their integrity and code of conduct (e.g., APFM, 2015; McQuail, Windahl, 2015). These considerations should lead flood managers not to underestimate the work and capabilities of the media and to assume that they are always motivated by materialistic economic goals. Irritation and impatience with journalistic issues should give way to a willingness to cooperate in the interest of the community as a whole (e.g., APFM, 2015).

### 3. Results

Analysis of the informants' responses revealed two major themes: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are largely predicting factor and they are "news characteristics" (Participants A3, B1, C6), "funding" (Participants A5, C1), "unprofessionalism" (Participants A1,3,6, B4,6, C1,6), and "profit orientation, skilled labour and funding" (Participants A6, B1,4,6, C2-4) all impact the active participation of the media in flood risk reduction. External factors, on the other hand, are largely moderating barriers imposed by entities other than the media. These are "the lack of information" (Participants B4,6, C4,6), "mistrust" (Participants A1-6, B6, C7), "inadequacies on the part of government and citizens" (Participants A3, B3-5, C6,7), and "community perception of media's role in flood disaster management" (Participants B4-6, C1, 6-7).

Based on the data analysis, a model was created that includes all factors, as shown in [Figure 1](#).



**Fig. 1.** Factors hindering media participation in effective reporting of disaster risk in the pre-disaster phase

### 5. Conclusion

This study examined pressing problems affecting media participation in disaster risk reduction in Yobe State. Findings show that the duo interact less before disaster occurrence while relationship during and after disaster occurrence is largely fraught with distrust, tension, fighting, blaming and another crisis. There is inadequate coordination, collaboration and communication among journalists and disaster managers before disaster occurrence. Some of the problems identified are within media organisation while some lie with disaster management organisations and other stakeholders. By creating disaster risk awareness through disseminating information on the likely disaster and educate people on how to be adequately prepared and avoid activities that would make them vulnerable, media will be playing its role. It should de-emphasis reporting numbers of people that died, property destroyed, human misery, tragedies and other attendant challenges brought by flood. It is time for media and other stakeholders to be conscious of how many lives and property could be saved through effective reportage and involvement in disaster risk reduction. Journalists need to see themselves as critical stakeholder in disaster risk reduction and collaborate with other stakeholders actively.

One of the critical external factors is the community's perception of the role of media in the management of flood disasters. This factor can make or mar the whole management effort depending on how it is handled. The community's perception of the role of media must be taken into consideration when deploying journalists and other media practitioners to cover flood disasters, especially in rural and semi-urban communities. If, for instance, the media perceives any unfavourable attitude toward it by the community, strategic media community relation techniques

must be harnessed well before embarking especially by engaging community influencers such as traditional ad religious leaders, youth pressure groups' leadership, herders and farmers' unions, etc.

Furthermore, the media needs to be effectively cultivated by Yobe State Government and "other stakeholders as one of the critical publics of disaster management organisations in the state." Media too should see itself as a stakeholder not an ordinary participant. A functional relationship with the media before flood disasters occur would be of great benefit to stakeholders both at the state and national levels.

*Limitations and Future Research Directions:* This study is limited to a qualitative study methodology, key informant interview only, future research should adopt a mixed-method or quantitative approach. Another key limitation is a focus on media (or, partially, news media). Future research should investigate the engagement of specific categories or types of media (e.g., broadcast – radio, TV, the print – newspaper, magazine, new media – social media, etc.). Focusing on community-related flood disaster management only is also a key limitation. Future research should explore urban flooding as well. Focusing on pre-disaster phase only is another limitation and future research should explore examining both pre- and post-flood disaster management. Apart from the mass media, dialogue and community engagement are some of other forms of communication media (communication for development C4D) that are largely based on face-to-face negotiations and engagements. This study did not cover that aspect. Future research should explore the application of C4D in flood disaster management during both pre- and post-disaster phases with emphasis on the pre-occurrence stage.

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## Isolation Among University Students During the COVID-19 Lockdown: The Mediating Impacts of Social Sites Usage and Pursuing Social Support

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### Abstract

As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, social isolation has become required globally. This period of social isolation can be a risk factor for mental health issues, particularly in younger adults. Young adults also use social media at a higher rate than other age groups, a type of socialising that has been associated to bad mental health outcomes like isolation and serious depression. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the current study looked at the possible mediating effects of social networking site usage and social support searches on the relationship between age and isolation signs and symptoms. The qualitative approach is utilised for this study. Data is acquired from ten university students from the United States and Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to learn more about the phenomenon of depressive symptoms, loneliness, coping methods, and changes in their daily lives as a result of the epidemic from the United States and Pakistan. During the epidemic, university students were even more lonely than older individuals, used more social media, and sought less social aid, according to the data. The findings are discussed in light of past research, as well as the potential impacts of fear and isolation during a pandemic from both countries.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, pandemic, isolation, social media, social support.

### 1. Introduction

The coronavirus disease epidemic of 2019 (COVID-19) triggered a global health catastrophe, putting individuals in a distressing and unexpected scenario (Ciotti et al., 2020). Individual feelings, everyday habits, and relationships were all profoundly affected by the possibility of contamination and the experience of social alienation. Uncertainty about the pandemic's timeline exacerbated people's worries, stress, and bewilderment (Varma et al., 2021). According to (Kowal et al., 2020), both older and younger people experienced increased anxiety and feelings of isolation as a result of the quarantine. Researchers from all across the world have been examining how the pandemic has affected mental health since the early weeks of COVID-19's spread (Cullen et al., 2020) and caused people to plan how to deal with their isolation (Fluharty et al., 2021). Losing one's regular routine and having fewer social interactions can, in fact, cause boredom, frustration, and isolation. These emotions can cause people to feel very distressed and increase their risk of developing mental illnesses like depression. The subjective feeling of loneliness best captures people's negative feelings of a lack of meaningful social connections, both in terms of quantity and quality of social contacts (Tuijt et al., 2021). Despite the distinction between objective social isolation and subjective loneliness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015), social separation is undoubtedly one of the most potent predictors of loneliness and has negative effects on both health and well-being

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(Kanitz et al., 2014). In fact, social isolation brought on by disengagement from society exacerbates loneliness in individuals.

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures caused social isolation, which had a detrimental effect on the mental health of the general population worldwide. This increased mental distress, depression, and anxiety, which was occasionally linked to changes in feelings and lifestyle, like decreased physical activity, unhealthy eating habits, poor sleep quality, and a sense of loneliness (Luciano et al., 2021). Due to the uncertainty of their financial status, school closings, and the suspension of educational services, parents experienced psychological anguish (Mazza et al., 2021). Children and teenagers started to exhibit negative emotional reactions (stress, concern, helplessness, social and dangerous behavioural difficulties, anxiety, and depression) as well as changes in lifestyle (sleeping issues, more screen time, decreased physical activity, and poor eating habits).

On January 30, 2020, the WHO designated the COVID-19 outbreak as a public health emergency of global concern. In March 2020, the WHO started classifying it as a pandemic to emphasise the gravity of the situation and to compel all governments to take action in identifying cases and halting the spread of the disease (Mazza et al., 2021). The most potent and effective defence that society has against this virus, which impacts not only health but also economy, politics, and social order, is the prevention of its spread, despite the existence of cures for diseases and the tremendous advancements made by our civilization. The main strategies for halting the disease's spread in society include hand hygiene, social seclusion, and quarantine. Stronger quarantine regulations would help eliminate secondary cases by detecting more COVID-19 positive patients in the community and increasing testing capacity.

A comprehensive definition of social support, which will be used in the proposed dissertation: In both official (such as support groups) and informal (such as friendships) contexts, social support refers to the social resources available or really offered to a person by non-professionals (Frison & Eggermont, 2015). Emotional support (e.g., love, caring, understanding), informational assistance (e.g., answers to specific questions), and instrumental support (e.g., aid with daily duties, essential physical resources, transportation) are the three categories of social support identified by scholars (Burlinson, 2003). One form of social support that has gotten a lot of press: purposefully seeking help from friends and family in times of stress (Helsen et al., 2000). The relevance of social support has been studied extensively. Social media refers to a collection of online social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. During the COVID-19 epidemic, social media is anticipated to grow even more in importance as a means of communication because people are unable to leave their houses for anything besides essentials and are prohibited from physically gathering. Prior to COVID-19, social media use among young adults was essentially widespread, with 90 % of them using it (Kumar et al., 2021). Researchers have begun to study the link between increased social media use and reductions in youth mental health in the last decade as a result of these occurrences (Sanchez et al., 2020). Researchers have concentrated on the effects of social media use on young adults' social support, loneliness, sense of well-being, and depression (Lisitsa et al., 2020). A study indicated that when teenagers sought social support and received perceived social support through Facebook, their melancholy mood improved; yet, when social support was not effectively obtained, adolescents' depressed mood worsened (Wadley, 2016). If this tendency continues true for young adults, their ability to find social support both online and off could create a self-reinforcing cycle.

## 2. Materials and methods

In older people, loneliness and social isolation are all too prevalent and typically coexist. Social isolation is based on the volume and frequency of social interactions, whereas loneliness is related to an individual's subjective feelings. Social isolation is defined as the objective state of a person's social surrounds and patterns of interaction, whereas loneliness is defined as the subjective feeling of being alone (Page, 2013). Page clarified that loneliness and social isolation are not the same thing; research has shown that both have detrimental effects on health through comparable but different pathways. The dependence on generic measures that only capture aggregate levels of help seeking is one of the limitations of the studies highlighted above. That is, much of the existing research on social support and support seeking has operationalized social support by asking participants about the size of their social network or how readily available they believe support resources are (Antonucci, 1986). A following study defines that the requesting assistance from one's partner is linked to enhanced closeness, relationship satisfaction, and lower

anxiety (Collins, Feeney, 2000). A daily diary method is frequently used in studies of daily pain and coping (Gunthert, Wenzel, 2012). These studies are instructive, despite the fact that help seeking is only a small part of them. Social support as a part of coping with arthritis pain and discovered that higher levels of pain are linked to more emotional support seeking, implying that the perceived severity of a negative event is linked to the likelihood of seeking help (Smyth et al., 2014). Even before the general public had access to the Internet, computer-mediated communication had long been used to communicate social solidarity. This practise of using computer-mediated communication to exchange somewhat anonymous supportive messages persisted into the Internet age. Discussion forums known as "newsgroups" were developed in the early years of the Internet as a means of disseminating information and encouraging group conversations among scholars and system administrators (McKenna, Bargh, 1998). However, new study reveals that people's online and real social networks are becoming increasingly entwined. In terms of social support in particular, the Internet was once a revolutionary medium for providing assistance to certain groups (Romiszowski, Mason, 2013). However, with the increasing popularity of the Internet, the individuals one meets at work or in their town may also be the people with whom one communicates via e-mail and chat (Luppigini, 2007). The increased popularity of online social networking services is a crucial element in this evolution.

With the development of new web services that emphasised social contact, the Internet gained widespread acceptability as a facilitator of social connection (Keenan, Shiri, 2009). Platforms like *MySpace*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *Twitter* became popular in the mid-2000s as a way to communicate with others in a number of mediums (video, audio, and text), as well as create new relationships and maintain old ones. As a result, fundamental changes in the way the Internet is used and its place in the social sphere began to emerge. High systolic blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease are only two of the many physical and psychological effects of loneliness. Loneliness and social isolation have been associated to a higher risk of coronary artery disease-related death, even in middle-aged people without a history of myocardial infarction (Valtorta et al., 2016).

Additionally, research has shown that social isolation and loneliness are both independent risk factors for higher all-cause mortality (Plagg et al., 2020). Numerous detrimental consequences on one's mental health are caused by loneliness. Reduced sleep efficiency (by 7 %) and extended wake time following sleep onset have both been linked to loneliness (Christiansen et al., 2016). The loneliness, along with low self-reported health, decreased functional status, vision issues, and a perceived negative shift in one's quality of life, can all lead to an increase in depressive symptoms (Segrin, Passalacqua, 2010). According to a systematic analysis, loneliness has been associated to both attempted and successful suicide in older people, which is examined in the study by (Gomboc et al., 2022). Loneliness, like depressive symptoms, has been linked to a decline in cognition over time. In a thorough analysis, it was discovered that social isolation and loneliness were highly associated with incident dementia (Rafnsson et al., 2020). The physiological stress response, such as increased cortisol, is the hypothesised cause of loneliness's detrimental impacts on health. Abnormal stress reactions have detrimental effects on health. The mechanism for social isolation may be related to behavioural modifications, such as an unhealthy lifestyle (smoking, drinking alcohol, doing less exercise, eating poorly, and disobeying medical orders) (Pinto et al., 2021). A smaller social network and limited access to healthcare worsen these problems. We may be able to develop the most efficient treatments if we can identify and better comprehend these potential pathways.

Based on the theoretical presumptions and study findings, we hypothesised that people who experienced high degrees of loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic were more likely to suffer anxiety and be dysfunctional active in social media use, perhaps as a coping mechanism. As a result, we looked at whether participants who felt particularly lonely during COVID-19's forced isolation were more likely to feel nervous and whether their loneliness resulted in overly-engaging in social media in an addictive manner. Additionally, the influence of excessive social media use on how loneliness and anxiety are experienced was examined.

RQ1. How university students affected with isolation in COVID-19 lockdown?

RQ2. What was the reasons of isolation for university students in both countries?

RQ3. What strategies university students used to cope with isolation in lockdown?

This is a descriptive, qualitative research study examining self-perceived stress in the late adolescent population during the COVID-19 pandemic, which will occur in 2021. During COVID-19, the researchers used a cross-sectional interview approach to examine the felt stress levels of

public and private university students from Pakistan and the United States, as well as uncover characteristics linked to perceived stress in late adolescence. Furthermore, the motives for using social media for social support throughout the quarantine period have been highlighted. Adolescents aged 18 to 24 were recruited using a non-probability, purposive sampling approach. The researcher contacted university student organisations on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram to recruit participants. The following criteria were used to determine who was eligible to participate: Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 24, live in the United States or Pakistan, and have lived in states or counties that have implemented COVID-19-related safety measures. At the start of 2021, a sample size of 20 late teens took part in the study.

### 3. Discussion

The increased use of social media in young generation was observed because it was the hardest time of their life as they have never been in any pandemic so to live with it was a big deal for them (Lemenager et al., 2020). To cope up with the situation, the quarantine and social distancing was enforced (Shah et al., 2020). There was no direct contact between the people which raised the feeling of isolation, boredom, anxiety and depression. The use of social media was considered as a new channel to vent out all the problems caused by the isolation (Bonsaksen et al., 2021). During COVID-19 many Taiwanese people used a variety of information sources depending upon the gender, age, profession and level of concern towards the pandemic (Chu et al., 2020).

The more information was searched for Covid 19 rather than for academic courses because people were more concerned about the health than other aspect of life (Vokinger et al., 2020). One of the important fact came in consideration that young people relied more on internet for Covid information as compared to older people who used traditional media (Orben, 2020).

Social Media played a significant role in providing the information related to pandemic by inviting the health experts, psychologist, and psychiatrists through their platform to instruct and advise people how they can calm their selves in this situation and how they can fight it (Liu, 2021). The social media is used as a constructive strategy by the adolescents to deal with anxiety, depression and frustration caused by pandemic (Cauberghe et al). Those who were lacking direct contact with people used social media contact to fulfil their survival needs.

The other added advantage of isolation people took in quarantine is that they gained physical health. Due to lockdown, the gyms were closed down which limited the physical activity of the people (Inasaridze, 2021). But people used social media and started digital exercise which again gave people a platform to let go of their depression and staying healthy and fit. During lock down, social media provided young generation to create online identities and build social network hence gaining valuable social support. Social media was also used as a source self-expression where you get to share what's going inside your mind without fear of being known (Qin et al., 2022).

### 4. Results

This section explains the participants' personal perspectives on COVID-19 lockdown and isolation. The result section is divided into three parts. The first part will demonstrate the effects of COVID-19 lockdown. The qualitative data analysis revealed various themes, some of which were common throughout Pakistan, while others were specific to the United States. The findings based on the perceptions of participants from both nations are presented in the next section.

It was discovered that there were numerous reasons for Pakistani university students to utilise social media more frequently during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as how they dealt with their isolation during this time.

#### a) COVID-19 lockdown affected university students from USA and Pakistan

The fundamental cause of the sensation of isolation is the government's severe lockdown in both countries. One of the most difficult phases of the participants' lives was transitioning from a conventional life pattern to a virtual existence. Students from both countries have stated that the closure of all public places, travel bans, transfer of physical classes to an online forum, closure of dance, singing, and acting schools, closure of all shopping establishments, no gym services, no night parties, and no visits to relatives have a negative impact on students from Pakistan and the United States.

The COVID-19 lockdown has impacted on the "Health Related Behaviour" of universities students from both countries. The COVID-19 epidemic and subsequent "Stay-at-Home" directives, according to some US respondents, have affected both their positive health behaviours (sleep and

physical exercise) and bad health behaviours (alcohol consumption, drug use, and tobacco use). The most typical justification for altering health behaviours during the epidemic was having more time available (negative and positive). Others claimed that this circumstance made it difficult to get fresh foods, that people ate more comfort food and sugary foods, and that people started nibbling out of boredom. Participants from Pakistan said that, in addition to posing major risks to people's physical health, COVID-19 also had a negative influence on people's social, psychological, and mental health because of lockdown, job loss, financial stress, and, most crucially, a shift in daily routine.

COVID-19 lockdown affected significantly of the “Public Transport System” in both countries. Respondents from the US said that because of the epidemic, transportation system was closed completely and students were unable to plan any trips along with friends and family. As, public transportation was severely impacted. People were unable to move around and travel, which seriously worried the populace. These circumstances lead to the feeling of isolation and loneliness. Different areas of the transportation industry were affected differently by COVID-19. In order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure the safety of essential personnel during the emergency response, cities across Pakistan with higher risks had to impose severe restrictions on public transportation since the outbreak of the disease. It is estimated that forced bus operators to lose millions of dollars per day in fare revenue.

One of the serious challenge faced by all over the world is “Food Security Challenge”. The US participants explained the serious concern that the abrupt rise in food costs was the result of the unique coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which impacted food systems and economies nationwide. Public health initiatives, such as instructions to stay at home, caused disturbances in the food system and the labour market, which raised hurdles to obtaining food.

Respondents from Pakistan described the difficulties Pakistan faced with regard to food security and the ensuing socioeconomic effects. The government had also implemented initiatives to stabilise the efficiency of Pakistan's agri-food systems. Due to limited resources, particularly in rural parts of Balochistan, Sindh, and KPK, many livelihood- and food security-related demands remain unmet despite enormous efforts.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 virus, the government decided to “Closure of Educational Institutions” in all countries. In the US, COVID-19 compelled educational institutions to switch from face-to-face instruction to virtual instruction, which had an impact on institutional stakeholders as well as constituted a threat to all of humanity because all parties involved in education had to alter their routines. Numerous conversations with US students revealed that they were dealing with serious issues with their mental health, finances, technical skills, and academics. Students from the Pakistan argued that they faced many problems due to closure of educational institutions specially university and college students stated that there was no proper mode for online education. Lack of internet facilities in remote areas posed major problems to the online system which also caused distress among students and teachers.

The COVID 19 has impacted the “mental health” of the students in both countries. The primary barrier to academic success, according to US respondents, is mental health problems brought on by the pandemic. Participants admitted that the COVID-19 pandemic had made them feel more stressed, isolated and anxious. Students' motivation, focus, and social relations were impaired by mental illness, which are essential skills for success in higher education. Pakistani students claimed that the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered the situation and had an impact on all facets of life. They argued that both the direct effects of the virus and the secondary consequences of measures like lockdowns and the ensuing economic toll on the populace have had a particularly bad impact on their mental health. Stress, depression, and anxiety were among the effects of the pandemic.

During this pandemic the individuals faced “loss of jobs” as well. Participants from the US reported that the COVID-19 epidemic caused millions of individuals to lose their jobs or have their working hours cut, and that the COVID-19 issue caused enormous market disruption across the nation. Students who had part-time jobs in hotels, restaurants, and other businesses to pay for their studies were severely impacted. According to Pakistani respondents, the expansion of COVID-19 badly impacted employment circumstances in the nation and resulted in millions of people losing their jobs as a result of the enforcement of lockdowns. The pandemic also forced a large number of people who had been hired abroad to return, adding to the burden of unemployment.

b) *The Outcomes to Cope Up with Isolation from the USA*

Multiple causes led to isolation during COVID-19 lockdown, according to the participants from the United States. During COVID-19 lockdown, they engage in a variety of activities to break free from their isolation. They define a variety of topics, including:

An increase in “usage of social media” was observed as a result of the government's rigorous lockdown. In order to work from home, participants have become more reliant on social media. They explained how they began to use social media more frequently after the shutdown. They were using internet channels to communicate with their buddies. They've joined a variety of online communities to learn more about COVID-19. In addition, there has been a huge surge in freelancing. However, after considerable use of the digital platform, they began to miss their regular lives, which led to sadness.

During the interview, many participants stated that they spent a large amount of time “playing online games” to pass the time. They soon became frustrated with this activity after following this regimen for several weeks. This situation made them feel lonely and depressed all of the time. But they started to make videos of games and uploaded them on social sites to earn via this approach.

Some of the participants admitted to being a casual user of an “online dating” service. They were bored with being at home and tried to fill their time with other activities. For them, being in lockdown was like living in a prison, and it was the most painful time of their lives.

Participants from the United States enrolled in “various online courses” and attempted to make the most of the lockdown period. However, after finishing a couple of courses, they became exhausted and decided not to enrol in any more.

Gyms in the United States were closed due to the shutdown. Some students began to continue their workouts at home by joining an “online fitness group” so they could stay healthy at home. Due to lockdown, students started to adopt bad eating habits which led to health consequences. On the suggestions of medical experts, respondents decided to join online fitness group and workout actively from home with virtual group members. These daily workout habits lead to a good healthy lifestyle during lockdown.

c) *The Outcomes to Cope Up with Isolation from Pakistan*

During covid-19 feelings of isolation and depression strongly resided in the students. To overcome these feelings, the students involved themselves deliberately in different activities.

Under the theme of “High usage of TikTok application”, the following section will define the outcomes from Pakistan. During the initial lockdown of COVID -19, students in Pakistan faced many problematic situations which forced them to stay within the boundaries of their homes, strict restrictions were implemented for the maintaining of the social distancing, to ensure the wellbeing of individuals and the society. According to respondents no other platform provided them with content which provided them relaxation as well as entertainment because the content available on the TikTok is funny, relatable and is presented in such a way that it gives a complete content for watching during lockdown.

The second theme is defining as “Increase usage of Netflix”. The respondents said, that as they were bound in their homes, they engaged themselves extensively with Netflix, which eventually led them to binge watching. The amenity of sitting at one place and getting mitigation from virtual reality was more allaying to them. This easiness made them habitual of Netflix to extent that they avoided the physical presence of family member because they felt annoyed and bothered if they were asked to get involved in the physical activity

A “Non-serious attitude toward education” theme is identified in this section. The participants were of the view that online education during covid-19 was a big challenge for them. As the online education required them to have a computer/laptop, stable internet connection and electricity thus unavailability of any one element disturbed their online education. As per participants, there were many other reasons as well, like lack of digital readiness from their instructors, issue of concentration and attention issues during ongoing lectures. Along with that they also raised the concern that most of the higher education institutes didn't facilitated the students with the online education which eventually built the non-serious attitude in students towards the education.

The “Excessive usage of online games” was observed, as face to face communication was banned during lockdown, they found the platform of online gaming more connecting for them to their friends. They, together with their friends played games for hours to kill the boredom and very

less leisure activities were available due to being house bound. As per participants, there were other factors as well like anxiety, achievement of entertainment and escapism also led them towards online gaming.

During COVID-19 lockdown “Increasing trend of online shopping” made the respondent’s life simple and easy to manage. They had the option of ordering online 24 hours without keeping in mind the closing time of the shop. They just had to surf the internet, find their desired product and to order it. This trend was seen comparatively more in male students as prior to lockdown they could have gone to stores and bought their essentials but during Covid 19 they were house bound and had to order online.

## 5. Conclusion

The impact of COVID-19 has provided unique insight into both countries' students' physical activity. COVID-19-related shutdowns and regulations appear to have been linked to changes in students' physical activity, as well as the barriers and facilitators that influenced these behaviours. The pandemic appears to have influenced health behaviours that influenced an individual's risk of physical and mental illness. Massive restrictions on public transportation in order to limit virus transmission made students feel isolated because they couldn't travel anywhere. Food shortages, the closure of all academic institutions, and the loss of part-time jobs all had an impact on the lives of students in both countries.

To deal with their feelings of isolation and seek social support, participants turned to online social media platforms. According to the findings, respondents used social media platforms effectively from the United States. They remained distant but stayed in touch with family and friends via social media sites. They began to use the work-from-home strategy to earn money during the pandemic. They enrolled in several online courses and continued to exercise at home to maintain their physical health. Pakistan’s participants, on the other hand, used online social media platforms for entertainment. Their use of social media was solely for entertainment and to pass the time. They watched movies on Netflix and had a casual attitude toward online education. The results of this study revealed that seeking support in response to stress varies significantly by venue, with online media forums being particularly popular during the COVID-19 lockdown in both Pakistan and the United States.

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## Digital Factors Influencing the Use of Social Media in Political Communication Among Thai Youths

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the digital factors influencing the use of social media in the political communication of Thai youths. Four hundred samples were collected through multi-stage sampling from undergraduate students studying at higher education institutions in Thailand. A questionnaire was used as a research tool and the content validity of the questionnaire was examined. Cronbach's alpha was also applied in a pre-test stage to measure the reliability. The alpha coefficient for all items was 0.95. The results showed that political news tracking was most influenced by the motivation for using social media, and media literacy in analysis of political issues, in terms of creating political content, and in the dimension of access for political information. The variation of political news tracking was explained at 33.6 %. Political discussion was mostly influenced by media literacy in access for political information, as well as the motivation for the use of social media. The variation of the political discussions was explained at 35.3 %. Political mobilization was most influenced by media literacy in creating political content, motivation for using social media, and media literacy in access for political information. The variation of the political mobilization was explained at 33.0 %.

**Keywords:** digital factors, media literacy, social media, political communication, youths, media.

### 1. Introduction

The Internet connection and further development of modern communication technology have made social media the most popular channel for communication between people and groups (Jun, 2012), allowing citizens and politicians to interact closely through two-way communication. The Internet has progressed into a key force in driving political activities. Factors involved in the use of social media to promote participation in political communication are referred to as 'digital factors' that influence online media usage; including accessibility, usability, and the knowledgeable use of media. They embraced motivation for using the media as well as social media literacy, which can act as both reinforcement and a barrier to political communication. Differences and inequalities between those with access to the Internet and those without are now considered a challenge in modern society (Breindl, 2010; Jensen, 2006).

It was also found that exposure to political information promotes political communication among members of society with common interests, thus greatly increasing the audience's knowledge and understanding of political situations (Conroy-Krutz, 2018). Social media presents three potential forms of political communication: Information (tracking political information); Discussion (discussion of political issues); and Mobilization (political mobilization) (Anouar, 2014; Breindl, 2010). In the first objective, social media plays a role as a channel for news exposure.

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By keeping up with the news regularly, it helps to build awareness of information, thereby promoting informed citizens. In the second objective, political debate and discussion may reflect political views, as well as the identities and stances of communicators as active citizens. The third objective leads to the mobilization of political forces in various activities. Through communication between groups of people with common political interests, political communication is the starting point for political participation both online and in the real world (Lee, Chan, 2015).

Social media is a relatively new media that influences online communication. Motivation for using social media is therefore part of the digital factors influencing participation in online political communication. They include two-way communication, ease of access and dissemination of information, virtual community building, the ability to employ portable communications devices, processing content from multiple sources together, promoting cyber inclusion, allowing users to change the content (theirs and that of others), and the ability to strengthen and maintain relationships in networks (Logan, 2010; Medaglia et al., 2009). All of these factors influence today's Thai youth to choose social media for political communication at different levels. Digital factors also cover social media literacy as a path to help young citizens thrive in the digital world. As a result, they can develop into active citizens and participate in political activities (Ashley et al., 2017; Mihailidis, 2014). New media features have strengthened the freedom of expression among younger members of society, thereby giving them rights and voices in society. This will lead to communication and sharing of different and diverse political views. Media literacy is therefore becoming increasingly important to promote the quality and accurate communication of information to others and society (UNESCO, 2021).

New media has opened up a 'space' for youths to participate in political communication through various channels, particularly social media. This research, therefore, aims to study youths who are first-time voters from leading universities in each region of Thailand. The country is classified into four regions according to the original administrative area: the Central Region; Northern Region; Northeastern Region; and the Southern Region (Office..., 2005). Each region is home to leading educational institutions, which have been a crucible for decades of youth's attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. Social institutions, especially higher education institutions, serve to produce graduates and are downstream in creating human resources for society. However, higher education institutions are not only responsible for transferring knowledge and new ideas to youths but are also political lulling institutions that prepare graduates to perform civic duties and participate in a democratic society.

Based on a review of previous research, there appeared to be no study of the factors influencing youths in political communication in both Thai and international social contexts, nor any reference to the possible digital factors. This led to the research question: What factors influence the youths' use of social media in political communication? This research aims to study factors influencing the use of social media in political communication among youths and to enhance understanding of the digital factors of social media motivation and social media literacy influencing political communication. The results herein help to determine guidelines for Thai youths to develop the potential to use social media in constructive political communication and make relevant agencies aware of the influence of social media and social media literacy in political communication. This may further lead to the development of a democratic Thai society in the next order.

## 2. Materials and methods

### *Conceptual Framework*

#### *Uses and Gratifications*

Ahmed and Zia (Ahmed, Zia, 2022) indicated that Blumler, Katz's theory of *Uses and Gratifications* has studied the reactions of individuals to media influence (Blumler, Katz, 1974). McCay-Peet, Quan-Haase (McCay-Peet, Quan-Haase, 2016) also stated that the uses and gratifications theory aimed to study a person's media utilization and what attract a person's attention to media exposure.

In the past, the uses and gratifications theory proposed a media usage paradigm that motivated media consumption and access to mass media (Rubin, 2009), which is inconsistent with the preferences of new media characteristics (Sundar, Limperos, 2013), namely interaction features, which are important motivations for new generation media (Korhan, Ersoy, 2016). However, in an era where new media has more influence on audiences, the theory of uses and gratifications has become a guideline in the study of new media and particularly social media. This

is because social interaction promotes active exposure of the audience and is a key motivation to promote exposure from various social media platforms (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Social media was also found to have benefits for relaxation, time-passing, information seeking and sharing, entertainment, mood management, and the enrichment of social relationships through the strengthening of social relationships. Through the development of social media as a communication paradigm, it has encouraged receivers to create and share information.

#### *Political Communication*

Political communication refers to the process of creating and interpreting political messages that stimulate reflexes (Griffin, 2009). In the process of political communication, receivers take a passive role through one-way communication or one-dimensional communication. They may play an active role in interacting with politicians, government officials, or political powers through the process of two-way (or two-dimensional) communication.

In addition, it may be a communicative interaction between receivers, who are citizens in a democratic society through a two-way communication process in a communication network via social media. However, such communication is not an interaction between two people, but rather a response to interactions between groups of people who share common interests and who are involved in the communication network, described as three-dimensional communication. Political communication may thus occur simultaneously (synchronous) or not occur at the same time (asynchronous) (Hoffman, 2012).

Anouar (Anouar, 2014) and Breindl (Breindl, 2010) outlined three main pillars of political exploitation of the Internet, the first of which is the monitoring of political information. Information, or data, is an important aspect in encouraging citizens to keep up with information and become informed citizens, which is the heart of democracy. Information drives communication and political participation.

The second core is discussion and/or debate; another mechanism that promotes 'active citizens', which help to refine and nurture political ideas between citizens or political representatives in public spaces. The third core is political mobilization, which is based on the idea that citizens need to be more politically involved in order to build a democratic society through active political participation.

#### *Factors influencing Use of Social Media*

Digital factors, which are new factors that influence online media usage, consist of the accessibility, usability, and knowledgeable use of media. They embrace motivation for the development of media usage and social media literacy, acting as both reinforcement and a barrier to political communication through communication technology (Breindl, 2010; Jensen, 2006).

#### *Motivation for use*

The study of motivation in the use of social media is one of the digital factors influencing participation in online political communication.

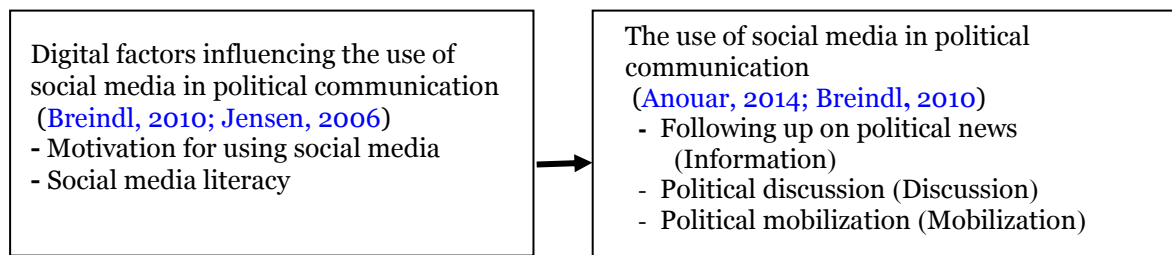
Therefore, new media features (Logan, 2010) are integrated with social media features (Medaglia et al., 2009), which can be summarized as social media motivation as follows: 1) social media can communicate in two directions where users can change their roles to senders; 2) social media is easy to access and disseminate information; 3) social media promotes continuous learning; 4) social media facilitates the creation of virtual communities; 5) social media can be installed and connected to portable communication devices; 6) social media has a converged nature by gathering various media into a single communication device; such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter; and 7) social media presents content processed from multiple sources.

#### *Social Media Literacy*

UNESCO (UNESCO, 2007) defines media literacy as the ability to analyze, criticize, and evaluate media, media accessibility, and media production and presentation in several forms. Media literacy also includes educational activities to develop analytical and critical skills, as well as to create opportunities for media access. The development of 'Social media literacy' frameworks in this study integrated the UNESCO's (UNESCO, 2007) media literacy component with the media literacy component of Ofcom (Office of Communications, 2008). At the same time, it has also linked digital literacy skills of the Center for Media Literacy's (Center for Media Literacy, 2008) five key concepts in media literacy, and the six characteristics of social media developed by Medaglia et al. (Medaglia et al., 2009) which characterized important principles in media literacy.

From a review of related literature, the researchers developed a conceptual framework (Figure 1) by setting an independent variable, namely, the digital factors influencing the use of

social media in political communication, including motivation for using social media and social media literacy (Breindl, 2010; Jensen, 2006). The dependent variable was the use of social media in political communication, which covers three issues: political information or following up on political news; political discussion; and political mobilization (Anouar, 2014; Breindl, 2010).



**Fig. 1.** Research conceptual framework

#### Research Method

This study applied the quantitative research method. The population under the study consisted of 3,401,148 undergraduate students, aged 18-22 years, studying in higher education institutions in Thailand (Ministry..., 2021).

This research uses multi-stage sampling, the first of which was a stratified sampling of Thailand's four regions: Central, Northern, Northeastern, and Southern, representing youths demonstrating different media usages and political communication behavior. Then, purposive sampling was performed by choosing the first leading university in each region, which had experience in imparting knowledge and new ideas to young people, and a long-time political facilitator to nurture youths to perform civic duties and participate in a democratic society. The sample size was divided according to population. The next step, cluster sampling, classified students in each educational institution to obtain a representative sample of the population by random delegation, classified by field of study and year. Simple random sampling was conducted by teachers via an online questionnaire.

Data were obtained from December 2021 to April 2022 and involved the use of social media in political communication. The validity of the content of the questionnaire was examined using the Index of item-objective congruence (IOC). Each question had an IOC value of 0.6-1.0. After a review by three content experts, recommendations were provided to improve its quality. Upon improvement, the questionnaire was tested for reliability through the responses of 30 students at the selected University in the northeast of Thailand (*Anonymous for reviewers*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.95, indicating that the questionnaire was of sufficient quality for data collection. A total of 400 questionnaires were then collected, omitting any incomplete responses.

The method of data collection was authorized by each of the universities, and then further coordinated by the researchers with program lecturers and students via e-mail.

The questionnaire was developed from concepts, theories, and research related to the use of social media in political communication among youths; consisted of three parts: (1) questions about the students' personal attributes; (2) questions about digital factors influencing their use of social media in political communication, including motivations for using social media, and social media literacy; and (3) questions about the use of social media in political communication consisting of the study of the three following issues; access to political information, political discussions, and political mobilization.

Data analysis was performed by using descriptive statistics; frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and the testing of the independent variables that influenced one another (the motivation in using social media and social media literacy) and one dependent variable (the use of social media in political communication). The three potential forms of political communication (Information, Discussion, and Mobilization) were analyzed through multiple regression analysis.

This research is eligible for an exemption for human research ethics from the Human Research Committee of Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand on November 3, 2021, authorized under Registration Number HE643221.

### 3. Discussion

Motivation for using social media mostly influenced the use of social media in political information, followed by political communication. Incentives for using social media embrace the ease of access and dissemination of information since it can be conveniently installed on portable communication devices. Communication occurs in two directions, resulting in social interactions between users. The creation of content by users (user-generated content) generates profiles that connect users through communication, including the political dimension. Social media also provides virtual spaces that promote information seeking and sharing, which help unite a group of people in a virtual community (Chan et al., 2017). Everyone has a different motivation for using social media. This motivation has encouraged political exposure and the follow-up of political news, as well as significantly affecting levels of political participation (Chan et al., 2017). In political communication, especially in the area of political information, social media has fostered both intentional and incidental exposure to political news among youths, thus causing political news to become part of their lives. The motivations to promote political activities are 1) decision-making tools, such as judging candidates; and 2) social utilities, such as communicating with other people (Kaye, Johnson, 2002). The growth of social media has fostered the potential of communication through digital platforms to connect people in society and provide a place for political expression; resulting in the interaction, cooperation, and mobilization to support political activities among groups of people with common interests (Calderaro, 2018; Chadwick, 2017). The knowledge gained from following political news represents an important factor in promoting effective political communication and participation. It was also determined that media literacy was a factor influencing political communication. Political communication was predominantly influenced by political information (Ashley et al., 2017).

Although the use of new media has the potential to promote political participation, academics have become concerned about the messages youths are exposed to and how young people choose to interact with online political issues. Their concerns involve the spread of misinformation (Allcott et al., 2019) caused by media algorithms and the news sharing by members of social networks (Brundidge, 2010; Lee, Kim, 2017; Prior, 2007; Tewksbury et al., 2001), internet outrage language (Middaugh, 2019; Wollebæk et al., 2019), and the 'Filter Bubble' (Pariser, 2011), 'Echo Chamber' (Sunstein, 2007), and 'Information Cocoon' (Sunstein, 2018). This implies that youths may choose to receive only news that is consistent with their thoughts, beliefs, and political views; resulting in the perception of information in one direction, leading to political polarization (Sunstein, 2001). The individuals must be exposed to different information and ideas to reflect the reality of society, thereby creating a clearer understanding of complex political issues, (Brundidge, Rice, 2009; Habermas, 1989; Kahne, et al., 2012) as well as awareness of different political opinions; leading to mutual understandings (Jamieson, Cappella, 2008; Mutz, 2006).

Media literacy in term of access to political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political discussion because social media has the potential to promote political expression (Aboukacem et al., 2018). Therefore, media literacy in information access is related to social goals, which involve political participation and civic engagement (Kahne et al., 2016), where even the discussion of political issues cannot avoid the importance of media literacy (Mihailidis, Thevenin, 2013). News from media thus not only melds the thoughts, attitudes, and political behavior of society's members but also enhances political knowledge (Aboukacem et al., 2018; Ashley et al., 2017; Kember, Zylinska, 2015; Stoddard, 2014). Acquiring media literacy skills in access to political information will result in increased awareness of social and political events. At the same time, low political confidence may develop as a result of one's less positive political views or the suspicion of political information exposure. Research also found that the gap in media literacy is similar to the knowledge gap or digital inequality, resulting in participation gap (Jenkins et al., 2009) and unequal benefits from media exposure. Individuals with high media literacy skills are typically more politically informed and involved than those with low media literacy (Ashley et al., 2017). As a result, people develop rights and voices in society through access to information, thus leading to the communication and sharing of different political views. Media literacy is therefore becoming increasingly important to promote the quality and accurate exchange of information to others and society (Mihailidis, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

Media literacy regarding analysis of political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political information. Critical thinking skills are one of the key skills in media literacy that promote the rational exposure of the audience. This makes following and consuming political news

useful in broadening the horizons and raising awareness (Ashley et al., 2017; Fleming, 2014; Silverblatt, 2018; Vraga et al., 2009, 2012) found that exposure bias was reduced, and that perceived credibility of news increases when youths have media literacy skills; as critical thinking skills help receivers distinguish fact from opinion, compare news through various sources and channels, distinguish fake news (Ashley et al., 2017; Hobbs, 2010; Lievrouw, Livingstone, 2006; Potter, 2019), and evaluate online news in both bias and credibility in communication (Kahn et al., 2012; Plotnikova et al., 2021; Silverblatt, 2018). As to the speed of producing and sharing information, news self-curation, youths prefer online news, as it is effortlessly accessible (Aboulkacem et al., 2018; Lankshear, Knobel, 2004). For this reason, understanding media ecosystems is essential for the awareness of the mechanisms behind online content, which will help consumers to determine credibility, as well as understand the potential and limitations of online media for civic duty in a democratic society. Media literacy skills promote the search for a wide variety of information from both like-minded and different-minded individuals to assess the credibility of online information from various channels (Kahne et al., 2012; McGrew et al., 2018).

The results indicated that media literacy concerning creation of (participation in) political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political mobilization. Social media fosters two-way communication between users. Communication through social media is therefore an important mechanism for political mobilization, where youths can become a sender to share political information, discuss and debate political issues, and persuade network friends to participate in political activities. However, to constructively communicate political issues for one's benefit or that of others, users must have the skills necessary to think critically before expressing their opinions (Silverblatt, 2018). Media literacy empowers young citizens to thrive in today's digital world with the skills necessary to receive and create media messages effectively (Drotner, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2009); such as effective information searching (Hargittai, 2010; Hargittai, Shaw, 2013), credibility assessment (Kahne, Bowyer, 2017; McGrew et al., 2017); and disseminating and creating content for political participation.

Individuals are more likely to be influenced through a network of friends or others with horizontal relationships, in which close interpersonal relationships foster political mobilization rather than loose ties (Bond et al., 2012; Tang, 2018). While youths conduct more online activities than adults; they are, nonetheless, less politically involved and not inclined to create or disseminate political information through online media (Cohen, Kahne, 2012). However, when social media has decentralized communication among its members, youths can then mobilize political forces through a network of communication between groups of people with common interests (Kahne et al., 2016). Political discussion, debate, and the persuasion of horizontal personal networks thereby encourage collective action to empower political activities (Tang, 2018).

As a result, social media has become an important tool for political mobilization playing a greater role in political communication than in the past (Allen, Light, 2015; Bennett, Segerberg, 2012; Weirman, 2020). Media literacy is, therefore, one of the necessities of a democratic society. It focuses on three outcomes: 1) being a critical thinker; 2) being a communicator and creator; and 3) being a leader in social change (Ashley et al., 2017), to foster informed citizens who are alert, aware, and up-to-date with current information (Hobbs, 2010; Lievrouw, Livingstone, 2006; Potter, 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

Media literacy is linked to skills in other disciplines; such as information literacy, digital literacy, critical literacy, and news literacy, as they encourage users to consume online information wisely, and promote the participation of citizens in various political activities within a democratic society (Aboulkacem et al., 2018; Ashley et al., 2017; Hobbs, Jensen, 2009; Hobbs, 2010; Silverblatt, 2018). The context of new media communication promotes greater audience engagement, referred to as 'participatory culture' (Jenkins et al., 2009), which features interaction and communication between peers within the social network (Middaugh et al., 2022), non-hierarchical communication, freedom from elites, and influential political organizations (Kahne, Bowyer, 2019).

In political communication, a participatory culture generates not just news consumption, but also the dissemination of information, as well as encouraging political behavior; where individuals can change their roles as senders or creators in political communication (Crampton et al., 2018; Kahne et al., 2015; Kahne, Bowyer, 2019). Strong democracy comes from access to high-quality information and the potential for debate, discussion, deliberation, empathy, and concession (Bradshaw, Howard, 2019). To promote effective political communication among youths, media literacy is therefore necessary.



Media literacy is an essential skill for communicating information in an era where new media has an increasing influence on the lives of members of society (UNESCO, 2021).

#### 4. Results

The results of the research are presented in four categories: (1) characteristics of the youths; (2) digital factors affecting the use of social media in political communication, which were divided into two parts, motivation for using social media and social media literacy; (3) the use of social media for political communication; and (4) the analysis of the factors influencing the use of social media in political communication, which are detailed as follows:

##### *Characteristics of Respondents*

The results showed that the youths of the sample group were male and female in similar proportions, 55.70 percent and 44.30 percent, respectively, 18-20 years of age. Roughly forty percent reported an average monthly income of 138-276 US \$, with 34 percent not exceeding 138 US \$. Interestingly, more than a third of the respondents spent between 6-11 US\$ per month on the Internet, with over 57 percent spending more than 11 US \$ per month.

##### *Descriptive Analysis*

##### *Influential Digital Factors*

Research results involving the influential digital factors can be classified into two areas: motivation for using social media, and social media literacy in politics.

The results of motivation for using social media revealed that youths were mostly motivated to use new media for three primary reasons: that social media is easy to access and to disseminate information ( $\bar{x} = 4.35$ ); social media encourages continuous learning ( $\bar{x} = 4.28$ ); and that social media can be installed on portable communication devices ( $\bar{x} = 4.27$ ), accounting for 45.20, 41.30, and 40.50 percent, respectively.

The results of the research into social media literacy found that in terms of access to political social media, students were able to use each type of social media to access political news ( $\bar{x} = 4.22$ ), representing 40.60 percent. Regarding social media analysis in politics, they were able to distinguish facts and opinions of political news on social media at high levels ( $\bar{x} = 4.11$ ), as well as to explain the main and hidden objectives of political news on social media ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ), representing 52.50 and 50.60 percent, respectively. Concerning the assessment of social media use in politics, youths were able to make reasonable decisions to believe or not believe political news on social media ( $\bar{x} = 4.15$ ), accounting for 57.50 percent. In terms of social media creativity in politics, the students were very capable of thinking critically before expressing opinions or criticizing political news on social media ( $\bar{x} = 4.15$ ). Political news through social media was also presented with an awareness of ethics, respecting different opinions, and communication security ( $\bar{x} = 4.12$ ), accounting for 52.40 and 51.40 percent respectively.

##### *Use of social media for political communication*

The results of the analysis of the use of social media for political communication consisted of political information, referring to following political news, political discussion, and political mobilization. It was determined that social media was employed for political communication at the moderate level of roughly 40 percent. When considering social media use in political information, more than 90 percent of the respondents had followed political news from news feeds and media pages or political news pages via Facebook, or online television programs and newspapers. In discussing political issues, 70 percent of youths chatted via Messenger when they found common interests, and 63 percent exchanged ideas with like-minded and dissimilar political figures via Twitter. Regarding political mobilization, most students (70%) expressed their support or opposition to political activities via Facebook, followed by Twitter (67 %) and YouTube (38 %).

##### *Factor analysis*

Factor analysis was carried out using multiple regression analysis, in which the independent variables and dependent variables were measured in interval scales or proportions. Any variable measured at the group level would be changed to 'dummy' and the reference group determined. Within the multiple regression analysis, no pair of variables taken for analysis was permitted to correlate at more than 0.75 to avoid the problem of multi-collinearity that would lessen the value of prediction (Prasitratasin, 1995). The research herein presents that all of the variables in each pair correlated lower than 0.75, thereby allowing the application of multiple regression analysis. (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Factors influencing the use of social media in political communication of the Thai youths

<i>Factors influencing use of social media of the youths</i>	<i>Political communication</i>		<i>Political information</i>		<i>Political discussion</i>		<i>Political mobilization</i>	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1. Motivation for using social media.	0.243	0.000	0.283	0.000	0.186	0.002	0.204	0.001
2. Media literacy								
2.1. Access to political information.	0.227	0.001	0.141	0.048	0.274	0.000	0.181	0.013
2.2. Analysis of political information.	0.175	0.044	0.244	0.010	0.112	0.238	0.137	0.154
2.3. Evaluation of political information.	-0.116	0.229	-0.091	0.346	-0.097	0.317	-0.121	0.216
2.4. Creation of (participation in) political information.	0.233	0.010	0.208	0.023	0.177	0.053	0.246	0.008
	<b>R2= 0.383</b>		<b>R2= 0.366</b>		<b>R2= 0.353</b>		<b>R2= 0.330</b>	

#### *Motivation factors*

Motivation for using social media mostly influenced the use of social media in political information (Beta = 0.283), followed by political communication (Beta = 0.243), political mobilization (Beta = 0.204), and political discussion (Beta= 0.186) at a significant level (0.01).

#### *Media literacy factors*

Media literacy in term of access to political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political discussion (Beta = 0.274), followed by political communication (Beta = 0.227), and political mobilization (Beta= 0.181) at a significant level (0.01).

Media literacy regarding analysis of political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political information (Beta = 0.244), followed by political communication (Beta = 0.175), at a significant level (0.01).

Media literacy concerning creation of (participation in) political information mostly influenced the use of social media in political mobilization (Beta = 0.246), followed by political communication (0.233), and political information (Beta= 0.208), at a significant level (0.01).

It was found that the motivation for using social media and the media literacy were able to mostly describe the variations of political communication at 38.3% (R2 = 0.383), followed by the ability to explain the variations of political information, political discussion, and political mobilization at 36.6, 35.3 and 33.0 respectively (R2 = 0.366, R2 = 0.353, and R2 = 0.330).

## **5. Conclusion**

Youths were mostly motivated to use social media in three aspects: (1) social media is easy to access and disseminate information, (2) social media encourages continuous learning, and (3) social media can be accessed on portable communication devices. In terms of social media literacy, it was found that youths were able to use each type of social media to access political news at high levels; to distinguish facts and opinions from the political news, to make reasonable decisions to believe or not believe political news feeds, to choose to receive political news that is useful to themselves, to reject political content that is not useful or not constructive, and to think critically before expressing opinions or criticizing political news. When considering sources of social media usage, more than half of the youths used Facebook, Twitter, and/or YouTube Twitter at moderate to high levels (47.50, 41.50, and 40.50 percent, respectively).

There was also a direct correlation found between the use of social media for political communication, as well as the follow-up of political information, and the user's motivation for using social media. The use of social media for political discussion was mostly influenced by social media literacy regarding access to political information. It was also found that the use of social media for political mobilization was mostly influenced by social media literacy in terms of the creation of (or participation in) political information. Summarily, social media characteristics are key motivational factors in promoting political communication among youths; particularly the

interactive features that encourage two-way communication, thereby resulting in the exchange of news and discussions of political issues. This will subsequently induce political mobilization. However, although such features promote participation in political communication among youths, taking on a role in politics as a 'sender' can be problematic if the user doesn't have the necessary media literacy skills. Therefore, the family, educational institutions, and related agencies, such as the Parliament and the Office of the Election Commission; may cultivate and strengthen social media literacy skills to encourage youths to take advantage of social media in constructive ways, developing well-informed citizens who become an important force in the development of a democratic society.

Recommendations for further research are: (1) Other factors, apart from the digital factors, may warrant further study, such as personal and social factors influencing Thai youths' political communication. (2) The development of target groups could classify first-time eligible voters and non-graduates, further classified by university type, i.e., state universities, autonomous universities, private universities, and community colleges. Such target groups may thereby promote a role in political communication and political participation following the roles and duties of citizens in a democratic society.

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## The Main Trends in Media and Information Literacy in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

The article provides an overview of 67 articles published in “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” in 2021-2022. The articles’ authors are scholars from Algeria, Chile, Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia and USA. Main areas of research during the pandemic are identified. Thematic focuses of articles directly related to COVID-19 are analyzed. The main results of research on the impact of the pandemic on the educational system, social relations, business, politics and a number of other areas are summarized. Particular attention is paid to the recommendations formulated by the authors to combat the manifestations and consequences of coronavirus in the field of pedagogy, interpersonal relations, management and working activity. It is concluded that, in general, many authors of articles reacted promptly and adequately to the changed realities. An assumption is made about a possible change in attitude to the complex of knowledge, skills and abilities associated with media and information literacy and expansion of the structure and scope of these types of literacy in future.

**Keywords:** media, media literacy, information literacy, pandemic, COVID-19, survey, research, tendencies.

### 1. Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has left an indelible mark on the modern history of humankind. COVID-19 quickly evolved from a purely medical phenomenon into a global social factor, the consequences of which are still being felt in various areas of life – from health and demography to politics and economy.

It seems quite natural that a variety of related aspects urgently requires reflection by the academic community. It should be noted that scholars from various scientific fields are already actively involved in the analysis of the nature, causes, specifics, and consequences of the pandemic. In this sense, I consider it important to look at how all this influenced research in the field of media and information literacy within one of the leading Russian journals. What issues related to the pandemic are being analyzed by specialists in this area? Are there any recommendations for countering detrimental effects of COVID-19? What occupies minds of Russian experts in the field of media and information literacy besides the pandemic itself? The search for answers to these questions is arguably capable of predicting the further development of this sphere of knowledge.

### 2. Materials and methods

The empirical basis for the analysis was 67 articles published in “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” in 2021-2022. Along with “Media Education”, this journal is

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justifiably considered one of the best in the field of media and information literacy and is the world. This is confirmed by the fact that “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” now indexed by Scopus, Q2.

Of course, the purpose of this article is not to present the main content of the works selected. All of them are publicly available on the Internet, so anyone interested in media literacy, education, and information literacy will certainly find there something that is of interest to them. Rather, I will draw attention to some important points that we believe to be especially relevant or controversial at the moment.

### 3. Discussion and results

Having analyzed the content of selected articles, I consider it necessary to first give a general description of the topics covered in them. After that, I will elaborate on the contexts of the articles and the way pandemic is presented in them.

The articles published in the journal provide insight about the features of media and information literacy research in different countries, such as Algeria, Chile, Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia and USA. In my opinion, such a wide geography indicates, firstly, that the journal is in demand in different parts of the world and, secondly, that media literacy related field is becoming more and more relevant and meets the needs of the time.

By the way, analysis of the articles published since 2021 convinces me that the focus of research attention is increasingly shifting towards digital literacy. Five out of seven articles devoted to different varieties of literacy dealt specifically with digital literacy (Byundyugova et al., 2021b; Feijoo et al., 2021; Kamilova, Yap, 2022; Prabhu et al., 2022; Syzonov, 2022), and only two touched upon news literacy (Memon et al., 2021) and financial literacy (Shvahaer et al., 2021). In my opinion, this is quite reasonable: realities of the modern world (i.e. steadily increasing pace of digitalization and penetration of the Internet into people’s daily lives) necessitate scholars analyzing this particular type of literacy. I dare to suggest that in the future the emphasis on digital literacy will become more and more obvious.

Of note, digital component is becoming more and more noticeable in articles devoted to various aspects of literacy within the framework of educational process. Among others, the authors consider perceived risk and the e-service convenience of satisfaction and trust of academic-online users (Ramadania et al., 2021), practical application of the video component of media education in direct and reverse acculturation activities (Slutskiy, 2021), use of visualization in teaching subjects of different ages (Byundyugova et al., 2021a), and development of educational motivation of adults with the help of visual technologies (Byundyugova et al., 2022). Besides, scholars also analyze risk-factors of cyber bullying among secondary school adolescents (Ibrahim, Phuong, 2021), methodology, technology and practice of organizing media education seminars and workshops for teachers on promoting interethnic tolerance in the university student community (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2021), the role of decisions by the European Court of Human Rights in shaping the content of new media literacy education (Plotnikova et al., 2021), multimodal output of university students in a general education English class to explore the application of knowledge processes of multiliteracies (Ugalingan et al., 2022), and implementation of a media educational project in museum pedagogy (Dolgireva et al., 2022).

Large proportion of articles is devoted to literacy in the context of social media use. Facebook and Twitter very often attract attention of researchers. For example, they explore communication strategies of universities through social networking sites (Eger et al., 2021), the online brand image building and user engagement strategies adopted by the Video on Demand Service providers (Srivastav, Rai, 2022b), effectiveness of Twitter in terms of assessing the sentiments of people amidst the #metoo campaign (Syamili, Rekha, 2021), and enhancing information preservation in social media text analytics using advanced and robust pre-processing techniques (Emaduddin et al., 2022).

In the context of our interest, other social media are mentioned less frequently. In particular, scholars investigate the effect of TikTok App on the transmission of cultural values (Dekhil, Sarnou, 2021), the process of re-strengthening and re-emphasizing the role of women in the family with the help of certain types of YouTube video (Rosida, Azwar, 2021), and try to decipher and analyze the peace message contained in MorshadMishu’s Instagram image for The Global Happiness Challenge (Sari et al., 2022).

Also of note are scholars' attempts to identify the role of media and information literacy in fostering students' ability to critically evaluate sources of information and use social media responsibly (Manabat, 2021), to evaluate social media interactivity among digital natives and digital immigrants (Ahmed, Zia, 2021), and to comprehend the meaning of humor in understanding the trolling behavior of social media users (UlHaq et al., 2021).

In general, such a wide range of topics covered in the context of social media seems justified. The depth of their penetration into the everyday life of a modern person is so great that it naturally requires a comprehensive analysis by the academic community. Obviously, today social media construct the environment where media and information literacy skills will be in high and constant demand for a long time to come.

The same is true for social interaction at its broadest. Not surprisingly, scholars are interested in analyzing communication barriers (i.e. cultural, psychological, educational, economic, and religious ones) and process of feedback in social interactions (Hassan et al., 2021) and the problem of teenage extremism as a form of social deviation in the configuration of modern media texts in the transformation processes (Gorbatkova, 2021). To continue the discourse on the younger generation, it is also necessary to mention a very ingenious study of the effects of raids on restaurants shown in crime or investigation shows of Pakistan on the behaviors of youth (Awais, Ali, 2022).

A wide range of articles is dedicated to grown-ups. Scholars try to moderate the role of self-efficacy within correlation of technostress creators with employees' work-life balance in the context of journalists' use of information and communication technology at work (Ibrahim et al., 2021), as well as to explore the phenomenon of groups of men known as Involuntary Celibates (Incels) in an internet meme culture (Aulia, Rosida, 2022). Worthy of separate attention is research of A.E. Lebid, M.S. Nazarov, N.A. Shevchenko, and K.M. Vashyst who analyzed the use of the terms 'information resilience' and 'social resilience' in the context of national resilience strategies (Lebid et al., 2021) and basic principles of conducting information-psychological special operations as one of the forms of information warfare (Lebid et al., 2021).

The latter of the studies mentioned above occupies a kind of borderline position between the articles that I have referred to 'social interaction' and 'politics' blocks. In fact, political dimension of media and information literacy is as important today as pedagogical or social ones. The tragic events that took place in the world in 2022 once again convince me of the importance of developing media competencies.

In this regard, I consider the research on media representation of the image of the Russian political leader in western online media especially indicative. It is quite difficult to disagree with its authors that "powerful structures of information warfare and anti-Russian propaganda have long been developed in the West, and this propaganda itself, often mixed with Russophobia, has practically turned into a factor of global politics" (Seliverstova et al., 2021). Moreover, even though the authors draw the data from a selection of publications of the American newspaper "Daily news" and the German magazine "Der Spiegel" in the online format from 2000 to 2004 and from 2018 to 2020, it seems fair to say that this trend is typical today for most other western mainstream media.

Apart from that, scholars also examine how usage of social media influence political polarization (Ali et al., 2021) and try to reveal a correlation between the information sources young Russians use and how they feel about politics and see their country's future (Kazakov et al., 2022). At last, certain media and information literacy issues are presented in the articles considering the reflection of current Russian-Cuban relationship in the content on the online news of the Cuban News Agency Prensa Latina (Ramírez et al., 2021) and the Truth Commission as a tool for accessing and disseminating information within the context of realization of the right to truth in post-conflict societies (Slavko et al., 2022).

The issue of manipulation is closely related to the political dimension of media literacy. Special mention must be made of research conducted by A. Levitskaya and A. Fedorov who first elaborated criteria and methods for assessing the effectiveness of activities, contributing to the development of students' media competence in the process of analyzing media manipulative influences (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021) and then suggested technologies of countering media manipulations and false information, based on tasks related to answering challenging questions (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021). A kind of applied variant of this scholarly strand became the study of the problems inherent in coverage of Russian news in foreign media, namely, the BBC Russian Service (Novikov, Fedorov, 2022).

Some articles published in the “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” are devoted to the business sphere. Specifically, scholars investigate the state of the art about business information literacy and identify how researchers have studied business information literacy in businesses (CapinzaikiOtonicar et al., 2021), conduct theoretical reviews to systematically organize the literature findings to develop an Electronic Word of Mouth communication model (Yaseen et al., 2021) and explore the role of emotional intelligence in advertising (Yaseen et al., 2022).

Significant part of research concerns various aspects of media and information literacy in the context of cinematography. The authors of the articles carry out various kinds of retrospective analysis of forbidden Soviet cinema (1951-1991) (Tselykh, 2021a), foreign leaders of Soviet film distribution (Tselykh, 2021b) or theoretical concepts of film studies in “Cinema Art” Journal published from 1945 to 1955 (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2022). Besides, they also present results of research on peculiarities of teenagers’ perception of the characters of a film narrative in a situation of moral choice (Skorova, Suvorova, 2021), narratives that are being platformed by global OTT giants to break through the Indian subcontinent market (Srivastav, Rai, 2022a), and the image of the USSR as a sports power in contemporary Russian audiovisual media texts (Seliverstova et al., 2022).

Finally, state-of-the-art papers in their pure form are very rare. By and large, during the period under review there was only one of them and it was dedicated to a five-year anniversary of “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” (Novikov, 2021).

These are the main thematic features of the articles that were published during the pandemic, but did not directly address this topic. It is also interesting to analyze the content of publications that directly touch on COVID-19. At the same time, I note that their content orientation to a certain extent coincides with the focus of attention of non-pandemic-related works.

A significant part of the articles considers the role of mass media in the fight against coronavirus. Among others, scholars conduct comparative analysis of the reportage of COVID-19 during the first and second waves by the Egyptian and Jordanian newspapers (Shvahr et al., 2021) and identify effectiveness of coverage of vaccination awareness by newspapers online portals in India (Kumar et al., 2022). Quite interesting is an attempt to assess significance of media and information literacy during pandemic and post-pandemic period (Khanina et al., 2021). Worthy of separate attention are studies on media as a source of popular science information during the pandemic (Kitsa, 2021) and the impact of digital and conventional media on the health-relevant choice and information overload (Baldil, 2021).

Interestingly enough, mass media are treated not only as an institution that plays a positive role in the era of COVID-19, but also as a source of certain drawbacks – phenomena of loneliness and fear (Makarova et al., 2021), to name but a few.

In general, the social and psychological consequences of the pandemic can be considered a separate area of research. In my opinion, this is absolutely reasonable as difficulties caused by coronavirus urgently require analysis of their causes and nature. For example, the authors of one of the articles published in the journal claim that “alongside with uncertainty and fear caused by COVID-19 pandemic hate speech as a social phenomenon adds to tension and stress, and as such should be studied, analyzed and differentiated from sarcastic or ironic statements causing no harm” (Makarova et al., 2022).

Not less important is the complex of issues related to information – for example, ways to strengthen people’s information security during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic period as a systemic phenomenon in terms of their protectedness (Sadivnychiy et al., 2021) and attempts to develop a better understanding of the online health information seeking behaviour during COVID-19 period (Shaheen et al., 2021). In connection with the contingency derived from the pandemic, a slightly different perspective was given to the already existing problem of addiction toward Smartphone on college students (García-Santillán et al., 2021; 2022).

In this context, the role of social media is also being rethought. For example, *Facebook* and *Instagram* news pages are screened for assessing degree of media literacy of modern recipients in the perception and further dissemination of information about COVID-19 (Shevchenko et al., 2021). Also of note is desire to test usage of *YouTube* for academic purpose among university students in time of the pandemic (Chhachhar et al., 2022). In my opinion, attempts to look at social media through the lens of their role and potential are absolutely justified and in a sense promising.

Roughly the same can be said in relation to the field of pedagogy. It is now obvious that proposing internet-driven alternative pedagogical system for use in teaching and learning during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic (Ibrahim et al., 2022) is likely to remain relevant in the long run.

It seems to me that the most important merit and contribution of the “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” to social development is the fact that a number of articles are devoted to specific recommendations for improving the functioning of individual social institutions during the pandemic.

To illustrate, among the recommendations to governments, the authors of the articles highlight the following:

1. To develop “a comprehensive contingency plan that includes not only school safety measures but also ways to ensure that students and teachers continue to learn and receive support in times of crisis. The government should also provide major support for essential social services and other services that are directly or indirectly related to home learning, such as power costs and internet/Wi-Fi” (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

2. “Government-level measures can also be taken to run awareness campaigns. Such campaigns would spread awareness among people and would influence them to consult a doctor instead of seeking information over the Internet or mobile applications regarding coronavirus or other diseases” (Shaheen et al., 2021).

3. It is also crucially important for government agencies “to adapt their communication processes both to the appropriate context and to the preferences of young citizens, to build such communication relationships that largely meet the needs of young people” (Harmatiy et al., 2021).

4. In a way, on online platforms, “governments should not only inform residents, but also educate” which is especially true for young audience (Harmatiy et al., 2021).

As far as media are concerned, journalists “should focus more on sensitizing the public on the necessary steps to take in curbing the virus. They should refrain from over usage of a negative tone to panic the public in presenting the stories of the COVID-19 pandemic” (Shvahaer et al., 2021). It also seems quite important for traditional media to start more actively working in social networks in order to comment and distribute pandemic-related news. This involves (but not limited to) “various video hosting services, because the modern consumer requires maximum interactivity. One of the demanded formats of popular science information are podcasts” (Kitsa, 2021).

A promising socio-communication model designed to ensure people’s security in times of epidemics and crises was offered by V. Sadivnychiy, M.S. Nazarov, A.E. Lebid, and N.A. Shevchenko. It includes a number of measures, the most important of which I consider “ensuring proper professional-information interpretation of various phenomena and processes through the engagement of top experts and professional media people capable of shedding an objective light on a particular event or phenomenon” (Sadivnychiy et al., 2021).

Pieces of advice addressed to an employer when transferring employees to a distant work mode are also very valuable. Apart from the broadest of them, it is worth paying attention to making sure the employee “knows how to search for information using search engines ... is able to prove the quality and reliability of the information received ... is aware of the legal aspects of the dissemination and use of information received in the Internet” (Khanina et al., 2021). Of course, all this is very important. However, unfortunately, one can hardly expect that in reality all employers seriously think about increasing the level of media literacy of their employees.

Last, but not least. As is commonly known, disturbing news and general exposure to mass media may well be quite harmful for mental health. To avoid this, sometimes it makes sense to limit news consumption and choose only the trustworthy sources of information. In addition to this, “To overcome your vulnerability, try to share your anxious thoughts and emotions with others. Don’t be afraid to expose your weakness and vulnerability” (Makarova et al., 2021).

#### 4. Conclusion

Concluding the review of articles published over the past year and a half in “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy”, I would like to note the following.

It is obvious that the pandemic has affected almost all spheres of society, including educational system, social ties, economy, and politics. Moreover, it not just affected, but to a certain extent modified them. Many people found themselves in largely new conditions, among other things requiring new approaches to working with information.

A large amount of unverified and unreliable information about the coronavirus and how to deal with it, myths, conjectures, and hearsay about vaccination, the transition of a significant part of the population to remote work – all these and many other factors have once again actualized the importance of media and information literacy. Today, many of those who did not attach much

importance to this before have realized how important media competences are in order to feel more or less confident in a rapidly changing world.

I note with satisfaction that many authors of articles published in “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy” promptly and adequately responded to the changed realities. They conducted studies that touched on the most acute and sensitive aspects of the impact of the pandemic on people’s daily lives. In their papers, scholars managed to reflect transformation of social relations, educational system, business and politics, and a number of other areas affected by COVID-19. They succeeded in conducting both empirical and theoretical research on pandemic and post-pandemic reality in this quite short period of time.

It is also worth mentioning that in a number of articles there have been formulated specific recommendations on how to minimize the impact of the negative aspects of coronavirus on people’s lives. Personally, I consider this as manifestation of the most important – so-called societal transforming – mission of a science.

I am sure that in the future, both the immediate difficulties associated with COVID-19 and the indirect problems caused by it will be successfully overcome. I am also confident that against this background changes in attitudes towards the complex of knowledge, skills and abilities associated with media and information literacy are possible. Composition and structure of these types of literacy itself will probably expand, too. At least, judging by the reaction of the authors of the articles published in “International Journal of Media and Information Literacy”, the future of this field promises to be rather interesting and intense.

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## Countering the Hate Speech: An Analysis of Muslim Countries Response to Macron's Speech Against Muslims After the *Charlie Hebdo* Incident

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### Abstract

After the *Charlie Hebdo* incident and the brutal murder of a teacher, the French president Emmanuel Macron addressed against Muslims which made him a target of anger in the Muslim world. In response, the representatives of the Muslim majority nations issued statements to condemn his speech. This study is an attempt to analyze the discourse produced by the leaders of the Islamic countries in response to the French president's speech regarding the *Charlie Hebdo* incident analyzing the sentiments of Muslims globally. To examine this discourse, the research engaged with Critical Discourse Studies as its framework, with a focus upon Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model as well as NVivo for linguistic inquiry. The study incorporated responses collected from October to November 2020 from the leaders of Islamic countries and examined through macro and micro analysis by incorporating the clash of civilization and orientalism theories. The study concluded that the French President's speech generalized the Muslims around the world and tagged them with the attackers as if the whole Muslim community was responsible for it. It further apprehended that a quick narrative can counter Islamophobia just as Muslim leaders responded to Macron's hate speech to address Muslims' sentiments around the world.

**Keywords:** media, islamophobia, France, Charlie Hebdo, Islam, Muslims, sentiments.

### 1. Introduction

The term Islamophobia refers to the organized fear, prejudice, hatred, and discrimination against the religion of Islam or the people adhering to this faith. This hatred, fear, and discriminatory behavior has increased manifold in the last two decades, due to several reasons, especially after 9/11 attacks, and terrorist attacks in Europe, the portrayal of Muslims and radical Islam by the Western Media. The phenomenon is occurring mostly in countries where Muslims are in minority. The term is very frequently used in academic, political and media discourses and has become a hot topic in debates pertaining to the Media, Racism, Politics, Cultural, Social and Anthropological Studies.

Hate, prejudice and othering originate from an uprooted mistrust of Muslims and their religion Islam and violence, and racism is legitimized because the religion is viewed as a source of terror in the Christian Identity of the West. The collective unconscious of the West has always remained biased towards Islam due to historical reasons; religious conflicts and scientific, holistic analysis of Islam are often obstructed by such prejudices. Therefore, Muslims and Islam are always portrayed as extremists, fundamentalists and terrorists due to political reasons and motives (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004). Immigrations and influx of refugees from the Muslim countries in Europe have drawn concerns among the dominant societies and cultures of the

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Western nations. The events of 9/11, the recession of 2007, the London bombings, *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and violent acts associated to the faith of terrorists and the emergence of right-wing populist leaders in the West have further deteriorated the already weak bond between the Orient and the West. This study is an attempt to analyze the relationship of French Muslims with the state, the response of the Muslim majority nations and their sentiments after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and steps taken by the French government, the rhetoric and discourse developed by the French government, especially the President Macron and how some of the policies of the state, in the name of laicizing or secularism and marginalization and maligning of Muslims.

President Emmanuel Macron anti-Islamic statements were condemned across Muslim world in which he blamed the Islam and Muslim for an individual's act. After his anti-Islamic statement, the following Muslim countries produced discourse which are as under Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. Macron statement was condemned across Muslim world among Muslim leaders. Turkish president Recep Tayyab Erdogan took the lead in condemning Macrons anti-Islamic statement.

The main objective of this study was to find out the how Muslims respond to the targeting of Muslims and Islam and analyse their sentiments after the hate speech and maligning of Islam by the French President Emmanuel Macron and investigate the contextual and written texts from the responses from the leaders of the Muslim majority states. More specifically, this study critically examines the sentiments of Muslim countries in response to Macron's remarks.

The study would also help in understanding of the deepening gulf between Muslims and the European world, and help in understanding of the problem of hate towards Muslims, how Muslims cope with and respond to this hatred, and react in certain scenarios when both their identity and faith become a target of hate crimes. The study is also important because it has chalked out various strategies and recommendations to the Muslim leadership, academics, intellectuals, and journalists for dealing with Islamophobia in the West.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research has used qualitative analysis approach for this study. The aim of this study was to collect Muslim leaders' response to Macron's speeches. President macron had given several speeches targeting Islam and Muslims in France. The researcher put speech and responses of Muslim leaders to the NVivo 12 Plus software for further processing. The NVivo 12 Plus software generated various graphs of both the texts entered to it and captions were added to the graphs to explain the results.

Discourses produced by different Muslim countries were subjected to the strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) and logical conclusions were drawn. Under the umbrella of qualitative research that can be multiple sources of texts and discourse material, therefore the current study data was compiled from statements and responses from Muslim countries leaders.

In terms of macro analysis, the researcher looked at the data on the binary self-other, which was a discursive strategy that was used to legitimize the self and delegitimize the other, emphasize positive things about 'us,' emphasize negative things about 'them,' de-emphasize negative things about 'us,' and de-emphasize positive things about 'them,'.

In term of micro analysis, the researcher used the 24 different rhetoric strategy which including: Actor's description; Burden; Categorization; Comparison; Consensus; Counterfactual; Disclaimer; Euphemism; Evidentiality; Argumentation; Illustration/example; Generalization; Hyperbole; Implication; Irony; Lexicalization; Metaphor; National self-glorification; Number game; Polarization (us-them); Populism; Presupposition; Vagueness; Victimization (Van Dijk, 2006).

The study examines the response of Emmanuel Macron's address at *Les Mureaux* on October 2, 2020 by the Muslim leaders around the world within a span of two months, from October 2020 to November 2020 in which the French issue was in limelight and in the media. The data was collected from international media platforms *BBC*, *CNN*, *Aljazeera*, etc.

14 statements of different Islamic leaders from Muslim majority countries were taken as sample for this study. The research selected Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, Jordan etc. because in these countries Muslims are in majority and usually, they represent Muslims on all international fronts. They also lead the various organizations of the Islamic world such as OIC, UN, CE, Organization for security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) etc.

### 3. Discussion

In today's world hate crimes against Muslims in the West are almost a daily occurrence. These incidents and hate crimes have increased manifold during the last two decades. This hatred against Muslims is well-known phenomenon and is evident in both West and the East where Muslims are in minority. This is the territory of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a highly disciplined procedure. It is not only the responsibility of Muslims to learn the genuine meaning of Islamophobia and its ramifications in today's world; but also, the responsibility of non-Muslims to study the true meaning of Islamophobia. Rather, it is a matter that Muslim groups and Muslim leaders, particularly those active in *dawah* or preaching and political activities and academic discourses (Wasay, 2018).

The world has entered a new political era called the "era of terrorism" since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the attacks in Madrid 2004, the terror attacks of London in 2005 and the terror attacks in France in early also known as the 9/11 of France (Ergul, 2015b). The Western media while reporting these tragic incidents of terrorism, painted its perpetrators as Islamist terrorists, radical Islamists, radical Muslims, Muslim terrorists, and jihadists. Similarly, the speeches of some politicians and intellectuals added more fuel to the fire, which resulted in creation of an environment of fear against Muslims in the Western world. On the other hand, the ordinary citizens in the Western countries who are unfamiliar with Islam and Muslims developed prejudice, hatred towards Islam and Muslims and some of them even indulged in acts of violence against Muslims in the West. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of Islamophobia has not remained limited to the Western world only but also spread towards Southeast Asia and Africa, leading to radicalization of people against Muslims in the rest of the world, where Muslims are in minority. The term Islamophobia was first used in a 1997 report by the Runnemed Trust. The English and French sources have confirmed that the phrase was used before 1997, however, this report is noteworthy, as it is the first time that Islamophobia has been used as a technical term (Ergul, 2015b). According to Runnymede, this report contributed to the widespread use of the term "Islamophobia." This report on religious prejudices towards Muslims and their problems had a huge impact on the international stage and in intellectual circles.

A study was carried out to look at the elements that contribute to anti-Muslim sentiment in the West. The study focused on specific forms of Islamophobic beliefs that relate violence and terrorism to Muslims, based on the idea that Islamophobic attitudes are more intricate than a mere hate of Muslims. Using data from the Pew Global Attitudes Surveys, three ideas are tested: perceived threat, social identity, and cognitive skills. For the experimental examination of individual level data in Germany, Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, a series of logit estimations were used. The findings demonstrate that citizens' perceptions of a real or symbolic threat are a major source of anti-Islam sentiment in the West. While people's impressions of Muslims and their qualities vary, higher levels of education are associated with a reduction in negative attitudes of Muslims. Many Westerners regard Muslims as aggressive individuals, while others assume they are supporters of al-Qaeda. Muslims are more likely to be associated with terrorism if residents in the West feel threatened by their physical and cultural presence (Ciftci, 2012). According to these studies the misconception against Muslims is very high in the West. However, this intolerance at such a great scale is a big concern for democracy, which is defined by its essential ideals of equality, tolerance, and religious liberty (Kaya, 2015).

Islam, according to many Europeans, poses a larger threat to their values than other religious traditions. Biases of this nature aren't insignificant; they can reflect and/or affect laws, policies, and practices. Unfavorable attitudes and views may lead to religious dress prohibitions, opposition to mosque construction projects, and intolerance toward migrants from Muslim-majority countries. The term "Islamophobia" was coined in public and academic circles to describe anti-Muslim prejudice that resulted in derogatory remarks and actions directed against Muslims. The term "Islamophobia" was coined by politicians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations, which is most strongly associated with Western liberal democracies. The term was coined to describe any anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic emotion or action that exists in society (Bleich, 2011).

The definition of Islamophobia has moved in recent years from a primarily political concept to one that is primarily used for analytical and anthropological purposes. Scholars now use it to identify the various factors that contribute to anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic sentiment. Many academics include aspects such as a country's historical relationship with religion and plurality;

Muslim population density; anti-Islamic sentiment; driving factors for those unfavorable sentiments; and anti-Islamic sentiment's prospective consequences. The notion of Islamophobia has returned in the social sciences, but this time in a more comprehensive form than before. Islamophobia, on the other hand, lacks a universally accepted or unambiguous description. Because there is no globally agreed definition of Islamophobia, it is hard to assess or compare levels of Islamophobia over time within or between countries. Over the previous 20 years, the widespread understanding of what defines Islamophobia has evolved, significantly confusing the term's meaning. This makes conducting a comparative examination of Islamophobia challenging. A comparative model in the social sciences is missing because no precise causes or definitions for this word have materialized. As a result, there is a knowledge gap in the academic community about the origins and motivations of anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, which has recently gained prominence. Due to the lack of a universally agreed definition for Islamophobia, many interpretations of the notion have emerged (Bleich, 2011). Brian Klug, an Oxford philosopher, and expert on Islamophobia, points out that Islamophobia was once classified as a type of religious bigotry. This demonstrates that bigotry against Muslims stems from their religious convictions (Klug, 2012).

The concept of Islamophobia as a sort of religious intolerance, according to researcher Fernando Bravo López, the term comes from the origins of the word, which means "fear or phobia of Islam." However, limiting Islamophobia to a fear of Islam isn't a sufficiently wide term. Islamophobia is a fear of Muslims in general, not a fear of a particular religion. It's also seen to be a sort of racial discrimination stemming from preconceived notions about Muslims (Bravo López, 2011). According to Bleich, Islamophobia is based on racial stereotyping of a minority group, which indicates the presence of discrimination against Muslims. The majority of society negative opinions toward "outsiders" stem from underlying in-group and out-group attitudes and sentiments. Some of the societal divides between Muslims and non-Muslims may be explained by these negative views of Islam. since a low percentage of Muslims occupy public office, secure professions, or attend prestigious schools. Discrimination, on the other hand, is a weaker indicator of Islamophobia than other, more visible institutional norms (Bleich, 2011). To understand anti-Muslim sentiment within a culture, it is best to look at how this minority religion group is portrayed in pop culture and the media.

According to a Pew research center report 2019, on Muslims in France, media coverage has an impact on French perceptions about Islam. "When you meet your Muslim friends on a regular basis, you don't assume that relations with Muslims are bad," argues a 22-year-old Parisian architect. However, if all you do is watch television, you will see a lot of severe examples of Islam. Similarly, in the United States, "half or more of Muslims [surveyed] have consistently thought that U.S. media portrayal of Muslims is unfair" for the last ten years. Examining how Muslims and other minorities are depicted in media such as television, movies, cartoons, video games, literature, and music, for example, can show underlying sentiments toward Muslims in a certain country. To analyze how a country's culture and political system treats its Muslim community, all of these indicators, as well as social relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims and repressive state actions directed at Muslims, might be used. Another way to measure Islamophobia is to look at how much prejudice or distrust exists in a society, as measured by opinion surveys and other indicators. "An efficient system of government prosecution and media coverage brings Muslim American terrorism suspects to national attention," according to a recent Gallup study, "perhaps unintentionally creating the impression— perhaps unintentionally— that Muslim-American terrorism is more prevalent than it is." When the media and the government place a high focus on prosecuting Muslim terrorists, the public's perception of Islam as a threat is more likely to expand. These and other factors, as well as ones mentioned above, are used to assess the level of Islamophobia in a certain country. Nonetheless, indicators must be evaluated holistically and critically in order to genuinely realize the extent of Islamophobia in a country in order to fully understand the dynamic between Muslims and non-Muslims (Bleich, 2011).

More than 17 million Muslims dwell in 17 countries across Western Europe, with France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain having the highest Muslim populations. In all of these nations, there has been an increase in Islamophobic discourse, most notably in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders, the Dutch MP and leader of the populist Freedom Party, has called for a complete ban on immigration from all Muslim countries. Recent governmental alterations impacting Muslim traditions have been enacted as a result of this shift in public opinion

on immigration. The Belgian parliament resolved in 2010 to make it illegal to wear niqabs (Islamic face-covering veils) in public. However, the government fell apart before the Senate could put it into law. As a result of migration and family reunification, the Muslim population in Europe has increased significantly over the previous four decades, resulting in predictable difficulties. Conflicts between dominant and minority groups in Europe are the product of a globalized civilization of confrontations, according to An Essay on the Geography of Anger, rather than a "clash of civilizations," as S. Huntington (Huntington, 1993) put it (Appadurai, 2006). In today's Europe, the battle between the local and the global is palpable.

Fear and outrage emerging from anti-Muslim fringe organizations dominated media coverage of the 9/11 events in the United States, according to sociologist Christopher Bail, rather than more moderate remarks emanating from mainstream civil society organizations. He also contends that such communications have an impact on public opinion. Rather than relying on a survey of media coverage of Muslims and Islam in Europe and the United States, our research aims to determine the true impact of media coverage on public opinion in relation to other factors including political affiliation and religious beliefs and practices. The in-group mindset of French culture has prioritized maintaining the nation's (people's) uniform alignment with the state (political apparatus). The drive to maintain a homogeneous national identity has resulted in France's current xenophobia. This has happened in two ways: first, the country's secularism prohibits public displays of faith. Second, because of France's traditionally Catholic majority, a person who practice religions other than Catholicism are typically considered outsiders. Initially, many far-right and Catholic practitioners focused on anti-Semitism in order to safeguard France's homogeneity. In recent years, however, anti-Semitism in France has been accompanied by anti-Muslim sentiment in some groups (Cazedepats, 2016). The French legislature made it illegal to wear niqabs in public. Wearing a niqab in public is punishable by a punishment of 150 euros, according to the law, which went into force in April 2011.

France has a long history of anti-religious animosity, which has been focused primarily at Muslims in the country over the last ten years or so. Anti-Muslim sentiment was visible following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, although it has since receded. There was Islamophobia in the state before to this incident. Muslims have long been seen as second-class citizens in France, even when they are native-born citizens. Muslims have fewer chances as citizens in France than Christians and have remained excluded within the country.

Thus, this study investigated and did a sentimental analysis of Muslim's response towards the Speech of Emmanuel Macron after his Speech and Muslim world painting him as an Islamophobe and would add to the already available literature on how seriously the issue of Islamophobia is being perceived among the Muslims around the world. The study further helps in understanding the various responses and sentiments of the Muslim majority countries, when Islam or Muslims become the target of political hatred, bigotry and anti-Muslim rhetoric and hate speech across Europe, specifically in France.

The epistemology or theoretical foundations of this study can be traced and linked to the discourses and paradigms presented by Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization, Edward Said's Orientalism.

In post-Cold War geopolitical thinking, the concepts of "culture" and "cultural difference" have gained a lot of momentum, with the concept of "clash of civilizations" gaining special attraction. Samuel Huntington popularized the idea in 1993, however it was first proposed in a 1990 paper by Bernard Lewis titled "the Roots of Muslim Rage." The bipolar paradigm of the Cold War aided international relations, security, and strategic studies. The term "clash of civilizations" has been used to describe global geopolitical conflicts since the end of the Cold War. The New York Times, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*, among other 'quality media' in the United States, framed the events of September 11, 2001, in terms of Islam, civilization, and culture. Despite academics' outright rejection of the 'clash of civilizations' paradigm as unprofessional history and speculative political science, it became the standard paradigm for describing all forms of Middle Eastern crises. Economic failures, social problems, corruption, and political deadlock are all examples of events that are usually attributed to 'Islam' (Semati, 2010).

Huntington describes civilization as "similar objective components" shared by diverse cultures, such as religion, institutions, customs, history, and language. Huntington also believes that the clash of civilizations between Islamic and Western civilizations will be the main source of conflict. Huntington goes on to claim that the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West will

almost certainly continue, citing Islam's predilection for murder and bloodshed as proof. He also says that Muslims engage in violent clashes with non-Muslims, citing Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Buddhists in Burma, and Jews in Israel as instances. To put it another way, he asserts that "Islam has bloody borders" and that Islam has bleeding boarders (Green, 2015).

Huntington and Lewis use several classic Orientalist motifs in their work. For example, Huntington argues that the West is a superior and distinct civilization, and hence promotes Western colonial interests at the expense of Arab and Muslim countries. Islam, he says, is harsh and hostile by nature. The phrase that "Islam has bloody borders" is a not-so-subtle hint that Muslims are to blame for all problems in which they find themselves, including disagreements with Western nations (Huntington, 1993).

This study falls into the category of Clash of civilization presented by Huntington. The Clash of Civilizations (COC) is a thesis that says that in the post-Cold War world, people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict. The core assumption of this theory is that in the world different civilizations fight with each other. They have disagreements about history, prejudice, faith, and traditions. Muslims are a problem in France as well. Since each region of the world has its own culture. The French government requires Muslim women to drop their hijab, despite the fact that they are French citizens. This is also the source of blasphemy, and it is for this reason that two civilizations differ. The clash of civilizations is reflected in Macron's voice. How. Macron's speech represents a clash of civilizations in the way he humiliates Muslims. Macron's speech infuriated Muslims. In my study it has clear that Macron speech has clear factors that he could not accept Muslims and he don't want to understand how he humiliate the sentiments among Muslim countries. He doesn't want to apologize over blasphemy. The conflict in France between Muslims and the secular French government is an example of the conflict between different cultures, faiths and often take the shape of violent conflicts. The Islamophobia and the rise against Muslims in France, the blame of separation and segregation of the French Muslims citizens by President Macron and war with the radical Islam can be best described in the context of clash of cultures, identities, tradition, and way of life.

This study will touch another important and popular theory of social science research i.e., Orientalism "Orientalism" is a way of looking at the world that envisions, emphasizes, misrepresents, and contorts distinctions between Arab people groups and societies and those of Europe and the United States. Said's main point is that individuals who utilize the clash of civilizations paradigm to make sense of the world, particularly the relationship between Islam and the West, are questioning their motives. In a fairly Orientalist manner, the conflict of civilizations promotes Western imperialism (Green, 2015). The critique of the colonial mentality Islamophobia is a relatively new concept with etymological roots in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that suspicion and fear of Muslims, as well as the idea of Muslims as a completely other "Other," have deeper historical origins in Europe. Attempts to civilize the "Other," primarily through colonial expansion, ushered in a new era in Europe's relationship with the Orient (Bakali, 2016). The effects of colonialism on both colonizers and colonized have been studied in postcolonial ideas.

Edward Said's Orientalism (Said, 1979) is one of the basic writings on the colonization of Muslim majority countries. He explores the ideologies that gave moral explanations for and the continuity in defining Muslims as the "Other" in his book Orientalism. The work was a critique of Orientalist study, and it has influenced many contemporary anti-Muslim racism critiques. When Muslims are treated as if they do not belong with (the superior) us, but rather as the other, Islamophobia is clear. As a result, the concept of Us versus Them is included in a way that excludes Islamic affiliations and/or Muslims from the prevalent discourse, and is thus based in part on the Orientalist viewpoint.

The core concept of Orientalist theory is a creative but starkly polarized geography that separates the world into two unequal parts: the larger, "other" Orient and the smaller, "our" world, Occident or West. There are a multitude of religious, psychological, and political reasons for this, but they all originate from the view that Islam is not only a formidable foe, but also a latecomer to the West's Christian faith (Said, 1975). Direct colonialism has largely ended in our day; imperialism...remains in a general cultural sphere as well as specific political, intellectual, economic, and social acts, as it has always been," writes Said (Said, 1997: 9). He claimed that superior thinking formed the groundwork for Orientalist ideas in the 19th and 20th centuries (Bakali, 2016).

After its publication, Said's book *Orientalism* sparked intense debate and controversy. Said's failure to connect *Orientalism* concretely to colonial history and its connection to the development of capitalism, his omission of the many ways the colonized resisted colonial power, and his tendency to essentialize the West while criticizing Western essentialization of the Orient are just a few of the more common criticisms. Although researcher do not plan to go into detail about each of these criticisms, they are valid, and it would be worthwhile to debate and analyze them in a context other than his book. Regardless of Said's *Orientalism*'s flaws, his larger argument is sound, raising crucial concerns about how the West has researched Muslims and Islam and continues to do so. Despite their reservations, many anti-Islam and anti-Muslim academics credit Said with assisting them in realizing how much anti-Islam and anti-Muslim prejudice is shaped by discourse rooted in the power dynamic between Muslim-majority regions and the West. The portrayal of Muslims as essentialized "Others" in opposition to Europeans, which is founded on the premise that Europeans possess inherent civilization and cultural superiority, has its roots in *Orientalist studies and literature* (Green, 2015).

In regard to Islamophobia, extending *Orientalism* as a framework is founded on the assumption that Islam is a hostile faith. Even when they have citizenship, Muslims are viewed as foreigners who are violent and unassailable (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004b; Marranci, 2004). As a result, the Orient emerges as a power struggle between us, the Occident (the West), and them, the Orient (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004a; Ning, 1997). The concept of *Orientalism* is vital for this argument since it laid the foundation for Islamophobia. Furthermore, the links between Islamophobia and political power may be traced back to the nineteenth century's nexus between *Orientalism* and colonial authority. Drawing on this, researcher will argue that Macron creates these distinctions between us and them in the analytical section of this thesis.

The global capitalist international system creates ideologies from a variety of actors to compete with one another for ideational supremacy. Patterns "of interacting social forces" that develop and remodel the ideas that become globally hegemonic are used to describe this contestation. The rules, ideas, and values promoted by an ideology have the capacity to persuade others to act in a certain way, and so dominate human behavior (Burchell et al., 1991). It is reasonable to assume that a globally dominant ideology would predisposition, organize, and regulate people on a global scale. This raises questions about dominant ideology's normativity within societies, as well as the injustices and oppression that result from it. Furthermore, the basic divide between East and West, according to Edward Said's popular idea of *orientalism*, serves as a beginning point for hypotheses, sagas, literature, social portrayals, and political records concerning the Orient, its relatives, customs, 'mind,' predetermination, and other themes. The major goal of this theory was to forecast the integral relationship between East and West. *Orientalism* theory's primary premise is that societies are diverse and have their unique perspectives.

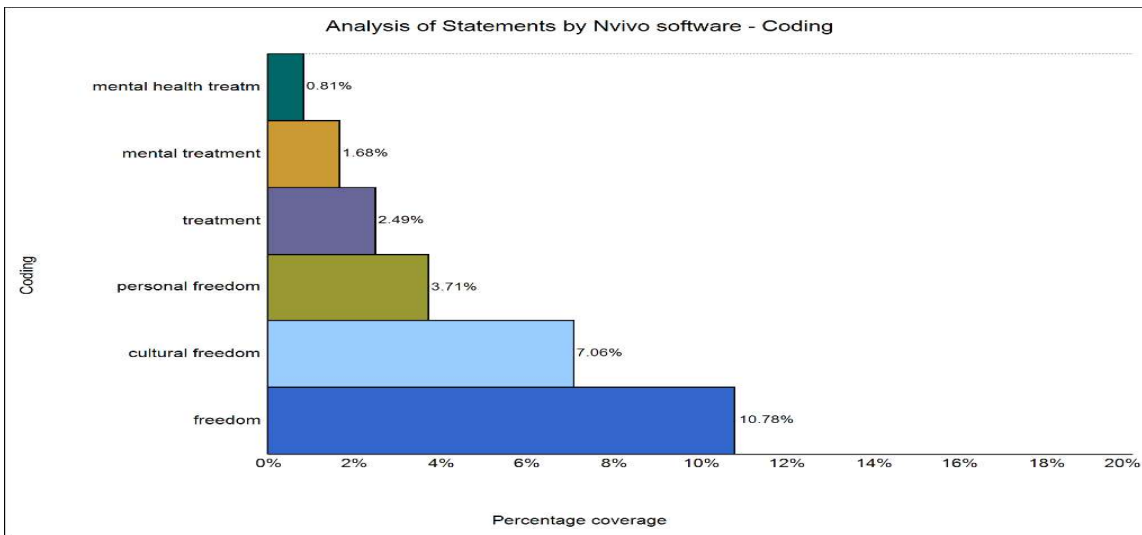
This study is an attempt to understand *orientalism* in the context of Islamophobia in the West specifically in France. The study will also add to the available literature on *orientalism* Islamophobia and clash of civilization among different cultures of the East and West. The study will also help in highlighting the Islamophobia prevailing in the West and Muslims being on the receiving end of this hatred, racism, and hate speech. That is the outcome of us versus them. The study will also analyze the discourse developed by the mainstream media of the Western world and how politicians specially the president of France is contributing to this discourse This is why the researcher as selected all the three concepts for her theoretical work.

#### 4. Results

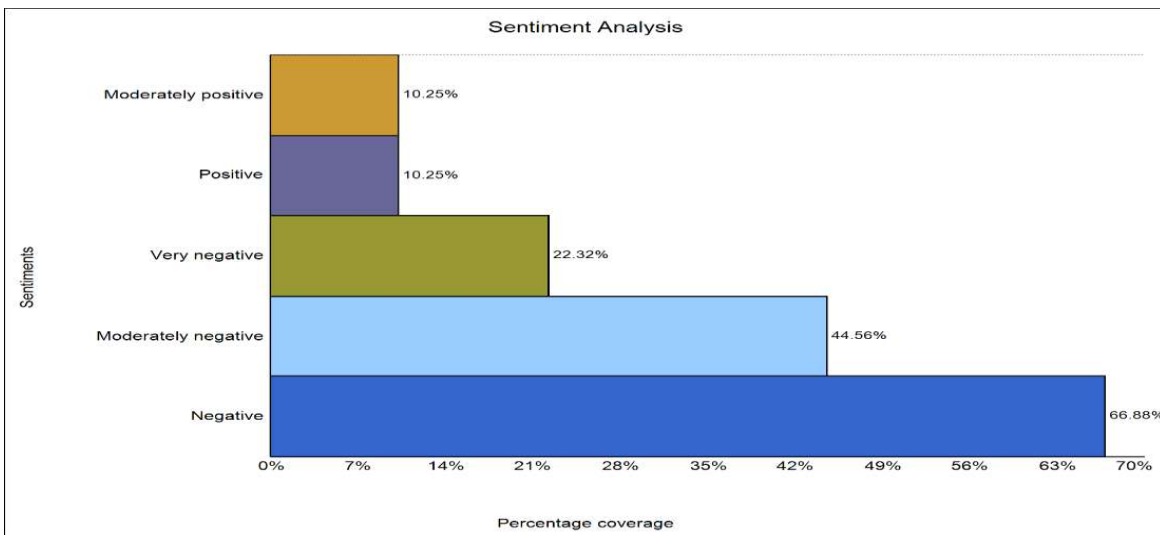
The study's sampling frame was aimed to collect the most contentious official statements of Muslim Countries about the French president's hate speech. The discourses produced by various Muslim majority countries including Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Malaysia etc. were also collected from different news websites such as *Aljazeera*, *BBC*, *Daily sabah* etc.

Figure 1 shows the analysis of statements produced by Muslim Countries by NVivo software. The Muslim leaders have used terms like mental health treatment, cultural freedom, and freedom to counter him and portray him as a retard, psycho, populist, and someone who is out of mind and needs to think before he speaks. This is a strong rebuttal of his allegations on Islam and Muslims and how freedom of speech should respect cultural diversity and others' beliefs.





**Fig. 1.** Analysis of statements produced by Muslim Countries



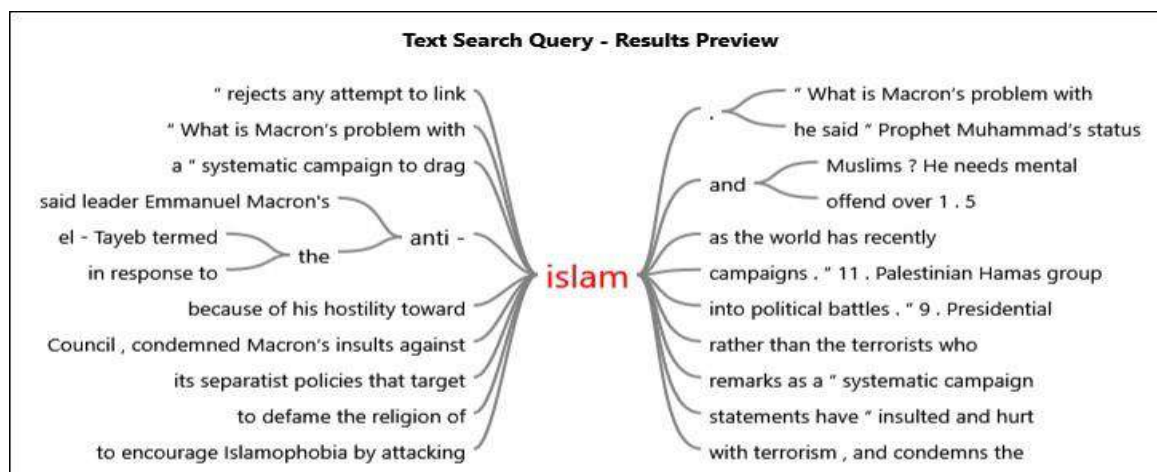
**Fig. 2.** Sentiment analysis of Muslim Countries

Figure 2 shows an analysis of the sentiments of the Muslims by NVivo Software. The graph shows very negative comments and the annoyance of Muslim leaders across the globe towards Macron and French government. Overall, it is clear how angry the Muslim world was after publication of blasphemous caricatures and Macron’s speech.

Figure 3 shows an analysis of the text used in the statements of Muslim leaders. Phrases like rejecting any attempt to link Islam with terrorism, what is Macron’s problem, systematic campaign to drag Islam etc. show the anger, irony, and shock of Muslim leaders towards Macron and the French government.

*Macro Analysis of Statements of Muslim Countries*

In response to President Emmanuel Macron speech the representatives of Muslim majority countries issued statements that condemned the remarks of the French President. The statements produced by the representatives of leading Muslim state such as Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, etc and organizations of Islamic countries and political moments were analysed to understand the various narratives and discourses produced by these states between Oct 2020 and Nov2020. The researcher used the critical discourse analysis to assess the discourses produced by these statements and made the following conclusion.



**Fig. 3.** Word trees of frequently used terms in the statements of Muslim Countries

*Statement by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.*

"It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists" (Aljazeera, 2020).

In the very first statement Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is an actor according to Ideological Square Framework, says that President Macron should have attacked or blamed the individual(s) who carried the attack rather than blaming the whole Muslim community or their religion Islam. Applying "Generalization" strategy to the statement, according to Imran Khan, the French Prime Minister has blamed all Muslims by painting them all with the brush of terrorism, instead of isolating those who performed the violent acts. The researcher also sees "Polarization" in this statement, in which the Muslims are being polarized and segregated from the rest of French community. Applying the discursive strategy, the Prime Minister Imran Khan has created an "us' vs. 'them'" by applying negative connotations towards Macron while trying to take side of French Muslims.

*Statement by President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan*

"Macron needs "mental treatment" because of his hostility toward Islam. "What is Macron's problem with Islam and Muslims? He needs mental health treatment" (Agencies, 2020).

In this statement the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that President Macron is out of his mind and lost his way. Recep Tayyip Erdogan is using the "Hyperbole" and stressing upon the fact that Macron is out of his mind and is trying to enhance the semantic meaning according to Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) by associating "out of mind" and "mental health" to undermine the seriousness of Macron's statement. The actor tries to make a strong argument here that the president Macron is in dire need of mental treatment and not worthy of a response from Erdogan. Applying the "Metaphor" strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) to the statement, the actor has used metaphorical expression to target his opponent Macron. The researcher also sees "Populism" in this statement in which the actor Erdogan has termed Macron as someone who is attention seeker by making illogical statements as explained by the Van Dijk. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk, the researcher has clearly identified that President Erdogan is using the framework of "us" vs. "them" in his speech and has tried to associate craziness to Macron while associating sanity to himself.

*Official statement from Saudi Arabia*

"Saudi Arabia rejects any attempt to associate Islam with terrorism and condemns the insulting drawings of the Prophet," the ministry said, amid an intensifying feud between France and some Muslim-majority countries over Paris' support for the right to caricature the Prophet. "Intellectual and cultural freedom to be a beacon of respect, tolerance, and peace that rejects practices and acts that produce hatred, violence, and extremism and are opposed to the norms of coexistence," a Saudi foreign ministry official told state media" (Aljazeera, 2020a).

In its official statement, the Saudi Government rejected President Macron's attempt to link Islam with terrorism and condemned offensive cartoons aimed at ridiculing the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The actor further explains that freedom of speech should not violate the value of respect for other cultures, beliefs and religion, and that freedom does not mean to

disrespect other religions or holy personalities. According to the researcher this statement falls in the category of “*National self-glorification*”. As the actor has argued that “freedom is also a beacon of respect, tolerance and peace that rejects practices and acts which generate hatred, violence and extremism and are contrary to the values of coexistence,” When it comes to the discursive strategy of “us’ vs “them’ as explained by Van Dijk, and applied to the statement of Saudi government, the actor portrays Saudi Arabia as in-group who respects other’s cultures and beliefs in the domain of freedom of speech, while the French President as “out-group’ that doesn’t respect others beliefs and cultures and holy personalities.

*Statement by Foreign Minister of Iran Javad Zarif*

Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said “Muslims are the primary victims of the “cult of hatred’ empowered by colonial regimes & exported by their own clients. Insulting 1.9B Muslims & their sanctities for the abhorrent crimes of such extremists is an opportunistic abuse of freedom of speech. It only fuels extremism” (Aljazeera, 2020).

In this statement the actor says Muslims are the primary victims of all sorts of hatred emboldened by colonial regimes. The sentiments of 1.5 billion Muslims and sanctities are being disrespected and ridiculed in the name of freedom of expression. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella of “*Number game*” where the emotions of 1.5 billion people of Muslims are hurt. “The researcher also sees “*Victimization*” in this statement. According to Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), it is the most widely employed political technique for the “binary us-them set of in-groups and out-groups”, and here the in group which is Muslims and are in a large number are being victimized in the name of freedom by the outer group which is French government. Furthermore, when it comes to the discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher sees that the actor has painted Muslims as victims of so-called freedom of speech while blaming the French President for inciting Muslims towards violence and extremism in the name of freedom of expression.

*Statement by President of Indonesia Joko Widodo*

Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo said; “Emmanuel Macron's anti-Islam statements have insulted and hurt the feelings of Muslims around the world” (Gozali, Koswaraputra, 2020).

In this statement President Joko Widodo says that the Islamophobic and anti-Islam remarks have insulted and hurt the feelings of the whole Muslim community around the world. Applying “*Implication*” “which refers to the understanding regarding what is not explicitly expressed in discourse”, the actor is blaming Macron for hurting the emotions of all Muslims around the world by targeting their religion Islam. The statement also comes under the “*Generalization*” in which the actor is generalizing the emotions of French Muslims with the Muslims around the world. Applying the discursive strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) of “us” vs “them” the actor has portrayed Muslims an (in- group) whose emotions are hurt by Macron, while declaring the French government as (outer-group) and blaming them for hurting the sentiments of Muslims in the name of freedom of expression.

*Statement by Foreign Minister of Malaysia Hishammuddin Hussein*

"We strongly condemn any inflammatory rhetoric and provocative acts that seek to defame the religion of Islam as the world has recently witnessed in the form of populist speeches and publication of blasphemous caricatures depicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad” (Aljazeera, 2020).

In this statement the actor has condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures in the name of freedom of expression. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella “*Lexicalization*” to depict something or somebody positively or negatively and the actor has clearly termed Macron’s speech under populism. The researcher can also see “*Populism*” and “*Polarization*” in this statement as the actor has clearly called Macron a populist leader who has defamed Muslim by his speech and created polarization by isolating the French Muslims by hurting their emotions.

Moreover, applying discursive strategy the actor says that French authorities are trying to mitigate negative things about them “Muslim” by calling them intolerant.

*Statement of Organization of Islamic Cooperation*

"The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has urged France to reconsider its separatist policies, which attack Islam and hurt the world's 1.5 billion Muslims." In a statement, the OIC has said: "We condemn the constant systematic attack on the feelings of Muslims by insulting the religious symbols represented by the person of the Prophet Muhammad" (Aljazeera, 2020).

According to the researcher this statement falls under the category of “*Evidentiality*” and “*Number Game*” where the hard facts and figures are used to support speaker’s claim or idea. In this statement the actor OIC has used the tactic of evidentiality by providing the evidence of separatist remarks of Macron and the number of Muslims which is 1.5 billion across the world and who are hurt by the caricatures of the Holy Prophet. The actor has also condemned in strongest possible words the organized attacks on Islam and the respect of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the name of freedom of expression which is “*Victimization*” strategy. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk, the researcher has clearly identified how OIC has blamed Macron for separatist policies of France in which Muslim are being declared as an outer group while the rest of France as in-group.

*Statement issued by Grand Imam of Egypt Sheikh Ahmad*

“In Egypt, the grand imam of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb termed the anti-Islam remarks as a “systematic campaign to drag Islam into political battles” (Agencies, 2020).

This statement falls under the “Polarization and Populism” where Sheikh Ahmad has described the anti-Islamic remarks of French President Emmanuel Macron as an organized campaign to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. According to Sheikh Ahmad Macron is using such populist and cheap tactics for getting electoral gains and using a defamation of a holy religion and personality to increase his support among the West. The actor also sees “Victimization” in this statement in which Muslims are the victims of populist bigot. These remarks have also led to the polarization of the French Muslims as us vs them. When it comes to the discursive strategies suggested by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the actor says that French President is trying to legitimize himself and de-legitimize the French Muslims, by calling it a systematic campaign of the French government to acquire political gains.

*Remarks by Presidential Council of Libya Mohammad Zayed*

“In Libya, Mohammad Zayed, a member of the Presidential Council, condemned Macron’s insulting remarks against Islam and said; “Prophet Muhammad’s status will not be affected by malicious statements or trivial drawings” (Agencies, 2020).

In this statement Mohammad Zayed, a member of Presidential Council who is an actor according to Van Dijk framework (Van Dijk, 2006), has condemned the remarks of Macron and has stated that these derogatory remarks against Islam and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable and this malicious statement will never ever affect Islam and its Prophet. According to the researcher this statement falls under the strategy of “National self-glorification” “which according to Van Dijk creates a positive representation of a specific country/nation through certain positive references, like history, principles, culture, and traditions”.

According to the actor, the glory and dignity of the Holy Prophet cannot be minimized by the trivial remarks of a populist leader and won’t affect the sanctity of the great leader. He has explained that any person’s greatness cannot be limited by derogatory remarks of another person and when it comes to the Holy Prophet, PBUH, there is no impact on Muslim’s respect towards the messenger of God when a person tries to defame him, because he lives in the hearts of Muslim. Whereas when it comes to the discursive strategies, the researcher can easily determine how the actor has termed President Macron as an Islamophobe who is treating Muslims as an out group by calling them terrorist and extremists and calling himself victims of Islamic terrorism.

*Statement of Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmed Attiya*

“Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya calls for boycotting French products in response to the anti-Islam campaigns” (Agencies, 2020).

The Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya has called for the boycott of French products in reaction to anti-Islam campaign in France led by President Macron. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella of CDA strategy “Counterfactuals” “which is a persuasive argumentative strategy that is being used to move of asking for empathy”. The actor has actually tried to counter the French President by targeting their products to give him a strong message that Muslims are not willing to tolerate the blasphemy of their Prophet PBUH and would respond in the form of boycott to harm their economy.

When it comes to discursive strategy which was given by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher found out that according to the actor the French leadership is using the framework of “us” vs “them” by portraying Muslim and Islam in a negative way and rest of the French society in a positive way and therefore Muslims are boycotting their products to settle their score with them.

*Statement by Palestinian Hamas group leader Maher al Huli*

“Maher al-Huli, a leader of the Palestinian Hamas group said; “We condemn the comments of the French president and whoever offends the Prophet Mohammed, whether through words, actions, gestures or drawings” (Agencies, 2020).

The leader of Palestinian Hamas group has condemned the comments made by President Macron against Muslims and said that any offensive remarks in any form towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable. According to the researcher this statement in the CDA strategies falls under the “Disclaimer” where the actor is giving a disclaimer that we condemn that act of offending the prophet BPUH in any form and would not tolerate it. The researcher also sees ‘Authority’ in this statement whereas the Palestinian organization has used its authority to condemn Islamophobic remarks. When applying the discursive strategies, of us vs them, the Palestinian authority Hamas considers the French Muslims as us, and the French government as ‘them’ and has condemned ‘them’ which is France for hurting the emotions of ‘us’ which are Muslims of Palestine.

*Statement of Pro Faction of Iraq Rabaa Allah*

“Rabaa Allah, a pro-Iran faction in Iraq, said in a statement that one and a half billion people worldwide had in effect been insulted, and warned that its men were ready to respond when and where they want” (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the actor Rabaa Allah, an organization in Iraq has threatened the French government of retaliation and dire consequences. According to the researcher this statement fall in the CDA under the strategy of “Evidentiality and Number Game” in which the French President has offended and hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims globally and the actor has condemned in strongest possible words and has warned them of consequences because Macron has committed a crime against a huge amount of Muslims by hurting their emotion in the name of freedom of speech. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher has clearly identified how the organization Rabaa Allah has given a veiled threat and has termed the French authorities as “them; who have hurt the emotions of ‘us’ that is 1.5 billion Muslims and therefore, reserves the right to retaliate.

*Statement issued by Foreign Ministry of Morocco*

“Morocco’s foreign ministry also “vigorously” condemned the continued publication of the caricatures” (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the Foreign Ministry has clearly condemned the act of French government in the strongest possible way. This statement comes under the strategy of “Lexicalization” in which the actor has condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures on the name of freedom of expression. Moreover, while applying discursive strategy the actor says that French authorities are trying to mitigate negative things about them “Muslim” by publishing the caricatures of the Holy Prophet PBUH.

*Statement issued by Minister of Islamic Affairs Jordan, Mohammed al-Khalayleh*

“Insulting prophets, according to Islamic Affairs Minister Mohammed al-Khalayleh, is “not a matter of personal freedom, but a criminal that invites violence.” Macron's remarks were regarded as “an affront on the (Islamic) nation and amounted to malice and ugly racism” by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the Jordanian chapter of Islamic Brotherhood Movement has clearly condemned Macron’s anti-Islamic remarks and termed the publication of caricatures of the Holy Prophet as an attack on the Muslim around the world. According to the researcher these statements fall under the umbrella of “Polarization and Lexicalization” where the actor has described the anti-Islamic remarks an attack on Islam which has clearly hurt the emotions of the Muslims around the world, and they deserve the right to retaliate against France. When it comes to the discursive strategies of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) the actor Jordanian leader says that French President has clearly tried to legitimize self (France) and de-legitimize the other (Muslims) and has associated negative things towards Islam and has encouraged violent behavior by hurting the emotions of one and half billion Muslims across the globe.

## 5. Conclusion

This research focuses on Macron's anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments expressed in his historic speech in Les Meraux, outside of Paris, on October 2, 2020, to reflect his policy to combat radical Muslim separatism. Muslim leaders around the world responded to the speech at different

platforms. For instance, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan said that President Macron should have attacked or blamed that individual who carried the attack rather than blaming Muslims or Islam. Similarly, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Macron has “lost his mind” because Macron is blaming the entire Muslim community for this particular murder rather, he should have blamed the individual who carried out the violence. The Saudi government also issued a strong statement against Macron and criticized the speech of Macron under National self-glorification which is a rhetoric framework of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006). The government rejected President Macron’s attempt to link Islam with terrorism and condemned offensive cartoons which were aimed to ridicule the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Iran’s Foreign Minister Javed Zarif used a strategy of Victimization, Number game and Evidentiality which are rhetoric strategies proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) to depict that Muslims are the primary victims of all sorts of hatred emboldened by colonial regimes. Despite having a huge population of 1.9 billion people Muslims holy personalities are being disrespected and ridiculed in the name of opportunistic abuse of freedom of expression. Indonesian President Joko Widodo also used a strategy of Implication.

The Malaysian foreign Minister Hishamuddin Hussein while using the strategy of Lexicalization, condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures in the name of freedom of expression. The grand imam of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb blamed Macron for using Populism and Polarization and declared that anti-Islamic remarks was an organized campaign to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. Similarly, Libya, condemned the remarks of Macron and stated that these derogatory remarks against Islam and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable and this malicious campaign will never ever affect Islam and its Prophet. Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya used the category of Counterfactuals and called for the boycott of French products in reaction to anti-Islam campaign in France led by President Macron. Palestinian Hamas group Maher al-Huli criticized the comments made by President Macron against Muslims and said any attempt to defame Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is unacceptable. Mohammed al-Khalayleh, Jordan Islamic Affairs Minister in his remarks condemned the anti-Islamic remarks and called it an organized campaign in order to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. Finally, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has also asked the French government to re-think its separatist policies that has offended and hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims globally.

The researcher believes that Islamophobia is linked to the concept of “*Clash of Civilizations*” presented by Huntington. The “*Clash of Civilizations*’ (COC) is a theory, according to which, in the post-Cold War world, people’s cultural and religious identities would be the primary source of conflict as they would have disagreements about history, prejudice, faith, and traditions. Moreover, the hate crimes against Muslims and France is a byproduct of Clash of civilization because Islam and secularism are two conflicting ideas, It is not uncommon to hear the native-born French declare, “It is not that I don’t want Muslims in the country; the problem is they don’t want to integrate”.

Furthermore, the researcher believes this study is also linked/related to another important and popular theory of mass communication research i.e., “*Orientalism*”, the core assumption of which is based on a biased approach of the West towards Islam and the Arab world. The main motive behind this theory was to predict the integral bond among East and West. The core assumption of Orientalism theory is that societies are diverse and it has their own opinions. Unfortunately, President Macron speech is an endorsement of Orientalism and that he cannot not accept Muslims nor wants to understand how he hurts the sentiments among Muslim countries.

The researchers concluded that the representatives and rulers of Muslim majority states responded to Macron’s remarks, condemned his targeting of religion Islam and called him an Islamophobe, who hates Islam and uses his anti-Islam rhetoric for political gains. The discrimination against his own minority and creating an environment of segregation and hatred towards Muslims in France, has divided the French society and made the minority Muslims vulnerable to the rest of French majority population. This study has also found that Macron has frequently made Islamophobic remarks which has added to the rise of Islamophobia in France and rest of the West. Macron has consistently targeted Muslims in various ways, showing Muslims in a negative light while promoting himself and France in a positive light.

The researcher has also found out a total agreement and similarity in the response of Muslims leaders from across the world to Macron, calling him a populist, bigot, out of mind and someone who

uses religion for his political gains and has unanimously condemned his Islamophobic remarks and called upon him to revise his strategy of targeting Muslims and respect all faiths and cultures including the religion Islam and its holy Prophet PBUH. Furthermore, the results concluded that the religion Islam, has been politicized at international platforms to trigger the sentiments of Muslim community and create a dispute which can be avoided by controlled diplomatic statements.

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## Information Security of UN Sustainable Development Goals Implementation

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### Abstract

The Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are a roadmap for countries in their pursuit of prosperity. The Agenda defines the principal areas of the signatory countries' activity to build a society of prosperity regarding the level of social stability increasing in situations of uncertainty, risks, and crises. Global threats and conflicts and related humanitarian crises threaten to undo much of the development progress achieved in recent decades. For the second year, we have not seen progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The article examines the results of information support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals at the level of scientific publications posted in the ERA (Education Research Abstracts) database in 2015–2022.

The results of the data analysis showed an uneven interest in the SDGs on the part of the scientific community and the representation of specific SDGs in scientific publications. In particular, in 2015, SDG 2, SDG 6, and SDG 7 were the «outsiders» in terms of representation in scientific publications. The difference between the lowest (260 – SDG 2) and the largest (26 305 – SDG 4) number of publications in 2015 is almost 102 times. In 2022, this difference was 80.

At the same time, the analysis of publication activity, starting from 2015, shows the most significant increase in the number of publications until 2022, specifically for SDG 2 and SDG 6, due to their relevance in the context of global processes.

**Keywords:** sustainable development goals, Education Research Abstracts, education, education quality, empowerment, SDGs indicator.

### 1. Introduction

By joining the Sustainable Development Agenda, the signatory countries joined the international coalition of UN member states for the implementation of sustainable development programs and strategies and the global process of ensuring sustainable development. Therefore, adapting the Goals and Targets of sustainable development regarding national and regional specifics has begun. As a result, national systems of Sustainable Development Goals and Targets containing the task of developing national sustainability emerged.

In particular, the President of Ukraine signed the Decree “On the Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period until 2030”, which states that «The Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period until 2030 are the guidelines for the development of forecast and program document drafts, regulatory act drafts to ensure the balance of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of Ukraine sustainable development». In addition, the Presidential Decree on the Goals and Targets of Sustainable Development of Ukraine recommended that

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Ukraine's scientific and academic community consider the SDGs when determining the paradigm of their scientific research (Ukaz..., 2019).

To implement this Decree, the Government of Ukraine should analyze forecast and program documents regarding the Goals and Targets of sustainable development and take measures to improve them; develop an effective monitoring system for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; ensure annual publication of its results.

A list of indicators has been approved in the context of these principles and tasks implementation. Data will be collected considering these indicators to monitor the implementing SDGs in Ukraine. Therefore, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine should ensure the collection and publication of these data, as well as coordinate the work on elaborating metadata according to indicators. Central executive bodies responsible for calculating national indicators of sustainable development, with the participation of state bodies, ensure their collection and development of metadata, which are subsequently submitted to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Rozporiadzhennia..., 2019).

## 2. Materials and methods

The article is based on the official UN documents related to the Goals and Targets of sustainable development, in particular, the principal document – 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Transforming our world, 2015); annual monitoring and reports of the organization (SDG's Report, 2022a; SDG's Report, 2022b); the UNESCAP methodology for assessing the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (PAM, 2022) and others.

In addition, we analyzed an array of scientific publications in the ERA (Education Research Abstracts) database. This database contains indexed abstracts of modern international scientific studies in the field of education, including those indexed by Scopus and Web of Science databases. The ERA database provides access to more than 25 specialized datasets representing all major areas of scientific research. ERA includes a comprehensive publication archive dating back to 1995, advanced unique taxonomy, CrossRef support, and more.

We filtered all publications in the ERA database according to several parameters:

- 1) The hashtags Sustainable Development Goals, regarding specific SDGs, such as Gender equality, Industry; Innovation and Infrastructure; etc., were used;
- 2) The array of publications was filtered by Article type;
- 3) Limitation of publication date to 2015–2022.
- 4) Filtering was done by publication title, keywords and abstract.

To analyze the information support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we used:

- 1) Method of system analysis – for a comprehensive analysis of progress in achieving the SDGs, taking into account global and national indicators; challenges, and risks that humanity has faced in recent years;
- 2) The structural-functional method – for differentiation and typology of SDGs data taken from the ERA database;
- 3) Comparative analysis – to compare the level of information support and promotion of specific SDGs at the level of their scientific publication's presentation in a global dimension.

## 3. Discussion

The theme of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is gaining particular importance today, first of all, in the context of global challenges related to climate change, pandemics, armed conflicts, etc. Hence, the ambitious Goals and Targets announced at the UN General Assembly in 2000 (Millennium Goals) and 2015 (Sustainable Development Agenda) need to be comprehended not only from the point of view of value aspects but also as standards and guiding rules for practical implementation. The relevance of the theme concerning sustainable development goals at the global, regional, and local levels is evidenced by the fact that the total number of scientific publications with the Sustainable Development Goals hashtag is about 130,000 since the announcement of these Goals in 2015 (Education Research Abstracts).

Therefore, the entire array of scientific publications in ERA related to the SDGs can be divided into specific groups: publications that deal with the general principles of the UN SDGs, algorithms and methodology of their indexing at the global and national level, problems related to the implementation of the SDGs, etc. Also, the database presents scientific articles that relate to specific SDGs: poverty alleviation, gender equality, qualitative education, etc.

For example, Addo R. et al. emphasize social development prospects in the context of achieving the SDGs. The authors underline that SDGs are very important in the international practice of social work. Hence, teaching SDGs and social development requires social work teachers to use pedagogical approaches that provide a comprehensive understanding of real-life scenarios. The authors contextualize teaching based on the analysis of specific situations and project management within the framework of constructivist pedagogy, which promotes the development of critical thinking, cooperation, and problem-solving (Addo et al., 2022; Lebid, Shevchenko, 2020; Lebid et al., 2020).

Wynn M. and Jones P. assess the major industries' different approaches to the SDGs; they identify and discuss broader issues regarding the future implementation of the SDGs (Wynn, Jones, 2022).

Guo H. and other Chinese researchers discuss the challenges of Big Data about the Earth and the concerted efforts needed to achieve and measure progress towards the SDGs. They emphasize that important problems for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals are the lack of data for indicators of progress in achieving each goal and the different capabilities of countries in conducting such assessments. The scientists analyze the potential of the Big Data Earth Science Engineering Program of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CASEarth) and other case studies on Big Earth Data to support the SDGs (Guo et al., 2021).

Overcoming poverty is one of the biggest challenges facing low- and middle-income countries, according to scientists from China, which had the largest number of rural poor. The authors of the study (Jiang et al., 2021) proposed an inexpensive, timely, and accurate method that can be applied to other low- and middle-income countries to assess well-being on the way to the implementation of SDG 2: Erase Hunger.

Tura H. examines a human rights approach to food security using the example of Ethiopia. It has been established that a human rights-based approach to food security aims to empower vulnerable populations to assert their rights. This approach reinforces the obligation of governments to respect, protect and fulfill citizens' right to food. In addition, it encourages the implementation and integration of this right into the development and implementation of food security policies (Tura, 2019).

In their study, Given F. et al. conclude that increasing access to multimodal communication strategies and communication technologies, as well as user-centered co-design that enables digital autonomy in health care, will contribute to further progress towards reducing inequalities – SDG 10 and ensuring good health and well-being – SDG 3 (Given et al., 2022).

Using data from the World Bank, Wilson E., Verma R., and Jayanthakumaran K. estimate the elasticity of losses from poverty based on microeconomic utility and provide a better understanding of possible rural and urban policy directions for India and China. Elasticity indicators presented in the study show that a reorientation of priorities from promoting future urban growth to reducing urban-rural inequality can substantially reduce poverty-induced incapacity (Wilson et al., 2022).

In times of global pandemics and the climate crisis, social sustainability has become a key issue for various sectors and disciplines. In this context, the article by Barthel S. et al. aims to broaden the discussion about social sustainability in general and concerning working with communities in particular (Barthel et al., 2022).

J. Fitzgerald analyzed five US cities' climate action planning process to determine how planners and politicians make the planning process more inclusive for marginalized groups and incorporate equity issues into the plan's goals (Fitzgerald, 2022).

#### 4. Results

The Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are a roadmap for countries in their pursuit of prosperity, inclusion, and equality, leaving no one behind, and no one is forgotten. On September 25, 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the Resolution «Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development», which is an action plan and a guide on the way to global prosperity, improving life, and strengthening peace in conditions of growing freedom (Agenda..., 2015).

The countries should implement this plan based on the principles of social partnership, cooperation, and interaction with the goal of comprehensive prospects for the sustainable development of states, communities, people in the communities, and the world as a whole. The adopted Agenda consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Targets, which are of

great ambition, far-reaching and large-scale. All Goals and Targets are oriented towards the development of tasks and results, actualized within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG, 2015).

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 Targets associated with them are comprehensive and indivisible. These Goals and Targets entered into force on January 1, 2016, and for the next 15 years, the signatory countries will be guided by them in their decision-making. The Goals and Targets of sustainable development are aimed at realizing human rights, achieving gender equality, expanding women's rights and opportunities, etc. Having a complex and indivisible character, they ensure the balancing of three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

The Agenda defines the principal areas of the signatory countries' activity to build a society of prosperity regarding the level of social stability increasing in situations of uncertainty, risks, and crises. These areas of activity are:

- People;
- Planet;
- Prosperity;
- Peace;
- Partnership (Agenda..., 2015).

As defined by the Agender, countries «are determined to protect the planet from degradation, in particular, through rational consumption and production, rational use of its natural resources, and taking urgent measures regarding climate change so that the planet can meet the needs of present and future generations» (UN Declaration..., 1948).

In addition, the Agenda provides for the efforts of states to ensure a prosperous life for everyone, to promote the construction of a peaceful and just society, the activation of global partnerships in the interests of sustainable development, which is based on the principles of strengthening international solidarity, etc.

**Table 1.** Areas of activity and Goals of sustainable development by the 2030 Agenda

<b>People</b>	<b>Planet</b>	<b>Prosperity</b>	<b>Peace</b>	<b>Partnership</b>
SDG 1: Eliminate Poverty SDG 2: Erase Hunger SDG 3: Establish Good Health and Well-Being SDG 4: Provide Quality Education SDG 5: Enforce Gender Equality SDG 6: Improve Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 7: Grow Affordable and Clean Energy	SDG 14: Influence Responsible Consumption and Production SDG 15: Organize Climate Action SDG 16: Develop Life Below Water SDG 17: Advance Life On Land	SDG 1: Eliminate Poverty SDG 4: Provide Quality Education SDG 5: Enforce Gender Equality SDG 8: Create Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 9: Increase Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure SDG 10: Reduce Inequality SDG 11: Mobilize Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 16: Guarantee Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	SDG 1: Eliminate Poverty SDG 2: Erase Hunger SDG 7: Grow Affordable and Clean Energy SDG 10: Reduce Inequality SDG 11: Mobilize Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 16: Guarantee Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions SDG 7: Build Partnerships for the Goals	SDG 4: Provide Quality Education SDG 5: Enforce Gender Equality SDG 10: Reduce Inequality SDG 11: Mobilize Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 16: Guarantee Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions SDG 7: Build Partnerships for the Goals

The Goals and Targets of Sustainable Development define a vision of a future global world in which there is no place for need, fear, and violence. This is a world of universal literacy, where equal access to quality education and social protection is ensured, where physical, spiritual, and social well-being is guaranteed, where the living environment is safe and sustainable.

Essential aspects of achieving these ambitious goals are, in particular, respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law as opposed to the human rule, justice, equality, and non-discrimination.

Investments in social and human capital: elimination of legal, social, and economic obstacles to expanding the rights and opportunities of the most vulnerable population groups are also considered fundamental for implementing sustainable development Goals and Targets.

The Agenda is based on the goals and principles of the UN Charter in compliance with the norms of international law. This is what determines common principles and commitments on the way to sustainable development Goals and Targets implementation and increasing the level of social sustainability. The Agenda reflects the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international treaties in the field of human rights, the Millennium Declaration, and the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. It also considers the provisions of other documents, particularly the Declaration on the Right to Development. The problems and obligations defined by UN documents are interrelated and require comprehensive solutions. To manage them effectively, a new approach is needed.

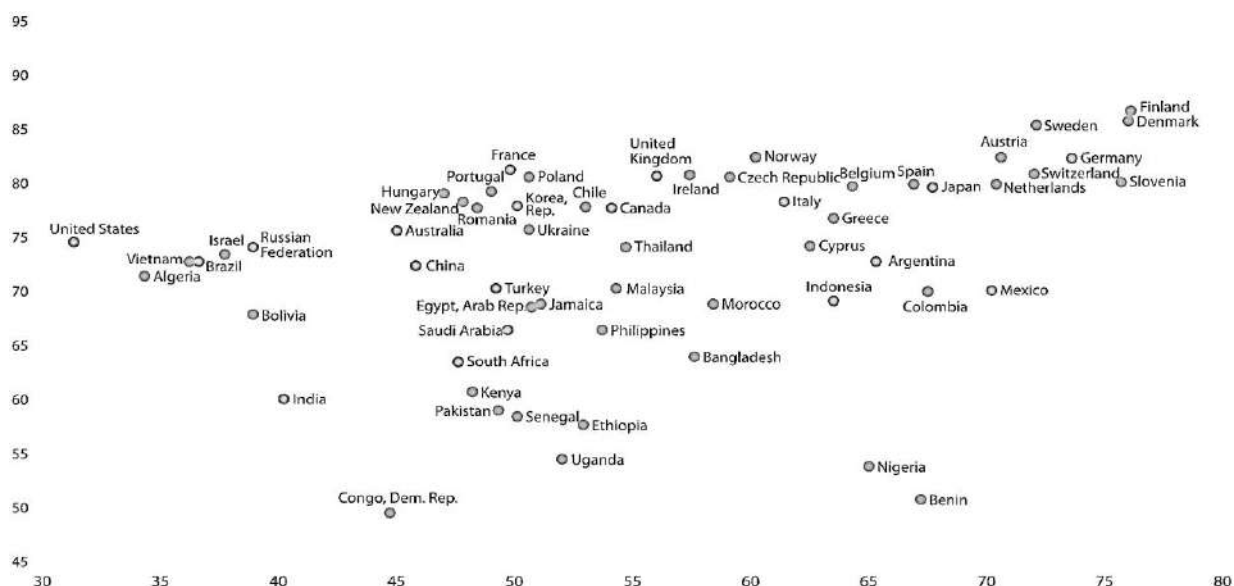
Today, the global community on the path to sustainable development faces serious challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, the aggravation of global conflicts among countries, the crisis of international institutions, etc. Internal and external disparities and inequality among countries are highlighted, particularly regarding the distribution of opportunities, resources, values, and power. Gender inequality remains one of the critical challenges. Unemployment, especially among the youth, is a deep concern.

Global threats and conflicts, extremism and terrorism and related humanitarian crises, and forced population displacement threaten to undo much of the development progress achieved in recent decades. For the second year, we have not seen progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Report, 2022b; Figure 1). In 2021, the average of the SDG index declined slightly, in particular, due to the slow or absence of recovery in poor and vulnerable countries. It is a severe failure, especially if we consider that before the pandemic, from 2015 to 2019, the world progressed towards implementing the SDGs by half a point per year, which is not enough to achieve them by 2030. Moreover, the progress of poor countries was more evident than in developed countries.



**Fig. 1.** The average global SDGs indicator

Today, political efforts and commitments to support the SDGs differ regionally, particularly among the G20 countries. In 2022, the ranking of the commitment and efforts of governments to achieve the SDGs, compiled in more than 60 countries. It showed that among the G20 member states, the USA, Brazil, and the Russian Federation offer minor support for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. On the other hand, the countries of Northern Europe show relatively high support for the SDGs, as well as Argentina, Germany, Japan, and Mexico. Some countries, such as Benin and Nigeria, for example, have large gaps in the SDG index, yet score relatively high for policy efforts to achieve the SDGs (SDG Report, 2022b; Figure 2). It can potentially help them get better results.



**Fig. 2.** Assessment of governments' commitments and efforts to achieve the SDGs

Nevertheless, it was possible to achieve tangible progress in solving the cross-cutting global development problems. In particular, millions of people have overcome extreme poverty; opportunities for access to education have significantly expanded; the spread of information and communication technologies and scientific and technical innovations significantly affect the progress of human civilization, accelerating it; there is a softening of the digital differences among countries, and increasing of the level of civil society and social stability development.

However, this process is still uneven, especially in African countries; developing countries; landlocked countries; small island states. Thus, some Millennium Development Goals have not yet been achieved in these territories, particularly those related to maternal, newborn, and reproductive health care.

In this context, several priority directions in solving problems related to the implementation of sustainable development Goals and Targets have been identified, in particular:

1. Financing the SDGs: an international agreement on introducing a global minimum corporate tax rate is the right step, but it will require effective implementation.

2. Technical cooperation and diplomacy of the SDGs: technical collaboration and knowledge transfer will increase social sustainability in producing countries. It is crucial that sizeable international investment programs – «Build Back Better», «Global Gateway», «Belt and Road Initiative» and others – were responsible for the SDGs. Countries should use diplomacy to promote multilateral processes for achieving the SDGs at the UN General Assembly, the Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the G7, the G20, the annual meetings of the IMF, and the World Bank.

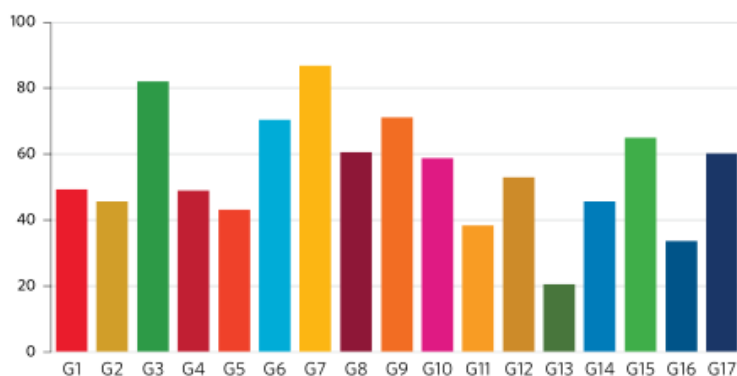
3. National goals and tools can contribute to the activation of actions on the way to the implementation of sustainable development Goals and Targets, which increase the level of social sustainability not only at the global but also at the national, regional, and local levels. An important component of this process is effective tools for monitoring the fulfillment of commitments.

4. Accountability, open data, and statistics: robust data systems should be paramount at all levels to track challenges and risks and coordinate global action to eliminate side effects.

In addition to global progress and regional differentiation in implementing the Goals and Targets of sustainable development, it is important to emphasize those differences that relate to the implementation of specific SDGs (SDG Report, 2022a; Figure 3).

As we can see, the global world has achieved tremendous success in the implementation of five SDGs, namely: SDG 3: Establish Good Health and Well-Being; SDG 6: Improve Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG 7: Grow Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG: Increase Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; SDG 15: Advance Life On Land

The least implementation of the SDGs also concerns five items: SDG 2: Erase Hunger; SDG: 5: Enforce Gender Equality; SDG 11: Mobilize Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 16: Guarantee Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and the worst situation with SDG 13: Organize Climate Action.



**Fig. 3.** Achieving SDGs, 2022

However, in this situation, it is vital to consider some other factors, not only the ability and political will of governments to implement the Goals and Targets of sustainable development. Thus, significant progress has been made in ensuring the availability of internationally comparable data for monitoring the SDGs: the number of indicators included in the global SDG database has increased from 115 in 2016 to 217 in 2022 (SDG Report, 2022a: 4). However, there are still significant data gaps in geographic coverage, timeliness, and level of disaggregation, making it difficult to understand the pace of progress toward implementing the 2030 Agenda, regional differences, etc.

Less than half of the 193 countries have internationally comparable data on 8 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2015 or later. Hence, data on SDG 3: Establish Good Health and Well-Being and SDG 7: Grow Affordable and Clean Energy have the highest availability (more than 80 % of countries). While only about 20 % of countries have internationally comparable data on SDG: 13: Organize Climate Action.

There is also insufficient disaggregated data to monitor progress on government policies and the situation of vulnerable populations. Among the 32 SDG indicators by gender, only 21 indicators have new disaggregated data available in most countries (more than 80 %). For 8 indicators, there are no such data at all. When considering other disaggregation parameters, such as disability status, the picture is even more uncertain: of the 10 SDG indicators that require disaggregation by disability status, only two of them have internationally comparable data.

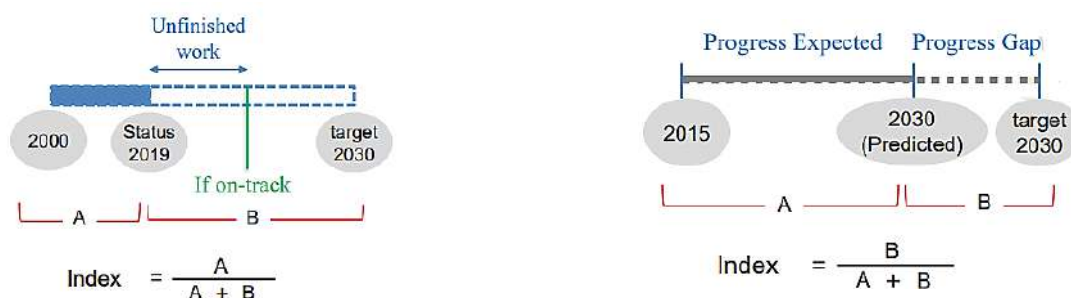
This situation directly depends on the challenges and risks that the global world faced at the beginning of the pandemic, which significantly affected the regions and caused irreparable damage, especially to states with weak economies. These states were deliberately forced to suspend the implementation of sustainable development programs, directing partly limited resources to overcome or mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. Some resorted to authoritarian management methods, which affected other parameters of national, regional, and local stability and sustainability.

The global indicator system includes 231 unique indicators. But the total number of indicators listed in the global system of SDG indicators is 248, and 13 indicators are repeated within 2-3 different goals:

- 7.b.1/12.a.1
- 8.4.1/12.2.1
- 8.4.2/12.2.2
- 10.3.1/16.b.1
- 10.6.1/16.8.1
- 13.2.1/13.b.1
- 15.7.1/15.c.1
- 15.a.1/15.b.1
- 1.5.1/11.5.1/13.1.1
- 1.5.2/11.5.2
- 1.5.3/11.b.1/13.1.2
- 1.5.4/11.b.2/13.1.3
- 4.7.1/12.8.1/13.3.1

The assessment of progress in achieving the SDGs is based on the global system of indicators fixed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the General Assembly on July 6, 2017. The data are published in the Global Database of SDG Indicators, which is maintained by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In the absence of sufficient data for a specific SDG indicator, additional indicators from internationally recognized sources on the ESCAP SDG Gateway Data Explorer portal are used.

In order to understand whether the country is moving towards the goal at a sufficient pace, a methodology for assessing the progress of countries in achieving the Goals and Targets of sustainable development has been developed. Two leading indicators are used to evaluate regional and subregional progress in achieving the SDGs: the current state index and the expected progress index (Figure 4).



**Fig. 4.** Scheme of the current state index and the expected progress index

The Current Status Index shows how much progress has been made since 2000. The Expected Progress Index shows the likelihood of achieving goals by 2030. The Expected Progress Index measures the gap between the predicted value of the indicator and the set target value. In an ideal situation, the Current Status Index would provide a reliable indicator that can be compared to all 17 goals. However, regarding that data availability is limited for some targets and the assessment is sensitive to adding new indicators, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Indicators are selected based on two criteria:

- 1) The presence of two or more data points for more than 50 % of the countries of the relevant region or subregion;
- 2) The possibility of setting a quantitative target value.

Any indicator that does not meet any of these criteria is excluded from the analysis. If there are no index values for specific years, then available data are used. If the target value for the indicator is not set, it can be calculated based on the values and dynamics of the indicator in other countries of the region.

Denoting the indicator values for 2000 and the current year by  $I_{00}$  and  $I_{cv}$ , and the target value for 2030 as TV, and setting the normalized indicator values in 2000 and 2030 to 0 and 10, respectively, the normalized indicator value in the current year on a scale of 0 to 10 can be calculated as follows:

$$P_{cs} = \frac{I_{cv} - I_{00}}{|TV - I_{00}|} \times D$$

where  $D = -10$  (desired decreasing index);  $D = 10$  (desired increasing index).

The above values are calculated for each indicator and averaged over the targets and objectives to measure «average progress» in achieving each goal. If the region (or subregion) has progressed since 2000, then the average value of the normalized indicators for each goal gives an index ranging from 0 to 10. If it has regressed, the value is negative and indicates the size of the regression.

An essential aspect of the UNESCAP methodology is the inclusive measurement of progress in achieving the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda is a human-centered program document. Its main principle is not to leave anyone behind. The world will not be able to follow this principle if the assessment of progress toward achieving the SDGs is not based on it. The idea is to introduce a coefficient that adjusts the overall progress made on one indicator to the progress of the most vulnerable group. In this context, it is appropriate to consider personal and social sustainability as

fundamental categories, as the goal and task of governments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thus, each Sustainable Development Goals is a system-forming union of tasks, indicators, and metadata that attribute a specific SDG (Metadana..., 2018). Undeniably, the level of social sustainability is determined by all the Goals and Targets of sustainable development. All of them, to some degree, are implemented according to the principle «No one will be left behind», which testifies to the fact that «People» is one of the most critical for humanity and planet, spheres of activity in which the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, at least until 2030, will stimulate activity in this area. Therefore, the sphere of «People» in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development occupies the first position as the most relevant direction (Agenda..., 2015).

Information support for the implementation of the SDGs with the help of national indicators of the SDGs makes it possible to assess progress in achieving sustainable development, timely identify current problems, prioritize the solution of economic policy tasks, establish relationships between sectors to ensure a synergistic effect and smooth out potential contradictions. It will also ensure accountability in the relationship between governments and citizens and contribute to raising awareness and mobilizing political support, stimulating sustainable development, and increasing social sustainability at all levels.

The scale and ambition of the Agenda require intensifying the work of the Global Partnership to ensure its implementation. This partnership will operate in a spirit of global solidarity. It will promote active broad participation in support of the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, involving governments, the private sector, civil society, international and other institutions, and mobilizing available resources. Sustainable development Goals and related Targets, considering different national realities, capacities, and levels of development, and considering national strategies and priorities, are comprehensive, indivisible, global in nature, and universally applicable.

The number of publications on sustainable development goals in the period from 2015 to 2022 was uneven.

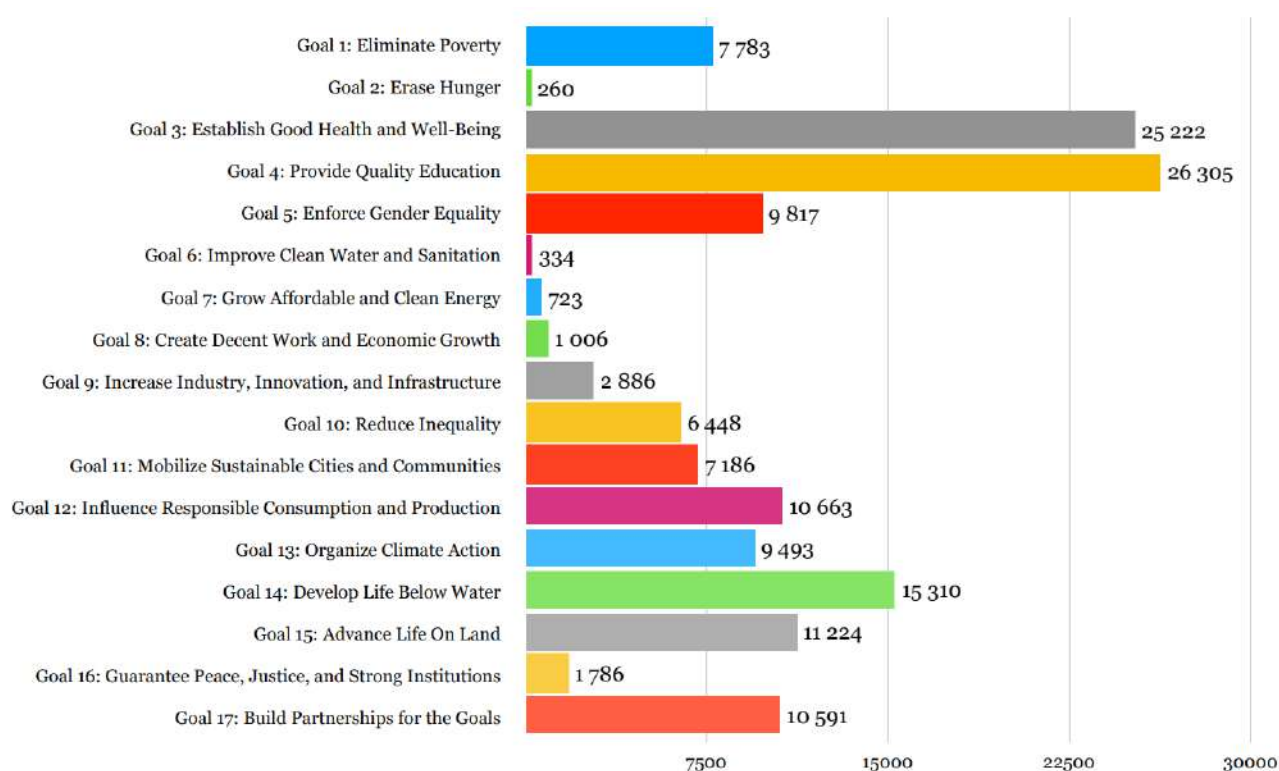
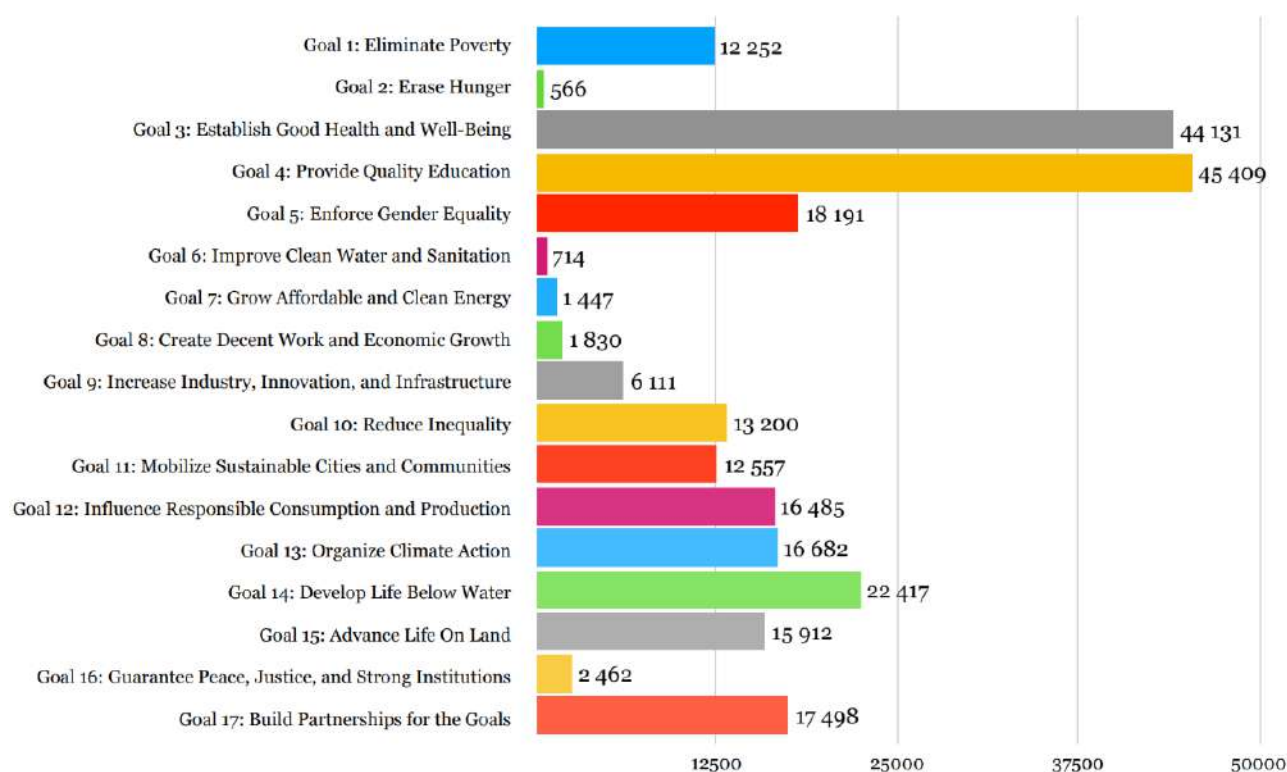


Fig. 5. Number of publications (ERA, 2015)





**Fig. 6.** Number of publications (ERA, 2022)

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, the UN Sustainable Development Goals are unevenly represented in scientific publications (Figure 5; Figure 6). For 10 months of 2022 among the most popular Goals which are under the research interests of scientists, we have singled out the following: SDG 4: Provide Quality Education – 45 409 publications; SDG 3: Establish Good Health and Well-Being – 44 131 publications and SDG 14: Develop Life Below Water- 22 417 publications.

The smallest number of publications covers SDG 2: Erase Hunger – 566 positions and SDG 6: Improve Clean Water and Sanitation – 714 (Figure 5).

As for the number of publications from 2015 to 2022, we observe an increase in all sustainable development goals. However, this growth was not uniform:

- SDG 1: 57,4 %
- SDG 2: 117 %
- SDG 3: 74,9 %
- SDG 4: 72,6 %
- SDG 5: 85,3 %
- SDG 6: 113,7 %
- SDG 7: 100,1 %
- SDG 8: 81,9 %
- SDG 9: 111,7 %
- SDG 10: 104,7 %
- SDG 11: 74,7 %
- SDG 12: 54,6 %
- SDG 13: 75,7 %
- SDG 14: 46,4 %
- SDG 15: 41,7 %
- SDG 16: 37,8 %
- SDG 17: 65,2 %

2015 – 140 037 publications, 2022 – 247 864 publications (growth – 76,9 %).

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## Perceptions of Pakistani Journalists Regarding the Credibility of Social Media

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### Abstract

Social media is ubiquitous these days and its importance cannot be denied but the invincible expansion of fake news and disinformation is undermining its credibility; and demands more scholarly research in this area. The current study is specially designed to analyze the perceptions of Pakistani journalists regarding the credibility of social media as a news source. This study helps the researcher to ascertain whether social media is a credible source of information among Pakistani journalists or not. To investigate the proposed hypothesis, the researcher opted for a cross-sectional survey method (n=196) by using the questionnaire technique. The sample of this study is both male and female journalists from print and electronic media of Lahore. The results claim that journalists are using social media for news updates, sharing breaking news and depending on it for their professional needs. Study also identifies a significant association between the usage of social media and the perceptions of its credibility; if journalists are spending more time on a site then they are more likely to identify fake and fabricated news. The present study also contributes to the body of knowledge in the area of social media credibility and journalists' perception in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** social media credibility, perception, journalists, social media news, fake news, message credibility, medium credibility, source credibility.

### 1. Introduction

Social media has become the prime source of information for the people of all spheres (USW, 2021). According to some studies, social media is considered a more reliable source of information than other mediums because of the freedom of speech and the free flow of information (Popoola, 2014). Although social media is a great source of information but the problem is that there is too much information available. Among the tons of reliable sources and factual information, social media is also bombarded with fabricated information and disinformation. The users of social media are constantly facing false news and could easily get lost in misinformation (Ketchell, 2021). It is very difficult for a user to identify which social media platform is credible and how they can identify the factual sources? (Tunikova, 2018). Almost 58 % of Pakistani people believe that fake news is a major problem in Pakistan (Haque, 2017). Even though social media credibility is becoming suspicious but the traffic on social media is increasing day by day (Mohsin, 2021). People are using social media to get breaking news; and to share information and Pakistani journalists are not an exception (Cherilyn Ireton, 2018).

Social media is increasingly becoming the dominant source of information for journalists and most of the Pakistani journalists are depending on social media and utilize it to get news updates (Zulqarnain, 2016). Based on Malik's study almost 57.4 % of Pakistani journalists use social media for news updates daily and 40.4 % of journalists are completely relying on social media for news stories (Malik, 2019). Whereas social media has made some of the journalistic work easier like

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finding information, disseminating news and interacting with the audience, at the same time it has also made some functions challenging for journalists like verification of the facts and identification of fake news (Pradhan, 2018). In the rating race era, sometimes professional journalists (intentionally/ unintentionally) print or broadcast unverified, picked up from social media, news which afterward can create uncertainty and chaotic situation in society (Jamil, 2019).

In this scenario where most news organizations are becoming digital- first and investing more money in online journalism to reach out to the mass audience, journalists need to be more cautious and diligent. Otherwise, it will be dangerous not only for media institutions but also for society. Journalists should always report verified and factual information from reliable sources because they are the influential source of information for the general public (Butt, 2017). Since Pakistani journalists are utilizing the customer-driven medium, which is sabotaging its credibility by disseminating fake news and disinformation from individual to individual unstopably. The aim of this study is twofold; first, this study aims to analyze the journalist's perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source to understand how much they depend on social media as a news source. Secondly, this study measures the influence of a journalist's demographics on their perception regarding social media news credibility.

To achieve the aims of the study, the following objectives are proposed:

- To ascertain the perceptions (understanding and attitude) of Pakistani journalists regarding the credibility of news shared on social media;
- To measure the influence of a journalist's demographics on their perception regarding social media news credibility.

## 2. Material and methods

The current study applies the credibility framework of Flanagin and Metzger for the understanding of medium, source and message factors (Flanagin, 2000). Credibility has three forms: source credibility, message credibility and medium credibility. Medium credibility is a perceived level of credibility of a specific medium, such as newspapers, television, internet or blogs (Sunar, 2001). In this study researcher is not comparing social media with traditional but comparing social media platforms such as mediums like *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *YouTube* and *WhatsApp*. Factors that define medium credibility are: *Trustworthiness*, *Reliability*, *Unbiased*, *Honesty* and *quality*). Source credibility is focused on the expertise or trustworthiness of the sources, such as journalists, experts, govt. officials, colleagues, influencers, private sources, friends and family, as the likelihood to provide credible information (Sobia, 2013). Factors that define source credibility are: *Knowledgeable*, *Influential*, *Transparent*, *Passionate*, *Reliable*, *Objective*, *Skilled* and *Professional*. Message credibility is a perceived level of credibility of the communicated message itself, such as information quality, accuracy, and currency (Flanagin, 2000). Factors that define message credibility are: *Clear*, *Fact- based*, *Believable*, *Unbiased*, *Accurate*, *Fair*, *Timely* and *interactive*.

We have opted for a quantitative research methodology to analyze the perception of social media news credibility among Pakistani journalists. The method that has been used to carry out this research is a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire contains multiple-choice questions. Through a simple random selection technique, a sample was selected and the data were collected from 196 (male and female) Pakistani journalists from television and print media. Flanagin and Metzger's credibility framework were used to identify the factors of medium, source and message credibility.

Instrument was carefully adapted carrying 4 sections and a 5-point likert scale (i.e., 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree). These sections were developed to inquire about journalists' use of social media, social media perceptions, the credibility of social media, and journalists' demographics. Section of the instrument related to social media perceptions was based on the scales adopted from Wajid Zulqarnain, social media credibility (Zulqarnain, 2016). The scale for the credibility of the social media section was adapted from various studies including Wajid's study (Wajid Zulqarnain, 2016, 2018), Rieh's scale (Rieh, 2007), Maurice Vergeer (Hermans, 2009), Cassidy (Cassidy, 2007), and Minjeong Kang (Kang, 2010).

We have applied Morgan and Krejcie's formula (Krejcie, 1970) to determine the sample size of the study. It offers more appropriate sampling:

$$s = \frac{X^2 N p(1-p)}{e^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

In Krejcie- Morgan formula  $s$  = required sample size,  $X^2$  = the table value of chi- square 6.64,  $N$  = population size,  $p$  = proportion of population 0.5 and  $e$  = acceptable sampling error 0.05 based on the research condition. According to the Krejcie- Morgan formula, the sample size for the current study is 226. Data collected from 226 journalists of Lahore, Pakistan was entered into SPSS Statistics 21 and 196 entries came up which account for an 87 % response rate. Cronbach's Alpha was also applied to check the reliability of the instrument, which was 0.949 as shown in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.949	.954	196

### 3. Discussion

Social media is the most acclaimed form of media because of its cheapest, fastest and most direct access to the world ([Dwivedi, 2021](#); [Kapoor 2018](#); [Reed, 2022](#); [Shabir, 2014](#)). The whole spheres of information system go through with some major changes after the advent of new technologies and the internet. Social media has disturbed the circulation flow of news because now the users of media information became contributors to its content ([Eijaz, 2013](#)). According to [Schifferes and Newman \(Schifferes, 2014\)](#), the study of the British Press shows that social media has become a major news source not just for the general people but for the journalists as well. It has become the source of breaking news for its users, additionally, celebrities (politicians and sports and entertainment) use social media channels like *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram* to reach out to their audience and broadcast their messages that they know will be picked up by the other media. According to [Boyd \(Boyd, 2014\)](#), readers seek information from the internet rather than traditional media but it's very risky to completely rely on social media for news updates. The internet offers an opportunity to users to keep their identity, location and role anonymous and these features generate concern regarding the credibility of content and medium where the anonymous identity of the sender may result in fake and fabricated information ([Fogg, 2013](#)).

According to the study on the science of fake news ([Lazer et al., 2018](#)), the issue with social media is that the penetration of disinformation and fake news is uncontrollable ([Duyn, 2019](#); [Li, 2020](#); [Molina, 2021](#); [Yamamoto, 2017](#)). Some people are intentionally spreading fake information to harm a person or the whole society. Regarding Pakistan, there are many examples of fake news available which were built up by a person or groups to defame a well- known individual or demoralize the society. The recent incident of Sunita Mashih's gang rape went viral on social media and was picked up by other media too, but turned out fake ([HelloPakistan, 2021](#)). Similarly, the recent *Facebook* post of Nobel Prize winner, Montagnier, on "Corona vaccinated people will die in 2 years" creates chaos in society but after the investigation it turns out he was just sharing his thoughts, not making any official statement ([Dunn, 2021](#)). Likewise, the fake image with an official stamp regarding "mutton eaters have more chances to get affected by the corona virus" were circulated on all the social media platforms and damaged the supply of meat, before it was declared fake ([AFP, 2020](#)). The main point here is that although social media is filled with rumors and disinformation but it cannot be denied that it's still a very beneficial source for breaking news ([Vorhaus, 2020](#)).

The Internet has changed the role of journalists in the communication process ([Arif, 2016](#); [Cassidy, 2007](#)). On one hand, social media empowers journalists with unparalleled information access, while on the other hand, it presents challenges of ensuring that the unfiltered information from unofficial sources is credible or not. There is a popular opinion that social media is full of disinformation. Newman's research ([Newman, 2009](#)) has found that even the Newsrooms integrated social media to gather content and find story ideas because it's changing the nature of breaking news. According to the research by Cision and The George Washington University on journalists' use of social media ([Bugasch, 2010](#)), most American journalists (61 %) are using Google or Wikipedia in their work. Social media is now becoming a relevant part of journalistic research. Almost 56 % of reporters are relying on social media sources for their news updates and breakings.

Although, American journalists think social media is less credible than traditional media but still use social media information actively. They claim in their research that mainstream media, television and newspapers, are relying on social media for their news research and reporting (Salaudeen, 2020; Shearer, 2018).

This obsession of people with using social media for a minute -to -minute updates and eyewitness reporting has raised a question not only on the credibility of social media but also about the credibility of Journalism. This customer-driven media is undermining its credibility by disseminating hoaxes, lies, disinformation and rumors from individual to individual unstoppably (Ireton, 2018; Situngkir, 2011).

Here are few questions arise: Do journalists consider social media as a credible news source? Do journalists use social media as a news source for reporting purposes in Pakistan? Which social media platform is more credible for news updates (breaking news) among Pakistani Journalists? What are the important factors that help journalists to assess the credibility of medium, source and message? Is there any relation between usage of social media and perception of its credibility?

The current study addresses the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant effect of Journalists' use of social media on their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source.

H<sub>2</sub>: Journalists' demographics are significantly associated with their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source.

H<sub>3</sub>: Journalists perceive source credibility more important than medium and message credibility.

#### 4. Results

Demographic information was collected in terms of age (i.e., 18 to 25 = 33 percent, n = 65; 26 to 35 = 59 percent, n = 115; 36 to 50 = 6 percent, n = 12; Above 65 = 2 percent, n = 4), educational level (i.e., High school = 6 percent, n = 12; Bachelors = 29 percent, n = 57; Master = 59 percent, n= 115; Doctorate = 6 percent, n= 12), and working experience of journalists in the field (i.e., less than 5 year = 48 percent, n= 94; 5-15 year = 48 percent, n= 94; more than 15 year = 4 percent, n = 8). Among survey participants 80 percent indicated that they access social media very often, followed by "often" (19 percent) and "occasionally" (1 percent). Out of the sample of 196, five types of active social media users were identified. Code 1 was given to "more than 2 hours" code 2 was given to "1-2 hours every day" code 3 was given to "few minutes every day" code 4 was given to the users who use social media only "once a week" and code 5 was given to those who "rarely" use social media. The effect of journalists' demographics on their perceptions regarding social media news credibility was tested. The results of the hypotheses tested in the present study are reported in the result section.

The given below tables are the actual representation of collected data in their specific categories to make it more convenient for others to understand the perception of Pakistani Journalists regarding the credibility of social media news.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant effect of Journalists' use of social media on their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source.

**Table 2.** Effect of Journalist's use of social media on their perceptions

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>			
R Square	Regression (Sum of Squares)	ANOVA (sig.)	Constant B
.513	36.765	.000	17.987

Table 2 illustrates that the coefficient of determination value R<sup>2</sup> indicates that 51 % of the variability in social media credibility can be predicted from the variable access (usage). The p-value of this hypothesis is 0.00 which is less than the Alpha-value of 0.05; it means there is a significant effect of Journalists' use of social media on their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source.

H<sub>2</sub>: Journalists' demographics are significantly associated with their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source.

**Table 3.** Association between Journalist's demographics and their perception

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square (age)	77.293 <sup>a</sup>	30	.000
Pearson Chi-Square (education)	95.171 <sup>a</sup>	30	.000
Pearson Chi-Square (experience)	49.445 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
N of Valid Cases	196		

According to [Table 3](#), the p-value of this hypothesis is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, so we can interpret that there is a significant association between demographics and journalists' perceptions regarding credibility. The results show that young journalists between the age of 26-35 with the experience of less than 5 years and more educated in the field are more likely to believe in social media credibility than more aged and experienced journalists.

H<sub>3</sub>: Journalists perceive source credibility more important than medium and message credibility

**Table 4.** Type of credibility

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Message	4	2
	Medium	48	24.5
	Source	144	73.5
	Total	196	100.0

[Table 4](#) demonstrates that the majority of the journalists perceive source credibility more important to assess the social media credibility than other forms of credibility. More than half of the journalists (i.e., source credibility = 73.5 percent, N= 144) think Knowledgeable, Influential, Transparent, Passionate, Reliable, Objective, and Skilled source is more important than Trustworthy, Reliable, Unbiased, Honest, quality medium (i.e., medium credibility = 48 percent, n= 24.5) and Clear, Fact-based, Believable, Unbiased, Accurate, Fair, Timely, interactive message (message credibility = 4 percent, n= 2).

**Table 5.** Usage level

	Twitter	Facebook	WhatsApp	YouTube
More than 2 hours everyday	39 (20 %)	106 (54 %)	184 (94 %)	70 (36 %)
1 hour everyday	53 (27 %)	49 (25 %)	4 (2 %)	52 (26 %)
Few minutes everyday	84 (43 %)	16 (8 %)	8 (4 %)	54 (28 %)
Rarely	20 (10 %)	25 (13 %)	0	20 (10 %)

**Table 6.** Spreading Fake News

	Twitter	Facebook	WhatsApp	YouTube
Not at all	127 (65 %)	29 (15 %)	34 (17 %)	16 (8 %)
Sometimes	69 (35 %)	98 (50 %)	112 (57 %)	131 (67 %)
Most of the time	0	49 (25 %)	42 (22 %)	41 (21 %)
Always	0	20 (10 %)	8 (4 %)	8(4 %)

**Table 7.** Credible source for news information

	Twitter	Facebook	WhatsApp	YouTube
Strongly agree	29 (15 %)	0	13 (7 %)	4 (2 %)
Agree	97 (49 %)	4 (2 %)	122 (62 %)	8 (4 %)
Neutral	66 (34 %)	57 (29 %)	41 (21 %)	17 (9 %)
Disagree	4 (2 %)	93 (47 %)	12 (6 %)	113 (58 %)
Strongly disagree	0	42 (22 %)	8 (4 %)	54 (27 %)



**Table 8.** Social media is a credible source

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	9	5
Agree	74	38
Neutral	48	24
Disagree	46	23
Strongly disagree	19	10

**Table 9.** Use social networking sites to

	Frequency	Percent
Get the breaking news	20	10.2
Break the news	29	14.8
Both	147	75.0

**Table 10.** Source you use to verify the validity of news

	Frequency	Percent
Personal contacts	124	63.3
Government Officials	36	18.4
Private official sources	16	8.2
Traditional media sources	20	10.2

It's been observed that journalists are using social media on daily basis and depending on social networking sites to prepare their reports and news (Safiri, 2016). This study explores that journalists are mostly spending their time using WhatsApp (94 %), and utilizing *Whatsapp* and *Twitter* for accessing information (25 % and 25 % respectively) regarding news and current happenings, rather than other social networking sites like *Facebook* (12 %) and *YouTube* (8 %).

According to the results of this study, *Twitter* and *Whatsapp* are the most trusted social networking sites for journalists because, as reported, *Twitter* is the least in spreading fake news and rumors.

As inspected, Pakistani journalists consider social media as a credible news source. Nearly half of the journalists are agreed that social media is a credible news source and half of them neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Journalists are usually depending on *Whatsapp* to verify the news by using their contacts. They don't reach out to the government or private officials very often to verify the social media news.

Moreover, Journalists are not only using social media to break the news but to get the breaking news as well. This study documented some attention-grabbing results and found excessive usage of social media among Pakistani journalists. According to their perceptions, social media is playing a vital role in their work life. Journalists are now relying on social media for news updates and breakings. This research suggests that there is a need to work more on social media credibility and verification methods for social media news.

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this empirical study was to examine the perceptions of Pakistani journalists regarding the credibility of social media. It's been discovered that there is a significant effect of Journalists' usage of social media on their perceptions regarding social media as a credible news source. Results indicate that journalists' demographics (age, education and experience) are significantly associated with their perceptions regarding social media credibility as a news source. Another inference can be made based on this research that journalists perceive source credibility as more important than medium and message credibility. In addition, *Knowledge*, *Influential*, *Transparency*, *Passion*, *Reliability*, *Objectivity* and *Skills* are the most important factors to verify the credibility of any news source. The study explores that journalists prefer social media to get an update regarding soft news (*Entertainment*, *Health*, *Sports* or *Weather*) as compared to hard news (*Political*, *International*, *Economic*, *Crime* and *Disaster News*).

Social media is becoming the priority to get breaking news not only for people but for journalists as well. It has changed the world by removing the communication gap. It not only allows users to create, share and disseminate content but it helps to construct their opinion via available information online (Molyneux, 2019). This research has successfully answered the research questions of the study. Do journalists use social media as a news source for reporting purposes in Pakistan? Journalists are using social media for news updates, sharing breaking news and their personal opinion regarding the news and depending on it for their professional needs. For the traditional media Journalists, it's obligatory to follow the organization's policy. But social media allows sharing their personal views with its users. Journalists use social media to prepare their reports, to collect in-depth detailed information and trending topics as well.

Which social media platform is more credible for news updates among Pakistani Journalists? The current study discovers that journalists do consider social media as a credible news source. There is a mixed perception regarding social media credibility. Almost 40 % of journalists are agreed with the statement that social media is a credible news source but 25 % disagree and 25 % are neutral. Among the sample of 196, 122 journalists consider *Whatsapp* the most credible source of news because through *Whatsapp* they can contact their colleagues and other journalists to share and receive the current happenings and news.

Is there any relation between usage of social media and perception of its credibility? The current study also identifies a significant association between the usage of social media and the perceptions of its credibility; if journalists are spending more time on a site then they are more likely to identify fake and fabricated news.

Although the current study generated significant findings, there are some limitations, such as the sample was only based on the journalists from Lahore, which is why the study is limited. The study has opted for the survey method because of the limited time frame but a survey technique with in-depth interviews of journalists will be more adequate for much better results. There is a dire need to research social media credibility and how journalists can identify the credibility of the source, message or medium. Also to investigate which methods journalists use to verify the news they receive from social media sites.

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## Licenses as a Legal Basis for the Use of Internet Resources in the Educational Process

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### Abstract

Currently, blended learning is becoming a promising form of higher education organization. This implies an increase in the volume of author's electronic educational and methodological content used in the educational process, for the creation of which teachers use software hosted on websites and third-party digital materials: presentations, texts, drawings and video materials. In this regard, the article discusses free and open licenses as the legal basis for using the resources of the global Internet in the educational process. To determine the degree of teachers' awareness an anonymous survey was conducted. The survey included 76 teachers of all age groups; most of them have more than 5 years of university work experience. The results revealed that more than half of the teachers believe that any software and all third-party digital materials posted on the global Internet have open access and can be freely used, modified and distributed. The novelty of the study is determined by the fact that the awareness of teachers in this area is being investigated. The practical significance is determined by the fact that the legitimate use of software and third-party digital materials posted on the Internet can improve the quality of author's electronic educational and methodological content.

**Keywords:** blended learning, copyright electronic content, Internet resources, legal use of third-party digital materials, teacher awareness.

### 1. Introduction

According to experts, in the next decade, blended learning will be one of the promising forms of organizing higher education (Bonk, Graham, 2004; Fomina, 2014; Khodeir, 2018).

Thus, the authors H. Batty, G. Scott, K. Stevens claim that the findings highlighted that the placement and the blended learning approach was successful from both the student and staff perspectives (Batty et al., 2022).

Currently, the concept of blended learning developed by the Clayton Christensen Institute (CCI) has been adopted (Shattuck, Burch, 2018). It defines blended learning as a formal educational program in which a student learns:

- In part online, with some element of control over the time, place, path, or pace of their learning.
- In part in a brick-and-mortar location away from home.
- The modalities along a student's learning path are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

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As you can see, blended learning involves an increase in the volume of electronic educational and methodological content used in the educational process, which must be created in accordance with state educational standards of higher professional education and author's teaching methods.

Thus, pre-recorded lecture videos had a positive impact to teaching and learning of chemistry courses among the students (Lapitan et al., 2021).

Author's electronic educational and methodological content posted by teachers on the university's online platform to support blended learning can be defined as the content of various types of scientific, pedagogical, educational, informational, instructive, organizational, regulatory, technical and other materials presented in electronic form (Robert, Lavina, 2012).

The range of technological solutions of online platforms used by universities to support blended learning is quite wide – these can be:

- specially designed software products, Authoring Packages (for example, We.Study, <https://we.study>);
- Learning Management System (LMS, for example, Moodle, <https://moodle.org>);
- Content Management Systems (CMS, for example, WordPress, <http://www.itrack.ru/research/cmsrate>) (Adini et al., 2017);
- in the simplest case, an online platform is a university website where teachers post electronic educational and methodological content and students' mobile applications to display this content.

In the process of creating author's electronic educational and methodological content, teachers use global Internet resources.

Internet resources can be defined as a set of scientific, pedagogical, educational, methodological, normative, instructive, organizational, technical information and software presented in a format that provides their technical and technological support in local and global networks and stored on various servers (Robert, Lavina, 2012).

Usually these resources are developed by companies to generate profit from users or advertising, but sometimes they are completely free for educators.

In accordance with the current copyright law, all rights, both property and non-property, automatically belong to the authors. The right to determine the forms, methods and technologies for the distribution and use of intellectual property belongs to its owner. The granting of intellectual property rights to the third parties and notification of this is governed by the relevant licenses or documents (agreements) that give the right to perform certain actions (Avtorliq..., 2020; Grazhdanskiy..., 2022).

That is, there is a need to inform teachers in the field of licenses application, as a legal basis for the legal use of Internet resources in the educational process.

## 2. Materials and methods

### *Teacher software*

Recently, software sites have appeared on the Internet, where teachers have the opportunity to create and publish their own educational and methodological materials in colorful, digital form.

For example, using the Prezi cloud web service (<https://prezi.com>), you can create interactive multimedia presentations with a non-linear structure online. Prezi generates one slide that contains the entire presentation. This service is free for teachers.

Web service Kahoot! (<https://kahoot.com>) is free and designed to create online quizzes, polls and discussions. Since the service is aimed at rapid development, and the options are minimal. Students use mobile phones to answer test questions. On the common screen, they see the question and the results of the answers of the whole group. During the test, a healthy spirit of competition arises, which increases the involvement of students in the learning process (Wang, Tahir, 2020).

So, paid licensed commercial software is called proprietary and means that you cannot use any of its functions before buying the program.

In addition to paid software, there is free software of interest to us: Freeware, Shareware, Adware, Demo, Freemium, Open-source and Free Software.

Most of the Internet resources with software for teachers belong to the class of programs called Freemium – this is a business model that offers to use the online service for free, but with incomplete functionality, and an premium version or program with improved, higher quality are offered for an additional fee depending on the amount of features.

And only Free Software can be freely installed and used on any computers: in universities, offices, on personal computers of teachers and students, on computers of commercial and governmental organizations and institutions. It grants the user the right to: run the program freely; distribute copies of it; have access to the source codes of the program, study them, change and improve them (Pozharina, Ponosov, 2008).

To save users of free software from legal problems, developers give users the necessary rights by releasing the software source code under free software licenses.

Unlike a typical proprietary license, free licenses grant the user the rights that are specific to free software. The user can read the source code of the programs, edit it, and distribute modified and unmodified versions of the software.

Under the terms of free licenses, the rights holder cannot revoke the privileges granted to users, but the authors of the software retain their rights guaranteed by law.

The first such license was formulated by Richard Stallman. It's called the GNU General Public License, or GNU GPL for short, or simply the GPL (Litsenziya..., 2014).

Modern free licenses: GPL, LGPL (<https://www.fsf.org>), BSD (<https://www.bsd.org>), MIT (<https://tlo.mit.edu>), MPL (<https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/who-we-are/licensing>), Apache License (<https://www.apache.org/licenses/LICENSE-2.0>), have a number of differences, but they all give the teacher the right to use the software for any purpose, freely distribute it, modify it (except for the name), and distribute modified copies.

So the authors Sen R., Subramaniam C., Nelson M.L. argue that non-copyleft licenses will dominate for large open source software projects (Sen et al., 2011).

#### *Third party digital content hosted on the Internet*

Also recently, the practice of free exchange and use of presentations, texts, photographs, drawings, video materials, open electronic educational resources posted on sites on the global Internet has become widespread. Third-party digital materials are used by teachers to create their own electronic educational and methodological content.

Free licenses intended for software are not suitable for the distribution of electronic content in the field of education and science (Camerlink, Pongrácz, 2022). To legalize the use of third-party digital materials, a group of international licenses Creative Commons has been developed (Vorozhbit et al., 2011; Yeliseyev, 2019).

To prohibit copying and (or) modification of copyrighted digital material, the copyright holder may use technologies for distributing hyperlinks to this material, technologies for embedding content in a website or blog.

To retain your intellectual property and allow Internet users or a limited number of individuals to view, copy, modify and distribute copyrighted digital material, it must be accompanied by a Creative Commons license (Herr, 2021).

Creative Commons open licenses (<https://creativecommons.org>) comply with copyright law, they describe the terms of use of presentations, texts, photos, drawings, videos to which they are attached.

Unlike free licenses, Creative Commons do not require distribution of accompanying text with license terms along with the work, a letter code from the basic elements is enough (Litsenziya..., 2021; Rukovodstvo..., 2020).

#### *Internet survey*

To determine the degree of teachers' awareness in the field of licenses application, as a legal basis for the legal use of Internet resources in the educational process, an anonymous survey was conducted.

To conduct the survey, a questionnaire was developed, which was posted on the Internet on Google Forms, which provide a service for conducting user surveys based on the Google Marketing Platform ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScEFiHuFvdNZtvj9W\\_C5d6w8I-3tTE49erCUyzcgqL4s-CtUQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScEFiHuFvdNZtvj9W_C5d6w8I-3tTE49erCUyzcgqL4s-CtUQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)).

76 teachers took part in the survey. For greater clarity, the qualitative composition of teachers is shown in Table 1.



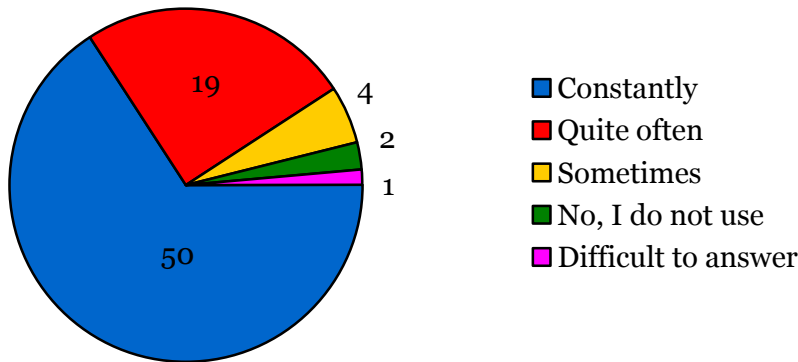
**Table 1.** Composition of teachers who took part in the study

Composition	Quantity
Total teachers	76
Male teachers	31
Female teachers	45
Under the age of 30	15
At the age of 30-40 years	22
At the age of 41-50 years	24
Over 50 years old	15
With less than 1 year of work experience	7
With work experience from 1 to 5 years	16
With more than 5 years of experience	53

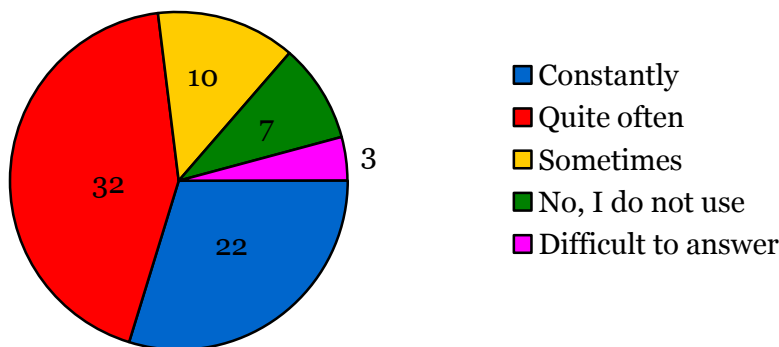
As we can see, 41 % of male and 59 % of female teachers took part in the survey; 20 % were teachers under the age of 30, 29 % were teachers aged 30-40, 32 % were aged 41-50, 20 % were teachers over 50; 70 % of which have more than 5 years of university work experience.

For greater clarity, the results of the survey of teachers are given in the form of [Figure 1](#).

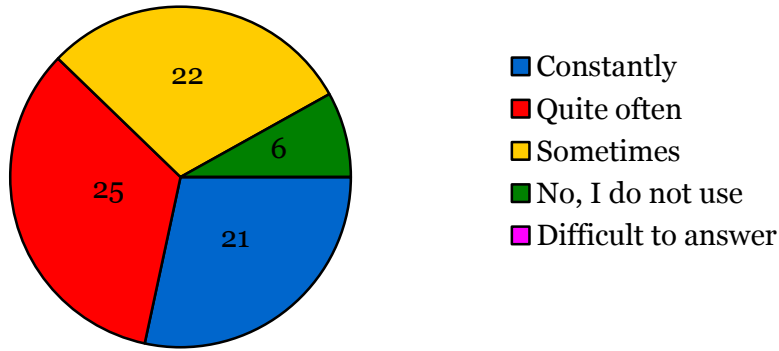
1) How often do you use Internet resources in your work?



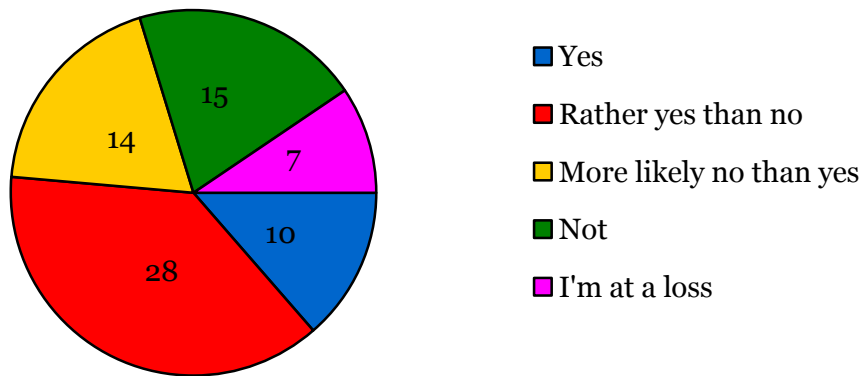
2) How often do you use software for teachers hosted on sites on the global Internet in your work?



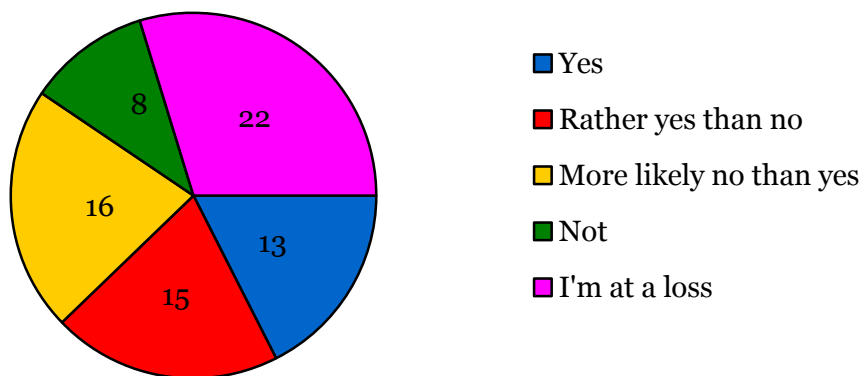
3) How often do you use presentations, texts, drawings or videos posted on the Internet in your work?




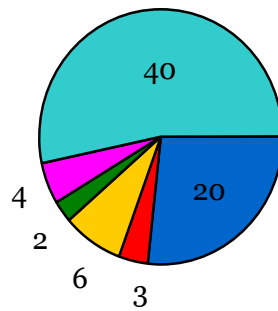
4) If the software for teachers, presentation, text, drawing or video material is posted on the global Internet, does this mean that this resource has open access and any Internet user can view copyright material, use, modify and distribute it?



5) Can free software licenses be used to use, exchange, modify and distribute electronic content in the field of education and science?

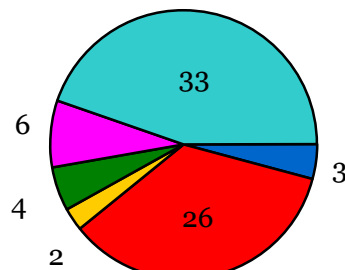


6) What does the "Attribution (abbreviated BY)" element  mean?



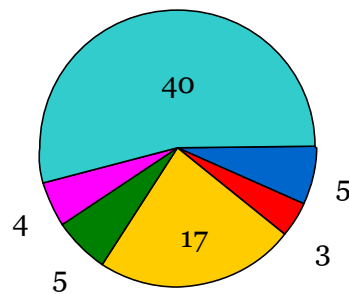
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- Difficult to answer

7) What does the element "Noncommercial (abbreviated NC)"  mean?




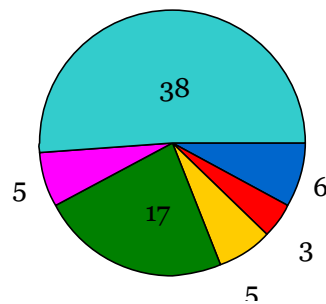
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- It is allowed to make any changes to the work, use it exclusively for non-commercial purposes, with the obligatory indication of the author of the original source and the license preservation
- Difficult to answer

8) What does the element "No Derivative Works (abbreviated ND)" mean ?




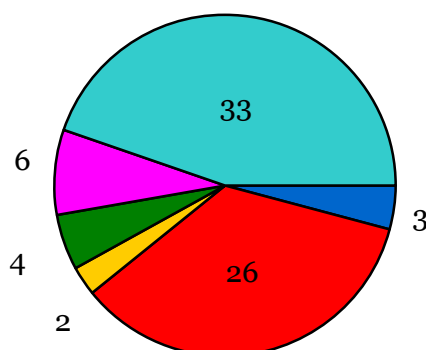
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- Difficult to answer

9) What does the "Share-alike (abbreviated SA)" element  mean?



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- It is allowed to make any changes to the work, use it exclusively for non-commercial purposes, with the obligatory indication of the author of the original source and the license preservation
- Difficult to answer

10) What does the following entry "CC BY-NC-SA"  mean?



- It is allowed to copy, distribute, reproduce, perform and rework the work, provided that the author of the work is indicated
- Permission is granted to copy, distribute, reproduce, perform and process for non-commercial purposes
- Permission is granted to copy, distribute, reproduce and perform only unmodified copies
- You may only distribute derivative works under the same license as the original work
- It is allowed to make any changes to the work, use it exclusively for non-commercial purposes, with the obligatory indication of the author of the original source and the license preservation
- Difficult to answer

**Fig. 1.** Results of the teachers' survey

As you can see, 66 % of the responding teachers constantly use and 25 % of the teachers quite often use the Internet resources in their work. 30 % of teachers constantly use, 43 % quite often use the software posted on the sites. Presentations, texts, drawings and videos posted on the global Internet are constantly used by 28 % and quite often by 34 % of teachers.

At the same time, 14 % of teachers answered that any software and all third-party digital materials posted on the global Internet: presentation, text, drawings and video materials have open access and can be freely viewed, used, modified and distributed; 38 % of teachers answered yes rather than no.

30 % of teachers found it difficult to answer the question: "Is it possible to use free licenses designed for software to use, exchange, modify and distribute electronic content in the field of education and science." Thus, they showed a lack of awareness in the field of application of free licenses, which are the legal basis for the legal use of free software.

53 % of teachers found it difficult to answer what the basic element of Creative Commons licenses "Attribution" means, 45 % found it difficult to answer what the element "Noncommercial" means, 54 % what the element "No Derivative Works" means, 51 % of teachers found it difficult to answer what the element "Share-alike". 57 % of teachers found it difficult to answer what the letter code "CC BY-NC-SA" means.

So, the teachers' survey results made it possible to identify the problem of their lack of awareness in the field of application of licenses, as a legal basis for the legal use of Internet resources in the educational process.

### 3. Discussion

For the training of university teachers, a training module "Licenses as a legal basis for the use of Internet resources in the educational process" has been developed. The duration of training is 72 hours, it is provided for control over its development.

The training purpose: familiarization of university teachers with free and open licenses as a legal basis for the legal use of Internet resources in the educational process.

Required initial level of students' training: familiarity with basic concepts and services of the Internet; knowledge of terminology related to the educational process; the ability to search for information on the Internet; experience with Internet resources.

Formed knowledge and skills of students:

– understanding of the normative base of documents regulating the legal aspects of the Internet resources use in the educational process;

– familiarization of teachers with free and open licenses as a legal basis for the legal use of software and third-party digital materials posted on the global Internet.

The module structure is shown in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2.** The structure of the module "Licenses as a legal basis for the use of Internet resources in the educational process"

№	Lessons content	Number of hours		
		Lectures	Practical lessons	Independent work
1	Introduction. Information about the module, learning objectives, formed knowledge and skills	1	-	5
2	Acquaintance with the main provisions of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, regulating the use of Internet resources	4	-	2
3	Teacher Software: Prezi, Kahoot!	-	4	2
4	Acquaintance with the main provisions of the Russian legislation governing the use of Internet resources	2	-	4
5	Classification of computer programs in accordance with the rules of law. Open source and free software	2	-	4
6	Search for educational information on the Internet	-	3	3
7	GNU General Public License. Comparative analysis of free licenses: GPL, BSD, MIT, LGPL, MPL, Apache License	2	-	4
8	Legitimacy of educational materials exchange. Legality of using social media tools	2	-	4
9	Search for third-party digital materials on the global Internet	-	4	2
10	Creative Commons open licenses	2	-	4
11	Creation of author's educational and methodological content	-	4	2
12	Test lesson	-	-	6
	Number of hours modulo:	15	15	42

Taking into account the specifics of an adult audience: the form of presentation of lecture material involves providing students with the opportunity to adapt the content to their own practice during classes; practical exercises include familiarization with the experience of colleagues, work in small groups; project activities are aimed at creating their own educational and methodological content, professionally in demand in the educational process.

#### 4. Results

At the teachers' request, two groups were allocated.

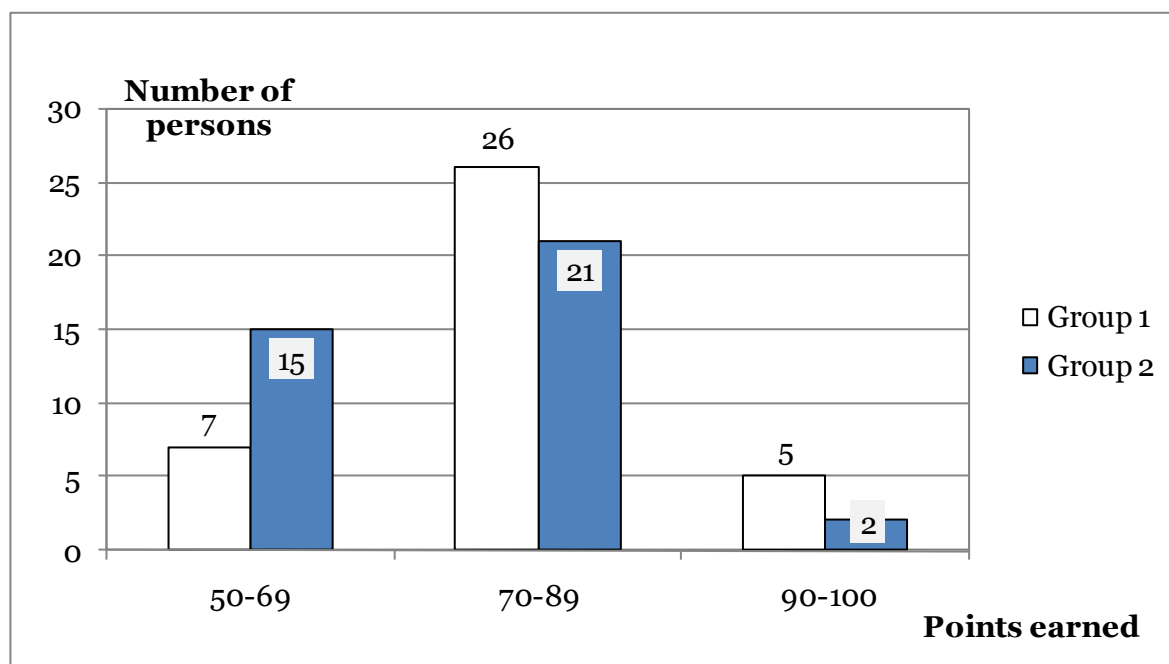
In the process of teaching the first group, electronic educational resources were used: educational puzzles, educational game "Who wants to become a millionaire?", electronic laboratories and text mosaic.

Text files in pdf format with thematic hyperlinks in the global Internet were used as teaching aids for the second group.

A point-rating scale was used. The results of teacher testing, after training, are shown in Table 3 and Figure 2.

**Table 3.** Results of the final testing university teachers, after training

Levels of knowledge and skills	Group 1	Group 1	Total
High (90-100 points)	5	2	7
Sufficient (70-89 points)	26	21	47
Satisfactory (50-69 points)	7	15	22
Unsatisfactory (0-4 points)	0	0	0
Total	38	38	76



**Fig. 2.** Results of testing teachers, after training

The following results of teacher testing were obtained: 14 % of the first group and 5 % of the second group teachers received excellent marks (high level); 68 % of the first group teachers and 56 % of the second group received well (sufficient level); 18 % of the first group and 39 % of the teachers of the second group received satisfactory results, not a single teacher received unsatisfactory results.

A statistical hypothesis  $H_0$  was put forward about the homogeneity of the first and second groups in terms of knowledge and skills levels after training, which was tested on two samples obtained from the results of the final testing of these groups (Table 4 and Figure 1) using the

Pearson goodness-of-fit test  $\chi^2$  (Vukolov et al., 2003: 294-295. Example 3).

According to formula (5) (Vukolov et al., 2003: 271) we find:

$$\chi^2 = 76 \cdot \left( \frac{5^2}{38 \cdot 7} + \frac{2^2}{38 \cdot 7} + \frac{26^2}{38 \cdot 47} + \frac{21^2}{38 \cdot 47} + \frac{7^2}{38 \cdot 22} + \frac{15^2}{38 \cdot 22} - 1 \right) =$$

$$= 76 \cdot (0.093984962 + 0.015037594 + 0.37849944 + 0.246920493 + 0.05861244 + 0.269138756 - 1) = 4.72672 \approx 4.73$$

Number of degrees of freedom (Vukolov et al., 2003: 293):  $r = (4 - 1) \cdot (2 - 1) = 3$ .

The statistics of the Pearson test  $\chi^2$  turned out to be 4.73 with a tabular value defined  $\chi^2_{1-\alpha}$  at the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$  with three degrees of freedom 7.81 (Vukolov et al., 2003: 417. Table P5). This made it possible to accept the  $H_0$  hypothesis as plausible and combine two samples with the results of the final testing into one.

The number of trainees in the combined sample who acquired knowledge and skills at a high and sufficient levels turned out to be 54 people (Table 4 and Figure 1) or 71 %, that is, the majority.

The first group showed better results than the second one.

The study confirmed the assumption that the inclusion of modern electronic educational resources in the educational process contributes to improving the quality of students' knowledge.

## 5. Conclusion

Free licenses, such as GPL, BSD, MIT, LGPL, MPL, Apache License, are the legal basis for teachers to use free software provided by developers on sites on the Internet to create their own electronic educational and methodological content.

Open licenses such as Creative Commons are the legal basis for the free exchange of educational digital content. The developers of open educational resources, unlike other copyright holders of presentations, texts, photographs, drawings, video materials, deliberately waive their rights that limit the ability of users to distribute or modify copyright digital material, while retaining only certain rights to it.

To identify the awareness of teachers in this area, an Internet survey was conducted. 76 teachers took part in the survey.

Almost the same number of male (41 %) and female (59 %) teachers participated; teachers of all age groups: under 30 years old (20 %), 30-40 years old (29 %), 41-50 years old (32 %), over 50 years old (20 %); most of them have more than 5 years of university work experience (70 %).

Most of the responding teachers use the Internet resources in their work (66 % use it constantly and 25 % quite often). Teachers use software hosted on websites (constantly use 30 % and quite often 43 %); as well as presentations, texts, drawings and video materials posted on the global Internet (constantly used by 28 % and quite often by 34 %).

At the same time, more than half of the teachers believe that any software and all third-party digital materials posted on the global Internet: presentation, text, drawings and video materials have open access and can be freely viewed, used, modified and distributed (yes, you can use – answer 14 % of teachers and more likely yes than no – 38 %).

Almost a third of teachers (30 %) found it difficult to answer the question: "Is it possible to use free licenses designed for software to use, exchange, modify and distribute electronic content in the field of education and science".

Most of the responding teachers could not recognize the letter code and pictures of the basic elements of the Creative Commons open licenses. Difficult to answer what the element "Attribution" means 53 % of the responding teachers, "Noncommercial" – 45 %, "No Derivative Works" – 54 %, "Share-alike" – 51 % of the teachers. What does the entry "CC BY-NC-SA" mean? 57 % of teachers found it difficult to answer.

Thus, the study revealed a lack of awareness of teachers in the field of application of free and open licenses, which are the legal basis for the legal use of software and third-party digital materials hosted on the global Internet, in the process of creating copyright electronic content and using it in educational process.

To train university teachers, a training module "Licenses as a legal basis for the use of Internet resources in the educational process" was developed, which provides training for 72 hours and monitoring the results of its development.

After the training, some of the teachers showed a high level of mastering the educational material of the module (14 % of the first group teachers and 5 % of the second group received



excellent marks); more than half of the teachers mastered the educational material at a good level (68 % of the first group and 56 % of the second group); approximately one third of the teachers showed a sufficient level of knowledge and skills (18 % of the first group teachers and 39 % of the second one).

The study confirmed the assumption that the inclusion of the first group of modern electronic educational resources in the educational process contributes to improving the quality of students' knowledge.

## 6. Acknowledgments

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## Twitter as Public Sphere to Connect between Librarians and Library Users: A Bibliometric Analysis of Research Topics Trend Related to Twitter Usage and Library Service

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### Abstract

Academic libraries must adapt to the development of the era. Twitter as social media can become a new form of the public sphere. The public sphere is the place where people can go for discussion without feeling restricted by the status or regulation of authorities. This study aims to investigate the topics that had become research trends of publications related to the usage of Twitter and library service in University. This study uses a bibliometric analysis to process the secondary data. The secondary data are from Scopus website with the samples from three global university libraries, namely Harvard, Cambridge, and Airlangga University. The duration of the samples were 2016–2021 and the data were gathered using keyword search in Scopus. Those keywords were *library* and *Twitter*.

There were 66 samples from Harvard University, 97 samples from Cambridge University, and 7 samples from Airlangga University. The result showed that Harvard University focused more on IOT, especially on machine learning to enhance the Twitter usage for library service. Meanwhile, Cambridge university balanced between the usage of Twitter and library as their research topics. Airlangga University had few topics related to those two.

**Keywords:** IOT, academic library, Twitter, education, media literacy, developing countries.

### 1. Introduction

The emergence of “industrial revolution 4 (Cowan, 2018) affects the whole system of global library standards based on IFLA standard, to compete with the never-ending growth of society’s interest (Te Boekhorst, 1995). In this era, society cannot live without interacting with digital technology (Pratama et al., 2020). As such, libraries, including those of universities, as institutions that offer information and insight to society should adopt digital technology into their system (Seeman, 2018). One of the adjustments toward the digital era is the creation of an e-library to access books and articles collection using the library website (Kruger, 2018)

Application and library websites can offer online transactions, such as ordering books for loan, repository detection of which book or article is a late returned item, and which books and articles are available. Moreover, by using digital repository, librarians can add more collections without worrying about space for books or maintenance for books or articles to prevent deteriorating collection because of mould or climate (Alvermann, Sanders, 2019),

To update information on the latest library collection, library opening hours, as well as provided library facilities, librarians should keep in touch with the society through social media. Librarians are also able to update details of events held in the library to meet public expectations.

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The fourth industrial revolution has led to the penetration of social media into all people without border (Han, et.al., 2018). Social media also enables librarians to build their forum of discussion for certain academic majors. Moreover, it also makes it possible for librarians to keep in touch with users and visitors (Maceli, 2018), and also to update them with the latest trends and information needed. In the case of university libraries, this is especially true in relation to academics (Lacey, Lomness, 2020).

Abeyrathne and Ekanayake in their study state that academic libraries have responsibilities to meet the required information related to research (Windsor, 2019), since they focus on the insight of higher education (Yudkevich, 2019). These libraries are supported by the government to meet academics' demand for the growing popularity of specific majors. Libraries of higher education should maintain all of the collection and events adapted to the life of research since the goal of higher education is on research (Cervone, Brown, 2019).

The use of social media has become indispensable because librarians have to keep in touch with academics and academic communities, especially students who need materials for their assignments or research projects (Juliansyah et al., 2021). One of the most commonly used social media by librarians in universities is Twitter (Himmelbolm et al., 2017). Twitter is easy to use and does not need a long loading time like Facebook, because there is hardly any advertisement on the platform. Moreover, Twitter does not limit its users in downloading resources uploaded by other users, as all of these features are free to use (Brems et al., 2017).

By using social media, the library reputation is also increased because academics feel that librarians pay attention to their demands. Twitter also offers unlimited storage for users to upload contents that are related to higher education learning process (Smith et al., 2015). Based on the background above, this study aims to observe the research trend of topics related to the usage of Twitter and library service published by universities libraries from three countries. The theoretical implication of this study is expected to provide insights and advice for librarians in universities.

## 2. Materials and methods

The public sphere is the place where people can go for discussion without feeling restricted by the status or regulation of authorities. Habermas is a sociologist and philosopher who is often associated with the concept of the Public Sphere. According to Habermas, Public Sphere is depicted as a reality of social life in which there is a process of exchanging information on various views, regarding the subject matter (Sharman et al., 2018). The existence of the Public Sphere shows the activeness of the community by utilising their rights to participate in thinking and being involved in a hot discourse, especially related to political issues (Audunson et al., 2019).

The concept of Public Sphere emerged as a new era by the demolition of bourgeois group in global, and the rise of middle and lower class into high class as a result of globalization and democracy. With the existence of mass democracy, the public which was originally represented by a limited educated elite began to be joined by the majority of people who were not well educated (Wardhana, 2021a). The birth of social media that creates limitless room for discussion for many people regardless of the status and power is the new era for the public sphere (Rodriguez, 2020).

The birth of a social networking site, which is a web-based service, allows users to create profiles, view a list of available users, and invite or accept friends to join the site. The relationship between mobile devices and internet web pages through "social networks" has become a standard in digital communication. Social media does not only become discussion space (Kursuncu et al., 2019) to replace meeting places of workers, rather it is also a space to gain authority against certain power (Stolze, 2019). Habermas states that the concept of 'public space' is an independent and separate space from the state and market (Audunson et al., 2019). The public sphere ensures that every citizen has access to be a leading figure of public opinion. This public opinion has a role to influence, formally or informally, the perspective of society and marketplace that is related to the economy (Stolze, 2019).

This study uses a bibliometric analysis to process the secondary data. The data gathered from Scopus website with subscription service, so that it could generate more meta-data from many papers (Wardhana, 2020). This study used purposive sampling technique in gathering samples. The samples were publications from three universities of different countries, namely Harvard University – the USA, Cambridge University – the UK, and Airlangga University – Indonesia. The three universities were selected because Harvard is the first rank university in the world, Cambridge

University is famous for its curriculum of education that is used globally and Airlangga University was chosen because one of the largest university in Indonesia (Mafruchati, Makuwira, 2021).

The duration of the samples were 2016-2021 and the data were gathered using keyword search in Scopus. Those keywords were *library* and *Twitter*. There were 66 samples from Harvard University, 97 samples from Cambridge University, and 7 samples from Airlangga University.

The data then exported in CSV format file and analyzed using Vosviewer software version 1.1.16. Vosviewer could visualize the trending topics inside the samples along with the connection of each topics. Moreover, Vosviewer also could distinguish topics between each year in colored dots, so that the samples could be identified when it appeared (Mubarrok, 2020).

### 3. Discussion

Twitter has become a fast and interactive media to distribute information as well as effective correction medium for many news media (Melissa et al., 2020; Vraga et al., 2022), therefore university also intensively uses twitter to spread their university news to the public.

Interestingly, there was a topic *machine learning* and *spatial analysis* as research topics which were became trend in 2020. It could be said that librarians in Harvard University take a measure seriously to the machine learning as a part of their research to improve the quality of library's service. Machine learning gather the data from social media and study them to know the current trend of library users' intention in visiting library.

The use of social media is inevitable including the university libraries, the media literacy competence also become important skills that information providers should have. Media literacy education is introduced in college level (Ashley, 2015; Chanda, 2017). It is a good movement if library invest on their human resource to study media literacy either through degree or short courses to equip their staff with those competencies.

Study by (Torabian, 2019) stated that the top university in the world, especially ranked top ten by Webometric and QS World Ranking University emphasize their library service not only in the human resources, but also in the sophistication of technology to boost the research life of academicians.

A first rank university must have a great library to support the needs of academicians of finding a good information that could help to fill their research gap in making a paper or conducting laboratory project. This is not necessarily true in the case of other universities with a mediocre global ranking. Top ranking university does not only have to maintain the good quality of its library service, but also have a great number of potential research results as their achievement (Anna et al., 2019).

Social media as part of human and organization life has become a bridge by those university to spread the university value and goodwill. This is a changing since university differ to news agency that has human resources that support the broadcasting activity. News agency are used to send message to various type of public effectively (Tully et al., 2020). While in library this job usually done by librarian that do not have advance competency like a journalist on the news media.

Open access and digitization also become trending hashtags (Hargittai, 2010). This is not surprising, since first-rank universities, such as Harvard University, have to adapt to the development of the era, especially with the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution (Yudkevich, 2019).

Rachman in his study states that the electability of university depends on the quality and quantity of its research that is supported by its library as an information provider (Rachman, Putri, 2018). Moreover, the digital native behaviour in the learning process is completely different from previous generations which were considered digital migrants (Bahr, 2019).

It is no surprise that the digital native generation or generaton which is born as milleneal and generation Z which are born around 2000 until now is much more intelligent than the librarians themselves (Halim et al., 2018). If a university does not pay attention to the development of its library system and its librarians' competence, the quality of its library will soon deteriorate and this will affect the global reputation of that university (Wardhana, Ratnasari, 2022).

Eynon and Goniets (Eynon, Goniets, 2016) stated on their study show that digital natives feel the comfort of the learning process with technology. In the digital learning process, digital natives can easily adapt to new technology or devices/applications. They need to be directed to be aware of the truth behind information, by generating positive discussion and to give insight which technology or application is needed to support learning process (Pratama et al., 2020).

Digital natives also tend to want something quick, especially in their learning process. They tend to avoid monotonous processes with little gain, which is different from the old generation or the so-called baby boomers. Library service that can adapt to this situation is essential, since most of the young students are digital natives (Anwary, 2019).

When the age of the fourth industrial revolution emerged, the dissemination of social media immersed so fast in all levels of society. People who live in this era cannot be separated from social media. Social media is also used by corporations and public institutions to keep in touch with society. Institution like public university uses social media to update their latest news (Lysik et al., 2014), as a branding and promotion media (McCorcle, Payan, 2017; Vetsianos et al., 2017). Social media is more deficient in disseminating news since they do not need any radio towers or expensive facilities to share content. Moreover, society can engage in discussion in university's account anytime. The public relation of public universities can lead the mass opinion that can give benefit to the institution, especially in building reputation (Panahi et al., 2016).

Figure 2 also showed that there was also a topic *female* that became trending topic in research related to the library and twitter. It means that the role of women in online library service become the concern of the research by academicians in Cambridge University. This was similar with the study by Stentiford, that the more women take the role in important positions, the stronger gender equality can be maintained inside campus life (Stentiford, 2019).

Public sphere in the past is restricted by set of rules and the domination of class in controlling the discussion. But in current era, public sphere is free from the intervention of class authority, thanks to social media as discussion space. Moreover, the varieties of social media allows society to create individual public sphere with no boundaries (Audunson et al., 2019). Cambridge University library allows the new wave of feminism to engage in the digital public sphere where women as researchers as well as academicians could participate and manage the public sphere (Jouët, 2018). Cambridge University library has a great capability to ensure that their Twitter account are related to the research's environment (Torabian, 2019).

Ismail in his study states that different from the Western world that emphasises individualism, Indonesian people appreciate social activities. It is apparent that past or recent chaotic incidents and conflicts are resolvable through a peaceful way (Ismail, 2019). Indonesia has not yet fully transformed social media as a place for a new public sphere for academic purposes. Moreover, it is still uncommon for academics to conduct discussions in public groups of social media using English, which is the mostly used language in social media, including Twitter. They feel that conversing in a language other than Indonesian, such as English is seen as boastful (Zein, 2017).

Nonetheless, students in many parts of the world, especially in countries where English is not spoken as a first language, are generally poor in English language learning. Students' difficulties in learning English are attributed to gaps in social backgrounds and cultural conditions (Nuridin, Anwar, 2019). Students in developing countries such as in Indonesia has rarely used english in social context (Irindayanti, 2018), except in higher education. Thus, the situation in where many family in indonesia also not accustomed in using English in daily conversation also makes english is privileged as a language for education, not in social context (Zein, 2017).

Study (Salahudin et al., 2020) also stated that Indonesian were not accustomed to spent most of their times in using social media for educational purpose. Instead, indonesian tend to use Twitter for political purpose and to find people that shares the same political choice. Moreover, Twitter was used by some of the political endorser known as Buzzer. Those buzzers have a purpose to defend the dignity of the public figures and create negative opinion of the opposing parties.

They were paid by the perpetrator for gathering mass attention as well as vote for presidential and general election. One of the example of the street politic led by the 212 alumni and reunion of 212 on each 2th of December were the result of the public opinion built by buzzers (Wildan, 2017). The US also use twitter for politics during election (Buccoliero et al., 2020), also in Australian election use Twitter for political purposes (Kušen, Strembeck, 2018).

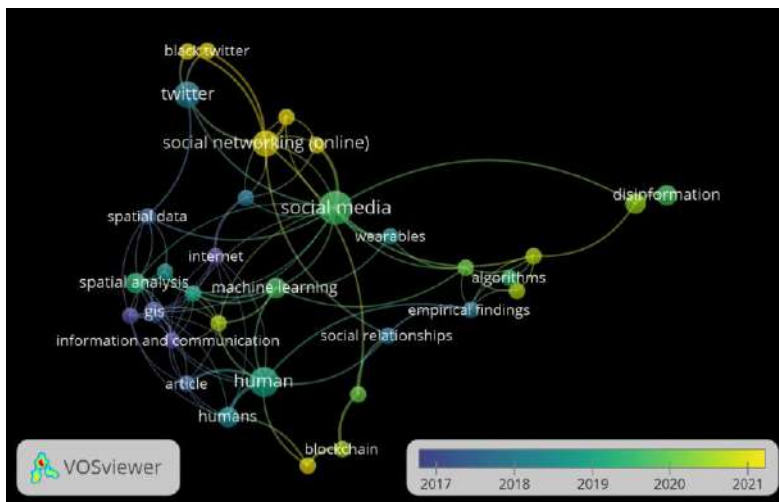
However, buzzers were also dispatched by the government to defend public perception about them. Study by (Amanullah et al., 2018) stated that proxy war through social media was more crucial than implementing street politic, because public opinion was faster to built through social media.

Moreover, social media offer fast and massive information about latest update of the political news, including the one that was not spread through formal media and journalist. One of the example was several leakage of the information about corruption cases which were not sigted by

journalists, such as Garuda Indonesia scandal, Social Aid for COVID-19 corruption, and scandal about civil servant recruitment in 2021 (Wardhana, 2021).

#### 4. Results

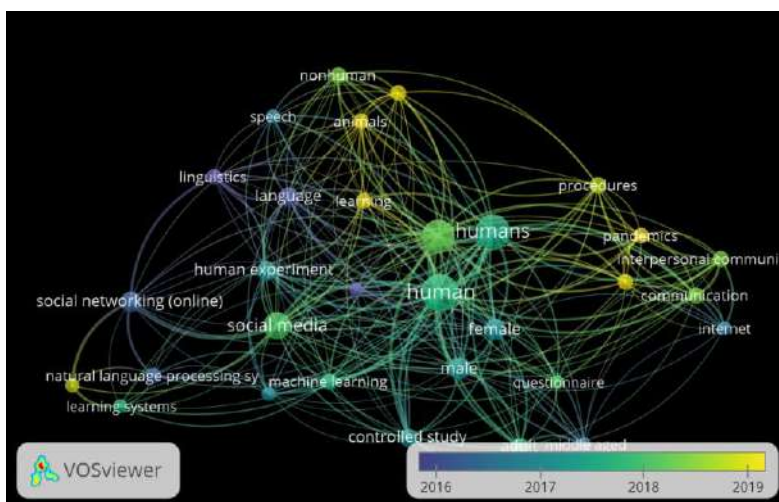
Figure 1 showed that *social networking (online)*, *black twitter* becomes the trending research topic in 2021. It means that the library users along with the librarians have accustomed to the usage of internet to run their daily life in university as a result of restriction implemented by the US government to prevent the dissemination of SARS-COV-2. Figure 1 also showed that *twitter* becomes trending topic of research because many librarians used twitter as a public sphere to discuss with the library users.



**Fig. 1.** Trending topic of research related to library and Twitter in Cambridge University

Source: Data processed by Vosviewer 1.1.16

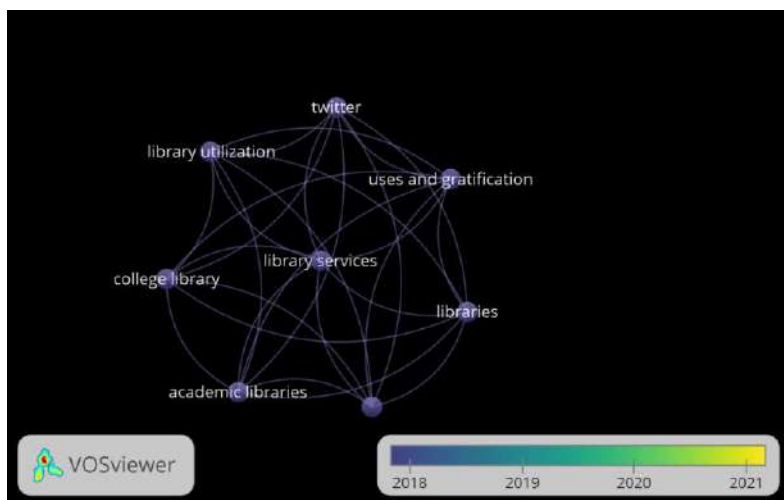
Figure 1 also showed a topic social media became the major topic in 2020. It could be understood because during 2020, social media became the place to connect between library users and librarians. Moreover, during the fourth quarter of 2020, there was a topic blockchain that became trending topic of research. It could be means that the study about blockchain to make sure that the information provided from the librarians to the library users as customers could be maintained well and credible.



**Fig. 2.** Trending topic of research related to library and Twitter in Cambridge University

Source: Data processed by Vosviewer 1.1.16

Figure 2 showed that the trending topics were more related to academic terms, especially related to the internet of things (IOT) than library. the topics *social media* and *human* became the trending topics in research around 2018-2019. However, Cambridge university had no research topic related to library and twitter in 2020 and 2021.



**Fig. 3.** Trending topic of research related to library and Twitter in Airlangga University

Source: Data processed by Vosviewer 1.1.16

Figure 3 showed that there were only a few of topics in published research papers by Airlangga University related to twitter and library. There was no topic which was related to IOT, instead it focused only in library, especially in service and utilization. One possible explanation is because the Indonesian people still prefer face-to-face communication to digital communication (Umar, 2019). They want to maintain the principle of cooperation by trying to not be immersed in virtual communication. Moreover, by conducting face-to-face communication and using real place as public sphere location, they believe that it will create an atmosphere of mutual understanding (Rodriguez, 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the result above, it can be concluded that Harvard University library gave attention to the topics related to the IOT to explore the correlation between Twitter usage and library to their publications. They aware that IOT could enhanced the efficiency of twitter as a form of digital public sphere for communication purpose.

Meanwhile, Cambridge University library did similar approach as Harvard University in conducting research, which was shown by the topics which were related to IOT as well as library. However, Cambridge University also arose a topic about female's role in library service in their publications distinguished between topic trend of Harvard and Cambridge University.

Thus, Airlangga University had only a few topics related to the usage of *Twitter* and library. There was no IOT related thing in their publications. It could be means that they still did not pay attention toom much to the research related to the library and the usage of *Twitter* as a form of digital public sphere. The possible reason is because Indonesia has different cultural practices from its counterparts in the Western world, hence it tends too mphasise more on face to face communication rather than virtual communication.

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## Addiction to Social Networks: An Empirical Study in Higher-Education Students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of addiction to social networks among higher education students. The Social Network Addiction Scale (adicción hacia asredes sociales or ARS) designed by Eскурra-Mayaute and Salas-Blas (2014), with responses ranging from 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'frequently', and 'always', was used in this empirical study. The participants were students studying in private sector institutions in the city of Veracruz, Mexico. Non-parametric Man-Whitney U tests were used to assess whether gender affected the scores of each of the constructs in the questionnaire. The main findings were that there was no difference between men and women in terms of their scores for obsession with, lack of control regarding, and use of social networks. It is recommended to continue exploring the levels of addiction to social networks in students from public and private sector institutions at all educational levels, with greater emphasis on young people in basic and middle education, of course without neglecting studies focused on university and postgraduate populations. If the population spectrum expands, a broader coverage and greater representativeness of these populations can be achieved.

**Keywords:** addiction, social networks, internet, smartphones.

### 1. Introduction

The emergence and evolution of technology has given rise to the internet and mobile telephony, also generating the various platforms referred to as social networks (SNs). The advancement of technologies has always been associated with changes in human activity as well as with the appearance of certain addictive behaviors including internet addiction, cellphone addiction, and the focus of this specific study, addiction to SNs. Thus, while here we focused on addiction to SNs, the internet and mobile telephony constitute the means to fuel this addiction by providing access to SNs. Therefore, understanding the way human beings interact with technology and how it might affect their behavior is also of particular interest to researchers.

This knowledge could improve our understanding of the phenomenon of addiction to SNs given that addiction is an activity that generates pleasure to the detriment of the addicted person. This is because, whether voluntarily or not, these individuals acquire an inability to regulate their SN activity and feel a persistent need to participate in these damaging activities. Hence, denial of addiction is an interpersonal expression used by addicted individuals as a defense mechanism

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against the mental conflict associated with their addictive behaviors. In other words, addiction would be impossible without denial (Johnson, 1993).

In relation to this idea, in 1995, Griffiths was the first to define technological addictions as those involving excessive use of technology. Later, Young (Young, 1998b) discovered that, many of the 396 students dependent on use of the internet showed personal, family, and occupational problems. More specifically, these individuals could not control their internet use, had difficulty completing homework, studying, and sleeping for long enough to be alert the next day for their classes, resulting in poor grades and even expulsion from school in some cases. Likewise, the same research showed that lonely people or those who felt misunderstood maintained virtual relationships in the search of feelings of well-being and comfort. Furthermore, those dependent on internet use tended to hide or lie about how much time they spent online, thereby generating mistrust among those surrounding them.

A priori, we could say that young people now consider SNSs as a means of escape from reality because they can immediately contact other individuals, even if they are thousands of kilometers away, to engage in chat conversations or share multimedia images, videos, and voice recordings. A few years ago, these platforms were only available on personal computers. However, technological advances leading to the widespread availability of smartphones led to the development of applications providing extremely easy access to SNSs. Nonetheless, the extent to which this advance is beneficial remains to be determined.

According to a BBVA report from 2018, the boom in SNSs arose with the emergence of smartphones and tablets which led to the rise of SNS platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat which are now highly sought after by users. However, we must remember that all evolving entities have a beginning, with the phenomenon of online connections with family and friends being no exception. For instance, FotoLog is widely believed to have been the first SNS, before Facebook and Instagram superseded it. Similarly, other SNSs that were immensely popular sites that helped young people to interact were Myspace, Buzz, Second Life, and Hi5, among others, although they never exceeded the current success of Facebook or Instagram (BBVA, 2018).

Various publications have expounded theoretical positions and results related to our current academic knowledge of this phenomenon. Dr. Kimberly Young is one of the most well-respected researchers in this field of psychology. Her work has painted the broad brushstrokes helping to explain the addictions generated by the internet and smartphones as a means to access SNSs. Accordingly, Young (Young, 1998b, 1999a) detected that young people experience a pleasant effect when using the internet to escape into a virtual reality. She even compared the magnitude of this effect to that of alcohol, drugs, or gambling. A growing body of scientific evidence related to the frequent and excessive use of the internet led her to establish this addiction as a separate disorder characterized by being connected for excessive periods of time. This leads patients to become isolated from their surrounding contexts, and in the worst-case scenario, to neglect of their personal commitments and work, academic, and social obligations (Young, 1998a).

Besides to addictions, SNSs hosted on the internet can also cause severe damage in the form of cyberbullying and several types of verbal violence, including sexual harassment. In this sense, youth constitute one of the most vulnerable groups because their inexperience often leads them to look for new experiences. Thus, Young (Young, 1999a, b) proposed a classification of impulse control behaviors derived from internet addiction: (a) cyber-relationship addiction (online relationships); (b) internet compulsions (gambling obsession); (c) cyber-sexual addiction (excessive use of adult websites); (d) data and information search engine addiction (data searching); and (e) computer addiction (obsessive use of computers).

Thus, considering the aforementioned arguments and theoretical perspectives, and given that the internet and smartphones are gateways to SNSs, we studied the extent to which addictions to SNSs are present among higher-education students in our geographical area. We also conducted a review of the existing academic literature in this broader field of study.

#### *Research questions, objectives, and hypotheses*

Our main research questions were (1) To what extent are university students addicted to SNSs? and (2) Are gender differences related to obsession with SNSs, lack of control in their use, and their excessive use? Thus, in this study we established the following research objectives:

O<sub>1</sub>: Determine the level of addiction to SNSs among university students.

O<sub>2</sub>: Determine if there were gender differences in obsession with SNSs, lack of control in their use, and their excessive use.

Hence, our hypotheses were as follows, where ‘o’ represents the null hypothesis and ‘A’ represents the alternative hypothesis:

H1<sub>o</sub>: Obsession with SNs is equally distributed among the genders ( $p > 0.05$ ).

H1<sub>A</sub>: Obsession with SNs differs between the genders ( $p < 0.05$ ).

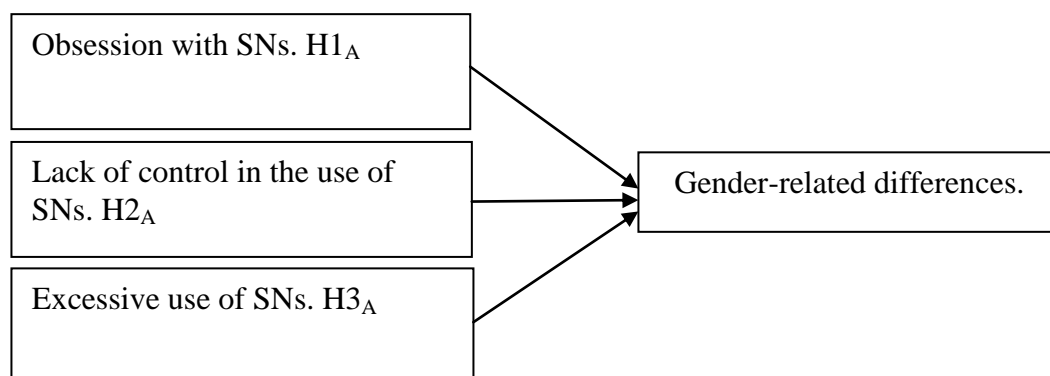
H2<sub>o</sub>: The feeling of lack of control in relation to the use of SNs is equally distributed among both gender categories ( $p > 0.05$ ).

H2<sub>A</sub>: The feeling of lack of control in relation to the use of SNs differs between the genders ( $p < 0.05$ ).

H3<sub>o</sub>: Excessive use of SNs is equally distributed among the genders ( $p > 0.05$ ).

H3<sub>A</sub>: Excessive use of SNs differs between the genders ( $p < 0.05$ ).

These can be summarized as shown in the construct presented in [Figure 1](#).



**Fig. 1.** Research route used in this empirical study.

Abbreviations: SN, social networks; H1–3, hypotheses 1–3; A, alternative to the null hypothesis

### *Rationale*

Addiction to SNs has now become a prominent issue given that a substantial body of academic research has shown a strong association between their addictive use and psychiatric disorders. Indeed, it appears that smart mobile devices together with their applications, as well as excessive use of the internet (particularly of SNs) affects the personality of users ([Marín-Cipriano, 2018](#)). This includes an apparent increase in neurosis ([Castillo et al., 2008](#); [Caro, 2017](#); [Kuss et al., 2014](#); [Müller et al., 2013](#); [Wang et al., 2015](#)), extraversion, narcissism, low emotional stability, low responsibility ([Caro, 2017](#)); depression ([Padilla, Ortega, 2017](#)); and feelings of loneliness ([Caro, 2017](#); [Ryan et al., 2014](#)).

In addition to the collection of results that add to the existing empirical evidence, the importance of this type of study lies in the fact that these data may make it possible to suggest strategies to counter the emergence of possible addictions among the population being evaluated. The theoretical contribution is implicit in the evidence obtained and the practical implications are derived from the benefits that the provision of precisely designed support strategies for students entails. Of note, the ongoing health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic as of the end of 2019 has increased the use of different electronic communication devices. Indeed, the educational sector had to immediately migrate to virtual classes by videoconference, necessitating internet and smartphone use, to deliver and facilitate teaching-learning processes at every educational level.

## **2. Materials and methods**

This was a non-experimental, cross-sectional study without manipulation of the variables (X). We aimed to answer the study question by determining the level of addiction to SNs among higher-education students by analyzing the data using a hypothetical-deductive method. The study type was descriptive and we measured the difference in the means between the two genders for each variable.

The participants were students from a private higher education institution in the Puerto de Veracruz, Mexico. Authorization for the field work was granted by the director of the faculty and, as a condition for the application of the study instruments, all the students agreed to their continued participation. The sample cohort was non-probabilistic and self-determined; a total of 132 students met

the inclusion criteria of being enrolled in an academic program at a private sector institution in the city of Veracruz, Mexico and being up to date with their obligations in terms of schoolwork and the treasury office. In addition, the participants were informed that their identity would always be guaranteed given that the survey was anonymous and its purpose was strictly academic.

For the empirical study, the Social Network Addiction Scale (*adicciónhacialasredessociales* or ARS) designed by Escurra-Mayaute and Salas-Blas (Escurra-Mayaute, Salas-Blas, 2014) was used. The ARS includes questions related to the participant profile such as age and gender and is based on 24 Likert-format response questions with the following options: (1) 'never', (2) 'rarely', (3) 'sometimes', (4) 'frequently', and (5) 'always'. The ARS was converted into an electronic format via Google forms and distributed via email to the participants.

In terms of data analysis, first we validated the data matrix by applying Cronbach's alpha coefficient to verify the reliability and validity of the items and their internal consistency. We subsequently used Mann-Whitney U tests to analyze the independent samples. The null hypothesis was accepted for  $p$ -values exceeding 0.05, and otherwise, was rejected. Where 'A' and 'B' designate the two samples, 'H<sub>0</sub>' and 'H<sub>A</sub>' represent the null and alternative hypotheses, and 'Med' refers to the median value, our assumptions stated that:

H<sub>0</sub>: MedA = MedB (the central tendency of these two populations did not differ); MedB ≥ MedA; and MedB ≤ MedA.

H<sub>A</sub>: MedA ≠ MedB (the central tendency of these two populations differed); MedB < MedA; and MedB > MedA.

### 3. Discussion

This current study was in line with the theoretical proposals of Young (Young, 1998a,b; 1999a,b) who established guidelines and directives to assess internet and smartphone addiction. These theoretical arguments explain the causes and possible damage generated by addiction to excessive internet use resulting in severe damage to this population of internet users. In the same vein, according to the classification also proposed by Young (Young, 1999a, b), we observed patterns of addiction resulting from the excessive use of computers and platforms used to search for information and data as well as excessive time spent connected to SNs.

#### *Addiction to the internet, smartphones, and social networks*

Numerous studies have tried to explain the phenomenon of addiction to the internet, smartphones, and SNs in adolescents. Therefore, here we discuss the theoretical and empirical debate in some relevant studies in this field with the aim of substantiating the study and better understanding the study population. Thus, in addition to Young's proposals (Young, 1999a, b), Davis (Davis, 2001) classified internet addiction as either primary (such as computer addictions resulting from uses such as online gaming, excessive searching for information, and the maintenance of virtual relationships) or secondary, in reference to impulses to make online purchases, participate in games of chance, monitor the stock market, or watch pornography or virtual sex.

To test this idea, De Gracia et al. (De Gracia et al., 2002) disseminated an internet-based questionnaire, recruiting the collaboration of 1,664 users who responded to the request to participate. These authors identified recurring thoughts among the cohort, included the desire to stay connected to the internet; feelings of guilt and anxiety when connected or not connected; loss of control; and infrequent direct social interaction which led the participants to access chat pages or pornographic pages, causing them to start presenting problems at work or school.

In turn, Chak and Leung (Chak, Leung, 2004) developed a questionnaire to assess 722 students electronically, online, or in person. They found that the desire to be connected to the internet was proportional to the shyness and lower self-confidence of the participants. The participants maintained the firm belief that they had control over other people, and they placed their trust in others at random for determining their life path. In addition, these researchers also discovered that full-time students were most likely to be addicted to the internet because they had free and unlimited access to this resource along with a flexible schedule.

Cruzado, Matos, and Kendall (Cruzado et al., 2006) studied 30 patients diagnosed with internet addiction and showed that those who connected for more than six hours a day (spending most of this time playing online games), also presented suicidal thoughts (or had attempted suicide), along with some antisocial characteristics, irritability, and affective disorders. Perhaps even more serious, some had a history of family dysfunction while others had pulmonary

tuberculosis and poor school performance. Indeed, the latter is consistent with data collected by Sánchez-Carbonell et al. (Sánchez-Carbonell et al., 2008) and by Rial et al. (Rial et al., 2015) in terms of family dysfunction and poor academic performance.

Along the same lines, Jiménez and Pantoja (Jiménez, Pantoja, 2007) reported that, like the addictions resulting from the pleasure generated by alcohol or gambling, the internet plays a characteristic role in promoting addictions because its use is also pleasant and it is often used by introverts to help them evade reality. Therefore, such individuals may indirectly satisfy their needs by immersing themselves in SNSs. However, being connected to the internet for prolonged periods was also associated with low self-esteem, meaning that this group may relate to reality in a superficial way and the online relationships they engage in are more likely to be short-lived or unstable. Similarly, Castillo et al. (Castillo et al., 2008) discovered that a sample of 392, mainly female (73.9 %), students were connected to the internet for an average of 84.81 minutes a week and that a tendency towards introversion and avoidance of direct social relationships stood out among those connected for the longest periods.

Sometimes there is a tendency to believe that the word addiction implies substance use. However, addiction to the use of technology leads to certain activities that can include a compulsion to excessively use the internet (Balaguer, 2008). Addictions are usually negative and affect the person who suffers from them. In this specific case, internet use makes it easier for certain individuals to show themselves as they really are and from a place of anonymity (Balaguer, 2008; Beranuy et al., 2009; Caro, Plaza, 2016; Cruzado et al., 2006; Echeburúa, 2016; Jiménez, Pantoja, 2007). Likewise, it allows them to establish or maintain fluid virtual relationships even though this implies spending more than an average amount of time using the internet (Araujo, 2016; Balaguer, 2008; Beranuy et al., 2009; Carbonell et al., 2012; Caro, 2017; Luengo, 2004; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Pérez del Río, 2014; Puerta-Cortés, Carbonell, 2014; Sánchez-Carbonell et al., 2008; Young, 1998a).

Other studies have reported various findings, such as those that identified that the men in their study showed higher internet use than women (Beranuy et al., 2009; Fargues et al., 2009; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Matalinares et al., 2013; Muñoz-Rivas et al.; Ortega, 2003; Shek, Yu, 2016; Yang, 2001). In contrast, Puerta-Cortés and Carbonell (Puerta-Cortés, Carbonell 2014) reported that the women used the internet more than men and were also more likely to use their cellphones to communicate their emotions (Beranuy et al., 2009; Fargues et al., 2009; Ling, 2002; Mante, Piris, 2002). Later, Matalinares et al. (Matalinares et al., 2013) discovered a correlation between aggression and internet addiction and that men tended to be more aggressive both physically and verbally while women were more likely to be angry and hostile. Therefore, it seems that the more aggressive the behavior displayed by adolescents, the greater their tendency to become addicted to the internet.

Work conducted in the Netherlands by Vink et al. (Vink et al., 2016) showed that their male cohort spent more time playing online games, which also concurred with other research findings (Matalinares et al., 2013; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2003; Puerta-Cortés, Carbonell, 2014; Tsouvelas, Giotakos, 2011), while the women in their study spent more time on SNSs. The latter finding coincides both with research conducted by Ling (2002) and with data collected by Marín-Cipriano (Marín-Cipriano, 2018), however, it differs from the research by Araujo (Araujo, 2016) which showed that the men in their study had a significantly higher level of obsession with being connected to SNSs.

Internet addiction usually starts at the age of 14 to 24 years (Araujo, 2016; Echeburúa, 2010; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Padilla, Ortega, 2017; Rial et al., 2015; Shek, Yu, 2016; Terán, 2019) and according to Lam-Figueroa et al. (Lam-Figueroa et al., 2011), is characterized the level of involvement with the internet. That is, dependence on the internet and a lack of control regarding its use that can lead individuals to feel uncomfortable, exhausted, or distressed, depending on their personal needs. These authors designed the Lima Internet Addiction Scale (*escala de la adicción a internet de Lima* or EAIL) to evaluate two dimensions: (1) symptomatic or 'salient' (preoccupation with internet use), tolerance, withdrawal, and failure regarding control and relapse; and (2) dysfunctional, in relation to school, family, and interpersonal problems.

In their study, they applied the EAIL questionnaire to 248 students with an average age of 14 years and found that dimension 1 was associated with the male sex, length of weekly internet use, a history of poor discipline, and lack of future plans. In turn, dimension 2 was associated with



a poor discipline, a lack of future plans, and missing school with no reason, indicating that both an inadequate family and social environment may be factors that affect internet addiction.

*Internet use as a clinical disorder*

Cases have been documented in which internet addiction was prejudicial to health or life, including the report by Berner and Santander (Berner, Santander, 2012) which highlighted two such cases. The first was the case of a South Korean couple who spent so much time connected to the internet that they failed to feed their daughter who eventually died of malnutrition. The second was a case of a young man in China who died after spending seven continuous days playing games on the internet. This type of addiction goes far beyond the imaginable, but it is a sad reality in some cases. In their study, Berner and Santander (Berner, Santander, 2012) listed some warning indicators regarding internet addiction, which can be summarized as follows:

- Insomnia caused by being connected to the internet for too long.
- Forgetting family, school, work, and social events, and even personal hygiene.
- People constantly complaining about a family member or friend who spends a lot of time online.
- Having recurring thoughts of accessing the internet or getting upset if prevented from connecting to the internet or if the internet speed is slow.
- Being isolated from the environment.
- Elusiveness about the real amount of time spent connected to the internet.
- A desire to reduce the number of hours spent connected to the internet without success in achieving this goal.
- Demonstration of a sense of well-being when connected to the internet.

Of note, Carbonell et al. (Carbonell et al., 2012) identified that, on the one hand, young people addicted to the internet are more likely to suffer from insomnia, social isolation, anxiety, depression, and negative thoughts, while on the other, those who used their cellphone excessively showed traits of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and excessive alcohol and cigarette consumption. Furthermore, Marco and Chóliz (Marco, Chóliz, 2013) showed that internet addiction appeared with the abuse of technology and a lack of control regarding interactions with technology, aggravating the relationships that the individual maintained with their family, society, and with their work. These effects then generate an emotional maladjustment, disturb individual adaptive behavior, and manifest as a need to continue using the internet. Thus, even when the individual knows that internet use is harmful to them, they cannot abandon the habit, thereby reflecting a dependent behavior towards this technology.

Caro and Plaza (Caro, Plaza, 2016) pointed out that internet addiction is not the only way that extreme amounts of time are spent online; interacting with web pages that incite violence, information sites, SNS, playing online games, and interacting with pornography can all produce conditions in the people using these pages. This has repercussions on their behavior and their social, family, and academic and work relationships, as has been documented in several studies (Caro, 2017; Chak, Leung, 2004; Chóliz et al., 2016; Cruzado et al., 2006; Echeburúa, 2010; Li et al., 2014; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Terán, 2019; Wang, 2001; Yang, 2001).

To say that a behavior is addictive, Caro (Caro, 2017) clarified that it must be an activity that the individual finds pleasant but they then lose control over. Because, in the early stages, their chosen activity is desirable and pleasant, these individuals perform it repetitively (Chóliz et al., 2016); people enjoy the activity and it relieves their tension, leading them to lose sight of its consequences in terms of the time not spent in their 'real' social environments.

Also of note, new fears and anxieties have arisen with the appearance of technology. These include not being able to leave the house without a cellphone, losing a cellphone, the battery running out, not having coverage leading to feelings of isolation from family and society, work managers demanding that workers always remain available, checking cellphones for new notifications, or wanting to know what others are doing (Caro, 2017). The excessive use of the internet by spending time on SNS has even generated certain personality traits (Marín-Cipriano, 2018) such as neurosis (Caro, 2017; Castillo et al., 2008; Kuss et al., 2014; Müller et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2015), extraversion, narcissism, low emotional stability, low levels of responsibility (Caro, 2017), depression (Padilla, Ortega, 2017), and feelings of loneliness (Caro, 2017; Ryan et al., 2014).

As to the reasons why students tend to become addicted to the internet, Marín-Cipriano (Marín-Cipriano, 2018) pointed out that family represents a fundamental part of the increase its incidence given that adolescents without close communication with their parents, or with a lack of

affection or harmony in the family, were more likely to become addicted to the internet. That is, childhood violence or abuse, or even parents who are separated, can potentially promote excessive internet use, thereby generating internet addiction, an effect that has also been reported elsewhere (Aponte et al., 2017; Barrera, Duque, 2014; Cruzado et al., 2006; Echeburúa, 2010; Li et al., 2014).

#### *Addiction to social networks*

In relation to addiction to SNSs, Padilla and Ortega (2017) observed that the severity level of the symptoms of depression was directly associated with a remarkably high level of addiction to SNSs. They reported that a possible explanation for this phenomenon may be related to certain indicators of depression such as low self-esteem, which is characteristic low levels of social interaction and/or social isolation. As already pointed out at the beginning of this current work, the last two decades have seen major changes resulting from innovations in the areas of information and communication technologies. In turn, these changes brought about the interactivity associated with the internet (Berríos, Buxarras, 2005; Cho et al., 2014; Cruzado et al., 2006), which mainly influences adolescents who incorporate it into their daily lives as a form of entertainment, socialization, and education (Gomez et al., 2012, Kuss, Griffiths, 2011a, Machargo et al., 2003, Young, 2008).

There are different currents of thought regarding the internet and SNSs and the positions of scholars on the subject disagree. For example, Carr (Carr, 2008) maintained that the internet and everything derived from it (including SNSs) has made us all more foolish. In contrast, Schmidt (Schmidt, 2018) suggested that the internet and its derivatives actually make human beings more intelligent. Therefore, the debate continues between those who support each of these abovementioned positions. We could also ask ourselves about the factors that most strongly influence addictions. In this sense, here we base our opinions on those of Griffiths (Griffiths, 2005) who pointed out that biological, social, and psychological factors are all involved in studies on social addictions.

The same author also proposed a model of addiction components from the biopsychosocial perspective which includes the characteristics of prominence, mood changes, and symptoms of withdrawal, conflicts, self-esteem problems, and relapses (Griffiths et al., 2014, Pezoa-Jares et al., 2012). Thus, the biopsychosocial model of internet addiction and SNSs reassessed various criteria and observations such as social, cognitive-behavioral, and sociocognitive skills to help understand and explain these phenomena (Griffiths, 2013; Turel, Serenko, 2012). Furthermore, sociocognitive theory also indicates that addiction to SNSs arise from the hope of positive results combined with the self-efficacy of internet use and lack of regulation of its proper use (LaRose et al., 2003; Turel, Serenko, 2012).

Another theoretical position is that of Castells (Castells, 2008) who stated that social platforms can become the key factor in social change, arguing that feats usually considered 'impossible' can be achieved through communication networks and digital collaboration. Finally, it is also worth citing views such as that of Chomsky (Chomsky, 2020) that postulate the opposite case, that smartphones and SNSs isolate the population. This school of thought claims that SNSs create a mistaken sense of belonging and autonomy, because building relationships created or based only on digital interactions results in the creation of a false idea of friendship and a superficial life.

All this theoretical debate leaves us with several concerns and open questions. However, the reality is that technology has revolutionized the world of communications, and with it, the internet has further gained strength with the emergence of SNS platforms. Tablets and other mobile devices have become the primary means to access these platforms, thereby increasing the chance of individuals falling into addictions to SNSs.

The establishment and evolution of technology brought with it the emergence of the internet, mobile telephony and, in parallel, various SNSs. As Johnson (Johnson, 1993) pointed out, the phenomenon of addiction to SNSs generates pleasure in addicted individuals because, voluntarily or not, they acquire a persistent need to participate in these platforms. A similar argument was made by Griffiths (Griffiths, 1995) who posited that technological addictions are the result of the excessive use of technology. For her part, Young (Young, 1998a) found that students with a greater level of dependence on internet use showed more personal, family, and occupational problems.

The use of technology, and specifically SNSs, can lead people who are lonely or misunderstood, to maintain virtual relationships. The results reported in this current study showed that 36 % of

our university student cohort presented an obsession with SNs, 40 % lacked personal control regarding their use, and 34.2 % used SNs excessively.

In addition, we showed that both men and women experienced the same levels of obsession with SNs, lack of personal control over SN use, and the excessive use of SNs. This result seems to align with the theory and empirical evidence suggesting that young people use SNs as an escape from reality and as a means to immediately contact other people. For this reason, addiction to SNs is currently a substantial issue given that many different studies have shown a strong association between the addictive use of SNs and psychiatric disorders, personality affectations (Marín-Cipriano, 2018), neurosis (Caro, 2017; Castillo et al., 2008; Kuss et al., 2014; Müller et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2015), low responsibility and emotional stability (Caro, 2017), depression (Padilla, Ortega, 2017) and feelings of loneliness (Caro, 2017; Ryan et al., 2014).

The internet is the conduit that connects individuals to SNs, encouraging them to present themselves as they are, often from a place of anonymity or, as indicated in previous work (Balaguer, 2008; Beranuy et al., 2009; Caro, Plaza, 2016; Cruzado et al., 2006; Echeburua, 2016; Jiménez, Pantoja, 2007), allowing people to establish or maintain virtual relationships, often leading to excessive internet use (Araujo, 2016; Carbonell et al., 2012; Caro, 2017; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Pérez del Río, 2014; Puerta-Cortés, Carbonell, 2014; Young, 1998a). Here, our results showed that men and women share the same levels of obsession with SNs, lack of personal control over SN use, and excessive use of SNs, a finding that does not seem to coincide with previous reports. Indeed, some studies have shown greater internet use among men (Beranuy et al., 2009; Fargues et al., 2009; Marín-Cipriano, 2018; Matalinares et al., 2013; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2003; Shek, Yu, 2016; Yang, 2001) or, as in the case of Puerta-Cortés and Carbonell (Puerta-Cortés, Carbonell, 2014), increased use among women, who also used their smartphones to communicate their emotions more often than men (Beranuy et al., 2009; Fargues et al., 2009; Ling, 2002; Mante, Piris, 2002).

Obsession with SNs, a lack of control over their use, and excessive SN use has already been associated with serious, classified clinical disorders given that severe symptoms of depression are associated with an elevated level of addiction to SNs (Padilla, Ortega, 2017). In addition, these addictions and obsessions more often influence adolescents because they include the use of SNs as part of their means of everyday entertainment and socialization (Gomez et al., 2012).

#### 4. Results

The reliability and internal consistency of the ARS instrument was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha, where values less than 0.6 indicated that the data were not normally distributed and therefore, had to be analyzed using non-parametric statistical techniques. In terms of sociodemographic data, the study sample comprised 31.1 % ( $n = 41$ ) men and 68.9 % ( $n = 91$ ) women and the participant ages ranged from 13 to 63 years. The most representative ages were 20, 17, and 19 years old (25.8%, 10.6%, and 9.1% of the population, respectively).

Of note, 75.0 % of the students stated that they only studied, followed by 24.2 % who worked, and 0.08 % that said they studied and worked; 57.6 % were studying for a degree, 29.5 % for a high school diploma, and the remaining 12.9 % for another type of academic title not specified in the ARS. When asked if the participants used SNs, 100 % agreed that they did. Table 1 shows the frequencies of the different means participants used to connect to SNs, their frequency of SN connection, percentage of direct contacts on SN platforms, whether their SN profiles contained their true personal data, and how they used SNs.

**Table 1.** Uses and means of connection to social networks

<i>Means of connection</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Cellphone	122	92.4
Computer	10	7.6
Total	132	100
<i>Place of connection</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
At home	101	76.5
At work	26	19.7
In an internet booth	5	3.8

Total	132	100
<i>Frequency of connection</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Connected all the time	72	54.5
7 to 12 times a day	54	40.9
3 to 6 times a day	6	4.5
Total	132	100
<i>Direct contacts</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
10% or less	3	2.3
11 to 30%	4	3
31 to 50%	2	1.5
51 to 70%	76	57.6
More than 70%	47	35.6
Total	132	100
<i>Real profile data used</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
No	7	5.3
Yes	125	94.7
Total	132	100
<i>Purpose of social network use</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Socializing	46	34.8
Work	32	24.2
Both Socializing and Work	49	37.1
Other	5	3.9
Total	132	100

Table 1 shows that 92.4 % of the study participants connected to the SNs via their cellphones, 76.5 % from home, and 54.5 % remained connected all the time, followed by 40.9 % who connected 7 to 12 times a day. Moreover, the participants often had contacts they had never met before; these were contacts of their own acquaintances that had sent them friendship requests which were usually accepted by the SN user. Hence, one of the indicators we included was precisely about the percentage of the participant's contacts they really knew, with 57.6 % indicating that 51 % to 70 % of their contacts were direct contacts, followed by 35.6 % who said they knew more than 70 % of their contacts.

Another very common practice was to maintain SN profiles using different aliases or fictitious names, and so we wondered if the data the participants were registered with were real; 94.7 % of the students in the cohort indicated that they had used their true personal identification data. Finally, when asked about how the participants used the SNs, 34.8 % said they used them for socializing, 24.2 % for work reasons, and 37.1 % used them both for work and socializing.

To test our hypotheses, we examined the scores of each of the constructs assessed in the questionnaire. We conducted these tests exclusively in the undergraduate student population because it was the most frequent group ( $n = 76$ ) in the study cohort. Thus, Table 2 shows that 36 % of this population presented an obsession with SNs, 40 % lacked personal control regarding the use of SNs, and 34.2 % used SNs excessively.

**Table 2.** Scores for obsession, lack of control, and social network use

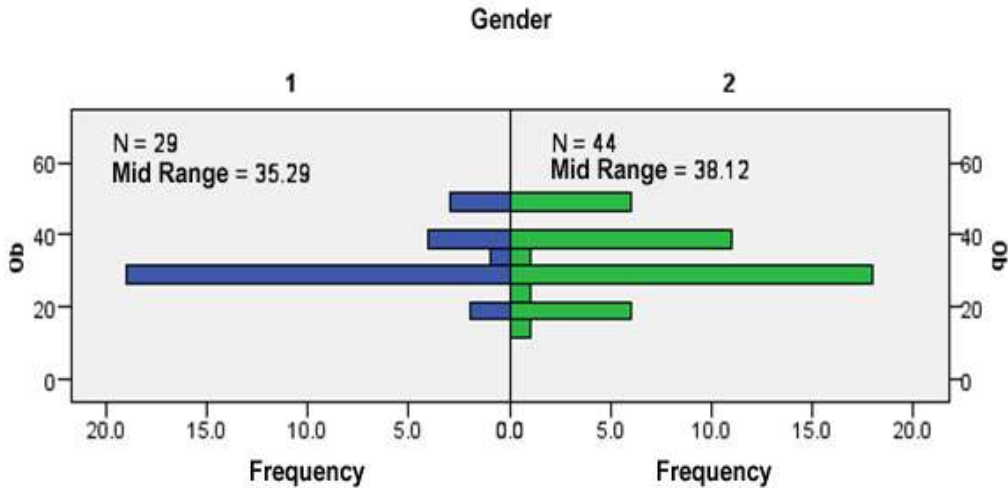
<i>Obsession with SNs</i> Mean = 30; $\delta = 8.79$		<i>Lack of control of SN use</i> Mean = 18; $\delta = 5.01$		<i>Excessive SN use</i> Mean = 24; $\delta = 8.79$	
Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
14-30	64	8-18	60	13-27	65.8
31-50	36	19-30	40	27-30	34.2

Abbreviations: SNs, social networks.

Thus, our findings regarding potential differences between the distribution of the ‘obsession with SNs’, ‘lack of control of SN use’, and ‘excessive SN use’ constructs according to gender categories corroborated the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) in all three cases, as described below.

*Hypothesis 1*

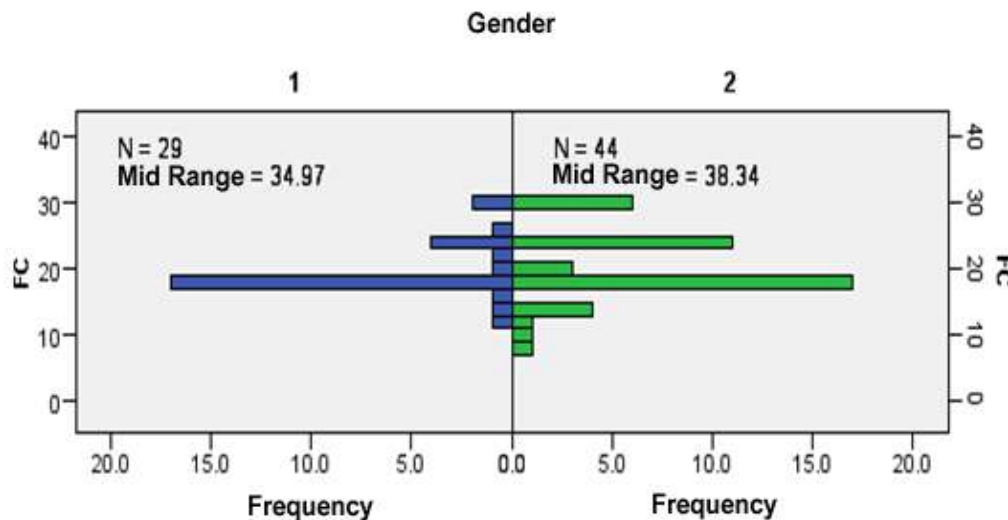
Mann–Whitney U tests were used to assess independent samples. Figure 2 shows the frequencies of each sex for the ‘obsession with SNs’ construct. The mean and range of the difference between the groups was 2.83 (35.29–38.12), with a Mann–Whitney U value of 687,500 and a p-value of 0.592. Hence, considering that the value of p exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted and we concluded that men and women experienced the same level of obsession with SNs.



**Fig. 2.** Mann–Whitney U test results for obsession with social networks. Mann–Whitney U = 687,500;  $p = 0.592$

*Hypothesis 2*

Mann–Whitney U tests were similarly used to evaluate independent samples in this case. Figure 3 shows the frequencies of each group for the ‘lack of control of SN use’ construct. The mean and range of the difference between the groups was 3.37 (34.97–38.34), with a Mann–Whitney U value of 697,000 and a p-value of 0.481. The p-value exceeded 0.05 and so the null hypothesis was not rejected and we concluded that there was no difference between men and women in terms of their lack of personal control regarding the use of SNs.



**Fig. 3.** Mann–Whitney U test for a lack of personal control regarding the use of social networks. Mann–Whitney U test = 697,000;  $p = 0.481$ .

### Hypothesis 3

Finally, Mann–Whitney U tests were also used to assess the independent samples for this hypothesis. Figure 4 shows the frequencies of each sex for the ‘excessive SN use’ construct. The mean and range of the difference between the groups was 3.37 (36.14–37.57), with a Mann–Whitney U value of 663,000 and a p-value of 0.767. The p-value exceeded 0.05 and so the null hypothesis was accepted and we concluded that there was no difference between men and women in terms of the excessive use of SNs.

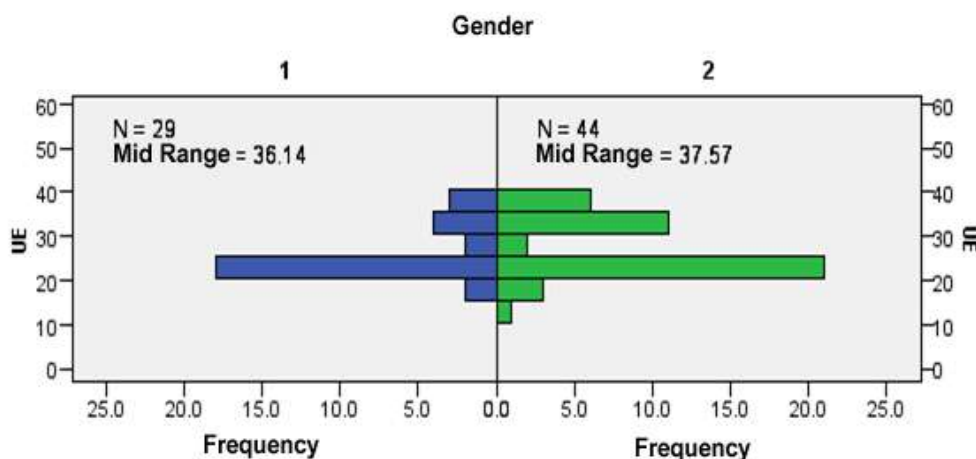


Fig. 4. Mann–Whitney U test for social network use. Mann–Whitney U test = 697,000;  $p = 0.481$

## 5. Conclusion

Our theoretical and empirical review of the existing literature in this field highlighted the fact that people can be affected by a wide variety of addictions when they are not able to control certain activities or actions in their lives. One example of an addiction of this type is the specific use of the internet as a channel to access different SNs, be it via computers, cellphones, or tablets, permitting contact between addicted individuals and other people in real time.

Of course, the technological evolution of the internet and mobile telephony has greatly contributed to humanity, not necessarily in negative ways. On the contrary, these advancements have also ushered in many benefits to modern society. Indeed, there are different schools of thought regarding the internet and SNs. On the one hand, Carr (Carr, 2008) insists that the internet and its derivatives (including SNs) has made fools of us all; on the other hand, Schmidt (Schmidt, 2018) claims that these technologies have made human beings more intelligent.

Thus, the debate remains and relies on the empirical evidence available as the only means to help us better understand this phenomenon. Future research should continue to explore the levels of SN addiction among students at every educational level, especially in adolescents in basic, secondary, and higher education as well as those in continued professional and postgraduate education. This will allow researchers to achieve wider coverage and greater representativeness of these populations.

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## The Effect of Personal Competence and Pedagogical-Didactical Competence of High School Economics Teachers in Media Literacy on Teaching Effectiveness

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### Abstract

The effectiveness of teaching Economics is highly dependent on the teachers. To increase the effectiveness of teaching, they must have personal and pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy. This study investigates the effect of the personal and pedagogical-didactical competence of Economics teachers in the field of media literacy on their teaching effectiveness. The population of this study was the high school Economics teachers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The number of research samples was 182 teachers. The data collection of this research was carried out using a closed questionnaire. The Google-Form questionnaire was delivered to high school Economics teachers as the respondents of this research. The data collected is then analyzed quantitatively (using multiple linear regression). The results of this study indicate that the personal and pedagogical-didactical competence of high school economics teachers in the field of media literacy have a significant effect on the effectiveness of their teaching. The results of the study indicate that school leaders or related education offices should improve the personal competence and pedagogical-didactical competence of high school Economics teachers through various, relevant, and structurally designed media training activities.

**Keywords:** teacher personal competence, teacher pedagogical-didactical competence, media literacy, teaching effectiveness.

### 1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic situation has swiftly changed the way teachers carry out the learning activities in the classroom. Previously, learning was carried out face-to-face in class, during the Covid-19 pandemic, learning inevitably has to be carried out in a new way, namely online learning or distance learning. Teachers and students carry out learning activities from their respective homes. Although the way of learning is different from before, the goals of learning are the same which aim to the learning objectives' achievement (instructional objectives).

There are various obstacles that teachers face during online learning. The obstacles are mostly related to: the awkwardness of having online interaction with parents and students, the unreadiness of making use of online learning resources and media, the inequality of learning facilities between schools located in cities and villages, the economic condition to afford the internet network, etc. The toughest learning implementation during Covid-19 pandemic is related to the teachers' teaching effectiveness. Teaching ineffectiveness can be seen from two sides, quantitative (Jupp, 2009) and qualitative (Good et al., 2009; Jupp, 2009). Teaching ineffectiveness is qualitatively seen from the students' added value individually and in groups. Meanwhile, from a quantitative perspective, this can be seen from the teacher's performance in classroom learning practices to improve students' achievement.

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Teachers are an important element in the teaching and learning process in schools. Every teacher must have adequate competence in carrying out teaching tasks so that the learning process achieves its goals (Day, 2006; Sammons, 1996) or at least knows whether students are learning or not as the result of teacher behaviors during learning activities. Therefore, the challenge for teachers is to be able to identify and develop the mastery of strategies, to develop certain instructional behaviors that are accepted as effective practices, and to develop the ability to match the teaching strategies and the teachers' behaviors at the right time for students individually and in groups in certain teaching situations that are related to expected students' learning outcomes (Hunt et al., 2009).

The real challenge faced by teachers in carrying out learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is the dynamically changing technological environment. This condition requires teachers to continuously innovate their teaching (Tiede et al., 2015). The task of teachers is to make creative and innovative efforts to provide teaching materials and to organize teaching according to student learning needs (Baker et al., 2021). One of the teacher teaching innovations is that they need to continually improve their knowledge and skills to effectively utilize various texts, media, and technology that are available to support the educational process. However, technology-based learning media has been widely applied in the teaching and learning process in the classroom to effectively support the teaching and learning process (Tiede et al., 2015). Teaching media is a tool to increase the teaching effectiveness. The effectiveness of the media use is highly relied to teachers' competencies. This study is intended to investigate whether the level of teachers' personal and pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy is related to the teaching effectiveness during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2. Materials and methods

The population of this study was the high school Economics teachers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The total population of this study was 349 people. The sample of this study was 182 people. The number of samples in this study was determined based on Cochran formula (Cochran, 1977). The sampling technique is proportional random sampling. It considered the distribution of the research sample that came from 5 different regencies/cities, namely 45 people from Sleman Regency, 45 people from Kulon Progo Regency, 44 people from Bantul Regency, 31 people from Gunungkidul Regency, and 17 people from Yogyakarta City.

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The form of the questionnaire was a closed questionnaire. In each question item the respondents chose one of the answer options provided. In the following, the operationalization of the three research variables is presented.

The teacher's personal competence in media literacy as referred to in this study is the level of teacher's abilities/skills in selecting, understanding, and properly utilizing the content of Economics subjects available online. The measurement of variables adapted the research instrument developed by M. Simons, W. Meeus, J. T'Sas (Simons et al., 2017). Indicators of teacher personal competence in media literacy included the competencies in using media (mastering the technical use of media devices and being able to discover and utilize various sources of information), the competencies in understanding media (knowing how to produce the various sources of information, being able to evaluate the media content based on various criteria, and able to create the media content), contributing medially (creating, communicating media, and participating in using media). Each question stated in 5 Likert scale. The results of the empirical validity test showed that 9 questions were declared valid, while Cronbach's alpha value showed a value of .909.

The teacher's pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy referred to the level of the teacher's abilities/skills in managing online learning. The variable of teachers' pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy adapted the research instrument developed by M. Simons, W. Meeus, J. T'Sas (Simons et al., 2017). Indicators of teacher pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy included developing students' competence in mastering the technical use of media devices, developing students' competence in discovering and utilizing various sources of information, the competencies in understanding media (developing students' competencies on how to produce and distribute the media, developing students' competencies to be able to evaluate media contents based on various criteria, developing students' competencies to be able to create media contents, contributing medially (developing students' competencies to be able to

communicate and present the content using media). Each question stated in 5 Likert scale. The results of the empirical validity test showed that the 10 variables of this study were valid, while the Cronbach's alpha value was .952.

Teachers' teaching effectiveness was the teacher's efforts to obtain instructional goals, have knowledge of the contents, communicate well, monitor students' understanding, be thoughtful and respectful to their teaching practices. The teachers' teaching effectiveness questions referred to the following 10 indicators: organization, shared goals, classroom climate, behaviors management, collaborative learning, personalized teaching and learning, making explicit links, dialogic teaching and learning, assessments for learning, plenary, and homework (Ko et al., 2014). Each question stated in 5 Likert scale. The results of empirical testing for 13 items of research instruments were valid, while Cronbach's alpha value showed a value of .923.

Data collection used a closed questionnaire. Questionnaire in the form of Google Form was delivered to Economics teachers in the Special Province of Yogyakarta who were selected as respondents for this study.

Research data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive analysis was intended to provide a brief description of the research variables. Before testing the research hypothesis, namely multiple linear regression, the classical assumption is tested. Tests were conducted using the IBM SPSS 25 application program.

### 3. Discussion

In many studies, the terms 'instructional effectiveness', 'teacher effectiveness' and 'effective teaching' have often been used interchangeably (Scheerens, 2008). The teaching effectiveness has showed that teacher behaviors can be observed during the whole teaching activities in the classroom (Ko et al., 2014); teacher's ability to provide the added value or progress on students' achievement (Little et al., 2009); teacher's ability to give an impact on students' performance from some important learning factors, such as teaching methods, teacher's planning, class organization, and the use of the classroom resources (Campbell et al., 2004); some references on the factors outside the learning process, such as student's learning experiences, behaviors or learning, teacher training, internal and external teaching contexts, internal teaching contexts, and student's characteristics, etc (Medley, 1977). In summary, teaching effectiveness describes that the main task of a teacher is teaching and it is conducted in the classroom. The final teaching performance is always associated with the students' final learning result and this learning process is intended to promote better students' learning outcomes.

Teachers' efforts to create an effective teaching are not always easy. Even though teachers play a very important role in teaching, yet there are various factors that also determine the success of teaching. The Covid-19 pandemic situation, for instance, has caused many teachers to experience challenges in carrying out their teaching activities (Baker et al., 2021). Their findings in New Orleans showed that during the pandemic teachers experienced a lot of mental stress which had an impact on mental health and teachers were not carrying out their main duties smoothly. In the United States, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many schools having to close and teaching must be held online. Online teaching does not necessarily solve all the problems directly, many students from poor families can not be actively involved, as well as students with special needs who also do not get good educational services (Harris et al., 2020). On the teacher's side, during the pandemic they are overcome by various negative feelings that impact them from carrying out effective learning (Cipriano, Brackett, 2020; Sahu, 2020). Meanwhile in Canada, the Covid-19 pandemic has also caused many teachers to experience a lot of stress in online teaching and teaching services for students are also not running fairly for all (Sokal, Trudel, 2020). In short, the Covid-19 pandemic is a difficult situation for teachers in various countries to be able to conduct effective teaching.

There are many obstacles faced, such as the lack of budget prepared by the local government to face the changing forms of teaching (Turner, 2020), inadequate school infrastructure for online learning, there is an awkwardness for teachers to use technology in carrying out online teaching (Sahu, 2020; Sokal, Trudel, 2020), teachers themselves feel anxious while carrying out teaching both for themselves, their families, and their students (Cipriano, Brackett, 2020), online learning costs are not cheap, unequal access to technology from students living in villages and cities (Harris et al., 2020), and others. However, in the difficult situation during the pandemic, teachers need to make creative efforts in providing teaching to students (Baker et al., 2021; Sokal, Trudel, 2020). Online

teaching is an unavoidable choice in a pandemic situation. This form of teaching is a challenge for teachers in carrying out their profession. In Indonesia, as in many other countries, online teaching is a new thing for teachers. In general, teachers are also generally not prepared to do so.

The presence of technology is felt to be very helpful for teachers in carrying out online learning. The adoption of technology by teachers is felt to be very helpful for students to achieve curriculum goals and specifically the educational goals of individual students (Blackhurst, 2005). In practice, technology is applied in various forms. One of them is technology is applied in the preparation of teaching media to support efforts to create more effective learning. This is important considering that teaching media has a direct impact on increasing students' competence (Römer et al., 2022). Students can also be more independent, considering that learning media in general have a fixative nature (Edyburn, 2006).

Teachers need to have good media literacy to support teaching tasks. Teachers need to have adequate knowledge about the media applied in teaching. Research findings show that teachers' knowledge of technology is positively correlated with their perception of the usefulness of technology in life (Lamond, Cunningham, 2020). The definition of media literacy itself has indeed sparked a lot of discussion. One of them, for example, relates to the lack of clarity about the operationalization of the concept of literacy for empirical research on media literacy (Wuyckens et al., 2022). However, this study rests on the definition of media literacy as a person's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in various forms (Aufderheide, 1993; Christ, Potter, 1998). These four components are seen as an approach based on skills in using media. Each component supports the other components and becomes part of a nonlinear dynamic learning process, such as learning to create content, helping someone to analyze professionally the contents produced by others, having skills in analyzing and evaluating internet use, expanding access, and etc. (Livingstone, 2004). Media literacy, therefore, denotes the capabilities embodied in the observable actions and practices of media users (Wuyckens et al., 2022).

During the distance learning (online), the use of learning media becomes a primary need. Its position is likened to food and clothing (Preeti, 2014). Media is a tool to help implementing the effective learning. Learning media in various different forms affect students' learning and interpret the information they get. In this context, teachers should improve their media literacy and integrate it in their field of work in various contexts at school (Tiede et al., 2015). Today, many educators have achieved success in teaching by utilizing digital technology. On the other hand, many students have also discovered digitally mediated ways of learning. That is, the pandemic situation has catalyzed some long overdue debate on important issues such as assessment, curriculum and pedagogy (Williamson et al., 2021).

In the online learning, teachers are more free to choose the right teaching materials, master the material well, and take advantage of online subject contents. Teachers need to technically master the use of media devices, be able to discover and utilize various sources of information, how to produce various sources of information, evaluate media content, create media content, and communicate and present the content using media (Simons et al., 2017). Thus, the better the level of teacher's personal competence in media literacy, the better the effectiveness of teachers' teaching is. Teachers must also be able to manage learning such as understanding the characteristics of their students, designing and implementing learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students to actualize their various competencies. Teachers need to prepare, implement, and evaluate learning activities that encourage students to search, analyze, and present the information (Friesem et al., 2014; Neag, 2015). This can be done by facilitating students in mastering the use of media devices, choosing the media devices correctly based on its functions, discovering and utilizing various sources of information, knowing how to produce and distribute the media, evaluating the media content based on various criteria, create media content, communicating and presenting content using media (Simons et al., 2017). Therefore, the better the level of teachers' pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy, the better the effectiveness of teachers' teaching is.

#### 4. Results

The description of each research variable is described in Table 1. Based on the benchmark reference assessment, the personal competence of teachers in media literacy was generally categorized as sufficient, the pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy was also generally categorized as sufficient, and the effectiveness of teachers' teaching was categorized as sufficient.

**Table 1.** Description of research variables

Research Variables	N	Theoretical Range	Range Actual	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Personal competence in media literacy	182	12 - 60	23 - 60	36.989	6.279	39.436
Pedagogical-didactical competence media literacy	182	12 - 60	23-60	36.265	6.474	52,997
Teaching effectiveness	182	24 - 120	69 - 120	85.005	10.227	104.600

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS.

The results of testing the normality of the data distribution of the research variables are shown in [Table 2](#). The asymp value. sig. (2-tailed) indicated that the data distribution of the research variables was normal.

**Table 2.** One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		182
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.41927190
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.180
	Positive	.080
	Negative	-.143
Test Statistic		.180
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.104*

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS, *Note: \*p > 0.05.*

The results of the heteroscedasticity test are shown in [Table 3](#). The variable of personal competence and the pedagogical-didactical competence of teachers in media literacy showed significant results. This meant that the variance from the residual value of one observation to another observation was fixed. In other words, there were no symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

**Table 3.** Heteroscedasticity test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	6.874	1.723		3,991	.000
	Personal competence in media literacy	.005	.038	.010	.118	.906*
	Pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy	-.081	.037	-.182	-2.186	.070*

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS, *Note: Dependent Variable: The effectiveness of teachers' teaching; \*p > 0.05.*

The results of the multicollinearity test are shown in [Table 4](#). The tolerance value for the personal competence and pedagogical-didactical competence of teachers in media literacy was more than .01 and the VIF value for the personal competence and pedagogical-didactical competence of teachers in media literacy was less than 10. Therefore, based on the results of multicollinearity the test did not find a high or perfect correlation between the independent variables in the regression model.

**Table 4.** Multicollinearity test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	17.721	2.686		6.597	.000		
	Personal competence in media literacy	.957	.059	.587	16.080	.000	.725*	1.379**
	Pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy	.699	.058	.442	12.111	.000	.725*	1.379**

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS, *Note:* \*Tolerance > .01 and \*\*VIF < 10.

**Table 5** (ANOVA) shows that the F value and the significance value (sig.) showed that the regression model can be used to predict the effectiveness of teachers' teaching.

**Tabel 5.** ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16588.652	2	8294.326	420.342	.000*
	Residual	3808.343	179	19.732		
	Total	20396.995	181			

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS, *Note:* Dependent variable: the effectiveness of teachers' teaching; predictors: (constant), personal competence in the field of media literacy, pedagogical competence in the field of media literacy; \*p < 0.05

**Table 6** (Multiple linear regression) shows that the personal competence and pedagogic-didactical competence of teachers in media literacy had a significant effect on the teaching effectiveness. The influence of teacher's personal competence in media literacy was greater than that of pedagogical-didactical competence on the effectiveness of teachers' teaching.

**Tabel 6.** Multiple linear regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.721	2.686		6.597	.000
	Personal competence in media literacy	.957	.059	.587	16.080	.000*
	Pedagogical-didactical competence in media literacy	.699	.058	.442	12.111	.000*

Source: Research data calculated with SPSS, *Note:* Dependent variable: the effectiveness of teachers' teaching; \*p < 0.05

The results of this analysis indicated that the personal competence and pedagogic competence of high school Economics teachers in media literacy had a significant effect on the effectiveness of their teaching. This means that the better the personal competence and the better the pedagogic competence of the Economics teachers in media literacy, the better the teachers' teaching effectiveness was.

The effectiveness of Economics teachers' teaching in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia was indeed in doubt during the Covid 19 pandemic. This was also reflected in this study

that the effectiveness of teachers' teaching was categorized as sufficient. To obtain the learning objectives, teachers must have the abilities to use good media. This was because the implementation of learning could not be conducted face-to-face like before the pandemic. However, the personal competencies and pedagogical competencies of Economics teachers in media literacy as found in this study were still categorized as sufficient. The consideration, as regulated by the government of the Republic of Indonesia, was that the spread of the Covid-19 virus could not be controlled in the school environment. During the implementation of online learning, teachers did not seem to have optimally utilized various Economics learning media to support the smoothness of the learning processes and the efforts to achieve Economics learning objectives. Media was only a means of assisting to support the achievement of instructional goals. However, it depended on the competencies of the teachers. In other words, teachers must have adequate media literacy and have the ability to encourage students to have media literacy as well (Simons et al., 2017). In many communities, teachers are now required to incorporate media and technology in their teaching and must address the educational, social, and ethical dimensions of technology in home and school lives of their students. The work is understood as an important step to ensure that schools encourage and support students in acquiring the required competencies and taking responsibility for their knowledge (Tiede et al., 2015). Therefore, the better the personal competence and the better the pedagogic competence of the Economics teachers in media literacy, the better the teachers' teaching effectiveness was.

In terms of students, they are a generation that tend to be more adaptive to various technological developments. Information technology has long been available in the lives of children and adolescents, such as TV, computers, video games, internet, social media, and cell phones. Media and technology are an integral part of all aspects of home, work, leisure and school. Teachers and school leaders should be responsive to changes in life in society. However, media and technology are increasingly being applied in classrooms around the world both as tools to support teaching and learning processes and as subjects of inquiry themselves (Tiede et al., 2015).

In general, the results of this study were supported by S. Dubovicki, R. Jukić (Dubovicki, Jukić, 2017) which state that teachers and prospective teachers has benefited from organized and guided work when carrying out work with their students in the classroom. Media is very helpful for teachers in improving the pedagogical-didactical skills of teachers and prospective teachers to achieve learning objectives. Similarly, J. Jenkinson (Jenkinson, 2009) shows that from a learning perspective, especially a multimedia environment, the adoption of an evaluative framework encourages a more flexible approach to measure the effects of more meaningful learning. Teachers can use media to support more complex engagement with the learning materials. The use of technology, however, will develop students' learning processes to understand the material being studied.

## 5. Conclusion

The teacher has the main task of creating teaching effectiveness. Teachers can use learning media to support their implementation of effective teaching. In obtain this, teachers need to have personal competencies and pedagogical-didactical competencies in media literacy. Both of these competencies are needed in online learning or distance learning. The results of this study indicated that the personal competencies and pedagogical-didactical competencies of Economics teachers in media literacy had a significant effect on teaching effectiveness. The results of the study indicated that school leaders or related education offices should improve the personal competencies and pedagogical-didactical competencies of teachers through relevant and structured training activities.

Based on the findings of this study, there are some suggestions. First, the respondents of this study were Economics teachers. Teachers assess the effectiveness of teaching, personal competencies, and pedagogical-didactical competencies in media literacy on themselves. It is possible that they give answers that do not correspond to the actual conditions. The next researcher is advised to develop research on teachers with other scientific fields or take research respondents from different sides, for example from the students' perspectives. Second, the effectiveness of teaching is highly dependent on many determining factors. The next researcher is suggested to develop research by adding factors such as teachers' social competencies, teachers' personality competencies, teachers' background, and some teachers' characteristics such as socio-demographic factors.



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## Framing Face-Saving Behavior on Facebook

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### Abstract

The majority of the previous research suggested that the significance of face on social communication is both prevalent and powerful. Every communication channel has the potential to risk the harmony between speakers and hearers. As a result, based on the concept of politeness strategies, this study explores face-saving behavior employed by Facebook users. By examining the different situations of interactions, the paper attempts to describe and analyze the use of politeness strategies on Facebook. The results found that all speakers employed all four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson. The use of positive strategies with 36.67 % that was in high-rated population, and followed by bald on record politeness strategy without redressive action that took 28.89 %. Negative politeness was used 20 % in this platform channel. The last strategy is an indirect strategy called bald off-record that took 14.44 %. In conclusion, politeness strategy plays a significant role as a strategy in building a good interaction without violence the communication and can save the speaker's face as well.

**Keywords:** face-saving behavior, Facebook, politeness strategy, social communication.

### 1. Introduction

Social media has now become a channel for cyberbullying as a form of transformation of traditional bullying into online forms. This destructive behavior grows along with the interaction and communication between users of this online social media platform. At some point cyberbullying will be considered a potential risk of relying on online platforms (Abaido, 2020). Cyberbullying certainly breaks channels and disrupts the flow of communication made between users of this online platform (Haq et al., 2021). Social media users begin to realize the phenomenon that has invaded their privacy, and eventually becomes their reason to leave their social network accounts (Proudfoot et al., 2018). The occurrence of cyberbullying and other negative social interactions that occur in social networking communities causes users to be able to avoid it in certain ways. Speakers or social media users developed some strategies to manage these conditions. They established strategies and behaviors that would make the communication acts more possible to occur (Thielke, 2011: 5).

The face concept can explain individual or group organizational behavior in social interactions on social media. In the context of collectivism culture, people are more likely to judge others to avoid losing face. Individuals would try to reestablish disgraced public self-images by creating favorable self-images (Kim, Nam, 1998). The exchange of information on social media often inadvertently stimulates embarrassing behavior among users, sometimes by laughing at and expressing unkind behavior and posting funny comments that are deemed offensive to certain individuals (Choi et al., 2015). Embarrassment damages an individual's characters and reduces his or her social communication interactions. Individuals are finally motivated to eliminate this

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embarrassing behavior and to avoid situations caused it by using both verbal and non-verbal methods (Dong et al., 2013). In communicating the use of certain strategies to convey uncertain messages and a desire to be polite to save face is necessary (Holtgraves, Perdeu, 2016).

All speech acts are face threatening acts (FTAs) that can harm the harmony between the speaker and the interlocutor. An FTA, both positive and negative, are indirectly ambiguous, so they are often considered as deviations. In contrast to negative politeness strategy, which strives to fulfill the hearer's wishes under coercive circumstances, positive politeness-strategy aims to satisfy what the recipient may want. The dominant illocutionary power can threaten the face of both positive and negative recipients (Brown, Levinson, 1987). Every speaker has a face that they wish to keep, and they also want to keep the addressees' faces. To carry out an FTA, the speaker works to reduce the face threat, unless the requirement to keep face is greater than the necessity to carry out the FTA as effectively as possible (Jaszczolt, 2016). The dynamics of impoliteness in communication interactions, especially in social media, may develop our knowledge about the complexity of communication between speakers and hearers (Chen, 2017). A crucial consideration in a variety of speech acts, including apologies, wishes, protests, rejections, and arguments, is the speaker's choice of strategies. (Sayogie et al., 2022).

E.T. Vold (Vold, 2006) proposed epistemic modality markers, which are language components that indicate uncertainty assertions. The primary purpose is to indicate the writer's level of commitment (boosters) or lack of commitment (hedges) to the proposition's truth.

Social media users need to use positive politeness strategies to minimize the impact of interpersonal communication on the positive face of the interlocutor so that they feel valued (Gribanova, 2019). P. Brown and S.C. Levinson (Brown, Levinson, 1987) categorized various forms of politeness strategies for responding to FTAs. The various politeness strategies are based on three sociological factors: the hearer's relative influence on the speaker, their social closeness, and their assessment of the FTA's.

This study aims to explore how to frame face-saving behavior in building effective interpersonal communication on Facebook user interactions by using politeness strategies.

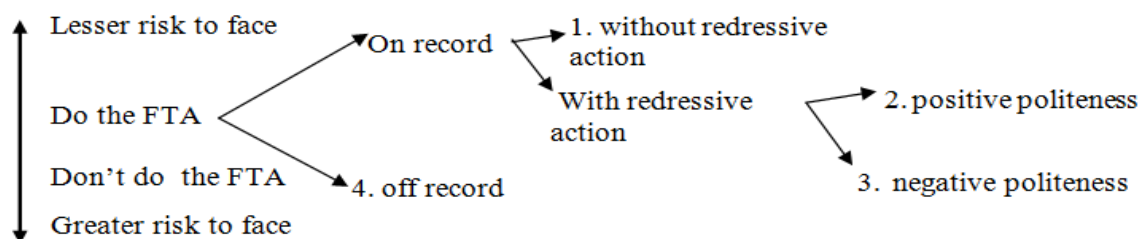
## 2. Materials and methods

This study is descriptive and qualitative methods because it purposes to analyze, classify, examine, and describe one specific case that is interesting to explore (Kim et al., 2017). The current analysis stresses on the four patterns of politeness strategies (Brown, Levinson, 1987; Jaszczolt, 2016) used by Facebook users to avoid FTAs. The choice of materials was determined by the differences of the situation use of the communicative purpose, which makes the study of politeness strategies oriented. The sources of materials subjected to investigation comprise authentic scripts of Facebook user interactions. The discussion presented below is based on samples collected from Facebook profiles of 90 during 2022.

## 3. Discussion

The majority of previous research (Ademiluyi et al., 2022; Alim, 2016; Boddy, Dominelli, 2017; Özel et al., 2017; Rajbhandari, Rana, 2022; Schodt et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2020) observed that negative social interactions in social media will be considered as a possible problem to lose social media users' face. In framing face-saving behavior, users must learn or develop an instrument as a personal assistant that is politeness strategies (Andriuzzi, Michel, 2021; Eshghinejad, Moini, 2016; Maros, Rosli, 2017).

The goal of this study was to examine the concept of FTAs to achieve the understanding of politeness strategies used by Facebook profiles. Politeness strategies were commonly used in their posting and comments. As G. Eelen (Eelen, 2014) explained that politeness is an expression of social relations that is expressed verbally to relieve interpersonal tensions that arise from interactions that are contrary to cultural and social norms. The attribution shields can let speakers or hearers to avoid commitment for their statements. This avoidance motive has the potential to protect both individual and group values to ensure good and harmonious relationships (Ginsburg et al., 2016).



**Fig. 1.** Model for politeness strategies (Brown, Levinson, 1987)

The use of positive strategy with 36.67 % that was in the most population. The results support the most common strategy applied to gain positive face to protect an FTA to maintain relationship. Positive politeness performs to protect the hearer's positive face by considering as participants of an in-group which convinces that the FTA is not perceived as a negative assessment of hearer's face. This strategy saves positive face by representing intimacy, and addressing relationship. Examples are, "*We're not feeling well, are we?*", and "*Hey Bud, have you gotta minute?*" (Maros, Rosli, 2017). Positive politeness strategy is frequently used in friendship groups, strong-relationship communities, and other settings where people are well acquainted. By showing warmth and demonstrating a keen interest in reducing FTA to the listener, the positive politeness strategy seeks to reduce the distance between speakers and hearers. The speaker literally states "*The team played horribly last night, right?*", and "*Isn't your new car a beautiful color!*". The use of safe topics to seek agreement enables the speaker to underline his agreement with the hearer's need to be correct and have his beliefs supported

Bald on record politeness strategy without redressive action took 28.89 %. With this strategy, the speaker makes no attempt to lessen the threats to the hearer's face. The speaker will make the hearer uncomfortable and unpleasant due to communicating them directly or through direct command. The famed "bald on record" strategies are employed to directly address the hearer or the other person to communicate the speaker's needs. It is a straightforward method of communication without imposing oneself. A bald on record technique doesn't make any efforts to lessen the risks to the hearer's face. The speaker may also have varied motivations or reasons for the FTA with greatest effectiveness, therefore there are many reasons why the bald on record is employed in different situations (Brown, Levinson, 1987). From the results, bald on record strategy is a straightforward statement that employs a negative term that is denoted as a "rude" face. It is a bald on statement since it is blunt and contains negative language when the speaker literally says "*Just open your messenger, b\*\*tard*".

Negative politeness is used 20 % in this platform of virtual communication on Facebook. Negative politeness related to the hearer's negative face is redress. To demonstrate to the addressee speaker's respect, recognition, and assurance that he or she is not the one who will intrude on the addressee's negative face, the basis is on avoidance. The strategy could come off as quite formal and understated. When using this strategy, "apologies for meddling or transgressing, hedges on the illocutionary acts, and impersonalizing mechanisms (such as passives)" are frequently used. By showing distance and caution, negative politeness is directed through the hearer's negative face. Negative politeness frequently gives the other person the impression that the speaker is imposing on them (Brown, Levinson, 1987: 70-71). This strategy is employed to prevent encroachment on one another's space, and apologies, hedging, and questioning are utilized to prevent imposing on the other hearers. Negative politeness might come off as very formal and constrained.

Hedges are part of negative politeness strategy. Speakers can use hedges to blur limits or ranges when they don't want to clearly reveal their original objective or true concept in order to protect themselves and maintain their face (Liu, 2020). Hedges are a typical linguistic characteristic that can be found in both written and spoken language. A communication strategy known as a hedge weakens the statement's illocutionary force, which would otherwise make it sound rude, impolite, or plain. Hedges as mitigating expressions are considered to smooth social communication (Ginsburg et al., 2016). Hedges are a unique pragmatic tool for communication that can reduce and weaken the importance of information in sentences while also changing the subject (Liu, 2020). On social media, language is a means of creating reality in different ways in constructing, sharing, and shaping views, perceptions and identities to gain recognition, and provides a description of reality in a means of discourse that creates its own meaning (Gergen,

Thatchenkery, 2004). The speaker says “*I wonder whether you read my message*”, and “*Perhaps, you could give me more time*”. The use of content words and function words beyond the differential perlocutionary effect directly affects the hearer (Ludwig, de Ruyter, 2016). The strength of the illocutionary force has a perlocutionary effect in realizing the communication of a complete speech act in a particular sociolinguistic community like in social media platform. Intrinsically interaction in speech requires linguistic perception and acceptance in the communication process built which results in other forms of speech acts (Ordenes et al., 2017). The argument that each application of social interaction theory is likely to produce differences and interactions in different outcomes (Tsoumou, 2020). Self-presentation in attractive language on social media is a progressive area of using certain platforms to produce and share content (Amirudin, Triyono, 2018).

The last strategy is an indirect strategy called bald off-record that took 14.44 %. Bald off record is different from bald on record without corrective action in that it provides indications, clues, and confusing statements. Bald off record refers to not explicitly stating an actor's intention so that they can avoid being held accountable for performing an FTA. On the other hand, an addressee can miss the information and take the speaker's words in a different light than intended (Brown, Levinson, 1987). The speaker says “*Money is money*”, and “*Well between yes and no*”.

#### 4. Results

The study explored the types and patterns of politeness strategies used by Facebook users avoiding face threatening acts. The goal of the present study was to examine the types and patterns of politeness strategies employed by Facebook users to prevent FTAs. The results were presented based on information gathered from Facebook users' interactions in various contexts to address the research topics.

**Table 1.** Facebook users employed politeness strategies

Politeness Strategies	Occurrence	Percentage (%)
Bald on record strategy	26	28,89
Positive politeness strategy	33	36,67
Negative politeness strategy 1	18	20
Bald off record strategy	13	14.44
Total	90	100

From the results, the most popular strategy in virtual conversations on *Facebook* is positive politeness. Positive politeness, which expresses warmth and a great interest in the hearer's desire for respect, can work to bridge the gap between speaker and hearer. The need for friendliness in communicating as a goal of interacting so this strategy is the most widely used. The results showed that the speaker used several positive politeness sub-strategies including making jokes or humor in conversation, paying attention to hearers' interests, giving gifts to listeners, avoiding disputes, seeking agreement, and building commonalities. Furthermore, the results indicate that the bald on record strategy is the second-best strategy. The sub-strategy of direct negative comments, sympathetic cautions, and advice was used by the speakers. The use of profanity occurs in this strategy. In extreme cases, the speaker ignores the faces of people who are much older in spite of social differences but at the same time still maintains status and honor. The third politeness strategy used is negative politeness. Speakers employ strategies of apologizing, hedging, minimizing coercion and respect. The reason this strategy is least frequently utilized on Facebook is that there is frequently no respect shown there, and most speaker prefer to use positive politeness strategy to uphold friendship without going overboard or imposing. The negative politeness is frequently employed while interacting with acquaintances to reduce FTA and while the speaker wants to keep the hearer's negative face. This negative politeness strategy is frequently used in exchanges between two different states. It was noted that many people favor the direct strategy and the indirect strategy is almost equal, making it clear that certain people have a preference. Most speakers employ sub-strategies including metaphors, hints, generalizations, and paradoxes. FTAs are reduced through indirect methods in the most deceptive and vague ways. According to the results, instances of "sarcasm" were also discovered in the data. The indirect strategy might be advantageous since the speaker can try to enforce an FTA without accepting responsibility.

## 5. Conclusion

Facebook is now becoming a virtual online communication platform. Due to the prevalence of cyberbullying and other unfavorable social interactions in social networking sites, *Facebook* users are able to avoid them in some ways. Social media users or speakers have evolved several management strategies for these circumstances. They developed strategies and behaviors that would increase the chances that the communication activities would probably occur. The harmony between the speaker and the interlocutor can be harmed by all communication activities, which are considered as face threatening acts (FTAs). To make their interlocutor feel valued, social media users need to employ good politeness strategies to reduce the negative effects of interpersonal communication. The results indicated that all speakers consistently used all four of Brown and Levinson's recommended politeness strategies.

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## Practical Application of the Audio Component of Media Education in Order to Socialise the Students as an Individuals in the Postmodern World

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### Abstract

The socialisation of (foreign) students is an important component of the social work of a higher education institution. The postmodern world requires the individual to be competitive in academia as well as socially and economically, which requires appropriate training. Such training can be achieved through linguistic and counselling activities that will enable the individual to perform effective interactions in academic and social spaces. To conduct a comprehensive study, we used a set of methods, including analysis (helping to divide the processes of socialisation and media education into areas and components), synthesis (allowing to combine the elements under consideration into a single system), axiomatic method (aimed at designating certain parameters of the study), deduction (conducting research from a general system to specific elements), induction (studying the element application algorithm to form a single system), abstraction (specifying the directions and components of the study in accordance with a given goal), comparison (facilitating the consideration of the components of media education in the context of general socialisation and linguistic training). Thus, the purpose of this article is to analyse the use of the audio component of media education in the socialisation of the student as an individual in the postmodern world. We have come to the conclusion that the audio component of media education is used by higher education institutions as an auxiliary tool for linguistic training (building skills for the use of rhythm, intonation, grammar features during interpersonal interactions as part of individual activities or work in specialised language laboratories; using audio lectures, which is relevant for foreign students who find it difficult to perceive colloquial academic speech) and counselling (counselling activities in specialised psychological recovery laboratories; the use of musical tracks to restore emotional and behavioural balance) of the individual.

**Keywords:** interpersonal interaction, linguistic skills, audio class, academic space, non-academic environment, culture shock, audio training, playlist, meditation track, “regular”/foreign student.

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the globalisation processes require building necessary competencies in students that will allow them to effectively interact in our postmodern society. Considering that being active in modern society requires constant personal development, this is rather consistent with the definition of “postmodernism as a movement” (Anderson, 2011: 35). Thus, a foreign student as an individual must consistently develop their theoretical knowledge through practice, which will

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testify to their ‘movement’ in the postmodern meaning. Given that postmodernism implies the development of individual freedoms or, in other words, democratisation (including the democratisation of the educational process), it is important to understand how a student can currently learn the theory of and practice their socialisation skills.

It is important to understand that the process of socialisation is necessary for several categories of students, including “regular”/foreign students; individuals who have psychological problems associated with difficulties in communication and interpersonal interaction, etc. Accordingly, such groups of students require certain support from educators, other students, as well as representatives of specialised counselling centres, who should provide theoretical and practical training for individuals with socialisation-related problems, which will allow them to be integrated into social and academic spaces. Ultimately, we can talk about the so-called “adaptive or integrative socialisation, which leads to the adoption of the characteristics or personal abilities that will facilitate integration” (Crisogen, 2015: 333). In other words, adaptive socialisation requires developing certain personal qualities (competencies) that will allow the student to function in society (including academic space). First and foremost, these qualities are “fundamental social aspects” (Duff, 2019: 7), including, *inter alia*, “social ... and linguistic” (Duff, 2019: 7). Thus, adaptation measures should include activities and technical means that contribute to the priority development of social and linguistic interaction skills.

This kind of development can be achieved through the practical application of various types of media, having, *inter alia*, video, audio or text components. This study will analyse audio tools, the use of which can provide the following:

1. Understanding and acceptance of social and cultural features that affect the student as an individual when their intercultural competence is insufficient.
2. Development of language skills that enable effective communication with representatives of other social and cultural groups.

Ultimately, we will consider two groups of students: foreign students (who have linguistic problems) and “regular” students affected by social and cultural as well as psychological influences. As examples of the practical application of audio tools to solve socialisation problems, we have chosen Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts, USA); Cornell University (Ithaca, New York, USA); University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA); Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee, USA); University of Nevada, Reno (Reno, Nevada, USA); Boston College (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, USA); and SHEI “Donbas State Pedagogical University” (Sloviansk, Donetsk region, Ukraine).

Thus, taking into account the foregoing, the *purpose of this article is to study the use of the audio component of media education in the socialisation of the students as individuals in the postmodern world.*

## 2. Materials and methods

The process of studying the practical application of the audio component of media education involved a number of methods that contributed to a detailed study of the topic under consideration and, consequently, to drawing the relevant conclusions. Firstly, it should be noted that the use of the *analysis* that allowed to divide the process of socialisation of (foreign) students into linguistic training and psychological support facilitated studying each direction separately, while the *analysis* of media education from the perspective of its components allowed singling out the audio component, which tied the studies of various areas of the socialisation of the individual together. Secondly, the importance of the *synthesis* used in our study to draw intermediate and final conclusions should be emphasised. For instance, the analysis hereunder helped divide socialisation and media education into areas and components. However, drawing conclusions required piecing all the elements under consideration back together into a single system, and the integrity of this system was the goal of this article.

For a certain simplification, we used the *axiomatic* method to set certain parameters at the beginning of the study that do not require additional evidence but directly affect the further course of the study. First of all, here it is necessary to note that linguistic and psychological directions were identified as elements of the basis of the socialisation of the individual, and the audio component was identified as an integral part of media education.

Since the study of the practical application of the audio component in the process of socialisation of the (foreign) student as an individual requires a gradual transition from general

processes to specific features, we used the *deduction* method. It was used due to the branching of certain processes. Accordingly, in order to study them effectively, the general conceptual structures had to be considered first and then new parameters (directions) had to be involved in the research component. This approach allowed studying the systematic nature of the process of socialisation of a (foreign) student. In turn, the branched nature of the socialisation process necessitated the use of the *induction* method. For instance, final conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the use of the audio component of media education can be drawn upon conducting a detailed study of the directions of socialisation of the individual. As a result, the scientific path from particular elements to a unified system of training and support of (foreign) students contributes to the unification of disparate directions and is aimed at understanding the foundations for the topic under study.

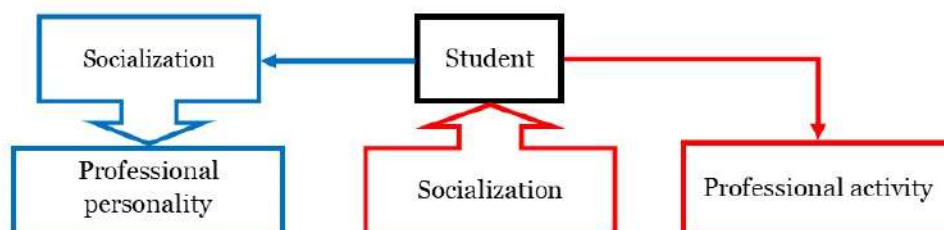
Given that the socialisation of the individual is a complex process associated with many areas of training and counselling, and so is the media education system which, at its core, consists of several components, in order to conduct our research in accordance with its goal, the *abstraction* method was applied. This method was necessary to narrow down determining directions of socialisation (linguistic, psychological) and components of media education (audio) for our study. Other directions and components were touched upon superficially and were not used further as examples when studying their practical application in higher education institutions. Thus, the abstraction method allows focusing only on the elements that are directly relevant to the goal of the study. Therefore, scientific abstraction ensures the specification of the presented material and, accordingly, its final conclusions.

The *comparison* method was also used in the study. The consideration of the general principles of media education points to the existence of four components of this process: video, audio, text and Internet components. To compare all four components, they were analysed in connection with two directions of the socialisation of (foreign) students, namely general socialisation and the development of linguistic skills. Thus, this comparison identified the significance of these components for each direction and the possibility of their practical application for language training and general socialisation.

### 3. Discussion

One of the directions of social pedagogy is the study of the socialisation of the individual (including a student) under two main conditions: during the regular interpersonal interaction of an academic nature and when encountering new cultural features (which is typical for foreign students affected by culture shock). According to Y. Moradi, F. Mollazadeh, H. Jamshidi and other researchers, socialisation is inevitable when performing activities in any professional field (Moradi et al., 2017). Considering that academic activities prepare the individual for their further professional development, learning in a higher education institution and interpersonal interactions related to this process can be defined as pre-professional training which also requires certain actions that will ensure the effectiveness of the overall socialisation process.

The conclusion reached by W. Salisu, N. Nayeri and I. Yakabu, that socialisation is a process during which a professional identity is formed (Salisu et al., 2019: 1289) should also be taken into account. Thus, proper socialisation will allow a student – and then a professional – to function efficiently, even when being in a different social and cultural environment. As a result, we can trace the direct and inverse relationship when the socialisation process is necessary for the professional functioning of the individual; in turn, the student will be able to function efficiently only if proper socialisation is achieved (Figure 1).



**Fig. 1.** Direct and inverse relationship of the process of the socialisation of the individual

Given that there are several stages of socialisation, including primary socialisation (in the first years of a person's life); intermediate socialisation (typical for adolescence); secondary socialisation (associated with professional development) and re-socialisation (involving the preparation of the individual to return to the usual social and cultural environment) (Aljeksjejenko, 2007: 38), this study will cover the secondary socialisation, which involves the professional development of the student as an individual and requires, as discussed previously, direct and inverse relationship. Secondary socialisation presupposes that the individual has certain social and cultural competencies formed at the previous stages and requires a narrowly focused development of interpersonal and, accordingly, linguistic skills.

In general, the process of socialisation may include activities of a different nature, including those with the use of media. It should be taken into account that "in real-life conditions, both the social situation itself and the ways the individual approaches it is ever-developing, constantly expanding the idea of the possible" (Aljeksjejenko, 2007: 26). Thus, the choice of activities that can be used to form social and cultural skills should directly depend on the social and academic spaces where the student has to function. However, media tools can be considered universal since they can be applied regardless of specific social and academic requirements.

Both individual components and media education as a whole were studied by many authors, including: M. Paskevicius (content creation in various types of digital media) (Paskevicius, 2021); A. Levitskaya, A. Fedorov (building media competence of the individual and research of media influences) (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021); A. Law, R. Stock (use of media in education) (Law, Stock, 2017); S. Kim (Kim, 2019), Z. Vahedi, L. Zannella, S. Want (Vahedi et al., 2019) (practical application of information and communication technologies); J. Holopainen, A. Lähtevänoja, H. Lammassaari, C. McLaughlin, E. Sillence, J. Brunton, M. Brown, E. Costello (educational activities online or in a blended learning environment; socialisation and support when using social media) (Holopainen et al., 2022; McLaughlin, Sillence, 2018; Brunton et al., 2018); M. Simons, T. Smits, P. Janssenwillen (building media literacy skills when using the text component of media education) (Simons et al., 2020).

Taking into account the existing studies regarding the use of media education components in academic activities and socialisation, the fundamental components can be singled out, namely video, audio, text and Internet components (Sluc'kyj, 2022). Their significance for the socialisation process is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1.** The role of media education components in the general and linguistic socialization of students

<i>Media education component</i>	<i>The role of the component in the general socialisation of the student</i>	<i>The role of the component in the developing of linguistic skills</i>
Video component	It has a direct impact on the formation of social and cultural ideas about the new society by visualising the values inherent in a particular society (in the case of foreign students); involves the development of interpersonal skills when watching and further discussing a video together (when conducting classroom and out-of-class viewings as part of the socialisation of "regular" students).	It can be used as a means of language training for foreign students when screening films in the language of the host country.
Audio component	It mostly refers to the psychological recovery of the student as an individual after the influence of cultural (for foreign students) and/or social (for "regular" students) shock after the audio training.	It is effective when working in language rooms and in case of individual listening to monologues, dialogues, podcasts, etc.
Text component	It is aimed at the development of social and cultural competence by reading literary works of the host country (for foreign students).	It facilitates the development of language skills during discussion events (e.g. Book Clubs), which contribute to the formation of

		linguistic and cultural patterns (relevant for both foreign and “regular” students).
Internet component	It is characterised by combining video, audio and text components, as well as enabling their practical application remotely.	

This study considers the audio component of media education. According to the table above, this component can be applied during the socialisation (support) of both “regular” and foreign students. The role of the counsellor in the process of the practical application of the audio component for socialisation and development of linguistic skills should be emphasised. The main element of the effectiveness of the use of audio tools, including the audio component, is the direct interaction between the counsellor and the student (foreign student). The counsellor (both advisers and psychologists, as well as employees of international student support centres (in case of, for example, higher education institutions in the US) can act as counsellors) should “help fix problems” (Hsu et al., 2008: 194) of the students that can be both language-related and related to social, cultural or psychological issues.

Thus, given the importance of encouraging students to be proactive in their personal socialisation (Charoensap-Kelly, Punyanunt-Carter, 2022: 68; Gardner, Barnes, 2007), this process must be planned professionally, which students cannot achieve on their own. Therefore, the use of the audio component of media education should be based on:

1. Specific problems of a social or linguistic nature that affect the quality of the student’s academic activities;
2. Implementation of the stages of the individual socialisation plan created on the basis of the psychological and linguistic analysis of the (foreign) student.

Correspondingly, we can claim that the uncontrolled use of the audio component of media education will have, to a greater extent, a superficial effect. Therefore, this requires purposeful preparation of the individual for the competent use of media technologies in general (Prykhodkina, 2020: 186) and the audio component of media education in particular, which can be achieved subject to planned socialisation and the help of a counsellor.

In view of the above, we can conclude that for the purpose of socialisation of the (foreign) students, there are two directions for the application of the audio component of media education:

1. If (foreign) students have some psychological problems;
2. For linguistic training in specialised laboratories.

As for the first direction, it should be noted that a student (and this is especially important for foreign students), finding themselves in a new society, is affected by certain external stress factors, which subsequently transform into negative internal manifestations that directly affect social and academic activities of the individual. In this regard, the audio component of media education can be applied, in psychological terms, as audio training which will provide psychological and emotional recovery after the effects of social (typical for “regular” students) or cultural (for foreign students) shock. In addition, when it comes specifically to foreign students, the availability of recordings in various languages is essential when providing psychological audio support. This will enable the counsellor to conduct psychological training in the foreign student’s native language. This aspect is important since foreign students who have only recently started the educational process and, therefore, are yet to form sufficient linguistic skills, are most susceptible to culture shock and require the most psychological support.

As for the second direction, the student’s language training should be considered as a necessary element of interpersonal interaction (for “regular” students) and an element of communication in general. According to M. Nikolic, audio recordings allow students from non-English-speaking countries (foreign students) to learn English as it is used in the host country (Nikolic, 2017). Naturally, English, in this case, cannot be considered the only possible language in linguistic socialisation. M. Nikolic’s conclusion of can be equally applied to the state language of any host country.

However, this kind of linguistic audio training should not be a one-time thing. It has to be continuous to enable not only theoretical understanding, but also the practical mastering of language skills. For instance, according to O. Banit, “continuous audio practice replenishes vocabulary, teaches you how to combine words correctly and use prepositions and makes a foreign language as natural as possible” (Banit, 2013: 229). Thus, the audio component of media education

has a direct impact on the student's language training both during the educational process and during socialisation.

It is important to keep in mind that one of the main prerequisite for professional work in postmodern society is the ability of an individual to build effective communication relationships, which is achieved by the ability to apply the so-called linguistic and cultural patterns that include not only the skills of using certain phrases and linguistic combinations, but also the use of the host country's cultural features in communication. In this case, a prerequisite for the formation of such patterns is the direct participation of a counsellor (who can provide an explanation for certain cultural and language features), as well as the frequent listening to audio recordings specially developed for this purpose.

With all that in mind, let us consider [Figure 1](#) from the perspective of the audio component of media education. Given that the linguistic direction of the audio component is more relevant for foreign students (whereas for "regular" students, it is the psychological counselling direction), they are the focus of this study. As a foreign student obtains theoretical skills that contribute to socialisation their practical mastering, socialisation occurs directly, allowing the student to get further opportunities for effective interpersonal academic and socially oriented interactions, which will ultimately lead to their professional development as an individual. Therefore, the use of audio tools as methods for the formation of linguistic (as well as, and this is essential for socialisation, cultural) patterns is a prerequisite for the formation of a professional identity of the individual. In turn, a proper process of socialisation of a (foreign) student will allow them to perform activities with a positive end result (professionally).

Thus, having considered the theoretical concept of our study, we can conclude that the audio component of media education is an important component of the socialisation of both "regular" and foreign students as individuals. For "regular" students, using audio tools as psychological counselling is the most effective, while foreign students would benefit from them as an element of linguistic training. Naturally, this conclusion does not suggest using audio tools exclusively within the designated educational or adaptive parameters. Audio tools can also be used for the linguistic training of "regular" students when they study foreign languages as well as (as mentioned above) for psychological support for foreign students (if psychological training is available in different languages). However, we have identified the direction that will be largely considered in our study in terms of practical application (psychological counselling for "regular" students and linguistic training for foreign students), which does not negate the prospects for further study of other forms of using audio tools for various categories of students.

#### 4. Results

Today learning a foreign language is an important component of effective interpersonal interactions. It is especially true in the case of foreign students who have to master the language of the host country to the extent that would be sufficient to function in academic and social environments. In order to form the necessary linguistic skills (which are part of the socialisation of the individual), the media education components can be used, including audio tools. A curious case of such an application can be found in Language Laboratory at Boston College. The laboratory meets the needs for learning and teaching foreign languages at the language department of an educational institution for students who study English as a foreign language. Students are provided with access to portable equipment and multimedia tools and access to audio study of Latin, Greek, French, Italian and other languages. However, as an example, let us look at materials for learning and improving fluency in English. Pronunciation Recordings is an audio module that provides access to the following materials ([Pronunciation..., 2022](#)):

1. Accurate English. Runtime: approximately 5 hours and 30 minutes (an audio tutorial and reference guide for the pronunciation of American English that include the following thematic elements: stress, rhythm, examples of abbreviations, simplifications, regional variations, etc.).
2. The American Accent Guide. Runtime: approx. 8 hours (8 audio CDs with an overview of American English speech patterns, as well as a number of practical lessons on stress, intonation, etc.).
3. Jazz Chants. Runtime: 48 minutes (poems and dialogues designed to master intonation).
4. P.D.'S. Runtime: approximately 6 hours (a number of exercises for mastering pronunciation skills for the intermediate-level students).

5. P.D.'S in Depth. Runtime: approx. 7 hours (mastering pronunciation skills for the advanced students).

6. Small Talk. Runtime: 60 minutes (songs), 41 minutes (exercises) (materials feature music tracks (jazz) that emphasise the rhythm and intonation patterns of spoken American English; as well as listening exercises, pronunciation practice).

Thus, the Pronunciation Recordings module contributes to the development of communication skills of students (associated with rhythm and intonation), which enables forming speech features that facilitate spontaneous speaking skills. Such skills, in turn (especially when it comes to a foreign student), will allow the student to be more involved in the academic and social spaces of the host country, which is an indicator of the socialisation of the individual.

Another audio module at Boston College Language Laboratory is Grammar Recordings. Let us take a closer look at the materials provided in the context of this module ([Grammar..., 2022](#)):

1. Focus on Grammar – Advanced. Runtime: 7 minutes (one audio unit), 2 hours 45 minutes (total time) (materials of the module are aimed at expanding students' knowledge of English grammar through listening, reading, etc. The supplemental audio materials feature interactive exercises).

2. Side by Side I and II. The runtime of each audio lesson is 20-25 minutes (recordings include conversational materials).

As a result, the grammar-related audio module supplements the text component when studying the syntax of American English. Similarly, to pronunciation, the correct use of grammar structures directly affects the quality of interpersonal interaction between a (foreign) student and representatives of the host country.

The third module of Language Laboratory, Listening Comprehension Recordings, should also be highlighted. It is represented by the following materials ([Listening Comprehension..., 2022](#)):

1. Advanced Listening Comprehension. Runtime: 15-20 minutes (one lecture), 4 hours 46 minutes (total time) (academic lectures on various topics; the main purpose is to develop listening skills and learn to take notes from the ear).

It should be noted that audio lectures are also practised in other higher education institutions in the United States, such as University of Washington, which has the Audio Recording Lectures programme ([Audio..., 2022](#)), that allows students to access the content of lectures of a particular course. This option can be used both as an academic element (for additional and more detailed study of the "archived" material) and as an additional method in language training (listening). This conclusion is supported by the following material of the module Listening Comprehension Recordings at Boston College ([Listening Comprehension..., 2022](#)):

2. Better Listening Skills. Runtime: 6-13 minutes (each lecture), 44 minutes 18 seconds (total time) (the purpose of these recorded lectures is to help students who have difficulty understanding English in an academic setting). This is especially relevant for foreign students who are in the process of learning the language and may experience problems with understanding fast academic speech. In this case, the audio component of media education allows them to learn the necessary material outside the academic setting.

3. Feelings. Runtime: 2-3 minutes (each audio unit), 34 minutes (total time) (materials for students whose English level is upper intermediate. Audio recordings consist of 12 modules that are thematically focused on expressing one's feelings in various situations, discussing one's inner state, etc.). It should be noted that in a certain sense, these audio materials can simultaneously play a major role both in the linguistic training and in psychological support of the individual (including socialisation).

4. Improve Your English: English in the Workplace. Runtime: 2 hours 19 minutes (these materials are intended for ESL students (here we can talk about foreign students) and allow them to form everyday English comprehension skills by listening to interviews with people representing various professions). Thus, given that socialisation is the ability to interact in society, the formation of daily communication skills can be considered among the important aspects of involving a person in the social and cultural spaces of the host country. This definition can also be applied to the following materials, namely:

5. Listening in the Real World. Runtime: 3-5 minutes (each lesson), 2 hours 45 minutes (total time), 1 hour 35 minutes (dialogues) (these are very short but fast conversational recordings, which is especially important for students who have difficulty understanding everyday speech in foreign language).

Thus, the Listening Comprehension Recordings module focuses on the formation of academic and social communication skills and features audio lectures and dialogue materials that contribute to listening to situations in a calm environment, which will allow students to interact more effectively in various interpersonal situations of spontaneous nature.

The value of linguistic training using the audio component is important for academic as well as social and cultural interactions, which is the main goal of the course Listening and Speaking Classes at Northeastern University ([Listening..., 2022](#)), held three times a year for students from non-English speaking countries. The syllabus of the course is aimed at mastering pronunciation, listening, learning colloquial speech.

Let us consider the value of specialised software for the use of the audio component of media education in the development of linguistic skills using Web Audio Lab (WAL) at Cornell University ([Web..., 2022](#)) as an example. This software is an interactive platform for learning foreign languages aimed at developing linguistic exercises that allow students to receive audio, video and text materials, as well as practice speaking when learning a particular language. WAL resources can be used both in the language laboratory and in other places where computer equipment is available. Thus, this platform uses all four components of media education: video, audio, text and the Internet (as a connecting component that allows you to access the rest). As a result, classes in a specialised language laboratory allow students to examine, *inter alia*, features of colloquial speech, intonation, the rhythm of the language, etc. However, it should be noted that modern technology allows expanding the possibilities of using such platforms by providing access to materials for students from smartphones so that linguistic training can take place regardless of the academic space. In this case, the mobility of the formation of linguistic and cultural patterns can be achieved.

The practice of using a language laboratory is also present at the English-German Department of the Donbas State Pedagogical University. Students are provided with dialogue and monologue recordings, which they can listen to both as an aid during class (academic time) and for self-study (outside academic time).

Given the importance of the mobility of linguistic training (as mentioned earlier), the initiative Foreign Language Audio Material (FLACS), which is part of Language Resource Center at University of Michigan ([Foreign..., 2022](#)), should be emphasised. Users are offered a choice of several languages for learning (including Arabic, Hindi, Latin, Turkish, Ukrainian, etc.), and the audio materials can be downloaded to any device that can play audio files. This way, students are able to perform the same actions as in the language laboratory, only without the need to be present in the academic space. Note that in addition to mobility, the ability to play linguistic audio recordings outside the academic space also contributes to socialisation. For instance, when working in a language laboratory, students are separated from each other and listen to audio recordings individually. If these recordings are available outside the classroom, students who study a foreign language can listen to them together and subsequently discuss them, which will contribute to interpersonal interaction and the development of conversational skills.

Thus, the audio component of media education is effectively used in higher education institutions as recordings of academic lectures that a (foreign) student can listen to during non-academic time (in case of insufficient understanding of colloquial speech); records of materials of a dialogue and monologue nature that allow learning the rhythm, intonation and the use of slang structures during communication; audio materials that supplement English (or another language) grammar textbooks. Consequently, the development of linguistic skills allows the student (and this is especially relevant for foreign students) to have more effective interpersonal interactions with representatives of the host country (for foreign students) and, therefore, undergo the process of socialisation in a better format since an individual gets involved in a new society through the active interpersonal interactions.

However, the audio component of media education can be used not only for the formation of language skills. Given that an individual, staying in an unfamiliar social and academic (for “regular” students) or social and cultural (for foreign students) environment is negatively affected by culture shock, they need psychological counselling. This is especially true for students from other cultural groups. In this case, audio tools can also be used as an auxiliary element of counselling. An example of this application is UCC Mind Body Lab at Vanderbilt University ([UCC..., 2022](#)). The initiative aims to increase self-awareness and provides tools for managing stress. The student can undergo audio training in a specially equipped room and learn meditation



and restore balance to the mind and body. This psychological support laboratory is designed for one person, allowing them to concentrate on their inner issues.

It should be also noted that music (as an element of the audio component of media education) has a great influence on the emotional state of the individual and their ability to concentrate. According to Counseling Services University of Nevada, Reno slow-paced music makes you feel calm, helps relieve stress (which is a prerequisite for psychological problems) (Releasing..., 2022). However, not every genre of music can be used as an aid in psychological counselling. For instance, Counseling Services University of Nevada, Reno argues that Native American, Celtic stringed instruments can be considered effective as relaxing (and therefore meditative) music, even if it is loud. The combination of various sounds with music can also be described as positive. For example, the sounds of rain or nature sounds can be effectively combined with classical pieces, jazz (Releasing..., 2022). However, there is a fundamental consideration of using such music that should be emphasised. The student should enjoy the soundtrack aimed at psychological recovery. If certain music is annoying to a person, the effectiveness of the audio tool in psychological counselling will be questionable. Accordingly, there is a need to select audio tools together with a counsellor. An effective selection of music is necessary to reduce stress and thus increase the ability to socialise in a new social (“regular” students) or social and cultural (foreign students) environment.

University of Nevada, Reno suggests examples of the kind of musical tracks that can be used (or act as an example of the creation of playlists individually designed by the counsellor and student for psychological counselling), which are given in Table 2 (Releasing..., 2022):

**Table 2.** Examples of audio tracks that can be used as an aid in psychological counselling

Name of the track	Author of the track	Description of the track	YouTube link
A Moment of Peace Meditation	Aneal & Bradfield	Instrumental piano music	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xINL9o68Yvg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xINL9o68Yvg</a>
Echoes of Time	R. Carlos Nakai	Music of Serenity on Native American flute	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQYweHL9chg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQYweHL9chg</a>
The Winding Path	Kevin Kern	Instrumental piano music	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGUTu2IEUiQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGUTu2IEUiQ</a>
Classical Indian Music for Healing and Relaxing	Gayatri Govindarajan	Meditative music on Veena, an ancient Indian musical instrument	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUeMuFaOVSM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUeMuFaOVSM</a>
Pachelbel's Canon	Angels of Venice	Classical performance on three instruments: harp, flute and cello	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2yIPzepYEK">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2yIPzepYEK</a>
Earth Drum	David and Steve Gordon	Serene Native American music	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXm5M4vEjuE&amp;list=PLCoF228E6C7956479">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXm5M4vEjuE&amp;list=PLCoF228E6C7956479</a>
Buddha Spirit	Aneal & Bradfield	Music that is slow-paced but created using different instruments	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2gRrGCotHQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2gRrGCotHQ</a>
As Twilight Fades	Dan Gibson's Solitudes	Instrumental music with added sounds of nature	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqKQYx2UqJo&amp;list=PL4cMJDoPFDomWc_ovlHBJbxxWVkswblmB">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqKQYx2UqJo&amp;list=PL4cMJDoPFDomWc_ovlHBJbxxWVkswblmB</a>
Weightless	Marconi Union	This track featured a carefully selected rhythm which helps to reduce stress	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfcAVEjsl rU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfcAVEjsl rU</a>

All presented tracks are meditative in nature and can be used (or act as examples) as auxiliary audio tools in overcoming the negative consequences of social and/or cultural shock.

Thus, the audio component of media education can be used as an auxiliary method in conducting psychological counselling. Its practical application is associated with the organisation of the work of specialised laboratories where the student can listen to audio lessons or music for stress relief. In addition, music can be used outside the classrooms for psychological and emotional recovery through listening to certain playlists, which should fit the student's personality and therefore necessitates the involvement of a counsellor.

## 5. Conclusion

To summarise, we can conclude that the audio component of media education will be used as an aid in educational and counselling activities that contribute to the socialisation of students. However, despite the fact that the effectiveness of audio tools is related, in our opinion, to the type of students ("regular" students need the audio component in the process of psychological counselling; foreign students need it for linguistic training), the study did not make a strict separation of students as the goal was to analyse the experience of socialisation of all students using audio tools. In this case, for the purpose of our article, the use of the audio component of media education are interconnected for both "regular" and foreign students.

Thus, we have identified two areas of research into the audio component of media education: linguistic and psychological, each having its own characteristics. When considering the use of audio tools in higher education institutions for the language training of students, the following should be noted as to the audio component:

1. It promotes the formation of practical rhythm and intonation skills that are relevant to spoken English, which facilitate the development of the speech features necessary for effective communication (Boston College);

2. It acts as an aid to textual grammar materials since the knowledge of and the practical skills of applying grammar structures is an important condition for a person's ability to communicate in a new society (Boston College);

3. It is used as audio lectures, allowing the student to additionally study academic material, especially in case of insufficient skills in recognising fast academic speech (Boston College);

4. It is used in the form of dialogue and monologue recordings, which the students (primarily foreign ones) need to form communication skills, namely the ability to properly communicate, which involves understanding the other people's speech in real time and providing a quick response in the language of the host country (Boston College);

5. It can be used in specialised classrooms (language laboratories) where students can work with dialogue and monologue recordings in a more detailed format (Donbas State Pedagogical University), as well as when using platforms such as (Web Audio Lab (WAL)), that allow mobile use of media education components outside the academic space, which will increase the amount of time spent on the linguistic training of the individual (Cornell University, University of Michigan).

However, the study showed that the audio component of media education can also be used in psychological counselling. Given that "regular" students experience the effects of social shock caused by interpersonal interaction in a new space (academic), while foreign students experience culture shock caused by the social and cultural features of the host country, the linguistic training alone cannot fully ensure the socialisation of the individual, because intrapersonal difficulties will arise and damage the interpersonal relations built during communication. In this regard, (foreign) students require psychological support in order to reduce their overall stress level. An audio component can also be used for this, namely:

1. When the student uses specialised psychological recovery laboratories, which provide appropriate training in the premises equipped for this (Mind Body Lab). Classes of this format allow the student to analyse the root causes of actual psychological problems and concentrate on solutions to negative aspects. Moreover, the stay in this laboratory involves audio-trainings offering "virtual work with a counsellor" (Vanderbilt University);

2. Furthermore, psychological support for (foreign) student can also involve the audio component of media education in the music format. Thus, certain tracks have a direct impact on the emotional state of the individual and can either increase the level of psychological, emotional and behavioural perception of the society or help reduce it and, therefore, reduce stress manifestations caused by the cultural/social shock. In this case, however, the individual

characteristics of the student should be considered, which requires the direct involvement of the counsellor in the process of selecting a psychological support playlist (University of Nevada, Reno).

However, it should be noted that as regards the application of the audio component of media education in the socialisation of students, there are more directions than just linguistic and psychological. Promising topics that require further study by researchers also include the use of the audio component during cultural events related simultaneously to foreign students presenting the cultural features of their countries and “local” students presenting the host state; studying various directions of the practical application of the audio component in higher education institutions in the US and Europe (comparative characteristics); identifying the possibilities and effectiveness of combining the audio component with other components of media education during the activities aimed at the socialisation of students.

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## Netnography in Social Networking Sites – An Exploration of Cybercultures in Consumer Groups

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### Abstract

Social networking sites (SNS's) allow for formation of groups of individuals united by a cause, interest and at times even a brand. These groups could have a hundred or a billion members, ranging in their degrees of involvement. With such huge numbers, quantitative studies such as surveys, or highly selective qualitative studies such as interviews remain only popular options to study audience behaviour. This paper explores the method of Netnography (Kozinets, 1998) for observing the online populations and evaluates its pros and cons for studying cybercultures in the Social Networking Sites. Netnography is an online adaptation of on-field ethnographic study, a method utilized often in sociological studies. It allows for a qualitative as well as a quantitative approach with the use of various methods and tools adapted for a computer mediated field. This paper explores the various approaches and tools of Netnography, their uses and perceptible outcomes and compares it with those of other methods of studying virtual populations. With a review of select studies and research papers on Digital communication research methodologies and virtual sociological paradigms, the study evaluates the pros and cons of adopting this research method. Lastly, the paper also discusses the ethical repercussions of online observation vis-a-vis cyber stalking.

**Keywords:** netnography, virtual population, social networking sites (SNSs), cyber stalking, virtual platforms, media.

### 1. Introduction

Internet has become a platform for inception, as well as congregation of various communities. Virtual populations from all over the world cohabit the internet and have found ways to group on different bases, similar to the populations inhabiting the real world. Communities formulating online are digitally aided social networks that cross geographical and political boundaries in favour of mutual interests. Like communities in real world, these are also bounded by certain codes and rituals (Carey, 2008). These communities can be divided into two categories, those which formulate online and those which exist offline but utilize web platforms to connect online. Mostly these communities operate online, with few cases where individuals choose to meet offline, or yearly congregations such as Comic con etc. In online platforms, these communities interact virtually with help of text(chats, message boxes, bulletin boards, emails), visuals(photos, memes, graphics, videos) and audio(podcasts, audio messages) etc. The messages exchanged are archived in servers and when extracted and collated they work as data or content to be studied extensively, shedding light on the community behaviour (Fisher, 2019).

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These online communities can be further broadly categorized in two categories: open communities and closed communities. Open communities are such as Wikipedia, which do not require the user to register, thus opening the community and the content generated to anyone and everyone. Closed communities are the ones that are selective about the participants, filtering applicants on basis of several factors, ranging from sex to whether they are a fan of a music band, as per the needs of the group. These communities are difficult to study as they guard their membership and thus the content as well. So while the community exists in public sphere on the web, the interactions and thus the content is hidden from the non-members (Kim et al., 2020)

Thus, in case of researching on the former category of communities, the researcher has complete access to data, and is able to employ any number of qualitative and quantitative tests on the same. But in the case of latter, the only way to gather the data is that researcher becomes a participant of the community. The participant can be a passive observer or an active participant, depending on the method and skill of the researcher. It is their interaction with the group and observation of the practices, rituals and content from the inside, which elicit rich data which can be generalized and abstracted to describe the community, much like an ethnographic study.

Ethnography as a classical research method requires the researcher to live with the community, observe their practices including their patterns of communication within the community and with the outside world. The content produced while communicating, such as verbal and non-verbal conversations, rituals, etc are gathered in form of data through field notes. The data is then analysed and interpreted with a larger world view (Brewer, 2000). Netnography is a virtual adaptation of the same with the researcher joining the virtual communities, observing the communication patterns of the community population with each other. They also analyse the virtual content produced by the community and the reactions to the same within and across communities. Much like real world, these online communities also have their own practices and customs and researchers are also able to identify them for the community in the virtual world (Kozinets, 2015).

Netnography has also been named alternatively as Cyber Ethnography (Morton, 2001), Ethnography of virtual spaces (Burrell, 2009), Internet Ethnography (Boyd, 2008), Digital Ethnography (Murthy, 2008) and Webnography (Puri, 2007). While most of them pander upon the same methods, approaches and tools, it is Netnography that has been most extensively written about by Kozinets, including case studies from various socio and psychological perspectives including marketing and communication.

This research is aimed at analysing Netnography as a method for researching online communities and evaluating its tools and techniques.

## 2. Materials and methods

**Aim:** The overarching aim of this study is to assess the methods of Netnography for studying online populations.

**Objectives:** The specific objectives of this paper are

1. To explore the approaches and tools of Netnography
2. To estimate the perceptible outcomes by adopting various tools of Netnography
3. To compare Netnography with other methods of studying virtual populations
4. To analyse ethical repercussions of adopting Netnography to study audience/consumer behaviour.

**Method:** Adopting an evaluatory approach, the study employs an in-depth review of select studies and essays written on various methods of researching online populations

**Sample:** Two types of papers were chosen for the research

1. Studies which were critiquing the methods and tools
2. Studies which were employing the methods and tools

The filtration process was done on the basis of relevance of the paper for this particular study.

## 3. Discussion

Ethnography is the study of human interactions occurring in public space, elucidating on their behaviours, perceptions bound by a geographical space and time. This helps in understanding the drawing thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973). Drawing parallels with the real world ethnographic study, Netnography requires the researchers to join online communities and study the communication styles,

patterns and nature of engagement, their tangible outcomes, adapted practices, and lastly adaptation of the Ritual Model (Carey, 2008) in them for the course of the study.

It is emerging as a suitable method for studying audience behaviour as in the era of social media, as a number of platforms are available on the web to facilitate engagement with the masses (Addeo et al., 2019). These social networks facilitate discussion and posting of own beliefs without any censorship or hegemonical structures, thus helping communities prosper. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Groups on Facebook etc. remain guarded for the outside world, but Twitter, YouTube and Instagram provide a top down approach (Kozinets, 2019).

Secondly, these official social media groups are not only used by the audience, but by content producers, collaborators and other stake holders as well, thus facilitating a transparent public discussion. Emerging as a popular method of marketing research that focusses especially on consumer groups as communities, Netnography has been adapted to study entertainment industries (Rai, Srivastav, 2021), tourism industry (Tavakoli, Wijesinghe, 2019), fashion industry (Kapoulas et al., 2020) amongst many others.

According to Alexa, SNS are the most popular web pages, inviting large numbers of users every day. These websites are free to join, thus economic parity is not a concern to be a part of them. They also allow sharing of videos, liking and commenting on them, and subscribing/following a particular channel as well, thus resulting in rich data that can be extensively analysed, qualitatively as well as quantitatively (Gugushvili et al., 2020).

As the number of virtual populations keeps rising, so does the variety of communities and participation in them as well. A variety of social media platforms like Facebook facilitate formation of virtual groups which function as the public sphere for the audience. These groups have made it possible to study audience behaviour and interaction with the text, creators and each other at the same time (Jerolmack et al., 2021). These groups also narrow down the sample size of the population relevantly as they are specifically dedicated to the subject in context (Salmons, 2021) (Gambetti, Kozinets, 2020).

Lastly, today all companies and conglomerates ensure their presence on social media to reach out to their audience. Apart from having their websites and email address, social media presence is also required in today's times. Usually these companies have their own official pages/groups on the social networking platforms which are used for company – customer communication (Gonçalves et al., 2020). This communication can be one way in case of announcements or platforms which allow limited interaction or two way in case of social media where customers can engage with the content posted online. These official platforms not only give credibility to the content shared by the company directly, it also helps in reflecting on the success or failure of the target audience engagement strategies adopted (Rai, Srivastav, 2021).

#### 4. Results

There are two types of approaches to studying online populations: 'Covert Netnographic approach' and 'Overt Netnographic approach' (Aker et al., 2017). Covert approach employs methods which do not let the group participants know that they are being observed. While this allows for unfiltered observation and rich data, there might be less access provided by the group admins limiting the field. Secondly, cyber stalking or lurking gives rise to many discussions on ethical issues as well. On the other hand, Overt approach involves the researcher reaching out to the community and asking for their consent to be observed. This usually involves communicating with the opinion leaders of that particular community. While it is easy to find someone in groups that are administered by a person or a small group of people, but these roles are different from a leader's role in the community. Having sought consent, even with the Overt approach, Netnography provides invisibility greater than offline methods, as Internet allows for anonymity. Thus it still emerges as a far less intrusive method compared to any other methods of gathering the data (Heinonen, Medberg, 2018).

Having established themselves as a part of the group, covert or overt, the researcher now may employ a variety or combination of methods to gather the data. This usually begins with the Observation method. It may involve observing and studying:

- The type of content(text, visuals, audio) which is being shared across the community usually in form of posts.
- The amount and type of reactions of the community on content posting.
- The nature of conversations online emanating from the content.

The researcher may also get involved and converse with the participants to observe their reactions. The process of data gathering is as follows:

- Coding: The researchers identifies and allocates codes for specific communication symbols. This makes data gathering simple and categorized.

- Noting: Data is now noted down in various formats, mostly digital in case of Netnography.

- Comparing: The researcher now needs to compare between different data sets in order to correlate and corroborate.

- Generalizing: After drawing out conclusions from the data, the researcher try to ascertain its wider applicability within the community. Moving further, they could compare it with other communities as well.

- Theorizing – After validating the data for the community practices, the researcher may develop a theoretical framework specific for the community basing on its characteristics ([Gambetti, Kozinets, 2020](#)).

While the process seems very much like Content analysis, this one is more transient and flexible as data is dynamic and could be in multiple formats. Data from the observation study can be collected in two parts: Archival and Field notes. Field Notes are those which are made by the researcher on a daily basis while applying the participatory observation method. Multiple windows can also be opened on the same screen to allow for simultaneous observation and note taking in an excel or a typing program. This eases the process furthermore and makes the act of observing covert, digital and real time. This method also helps in noting observations faster, simpler and easier to archive and edit later ([Ahuja et al., 2018](#)).

Archival data is collected by studying the posts, their purpose, their content and the audience engagement with them to draw out patterns of engagement after a period of time. In general, social media posts need at least two weeks' time to accumulate reactions ([Kozinets et al., 2018](#)). A post should be studied real time, for a stipulated duration. Many a times, researchers resort to saving the links at times but the host of the website may edit the data or remove the page completely. In that case, screenshots/screengrabs or screen recording can be done to capture and store the photographic evidence of the data, while observing the group communication. These evidences can be later used to elaborate and validate the data gathered.

Following factors can be regularly monitored for eliciting data on social media groups:

- a) Increase in number of likes, followers and shares following any activity.
- b) The comments – frequency, tone, frequently used words, emoticons, memes.
- c) Links from the page, leading to another page – by the page admins and the audience.
- d) Frequency of posting and other engagement strategies adopted by the group members.
- e) Popular memes/Graphics/Videos/other content ([Bartl et al., 2016](#)).

The content and conversation may be further analysed using the content analysis method, qualitative as well as quantitative. Interviews can be conducted over chat services, mails or thread conversations with willing participants. Focus group discussions can also help in gathering the group perspectives. Moving over, social network analysis may help in identifying the reach and impact of the community and further data scraping can help in observing the undercurrents of rising trends within the populations ([Bandarchi et al., 2019](#)).

To employ these methods in the virtual world, the researcher needs to have a skill set adapted for the same. As the communities are dynamic and not bound by personal presence the researchers need to be flexible and spontaneous, depending on the circumstances. They also need to be comfortable with their technological skills as the data gathering, storing, analysing and archiving needs to be done all with digital software and tools ([Duffy, Reid, 2018](#)).

With a mix of methods that can be employed, Netnography is replacing other methods of studying the populations online. So far the most popular methods of studying the populations have been survey, interviews and focus group discussions. Surveys are conducted to cover large populations and can collect quantitative data with ease and precision with the help of well-designed questionnaires. They require the researchers to approach the population and administer a set of questions on them. This basically means that the target groups and samples should be identifiable and approachable in physical space. In lieu of this, surveys have few drawbacks which are also the obvious strengths of Netnography, especially when it comes to studying the audience behaviour online:

- a) No physical area can be identified to meet the sample as online communities are not bound by geographical space
- b) Response rates of online surveys are dismally low (5-10 %)



c) Self-reporting by the respondents allows for biases to obscure the data (Gideon, 2012).

Another method eliciting qualitative data is interviews. With highly specific sampling and amount of time spent with each sample, interviews are a personal method of data collection. With the number of sample universe increasing, sampling for interviews becomes extremely difficult, a case relevant to online populations as their numbers range in lakhs and crores. It is also not possible to train a team of interviewers to administer the interview schedule due to the barrier of virtual space and low response ratio of online interactions. Still, the researchers may opt for triangulation with interviews with experts/opinion leaders being one of the methods (Gonçalves et al., 2020).

Secondly, interviews also allow the researcher to gather data from other inputs as well, such as body language, environment and other non-verbal cues. Thirdly, it is the interpersonal interviewing skills that help in gathering rich data. In an online scenario, firstly the sampling becomes difficult, secondly the non-verbal cues are missing and lastly the interviewer might face the barrier of technology while trying to establish a rapport with the interviewee, thus compromising the quality of data. These factors reduce the potential of interviews as a data gathering method in online spaces (Jerolmack et al., 2021).

Lastly Focus Group Discussions are also not very popular online as it becomes very difficult to elicit discussion in online groups. Some participants are more responsive than others, much like offline scenarios, but the external inputs such as body language, non-verbal cues, gestures etc are not recorded (Villegas, 2018).

British Educational Research Association highlights that while conducting a netnographic research, one needs to keep the 'privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity' of the participants in mind. A post on social media may not have been made while considering its potential impact on research. Thus the intent for posting is always different from creating data for research. Secondly, social media platforms blur the line between public and private data. While the platforms allow for visibility and privacy options, it is not possible to figure out how many of the users are aware of these customizing options and are using them to effect (BERA, 2018).

## 5. Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study was to explore Netnography as a research method for studying online populations and it emerges as a convenient, accurate, in depth and a novel medium for studying the online populations. It can be an amalgam and apply a combination of methods to extract the data from a variety of platforms. Traditional methods such as participant observation and field notes for example, allow for a penetrating qualitative approach. On the other hand, data extraction software and social network mapping gather quantitative data for analysis. Netnography can also be utilized to study immersive technologies such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality (Kozinets, 2022). Ranging from choice of platform to choice of tool, Netnography requires a skill set adept for digital interfaces. Being a new method, it is evolving along with the world it studies, the Internet.

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## ***Squid Game* Series as Social Phenomenon on Twitter: A Study of Participatory Culture**

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### **Abstract**

As information becomes more disruptive, now we can access it from the devices in our hands. Globalization has produced many new cultural influences on people in this world, one of which is the Korean Wave. The K-pop industry has quickly grown globally, and Korean films and dramas are the most popular among most people. Through the support of information technology, participation culture is emerging as a new form of culture that allows individuals to create and distribute content. This study investigates how the Indonesian fans of South Korean culture, known as Hallyu, consume and produce new cultural artefacts from the trending Netflix series entitled *Squid Game*. Using Henry Jenkins' Participatory culture theory with qualitative methods and virtual ethnography, this research analyzed several data on the @kdrama\_menfess Twitter social media account. This study found that there were four forms of communication in the account, including affiliation, expression, collaboration in problem-solving, and circulation, where everything was created collectively. The role of the account and the community administrator were inseparable from the role of fans exchanging information.

**Keywords:** participatory culture, squid game, Korean wave, twitter, media.

### **1. Introduction**

In the digital era, humans have been facilitated in every way, including exchanging information quickly. The growing technology makes it easier for humans to communicate and access information without spending a lot of energy. The use of technology today has expanded not only as a means of communication and information, but has also penetrated into the entertainment sector. Now it can be accessed from various platforms. We can watch on tv, cellphone, computer, and even when we are not at home, we can still watch entertainment. The situation that opens up opportunities for new media development is named as 'Circulation' (Jenkins et al, 2013). The word 'circulation' has a broader meaning than 'distribution'. Circulation refers to the distribution of media content both top-down and bottom-up, also both commercial and populist. The shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory culture in which the public is not just a consumer, but also a party that shapes, shares, frames, or reworks media content in ways never imagined before (Anshari, 2018; Jenkins et al., 2013).

At this time, entertainment not only becomes an eye freshener and stress reliever, but also has a great influence on spreading cultures. The culture of a country, along with the values contained therein then spread throughout the world to form *world culture*. The emergence of digital platforms is now taking on a role in changing the direction of cultural flows. In the past, traditional media, such as broadcasting and film, were dominated by a handful of Western media conglomerates. Unlike now in the pre-digital platform era, when Western countries dominated the

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production and distribution network, digital platforms played a crucial role in distributing popular culture, from non-Western to Western countries (Yong, 2017). This culture then becomes a culture that is in great demand by many people which is then called popular culture, pop culture, or mass culture (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020). In this regard, in recent years, Korean pop culture or better known as Hallyu or Korean Wave has become a cultural phenomenon that is growing rapidly throughout the world, especially in Indonesia (Jeong et al., 2017)

Korean Wave or Hallyu is a term that has emerged as a result of cultural waves from South Korea globally to various corners of the world. Starting in the early 1990s, the Korean Wave emerged after South Korea established diplomatic relations with China in 1992, then South Korean TV dramas and pop music gained popularity among the Chinese-speaking community. The term Hallyu itself was coined and popularized in 1999 by a Chinese newspaper, Beijing Youth Daily, due to the rise of South Korean pop culture. The use of this term is a description of the spread of South Korean culture and lifestyle which then spread widely throughout the world (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020; Yong, 2021).

The Korean wave as popular culture can be proven by many products of South Korean culture such as films, series, fashion, food, and music that many people enjoy. In theory, popular culture is the culture that most people enjoy today. Whatever the crowd likes and is interested in is called pop culture. This popular culture is indeed alluring because the concept is light, interesting and fun. It makes everyone flock to want to be a part of it. Further, in this popular culture, the role of social media is vast. With the existence of social media, any news and information about movies, music, food, and much more, can quickly spread so that it can then be enjoyed by many people (Arief, 2017; Kusuma et al., 2020).

The spread of Korean pop culture cannot be separated from the role of technology and various social media to disseminate making it easier for Indonesian people to access these various forms of entertainment (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020). One of the conveniences in accessing South Korean culture can be seen in many digital streaming platforms available, such as Hulu, HBO GO, Netflix, etc. Netflix provides many films and series from various countries including South Korea that we can watch in our spare time. Of the many films and South Korean drama series, recently a Netflix series *Squid Game* is being hotly discussed not only by Indonesian people, but also people from all over the world.

The Korean drama series *Squid Game* has become a viral show lately. Apart from Indonesia, the *Squid Game* drama series were popular in many other countries. *Squid Game* is a drama series broadcast on Netflix. It has just started airing in September 2021. So far, the drama series has aired for nine episodes, telling the story of a collection of South Koreans who have problems with bank debt. These people generally face economic difficulties and find it difficult to pay their debts to the bank. Then these people are invited to play a game in a remote area. The game in the *Squid Game* series offers prizes for up to billions of South Korean won. The games played are childhood games for South Korean children. However, this game has a high risk since the losing player will die brutally, as if shot with a rifle. It managed to capture the attention of movie fans worldwide, and reached number one in the global top 10 Netflix on Friday, September 24, 2021 (Shalihah, 2021).

Many people followed and watched this series. This resulted in the occurrence of 'Squid Game Fever', where many people imitated the scenes and events in this ginseng country series. An interesting and different story compared to other South Korean drama series makes the *Squid Game* series get a good reception from Korean drama fans. Various promotions and information related to the series widely spread on social media, have generated great interest from the Indonesian people, giving rise to various phenomena.

Regarding to that phenomenon, research based on the corpus of *squid game* has been previously carried out. A study done by Cho (Cho, 2021) found that managing certain cultural elements was probably the most difficult aspect of subtitles in *Squid Game* series. Another research was conducted by Wood and Baughman (Wood, Baughman, 2012), who discussed Glee fan practices on Twitter for becoming a forum for fan projects, and also paid attention to the consumer behavior aspect targeted based on the audience's choice. In addition, Park (Park, 2013) revealed how social media Twitter could be used as a democratic public space by allowing citizens to engage in public affairs in carnivalistic ways. The investigation of how Indonesian fans of Korean series who consume and produce new cultural artefact related to *Squid Game* have not been conducted. Therefore, it is interesting to observe the 'Squid Game Fever' as the result of a social phenomenon in the form of a trend after watching the series.

The consumption activities of the Indonesian people in the form of watching *Squid Game* through digital streaming platforms, have encouraged drama fans to download, support, criticize, reproduce, and recreate everything related to the series. They also uploaded them through social media, such as Twitter, which ultimately creating a new participatory cultural phenomenon. Thus, this study examines how participatory culture is formed in the *Squid Game* series on Twitter, especially on one of the Korean drama fan community accounts in Indonesia, @kdrama\_menfess.

## 2. Materials and methods

Participation culture is defined as a new form of culture that is developing due to the support of information technology, where individuals or members of a community can participate in the creation and distribution of content. In a participatory culture, the audience is determined not only by size, but by the power to connect with other users, producers and consumers of this medium, to form the public (Ciszek, 2013; Jenkins, et al., 2015; Jenkins, 2020).

Participatory culture has been a concern that includes much of Jenkins' scholarly work. It focuses on developing media theory and principles of practice, whereby media users are primarily understood as active and creative participants rather than simply passive consumers and receptive audiences. This participatory engagement is increasingly crucial given the interactive communication capabilities and enhanced networking of digital technology and the internet. The nature of participatory culture in online settings means that public relations campaigns become 'borderless' and practitioners need to be aware of the reflexes of different cultures and common cultures (Tomblason, Katharina, 2017).

According to Gousong, there are several forms of community participation in the current digital era. First, consuming, where people only act as consumers who only see and read without taking part in production. Second, namely participation, where people in it relate to each other, users with other users, and user interactions with content (e.g. adding playlists, and sharing posts and comments with other users). Third, participate in producing, including creating and distributing personal content such as text, audio, video, and images (Cahya, Triputra, 2016; Manca, 2018).

Jenkins divides participatory cultural groups into four categories based on the form of communication that allows interactivity between members (Jenkins, 2009), including:

1. Affiliations – is a form of participatory culture that is shown by the existence of efforts to join with other users both formally and informally, even merging can be done online or offline. Examples: Friendster, Facebook.
2. Expressions – is a form of participatory culture that is represented by expressing expressions through a variety of new creativity as a result of the process of affiliation with other internet users. Examples: digital sampling, fan video making, fan fiction writing.
3. Collaborative problem solving – is a form of participatory culture that is indicated by cooperation in a formal or non-formal group to increase knowledge or even try to find a way out of a problem from other members. Examples: Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming.
4. Circulation – is a form of participatory culture which is indicated by the existence of activities to form a flow of information in the media to sharpen the information. Examples: podcasting, blogging.

Participation culture certainly does not have a mediocre meaning, but has a deeper meaning. A participatory culture can have continuous interaction and be used as an individual understanding to change and form a meaning for the actions taken. The meaning of the act of participation cannot be separated from its role as a producer who wishes to always provide information (Smith, 2015). Participatory culture also has another feature of the digital environment related to the role of the audience. First, talk about interactivity as a pre-programmed option into the platform. Second, talk about participation as a more open option that requires active creative decisions from participants who take individual or collective ownership of the type of content posted or circulated (Jenkins et al., 2017).

Henry Jenkins (Jenkins, 2009) also defines the concept of culture into 5 characteristics:

1. Relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic, while having relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civil society involvement.
2. Strong support for creating and sharing creations with others, for having strong support for creating and sharing works with other members.

3. Some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices, having a kind of informal mentorship in the form of sharing knowledge from experienced to beginners.

4. Members who believe that their contributions matter, that is, each member believes that their contributions matter.

5. Members who feel some degree of social connection with one another, or feel a level of social connection with other members.

In this study, the researchers used qualitative research and also virtual ethnography. Qualitative research explores and understands the meaning in several individuals or groups of people originating from social problems (Creswell, 2014). Process and meaning are highlighted in qualitative research. Meanwhile, virtual ethnography is an ethnographic method carried out to see social and cultural phenomena of users in cyberspace (Angelone, 2018; Nasrullah, 2014). The theoretical basis is used as a guide so the research focus follows the facts on the ground. It can easily help researchers to dig deeper information related to a research topic which later the information obtained can be used to determine research objectives. The purpose is to understand the condition of a context by leading to the description in detail and in depth regarding the portrait of conditions in a natural context, about what actually happened in the field studies (Nugrahani, 2014). The researcher used a qualitative method to describe and analyze the words from the data collected from Twitter, a social media platform. It can refer to the study of human life, life experiences, behavior, emotions and feelings, as well as the function of organizations, social movements, cultural phenomena and interactions between people (Strauss, Corbin, 1998).

The type of data that we used is in the form of videos and audiovisuals on *Squid Game* series and Twitter. We collected, processed, and analyzed the data using several steps. First, identifying the relevant data as relevant as possible in the *Squid Game* series found on Twitter. The data are selected in a comprehensive way and according to the research topic. Second, reducing unimportant data and classifying the data. Third, analyzing the data by investigating the relationship between participatory culture theory and the data collected. Lastly, interpreting or explaining the findings of the research.

### 3. Discussion

*Squid Game* has become a popular discussion lately in Indonesian society, both in daily life and in cyberspace. *Squid Game* is attractive to the people of Indonesia because of the 'Hype' which is displayed and also served by various mainstream media in foreign countries including Twitter. It tells the story of Seong Gi-Hun and 455 other desperate people who risk their lives to participate in a series of games to win the prize of 45.6 billion won or equivalent to Rp. 555 billion. 456 participants had to overcome various obstacles in the game that they had actually played as a child. Lee Jung Jae as Seong Gi-Hun and Park Hae Soo as Cho Sang-Woo, play two childhood friends who meet again in this mysterious game to learn that there is more at stake than the prize money. One day Seong Gi-Hun was fired from his job so he became unemployed. His life turned miserable, but he had heard about a game that would award the winner's prize money of 45.6 Billion Won. This extremely fierce battle made the candidates have a great fear of risking their lives just to survive. However, the audience is left wondering who is the person responsible for this large-scale game with life or death stakes. This Korean thriller genre drama can break records because of the storyline that make the audience curious.

This South Korean original series was nominated in 2 categories at the 2021 Gotham Awards. It is an annual awards ceremony taking place in the United States that focuses on low-budget indie or independent films as well as TV series. In this 2021 Gotham Award, *Squid Game* is included in the category as a Breakthrough Series-Long Format (more than 40 minutes) along with 5 other series, one of which is *It's a Sin* from the HBO Max streaming platform (Putri, 2021). Creator of *Squid Game*, Hwang Dong-hyuk, had some ideas for the show after a few years spent reading *manga* and *manhwa* (Japanese and Korean comics) with similar themes. It included the influential horror satire *Battle Royale*, which became a pioneering work on survival games where people had to survive one by one (Romano, 2021).

In relation to that, we have observed that the Indonesian netizens did various activities on social media regarding their enthusiasm for the booming phenomenon of the Netflix series *Squid Game*. Many critics love the *Squid Game* series for the rating is also complete or 100 % on Rotten Tomatoes. According to Jo Elfving-Hwang, director of the Korean Research Center in Western

Australia, *Squid Game* skillfully combines elements of K-drama and Korean films. This is why the series is so popular. Elfving Hwang said that the topic of debt paralysis would be very familiar to many Koreans and other people elsewhere. This case is just similar when Hollywood launched endless remakes and superhero movies, where people looked for new and different content (Wikanto, 2021).

For many brands, the popular social media platform Twitter is very important. Twitter features (e.g. hashtags, retweets) make it easy for people to discuss what they're watching, connect with creators of their favorite entertainment brands, and share other messages they find on it (Negrete, Mcmanus, 2021). *Squid Game* is one of the products of the globalized Korean Wave in the world. The hype that occurred because of the event, caused the *Squid Game* fever for the Indonesian netizens on Twitter. The activities of the netizens have led them to become consumers as well as producers. This instance in particular – though not isolated by any means – therefore becomes a prime example of participatory culture, keeping in mind the growing pervasiveness of this phenomenon due to steady developments in technological convergence (Shetty, Gupta, 2021).

Mapping of participatory cultural activities of Indonesian netizens on Twitter discussing the *Squid Game* phenomenon, they are categorized into 4, namely affiliation, expression, collaborative problem solving, and circulation.

#### *Affiliations*

From various forms of participatory culture, the first step of participation is affiliations. According to Murray, affiliations is to get closer, cooperate or reply to the invitation of others who are allied (other people who resemble or like the subject) (Hall, Lindzey, 1993). It is a form of participatory culture that is shown by the existence of efforts to join with other users both formally and informally, even merging can be done online or offline (Jenkins, 2009). One example of the form of affiliation launched by Henry Jenkins is a twitter account "Mention Confess" or Menfess for short with the theme of Korean Drama.

The @kdrama\_menfess account on social media Twitter has become one of the main community places for Korean series fans. Although the form of affiliation that occurs is not by joining the community, but each fan account participates in the culture of the *Squid Game*. To join this community, one can easily participate by following the account, then automatically the followers of the account will get information about Korean dramas including the *Squid Game* drama series.

It has become a truism that foster a sense of community, whether performed online or in person (Jenkins, 2018). The fandom defines themselves through our social relationships in affiliations. Furthermore, Jenkins' participation features reduced barriers to expression and increased civil society involvement, which are also features found in this form of affiliations. With a range of abilities represented, their members can serve as a resource for induction and mentoring novice participants (Halverson et al., 2018). Generally, now fans or the civic society can easily get involved and participate in an online community. There are various platforms for just observing and participating, one of which is social media, namely Twitter. The requirement to join this community is only to follow this fan base account. After becoming a follower of an account, it is easy for fans to be actively involved in exchanging information, photos, and content about the same interests.

#### *Expression*

Having discussed our discovery of affiliation, then there are expressions. The potential of participatory culture for creative engagement and expression has been investigated by Jenkins. Participatory culture is considered potential because of 1) barriers to artistic expression and member involvement including relatively low; 2) strong support for creating and sharing creations with others; 3) trust among members about how they contribute to each other; 4) the level of social connection with other people.

From the data, we have found that many netizens were very enthusiastic about this Korean drama series. Participatory culture does not escape the concept of fandom. Jason defines fandom and fan culture as "existing primarily in relation to other external cultural objects. A key aspect to fan culture is that participants have an emotional engagement with the shared form of culture, dedicating their time, money and creative energy to exploring that relationship" (Mittell, 2013). Twitter provides a platform for *Squid Game* fans to express anything related to the Netflix series freely. We found forms of expression in the form of fan videos, posters, photos and in the form of dramas inspired by the *Squid Game*. Then, they post the creations of these fans on their personal

Twitter accounts in the form of a mention confess account which we explained earlier to have fun with other *Squid Game* series lovers.

One of the Twitter accounts, @cumanspam\_, uploaded a picture in the context of the participants. This creativity of *Squid Game* fans showed that there were forms of expression in participatory culture. It can be observed that the fan uploaded a picture of two children who were imitating or cosplaying one of the antagonist characters in the drama series. The way the member dressed like the characters in the *Squid Game* series was one of the member's creativity. Their creation was very simple, namely by using a traditional rice bowl (in Indonesia known as *besek*) as his mask, and wearing clothes that had almost the same colour as the characters in the *Squid Game* series; they then uploaded it to twitter on the basis of belief that their contribution to the *Squid Game* phenomenon was significant. The caption in the tweet was "Squid game of kids' version". The expression was a parody of the *Squid game* played by children. It is clear that the expression formed is by becoming a cosplayer, so it is similar to making artwork. As aforementioned, the researcher found that there were characteristics of participatory culture, namely the trust of members who believed that their contribution was important. In an ideal participatory culture, members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another (Jenkins et al., 2017).

In addition, another Twitter account used other form of expression. The expression made by @moviemenfess account for example, was also the expression of parody of the series. The account posted various images in the tweet to show that they represented the concept of the *Squid Game*. They were packaged and mixed with aspects inherent in Indonesian culture. The name *Squid Game* on the image was changed into *Dolanan Game*, which in Javanese means a game played by little boys with their friends. Javanese is the largest regional language used by many Indonesian people. The mask used by the Front man in the picture posted was also changed to a mask that has Indonesian characteristics, resembling *ondel-ondel*, which is a large puppet figure in Indonesian traditional folk performance. The *Betawi* people—one of the Indonesian tribes—use *ondel-ondel* to preserve their culture that has existed for a long time. The puppet can also be a costume and it can dance to the typical rhythm of *Betawi* music. It is also described as a manifestation of the ancestors of the *Betawi* people who always look after their children, grandchildren, and even residents of a village. Besides, in the caption of the image, it was also stated "squid game (2021) with added elements of local wisdom", which indicated that the cultures and customs were inspired by the Indonesian local culture. Therefore, the expression displayed in the tweet was a diffusion of the *Squid Game* series and also aspects of local wisdom existed in Indonesia.

#### *Collaborative problem-solving*

The next category of participatory culture is collaborative problem-solving. It is involved in building knowledge and providing answers to unresolved questions or issues in a group context. Fans work together to create fan pages to share their thoughts and add their insight, highlighting the knowledge-building aspects of participatory culture (Bermudez et al., 2020). In this context, it is the behavior of *Squid Game* fans to work together to solve problems, develop knowledge between fellow fans and also complete tasks. Collaborative problem solving relates to teamwork used to create new ideas or achieve goals. This can be achieved through discussion groups that focus on specific issues (Winter, 2011). Contributions within the participatory culture are driven by a set of values, practices and expectations that emerge about how people communicate with one another (Tomaž, Walanchalee, 2020).

Problem solving collaboration is a form of participatory culture characterized by the existence of forms of cooperation in a group or social media post both formally and informally to develop new knowledge. We found various tweets about collaborations between *Squid Game* fans to discuss and also solve problems related to what is in the Netflix series.

An interesting example can be observed from the @tubirfess social media account which shared an argument about the problems occurred in the *Squid Game* series. The fan prompted a critical question which have been translated into English.

@tubirfess: 2beer! [Triggered!]. I saw a tweet saying that squid game was not diversified since no black people played in the film. What do you think? I think it's not that important because it's Korean series, and not series about diversity.

The followers of the account who have become affiliated with this culture then shared their resolutions and counterarguments to the statement given by the admin of the community. The following are the examples.



*@etherlone: Asians don't owe anyone non-Asians any representation.*

*@Cheeseislikeu: No need. Indeed, they just want everything to be "diverse". But their good intention ruined the behavior by starting to feel "superior"*

*@petiteshort: 'Ali' as a representative of immigrants in my opinion is enough. In reality, mostly immigrants or illegals are treated unfairly and not even paid when they work.*

The comments above show that there is collaborative problem solving to develop information and create engagement with fans, so that members who often share in the community can collaborate to solve problems or issues in the *Squid Game* series community. This concerns the unification of ideas and agencies, social processes and practices into a cybernetic convergence analysis closely related to social change, where social life consists of space and time. The process of social change is a process that describes how space and time are produced by agents acting through this collaborative problem solving (Bayquni, 2021). In this case, unconsciously, the examples above show the characteristics of participatory culture, namely the existence of a kind of informal guidance from more experienced community members to novice members within the scope of this community. This is indicated by the comments from the community that provided resolutions and contra given by the community admin. Usually, in the Korean drama community, people who often argue in the comment column are those who have often watched and know more about the world of Korean dramas. The comments indicated that the fans watched Korean dramas and shared opinions regarding statements by the community admin, then together with other members collaborated to solve problems existed in the *Squid Game* series community.

Another data that displays collaborative problem solving can be observed in the main affiliate account asking certain questions.

*@kdrama\_menfess: \*kdm\*[account name] Does anyone know the difference between squares, triangles and circles?*

The fan community account shared a picture of antagonist characters in the series who wore costumes with various symbols on their headscarves (square, circle, and triangle). From the question and the picture shared, *Squid game* fans were stimulated to answer collaboratively. Some examples can be seen from some accounts answering the questions.

*@neverdistressed: circle: logistics division, triangle: soldier, square: manager. Don't know if it's right, correct me if I'm wrong*

The answer "don't know if it's right, correct me if I'm wrong" from one of the fans above also indicated that this fan invited other fans to cooperate in solving problems given by the main account.

#### *Circulation*

The last form of participatory culture is circulation. It is a form of participatory culture indicated by the existence of activities to shape the flow of information in the media to sharpen information. As a form of participatory culture, circulation creates waves and channels of the information in the media to enhance the content.

Online creativity requires material support as well. Though "virtual," their form is neither abstract nor contextual. This means that despite the sometimes-unorganized way creativity moves on the Internet-across social networks, platforms, and communities-the site-specific nature of creativity on the Internet must not be overlooked. In short, online creative spaces possess unique norms, contexts, ethos, as well as a range of technical affordances that might generate creative participation in certain kinds of circulations (Baym, 2015; Literat, Glăveanu, 2018).

Circulation occurs because of the formation of interconnected media flows such as transforming information and ideas that are owned into the media they have. We found that @kdrama\_menfess account shared a question to *Squid Game* fans and a picture of a Korean actor.

*@kdrama\_menfess: Do you believe it or not if he's [Wi Ha Joon] in the d word [dead]? I do not. It seems like a Squid game without Wi Ha Joon is like vegetable without salt.*

The question was answered by some fans:

*@wonsream: I don't think so, because Hwang Junho is one of the outsiders who witnessed the existence of the Squid Game. It is said that in season 2 will be more about the frontman and the police, but don't know how the end of the film later.*

*@shiningdayx: I don't think so, he was just fainted. When it's about to end, the time-setting was different. If he's alive 2 years from now, maybe Gihun can get help, and they can start looking for each other, but no clue at all....maybe it will be explained in season 2.*

*@yourberry12: He really didn't die, it looked like he just got shot in the shoulder and pretended to drown.*

The interaction above creates a form of circulation. This happens because the formation of this circulation is used when disseminating information regarding their idols, which allows them to reach more people. Therefore, the flow created from this form is the amplification of the content of the information.

The feeling of a social relationship between fans is also one of the characteristics of participatory culture. It portrayed that the amplification of information from the first party (the menfess account) could form a belief in social relations with other members. When each fan threw an argument at each other and got the attention of fellow members, then they considered being a part of the community.

The level of social connection has changed not only from the beginning to just exchanging information, but also building relationships with humans as social beings. Apart from these characteristics, it also proved that the members believed that their contribution was meaningful. They realized that no matter how small their participation was, they had contributed to their community. This happened because one member connected with another member. When they joined a community, they were considered to be part of that community. The data illustrated that a high sense of solidarity and mutual help was formed in a participatory culture.

Another example of the form of circulations can be seen from the example of interaction as follows:

*@kdrama\_menfess: Everyone, this is WOMAN art director of squid game [showing portrait art director, Chae Kyoung-Sun]*

The question was answered by some fans:

*@taeri2521: One of the excellent things from the squid game compared to other dramas, the sets were so real and pretty. They presented beautiful shots through extraordinary artistic means.*

*@sweetgrizzlyy: It's not surprising, when climbing the colorful stairs of the labyrinth, I was very surprised, very artistic*

*@seo\_lovekwang: Just finished ep 4, will it continue...? The words that came out, apart from the enormous sets, were also swear words...*

In the following data, it can be observed that the purpose of circulation is sharpening information on the media. The affiliate account provided information about the director behind *Squid Game*. Besides that, the fans and other consumers were invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content. From this flow of information, they finally made circulation of the information so that it continued to be conveyed to other fans. Forming a media flow in this case is an activity that creates an interconnected media flow (Burgess, Green, 2018; Jenkins, 2009).

#### 4. Results

Mapping of participatory cultural activities of Indonesian netizens on Twitter discussing the *Squid Game* phenomenon, they are categorized into 4, namely affiliation, expression, collaborative problem solving, and circulation. The results showed that for affiliate activities, netizens who loved the *Squid Game* series joined and discussed in an account on twitter called "K-Drama Menfess" which discussed all drama series in South Korea, one of them was *Squid Game*. It also proved that content sharing activities such as information, knowledge, experiences, ideas, photos, videos were dominant. The second form of participatory culture is expression. The use of social media produced a variety of new creative forms in fans communities. Many of them created artwork based on a character, costume, and story. Next, the third form of culture is collaborative problem solving. The results of the study showed that there was an interaction between one member of the community and other community members in solving a problem occurred in the community. The last one is circulation, which is a form of participatory culture indicated by the existence of activities to shape the flow of information in the media with the aim of sharpening information. In this form, the researcher found a participatory culture shown by the account of Korean drama community that shared posts about the *Squid Game* series to the fans on Twitter. This is called a circulating form of participatory culture because the community members shared information about their idols, which then reached more people. In short, the @kdrama\_menfess became a trigger for fans to participate or share about what they enjoyed.

This narrative showed how the community shared information and parody, as well as searched for answers to questions within the scope of this Korean Wave. As in the results of the discussion, this study found that this affiliate account posted about lots of issues related to the series to be shown to fans for their response. In this way, Jenkins' participatory culture was shaped by the fans, unconsciously creating an ecosystem where one participant issued an argument for the other participants to see and therefore created a circulation, so that the fan community formed an automatic ecosystem. It is undeniable that social media such as twitter is also very active in helping netizens find some information with fellow fans in the same fanbase.

## 5. Conclusion

In a participatory culture, fans or followers of a particular culture are not only media consumers, but also producers, especially in the scope of social media. The phenomenon of *Squid Game* as an object in this study revealed the implications of individual preference for popular culture participated in building a fan ecosystem. Based on the analysis carried out above, the form of communication created by the fans had four main pillars, from affiliation, expression, collaboration in problem-solving, to circulation, where everything was created collectively. The cultural practice of participation in *Squid Game* fans could not be separated from the role of each account and the admin who was able to develop the community as a means of exchanging information for people who had the same preferences about the series. For further research, the Jenkins' cultural shift concept from the data could be identified, to obtain more comprehensive and deeper results.

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## One Thousand and One Highest-grossing Soviet Film: Opinions of Film Critics and Viewers. Leaders in the Box Office through the Eyes of a Movie Expert

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### Abstract

What does the list of the thousand most popular Soviet films look like? Why did these Soviet films become box office leaders? Which Soviet directors can be considered the most box office hits, and why? How did the press and the audience evaluate the highest-grossing Soviet films? Professor Alexander Fedorov's monograph *One thousand and one highest-grossing Soviet film: opinions of film critics and viewers*, now in its third revised edition, offers a broad panorama of a thousand of the most popular Soviet films, viewed through the eyes of film critics and audiences.

The material of this book might be of interest for higher-school teachers, students, graduate students, researchers, film critics, cinema scholars, journalists, as well as for the wide range of readers who are interested in the history of cinema art, problems of cinema, film criticism and film sociology. In connection with the publication of the monograph A. Fedorov gave an interview to Professor Marina Tselykh.

**Keywords:** soviet screen, fedorov, book, film studies, film distribution, soviet cinema, readers, audience.

*Your new book, which continues your series articles and books on cinematography (Fedorov, 2012; 2017; 2021; 2022), is called "One thousand and one highest-grossing soviet film: opinions of film critics and viewers". Its name says a lot. This is currently your largest book in terms of volume (it has a total of 1250 pages). It contains and presents not only the statistics of film distribution, but also a brief history of Soviet cinema, its periodization, a typology of levels of perception and analysis of films by a mass audience.*

*It is known that people tend to have an evaluative perception. When it comes to films, the opinions of people who have seen them often differ diametrically. Moreover, viewers do not always agree with the opinions of film critics and do not perceive them as reference or testifying to the real quality of the work.*

*Your book is just interesting because it contains diverse reviews and reviews of people with very different levels of cinema/media competence: from ordinary film lovers to professional film critics and film experts.*

*Your analysis of numerous reviews of Soviet films clearly shows that even a high level of film competence does not exclude different interpretations of film works and sometimes even opposite assessments of their artistic significance.*

*What did such a detailed analysis of the list of thousands and one of the highest-grossing Soviet films in the mirror of the opinions of film critics, film critics and viewers give you personally? What scientific conclusions did you draw as a result of your meticulous research work?*

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More than once I have encountered the ironic comment that there was so little entertainment in the Soviet Union that any Soviet film that was released was doomed to mass success as long as it had a large circulation.

In fact, this is far from being the case. For example, such notable films with large print runs as *A Member of Government*, *The Light Way*, *Ivan the Terrible*, *Time, go ahead!*, *The Red Tent*, *The Slave of Love*, *Five Evenings*, *A Winter Evening in Gagra*, *A Military Field Love Story*, *Leo Tolstoy*, *Marry the Captain* and many others. Of all the films Andrei Konchalovsky made during the Soviet period, only two (*Noble Nest* and *Romance of Lovers*) made it into the top thousand box office hits. Only two films by Nikita Mikhalkov (*One's own among strangers, a stranger among their own* and *Kinfolk*) managed to overcome the 15 million viewer barrier in their first year of release. Of all of Sergei Solovyov's films, only *Assa* surpassed this threshold...

Let us also not forget that Soviet films competed at the box office not only with foreign films (which, incidentally, had many hits; suffice it to recall, for example, such popular movies as *Spartacus*, *Fantômas*, and *Yesenia*), but also, since the 1960s, with television.

According to data compiled by S. Zemlyanukhin and M. Segida, all in all more than seven thousand full-length feature films were made in the USSR (up to and including 1991, not including television films) for release in cinemas.

Thus, only one in seven of the highest-grossing feature films for distribution could be included in the top thousand Soviet films. And the barrier of 40 million viewers could take only a hundred Soviet films. So not all films in a row (despite their, for example, large circulation) were watched with equal enthusiasm by the mass audience...

At first glance, it seems surprising that the thousand most popular Soviet films is dominated not by comedies, melodramas and detective stories, but by the drama genre. But if we bear in mind that for all the years of the existence of the USSR the films on the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War were quite popular with mass audiences, and in the 1930s – 1960s there were also dramas on a revolutionary theme, then the situation becomes more understandable.

On the other hand, the percentage of entertaining Soviet films is highest in the top ten ratings (90 %); but they also dominate in the top thirty (over 70 %) and overall among the highest-grossing three hundred Soviet films (over 60 %).

That said, the number of popular non-films among the top 300 highest-grossing Soviet films, which had been quite large in the 1960s (33 films), was gradually declining until it reached a minimum in the 1980s (8 films).

I should also note that the top 20 highest-grossing Soviet films consisted exclusively of films made in the Russian Federative Republic. As for box-office hits made in other Soviet republics, they made it to the top 300 of the Soviet box-office leaders much less often, usually with no more than two films, and secondly, they all belong to entertainment genres (comedy, fairy tale, detective and action).

My research showed that the maximum number of Soviet box office leaders were shown in cinemas between the 1950s and 1970s: about 73 %, which essentially corresponds to the peak of movie attendance, which had been rising consistently from the second half of the 1950s to the early 1970s (at the turn of the 1970s, the annual number of film attendances per resident of the USSR reached 19). However, film attendance in the Soviet Union began to decline as early as the second half of the 1970s.

Various factors had an impact on the level of film attendance:

- subjective: the growth in the number of cinemas (which significantly increased film attendance in the 1950s and 1970s), the genre structure of the film repertoire (in the 1950s and 1970s many more melodramas, comedies, detectives, and action films popular with audiences began to be screened)

- objective: population growth; changes in the population's share of free time; the intensity of the development of other media (television, the Internet, and others); competition from foreign films that found their way into Soviet distribution, and, from the second half of the 1980s, onto video screens (video parlors, individual video consumption).

It should also be noted that entertainment genres practically always dominated among the most popular Soviet TV films.

Thus, despite all the efforts to implement communist ideology and active state support of an "ideologically restrained" cinema, the viewing public in general was following the same global

patterns: the entertainment genre films (though in many cases of high professional quality) were consistently at the top of the list of audience preferences.

*Your book tells in a very interesting way about the factors that make the mass audience sympathize with films and other media texts. Among them you name the reliance on folklore and mythological sources, the constancy of metaphors, the orientation towards the consistent embodiment of the most persistent plot schemes, the synthesis of the natural and the supernatural, the appeal not to the rational, but to the emotional through identification (imaginary reincarnation into active characters, merging with the atmosphere, aura works), the "magic power" of the heroes, standardization (replication, unification, adaptation) of ideas, situations, characters, etc., mosaicism, seriality, compensation (the illusion of the fulfillment of cherished, but unfulfilled desires), a happy ending, the use of such a rhythmic the organization of films, TV shows, etc., where the feeling of the audience, together with the content of the shots, is affected by the order of their change; intuitive guessing of the subconscious interests of the audience, etc.*

*Is it enough for a director to know all this to make a box office movie? It turns out that this is a universal model, and the result is obviously amenable to preliminary calculation for the total success of a work of mass culture????!! So why doesn't this model always work? How often did Soviet directors use "recipes for success" when creating their films?*

Films belonging to mass (popular) culture are successful with the audience not because they are supposedly oriented only to people with low aesthetic taste, subject to psychological pressure, easily believing lies, etc., but because their authors respond to real, worthy of respect and study audience needs, including – informational, compensatory, hedonistic, recreational, moral, etc.

V. Propp, N. Zorkaya, M. Turovskaya, O. Nechay, M. Yampolsky and other researchers have convincingly proved that the total success of mass culture works requires the calculation of their creators on the folklore type of aesthetic perception, and "archetypes of tales and legends, and their corresponding archetypes of folk perception, having met, give effect to the integral success of mass favorites" (Zorkaya, 1981).

Indeed, success with audiences is very closely tied to the mythological layer of the work. "Strong genres – thriller, sci-fi, western – always rely on 'strong' myths" (Yampolsky, 1987). The relationship of extraordinary but "authentic" events, one of the underlying archetypes (drawing on deep psychological structures that affect the conscious and subconscious) of the tale, the legend, is very important to the popularity of many media texts.

However, the greatest influence on the audience is in television mass culture (which is now also available on the Internet), which is oriented toward the creation of large, multi-month (or even multi-year!) cycles of programs and series. Here "the system-forming properties of multiserries come into play: 1) the duration of the narration, 2) its discontinuity, 3) the special plot organization of the parts-sequences, which demands a certain identity of their structure and the repetition of separate blocks, 4) the presence of crosscutting characters, permanent heroes (or a group of such heroes)" (Zorkaya, 1981). Plus such specific properties of the organization of audiovisual spectacle as periodicity, rubricism, programmaticness, proportionality, translationality (providing increased communicativeness).

In addition, the creators of media texts of mass culture take into account the "emotional tone" of perception. The monotony of story situations often leads the audience to disengage from contact with the "text". That is why in the works of professionals there is a change of episodes, causing "shocking" and "calming" reactions, but with a happy ending that gives a positive "discharge". In other words, there are quite a few popular media texts that can be easily and painlessly broken down into blocks (often interchangeable). The main thing is that these blocks should be connected by a well-thought-out mechanism of "emotional gradients" – the alternation of positive and negative emotions evoked in the public.

Many bestsellers and blockbusters are built according to a similar "formula of success", including folklore, mythological basis, compensation for those or other missing feelings in the life of the audience, a happy ending, the use of spectacle (that is, the most popular genres and themes). Their action is usually based on a fairly rapid change of short (so as not to get bored) episodes. Let us add here and sensationalism: a mosaic of events unfolds in various exotic places in the center of the plot – the world of evil, opposed to the protagonist – almost magical, fairy-tale character. He is handsome, strong, and charming. He emerges from all supernatural situations unscathed and unscathed (a great excuse for identification and compensation!). In addition, many episodes



actively involve human emotions and instincts (a sense of fear, for example). There is a serialism, which implies many sequels.

Is it enough for a director to know all of this, to have a kind of recipe for a universal model of total cinematic success, the result of which is obviously calculable in advance, in order to make a box-office movie?

Of course not. Reliance on folklore, entertainment, spectacle, seriality, and the professionalism of authors is not yet sufficient for the large-scale success of a mass culture media text, because popularity also depends on hypnotic, sensual influence. Instead of primitive adaptation to the tastes of the "masses at large," the "secret subconscious interest of the crowd" is guessed at the level of "irrational feat and intuitive insight" (Bogomolov, 1989).

The same stories, getting to the average craftsman or, for example, to S. Spielberg, transformed, gather different audiences. Professionals of popular media culture have mastered perfectly the art of "puff-pastry": the creation of works of multi-level construction, designed for the perception of people of different ages, intellects and tastes. There emerge a kind of polustylizations-half parodies mixed up with "half serious", with countless allusions to textbook films of yesteryear, direct quotations, with references to folklore and mythology, etc.

For example, for some viewers the "text" of Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* series will be equivalent to seeing the classic *Baghdad Thief*. And for others, more sophisticated in media culture, it will be a fascinating and ironic journey into the realm of folkloric and fairy-tale archetypes, cinematic associations, and subtle, unobtrusive parody.

*Frantic* may well be perceived as an ordinary thriller about the disappearance of the wife of an American scientist who came to a Parisian congress, or it may – as a kind of reinterpretation and mischievously stylized heritage of the rich tradition of the detective genre, "black" thrillers and gangster sagas – from Hitchcock to our days, and even – as a veiled autobiography of director Roman Polanski...

The therapeutic effect and the phenomenon of compensation are also important for the mass success of the media text. It goes without saying that it is perfectly natural for a person to compensate for the feelings and experiences he lacks in real life.

Are these trends and popularity factors characteristic of Soviet films aimed at a mass audience? It seems that for many films (comedies by G. Alexandrov, I. Pyrev, L. Gaidai, E. Ryazanov and G. Daneliya, detective and spy films by B. Barnet, V. Dorman, V. Azarov, V. Basov, melodramas by E. Matveev, V. Menshov, N. Moskalenko, adventure action films by E. Keosayan, V. Motyl, S. Gasparov, etc.), which were included in the top thousand box office films, are certainly characteristic.

*Today, the gender theme is quite fashionable and promoted. How does the Soviet film industry look through the prism of gender? What interesting things did you identify while researching films made by women directors in Soviet Russia?*

Only 43 films (4.3 %) directed by women directors made the list of the top thousand highest-grossing films of Soviet cinema, and the top 50 highest-grossing films of the USSR included films directed only by men.

And those 43 films made by women directors included mostly films of entertainment genres.

It turned out that only Tatiana Lukashovich (1905–1972), Nadezhda Kosheverova (1902–1989), Tatiana Lioznova (1924–2011) and Alla Surikova managed to make two films each which were included in the top 300 highest-grossing films of the USSR. Though, of course, one can assume that if Tatyana Lioznova's most famous serial *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973) had been first released in a compact version, it would have had, in my opinion, every chance of making not only the top 300, but also the top 30 highest-grossing Soviet films.

*How did the outstanding filmmakers of Soviet cinema manage to adapt their talent to the strict requirements of censorship during different periods of the existence and development of cinema? For example, in the era of "exacerbation of the class struggle" or Stalin's mass repressions, etc.?*

The level of censorship pressure on cinema varied greatly in different periods of the USSR. For example, in the 1920s, under general ideological control, considerable experimentation was allowed in the field of form.

The advent of sound in Soviet cinema virtually coincided with the elimination of the last islands of creative freedom and the triumph of so-called "socialist realism". Stalin's regime was in a hurry to put almost every "unit" of film production at the time. Thus it is hardly surprising that

S. Eisenstein, who returned from a trip abroad, was unable to get his picture *Bezhin Meadow* released (it was eventually destroyed). And other leaders of the 1920s (D. Vertov, L. Kuleshov, V. Pudovkin) in practice felt the iron grip of censorship. The favorite filmmakers of the 1930s were those who had not only mastered the new expressive possibilities of sound, but also created the ideological mythology of the Great Socialist Revolution, which had overturned the world order. The Vasilyev brothers (*Chapaev*), Mikhail Romm (*Lenin in October*, *Lenin in 1918*) and Friedrich Ermler (*The Great Citizen*) joined the list of cinematographers favored by the authorities, who succeeded in adapting their talent to the hard requirements of an era of "worsening class struggle" and mass repression.

But the authorities understood that the film repertoire could not consist only of "ideological hits". Grigory Alexandrov (*Merry Fellows*, *Circus*, *Volga-Volga*) became the official "king of comedy" of the 1930s. And his wife, Lyubov Orlova, became a major screen star.

"Thaw" liberalization of the USSR in the second half of the 1950s caused a sharp increase in film production and an influx of directorial and actorial debuts. The most notable figure of those years, undoubtedly, was Grigory Chukhrai (*Forty-First*, *Ballad of a Soldier*, *Clear Sky*). However, the older cinematographers of the older generation were in no hurry to retire, either. *The Cranes Are Flying*, a true masterpiece by director Mikhail Kalatozov and cinematographer Sergey Urusevsky, deservedly won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Mikhail Romm also got his second wind. In my opinion, it was in the 1960s that he directed his best films – *Nine Days of One Year* and *Ordinary Fascism*.

The refusal of official pomp in favor of the problems of "ordinary people" is particularly vivid in Marlen Khutsiev's modest melodramas *Spring on Zarechnaya Street* (together with F. Mironer) and *Two Fedors*. These films were released in wide distribution unhindered. However, Khutsiev's attempt to raise the level of critical comprehension of modernity (*I am 20 years old*, *July Rain*) provoked harsh resistance from the authorities who started a gradual "freezing" of the cinematic thaw. The most famous victim of this censorship chill was Andrei Tarkovsky's legendary film, *Andrei Rublev*.

The attempt to re-liberalize the socialist system, timid at first, caused a gradual relaxation of censorship pressure in perestroika times (1986–1991). Many "shelf" films were finally released in cinemas, and even in mass circulation. This was followed by the abolition of the list of banned topics and genres. Vasily Pichul's *Little Vera* was the first Russian film with an explicitly sexual scene. But neither this film nor the scandalous *Inter-girl* by Petr Todorovsky have been able to affect the overall situation of declining attendance.

The proliferation of video, competition from revived television, the intensive importation of American films, and the "ninth wave" of Russian "blackout films" did their job. Soviet cinema started to lose even its most loyal viewers. Did not bring any substantial box-office dividends either denunciatory tapes about Stalinist camps, or militants speculating on the Afghan war and its consequences and terrorism, or pseudo-erotic comedies, or crime and domestic "black" or fantasy and "horror"... The overwhelming majority of these so-called "films for a mass audience" was marked by the same permanent disease of Soviet B-class cinema: unprofessionalism (plus, of course, technical poverty of staging)...

*What new requirements are put forward by the modern socio-cultural context to the media text? Do modern viewers have special requirements for film and media products? What wins when creating a film work: the demands of the public or the talent of the master? Dynamic movies are known to be the perfect form of art for the younger generation raised on MTV. These films have distinctive features: high-speed technical ingenuity, lightning-fast change of stunts and special effects, light pulses of video clips, external gloss and healthy cynicism, an abundance of bloody scenes, and so on. Has it changed the general approaches to the creation of works of cinema?*

Thirty years ago, R. Corliss (Corliss, 1990: 35) wrote that modern media texts (movies/tele/clips, computer-game) make higher demands on the eye, because with our eyes we have to follow every inch of the frame in expectation of lightning-fast tricks and special effects, and "dynamic films" are designed (primarily) for teenage audiences. The modern audience of cinemas is teenagers and young people. Representatives of the older generation prefer television and go to the cinema quite rarely. Hence, it is clear that current films that aspire to mass popularity must first and foremost interest the youth audience. Filmmakers who prefer to consider cinema as a form of Art are left with a narrow art-house niche and participation in festivals.

*Are you sure that it is important for modern creators of "mass" media texts to work specifically for the youth audience? After all, young people aged 14 to 35 make up only 27 % (39.1 million people) of the total population of Russia (145 million).*

*What does the focus on the youth audience change in the nature of media texts, doesn't it ultimately simplify the quality of the created works? What trends will still prevail in media art? Can one guess the desire to create a box-office media product a primitive adaptation to the tastes of the "broad masses", including the youth audience?*

My words are confirmed by numerous sociological studies: the most frequent visitors to modern cinemas all over the world, including Russia, today are teenagers and young people. And, of course, the focus on a young audience affects the content and form of films designed for mass success, largely reducing their intellectual level and adjusting them to the tastes and views of teenagers.

*You divide the history of the development of domestic cinema into certain periods. You emphasize that the last, "perestroika" period (1986–1991) was a time of a strong decline in the popularity of Soviet cinema.*

*Analyzing the decline in film attendance in the USSR in the second half of the 1980s, you come to the conclusion that this was the result of serious miscalculations in cinema policy, especially considering that the film industry in the USSR has long been an economically profitable production.*

*What does the state of modern Russian cinema indicate today? Is Russian box office cinema dead? Does it have a future? Can and should we place a bet on it? Don't you see a similarity between the situation that has developed today and the "thaw" era, when the ideology has changed dramatically and many directorial and acting debuts have appeared, and many directors have a second wind, which allowed them to stage some of the best box office films that Russian viewers still like to watch? Or do you think that the current situation is more similar to the era of Cinema Perestroika (1986-1991), when, under the influence of various factors, the gradual decline of Soviet cinema began, which as a result led to a loss of spectator interest in Russian cinema? Is it possible to return the former glory of Soviet cinema and instill a love for visiting cinema halls among modern Russian viewers? What needs to be done for this?*

There are no "thawing" trends right now, of course. In my opinion, contemporary Russian cinematography is in crisis. As a rule, private business prefers to avoid financing it because the overwhelming majority of contemporary Russian films are unprofitable. You can literally count Russian films at the box office on your fingers.

This leads to the situation whereby producers and directors make money (i.e. successfully "use" the money they receive from the Russian state budget) at the film production stage, and the subsequent failure of Russian films at the box office is largely of no interest to anyone.

It would seem that more recently, Russian film directors and producers pathos on TV and in the press, saying that the success of Russian cinema in the Russian box office is hampered by stiff competition from Hollywood... And now, in connection with the events of recent months, Hollywood has refused to sell its hits to Russian distributors. There are no more Great Hollywood productions in Russian cinemas.

So what? Attendance at the multiplexes has fallen dramatically. The lack of American competition has not helped the "triumph" of Russian cinema. Viewers hardly ever go to see it... And experts believe that if things go on like this, then most cinemas in Russia will close, and there will be only a minimum number of cinemas, which are subsidized by the Ministry of Culture.

And here we must soberly admit that even if (let's imagine!) Russian cinematography produces ten or twenty masterpieces each year, they will occupy a very modest niche in film distribution. The majority of young viewers will still be attracted by entertainment films of the (Hollywood) genre. If not in cinemas, then on the Internet...

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## Social Media Encourages Women Entrepreneurship: A Study of Challenges and Empowerment

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### Abstract

In this era, where technology advances and social media are in the hand of common man, women entrepreneurs remain a largely understudied phenomenon. Social media is the road of success for women entrepreneurs as it encourages women to be independent and become their own-bosses. In online home-based business women attained power in different factors as compared to men in the existing literature. Growing industrialization and urbanization, spasmodic mobility and social legislation change the status of women in global world. Presently, women come forward to take up higher education, technical and professional education and their proportion in the workforce has also been increased. Encouraging women as entrepreneurs in the recent scenario are the government initiative over the globe. Women's empowerment is related to women's decision-making power, easy access to information, and resource control. Semi-structured interviews from 25 women entrepreneurs has been conducted in Lahore, Pakistan Study explored the role of social media which empowering women and the challenges they faced while running online business. In-depth interviews were used to collect data on telephone and were recorded by the researcher and also make notes of the highlighted points. Uses and gratification theory is applied to identify women entrepreneurs personal integrative on social media platforms.

**Keywords:** women entrepreneurs, social media, qualitative research, in-depth interviews, women empowerment, Lahore, Pakistan.

### 1. Introduction

Social media itself is a platform which is in reach of every common man. Social media not only make our life easy to communicate but also enhance the people to earn. People can share their ideas with single click according to A. Lipsman, G. Mudd, M. Rich, S. Bruich (Lipsman et al., 2012). With use of social media applications people can share the pictures of their products, expand their business not with in boundary but also across border. It facilitates the people by increasing the followers, make their community relation strong and promote their business in every corner of the world.

In recent era, social media tools offer dominant way for professionals to raise their professional profile and act as an open voice for knowledge. This research similarly observes how social media are tangled with better improvement. Social media platforms and applications are frequently measured as useful instrument for free enterprise. They facilitate entrepreneurs to easily detect changes and chances in business formation through interactions and communications with peers on networks. Social media offers unlimited ventures to reach target customers and generate new ideas for initializing business cited by W.M. Teoh and S.C. Chong (Teoh, Chong, 2014).

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Social media platform is encouraging women to peruse businesses online and become their own bosses. Contributions of face book, Instagram, YouTube bring endless opportunities for women in this digital era.

For this study social media is used as it is an emerging tool and people now a days are highly rely on it. There are many applications like Instagram, Facebook that make the women to utilize them in comfort of their homes. Social media is gradually difficult in nature, becoming a necessary part of social lives and specific uniqueness, from users “following” celebrities on Instagram, to consumers “liking” their favorite brands on Facebook mentioned by M. Delbaere, B. Michael, B.J.Phillips (Delbaere et al., 2021). However, most people use digital media for delicate causes, many joined the power of social media to moneymaking business projects, such as the emerging peers of bloggers creating beneficial contracts with well-known brands from clothing to accessory companies, and even cooking. Women are now self-governing and use social media because it is easy, convenient and available for 24/7 to run their businesses and generate revenue.

Entrepreneurship is essential for economic expansion and its main element is entrepreneurs stated by K. Tran (Tran, 2014). In existing time women are an evolving economic vigor. Social and economic expansion of women is needed for advancement of country (Singh, Nanda, 2018).

In modern years, social media has become widespread tool for entrepreneurs to cluster around Y. Wu and D. Song (Wu, Song, 2019). Now women are no more depend on males to fulfill their needs. As they are not allowed to do job in work places , so women choose an alternative way that is to do home based business and earn money and in this way they are independent to earn and meet their needs. So, this study also seeks empowerment among women and their talent through use of social media.

To establish and accomplish an enterprise, specifically a business, generally with great initiative and risk, women entrepreneurs need to assume several challenges quoted by S. Belwal, R. Belwal, F.A. Saidi (Belwal et al., 2014). Major difficulties faced by these entrepreneurs were inadequate financial assets and access to peripheral sponsoring. The findings help to explain regional imbalances in entrepreneurial activities locally and globally. Specific objectives are to examine which media tools and social platforms women are using to start and sustain their businesses, to explore women’s reasons to start online business, to create women perceptions for use of social media in their business, to identify the benefits women gain from social media to run online business and to investigate the challenges women are facing in digital entrepreneurship indicated by K. Tran (Tran, 2014).

## 2. Materials and methods

Uses and Gratification Theory has been selected for this research study. UGT supposing that an individual person active in choosing and selecting media applications and content according to their own needs and wants. Reason to select this theory was it supports the personal and social integrative needs of UGT as entrepreneurs socially interact with a massive audience cited by E. Katz, J. Blumler, M. Gurevitch (Katz et al., 1974).

Through social media women entrepreneurs have easy access to worldwide communication. They easily deliver their messages and promote their products. Social integrative needs also shift the advertisement of products from door to door services campaign towards single click by the use of social media applications.

Through social interaction women entrepreneurs easily gain huge circle of friends or followers that can gratify their needs by increase their number of customers, promotion of their products and growth of their business. Literature review is divided into different segments. Like studies related to Social Media, studies related to Women Entrepreneurs and Empowerment and studies related to Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs.

E. Melissa, A. Hamidati, M.S. Saraswati (Melissa et al., 2012) explained in their article “*Social Media Empowerment: How Social Media Helps to Boost Women Entrepreneurship in Indonesian Urban Areas*” that social media is more convenient than other medium for business growth especially for women who face problems to do job or continue their career with family lives. They highlight that mobility and flexibility promoted by social media helps women to start their business in a low budget and not need any investment that is usually necessary in traditional business.

J.Y. Park, C.S. Sung, I. Im (Park et al., 2017) wrote in their research, entitled “*Does social media use influence entrepreneurial opportunity? A review of its moderating role*”. They described that Social media gives entrepreneurs and prospect to interact and talk their customers.

Social media also nurture aware of marketing knowledge and customer's attitude. By use of social media entrepreneur can gain selling knowledge and learn customer service how to deal with their clients and how to satisfy them in a positive way through social media.

W. Teoh and S. Chong (Teoh, Chong, 2014) point out the talent of women to become successful entrepreneurs in the article *"Towards strengthening the development of women entrepreneurship in Malaysia"*. They stated that women are more passionate to do dual work in a meaningful way and manage their work easily with other household activities.

T. Varghese (Varghese, 2011) defined in his article *"Women Empowerment in Oman: a study based on women Empowerment Index"* the process of women development and also what actually means women empowerment, this article give us tools which help us to indicate to know how women plays role in economic development. He framed those women empowerment consequence shows that they are good decision makers in household activities and in economic choice creating.

E. Melissa, A. Hamidati, M.S. Saraswati, A. Flor (Melissa et al., 2015) in their article *"Examining the Impact of Social Media on Women Empowerment"* argues that online business not only support women to be financially independent but it also encourages women to gain confidence and self-grooming that lead a solider post in family and society towards empowerment.

G.T. Althothali (Althothali, 2020) in his article *"Women entrepreneurs doing business from home: motivational factors of Home-based business in Saudi Arabia"* state that entrepreneurship is becoming the solution of unemployment especially for women. He concluded the motivational factor for home based business is passions that inspire woman to take interest in their work. The positive reviews on social media by happy customers increase encouragement for women to become more successful.

F.I. Omar, N.A. Othman, M.A. Salleh, N.H. Abdullah (Oyesomi et al., 2014) in their research, *"How sociable are women on social media? An experiential study on Nigerian women"* explores that how women use the social media for social commitment and liberation. Moreover, this study is fastened on UGT, which requires how women use social media and satisfaction they pursue and grow from the media.

M.A. Roomi and G. Parrott (Roomi, Parrott, 2008) described in their article *"Barriers to Development and Progression of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan"* that the patriarchal system still exist in Pakistan where man is superior that women and are still not allowed to do a job in any institution in Pakistan. This point make sense that women can encourage themselves to show their skills by home based business and maintain a position in their lives.

M. Haque (Haque, 2013) in her article *"Women Empowerment through Online Clothing Stores in Bangladesh: Prospects, Barriers and Challenges"* state that ICTs help to empower women entrepreneurship through social media and break the dilemma that men can grip towards technology. She discusses that social media can generate equality by breakdown the pathetic male dominance and in online business there is no gender discrimination.

Qualitative research method was used in this study. According to L.A. Guion, D. C. Diehl, D. McDonald (Guion et al., 2011), In-depth interview were preferred to connect telephonic with female respondents and obtain detailed opinion to collect specific set of information from women entrepreneurs that use specific social media platforms i.e. face book, Instagram and YouTube to run or established their home based business according to K.L. Barriball and A. While (Barriball, While, 1994). Questionnaire is used as an instrument of research methodology.

Population of collected data was women who owned their business by using social media from Lahore, Pakistan. Age of collected data was about 20 years to 40 years which included students, housewives, and professionals, literate or even illiterate females. "Non-probability procedure of sampling were used. Convenience sampling techniques was applied. 25 women entrepreneurs were selected which is easily reachable according to their number of followers J.L. Suarez (Suarez, 2016).

Women who owned their home based business with maximum years of experience and who had more than 5000 followers were selected for participant in this study. The experiences that participants had during the home based business gave them a basis from which to evaluate the challenges towards women empowerment.

Demographic information of participants is given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic information of participants

Sr. No.	Name	Qualification	Type of business
1	Ms. A	Master Interior designing	Customize baker
2	Ms. B		Home décor
3	Ms. C	MPhil finance Master Islamic education	Clothing
4	Ms. D	B.A	Fabric
5	Ms. E	B.Com	Stitching/ clothing
6	Ms. F	MSc. Interior designing	Baker/ teach baking online
7	Ms. G	Master fine arts	Food / baking
8	Ms. H	Bachelor in physics	Making jewelry
9	Ms. I	BS Physics	Handmade gifts
10	Ms. J	BS Nutrition	Baking
11	Ms. K	Matric	Customize wedding stuff
12	Ms. L	BS Mass Communication	Home accessories
13	Ms. M	BS Mass Communication	Customize birthday baskets
14	Ms. N	MBA Finance	Customize art and craft
15	Ms. O	MPhil business administration	Makeup Accessories
16	Ms. P	Master psychology	Baking
17	Ms. Q	B.Com	Catering
18	Ms. R	MBA	Handmade decor
19	Ms. S	Master Interior designing	Catering
20	Ms. T	BS Mass Communication	Baking
21	Ms. U	BS International Relation	Clothing
22	Ms. V	BS Sociology	Kids clothing
23	Ms. W	Intermediate	Makeup land
24	Ms. X	MPhil Journalism	Art and craft
25	Ms. Y	B.A	Jewelry and watches



6 participants belong from the field of baking. 5 women entrepreneurs belong from the field of clothing. 5 of them belong from the field of customize birthday and wedding gifts. 3 of them belong from the field of handmade home decor accessories. 2 participants belong from the field of catering. 2 of them belong from the field of makeup land. 2 of them belong from the field of jewelry making.

Themes which were drawn by taking interviews:

Theme 01: Social Media tools

Theme 02: Financial incentives

Theme 03: Personal interest

Theme 04: Desire to fill time

Theme 05: Ease of use

Theme 06: Social media gives women empowerment

Theme 07: Professional benefits

Theme 08: Compensate with customers

Theme 09: Meet with competitors

Theme 10: Critical comments

After the interviews were completed, all 25 audio clips were transliterated exact and examined through a textual analysis. Research Questions of this study are given below:

1. Which media tools and social platforms women are using to start and sustain their businesses?
2. What are the reasons for women to start online business?
3. Why women use social media for their business?
4. What are the Benefits women gains from social media to run online business?
5. What challenges female is facing in digital entrepreneurship?

### 3. Discussion

*RQ (01): Which specific digital media tools and social platforms women are using to start and sustain their businesses?*

Social media tools: Media tools are essential for online business. Mobile devices are important tool for online business. It is noted that mobile phone are used by many respondents like Ms. Q stated that without mobile phone i am not able to start this business it's a need source for me and I used mobile phone for multi purposes like click pictures, make videos, chat with clients, receive orders and even dispatch the order is all in this device (Park et al., 2017). Moreover, it is also noted that laptop is also used by many respondents for editing their videos and audio voice. For example, Ms. N tells that i use mobile phone and laptop for this business. I use laptop for editing of my tutorial videos and from Photoshop software in laptop I edit my product pictures. Ms. O also tells that I use DSLR for models photo shoot of my clothing brand states by Y. Wu and D. Song (Wu, Song, 2019).

*RQ (02): What is the main reason to start online business?*

Financial incentive was noted by several respondents. For example, Ms. O, R, H & D mutually explained that they are jobless and in need of earn so they start this business and to be self-employed. Moreover, Ms. L also tells that I was looking for job but not found so start this online business. Ms. T stated that I have to meet my financial matters and also I want to kill free time too cited by D. Raj and P. Avinash (Raj, Avinash, 2021). On the other hand Ms. U explained that "home based business is not just to earn money but a girl start this business as a hobby and I don't think it's make us financially strong that we meet all our financial needs". Ms. Y also shares their experience that "I think a single girl can't run her expense alone by doing this business, for financial matters it's just a help with your spouse in earning".

Personal interest: For every single work in any field, organization, and job and in business personal interest matters a lot. For women entrepreneur's personal interest is an important element i.e. according to the collected interviews Ms. A talks about her love for baking motivating her to start her business. While Ms. B stated that "it was a coincidence. My nieces motivate me to start baking because I have a yummiest taste and even my both nieces create a page for me and also send following request to my friends and other family members quoted by J.Y. Park, C.S. Sung, I. Im (Park et al., 2017). So, in this way I start my business". Ms. M, N & Y also make customize things and when asked why they started their business, their mutual answer is that they have original interest in accessories and homemade jewelry inspires to start this business. Ms. C stated

in this question that she started this business as a hobby and then it became a profession. I do it for the sake of passion and interest.

Desire to fill time: Ms. I explain: “I was a university student and want to do something in tedium and due to family strictness I don’t allow going outside and do job so I prefer online business”.

Ms. K specified that she was feeling bored because of her incomplete education she was not able to do a job and also utters that she want to do a bit change in her way of living by doing something interested to work in spare time and also by doing home based business no one target her low education. She describes that “This business gives me two opportunities at once. Firstly I fill my tedium in free time and secondly as my education is not high I just passed my matric so now I am independent and enough strong that nobody question on my low education” quoted by W. Zulqarnain, N.U. Hashmi, A.Z. Zulqarnain (Zulqarnain et al., 2020).

*R.Q. (03): Why women use social media for their business?*

Ease of use: Many women entrepreneurs described that Instagram was comparatively more easy to use. The word ‘easy’ seemed during the interviews. For example, Ms. C stated that Because in social media there is no strictness I am my own boss and can’t depend on other person and freedom to work according to my comfortably by G.T. Alhothali (Alhothali, 2020). Similarly, Ms. S stated that it is easy to use, comfortable, no need a huge investment, no rent fare issues, and in short can’t go out from house to earn. Ms. F noted that social media give me a proper platform like food forums give me a lot of recognition and business. So, it’s now very easy for me to approach people and also for customers to approach me through Instagram which was the easiest of all the platforms available according to V.N. Devi and G. Kavitha (Devi, Kavitha, 2021).

Social media give women empowerment: Ms. A stated that “social media play a role for empowering women, when a girl come up with nice ideas and low expertise and for granted in social media then they are admired it. As a girl you no need to go out and in a single platform you can do it no need of any shop, it’s a quick grab and it’s more hustle free for women according to S. Noor, F.M. Isa, L. M. Nor (Noor et al., 2021). Help out to make things ease out. Social media is free from all discrimination” as stated in the writings of M. Abrar ul Haq, S. Victor, F. Akram (Abrar et al., 2021). Ms. C stated that “for a girl, social media is the best platform to run your own business and without any pressure or hesitation I run my business very nicely (Ming Yen Teoh and Choy Chong, 2014). Moreover, in social media there is no gender inequality, like Ms. H stated that “Social media is a platform in which no gender discrimination and I think its best opportunity for women and online business is also acceptable in our society which is not friendly for women to go out for job”.

Ms. L stated that it is best platform for female at small scale I can earn without any restriction or hesitation and I think being a girl there is no harassment of job in social media. Even uneducated women also sell their best skills as stated in the study of Y.T. Uhls, N.B. Ellison, K. Subrahmanyam (Uhls et al., 2017).

*RQ (04). What are the Benefits women gains from social media to run online business?*

Professional benefits: Respondents prominent that using social media to run their businesses allowed them to raise their marketing range. Ms. A stated that it gives me inspiration and I learn baking from tutorials and easily connect with international bakers as well and use their expertise.

Ms. C stated that Instagram helps me to promote my products and learn marketing also.

Ms. F define that I gain business through Facebook pages, people start recognizing me, people give reviews about my products tag your page and through hard work people know me as a professional baker according to G.T. Alhothali (Alhothali, 2020). Ms. H listed that social media makes huge growth in my sales and now I can understand marketing for my brand. There is an easy way by sending PR packages to famous group on Facebook and other nationwide bloggers on Instagram due to this I can easily make more followers and increasing in number of customers. Some respondent highlighted the help of bloggers for their business. For example, Ms. I stated that for professional benefits, I think international bloggers boast my page and I learn marketing a lot by use of social media in my business. Ms. K and V stated that professionally I learn marketing and due to face book pages of organizations gives me a chance to enhance my business. Worldwide many organizations appreciate my work and offer me big orders that help me to use my all skills and ideas to become successful entrepreneur cited by N.H. Ismail, M.K. Nasir, R.S. Rahman (Ismail et al., 2021).

*Q 05: What challenges female is facing in digital entrepreneurship?*

**Compensate with customers:** By the use of social media is also notable result of challenging factor for women entrepreneurs. Ms. A stated that “if the fault is from my side then I compensate it with sending some free alternative thing also I can’t get money for that product. Moreover, online buyers can inquire before taking order and not create mess. Mess created by the online buyer who still is the stalk of ambiguity.” It is noted that many respondent gives discount as a compensation. Like, Ms. C says that “My customers are 90 % satisfy with my products but my business is clothing so there is chance of any technical issue like if there is problem in embroidery then I communicate my customers and tell them it’s not my fault and also compensate it by giving them 20 percent discount or return 50 percent money back” by G.L. Priya and S.S. Bose (Priya, Bose, 2021). Ms. F stated that I can’t face any issue where I use compensation but I usually compensate my customer as launching new product I give it to my clients as a giveaway gesture with his order. Ms. H noted that if the order is damage by her side then she immediately send clients a new fresh piece but if there is any delivery issue then she used to explain them that this is not her mistake. Ms. L stated that I convince my customer by giving alternative thing in emergency situation but if they are not agree with my alternative option than I give them discount according to order cited by I.S. Chaudhry and R.Y. Paquibut, (Chaudhry, Paquibut, 2021).

**Meet with competitors:** There is enormous competition on social media and its challenging to meet the competitors because for every product there are a lot of pages and in this way tough women entrepreneurs’ competition was also noted. Ms. A stated that “I keep on learning and polishing myself and for stand up with competitors I have to come up with something new, I do work in sugar free products which is different and also I boast myself in specialty of carrot cake making which is not available in common bakery so unique things help me a lot to meet the competition. So carrot cake is now my signature cake and wants to remain in pipeline” cited by M.Z. Zafar, A. Toor, T. Hussain (Zafar Toor et al., 2019). Most respondents use a new idea of product for the competition on social media. Likewise, Ms. F along with Ms. L stated that by launching new and unique products my work is different and I also make according to customers taste so easily meet competitors. Ms. H stated that by giving PR packages to well-known brands and also applies some different theme to make my product attractive so that I can easily meet my competitors according to F.I. Omar, N.A. Othman, M.A. Salleh, N.H. Abdullah (Omar et al., 2018).

**Critical comments** written by clients on every post are very important and the negative comment can ruin all the hard work and it also effects on the brand reputation. Like Ms. A shared that “it is very difficult to handle critical and I usually try to explain them if there is something wrong and taste issue because customer service matters a lot if one person gives a bad comment than it might harm my reputation. I try to give full attention because I want to make my customer happy”. Ms. V shares her reaction on critical comments by saying “it hurts a lot and mostly negative points are related to prices because we can’t compromise with quality so prices are fixed of every dress. Furthermore, haters going to hate, we can’t make everyone happy if there are 99 positive comments that 1 negative comment not matter for me” stated by N.R. Devi and Surana (Devi, Surana, 2021).

For avoiding negative comments it is noted that women entrepreneurs always do apologize either it’s their fault or not to make their customers happy. Ms. F stated that “It is difficult for me to say sorry a lot of time even I was not wrong, I politely and humbly handle them not make arguments simply apologies them”

#### **4. Results**

Feedback from the participant in this study showed that having online business helps the women to become independent and financially strong. According to the outcome, women are not doing online business just for the sake of earning it depends on other motivational factors too. Respondents also reported that earnings from the business are just for the help of their spouse in financial matters because earning in this business is not fulfilling all the expensive. So, financial incentives are not only the reason for women entrepreneurs to start business hence other factors also shown in this study.

Eighteen out of twenty-five respondents had negative response for financial incentives in online business. Maximum participants mentioned that personal interest is the motivational factor to start online business. Study also describes that family concern and their support to encourage the female interest motivated them to start their business and converted a successful entrepreneur.

Thirteen out of twenty-five respondents start this business to kill the spare time. Another factor also resulted as a reasons for starting business for a girl is strictness by family to go out and do job is also reported as an aim of starting online business by many participants.

According to the research all participants use social media apps for their online business but it is noted that Facebook and Instagram is effective apps that are used by huge amount of people as well as sellers and buyers. Moreover, it is also reported that WhatsApp is commonly used for communication purpose and in touch with regular clients. Participant's talks that it is quicker way to run business and save time as well as narrow down expenditures towards beginning business and boosted wages.

According to F.I. Omar, N. A. Othman, M.A. Salleh, N.H. Abdullah (Omar et al., 2018) in recent era where technology is more advance and in this why traditional media is converged to new media or can say as social media. Social media replace the traditional media not in entertainment and infotainment but also people prefer social media for their business. Results revealed that social media is only a platform which gives women empowerment to runs and sustains their business. Women at workplace face many issues like, gender discrimination and harassment which is the reason that our society not allowed women to do job at workplace but in social media there is no gender discrimination n and harassments.

It is reported that women gain personal and professional benefits from online business. Through personal benefits they gain economic liberty, gain independence, gain confidence, no physical effort and safe and sound to utilize skills. On the other hand through professional benefits women improve awareness, grow sales and build reputation. The twenty-five women entrepreneurs talks about professional benefits of using social media in business and shows positive point of views towards this advantage and also maintain hope in future to become professional in business.

In online business where social media gives women numerous benefits as well it is also generating some challenging factor for women to sustain their business according to D. Raj and P. Avinash (Raj, Avinash, 2021). The proverb "customer is always right" seems by all respondents in this interview. Women entrepreneurs debates that compensation with customer is also a challenging factor in online business. It has been observed that respondents talk about critical comment which is written on public post is difficult to handle. It might ruin the entrepreneur's brands reputation.

## 5. Conclusion

Social media apps like Facebook and Instagram are used by women to do their business online. Results indicated that social media applications empowered women by providing benefits for them and emerged than other mediums like TV, radio etc. Women become independent and have opportunity to do this business in the premises of their house. They are flourishing as designers, bakers, decorators, makeup artist, chefs, product makers and well-known tailors and still discovering new opportunities of economic contribution. Through use of social media women are clever to connect worldwide by promote their business with zero investment. These social media opportunities make women financially strong, independent, confident, and build their reputation with their talent. Social media gives equal rights to male and female without any gender discrimination. This equality brings women a chance to fly high and acceptable in society by the use of their talent and skills. The outcomes of existing research provide that social media will empower more women entrepreneurs as stated in the study of I.S. Chaudhry and R.Y. Paquibut (Chaudhry, Paquibut, 2021) which will be effected in better monetary and profits. Usage of social media having challenges and women entrepreneurs faces difficulties in their path of success. Women are ready to face every challenge and cross the hurdles in their path.

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## Disengagement from Postgraduate Research: An Exploratory Analysis of Media Research Students Experiencing Disengagement from Studies in Karachi

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### Abstract

MPhil and PhD students of media research (media studies/mass communication students) are expected to be a highly skilled selective group of students in addition to being avid researchers. Therefore, pursuing the MPhil and PhD in media studies/mass communication is more challenging than other humanities and social sciences disciplines. The existing literature addresses the issues faced by the students during their research journey. The literature also endorses this research journey as rewarding for some students. However, others may find it more complex and challenging. This qualitative study explores the MPhil and PhD media research students' experiences of disengagement from their studies. The semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 20 MPhil and PhD media research students who have prolonged or discontinued their MPhil and PhD studies. The research study explores the different categories, reasons, and inability to overcome the disengagement experience from studies among MPhil and PhD or higher education media research students. Work pressure, financial reasons, health issues, poor supervision, family restrictions, better alternatives, and change in priorities are found to be the few reasons for disengagement experienced by media research students in Pakistan. Moreover, students' personal and environmental inabilities to overcome the reasons for disengagement that leads to prolongment and discontinuation of their MPhil and PhD studies have also been discussed, followed by potential recommendations to overcome the disengagement experiences. The research is beneficial for the academic institutions offering MPhil and PhD programs in media research to resolve the issues of disinterest and disengagement of students at the MPhil and PhD levels.

**Keywords:** disengagement, MPhil media students, PhD. media students, mass communication.

### 1. Introduction

Pursuing a research degree is considered an inspiring, yet challenging task by the major segment of society. The research studies conducted earlier on the MPhil and doctoral students' experiences reflect the fact that the perception of the resulting degree concerning the compromises it demands is different for the people as per their priority. For the majority of the students, the MPhil and PhD process is rewarding, but for the few others it is challenging because it demands them to face the problems related to personal sacrifices, uncertain life experiences, inter and intradepartmental issues, funds lacking and support, completion of the dissertation (Appel, Dahlgren, 2003; Jairam, Kahl, 2012; Spaulding, Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

Authors including Lee have found that the students who were enrolled in the nursing program considered issues related to responsibility, financial stability, student-faculty or student-

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advisor relationship, academic discipline, and academic self-perception as the distracting factors in their doctoral process (Lee, 2009). However, to get higher degrees, the students face challenges, which are not always negative. The students also feel challenged, when they are expected to solve complex and ill-defined research problems to create or improve the new or existing body of knowledge. This keeps students motivated to progress in their MPhil and PhD processes. Contrary to that, the students might experience more stress if adequate support will not be provided to them. And, this could be resulted in prolonging and even dropping the MPhil and PhD programs. Few other research studies revealed that the issue arises due to the strained student-supervisor relationship and students' disengagement with the scholarly community. Other studies have also confirmed that this information leads to the conclusion that the rigorous research process itself is not the only reason why MPhil and PhD students discontinue their studies (Pyhältö, Keskinen, 2012).

Moreover, the available literature suggested that students withdraw from their higher degree programs when they did not get acceptance by supervisors and fellow researchers. The mismatch between students' and research communities' acceptance further aggravate the situation (Golde, 2005). In addition to this, it is evident that MPhil and PhD students often experience growing health issues, due to which around 30 % to 50 % of students around the globe in different contexts decide to discontinue their studies (Flores, Brown, 2019; Golde, 2005; McAlpine, Norton, 2006).

In the studies, conducted earlier, the determinants linked with students' determination, time constraints, and diminishing interest have been discussed in detail (Golde, 1998; Wao, Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Furthermore, there is an extensive amount of literature available on disengagement among students pursuing their undergraduate studies (Bergdahl, 2022; Pekrun et al., 2011; Schmitt et al., 2008). However, limited research studies are available on the disengagement issue that exists among MPhil and PhD students of media research, and a serious need for systemized research on the topic is needed.

Moreover, in the context of Pakistan, to the knowledge of the researchers, no research has been done earlier to find out the categories and reasons for disengagement among MPhil and PhD in media research. That is why after identifying the gap, this systemized research has been conducted. According to the news reports frequently published, Pakistan's MPhil and PhD dropout ratio is very high, which is even higher for media research students. Therefore, it is a serious concern for Higher Education Commission and academicians. In the Pakistani education environment, there is a strong need to understand, evaluate and assess the nature of issues MPhil and PhD students of media research experience while pursuing their studies so that the right efforts can be done to reduce the risk of prolonging and disengagement from their studies.

This qualitative study explores the media research students' experiences of disengagement from their studies. The semi-structured interviews have been conducted for MPhil and PhD students of media research who have prolonged or discontinued their MPhil and PhD studies in Media Studies/Mass Communication. The research study explores the different categories, reasons, and inability to overcome the disengagement experience from studies among MPhil and PhD students of media research. Several intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for disengagement have also been identified. Moreover, students' personal and environmental inability to overcome the reasons for disengagement that leads to prolongment and discontinuation of their MPhil and PhD studies of media research have also been discussed.

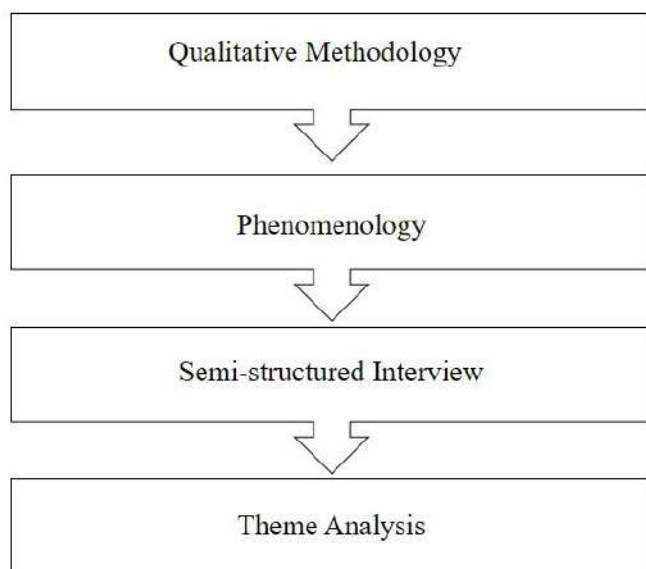
## 2. Materials and methods

In this study, a qualitative research approach has been applied to explore the reasons why higher education media research students experience disengagement from their studies. Scholars have referred to the term qualitative as the characteristics associated with entities and processes that are beyond the scope of the experimental examination and quantifiable measurements (Aspers, Corte, 2019).

Qualitative research scholars emphasize the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. A similar approach, inspired by phenomenology, was earlier used by scholars, which discusses the way people experience the phenomenon in experimental settings (Gonzalez, Forister, 2020; Marshall, Rossman, 1995).

The semi-structured in-depth interview was chosen as a data collection technique that allows participants to open up new insights. This method highlights the social constructionism paradigm which asserts reality is socially constructed (Smith, 2012).





**Fig. 1.** A summarized overview of the methodological process

Higher education media research studies conducted in Pakistan focus on both coursework and thesis. Here the process includes seminars, coursework, and a proposal defense of the thesis. The minimum duration for the completion of a research degree is 4 years and the maximum duration suggested by HEC is 8 years. Students enrolled in the programs are supposed to follow the durational limits. There are two parallel sectors of postgraduate studies that are functional in Pakistan. One is the public sector and the other is the private sector.

Moreover, the students are supposed to clear their GAT General Test and GAT Subject Test to get enrolled in MPhil/MS and PhD in media research programs respectively. The university can also organize its entry test as per the HEC policy. The students are expected to follow the terms and conditions imposed by the universities they are enrolled in. The university has the right to ask you to do the prerequisite courses, the interview panel usually suggests the course limit. If the student had already cleared the GAT General or GAT Subject test, then he/she will be exempted from the internal test conducted by the university. In addition to that, the university has all the right to consider you eligible or ineligible for admission irrespective of getting equivalence or not. Those who avail of HEC scholarship have different obligations to follow, which is beyond the scope of this research.

The HEC has recently closed the MPhil to leading PhD program to ensure quality education. The MPhil and PhD students pursuing media research are also supposed to clear their comprehensive exams after the completion of their coursework. Further, they have to conduct a proposal defense and after getting approval from the internal research board they finally get eligibility to proceed with their thesis. Regarding the supervisor's selection there are different policies frequently get updated by HEC, which is beyond the limit of this research, but again creates unrest among students.

The study participants were selected through a referral system. The participants were those who had discontinued or prolonged their MPhil and PhD process of media research. Initially, the first five participants were identified through personal contact then the others were contacted as referred by the initial contacts. We presumed that the discontinuation and prolonging could be the result of disengagement from the studies.

In total 20 students who were once enrolled in a postgraduate degree program in media studies/mass communication or related discipline were interviewed, among which 10 were males and the others were females. The six participants were journalism-related research students; five were advertising-related research students; four were social media-related research students while others were development support and communication-related students. All the participants were once enrolled or currently enrolled in the MPhil and PhD or higher media research degree programs. Twelve participants have discontinued their MPhil and PhD in media research and eight have prolonged their studies and were uncertain whether they will be able to complete their studies or not. The students participated in this research with their consent. The reasons for

disengagement or withdrawal from media research studies were identified through semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016; Kvale, 2006).

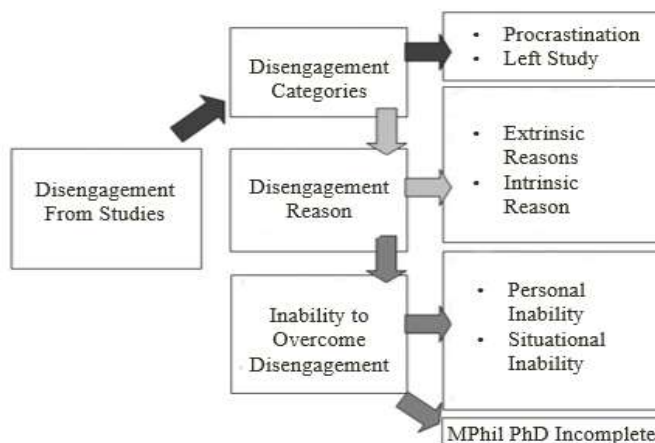
The in-depth understanding of media research students' experiences and their perspectives concerning disengagement was gauged through the semi-structured interviews, which helped us to learn more from their experiences. The interview structure was synthesized in a way that captured the positive and negative events media students face during their MPhil and PhD research studies (Kallio et al., 2016; Vekkaila et al., 2012). The focus of the study was on the negative experience explained by the media research students.

Before conducting the interviews for the research, in the pilot phase, the questions were tested on five higher education media research students and a course instructor and modified as per the feedback. At the beginning of the interview, the media students who participated were asked to visualize and draw their higher education media research education i.e., research process on a piece of paper. The student drew them in the form of timelines and roadmaps. Figure 2 is a real example of such visualizations.

After the completion of the drawing part, the participants were asked to identify and highlight the positive and negative episodes in their visualized journey. The positive episodes were regarded as the motivators for the media students to complete their research studies, on the other hand, negative episodes were considered de-motivators. In a traditional interview setup, it was assumed that a true reflection of experiences could have been compromised, therefore visualization-based interviews were preferred to get a better understanding of the life event experienced by the participants (Caspar, 2007). Every participant was individually asked to explain their episodic experiences clearly in detail. Elaboration on their part was further required for the events they had highlighted. Following probing, questions were asked for elaboration "Why does this particular episode (positive or negative) in your life occur? When and where do these particular episodes we are talking about occur? How did you react to that particular episode and what was your thinking? After that particular episode, what happened? Other people involved in that particular incident or not? Before conducting the interview, the participants were informed about the interview pattern and objective. The interviews were recorded and their duration varies between 20 to 30 minutes. The interviews were transcribed by researchers.

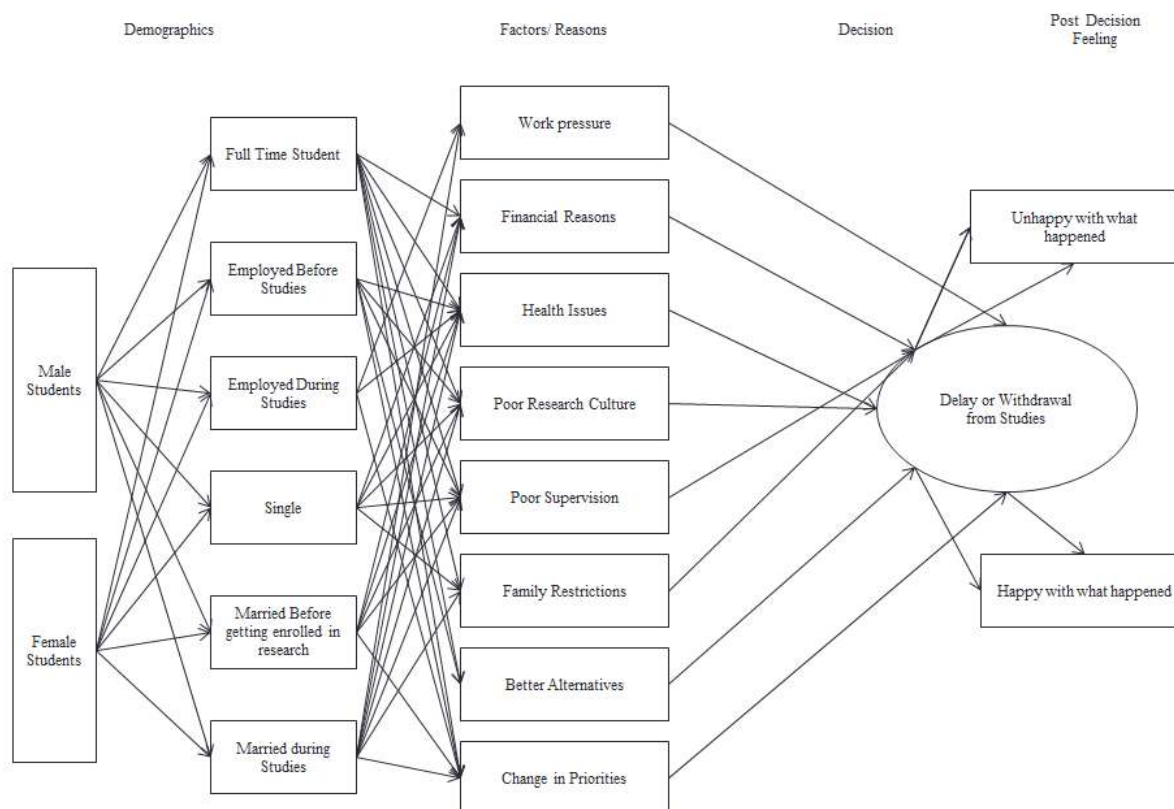
In the current research, first of all, the data recorded through interviews was made familiar by reading the responses over and over again. Data were then transcribed for further analysis. Initially, twenty codes were created based on the transcribed responses. During every step of the data analysis process, the researchers go through the data again and again, so that based on the theory the data in line with the observation can be categorized accordingly. Based on the differences participants experienced, the categories of the phenomena were formulated (Brew, 2001).

In the study, the data related to participants' inability to overcome the disengagement or withdrawal processes have been coded concerning their life experiences. Considering the differences and similarities among participants' life experiences, the data has been analyzed and coded, and by doing that, different categories, reasons and inability to overcome disengagement have emerged.



**Fig. 2.** Categorization of disengagement to reasons and inability to overcome it

The codes, after further reading, were modified. Not only the semantic meanings were studied, but the latent factors were also identified. After a thorough analysis theme is searched following the steps of thematic analysis. The final thematic which was created after the analysis is given as under:



**Fig. 3.** A thematic chart elaborating responses from MPhil and PhD media research students followed by demographics, factors/reasons, decision and post-decision feel of either postponing or withdrawing from postgraduate studies.

In the above chart themes which were created based on the responses received from the interviewees are positioned in such a way that the flow to the ultimate decision of either postponing or withdrawing the education is evident. The gender, employment status, marital status, etc. are labelled under Demographics whereas the further generated eight themes were classified as factors or reasons that cause disengagement from research. The decision then is bifurcated as the decision to postpone or delay studies and the decision to withdraw from studies.

From [Figure 3](#), it is evident that male students of media research who were single & full-time students made the decision to postpone or withdraw from the research having been influenced by the following factors: Financial Reasons, Health Issues, Poor Research Culture, Poor Supervision, Better Alternatives, Change in Priorities while single female full-time students had one more additional factor which caused them to decide on postponing or withdrawing from research and it was family restrictions. When it came to students who were single & were employed during their studies the factors that influence their decision were mainly Work Pressure, Health Issues, Poor Research Culture, Poor Supervision, Better Alternatives, and Change in Priorities. Those students who were employed before studies and single were influenced by the factors such as Health Issues, Poor Research Culture, Poor Supervision, Family Restrictions, Better Alternatives, and Change in Priorities regardless of gender. Same were the factors highlighted by those media research students who were married and employed before their studies. However, those students who were employed and got married during their studies were influenced by factors including Work Pressure, Financial Reasons, Health Issues, Poor Research Culture, Poor Supervision, and Family Restrictions & changes in Priorities. Overall the responses received from the interviewees were emphasizing the influence of two factors as mainstream factors which are Poor Supervision and Poor Research

Culture. The other factors have also emerged as substantial ones, but as compared to the two mentioned before their effects were lesser.

### 3. Discussion

In Pakistan, as per Higher Education Commission's (HEC) website, every year, MPhil and PhD students' enrollments are gradually increasing. The HEC is a constitutionally established, independently working, the autonomous educational body regulating, managing, and accrediting the efforts regarding the spread of higher education in Pakistan. During the last decade, the higher education sector in Pakistan has witnessed tremendous change. Several competitive institutes have been established and their enrolments are also increasing in media research programs. In mutual collaboration with local and international institutes and HEC, the government has provided various incentives to the MPhil and PhD students and faculty members of media studies/mass communication. The HEC encourages media students to equip themselves with higher education by providing sophisticated assistance and facilities to the universities offering postgraduate programs in media studies/mass communication. Its educational reforms have already established the competitive environment within the higher education sector in Pakistan. Despite its positive contribution to developing the demand for qualified individuals in Pakistan by producing more MPhil and doctoral students, HEC is still not successful in controlling or regulating the dropout ratio of research students enrolled in different universities across Pakistan. In the case of subsidized education and scholarship cases, this dropout ratio and increased duration of completing research studies incur a serious loss to HEC (Butt, Rehman, 2010).

In the available literature, disengagement is defined as a student's reluctance and distance from the assignment and activity, he or she is supposed to do and experiencing negative emotions while performing it (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reeve et al., 2004). As perceived by higher education, research students, disengagement from study means the withdrawal and passiveness of learning opportunities coming in the way offered by scholarly communities, further categorized as a low energy level, low involvement, and experience inefficiency ( Reschly et al., 2020; Schaufeli, Bakker, 2004). Previous studies on the topic suggested that disengagement from studies leads to several consequences which include decreasing commitment and disinterest in achievement (Carini et al., 2006), therefore, disengagement from studies stops research students from getting involved in academically sound activities.

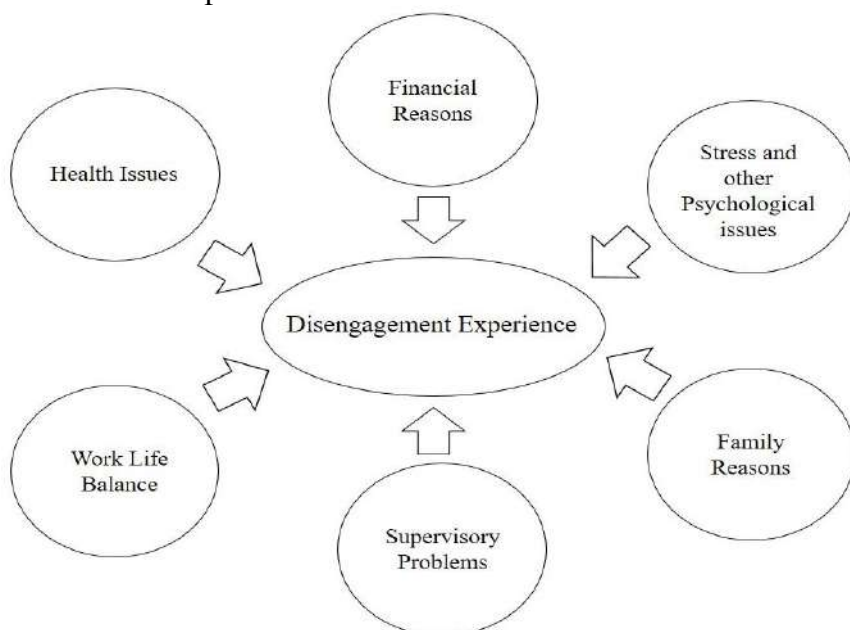
Scholars like S.K. Gardner and Wang et al. argued research students and the scholarly community serves as primary learning resource for higher education. Research students work in groups, they become members of the professional communities, hence, work in close collaboration with the scholarly community. This leads to the conclusion that research students do not just get influenced by the scholarly community, but they also actively choose their area of participation and they can adapt or adopt the community practices. Moreover, if they found community practices not aligned with their goals they may leave feeling frustrated (Pyhältö et al., 2012).

Further, pursuing higher education, and research studies lead to family compromises and financial crises which affect the students' study processes negatively (Appel, Dahlgren, 2003; Gardner, 2007). According to the study conducted by C Zhao & D.G Kuh on the enrolled and former research students, it has been found that if MPhil and PhD students experience negative connections with the faculty and fellow research students they find themselves demotivated in achieving their higher studies objectives and starts questioning themselves about continuing their research studies (Zhao, Kuh, 2004). Similarly, another scholar C.M. Golde, found that higher education research students see a disconnect between their targeted goals and desired expectations, and departmental discrepancies and mismanagement further add to their frustration. The researcher further added that the inconsistency between the supervisor and research student's communication, thinking, and working style is the main reason for disengagement (Golde, 2005). These research studies lead to another dimension of research students' environment interaction, which suggests that the disparaging resistance between the environment and research learners such as working practices, required environmental working perception, and lack of control and support system usually result in the misfit and perceived misfit leads to disengagement from the studies (Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli, Bakker, 2004; Schnitzler et al., 2021). Other studies while exploring the disengagement determinants suggested that mental and physical stress among research students is also a reason why they prolong and discontinue their studies. Anxiety and stress sometimes lead to physical illness as well. Since most of the research students work as well,

so they experience work-life imbalance, which is a major factor influencing their decision to discontinue research education communities (Pyhältö, Keskinen, 2012; Stubb et al., 2011; Bakadorva et al., 2020).

Based on the literature discussed above, this qualitative study explores the postgraduate media research students' experiences of disengagement from their studies through semi-structured interviews conducted with media research students who have prolonged or discontinued their MPhil and PhD studies. Several intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for disengagement have also been identified. Moreover, media students' personal and environmental inabilities to overcome the reasons for disengagement that leads to prolongment and discontinuation of their MPhil and PhD studies have also been discussed.

After conducting an extensive literature review, Figure 4 illustrates the factors that have been identified in the previous research studies:



**Fig. 4.** Factors of disengagement as identified in the literature review

The objective of this research was to explore the reasons why higher education media research students prolong or discontinue their education and, the factors influencing their disengagement from their studies. For that, the following research question has been devised:

What are the reasons for disengagement among MPhil and PhD students of media studies/mass communication or related discipline?

#### 4. Results

Results indicated that there are variations in the experiences of individuals depending on their gender, age, marital status, financial position, level of motivation, opportunities available, etc.

##### *Theme 1: Work Pressure*

Those individuals, both male, and female who are single and get employed during media research studies, mostly find it difficult to manage both ends meet and consequently end up either withdrawing or postponing research. As one of the respondents said, *"I was going on well with my research and then I got employed in a news channel as an anchor. The work pressure got the better of me. Ultimately I had to quit"*.

Another respondent said, *"My boss never understood what I was going through. He kept on putting pressure on me. I was stressed. I decided to postpone my studies"*.

##### *Theme 2: Financial Reasons*

Those media research students who are dependent on others for finance for instance: individuals who are jobless and their guardians are not well off, tend to struggle to do research flawlessly due to financial reasons. One of the respondents stated, *"It's very difficult to carry on studying when you lack financial resources. It feels really bad to be dependent on others"*.

For some researchers who are not financially stable after getting married, it becomes difficult to manage both things together.

#### *Theme 3: Health Issues*

Some researchers fall severely ill or have an accident during studies. Consequently, they find themselves at their wit's end and compromise on their studies for the time being. For a female student who is married and expecting a baby can also be a medical reason to postpone their studies. One of the respondents mentioned, *"I had an accident in which I got seriously injured which resulted in me leaving my research studies for good. Although I love to explore media-related insights"*.

A female student stated, *"I got pregnant during research studies and I had to prolong my studies because of that"*.

#### *Theme 4: Poor Research Culture*

One of the most common reasons which are highlighted by most of the researchers is the poor research culture prevalent at the university. One respondent said, *"Research needs full consideration and concentration without any pressure from any side whether it's personal or professional. You have to have the support of your colleagues. The culture in the media industry does influence the quality of research. Research is a full-time job. You have to burn your midnight oil to achieve the goal"*.

#### *Theme 5: Poor Supervision*

The most common reason for researchers to withdraw/ postpone research is poor supervision, most of the researchers complain about the quality of supervision they are provided and blame their supervisors for their failure. One respondent said, *"My supervisor never allowed me to ask questions. He never listened to me. He forced me to research the topic of his choice"*.

#### *Theme 6: Family restrictions*

Most of the female students stated their personal life and family restrictions as a reason for the delay or withdrawal from education. One of the female students mentioned: *"I got married during my research studies. Consequently, it took me more time to complete my research as my husband asked me to take a break from studies for at least a year"*.

Another female student stated: *"After my father died I had to quit my research studies because my brother was conservative and didn't allow me to go out and do research"*.

#### *Theme 7: Better Alternatives*

One student described experiences of *exhaustion*. When he did, it was in terms of feeling overstrained and having no energy to continue. Sometimes the students were fully exhausted or even depressed, and consequently distanced themselves from their research work and postponed it. While one student said. One respondent highlighted: *"I had an opportunity to go abroad and I didn't want to let that go begging. I quit my research studies for I thought I had a better alternative"*.

#### *Theme 8: Change in Priorities*

When it comes to those media research students who either get promoted professionally or start finding pleasure in doing other things as their priorities change they end up discontinuing their studies.

Variation was also expressed in the situations and activities that the media research students identified as contributing to these disengaging experiences. One female student respondent responded: *"After getting married I decided to give time to my family and became a housewife. I lost my interest in doing research". "No regrets at all. My family was and is my priority. The compromise I made proved to be fruitful"*.

The contrasting response was gotten from another interviewee: *"I have always regretted my decision of withdrawing from media research studies for I could have achieved much more as an academician"*.

The result of the responses showed few subtle and few substantial variations in the experiences of research students. After generating the thematic chart from the codes generated based on the responses gathered from the interviewees the result produced concluded that those who postponed or withdrew their studies due to reasons other than the change in priorities and professional growth had nothing but to repent and consequently were unhappy with what happened and vice versa.

## **5. Conclusion**

The factors that add to disengagement or withdrawal from the media research studies and

processes are infrequently studied in education. The present research was completed inside the setting of delayed research studies or withdrawal from it and, in this way, gives knowledge into the marvel by revealing insight into research students' different withdrawing experiences and the progression between them and their work amid these experiences. Comparative experiences have been ordinarily studied in business-related settings (Hakanen et al., 2006; Salanova et al., 2010). Our discoveries propose that leading media research work does not mean just taking courses, examining the space, and directing research; it is additionally particularly scholastic work inside an academic group that researchers as beginner researchers are engaged in. Further, our examination recommends that although the settings of the separating experiences and the nature of the ruinous progression differed, the understudies regularly observed the issue as coming about because of an excessively controlling or estranging academic group. Specifically, our outcomes are following past investigations on research education which demonstrate that apparent mavericks between researchers and their insightful groups are probably going to add to negative experiences and debilitate their determination (Golde, 2005).

Further, our outcomes recommend that disengagement from the research is additionally conceivable while matching interests, concerning vocations or families, engross them more than their proposed work, although they may see that finishing their proposition is conceivable. Our outcomes suggest that what is the nature of research studies' disengagement contrasts, and henceforth the methods and practices to encourage research studies' commitment to their research additionally should be more varied. Besides, the outcomes show that the nature of the transaction between research and the scholarly group matters. What's more, research studies and programs may require bolster in translating the insightful world and its requirements.

In the present investigation, we could give knowledge of media research doctoral understudies' experiences of disengagement from their proposal process. In any case, disengagement isn't an experience that exists in a vacuum or is separated from commitment. The conditions of research work additionally give assets to commitment and create a positive drive. Be that as it may, commitment itself was not the focal point of the present examination, and further research on commitment in research work is required. Thus, in future research studies, we intend to take a gander at commitment to research studies that lead their education inside the best level research group.

It is obvious from the discussion so far that there is wide a dissimilarity of accessible information inside the advanced education division on why researchers pull back from their picked course. The recommendations emerging from the discoveries of this research will be isolated into three classes: the individual foundation reaction; approach suggestions for the HEI area in all; the potential part of the National Forum in advancing research and best practice in expanding maintenance of researchers in advanced education. While the recommendations have been classified along these lines, obviously the unpredictability of the issue requires a community-oriented approach between the majorities of the partners to address it successfully.

As per our discoveries, matters relating to the course and course decision were by a wide margin the most well-known purpose of researchers to pull back from their advanced education thinks about. The student voice, as enunciated through the subjective information gathered, gives understanding into such issues in the segment in all, and in addition separating between the components that make up the part. Notwithstanding, as expressed above, there is a significant dissimilarity between what, on the off chance that anything, is gathered by the individual organizations to acquire top-to-the-bottom comprehension of why and how a student chooses it was to their greatest advantage to leave, regardless of the sentiments of disappointment it can induce. This demonstrates the requirement for the accompanying:

*Recommendation 1:* Systematic and institutionalized subjective information ought to be assembled as per normal procedure by all advanced education organizations from researchers who pull back from their course.

*Recommendation 2:* Development of a typical leave shape that incorporates open-finished inquiries looking to clarify why such a choice has been achieved; what, if anything, may have helped them to stay; and regardless of whether the student intends to re-enter advanced education in the quick future.

From the approach area of this examination, it will be obvious that extensive exertion must be consumed in getting data about existing information from the taking interest establishments. Also, it was discovered that a few establishments were presently drawn in, or had been locked in as of late, in research extends on student withdrawal. Such profitable information must be used in its

most extreme and duplication of exertion inside and crosswise over establishments be maintained at a strategic distance by building correspondence in the research procedure. Subsequently, we prescribe that:

*Recommendation 3:* A suitable individual ought to be the assigned contact for Teaching and Learning research in each HEI and this individual ought to be clear about their part in helping the National Forum concerning progressing research ventures.

*Recommendation 4:* Pakistan's advanced education foundations ought to be completely educated of all continuous research extends and made mindful of the additional estimation of such research, with the goal that any help required will be given to expanding effect.

Results from the information ordered by our investigation indicate issues identified with the course to be by a long shot the most widely recognized purpose behind researchers pulling back from their examinations. Promoting cross-examination of this information uncovers the unpredictability of this reason and why various methodologies are expected to address it. The Wrong course decision is a repeating subject, requiring different ways to deal with a guarantee that second-level researchers are best arranged for settling on educated choices while finishing their CAO Application Form. Adjusted to this, is the issue of the enrollment/showcasing methodology of the foundations when attempting to draw in potential researchers. The inquiry emerges regarding whether the data given clarifies the course substance and requests, and whether the base prerequisites in a specific subject are pitched at an adequately abnormal state to guarantee that those on the edge will have the capacity to adapt. For courses with large amounts of student withdrawal, the accompanying recommendations warrant thought:

*Recommendation 5:* Review the showcasing procedure and its "fit" with course substance and scholarly requests.

*Recommendation 6:* Review of passage necessities in connection with researchers' second-level subject decisions and Leaving Certificate brings about zones of specific importance.

*Recommendation 7:* Review of evaluation input and scholastic bolster structures with a specific spotlight on the initial three months of a program, along these lines making a "scholastic early cautioning framework".

*Recommendation 8:* Reviews of inner exchange components and backings to guarantee that such open doors are boosted for researchers who may some way or another pullback.

*Recommendation 9:* Audit of the scholastic and managerial backings expected to distinguish and exhort researchers who have turned out to be disillusioned with their picked course.

*Recommendation 10:* More spotlight on general learning abilities at higher instruction in the early long stretches of the first year, in addition to building educational program intercessions that advance student commitment and student strength in their advanced education examines.

*Recommendation 11:* Identifying researchers from admission insights who may be especially defenseless against poor social incorporation either because they are just a single going to form a specific second-level school, or whose house is a significant separation away.

The choice to pull back isn't a simple one from the student's point of view given the sentiments of disappointment, lament, and worry about conceivable family responses. On the institutional side, it speaks to lost income which can be sizeable, and a missed open door for another imminent student. Its scale makes it a vital approach issue of advanced education training all in all and by division, as far as problematic utilization of important assets. Unmistakably the arrangement can't become the method for a solitary change, but instead requires a multi-layered approach that includes second and in addition advanced education instructive strategy and practice. The initial step is to analyze how the issue is characterized. The way that a significant high extent of researchers demonstrated that they were wanting to move to an elective course/establishment employing the CAO, proposes that:

*Recommendation 12:* Student non-consummation ought to be seen in an unexpected way, not as a disappointment or issue, yet rather as a marker of the requirement for more noteworthy simplicity of student versatility inside the advanced education segment, in this manner empowering a student to make their own "vocation design".

#### *Implications, limitations and future research*

The research is useful for the policymakers who design and make changes in the programs of media research. It is equally important for the institutions offering MPhil and PhD level media research to keep a check on how they are performing in supporting and promoting research culture in society. Moreover, it also explains how media research students can be motivated with the help of proper



supervision. The most important aspect of the study is that it highlights how an individual can better devise his strategy as a media research student. It can also guide a student on whether to get enrolled in MPhil and PhD media research programs is a good option for him or not by making an in-depth analysis of the factors mentioned in the study. Since this study is mainly focused on media research students, students at other levels or pursuing an education in different faculty are not considered in the research. Moreover, for the analysis thematic analysis approach was used which certainly has many advantages yet there is an issue with the limitations of options available for interpretation which opens the door for other approaches such as narratives and biographies for future research.

Furthermore, the research horizon can be expanded from city-based to country-based and then to continent-based to bring about standard conclusions which can then be objectified with the help of quantitative research. Ultimately, these intermittent steps if taken slowly but surely can lead resulting in an improved education system worldwide. Future research should also explore the triggers of disengagement from MPhil and PhD studies in other disciplines such as Management Science, Engineering Science, and Medical Sciences.

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## COVID-19 and Online Fundraising: Seeing the Pandemic on Social Media

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### Abstract

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which first appeared at the end of 2019 has become a pandemic and instantly changed the way people interact. Not only because this virus has claimed many victims, but also because of policies to limit physical activity. These conditions have contributed to the emergence of solidarity in the form of online fundraising in society. Therefore, this research, intends to look at two online fundraisings; first, which was initiated by the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR RI), and second, which was initiated by Narasi Tv. In addition, this research looks at fundraising within the framework of a theatrical event which consists of various elements, tries to unveil the ideology that operates behind the events, and describes the audience's response as a result of their interpreting process towards the online fundraisings. Since the phenomenon being analyzed is online activity, this research uses netnography as a method to observe textual communication and multimedia communication which is the data in this research. The researchers argue that these two-fundraising had different characteristics of initiator, stage, and actor, so that each had different ideological implications as well. The different characteristics also produce different responses as the interpretation of the audience.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, online fundraising, theatrical event, ideology, audience response, YouTube, media.

### 1. Introduction

The emergence of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the end of 2019, which later became a pandemic, has changed human condition in all countries. As reported by mass media, Indonesia confirmed, officially, first corona virus cases in March 2, 2020 ([Jakarta Globe, 2020](#)). As part of handling this pandemic, the Indonesian government decided to implement PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restriction) policy as an effort to limit physical interaction among community members. Obviously, this policy cannot stand alone, it must be accompanied by tracing, testing, and isolating as a form of handling in the health sector ([Andriani, 2020](#)) and the level of compliance of every member of the community will determine success in dealing with this pandemic ([Pangaribuan, Munandar, 2021](#); [Ristyawati, 2020](#); [Yanti et al., 2020](#)).

Moreover, several studies on pandemic in the past have shown significant results from social distancing. In the UK, people's responses to social distancing have an effect on the spread of Spanish influenza ([Yu et al., 2017](#)). Whereas in Sweden, socio-economic and life expectancy during the pandemic have a significant relationship ([Bengtsson, Helgertz, 2019](#)). These researches show that the social aspect is one of the things considered, besides finding a vaccine, to overcome a pandemic. Early research on the COVID-19 pandemic has seen social and health factors as one of the important things that must be seen. As a form of disaster management, the implementation of

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social distancing and public awareness of the importance of seeing COVID-19 as a threat are important factors to end the pandemic and have been implemented in many countries (Lingam, Sapkal, 2020; Rambaree, Nässén, 2020; Sanfelici, 2020; Walter-McCabe, 2020). In order to face this pandemic, several steps must be taken, therefore the physical and mental health of the society is always maintained; social distancing, self-isolation, self-quarantine (Suppawittaya et al., 2020) and utilize technology and communication forms that can be understood by the community as a way to manage the outbreak (Chen et al., 2020). Moreover, using various kinds of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products is one of the right choices in the midst of pandemic, social distancing, and the high use of internet access in society.

However, it must be admitted that the social distancing policy has changed the way people interact; people are forced to enter cyberspace more often to avoid physical contact. Cyberspace can be defined as a space within computers, communication devices, and data storage devices that with a wide network makes it possible to communicate with a wide and fast range (Baase, Henry, 2018). Since the beginning of this pandemic, all the recommendations to protect ourselves from COVID-19 are translated in the form of hashtag (#), such as #stayathome #workfromhome #socialdistancing #physicaldistancing #covid19 and many more. It shows that all parties understand the activity patterns of people close to digital culture. The use of hashtag in various digital platforms is not only used as a tool for disseminating issues, events and interests, but also invites the public to get involved collectively in it (Bernard, 2019; Sauter, Bruns, 2015). Furthermore, the role of hashtags in every digital platform is always related to social issues in society.

For the Indonesian people, the habit of accessing the internet is not something new. The development of ICT has a significant role in the high level of public access to the internet. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of internet users and the consumption of Indonesian social media were among the highest in the world. Internet users in Indonesia reached 175.4 million with social media access users reaching 160 million in early January, 2020 (Clement, 2020; Kemp, 2020). With the necessity to do social distancing and physical distancing, that number will definitely increase during this pandemic.

The pandemic conditions that forced people to limit physical movement and the high number of accesses to the internet gave rise to, what is called, online fundraising. This fundraising emerged as part of the humanitarian movement and awareness of the need for individual participation in the community to contribute in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (Sobanova 2010) sees fundraising as an organized practice aimed solely at raising financial support for an organization's or individual's activities, and can be seen as an activity dealing with good motivation (Hommerová, Severová, 2019). Psychologically, what must exist is that the donors are able to see the relationship between their self and the issues in fundraising (Chell et al., 2020), and good communication skills are needed to influence potential donors (Song, Kim, 2020). In addition, donations made through the online payment method make it easier for potential donors, because of the ease of contributing and monitoring the distribution of the collected donations (Asyraf, Luckyardi, 2019).

In Indonesia, at least, there are two fundraising activities which used digital platform as a medium; Narasi Tv and MPR RI (People's Consultative Assembly of Republic of Indonesia). Online fundraising, even as a consequences of social distancing policies, also takes into account the high level of public access to digital platforms. Therefore, online fundraising activities are also part of the strategy to broaden the audience that will be involved (Bhati, McDonnell, 2020). The interesting thing from these two fundraising activities is that they represent two different institutions; Narasi.tv as an independent online news channel and MPR RI as a state institution. On the one hand, a motivation of the two fundraising activities is same; as a collective effort to help victims. But on the other hand, different backgrounds of the initiator, all parties involved, and how the activity is displayed have a different effect.

As a public activity, fundraising can be seen as a theatrical event. Looking at from this perspective, each party involved is an actor who plays with every capital he has and plays with symbols and other artistic elements (Weinryb, Turunen, 2017). In addition, the use of digital platforms makes the reach of fundraising wider (Klein, 2016). The digital platform also provides a place for audiences or donors to respond to online fundraising events. At least, on social media, comments written by the audience in the comment column, good or bad responses, also affect engagement (Segesten et al., 2020). Seeing fundraising as a theatrical event does not mean that fundraising is only limited to spectacle, but seeing how an activity is presented as attractively as possible so that the audiences can be interested in being involved as donors. Therefore, it is

important to look at the responses of the audience in the comments column to see how they give meaning to online fundraising.

In order to look critically at a fundraising event, apart from seeing it as a theatrical event, is to look at the ideology behind the event. Ideology exists implicitly through communicative actions (Zizek, 2012) and, in particular, it can be seen in comments column as a way of audiences responds the event. Moreover, Zizek sees ideology as part of the process of production of practices which aims to legitimize power relations (García, Sánchez, 2008). Dismantling the ideology in these fundraisings also means seeing the power relations that have a role in them.

## 2. Materials and methods

This research focuses on two fundraising activities for victims affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia which carried out by Narasi Tv and MPR RI (People's Consultative Assembly of Republic of Indonesia). As the researchers explained before, Narasi Tv is one of the Indonesian independent news channels and MPR RI is a political institution (parliament) in Indonesia. The two institutions conduct fundraising in the same way; involving music, musicians, celebrity, and used kitabisa.com as a fundraising platform. Furthermore, Narasi Tv fully conducted fundraising virtually through digital platforms on March 25-28, 2020, while the fundraising carried out by the MPR RI on May 17, 2020.

By using the netnography method, the analysis in this research focuses on two fundraising activities, Narasi TV and MPR RI, on a digital platform. On Narasi Tv, these activities are uploaded on the official website <http://narasi.tv> in real time which is also available on the official Narasi Tv YouTube channel. Meanwhile, the fundraising activities carried out by the MPR RI, although broadcasted offline, can be watched in real time on YouTube. However, netnography is a participant-observational study focused on online fieldwork and seeing the sponsor, participant, audience, and those to consent to it as a data base in understanding a cultural phenomenon (Kozinets, 2010). From the online data, the researchers used visual methodology to interpret the parties involved, the accompanying text, the interactions, and the comments in those fundraisings in relation to ideology and audience responses. However, visual culture is more than just an illustration; it is a location for the formation and representation of social difference and bring the user interpretation (Gillian, 2016). Moreover, the events can be interpreted as a theatrical event by considering the parties involved as actors with their symbols and artistic elements (Weinryb, Turunen, 2017).

## 3. Discussion

Digital culture and the development of ICT make online fundraising easy to implement, and the development of online crowdfunding applications helps people to become donors (Hutami, Irwansyah, 2019; Nurhadi, Irwansyah, 2018). The social distancing policy stimulates the community to raise funds by utilizing the digital crowdfunding platform as part of a participatory culture (Warapsari, 2020) as was done by Narasi Tv and MPR RI by using digital platform. The use of social media in a fundraising involving popular culture actors in the midst of a pandemic has become significant. The development of social media and all ICTs has an ability to develop and take advantage of social capital of the actors (Matthews, 2015).

Digital platforms, especially social media, have a different culture from other platforms. In social media, active engagement is a form of user participation (Huang, Su, 2018; Karaganis, 2007; Piatak, Mikkelsen, 2021). The features in social media allow users to respond organically and in real time. The involvement of many parties opens the opportunity to see certain relationships between donors and fundraisers. What often happens in a fundraising is the benefits obtained as a result of the relationship between the donor and the fundraiser, not the relationship between the donor and the beneficiary (Alborough, 2017). In this context, fundraiser, whether in the form of individual or organization, is an important factor in fundraising activities. There is a tendency for donors to consider fundraisers when donating. Moreover, when fundraisers are parties who are considered to represent the state, donors see their participation as an activity in helping the state to help its people.

Donors, fundraisers, and organizations involved are some of the important factors that need to be seen in a fundraising activity. By looking at these factors, fundraising is not a humanitarian activity that can only be seen from one side. One of them is by looking at fundraising as a theatrical event. Here, fundraising as a theatrical setup always involves sensory, artistic, and symbolic

aspects in its implementation (Weinryb, Turunen, 2017). Moreover, what calls as economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984), social capital, cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and online social capital (Faucher, 2018) have also important role this event. By looking at all these capitals, each actor comes with various social experiences and dispositions that will determine participation in this theatrical event. This illustration shows the various dimensions that are usually required in a theatrical event are connected with the various capitals owned by actors, with the result that fundraising must be seen as a complex social action.

In Indonesia, Narasi Tv is one of the independent media that chose digital platforms as its main medium. The figure of Najwa Shihab and the idea of using multi-platform digital on Narasi Tv succeeded in creating an audience that is internet users (Boer, 2019). In addition, the existence of Mata Kita Community, as a community of spectators, has an active role in negotiating the rules in Narasi Tv, and this shows openness and high audience participation (Wahyudi, 2020). Fundraising carried out by Narasi tv was held on March 25 to 28 2020, and this means that Narasi tv was one of the first institutions to conduct fundraising for victims affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia after the government officially announced the existence of the COVID-19 case in Indonesia on March 2, 2020. By involving thirty-five Indonesian artists and musicians, Narasi Tv conducted a digital concert under the theme *#dirumahaja Dari Musisi Indonesia* (*#stayathome From Indonesian Musicians*) and used *kitabisa.com* as a fundraising platform. The way Narasi Tv uses digital platforms is very effective not only because of the limitations of physical movement amid the *#stayathome* recommendation, but also because transparency and accountability can be fulfilled (Di Lauro et al., 2019).

Furthermore, it can be seen that social media is the main medium used in this fundraising program. This also shows another Narasi Tv's awareness of the characteristics of contemporary society in consuming music. In the digital era, the tendency of people to consume music is based on the ease and freedom to choose what kind of music they want to listen to, and this is possible because of technological developments (Nowak, 2016). The use of digital platforms in this fundraising was also an effective way to target young people as a group, who generally, consume more digital content than other groups in contemporary society. Moreover, this group usually accesses music through various digital platforms.

Meanwhile, the online fundraising concert carried out by the People's Consultative Assembly of Republic of Indonesia (MPR RI) involved several state-owned institutions, such as the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19, Agency for Pancasila Ideology Development (BPIP). In addition, this concert also involves institutions outside the government, such as the Genomic Solidaritas Indonesia (GSI Lab), Indika Foundation, and Indonesian Film Artist Association (PARFI). The fundraising concert was held on May 17, 2020 with a duration of 2 hours and used the Indonesian Public Service Broadcaster (TVRI) studio as the main venue. Moreover, this online fundraising also involved other commercial tv station, such as Kompas Tv, iNews, NET, Metro Tv, and ANTV. Although this event is supported by many tv stations, it also involves YouTube as a social media platform. As done by Narasi Tv, this concert also utilizes *kitabisa.com* as a fundraising platform.

The use of social media in fundraising initiated by state institutions is a form of their awareness of the magnitude of the influence of digital platforms as part of public communication. State officials, who by age are not part of the millennial group, are forced to adapt to a digital culture that is close to the millennial group. The old culture of bureaucracy transforms itself into a hybrid form of social media communication (Meijer, Torenvlied, 2014) with the aim of reaching a wider audience. In the context of disaster management, the state is also required to quickly adapt to changing circumstances, skills in information distribution, and generate collective action (Nowell et al., 2017). The experience of many countries also shows the use of social media to mobilize citizens and various parties outside the country to support the government in dealing with COVID-19 (Baniamin, 2021; Li et al., 2020).

Furthermore, celebrities who take part in this event are supporting actors. Those who sing or become supporter or volunteer of this event can be seen as part of the initiator's strategy to reach audiences from popular culture consumers. This is because celebrities who voluntarily get involved, in fact, have a big role by utilizing their capacity to achieve this fundraising target (Ihm, 2017). In addition, just like state officials, other institutions and television stations as a part of media company whose names are mentioned or written on the flyer are supporting actors who seek profit in different forms. Their appearance at the event is part of social media engagement and it is

related to their evaluation of advertisements (Voorveld et al., 2018) or, at least, their participation will have an effect on their positive brand image as an institution or a company.

#### 4. Results

Several similarities occurred between the online fundraising initiated by Narasi Tv and the MPR RI. In addition, to utilizing digital platforms, both events also involve many celebrities and songs as a way to attract public attention. However, the response given by the public looks different. The comment column is a feature provided by the YouTube platform to accommodate the public's response as an audience. Writing comments on the YouTube channel is a form of active engagement (Oh, Choeh, 2021) and users of YouTube display and tinker with their identities, express themselves on all kinds of topics, invent new products and ideas (Harrison, 2013). Furthermore, it is important to read and analyze the comments as a way of assessing audience response.

Like another fundraising, Najwa Shihab, either as an icon or host of Narasi Tv, gave a brief opening remark for only 12 seconds at the beginning of the event. In the brief welcome, Najwa Shihab only emphasized that this event is a form of community way to strengthen and entertain each other. She used "strengthen" and "entertain" words rather than state-related dictions. Furthermore, visually, the background used in the video is just a photo collage of the young musicians involved in this event; no sponsor or state symbols are included. This is what makes this event is independent, spontaneous, simple, and initiated and driven by youth.

The fundraising initiated by Narasi Tv provides a different style from the fundraising initiated by the MPR RI. The event initiated by Narasi Tv shows the power of young people as a driving force. All the musicians involved represent young people, except Achmad Albar who popularized the song *Rumah Kita* (Our Home). The use of social media as the main medium is also in accordance with the character of young people who trust social media more as a place to communicate various issues in society (Vromen et al., 2015) and as a form of citizenship in the information era (Pantti, 2015; Walsh et al., 2018). By utilizing digital platform and YouTube as a fundraising medium, Narasi Tv has more opportunities to reach young people as the largest users of social media to participate.

From the other theatrical perspective, there are significant differences between the two fundraising concerts. In Narasi Tv, there is no dominant celebrity or party in the show. All musicians are given the same portion of time; on average they sing for two minutes. Even Najwa Shihab, as the host, only gave a very short introduction for 12 seconds. The song sung was same, *Rumah Kita*. A song that was deliberately chosen to be contextual with the purpose of holding a fundraising concert; keep Indonesia as a common home during the pandemic. In the end, none of the celebrities or any party became an icon in this fundraising event. This is what makes all parties involved in this fundraising concert are the main actors.

Musicians, as actors in this event, have at least two capitals that will accompany them; cultural capital and social capital. Both of these capitals contributed to attracting netizens' attention to become the audience then contribute. The greater the capital owned, the greater the opportunity to successfully influence the attention of netizens. In social media, there is also what is called online social capital as a result of accumulation of the number of followers and likes (Faucher, 2018). In other words, in this online fundraising, cultural capital, social capital, and online social capital owned by each celebrity will be converted into profits in the form of donations.

As a show, the musicians involved use the house as a stage in this online fundraising. Digital platforms, especially YouTube, as the main medium in this event showed how they made their house a concert stage with simple equipment. There is no supporting equipment as it should be used in a performance, such as adequate lighting or audio, which is used by musicians. Visually, the background is the house or part of the house where the musician lives, and this can be found in all videos. Moreover, artistically, the stage is left naturally built without any additional ornaments. This condition shows the consistency of this event in carrying the theme *#dirumahaja Dari Musisi Indonesia* (*#stayathome* from Indonesian Musicians).

From theatrical perspective, the presence of Joko Widodo as president and Megawati Soekarnoputri as former president virtually, the chairman of the MPR RI on stage, and state officials (Kompas Tv, 2020) who sang virtually, other than the musicians, were actors at this online fundraising. In addition, various parties outside state institutions, such as organizations, foundations, and television stations involved in this event are also seen as actors. These actors

utilize the stage to perform with the support of various symbols displayed artistically. Furthermore, various symbols and capitals owned by the actors will determine the achievements of this event.

Social, cultural, economic, and online social capitals are significant part of this event. The musicians involved in this event have, at least, the cultural capital and online social capital. All of this capital is created as an accumulation of their work as musicians or celebrities and as part of social media users. Meanwhile, the other actors such as Joko Widodo, Megawati Soekarnoputri, and all the politicians who were present at the fundraising stage had social capital and online social capital. All the capitals are accumulated from their position in society and their existence on social media.

The number of actors who play in this fundraising, such as in a theatrical event, can be divided into two groups; main actors and supporting actors. President, state officials, and the other political figures were the main actors in this event. In general, their time portion is not as much as the musicians and celebrities who appear on the studio stage, but their virtual appearance at the beginning and in some other parts actually shows a domination on the stage. Large social capital as public officials are converted into symbolic capital and this makes them easy to get the attention of the audiences or donors. In terms of political marketing, their presence on stage is another form of personal branding that is indispensable in political contestation.

Although both involve celebrities, what makes the difference is that the MPR RI involves state officials. The fact that the composition of the performers is different, it is very possible that the two events have different ideological implications. The presence and opening speeches of Joko Widodo and Megawati Soekarnoputri have their own points in the fundraising initiated by the MPR RI. Symbolically, these two figures represent political leaders in Indonesia, and at the same time their remarks can be interpreted as political legitimacy for this event. The background of the red-white flag lining behind the president Joko Widodo is not only a property, but can be seen as the other symbol on the stage. As the national flag of Indonesia, the red-white flag tries to convey the meaning that this event is a part of nationalism.

The opening remarks of Joko Widodo and Megawati Soekarnoputri have almost the same pattern. The using of “we” as pronouns used clearly position them, as presidents and political figures, with the public as the audience in the same place. Whereas their social position with the audience is clearly different, and this is also clearly seen in the fundraising event. As presidents and political figures, they clearly have different social capital. The special time at the beginning of the event to give a short welcome is another form of effort to utilize their social capital in the event. Furthermore, the painting of Soekarno, Indonesia's first president, who was holding a small child and became the background when Megawati Soekarnoputri gave her speech was a symbol that was placed on the fundraising stage. Soekarno, who during his leadership always emphasized *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), is being brought back by painting with the aim of bringing back the spirit of *gotong royong*.

The presence of politicians and state officials in fundraising actually raises something hidden, which according to Zizek is called ideology (Zizek, 2012). The ideology hides behind the text contained in acts of communication, either verbal or nonverbal, carried out by politicians and state officials during this event. Implicitly, the act of communication of Joko Widodo's opening remark by saying that the Indonesia is a nation that is resilient, cares about others, and must show itself as a nation which able to facing COVID-19 shows the state's pessimistic attitude in helping its own people. It is as if the state is asking its people to help each other. Therefore, the state believes that the people must help themselves.

On the other hand, ideology no longer departs from the unconscious. Ideology is not just a set of ideas, but has also become a social world (Zizek, 2008). The pandemic condition that suddenly made people's conditions worse finally forced them to help each other. This is what Narasi Tv translates into the form of fundraising. The online fundraising event which is held independently is a response to the condition of the community who cannot expect much from government assistance. Furthermore, this Narasi Tv activity shows that mutual assistance among the community is an idea that must be realized in the midst of these uncertain conditions.

Public opinion and behavior are contrary towards the digital fundraising held by Narasi TV. This concert is hosted by Najwa Shihab, an Indonesian journalist who is currently has her own media company. While joined by Indonesia musician, the comments of this fundraising surprisingly are shown in positive way or even means as trust behaviors. The comment, “*Keterlulusan bagusnya. Thank you kak Nana sudah ngide buat konten seperti ini di kala Indonesia terancam terpecah karena adanya wabah*” (Outrageously good. Thank you, kak Nana,



for coming up with this kind of content when Indonesia is in danger of being divided because of the epidemic) shows a trust behavior. Trust is likely to be accompanied by a sense of confidence, security, perhaps even well-being, and it might inspire loyalty towards the trusted (Marien, Hooghe, 2011; Jennings et al., 2021). Moreover, this comment shows the audience's feeling that inspired by the action of Najwa Shihab who held the fundraising. The call "Kak Nana" is evidence that shows the emotional closeness between the audience and the host as well as a form of affirmation of the idea created by Najwa Shihab.

Furthermore, similar comment also appears from the other audience. The comment "*Merinding! Semangat semua! Badai pasti berlalu!*" (I have goosebumps! Good luck all! The storm will pass!) shows trust behavior as a well. O'Neil observes that trust is valuable only when directed to agents and activities that are trustworthy (Jennings et al., 2021). The audience feels confident about the crisis shall pass as she called it as "storm." She puts belief that Indonesian's people can unite and stay strong together against this pandemic after she watched the virtual concert #dirumahaja. Somehow, the virtual concert #dirumahaja motivates her to give the positive energy, not the opposite.

On contrary, this research found different kind of comments in MPR RI online fundraising that show distrust from the audiences. Distrust means a suspicious or cynical attitude towards others (Jennings et al., 2021). First, the comment "*Aku ingin pindah negara*" (I want to move to another country) can be seen as cynical attitude to the state institution as an organizer. In other word, his comment shows an incredulity to any governmental rules or statement especially that is related to the fundraising. Moreover, his comment can be interpreted that the action which come from the government especially what they present in the fundraising does not satisfy him, instead makes him feel desperate to become the citizen of Indonesia.

It happens also with the other comment. The comment "*Dia yang bikin acara gue yang malu nontonnya*" (The government is the one who create the event, but I feel embarrassed by watching it) shows the other distrust from the audience. In social media interaction, distrust indicates failure to influence audiences (Falcone et al., 2002) and the digital fundraising purpose is an open invitation in order to get financial resources and a form of support (Warapsari, 2020). However, the comment showed an attitude of refusing the invitation, and even the audience felt embarrassed. in other words, this shows the failure of state institutions to convince their audiences.

The comments above appear as a representation of the audience's assessment of the online fundraising event initiated by the MPR RI. The cynical impression that emerged from the event was a form of public distrust of the audience towards the event. However, these comments came after many politicians were present, either live in the studio or on video, at the event. In other words, various cynical impressions that are manifested in the comments column indicate that there is low trust or distrust in the audience. Low trust is defined as a lack of trust that is interpreted as an indication that the government is doing something wrong or that public services do not deliver, and it is cause for concern (Van De Walle, Six, 2014). The low level of trust cannot be separated from the existence of several state institutions involved in this event. The audience sees and connects state institutions as event organizers with handling COVID-19, and the responses that appear in the comments column can be understood as another form of audience disappointment in handling COVID-19. Furthermore, cynical comments that appear on social media are closely related to real conditions in society.

## 5. Conclusion

The fundraising conducted virtually by Narasi Tv and MPR RI involved directly a product of popular culture, particularly music. The high number of internet and social media access users in Indonesia plays a big role in this fundraising activity. In addition, it is important to involve musicians and celebrities in this activity as an important factor in attracting audience attention. This phenomenon demonstrates the connection between pandemics, fundraising, YouTube, ideology, and public trust. Eventually, online fundraising, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, in Indonesia is not only seen as a humanitarian event, but audiences seen as a means of political activity with the aim of instilling public trust in the Indonesian government. Similar to the online fundraising event held by Narasi TV, the online fundraising event by MPR RI also uses celebrities, even many politicians are involved in this event, to attract audience's attention. The phenomenon of celebrities in making donations in order to help people affected by the pandemic, obviously,

cannot be separated from the role of social media. Moreover, celebrities, with large followers on social media, will provide more affective power (Beta, Neyazi, 2022).

In theatrical perspective, president and the political figures become the main actors and the celebrities are only the supporting actors in fundraising event by MPR RI. Moreover, the stages also show that this fundraising event is part of nationalism. Therefore, this event is more visible as a political activity that is packaged in the frame of nationalism. On contrary, all the celebrities that involved in fundraising event by Narasi Tv are the main actors. They have the same portion of time in the event. Therefore, this fundraising looks more organic because it was initiated by the community without involving state or private institutions.

The comments that appear in the two events show the differences in audience responses to online fundraising organizers. Audiences are aware that the event is not only a fundraising issue, but they also consider the various parties involved in organizing it. The positive response given by the audience to the online fundraising event initiated by Narasi Tv shows trust. In addition, the positive response also shows that social movements initiated by the community are more likely to gain the trust of the audience. On the other hand, the negative response that appears in online fundraising initiated by state institutions, and involving the private sector, shows a lack of trust from the audience. Various state symbols that were shown with the aim of bringing the spirit of nationalism failed to form a positive image of the event, and the online fundraising failed to get the trust of the audiences.

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## The Evolution of Cartoons Throughout the History of Mass Communication

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### Abstract

This article intends to introduce the topic of Six Information Revolutions based on Irving Fang's views in the book *A History of Mass Communications*. In a short review, the history of the emergence of caricature and cartoon is discussed and then the functions and importance of political cartoons in the mass media are examined. This assertion is generally agreed upon that the main place and origin of cartoons is in the press and political cartoons have a long life along with the print media. Relying on this fact, the evolution of political cartoons, especially in the period of the second information revolution, i.e. the Printing Revolution and afterward in the third revolution, i.e. the Mass Media Revolution, has been scrutinized. With the development of the printing industry and publishing of newspapers in high circulation, cartoons became available to the public as an important part of the traditional print media; quickly gained popularity and profound influence, and provided a new outlet for information. And it became a new way of launching socio-political debates. Finally, in a holistic approach, today's pluralized media landscape and the challenges facing editorial cartoonists in the new media space have been analyzed.

**Keywords:** cartoon, caricature, political cartoon, editorial cartoon, information revolutions, Irving Fang, mass media, communication, journalism.

### 1. Introduction

In 1997, Communication researcher Irving Fang presented a broad-ranging approach to media history and divided the complex and long-lasting History of Mass Communication into six periods of time, which are recognized as *Information Revolutions*. Six *Information Revolutions* including the *Writing Revolution*, which began in the eighth century B.C.; the *Printing Revolution*, which began in the fifteenth century; the *Mass Media Revolution*, in middle of the 19th century coincided with the prosperity of mass newspapers, the telegraph, and photography; the *Entertainment Revolution*, which began in the late 19th and early 20th century and encompassing recorded sound and images; the *Toolshed Revolution* which began in the mid-twentieth century, considering the home as the particular position of entertainment communication; and ultimately the *Information Highway Revolution* (Fang, 1997).

Irving Fang applies the term *Information Revolutions*, and employs the concept to the whole history of communication in the West. He focuses on means and demonstrates how means and methods of communicating evolved in various periods, how they expanded and flourished, how they influenced society functions or been influenced by social changes. He also describes how each revolution changes the way we communicate and interact with the world, how means of communications influenced the societies of any era and how they have kept on to apply their

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penetration upon the next generation, and eventually he attempts to clarify where the culture proceeds through the tools people employ to communicate.

According to Irving Fang, the first revolution, which is called the *Writing Revolution*, took place in the eighth century BC in Greece. Writing is taken for granted today, but the impact of this revolution was so enormous and overwhelming that shifted mankind from Oral culture and a culture of “knowing what we could remember” to a culture in which memory was no longer limited. The second revolution, we encountered the invention of printing in the early fifteenth century. Information could now be more widely distributed and made available to the public.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, with the combination of electricity and communications, great strides were made to accelerate and improve communications, sparking a long wave of innovations, including the telegraph, radio, and telephone. Electricity was introduced as the driving force in communication channels and the term *telecommunications* became common.

However, in the mid-19th century, with the advancement of printing technology and the prosperity of faster printing machines, newspapers and magazines became extensively available to ordinary people, not just the elite, the third revolution called mass media emerged and the age of mass communication arrived.

At the end of the nineteenth century, with the invention and prevalence of recording equipment, it was possible to share films, music, and printed word, so information became a hobby and Irving Fang called this period the *Entertainment Revolution*. These changes were exciting enough, in the mid-20th century, but the fifth *Information Revolution* brought communication equipment such as telephones, broadcasting, and modern printers into the home. As the final stage, the sixth *Information Revolution*, which began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, brought the information highway.

The word *caricature* originally comes from the Italian words “carico” and “caricare”, which mean “to load” or “to exaggerate”. About 1600 the term *caricature* appeared in Italian art. There is disagreement in various sources as to who used this term in the artworks for the first time.

Regarding Cartoon terminology, the etymology is the Italian word “cartone”. It means a finished preparatory sketch on a large piece of cardboard. The term *Cartoon* was used for preliminary designs (The Oxford..., 1989). First known use in print media dates back to the mid-19th century, cartoon to refer to comic drawings was used in British Punch magazine in 1843. Punch satirically attributed this term to refer to its political cartoons, and because of the popularity of the Punch cartoons led to the extensive use of the term (Spinozzi, Zironi, 2010: 261).

This assertion is generally agreed upon that the politics is to be identified as a form of complex simplicity, as Oliver Marchart suggests in his book *Conflictual Aesthetics*, as “a multiplicity of lines of clear demarcation crisscrossing each other” (Marchart, 2019: 19), then with its potential of simplification and binary opposition. The art of cartooning could also be presumed as a genuine political action (Göpfert, 2020: 148).

As stated in Encyclopedia Britannica, *editorial cartoon*, also known as a *political cartoon* or *newspaper cartoon*, is a drawing in form of illustration or comic strip, containing a political or social commentary that usually relates to contemporary events or politicians (Knieper, 2013). In this article, *editorial cartoon* and *political cartoon* are being applied with the same meaning, function and purpose. In the final conclusion, we can separate these two terms from their future point of view.

The main role of *political caricature* is the dissemination of a critical idea through the formation of a certain image in the public mind. (Sanina, 2019). Creating a cartoon is a complex creative process based on the analysis of political, social and cultural information (Abdel-Raheem, 2020). Political cartoons combine features of iconicity: direct resemblance, diagrammatic schematization and metaphoric displacement (Chu, 2022). The reader reconstructs the caricature's direct resemblance to real historical figures and situations through the metaphorical distortion presented in the caricature and reconstructs the author's schematic, visual structural thinking to come to an understanding of the caricature's satirical message. The main source of the humorous effect of the cartoon is the discrepancy between the meaning of the cartoon and the viewer's reconstruction of the cartoonist's satirical purpose (Constantinou, 2019; Jaashan, 2019; Prendergast, 2019; Wawra, 2018).

*Editorial cartoons* are journalistic and artistic illustrations, making a humorous point in an ironic manner containing comments addressing political issues, events or personalities, typically combining satire, exaggeration and most of the times written elements to question authorities and

social etiquette (Mateus, 2016). *Political cartoons* usually portray public figures in a way that represents a particular stance. Since political figures and celebrities are the constant subjects of political cartoons, this type of cartoon always carries with it an exaggerated and distorted representation of these famous personalities in the form of a caricature as a permanent and necessary element. Just as caricature is for the viewer who is familiar with the person who has been ridiculed, cartoons are also grounded in a broad familiarity with the subject.

In order to comprehend the functionality of the genre, one should notice that any *political cartoon* is the combination of two different components. The first component is the art of caricature, which is used in exaggerated and humorous depiction of individuals, and the second component is the allusion that refers to the situation or context in which the individual is placed. That is, the subject of the cartoon and the background under discussion are widely known to the audience. To put it another way, the person or persons depicted in the cartoons are in a context of a generally political event, which is recognizable. The caricature will parody the public figures and the allusion refers the viewer to the context. As a result, political cartoons exaggerate the characteristics of particular persons and demonstrate that their inner nature, along with their behaviors, makes satire.

## 2. Materials and methods

The underlying argument in this article is that the historical evolution of cartoon art from primitive art based on deformity; through artistic endeavors in order to reach a deeper visual language, has been advanced to a vehicle containing a myriad of complex means of communication. “The rise and fall of the Political Cartoon”, during the Information Revolutions defined by Irving Fang (Fang, 1997), is the major matter of debate. In the following, in today’s pluralized media landscape and the challenges facing editorial cartoonists in the new media space will be scrutinized. Eventually with examining the rise of new media alternatives, it will be argued that whether the future of political cartoons will be bound to that of print media. Another vital question is whether political cartoons are a dying form of art.

*Caricature* as a Western branch of fine art dates back to the inventive examinations Leonardo da Vinci in the field of grotesque in order to find the “ideal type of deformity”, which could be used to better comprehend the concept of ideal beauty (Hoffman, 1957: 16). *Cartoons*, although were born in Italy as part of the fine arts with a new visual language, found new life with the press in the form of editorial cartoons. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the art of Caricature is the product of the Renaissance and Reformation emphasis on the importance of the individual. If caricature deals with the individual and with what makes him exclusive, cartoons could be argued that deal with groups of personages and with their public attributes; both are connected with the classification and categorizing in Renaissance (Ames, 2007).

This evolution from the Renaissance to the invention of the printing machine by Gutenberg in 1455 entered a vital and decisive phase. Undoubtedly, the advancement of printing industry technology played a striking role in this process. The invention of the printing press profoundly changed the functions of cartoons. What is noteworthy in this process is that the printing industry led to the emergence of broadsheets (here “broadsheets” refers to a large piece of paper printed on one side only, which is demonstrating information or advertisement, broadsheets are loose – page editorial productions designed for mass consumption) that widely spread around throughout Renaissance Europe. The employment of cartoons as a highly entertaining form of political commentary expanded the appeal and profitability of their product making it more easily understood and broadly accessible. Hereafter for cartoonists, the broadsheets caused reach to larger groups of audiences along with a sufficient source of revenue. Employing caricature, exaggerations and visual metaphors, Broadsheets put forward targeted audiences a synopsis and analysis of current news and events (Göçek, 1998: 3).

But broadsheets, despite their possible profitability, were an expensive product, and the number of prints ranged from tens to few thousands. The high cost of production led to irregular production, poor distribution, and limited editions. In order to justify necessary expenditure, the subject matters of broadsheets were confined to topics that were considered important or popular enough (Press, 1981: 37). In most cases, selected topics targeted the interests and concerns of the elite class of society, with various metaphors used by cartoonists pointing to the knowledge base of the educated (Duus, 2001: 966).



However, the first cartoons and caricatures were not intended to raise public awareness. At first, they were merely an artistic attempt to reach a newer and deeper visual language. “Public viewing” and “public consciousness” appeared with the Protestant Reforms in Germany that swept through Europe in the early 16th century. During this religious reform movement, “visual propaganda” was extensively used as a visual protest against the hegemony of religion and hierarchy in Church leadership. The context of religious reform was something widely familiar and known to people from all walks of life, so these early political cartoons were an effective tool for public awareness.

The success of Martin Luther's socio-religious reforms depended on the support of two classes of changing society. Emerging classes of merchants who responded positively to Luther's new ideas and could economically resist the powerful institution of the Catholic Church. Although the support of the growing middle class was crucial to the success of Luther's reforms, he realized that in order to lead a popular movement, he needed the involvement of the lower classes, the peasantry. During the growth of graphic art, many artists and designers in that period were engaged in the art of woodcarving and metal engraving. In the meantime, the factor that probably influenced the evolution of caricature more than any other cultural condition was the high rate of illiteracy. The extensive Distribution of broadsheet posters and illustrated booklets to ordinary and often illiterate people was a proficient tactic because the ideas reach as many people as possible and are as comprehensible as possible. For this reason, as the reform movement set out to spread throughout the whole Europe, cartoons as an approach of condensing “a complex idea in one striking and memorable image”, ranked high among the tools that facilitated to convey messages swiftly (Shikes, 1969: 13-17).

As Western culture diversified from its religious infrastructure to various intellectual tendencies, new topics became available for discussion and critique. Stemming from the point that the essential human rights have always authorized people to criticize; cartoons have been one of the most entertaining and efficient methods to get points across. Along with this socio-political movement, the expansion of the use of cartoons led to an increase in the media literacy of the people. According to A. Fedorov and G. Mikhaleva (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020: 155) media literacy is based on the ability of individual to access, analyze and evaluate media contents in various forms and genres. In this way, the appeal and impact of cartoons on public opinion as a media of interpretation with the association of negative connotation, that addressed serious issues and presented them in a manner that was not solely funny but also socially acceptable, increased significantly. The crux of the matter is that the socio-religious reform movement and the Renaissance emphasis on the importance of the individual brought political satire and cartooning in the west to full bloom.

The continued popularity of written communication caused the Printing Revolution to spill into the 17th century. The success of cartoons in engendering thought and inspiring action amongst people, during the late 17th and the 18th centuries, coincided with the age of Enlightenment, helped Consolidation of cartooning as a media tool. Cartoons went far beyond comedy and humor; they took on a humorous and serious tone. They presented serious issues in an acceptable way that was specifically designed to influence public opinion with the intention of making changes in the foundation of the church. As political cartooning became successfully efficient, "graphic satire" was utilized in the western culture and talented aspiring cartoonists thrived who dared to attack arbitrariness, corruption, wrongdoings or misconducts in positions of power that had hitherto been immune to criticism.

In the 19th century with steady improvements in the printing industry and distribution of newspapers in high circulation, cartoons as an important part of print media became available to the public and rapidly gained popularity and profound influence. These Technological innovations resulted in economies of scale that eventually led to the proliferation of visual satire and the birth of the modern political cartoons. Development of the printing technology increased print runs and image quality at the same time as reducing production costs (Press, 1981: 49). On the other hand, the emergence of the photography genre in the 19th century also played an outstanding role in the flourishing of political cartoons because it contributed in producing caricatures of public figures. High levels of illiteracy also helped to the success of the cartoons, as cartoons with exerting symbols and visual cues were recognizable to most people. In addition, for those people who were able to read cartoons in print media, it became a new outlet for knowledge and awareness, meanwhile a novel approach of launching socio-political debates. Political cartoonists hereafter played an influential role in social debates because of their vivid graphical social commentary. They analyzed serious and sophisticated issues and made them humorous and at the same time understandable, which were ultimately quite often extremely blunt and clear.

Broadsheets as visual interpretations to the current events were steadily incorporated into the burgeoning trade of European and American newspapers. The shift from broadsheet production to daily print media in the 19th century had a deep-rooted effect on this evolution. The modern editorial cartoon began as a mutually beneficial partnership between publication institutions and cartoonists. The editorial cartoon agreement came into sight as part of this consolidation. Publishers planned to take advantage of the cartoon's popularity to increase income while the cartoonists achieved job security and access to wider viewers. With accepting the editorial scrutiny and production deadlines, cartoonists were offered a consistent flow of revenue and broader distribution although they lost part of their artistic freedom under the auspices of larger editorial teams (Danjoux, 2007: 245). As cartoons became popular and mainstream, they found their place in newspapers, brochures and weekly digests. In this regard, it can be argued that cartoons, and peculiarly political cartoons, have a history as long as the life of the press. Shortly before that, political cartoons with Enlightenment motivations were made available to the public by Steel engravings in much more limited editions. Cartoons became impressive because everyone in the audiences group could become influenced. The visual images contained simplicity and brevity, which were important.

At any rate, *cartoon* became rather a broad term and clearly defined idea and its practice quickly became a popular genre of fine art in the 16th to 19th century. This period marked the significance and genuine emergence of political cartooning for social and political objectives. To sum up, it can be concluded that political cartoons were born and got peculiar attention in the second Information Revolution, which is identified by Irving Fang as the Printing Revolution. Afterward in the middle of the 19th century during the Mass Media Revolution flourished and achieved proper framing into communication context and this evolution continued until the next periods.

### 3. Discussion

During the late 19th century and early 20th century coinciding with the fourth Information Revolution i.e. the 'Entertainment Revolution', political cartooning was started to be utilized for propagating ideological and sensational content. Political cartoons in various stages of their evolution have become synonymous to political commentary. It is worth mentioning that the first cartoons in the colonial era undertook debates among colonies, cartoons shortly took on the Civil War and during World War II the governments applied political cartoons as ideological propaganda. Both sides in World War I, the Central and Allied Powers, commissioned the cartoonists to portray the enemy as evil and to glorify the struggle in order to strengthen public support on the home front (Göçek, 1998: 5). Particularly from the period of post-American Civil War and the First World War, political cartoons also became a part of yellow journalism and muckraking, which were being planned for secretly or dishonestly searching out and publicizing scandalous information about celebrities. After World War I, yellow journalism declined as the growing educated middle class took more interest in complex and objective media content. This new trend as well resulted in modern critical political cartooning. Nowadays in modern art, political cartoon has become a versatile symbolic means of propaganda, publicity and catharsis.

After the turn of the 20th century, editorial cartooning experienced another significant challenge. The shift from partisan newspapers to objective reporting in the 1920s severely curtailed the prominence that had persistently been associated with this artifice, as evidenced by the decrease in size, impact, and importance of cartoons in the newspaper. Although political cartoons of WWII era sparked social debates, and moreover brilliant cartoons regarding Watergate in the early 1970s often called the heyday of political cartoons, but with the advent of alternative weekly papers in the 1980s and 1990s. The number of editorial cartoons today has significantly dropped, mainly due to the shift of the newspaper industry to large conglomerates and online distribution.

Given the fact that the cartoon has been evolving as an art of visual protest since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517 to the present time, there has been a huge debate over its privileged position and role in the social movements. This capability of undermining the legitimacy of absolute rulers, signifying the meanings and susceptibility to interpretation is the legacy of satire that has really stood the test of time (Shikes, 1969: 10). This popularity and influence on public opinion continues to this day, and has been increasingly deployed in magazines and newspapers and over the past decades in online media for conveying political commentary and criticizing public figures and politicians. Historic and recent examples visibly prove the relevance attributed to the cartoonist's diligence and the successive uninterrupted capability of the political cartoon to draw attention and spark controversy,

which has made media researchers, become more aware of the power and importance of political cartoons than in the past. Moreover, to measure the relevance of the editorial cartoon in today's media landscape it can be done against the efforts taken to silence them (Danjoux, 2007: 245).

Few forms of art have this capability to keep going such a length of impact in society. Political cartoons sustain themselves because they bridge the apparent gap between fact and fiction (Edwards, 1997). Cartoons today in the internet age are shifting not only in content but also in the method in which they are transmitted and the orientation in which they are obtainable. The prospect of cartoons and the next step in their evolution is unquestionably the World Wide Web and social media. A. Fedorov and G. Mikhaleva stress that "Media literacy is one of the key competencies nowadays" (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020: 155) and become an imperative skill in order to survive in digital surroundings, minimizing online risks and expanding online opportunities (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020: 158). In the current media landscape, when audiences have a manipulated and distorted version of reality, political cartoons by cultivating the cognitive skills of critical and analytical thinking, could foster the skills of media literacy.

For example, experimental data to test the impact of John Oliver's programs *Last Week Tonight* and *ABC News* on the study of the importance and complexity of political issues showed that political satire is just as good a source of knowledge as news, given the viral distribution and increasing audience size of such programs (Becker, Bode, 2018).

Increasingly, consideration has been given to the nature and function of humor in digital game streaming on Twitch, and how the play humor in games and the web combines and evolves (Johnson, 2022).

In recent years, the print media – as the traditional place and mainstay of cartoonists' activities – has faced serious financial barriers and challenges, newspapers in classic paper form are gasping for breath. One of the key reasons for the decrease in print media sales is the fact that the younger generation no longer buys newspapers. They regularly prefer to catch all the required information through websites, blogs and social media. Based on a series of comprehensive statistical surveys in the US press (Watson, 2019), the estimated total earnings of U.S. based publishers have intensively fallen in the past decade from 46 billion U.S. dollars in 2007 to around 28 billion in 2017. Rising costs, shrinking readership, declining advertising incomes, weakening credibility, and an influx of social media have taken a giant toll on their financial health.

In addition, according T. Rhodes (Rhodes, 2014) to the Committee to Protect Journalists, since newspapers' advertising revenue continues to decline (Marshall, Vranica, 2016), it is strange that this has allowed large advertisers to have a profound impact; often allowing them to imperceptibly control what should and should not be published. This soft censorship behind closed doors is generally invisible to the public and is a filter that not only news reports, but also images of cartoonists' creativity must go through before publication.

On the other hand, the media is not just afraid of advertisers. Social media has also emerged as a vital threat. While platforms like Twitter can provide substantial ways for constructive feedback from the audience, they can also be a tool for constraint. The urgent need to avoid provoking the online anger mechanism, which can lead to the loss of subscriptions and advertising income, makes the media less inclined to publish content like cartoons that do not conform to public opinion and taste.

In some Conflict-Prone societies today, high fortifications are erected to keep public outrage over issues such as religion and race that are considered "sensitive," keeping them out of the reach of critics or cartoonists. Although modern political cartoons were evolved as a beneficial way for newspaper owners to attract more readership as customers, the shifting of media outlets into media empires and the advent of corporate media conglomerates has made editors responsible to a broader and more diverse consumer base. From the beginning, it has always been the publisher's concern to ensure that the message of cartoons is relevant to most of their audiences, or at least does not offend the bulk of them. Consequently the broader range of readers put more pressure on cartoonists to avoid insulting larger segments of the community since insulting or alienating customers has unconstructive economic impacts (Lamb, 2004: 40). As a result, political satire, in both its written and drawn forms, suffers from self-censorship and behind the dust of artistic vagueness and ambivalence becomes progressively more symbolic. This type of censorship leads to uncompromising restrictions imposed on hard-earned civic achievements and likewise can be detrimental to a democracy that depends on the liberated competition of ideas, even those that are offensive.

Regrettably, among a generation of audiences growing up with banal Instagram content, staff reductions and diminishing freelance budgets, have pushed the art of political cartooning into a tight spot. The freedom of journalists is now being violated by the government, the financial burden and the interests of the media. By observing the above mentioned factors in waning freedom of press, one realizes that political cartoons are also facing an unequal decline and losing much of their previous sting. It can be pointed out the lack of appetite amid audiences for a purposeful ridicule and criticism of the majority way of thinking, and the reason has settled in this fact that tastes have been changed by increasing the influence of the Internet in this phenomenon. Silencing political cartoonists, whether at the hand of governments, losing the centrality in pursuit of economic interests or weakening of their role to appease online mobs, is a warning sign and a herald of the decline of political freedoms. All these factors promise a little optimism where the future of editorial cartoons is concerned.

Caricatures are still pleasant, engaging, and memorable in storytelling, but in today's climate of information overload, they have become an undersized part of a crowded, noisy information highway rather than the influential public phenomena they once were. As a matter of fact in a frustrating process, they are gradually losing their centrality and influential role. Self-contained commentaries, terse wit and vivid imagination existing in cartoons don't dominate anymore and are being politely filed away. New Internet behavioral patterns, banality of content, mixing or confusion of different ideas and the wide range of social media make it impossible to offer a plain but comprehensive analysis of political satire as previously appeared in political cartoons. Instead of trying to perceive the underlying meanings and captions crafted by a professional editorial commentator, public opinion is increasingly being shaped by photomontages and online memes. As a consequence, newspaper cartoons no longer play such a central role as they did during the third period of the Information Revolution, known by Irving Fang as the Mass Media, or in the fourth period, i.e. Entertainment.

Disappointingly, it should be admitted that political cartoonists are an endangered species. New Business models in the digital media space are drawing final lines under the profession, which cartoonists are devoted to. If the time comes when all newspapers are published only in the online version and there is no longer a print edition, will the newspapers have the necessary budget and, in principle, a desire to hire political cartoonists? Many experts believe that, unfortunately, political cartoons are in danger of being forgotten, because the next generation of cartoonists will most probably be few in number and of low quality compared to peak periods due to reduced wages and job opportunities.

A panoramic observation would reveal that compared to the 1980s, when nearly 300 full-time cartoonists were employed as a steady, important and lucrative job, currently barely a handful of cartoonists are constantly employed by American newspapers due to declining circulation and falling advertising revenue (Marlette, 2004: 21). The emergence of electronic communication has provided editors access to a broad range of syndicated cartoons, reducing their dependence on their own staff cartoonists. Under such circumstances, the necessity to keep constantly employed cartoonists on the payroll has become less economically convincing (Danjoux, 2007: 247). Most of the cartoonists are now freelancers or their cartoons are being managed and distributed by a syndicate, which makes it much harder for them to earn money this way than it was two decades ago. Some political cartoonists own their dedicated personal website or have found alternative online platforms to keep on their work. Needless to say, with the help of the Internet, the art of political cartooning is reaching a broader range of audiences than ever before and keeps on resonating among both audiences and political leaders. However, the artists themselves are not paid for the widespread publication of their works, and even if they are, it is next to nothing.

Although digital media as an alternative is a new way for cartoonists to continue their careers, this alternative media has new technical challenges. One of the technical problems of online cartoons is that digital media are not compatible with traditional illustrated forms. Cartoons do not reach the same type of exposure as they do in print edition, and as a consequence have less visual impact on the viewer insofar as they may be invisible to the viewer. In a print newspaper, cartoons have their regular constant daily position and the readers of the newspaper according to their daily habit cannot avoid them. As a result, the majority of readers, even if they have no particular interest in cartoons, cannot ignore their eye-catching bold presence. When the reader is traditionally confronted with an image in the middle of a page full of typed articles, due to the difference between the font and the image and the power of image language, his eyes are inevitably drawn to that image. But on a website the visitor has to search for cartoons, while in a classic print newspaper he will come across it, willingly or unwillingly.

As print media are grappling with a steep decline in sales and advertising revenue, media owners over the years have been looking for ways to offset dwindles in sales. One of these measures has been to reduce the size of the traditional broadsheets to tabloid format. In order to reduce costs, editors are replacing cartoons with advertising and photomontages. In many cases, they publish cartoons in tiny sizes and do not give them enough room to show off, which reveals another aspect surrounding the decline of political cartoons today. Consequently, political cartoonists have to compete with less specialized forms of visual satire. Cartoons really have a hard time revealing their potency and distinguishing themselves from the relentless flood of information, online memes, manipulated images and photomontage. This is where political cartoons become vulnerable, do an actual disservice and are eliminated from the competition.

#### **4. Results**

Ironically, the origins of today's cartoon decline emanate from the same factors that led to the political cartoon evolution in the first place in the 19th century: technological innovation alongside organizational and economic benefits of media institutions. Is it possible to predict that in the digital age, the Internet will eventually take the print media out of the scene and, consequently, erase the political caricature? Predicting the future, especially in technological advances, is almost impossible. But it could be claimed that with the advent of digital media, the importance and position of political cartoons are changing dramatically. However, many specialists underscore the unfortunate fact that political cartoons may be in the final stages of decline. Due to costs and the financial burdens, many of them had to stop printing editorial cartoons.

In examining the impact of computer software and the possibility of manipulating images and afterward achieving the goal of humorous criticism, it can be concluded that digital image productions are, in a way, becoming a political statement. Image-distorting software for deliberately deceptive purposes is a Thriving online hobby for graphic enthusiasts and designers whose manipulated documents have embedded in the public imagination alongside political cartoons and humorous texts. We are witnessing an increasing number of websites devoted to "political expression, humorous commentary and visual puns", which the number of visitors and their popularity is increasing every moment. It could be compared to the role of political cartoons in traditional media. This is where the digital age meets political cartoons. Computer-generated images with the power of rapid dissemination and ability of "going viral" in social media, now has the place and effect like political cartoons. Photomontage, as a cheaper alternative to cartoons, has become very popular in newspapers. Rather than political cartoons newspapers currently prefer to use photo montages. The degree to which photomontages are actually replacing the editorial cartoons is a matter of debate, but in case newspapers stop publishing paper editions due to financial problems, and revive themselves online, will photomontage, political animations or memes become more effective online media than static cartoons?

#### **5. Conclusion**

Media has changed over each century; from the printing press to the World Wide Web and eventually, according to Irving Fang, to the sixth stage, which is identified as "information highway". Changes have been inevitable and dramatic. It is no surprise, that media's content also evolves and political cartoons follow the same rule. Although they are a unique phenomenon unto themselves there are sharply contrasting differences in each neighborhood of the Information Revolution or with the turn of each century. What the vast majority of people consider about the Six Information Revolutions is probably the rapid acceleration of change. The big challenge is that we have not really advanced at the same speed as technology (Lazutova, Volkova, 2017), and many people find constant change threatening rather than provocative.

In a general assessment, this paper stresses that in the age where journalism and artistic creativity are continually changing and facing serious challenges, political cartoons have remained of its time an everlasting form of political satire. They should be observed not only as news sources but also as an invaluable historical documentation of the political climate in any era. The ability of cartoons to raise public awareness and convey a persuasive, detailed message has unquestionably stood the test of time, particularly in an era of massive media output.

Unhappily, in the existing fractious and irritable media landscape, editorial cartoons are increasingly being pushed to a marginal place. But their capability to enlighten the truth, demonstrate that the men in power have nothing to hide, and to entertain the public does not diminish. Even though

this particular style of humor may retreat in encountering the emerging media forces of the digital age, political satire is not going to disappear as long as it has the correct materials to feed. From an optimistic viewpoint with exploring the rise of new media alternatives, there is hope that cartoonists will be able to adapt to this rapid rhythm of changes and over time, quality journalism and credible voices will be more appreciated by the audience. Good political cartoons are punctual meaningful images and versatile form of communication that quickly and responsibly react to events and could be completely updated in a short span of time. The facility for react and update quickly, also the ability to convey complex messages succinctly appears ideally suited to the age of instant messaging and puts them in a suitable place to survive in the digital revolution.

Although the claim that visual satire in the form of cartoons is fully disappearing in the digital age seems pessimistic, with a realistic observation, political cartoons are no longer the main component of the Central Tribune and are losing their importance and centrality. Correspondingly with the annihilation or diminish of the central role of political cartoons, journalism will lose one of its greatest democratic weapons. Two decades ago, we could realistically consider the cartoons in traditional media as an index of satirical commentary on social and political issues. Certainly, this reality of the loss of power and influence is not the outcome of waning of satirical power in political cartoons themselves. It is a striking consequence of changing formal and economic models in the media. These changes are a big loss, although it seems that the spirit of cartoons and satirical commentary in the modern media space is undoubtedly strong and healthy and will undoubtedly find its own new ways of expression in the future.

Political cartoons have changed dramatically in terms of both content and presentation along with media developments, and future changes cannot be predicted with certainty. The only definite statement is that they will remain a tribune for political expression and will continue to influence public opinion and the culture of the society. With mounting challenges for editorial cartoonists, the capability of the Internet to provide extensive access to a broader audience without editorial control would make the future of political cartoons more hopeful and bright. Since newspapers are no longer the best means of distribution and undermine job security, cartoonists can use the internet as a medium to bypass the “bottleneck” and deliver their sensitive topics, which previously had to be approved by newspaper editors before publication. Nowadays as independent commentators they could challenge mass targeted the audience by utilizing artistic freedoms, without the control of the editorial team.

Eventually with examining the rise of new media alternatives, it could be anticipated that the future of political cartoons will never be bound to that of print media. While the future of the traditional editorial model of cartoons in newspapers may be indecisive, the future of the political cartoon in digital form looks promising and even brighter. Instead of mourning in the twilight of print media, it may be time to embrace the dawn of digital alternatives to editorial cartoons.

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## Right to Replay: Contemporary Problems of the Media Legislation Development

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### Abstract

The right of reply is one of the “stumbling blocks” in the media market regulation. It is challenging to regulate this issue correctly. The problem lies at the intersection of civil law (as a personal non-property right), human rights (in the context of the right to privacy and family life, as well as freedom of the press and freedom of expression), administrative law (in the aspect of media regulation) and national security. Nonetheless, legal science and practice in different countries offer many solutions and options. This study aims to explore and analyze these options and make conclusions for identifying and protecting the right of reply in the context of global trends and European integration processes.

Based on an analysis of scientific publications, international documents, national legislation of selected countries, and judicial practice, the authors conclude on the essence of the right of reply and its relationship to the right to rectification (right of correction). The right of reply is the right that allows any subject to respond to the publication in the mass media of certain information concerning his honor, dignity, business reputation, etc., by posting in the same mass media the response itself, provably and adequately forming a certain point of view on the subject of discussion among the consumers of information content. This right is related to the right to rectification but is different.

Jurisprudence in implementing the right of reply is focused on balancing the right to privacy and freedom of expression. The main guidelines for achieving such a balance are formulated in the Case Law of the ECtHR. This practice, combined with the principles and norms enshrined in EU law, should be regarded as a reference point for the systemic development of Ukrainian legislation in this context. A comparison of selected aspects of the legislation on audiovisual services (right of reply) shows that Ukraine's current legislation must fully comply with the Directive. However, the Draft Law on the media, which is currently being considered by parliament, does not conflict with EU law regarding the right of reply.

**Keywords:** audiovisual services, media, fundamental freedom, freedom of information, right of reply, right to rectification.

### 1. Introduction

The field of audiovisual services is essential both from the point of view of consumer protection and from the perspective of information security of the whole society. It is seen that in this area, government regulation should solve several mutually exclusive problems:

- 1) Ensure that the public is correctly informed about current events;
- 2) Prevent manipulation of information and its distortion;
- 3) Create appropriate conditions for the freedom of expression realization;

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- 4) Prevent cases of leakage of information constituting a state or trade secret;
- 5) Protect intellectual property rights to audiovisual products;
- 6) Prevent cases of hate speech and harassment, etc.

The researchers provide a similar list of challenges for the audiovisual industry in Ukraine, emphasizing, however, the need to bring the standards of telecommunications services to European standards (Matskevych, 2016).

In Ukraine, the providing of audiovisual services is regulated by several legislative acts, among which the central place is occupied by the Laws “On Television and Radio Broadcasting”, “On Information”, “On Advertising”, “On the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting”, “On State secret”, “On telecommunications”, “On the foreign broadcasting system of Ukraine” and others. Also, there are many bylaws and quite an impressive volume of law enforcement practice and jurisprudence in this area. Nevertheless, regulation in this area must be improved and in line with basic European standards. The need to approximate the national legislation on the media to the European Union law is also conditioned by the obligations that Ukraine undertook in the framework of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (Association Agreement..., 2014) and the EU Commission's Recommendations for Ukraine's EU candidate status (Recommendations..., 2022).

According to Article 396 of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement “The Parties shall cooperate to promote the audiovisual industry in Europe and encourage co-production in the fields of cinema and television. Cooperation could include, inter alia, the training of journalists and other professionals from both the printed and electronic media, as well as support to the media (public and private), so as to reinforce their independence, professionalism and links with other European media in compliance with European standards, including standards of the Council of Europe” (Association Agreement..., 2014). Article 397 states that gradual approximation to the EU law and regulatory framework and international instruments in the area of audio-visual policy shall be carried out in particular as set out in Annex XXXVII to the Agreement (Association Agreement..., 2014).

As per the Annex XXXVII “Audio-visual policy” Ukraine undertakes to gradually approximate its legislation within the stipulated timeframes to Directive 2007/65/EC of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the co-ordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities and as repealed by Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) and European Convention on Transfrontier Television of 1989 (Association Agreement..., 2014).

To implement these provisions under the Action Plan for the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, the bills on audiovisual services must be adopted.

Despite significant progress in this area (e.g., the Draft Media Law (Draft, 2022) was adopted on August 30, 2022), we still need to speak of establishing uniform standards. One of the “stumbling blocks” in the discussion about media market regulation is the right of reply.

It is challenging to regulate this issue correctly. The problem lies at the intersection of civil law (as a personal non-property right), human rights (in the context of the right to privacy and family life, as well as freedom of the press and freedom of expression), administrative law (in the aspect of media regulation) and national security. Nonetheless, foreign legal science and practice offer many solutions and options. This study aims to explore and analyze these options and make conclusions for identifying and protecting the right of reply in the context of global trends and European integration processes.

## 2. Materials and methods

The theoretical basis of this study was formed by the works of researchers devoted to general issues of media regulation, freedom of speech, privacy, combating defamation, and fact-checking (Grossman, 2001; Hong, 2022; Lebid et al., 2020; Matskevych, 2016; Plotnikova et al., 2021; Slavko et al., 2020) as well as special studies concerning the right of reply (Jonson, 2022; Hempel, 2018; Koltay, 2013; Rikhter, 2019; Surculija Milojevic, 2015). To achieve the study's objective, the authors explored relevant international treaties, resolution and recommendations of international intergovernmental organizations, the EU law. A comparative legal methodology was applied to determine the key approaches to regulating the right of reply based on the national

legislation and judicial practice analysis of Ukraine, the USA, Germany, and Poland. The choice of these countries is due to both the presence of developed media legislation (the USA, Germany) and experience in implementing EU standards (Germany, Poland). The case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) was examined to define the approaches formed in regional human rights protection systems.

### 3. Discussion

In the first place, we would like to focus on such aspects as the right of reply and the right to rectification. These rights are closely related but are different. Researchers note that the right to rectification or correction usually provides a brief correction of false or inaccurate statements. I.e., it does not enable the publication of any content other than this; the statement calls, in official and bland terms, the public's attention to the falsehood of the published facts and indicates the actual state of affairs. In comparison, the right of reply allows the injured party to present their position comprehensively regarding the disputed issue; i.e., it is not limited to rectifying false information (Koltay, 2013). Some countries, including Ukraine, consider the right of reply as a type of implementation of the right to rectification. At the same time, there is no unified understanding of the relationship between these rights in doctrine and legislation.

The main reason for the right of reply is to hear the other side. The media has the power to change someone's life entirely by only one allegation, and therefore an individual has to have a right to respond to something that he/ she considers false or simply inadequate information about him/herself (Surculija Milojevic, 2015).

At the same time, the press has been and continues to be the watchdog of society, exposing its vices and shortcomings. Media must enjoy the freedom of expression and not be persecuted by those who abuse the right of reply.

#### The Right of Reply under International Law and the EU Law

The right of reply is provided for both the national and international levels. It logically flows from two rights: the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy, which are enshrined in many international instruments. For example, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to freedom of thought and expression: “this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Universal Declaration..., 1948).

Such a right is also guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (International Covenant..., 1966). At the same time, these instruments include the right to privacy (Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks” (Universal Declaration..., 1948)).

The next stage in developing the right of reply in international law was the adoption of the International Convention on the Right of Correction in 1953 (Convention, 1953). This Treaty obliges the media to act within the framework of editorial ethics, respecting human rights and taking responsibility for the accuracy of the information disseminated.

In 1952 an attempt was also made to adopt an International Code of Ethics (for journalists). It was drafted by the Economic and Social Council (Resolution 442B (XIV)) and provided for both the right of correction and the right of reply (Resolution..., 1952). The UN General Assembly recommended further work in this area involving specialists (directly from the media). Using the achievements of the Economic and Social Council, some professional organizations of journalists have adopted national codes of journalistic ethics.

At the regional level, the right of reply is enshrined, inter alia, in the American Convention on Human Rights (American Convention..., 1969). According to Article 14 “anyone injured by inaccurate or offensive statements or ideas disseminated to the public in general by a legally regulated medium of communication has the right to reply or to make a correction using the same communications outlet, under such conditions as the law may establish. The correction or reply shall not in any case remit other legal liabilities that may have been incurred. For the effective protection of honor and reputation, every publisher, and every newspaper, motion picture, radio, and television company, shall have a person responsible who is not protected by immunities or special privileges” (American Convention..., 1969).

At least the following conclusions can be drawn from the above text:

- 1) the authors of the Convention do not distinguish between the concepts of "right of reply" and "right of correction";
- 2) the national legislation of member states should develop the conditions and mechanisms of implementation of this right;
- 3) the right of reply is not the only instrument for protecting honor, dignity, and business reputation that may exist in a state. It is also possible to prosecute those who disseminate incorrect information. There must be at least one official, not endowed with immunities, within each media outlet who can be held liable.

Several scholars have also emphasized that the American Convention on Human Rights allows invoking the right of reply in situations where not only statements but also "ideas" are offensive. However, the Spanish-language version of the Convention does not seem to contain such provisions (Rikhter, 2019). The lack of opportunity to correct so-called "value judgments" is also noted by C. Grossman – it is essential to reiterate that the right of correction cannot legitimately include value judgments (Grossman, 2001).

The particularities of implementing the right guaranteed by Article 14 of the Convention have been the subject of interpretation by the IFCHR. Thus, in Advisory Opinion OC-7/85 of August 29, 1986 on the application of Costa Rica, the Court stated:

“That Article 14(1) of the Convention recognizes an internationally enforceable right to reply or to make a correction which, under Article 1(1), the States Parties have the obligation to respect and to ensure the free and full exercise thereof to all persons subject to their jurisdiction;

That when the right guaranteed by Article 14(1) is not enforceable under the domestic law of a State Party, that State has the obligation, under Article 2 of the Convention, to adopt, in accordance with its constitutional processes and the provisions of the Convention, the legislative or other measures that may be necessary to give effect to this right;

That the word "law," as it is used in Article 14(1), is related to the obligations assumed by the States Parties in Article 2 and that, therefore, the measures that the State Party must adopt include all such domestic measures as may be necessary, according to the legal system of the State Party concerned, to ensure the free and full exercise of the right recognized in Article 14(1). However, if any such measures impose restrictions on a right recognized by the Convention, they would have to be adopted in the form of a law” (Advisory Opinion..., 1986). Therefore, the right of reply in the context of the IACHR case law is understood as “self-executing” (Hennebel&Tigroudja, 2022: 471).

Nevertheless, in assessing the validity of this right, C. Grossman notes that “there are many ways of expressing opinions, so assuring correction by the same means (e.g., location, size, format) inadequately protects freedom of expression” (Grossman, 2001).

Although the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms does not explicitly protect the right of reply, there has been a long-standing debate in Council of Europe law. For example, Resolution (74) 26 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Minimum rules regarding the right of reply to the press, the radio and the television, and to other periodical media (Resolution..., 1974). According to the Rules, the right of reply belongs to any natural or legal person about whom false information has been disseminated. However, the right of reply is not absolute. It may be limited by time (if the person's claim was not received within a reasonable time after publication), scope and content (if the statement does not concern the publicized facts or exceeds a reasonable scope) and the rights and freedoms of others (the statement violates the rights of others or contains an insult or does not concern a general interest).

Recommendation 1215 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the ethics of journalism suggests that national governments ensure legislative guarantees of the organization of the media in a way that ensures the exercise of the right of reply (Recommendation..., 1993).

In 2004, the Recommendation Rec (2004)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the right of reply in the new media environment was adopted. It contains similar guarantees of the right of reply but expands the list of cases in which the exercise of the right can be limited and enshrines the right to publish the reply for free (Recommendation..., 2004).

The practice of the ECtHR (and formerly the European Commission of Human Rights) also provides some material for understanding how the Council of Europe understands the right of reply. For example, in *Ediciones Tiempo v. Spain*, the complainant was a publisher that published

the magazine *Tiempo*. The magazine published an article entitled “Mercorsa: how to become a millionaire at the expense of Spanish society.” In this article, the former head of Mercorsa, a public company, was accused of mismanagement and that the company had acquired large debts. The head of the company demanded the exercise of his right of reply by preparing the text of a statement to be made public by the publisher. However, the applicant refused to publish the text of the statement, claiming that it contained false information.

The national trial was quite controversial: first, the head of the company had been denied to publish the rebuttal statement because it contained value judgments. Later the appeal court obliged the publisher to publish the statement, from which the value judgments were removed. The applicant (publisher) considered that the obligation to publish the disclaimer constituted an interference with the right to freedom of expression/press freedom. Considering the statement's admissibility, the European Commission of Human Rights pointed out that the right of reply is a guarantee of pluralism in a democratic society and must be respected. Consequently, the application is ill-founded and inadmissible ([Ediciones Tiempo, 1989](#)).

Some aspects of the right of reply exercise were considered in *Eker v. Turkey*. The applicant was the local newspaper editor who published a critical article about the Union of Journalists. The head of the Union of Journalists wished the newspaper to publish a rebuttal response, which the applicant refused to do. Eventually, the local Court ordered the applicant to publish the reply from the Union of Journalists in his newspaper. Accordingly, the applicant complained of violating his right to a fair trial (Article 6) and freedom of expression (Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms). The Court noted that the obligation to publish a response is a normal element of the legal framework governing the exercise of freedom of expression by the press. As such, it cannot be considered excessive or unreasonable. “Indeed, the right of reply, as an important element of freedom of expression, falls within the scope of Article 10 of the Convention. This is due not only to the need to allow false information to be challenged, but also to ensure a plurality of views, especially in areas of general interest, such as literary and political debate” ([Eker, 2017](#)).

However, the Court recalled that the restrictions provided for by Part 2 of Article 10 still apply to this right. It should be borne in mind that the State's obligation to guarantee freedom of expression does not grant individuals or organizations an unfettered right to access the media to promote their views. On the contrary, newspapers and other private media should generally have discretionary “editorial” authority in deciding whether or not to publish articles, comments, or letters from individuals. In exceptional circumstances, however, an individual may legally demand publication of a rebuttal, response, or even a libel judgment. Therefore, there are situations where the State may have a positive obligation to ensure an individual's freedom of expression in such media. In any case, the State must ensure that the denial of access to the media does not constitute an arbitrary and disproportionate attack on an individual's freedom of expression and that such a denial may be appealed to the competent national authorities ([Eker, 2017](#)). In the end, the Court found no violation of Articles 6 and 10 in this case.

Researchers note that the findings from this case may expand the concept of “admissible” response content and the scope of the remedies that will be used to enforce the right of reply ([Hempel, 2018](#)).

In *Kaperzynski v. Poland*, the applicant refused to publish the response of the local municipality to his critical article on water quality. He was held criminally liable for this – the punishment included a ban on his journalistic activities for two years. As the ECtHR found, in this case, the national court found that the applicant failed to inform the mayor that he would not publish his response. The court also found that the applicant did not give any reasons for his refusal. This obligation is defined in Article 33 § 3 of the Polish Press Act. In addition, the national court found that the applicant had not published the mayor's letter either in whole or in a form that could be considered compatible with the profile and format of the newspaper. The court agreed with the conclusion of the first instance that the applicant had not fulfilled his professional obligations in this aspect ([Kaperzynski, 2012](#)).

At the same time, the ECtHR considered that a criminal penalty depriving a media worker of the right to engage in his or her professional activities should be regarded as very severe. Furthermore, it exacerbates the risk of creating a chilling effect on the conduct of public debate (§ 74). The above, as well as the judgment of the domestic Constitutional Court on the particularities

of the exercise of the right of reply, enabled the ECtHR to find a violation of Article 10 of the Convention because interference was not necessary in a democratic society (Kaperzynski, 2012).

Generally, the Council of Europe welcomes the enshrinement in the national legislation of the right of reply, considering it guarantees pluralism in a democratic society. The right of reply enables individuals to defend their honor, dignity, and business reputation and engage in public debate. However, the right of reply is not per se an infringement of the right to freedom of the press. However, the right of reply is not absolute and is exercised subject to appropriate conditions: the reply must be relevant, submitted within a reasonable time after publication, not contain insults or infringements of the rights of third parties, not be excessive in length, etc.

The field of media and audiovisual services in general is also very important for the EU. The regulation of audiovisual services is mentioned twice in the founding treaties of the EU.

In particular, Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU provides that “action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector”. Article 207 of the TFEU establishes procedural exceptions to the Council's activities. In particular, the Council acts unanimously to discuss and conclude agreements in the field of trade in cultural and audiovisual services, where these agreements risk prejudicing the Union's cultural and linguistic diversity (Consolidated versions..., 2012).

The central act of EU law in this area is Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Directive..., 2010). According to Article 28 “any natural or legal person, regardless of nationality, whose legitimate interests, in particular reputation and good name, have been damaged by an assertion of incorrect facts in a television programme must have a right of reply or equivalent remedies” (Directive..., 2010). Unfortunately, there is no systematic practice at the EU level regarding the interpretation of the content of the right guaranteed by Article 28 of the Directive.

### **The Right of Reply under National Law**

The member states of the Council of Europe mostly have relatively uniform approaches to regulating the media sphere, particularly the mechanism for exercising the right of reply. In Germany, the right of reply derives directly from the Basic Law, which guarantees the right to defend one's honor, dignity, and business reputation. In addition, the right of reply is provided for in the relevant articles of the press laws of the federal states. For example, Article 10 of the Saxon Press Act provides that the responsible editor and publisher of a periodical print publication shall print a response from the person or body affected by the allegation of the fact made in the printed work. At the same time, the publication is exempt from the obligation to print a reply if: the counter-report has illegal content; the content of the counter-report is not limited to factual information; the challenged part refers to advertising used exclusively for commercial purposes; the person or body concerned has no legitimate interest in the publication, or the reply is not of a relevant volume (the reply is considered relevant if its volume does not exceed that of the denied initial report). The counter-statement must be printed free of charge in the same part of the printed work and the same font as the negated text without inserts or omissions in an issue that is not closed to print (Sächsisches Gesetz, 2019).

The right of reply has also been the subject of examination by the German Federal Constitutional Tribunal. In particular, in a decision of February 8, 1983, the Federal Constitutional Court analyzed Hamburg's broadcasting law. In the context of that case, the Court noted that “someone whose cases are publicly discussed in the media has the right to speak out in the same place, with the same publicity and in the same forum with his representation; that person can defend himself immediately and therefore particularly effectively, whereas any additional civil and criminal law means to protect the individual in the main proceedings usually lead to success only at a time when the public already forgets the main process” (Beschuß..., 1980). Both the general right of the individual [to reply] and freedom of speech, however, form essential components of the constitutional structure of the Basic Law. Neither of these constitutional provisions can claim fundamental precedence. If a conflict arises, they should be brought into accord as far as possible.

In a more recent ruling, the German Federal Constitutional Court explains why it does not consider it necessary to initiate proceedings on the right of reply. The questions for the courts of

general jurisdiction were whether previous neglect of the opportunity to submit thoughts and objections regarding journalistic material could result in the inability to exercise the right of reply in the future. The Court emphasized that “the right of reply provisions are designed to protect the individual from the dangers of having his private affairs discussed in the press. They are analogous to freedom of expression in the press, which the person concerned, whose information is inaccurate, cannot oppose at all, with the prospect of the same journalistic effect” ([Beschluss, 2018](#)). At the same time, the Court emphasizes that the right of reply is an opportunity that does not depend on a person's prior statements and conduct, and the refusal to comment to journalists at the stage of preparation of material for publication cannot deprive the subject of information material of the right of reply ([Beschluss, 2018](#)).

Article 31 of the Polish Press Law provides the right to reply and the right to correction. In particular, at the request of an interested natural person, a legal entity, or an organizational unit that is not a legal entity, the editor-in-chief of the relevant magazine or other publication is obliged to publish, without charge, a factual correction of incorrect information contained in the press material. The correction shall be sent to the post office of the postal operator or submitted to the location of the relevant editorial office in writing by 21 days from the material's publication date. The text of the correction cannot exceed the double volume of the fragment of the press material to which it refers and cannot occupy more than double the airtime of this fragment of the message. The correction should be made in Polish or the language of publication ([Ustawa..., 1984](#)).

The decision of the Warsaw Court of Appeal Sygn. akt V ACa 55/22 dealt with the complaint of the editor-in-chief of a publication, who was forced by the court of the first instance to publish a rebuttal. The disproved article concerned an employee of the ministry who was a member of five supervisory boards. Accordingly, the article referred to him as a “record-breaker” and questioned him about his level of earnings. The official decided to exercise his right to reply and sent a refutation which the newspaper refused to make public. At the suit of the ministry official, the court of the first instance ordered the publication to publish the statement with specific corrections. In particular, the discussion concerned the notion of “record-breaker” used in the material, which the edition called a value judgment, thus not subject to correction. Nevertheless, according to the court, factual data could be easily verified. It also discussed the volume of the possible response, not exceeding double the size of the material to be refuted. The Court of Appeals rejected the publisher's complaint, stating that “a correction is a special mechanism for enabling the public to learn the position of the other party to the dispute, allowing the person concerned to take his/her position and present his/her version of events and making it public through the same media (in which information about him and his image was previously published). Correcting the press is not an objective statement of the facts. Adopting this concept of correction means that the subject of litigation is, first and foremost, controlling the legality of the editor-in-chief's refusal to publish the correction” ([Wyrok..., 2022](#)).

Thus, in Poland and Germany, the right of reply is understood primarily as the right to correct information in journalistic materials that do not correspond to reality. This right derives from the need to provide tools to protect the reputation and confidentiality of the individual and is a way of responding quickly to the humiliation of honor, dignity, and business reputation. In doing so, the German Federal Constitutional Court explicitly emphasizes the need to comply a balance between the right of reply and freedom of the press.

A different approach to the right of reply has developed in the United States. In the early twentieth century, U.S. law and law enforcement practice shaped the right of reply in the context as it is understood in the Council of Europe. In particular, the Radio Act of 1927 stipulated that all radio broadcasts should be made “for the public interest, convenience, and necessity” ([Radio Act..., 1927](#)).

It also established the Federal Communications Commission, which later played a central role in shaping communications policy, including the right of reply. Similar provisions were later confirmed by the Communications Act of 1934 ([Communication Act..., 1934](#)).

In 1941, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission presented the so-called “Mayflower Doctrine”, which expanded the right of reply ([Mayflower, 1950](#)). In particular, the Commission's decision of the same name stated that “Freedom of speech on the radio must be broad enough to provide full and equal opportunity for the presentation to the public of all sides of public issues. Indeed, as one licensed to operate in a public domain the licensee has assumed the obligation of presenting all sides of important public questions, fairly, objectively and without bias. The public

interest-not the private-is paramount. These requirements are inherent in the conception of public interest set up by the Communications Act as the criterion of regulation” (Decisions..., 1941).

After eight years of criticism from the industry, the Federal Communications Commission was forced to replace the Mayflower Doctrine with the Fairness Doctrine (McCraw, 2009).

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. Federal Communications Commission* (1969) was quite notable in this context. The Federal Communications Commission in the case explained that the plaintiff, Red Lion Broadcasting Co. had failed to meet its obligations under the integrity doctrine. The station broadcast a program that was a personal attack on a certain Mr. Cook. Accordingly, the Commission ordered it to send the transcript of the broadcast to Cook and to allow time for a response, regardless of whether Cook would pay for it. In reviewing this case, the U.S. Supreme Court pointed out the following:

- the First Amendment is relevant to public broadcasting, but it is the right of viewers and listeners, not the right of broadcasters, which is paramount (§386-390);
- the First Amendment does not protect private censorship by broadcasters whom the government licenses to use a limited resource that is denied to others (§390-392).

In addition, the court affirmed that the Federal Communications Commission acted within its authority when it required a radio station to provide opportunities to respond to a person attacked in a broadcast (*Red Lion Broadcasting, 1969*).

However, as early as 1974, in the case of *Miami Herald Pub. Co. v. Tornillo*, the Supreme Court made different points. The Miami Herald Publishing Co. refused to publish the administration candidate's response to an editorial criticizing him. However, the publication had such a duty under state law, allowing the candidate to sue the publisher accordingly. The U.S. Supreme Court finally reached the case and pointed out that the need to publish "responses" without explanation violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. According to the Supreme Court:

- the statute exacts a penalty on the basis of the content of a newspaper by imposing additional printing, composing, and materials costs and by taking up space that could be devoted to other material the newspaper may have preferred to print (§§ 256-257);
- even if a newspaper would face no additional costs to comply with the statute and would not be forced to forgo publication of news or opinion by the inclusion of a reply, the statute still fails to clear the First Amendment's barriers because of its intrusion into the function of editors in choosing what material goes into a newspaper and in deciding on the size and content of the paper and the treatment of public issues and officials (§ 258) (*Miami Herald Pub., 1974*).

This case marked the beginning of the decline of the honesty doctrine. However, for a long time, the Federal Communications Commission tried to maintain at least two fundamental elements of the doctrine: personal attack and political editorial rules.

#### 4. Results

The foregoing suggests that the right of reply has not lost its relevance for a long time. With the development of social networks and Internet media, responding to an attack on honor, dignity, and business reputation has become even more challenging (Slavko et al., 2020), requiring proper legal regulation and streamlined judicial practice. Ukraine's obligations under the Association Agreement and as a candidate for EU membership provide for the approximation of Ukrainian legislation to European standards.

In the current Law of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting, the right of reply (Article 65) and the right of correction (Article 64) are distinguished. However, they have the same procedure for protection under Article 64 (*Pro telebachennia..., 1993*). For example, the right of refutation arises if a broadcasting organization has disseminated degrading and/or false information. The law does not clearly define the requirements for a refutation statement and the conditions under which a television and radio organization may refuse to make it public. Hence, a general analysis of the provisions of the law suggests some requirements. The deadline for submission is no less than 14 days from the moment of dissemination of information; the form is written. The obligation of the television and radio organization to disseminate the refutation or the response of the person arises on the condition that it cannot prove the authenticity of the data it promulgates.

The provisions of Article 37 of the Law of Ukraine “On Print Media (Press) in Ukraine” (*Pro drukovani zasoby..., 1992*) are more detailed. They limit the deadline for submitting a

refutation to one year, contain conditions under which an edition can refuse a refutation, etc. At the same time, the law refers to the response as a form of refutation.

A rather illustrative example of the exercise of the right of reply in Ukraine is the application of *Melnychuk v. Ukraine*, which the ECtHR considered. The applicant published a collection of poems, which was criticized in the pages of the publication in local newspaper “*Berdychivska zemlya*”. The applicant demanded to publish a response in the same edition. The newspaper refused because of the vulgar language and insults in the response text. The Court noted that “as a rule, newspapers and other private media should be free to exercise editorial discretion in deciding whether to publish articles, comments and letters submitted by individuals. However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which a newspaper may be legally obliged to publish, such as a rebuttal, an apology, or a defamation judgment. Consequently, there may be situations where the State may have a positive obligation to ensure the individual's freedom of expression in such media”. ECtHR held that in the present case, the state “fulfilled a positive obligation to protect the applicant's right to freedom of expression by ensuring that he had a reasonable opportunity to exercise his right of reply by submitting a response to the newspaper for publication. Moreover, he had an opportunity to challenge the newspaper's refusal in court” ([Melnychuk, 2005](#)). Thus, the ECtHR confirmed the adequacy of the Ukrainian legislation and law enforcement practice to the requirements of the Council of Europe.

An analysis of contemporary jurisprudence regarding the requirement for the media to refute information (in particular, the decision of the Mariupol Prymorskyi District Court of the Donetsk Region of October 30, 2020 ([Rishennia..., 2020](#)) and the Holosiivskyi District Court of Kyiv of April 19, 2022 ([Rishennia..., 2022](#)) shows several common trends. In most cases, plaintiffs regard media materials as humiliating their honor, dignity, and business reputation. They, therefore, require not only a refutation but also compensation for the moral damage caused. Most plaintiffs cannot prove that the information disseminated in the media is false. Courts consider much of the information cited in journalistic materials to be value judgments not subject to refutation. Plaintiffs generally have no desire to exercise the right of reply and demand only that the information be refuted. In all of the cases analyzed, refutation of the information and satisfaction of other claims were denied.

## 5. Conclusion

The right of reply is the right that allows any subject to respond to the publication in the mass media of certain information concerning his honor, dignity, business reputation, etc., by posting in the same mass media the response itself, provably and adequately forming a certain point of view on the subject of discussion among the consumers of information content. This right is related to the right of correction but is different.

The right to reply on radio and television is not implemented as effectively as in the print media. The reason may lie both in the imperfection of legal provisions and in the abuse of the right to refutation and the right to reply on the plaintiffs' part. When analyzing court jurisprudence, it should be remembered that in such cases, the courts must strike a balance between the right to privacy and freedom of expression. The main benchmarks for achieving such a balance are articulated in the jurisprudence of the ECtHR. This practice, combined with the principles and norms laid down in EU law, should be regarded as a benchmark for the systemic development of Ukrainian law in this context.

Articles 396-398 of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement set out the basic principles of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in television and radio broadcasting and Ukraine's commitment to approximate national legislation to EU legislation. Within two years of the agreement's entry into force (September 1, 2017), national legislation was supposed to be approximated to Directive 2010/13/EU, but this has yet to happen. This fact indicates that Ukraine still needs to fulfill its obligations under this paragraph of the Association Agreement.

A comparison of selected aspects of the legislation on audiovisual services (right of reply) shows that Ukraine's current legislation must fully comply with the Directive. However, the Draft Law on the media, which is currently being considered by parliament, does not conflict with EU law regarding the right of reply.



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