



Media Literacy *and* Academic Research

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

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

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

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Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie
Faculty of Mass Media Communication



Editorial



The ability to work with information and meaningful and effective usage of the media are the key competences important not only for children and adolescents, but also for members of all social groups. First and foremost, there are teachers and other youth workers who stand in front of the current challenges of post-truth-society. More sophisticated strategies for spreading fake news, disinformation, hoaxes and rumours spread quickly and widely via social media. Responding to these challenges is not just a problem for citizens of all age groups, but also for politicians, journalists and other stakeholders who often face difficulties in distinguishing whether a message that appears online is true or a disinformation spread. In many countries, there is a lack of appropriate procedures to allow early detection of such false or based on facts information. However, especially in the USA and other English-speaking countries, digital tools are already available to analyze online information to detect if it is really true or if it is created to manipulate audience members.

The dynamic development of the Internet and new technology, as well as the time and professional requirements of the teaching profession, mean that teachers are not always able to keep up with their students – especially in the usage of new technology platforms and services. However, seniors, parents and customers are also increasingly confronted with these issues, and they can easily become the victim of various fraudulent commercial activities, but also of populist political propaganda.

These facts are one of the reasons why the widest range of users needs to gain perfect insight, confidence and proper professional skills in using new media. This implies the need for intensive development of their information and media competences so that the vast potential and capacity of the global information society are effective. This includes the complete range of capabilities to fully exploit the potential of working with information and digital skills. In particular, new media, their diverse platforms and user applications can also be used for education, development of key competences, teaching values and work to improve mutual relations, coexistence and governance. For example, social networks have the potential to help people with the same interests and opinions to become part of a group or movement that could help in communication between different cultures.

Academics, politicians, journalists, and other stakeholders should not be left behind by these initiatives, requiring constant monitoring of new trends and societal changes, managing work with new media and related digital competences in an efficient way. Many of these questions are addressed in the latest issue of Media Literacy and Academic Research. We believe that studies published in our magazine will contribute to a fruitful discussion of these issues and will bring much inspiration for further research, education, political and other initiatives in this field.

Pleasant reading,

Slavomír Gálik

Editorial Team of Media Literacy and Academic Research

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Debbie Danowski

Bet You Can't Eat Just One: Binge Eating Disorder Promotion In American Food Advertising

ABSTRACT

„Eat Like Andy“; „What Would You Do For A Klondike Bar?“ For well over a century, American food manufacturers have been competing for consumers' attention through the use of catchy jingles, iconic characters and celebrities. At the same time, the products being advertised contain greater amounts of addictive ingredients, which encourage binge eating resulting in an unprecedented obesity epidemic. Combine this with the „full-scale commercialization of the culture today“. Jhally identifies and the powerful impact of food advertisements becomes clear as does the need to evaluate these ads. As Kilbourne noted nearly a quarter of a century ago, the majority of food advertisements „normalize bingeing“ to the point of making it societally acceptable. This chapter uses content analysis methodology to analyze American food advertisements in print, electronic, and digital media format using the criteria for Binge Eating Disorder outlined in the American Psychiatric Association's Fifth edition of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSMV) and intake criteria from the National Eating Disorders Association and the Food Addiction Institute to determine the percentage of ads that promote BED/food addiction characteristics to increase product sales. In total, more than 100 ads for foods with the NOVA Ultra-Processed classification were analyzed.

KEY WORDS

Binge Eating Disorder. Eating disorders. Food addiction. Food advertisements. Normalize bingeing. NOVA Ultra-Processed Foods. Obesity epidemic.

1. Introduction

„Eat Like Andy“¹

„What Would You Do For A Klondike Bar?“²

For well over a century, American food manufacturers have been competing for consumers attention through the use of catchy jingles, iconic characters and celebrities. The first jingle broadcast in America is widely attributed to General Mills for Wheaties cereal, which was heard on radio in 1926 on Christmas Eve.³ A male quartet sang, „Have you tried Wheaties? They're whole wheat with all of the bran. Won't you try Wheaties? For wheat is the best food of man.“⁴ Sales in the area where the jingle was broadcast increased drastically thus cementing the use of slogans and jingles in food advertising for decades to come.

Similarly, the introduction of the Quaker Oats Man (1877), Aunt Jemima (1889), Mr. Peanut (1916), Snap, Crackle and Pop (1928), and thousands of other characters over many decades would be used to entice both children and adults to purchase food products as would the use of celebrities to sell everything from Kraft Cheese (Andy Griffith) to Whitman's Sampler Chocolates (Bob Hope).

Food advertisements as Parkin notes, „offer a unique opportunity to explore the cultural discourse, because of the centrality of food to the human experience.“⁵ Add to this, the fact that, according to the January 2019 UCONN Rudd Center for Obesity & Food Policy Rudd Report, the amount of money companies spent on television food, beverage and restaurant advertising from 2013 to 2017 was \$10.9 billion and it becomes clear exactly how powerful the influence of food advertisements has become.⁶

As Jhally notes. Even if we were to somehow give up our smartphones and other screens, advertising and corporate brands would be impossible to avoid, confronting us at every turn as we make our way through the spaces and places of daily life. And the sheer amount of time, talent and money that businesses have expended to accomplish this has been nothing short of astonishing. Corporations now spend more than \$200 billion a year on advertising in the U.S. Alone, a figure that's greater than the total GDP of many countries.⁷

With the large number and wide variety of segments in the food industry, finding a total figure for food advertising spending is problematic due to the widespread scope though individual corporate statistics are available. For example, the McDonald's Corporation alone spent \$1.51 billion on U.S. advertising in 2017⁸ while the food industry in total spent \$1 billion each specifically targeting children ages 2 – 11 and 12 – 17 years old.⁹

¹ WOHL, J.: *Ad Age*. [online]. [2019-02-03]. Available at: <<https://adage.com/article/cmo-strategy/burger-king-andy-warhol-super-bowl-ad/316498/>>.

² *Klondike Commercial*. YouTube. [online]. [2019-12-2019]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQgOVn3cHxI>>.

³ DAYE, D.: *Great Moments in Advertising*. [online]. [2019-02-12]. Available at: <<https://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2007/12/great-moments-1-3.html#.XGMAYS2-LgE>>.

⁴ DAYE, D.: Great Moments in Advertising. [online]. [2019-02-12]. Available at: <<https://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2007/12/great-moments-1-3.html#.XGMAYS2-LgE>>.

⁵ PARKIN, K. J.: *Food Is Love*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006, p. 2.

⁶ *Rudd Report. Connecticut: UCONN Rudd Center for Obesity & Food Policy*, 2019. [online]. [2019-02-12]. Available at: <<http://uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/TargetedMarketingReport2019.pdf>>.

⁷ JHALY, S. (Director): *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse*. [DVD]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation, 2017.

⁸ *McDonald's Corporation advertising spending in the United States from 2009 to 2017*. Statista. [online]. [2019-02-12]. Available at: <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/192159/us-ad-spending-of-mcdonalds/>>.

⁹ BERNING, J., RABINOWITZ, A. N.: Targeted advertising in the breakfast cereal industry. In *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 2017, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 382–399.

Add to this the fact that Americans see over 5,000 ads per day with some experts putting this number at twice that and the power to influence consciousness becomes all too clear. Percentages about the portion of these ads that are for food-related products has been estimated as high as 98%.¹⁰

As Kilbourne pointed out nearly a „quarter of a century ago, the majority of food advertisements normalize bingeing“ to the point of making it societally acceptable to eat large amounts of unhealthy, addictive food.¹¹

Taking Gerbner's theory about media portrayals „cultivating“ the way viewers see the world into account, and it becomes clear exactly how dangerous food advertisements that normalize binge-eating behavior are to the already overweight American public.¹²

According to the most recent statistics from The State of Obesity website, „adult obesity rates now exceed 35% in seven states, 30% in 29 states and 25% in 48 states“¹³ with the lowest rate being 22.6%. The same website notes that the childhood obesity rate is 18.5 percent, varying by age group and ethnicity.¹⁴ Combining these two statistics to estimate an average, it can be reasonably concluded that the obesity rate for Americans, both adults and children, is over 50%.

The American Psychiatric Association's recent addition of Binge Eating Disorder (BED) in the chapter on Feeding and Eating Disorders in the 5th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) was added „to better represent the symptoms and behaviors of patients dealing with these conditions across the lifespan.“¹⁵ This addition can also be viewed as a move to reflect the need for diagnosis of the rapidly rising American obesity rates.

It's important to point out that several researchers have noted the limitations of the criteria listed in the DSM-5 for Binge Eating Disorder. Wilfley, Citrome, and Herman point out in their study,

Characteristics of binge eating disorder in relation to diagnostic criteria point to previous clinical research points out that, Individuals diagnosed with BED often exhibit a unique clinical profile consisting of psychiatric (e.g. mood, obsessive-compulsive, and impulsive disorders) and nonpsychiatric medical (e.g. sleep disturbance, gastrointestinal symptoms, metabolic syndrome, and type 2 diabetes) comorbidities, psychopathologies (e.g. overvaluation of shape and weight), and personality/behavioral traits (e.g. overconsumption of calories, emotional eating, and interpersonal problems).¹⁶

Similarly, Kenney, Singleton, and Carter note in their study that, „In particular, individuals with BED reported more difficulties with awareness and nonacceptance of emotions, impulsivity in response to emotions, and difficulties accessing adaptive ER [Emotion Regulation] strategies when experiencing emotions.“¹⁷ Thus providing methodological proof for inclusion of stronger behavioral characteristics in BED diagnostic criteria.

¹⁰ WELLER, C.: *Do TV Ads Contribute to Childhood Obesity? 98% Of Commercials Feature Unhealthy Foods*. Consumer News. [online]. [2019-02-14]. Available at: <<https://www.medicaldaily.com/do-tv-ads-contribute-childhood-obesity-98-commercials-feature-unhealthy-foods-265345>>.

¹¹ PAPPERT, C. et al. (Director): *Slim Hopes*. [DVD]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation, 1995.

¹² GERBNER, G.: The importance of being critical – in one's own fashion. In *Journal of Communication*. 1983, Vol. 33, No. 1, p. 355–362.

¹³ *The State of Obesity*. [online]. [2019-02-14]. Available at: <<https://stateofobesity.org/adult-obesity/>>.

¹⁴ *The State of Obesity*. [online]. [2019-02-14]. Available at: <<https://stateofobesity.org/childhood/>>.

¹⁵ *American Psychiatric Association DSM-5 Fact Sheets*. [online]. [2019-02-14]. Available at: <<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/dsm-5-fact-sheets>>.

¹⁶ WILFREY D.E., CITROME L., HERMAN B.K.: Characteristics of binge eating disorder in relation to diagnostic criteria. In *Neuropsychiatric Dis Treat*. 2016, Vol. 12, No. 2 p. 2220. [online]. [2019-02-14]. Available at: <[doi:10.2147/NDT.S107777](https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S107777)>.

¹⁷ KENNY, T. E., SINGLETON, C., CARTER, J. C.: Testing predictions of the emotion regulation model of binge-eating disorder. In *International Journal of Eating Disorders*. 2017, Vol. 50, No. 11, p. 1298.

To compensate for the limitations in the DSM-5 BED criteria identified by researchers, diagnostic criteria outlined by the National Eating Disorders Association will be combined with the criteria in DSM-5. The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) is the largest nonprofit focused on assisting individuals and families with eating disorder treatment and information. As a nonpolitical, nonprofit organization with both medical and psychiatric scientific advisors founded in 2001, information from this organization is science-based and well vetted medically.

Additionally, though the concept of a physical and/or emotional addiction to food has been widely debated, there exists a substantial enough body of research that the concept deserves inclusion in this study.^{18,19} While the debate about whether food addiction is physical or behavioral or both is outside the scope of this study, criteria reflecting both ideas will be included in the measurement tool used in this study.

The NOVA Food Classification system will also be used. As firmly established in nutrition literature and emphasized recently in the Monteiro, Cannon, Levy et al. 2016 study, „NOVA. The star shines bright“ in World Nutrition.

NOVA is the food classification that categorises foods according to the extent and purpose of food processing, rather than in terms of nutrients. In recent decades some attention has been paid to the increasing importance of food processing in global food supplies and dietary patterns, and its role in the pandemics of diet-related non-communicable diseases. But the specific types of processing that modify food attributes and risks of disease – either negatively or positively – have not been precisely defined.²⁰

Furthermore, the researchers point out that, „NOVA is now recognised as a valid tool for nutrition and public health research, policy and action, in reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Pan American Health Organization.“²¹ Thus, making this classification widely accepted and a useful way of determining the food product types of advertisements used for this study.

According to the NOVA system, there are four food group categorizations:

Group 1: Unprocessed or minimally processed foods, Group 2: Processed culinary ingredients, Group 3: Processed foods, and Group 4: Ultra-processed food and drink products. For the purposes of this study, Group 4 foods will be used as these are not only the unhealthiest but also the most widely advertised thus having the greatest impact on the largest number of American viewers.

Following is the NOVA Group 4 definition. These are industrial formulations typically with five or more and usually many ingredients. Such ingredients often include those also used in processed foods, such as sugar, oils, fats, salt, anti-oxidants, stabilisers, and preservatives. Ingredients only found in ultra-processed products include substances not commonly used in culinary preparations, and additives whose purpose is to imitate sensory qualities of group 1 foods or of culinary preparations of these foods, or to disguise undesirable sensory qualities of the final product. Group 1 foods are a small proportion of or are even absent from ultra-processed products.

¹⁸ GORDON, E. L. et al.: What Is the Evidence for "Food Addiction?" A Systematic Review. In *Nutrients*. 2018, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 477.

¹⁹ See also: LERMA-CABRERA, J. M., CARVAJAL, F., LOPEZ-LEGARRA, P.: Food addiction as a new piece of the obesity framework. In *Nutrition Journal*, 2016, Vol. 15, No. 5. ISSN 1475-2891. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <<https://nutritionj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12937-016-0124-6>>; MEULE, A., GEARHARDT, A. N.: Food addiction in the light of DSM-5. In *Nutrients*, 2014, Vol. 6, No. 9, p. 3653-3671. ISSN 2072-6643.

²⁰ MONTEIRO, C. A. et al.: NOVA. The star shines bright. [Food classification. Public health] In *World Nutrition*. 2016, Vol. 7, No. 1-3, p. 28. [online]. [2019-03-21]. Available at: <<https://archive.wphna.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WN-2016-7-1-3-28-38-Monteiro-Cannon-Levy-et-al-NOVA.pdf>>.

²¹ Ibidem.

Substances only found in ultra-processed products include some directly extracted from foods, such as casein, lactose, whey, and gluten, and some derived from further processing of food constituents, such as hydrogenated or interesterified oils, hydrolysed proteins, soy protein isolate, maltodextrin, invert sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Classes of additive only found in ultra-processed products include dyes and other colours, colour stabilisers, flavours, flavour enhancers, non-sugar sweeteners, and processing aids such as carbonating, firming, bulking and anti-bulking, de-foaming, anti-caking and glazing agents, emulsifiers, sequestrants and humectants.

Several industrial processes with no domestic equivalents are used in the manufacture of ultra-processed products, such as extrusion and moulding, and pre-processing for frying. The main purpose of industrial ultra-processing is to create products that are ready to eat, to drink or to heat, liable to replace both unprocessed or minimally processed foods that are naturally ready to consume, such as fruits and nuts, milk and water, and freshly prepared drinks, dishes, desserts and meals. Common attributes of ultra-processed products are hyper-palatability, sophisticated and attractive packaging, multi-media and other aggressive marketing to children and adolescents, health claims, high profitability, and branding and ownership by transnational corporations.

Examples of typical ultra-processed products are: carbonated drinks; sweet or savoury packaged snacks; ice-cream, chocolate, candies (confectionery); mass-produced packaged breads and buns; margarines and spreads; cookies (biscuits), pastries, cakes, and cake mixes; breakfast „cereals“, „cereal“ and „energy“ bars; „energy“ drinks; milk drinks, „fruit“ yoghurts and „fruit“ drinks; cocoa drinks; meat and chicken extracts and „instant“ sauces; infant formulas, follow-on milks, other baby products; „health“ and „slimming“ products such as powdered or „fortified“ meal and dish substitutes; and many ready to heat products including pre-prepared pies and pasta and pizza dishes; poultry and fish „nuggets“ and „sticks“, sausages, burgers, hot dogs, and other reconstituted meat products, and powdered and packaged „instant“ soups, noodles and desserts.²²

2. Methods

A BED Advertising Analysis Chart was adapted for use in analysing advertisements [included within]. Information was used from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the Food Addiction Institute and the National Eating Disorders Association.

Criteria based on intake/diagnostic questions for potential patients and the general public were re-written to reflect use in food advertisement analysis.

Following that, food items listed in the NOVA Group 4 Ultra Processed category were selected based on choosing five that appear to be most unhealthy and five that appear to be least unhealthy. The first five appearing most unhealthy are: ice cream, candy, cookies, chips, and snack cakes. The second five appearing least unhealthy are: cereal, granola bars, fast food, frozen prepared meals and fruit yogurt. Fast food was included in the appearing least unhealthy category due to current attempts by companies to include healthier food options.

In total, 100 ads were viewed. To begin, an internet search was conducted to determine at least ten of the most popular brands in each category. Every effort was made to include the top five brands, however, if one category was dominated by one brand then those further down on the list were used. For example, the Pepsi-Cola Company owns the Lay's potato chip brand and Lay's, Wavy Lay's, and Kettle Cooked chips are included in the top six (omitting the

²² MONTEIRO, C. A. et al.: NOVA. The star shines bright. [Food classification. Public health]. In *World Nutrition*. 2016, Vol. 7, No. 1-3, p. 33. [online]. [2019-03-21]. Available at: <<https://archive.wphna.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WN-2016-7-1-3-28-38-Monteiro-Cannon-Levy-et-al-NOVA.pdf>>.

private label brands which are a consolidation of all store brands). Rather than analyse three out of five Lay's products, only two were included in the study (Lay's including new Poppables and Wavy Lay's).²³

All private label brands which include store brands were excluded based on the need to research nationally available brands. Similarly, regional brands were excluded as well.

Following that, a search using Google was conducted to find a current and historical ad for each of the brands in the top categories. Every attempt was made to locate older advertisements, generally from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In some cases, this was impossible due either to lack of digitized ads during this period or companies that were not yet established during this time. If no air date of the ad was available, the published date when the commercial was uploaded was used. Two ads from each brand were analysed using the BED Advertising Analysis Chart then a results table was created [included within].

| BED Advertising Analysis Chart | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Label | Description |
| Addictive | |
| A1 | Signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change |
| A2 | Evidence of neglecting daily responsibilities due to eating |
| A3 | Representations of deep emotional attachment to food |
| A4 | Indicators of doing anything to obtain food/inability to control cravings |
| A5 | Portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding |
| Behavioral | |
| B1 | Images of eating alone |
| B2 | Signs of stealing, hiding, or hoarding food |
| B3 | Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day |
| B4 | Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws |
| B5 | Signs of food rituals (won't let foods to touch, only eating red candy, etc.) |
| Emotional | |
| E1 | Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food |
| E2 | Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating |
| E3 | Evidence of distress before or after eating |
| E4 | Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others |
| E5 | Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape |
| Physical | |
| P1 | Representations of eating large amounts of food |
| P2 | Indications of eating quickly |
| P3 | Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts |
| P4 | Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others |
| P5 | Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape |
| Physical | |
| P1 | Representations of eating large amounts of food |
| P2 | Indications of eating quickly |
| P3 | Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts |
| P4 | Portrayals of weight fluctuations |

²³ Sales of Leading Potato Chip Brands of the United States in 2017. [online]. [2019-02-18]. Available at: <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/188222/top-potato-chip-brands-in-the-united-states/>>.

| | |
|---|--|
| P5 | Indicators of stomach/gastrointestinal distress/complaints |
| **Adapted for food advertising analysis using information from <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i> (DSM-5), the Food Addiction Institute, and the National Eating Disorders Association. | |

SCHEME 1: BED Advertising Analysis Chart

Source: own processing, 2019

Six columns were used in the results chart. The first is the product name, the second to identify the parent company, the third to record the gender representations in the ad, the fourth the format (electronic, digital, print), the fifth the label as outlined on the BED Advertising Analysis Chart, and the last the link to view the ad for future reference.

Each ad was viewed and evaluated using the BED Advertising Analysis Chart by a primary researcher. A secondary researcher was used to determine ambiguous representations then a determination was made among the two.

The majority of ads were viewed in electronic format and had been aired on television. When not available, ads digitally at the brand's website or social media site or print ads digitalized were analysed.

Following this results in the Label category were counted using the find tool in Microsoft Word and analysed to determine the major BED eating characteristics present in the ads viewed.

3. Results

Following is the raw data on the Results Chart then the percentages as outlined in the BED Advertising Analysis Chart.

| Product | Company | Gender | Format | Label | Link |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Breyers Ice Cream | Unilever | Female -children | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3 | https://www.breyers.com/us/en |
| Breyers Ice Cream | Unilever | Families | Electronic – 1970s | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlWGdTvdy9A |
| Ben & Jerry's Light | Unilever | No People | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVOrqlf3s70 |
| Ben & Jerry's | B&J | Male – B&J | Electronic – 1986 | A1, A3, P2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqTzelNMbiY |
| Haagan-Dazs | Gen. Mills | YA, M/F | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQeMy8epmWA |
| Haagan-Dazs | Gen. Mills | Male – children | Electronic – 1990s | A1, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YqZh4durak |
| Turkey Hill | Kroger | Female/ Male | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5, P1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dYu9/turkey-hill-triopolitan-cant-ever-decide-triple-chocolate |
| Turkey Hill | Kroger | Children – M/F | Electronic – 2000 | A1, A3, A5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxVIYnHkSAc |
| Klondike | Unilever | Food Chrs. Adults – M/F | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A5, B5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/w0Se/klondike-half-time-snack-time |
| Klondike | Unilever | Adults – M/F | Electronic - 1988 | A1, A3, A4, E1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQgOVn3cHxl |
| M&Ms | Mars/ Wrigley | Food Chrs. Male | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sON3ARGmNU |

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|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| M&Ms | Mars/ Wrigley | Food Chrs. Santa – M | Electronic – 1996 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/mms-santa-fainting-campaign/ |
| Hersheys | Hershey Trust | Adults – M/F Chilrn – M | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV0uxCBtiZQ |
| Hersheys | Hershey Trust | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic - 1990 | A1, A3, A5, | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHenuq3q12c |
| Reese's | Hersheys | Male – Voice Only | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A3, A5, E1, P1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dvmn/reeses-mouthstuffers |
| Reese's | Hersheys | Children – Male | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PnntM451Uk |
| Hersheys Kisses | Hershey Trust | Adults – M/F Food Chrs. | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wj6N/hersheys-kisses-2018-valentines-day-with-a-kiss |
| Hersheys Kisses | Hershey Trust | Food Chrs. | Electronic – 1989 | A1, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oKY3pnNht0 |
| Dove Choc. | Mars | Adult – Woman | Electronic – 2013 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwPwQ4S4op8 |
| Dove Choc. | Mars | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/l60R/dove-chocolate-soulmates |
| Oreo | Nabisco | Adult – Male Child – Female | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5, B5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wa6r/oreo-synchronized |
| Oreo | Nabisco | Children – M/F | Electronic - 1983 | A1, A3, A5, B1, B5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3xuFkaaLhE |
| Chips Ahoy | Nabisco | Adult – Female Children – M/F | Digital - acebook | A1, A3, A5, P1, P3 | https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=974898648217 |
| Chips Ahoy | Nabisco | Adults – M/F | Electronic - 1989 | A1, A3, A4, B2, E1, E2, E3, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18yTV3o5UE0 |
| Keebler Fudge Cookies | Kellogg Co. | Male Elves | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5, B5 | https://www.tvcommercialad.com/watch/JzXOwR8pGKLoM4j |
| Keebler Fudge Cookies | Kellogg Co. | Male Elves | Electronic – 1980 | A1, A3, A5, B5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRIG2uJ4paU |
| Pepperidge Farm Milano | Campbell Soup Co. | Adult – Female Children - M Voice Only | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, B2 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/waDH/pepperidge-farm-milano-save-something-for-yourself |
| Pepperidge Farm Milano, Geneva, Bordeaux | Campbell Soup Co. | Adult – Male | Electronic – 1986 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuhISMqkJSQ |
| Nestle Toll House Morsels | Nestle | Adult - Female Child - Male | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dl9T/nestle-toll-house-morsels-cookie-pizza |
| Nestle Toll House Morsels | Nestle | Children – M/F | Electronic - 1987 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gB-EiRIM_MA |

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|---------------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Lay's Poppable | Pepsi-Co Company | Adults – M/F | Digital – 2019 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B5, P1, P2 | https://www.lays.com/?fbclid=IwAR3EXEmZfP1SVHV8iwBXUBxF6buF3zAFf5xcO3f_HhPX4QKe4PB4Y0g1ns |
| Lay's Potato Chips | Pepsi-Co Company | Adult – M | Print – 1950s | A1, A3, A4, B1, B2, E1, P1 | https://www.pinterest.com/offsite/?token=493-602&url=https%3A%2F%2Fi.pinimg.com |
| Pringles | Kellogg Co. | Adults – M | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, A5, B2, B5, E1, E3, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tYrXkw6sYk |
| Pringles | Kellogg Co. | Adult – F Children – M/F | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5, B5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvSmcWnrTfA |
| Ruffles | Pepsi-Co. Company | Adults – M | Digital – 2019 | A1, A3, A4 | https://www.facebook.com/ruffles/ |
| Ruffles | Pepsi-Co. Company | Adults – M/F Children M/F | Electronic – 1983 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAlIpGVu1c0 |
| Cape Cod Chips | Synder's-Lance | None | Digital – FB – 2/10 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.facebook.com/CapeCodChips/photos/a.304285072962797/2201436219914330/?type=3&theater |
| Cape Cod Chips | Synder's-Lance | Adult – M Seagulls Anim. | Electronic - 2012 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89GjGq08x5A |
| Wavy Lay's | Pepsi-Co. Company | Adults – M/F | Electronic -2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Xqb6783nlc |
| Wavy Lay's | Pepsi-Co. Company | Adult – M Children – M | Electronic – 2007 | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iObWs8BExKA |
| Little Debbie | McKee Foods | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1, | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dxwQ/little-debbie-today-we-bake-sweetheart-of-american-snacks |
| Little Debbie | McKee Foods | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1986 | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B2, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN-u2k0Yj38 |
| Hostess Cupcakes | Gores Group | Adult- F Unicorn | Digital – FB – 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.facebook.com/Hostess/videos/308777826499394/ |
| Hostess Cupcakes | Gores Group | Adults – M/F Dragon - M | Electronic – 2005 | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKsYOeuq7kM |
| Enten-mann's | Bimbo Bakeries | Adult – F Voice Only, Child Hands | Electronic - 2017 | A1, A3, A5, P1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/A8YJ/entenmanns-everyones-got-a-favorite |
| Enten-mann's | Bimbo Bakeries | Adults – M/F Children – F Dogs – M Voices | Electronic - 2008 | A1, A2, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lplvd63lqR4 |
| Hostess Twinkies | Gores Group | Adult – M Opossum - M | Electronic – 2014 | A1, A2, A3, A4 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWvSbw3w9LA |

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|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|---|
| Hostess Twinkies | Gores Group | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1988 | A1, A3, A5, B2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdHKdqQ95OA |
| Sara Lee Snack Cakes | Hillshire Brand | Adult – F Voice Only Child - F | Electronic - 2013 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7bIV/sara-lee-devils-food-creme-cakes-delicious-snack-moment |
| Sara Lee Pound Cake Snack | Hillshire Brand | Adult – M Voice Only | Electronic - 1988 | A1, A3, E1, E2, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFC-kWyl8Ek |
| Cheerios | General Mills | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dXX7/maple-cheerios-good-goes-around-reduced-heart-disease-risk |
| Cheerios | General Mills | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic - 1984 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6-2HAl5eDo |
| Honey Nut Cheerios | General Mills | Adults – M/F Children – F | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, A5, | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lZm2/honey-nut-cheerios-to-the-honey |
| Honey Nut Cheerios | General Mills | Child – F Honey Bee - M | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yG45oOLHGk |
| Frosted Flakes | Kellogg Co. | Adult – M Children – M/F Tony Tiger | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A4, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lB1A/frosted-flakes-new-trick# |
| Frosted Flakes | Kellogg Co. | Child – M Tony Tiger - M | Electronic – 1980 | A1, A3, A5, B2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BELFGl11bel |
| Honey Bunches of Oats | Post | Adults – M Children - F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lVJD/honey-bunches-of-oats-breakfast-time-with-dad |
| Honey Bunches of Oats | Post | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 1989 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSfZvbBPYzY |
| Cinn. Toast Crunch | General Mills | Adults – F Squares | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5, E1, P1, P2 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/woB8/cinnamon-toast-crunch-filter |
| Cinn. Toast Crunch | General Mills | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 1985 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRNs4pxw6s |
| Nature Valley | General Mills | Adult – M | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dKD2/nature-valley-natures-powerful-energy |
| Nature Valley | General Mills | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkoEU4ChlZw |
| Quaker Chewy | Pepsi-Co. Company | Adult – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wVA4/quaker-chewy-granola-bars-welcome-wagon-song-by-andy-grammer |
| Quaker Chewy | Pepsi-Co. Company | M – Voice Only | Electronic - 1991 | A1, A3 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRjrTFKm3gA |
| Kashi Granola Bars | Kellogg Co. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 2017 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/A0ZE/kashi-chewy-nut-butter-bar-support-american-farmers |

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| Kashi Granola Bars | Kellogg Co. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 2009 | A1, A3, A4, A5, B1, E1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU0pxPUrK08 |
| Atkins Granola Bars | Simply Good Foods Co. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wByy/atkins-chocolate-chip-granola-bar-atkins-effect-ft-lauren-alaina |
| Atkins Granola Bars | Simply Good Foods Co. | Adult – F | Electronic 2015 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7xef/atkins-bars-snack-on-the-run-featuring-sharon-osbourne |
| Sunbelt Bakery Granola Bars | McKee Foods | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Digital – 2017 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.facebook.com/SunbeltBakery/videos/10158217024350574/?v=10158217024350574 |
| Sunbelt Bakery Granola Bars | McKee Foods | Adults – F/ Male Voice | Electronic – 2010 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6PP9x-IIZE |
| McDon.'s | McDon.'s Corp. | Adults – M | Electronic – 2019 Super Bowl | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSXvGHuaQUk |
| McDon.'s | McDon.'s Corp. | Children – M/F Charc.s | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdwjZPNoFT8 |
| Subway | Doctor's Assoc., Inc. | Adults – M/F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0NR02PRFhE |
| Subway | Doctor's Assoc., Inc. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1977 | A1, A3, A5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wkiHzkDFu4 |
| KFC | Yum China | Adults – M/ Voice Body Parts Only | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A4, A5, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmsor_xpaUc |
| KFC | Yum China | Adult – F Children – M/F | Electronic – 1980 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqD_l0Wj-20 |
| Domino's Pizza | Bain Capital | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, E1, P1, P3 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-okiOcwjvTQ |
| Domino's Pizza | Bain Capital | Adults – M/F Child – F | Electronic – 1985 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9mpnRVjfJQ |
| Burger King | Restaurant Brands Int. | Adult – M | Electronic – 2019 Super Bowl | A1, A3, B1, B5 | https://www.eater.com/2019/2/3/18209563/burger-king-super-bowl-commercial-2019-andy-warhol |
| Burger King | Restaurant Brands Int. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1980s | A1, A3, A5, B1, E1, P2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovahk9lGFcQ |
| Stouffer's Party Size Lasagna | Nestle | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A3, A5, P1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dmgi/stouffers-party-size-lasagna-with-meat-and-sauce-together-for-the-holidays |
| Stouffer's Frozen Entrees | Nestle | Adult – M/ Voice Only | Electronic - 1990 | A1, A3, P1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KQ5XlpfqLE |
| Marie Callender Chicken Pot Pie | ConAgra Foods | Adult - F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dWYx/marie-callenders-chicken-pot-pie-good-mood |

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| Marie Callender Chicken Pot Pie + | ConAgra Foods | Adults – M/F Children – M/F | Electronic – 2013 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7YgZ/marie-callenders-these-are-days |
| Lean Cuisine Farmers Market Pizza | Nestle | Adults - F | Electronic - 2018 | A1, A2, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d5w6/lean-cuisine-origins-farmers-market-pizza-patrice |
| Lean Cuisine Frozen Dinners | Nestle | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1987 | A1, A3, A5, B1, P4 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Dw4RYQHJ9I |
| Banquet Chicken Pot Pie | ConAgra Foods | Adult – F Children – M | Electronic – 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wWOO/banquet-pot-pies-feel-like-family |
| Banquet Frozen Dinners | ConAgra Foods | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 1960s | A1, A3, A4, A5, E1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqx9zbdflK9k |
| Healthy Choice Café Steamers | ConAgra Foods | None | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5, E1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dXUR/healthy-choice-plant-based-power-bowls-white-bean-and-feta-salad |
| Healthy Choice Café Steamers | ConAgra Foods | Adults - F/M Voice Only | Electronic - 2016 | A1, A3, A5, B1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hQ8NhnEbiU |
| Dannon Two Good Yogurt | Danone | Adult – F Voice Only | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5, B5, E1, E5, P1 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lfLA/dannon-two-good-friday-night |
| Dannon Yogurt | Danone | Adults – M/F | Electronic - 1982 | A1, A3, A5, B1, E5, P4 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooDZ_bdRVJ8 |
| Activia Yogurt | Danone | Adults – F | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, B1, E3, P5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkS3NBYxRd4 |
| Activia Yogurt | Danone | Adults – M/F J.L. Curtis | Electronic – 2012 | A1, A3, P5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7kc2/activia-irregularity-featuring-jamie-lee-curtis |
| Stonyfield Organic YoBaby | Danone | Adults – M/F Baby – M/F | Digital - 2018 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_l58Y-ngD8 |
| Stonyfield YoBaby | Danone | Adult – F Babies – M/F | Digital - 2015 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49mUWtXDg9U |
| Yoplait Oui and YQ | General Mills | Adult - F | Electronic - 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/l2al/oui-by-yoplait-and-yq-upside-down-spoon |
| Yoplait Yogurt – First Comm. | General Mills | Adult – M Jack Klugman | Electronic - 1979 | A1, A3, A5, B1, P2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLLq1ifsoYw |
| Chobani Less Sugar Greek Yogurt | Chobani Global Holdings, Inc. | Adults – M/F | Electronic – 2019 | A1, A3, A5 | https://www.ispot.tv/ad/lpx/ chobani-less-sugar-greek-yogurt-wonderful-world-of-less-song-by-roscos-gordon |
| Chobani Yogurt | Chobani Global Holdings, Inc. | Adults – M/F | Electronic - 2011 | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B2 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro96Au4eqVs |

SCHEME 2: Raw Data on the Result Chart

Source: own processing, 2019

| BED Advertising Results Chart | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Label | Description |
| Addictive | |
| A1 – 100% | Signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort/seek emotional change |
| A2 – 15% | Evidence of neglecting daily responsibilities due to eating |
| A3 – 95% | Representations of deep emotional attachment to food |
| A4 – 15% | Indicators of doing anything to obtain food/inability to control cravings |
| A5 – 87% | Portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding |
| Behavioral | |
| B1 – 25% | Images of eating alone |
| B2 – 8% | Signs of stealing, hiding, or hoarding food |
| B3 – 0% | Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day |
| B4 – 0% | Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws |
| B5 – 11% | Signs of food rituals (won't let foods to touch, only eating red candy, etc.) |
| Emotional | |
| E1 – 15% | Portrayals of feeling out of control with regard to food |
| E2 – 2% | Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating |
| E3 – 2% | Evidence of distress before or after eating |
| E4 – 0% | Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others |
| E5 – 2% | Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape |
| Physical | |
| P1 – 24% | Representations of eating large amounts of food |
| P2 – 5% | Indications of eating quickly |
| P3 – 2% | Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts |
| P4 – 2% | Portrayals of weight fluctuations |
| P5 – 2% | Indicators of stomach/gastrointestinal distress/complaints |

**Adapted for food advertising analysis using information from *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), the Food Addiction Institute, and the National Eating Disorders Association.

SCHEME 3: Percentages outlined in the BED Advertising Analysis Chart

Source: own processing, 2019

4. Discussion

The majority of ads categorized portrayed characteristics in the food addiction category with 100% of those viewed showing signs of using food to relieve emotional discomfort and/or seek emotional change. Much of this was evidenced by the inclusion of the „euphoric bite“ into the product advertised that clearly was designed to promise consumers emotional and, many times, sexual satisfaction by eating the products. Whether it was Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Lay's Poppables, Honey Nut Cheerios, or Atkins Granola Bars, the message was the same throughout each and every category studied: This food is special and eating it will provide great happiness, comfort and satisfaction.

This portrayal of satisfaction is taken to an extreme in a 2013 Dove Chocolate „My Moment, My Dove“ commercial where a woman dressed in a camisole interacts with a piece of chocolate in a way very obviously designed to imitate a sexual experience that culminates in the explosion

of an almond mimicking an orgasm.²⁴ Using an entirely different approach yet still equating food with emotional satisfaction, a 2019 Pepperidge Farm „Save Something For Yourself“ commercial first equates eating the cookie with sexual satisfaction as a woman wrapped in a towel is seen slowly savoring her cookie in what appears to be a spa-like setting until the camera pulls back and shows her surrounded by a bathtub filled with children’s toys.²⁵ In a voiceover, the woman is told, „You gave them your bathtub, don’t give them your cookies. Save something for yourself,“ clearly reinforcing the idea of gaining intense satisfaction from the cookies.²⁶

Similarly, 95% of the ads viewed included representations of deep emotional attachment to food. In much the same way as previously described, most of the humans and also all of the food characters expressed deep bonding with the products advertised. This is evident in a 2018 Banquet Chicken Pot Pie „Feel Like Family“ commercial where the product is used to cement good family and racial relationships by including a white friend in a black mother and son dinner that reminds viewers are „the moments that matter most.“²⁷

By the same token, many of the products took the deep emotional attachment a step further to present themselves as the solution to world problems as evidenced by a 2018 „Heartwarming the World“ Hershey’s Chocolate Bar commercial, which reminds viewers that“...the world could use some warmth” while showing images of people of all ages and races sharing the product.²⁸

This deep emotional attachment to food products even extends to electronic devices as portrayed in the Pringles „Sad Device“ 2019 Super Bowl commercial where an electronic device points out that there are 318,000 stacking combinations of Pringles chips and says, „Sadly, I will never know the joy of tasting any. For I have no hands to stack with, no mouth to taste with, no soul to feel with. I am at the mercy of a cruel and uncaring...“ after which she is cut off by one of the two males in the commercial and directed to play „Funky Town.“²⁹

Another data point worth noting is that 87% of the ads viewed included portrayals of using food to replace relationships or as a way to bond with others. This can be seen most especially in the many ads portraying family dinners or events centered around the product. While portrayals of family dinners and holiday celebrations in themselves do not necessarily indicate the presence of food addiction or BED characteristics, the images in the ads viewed put the product as the most important element in the meal and as the reason for the bonding, which differentiates the two.

For example, in a 2018 Nestle Toll House commercial, a mother is shown wondering how to „top pizza night“ then comes up with the idea of making a Nestle Toll House pizza for her son. The two are shown laughing and bonding while eating the chocolate pizza. At the end consumers are reminded to „Bake your heart into it.“³⁰ Thus, implying that the entire reason for the bonding meal is the product.

This is also seen in the 2018 Hershey’s Kisses „Valentine’s Day with a Kiss“ commercial, which shows a couple in a dimly lit room with candles cuddling together and gazing into each other’s eyes while eating Hershey’s Kisses.³¹ This ad also includes another phenomenon seen

²⁴ Dove Commercial Senses. [online]. [2019-02-18]. Available at: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwPwQ4S4op8>.

²⁵ Pepperidge Farm Milan „Save Something For Yourself“ Commercial. [online]. [2019-02-18]. Available at: <www.ispot.tv/ad/waDH/pepperidge-farm-milano-save-something-for-yourself>.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Banquet Chicken Pot Pie „Feel Like Family“. [online]. [2019-02-18]. Available at: <www.ispot.tv/ad/wWOO/banquet-pot-pies-feel-like-family>.

²⁸ Hershey’s Commercial (2018) USA. [online]. [2019-02-18]. Available at: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV0uxCBtiZQ>.

²⁹ Pringles Sad Device 2019 Super Bowl Commercial. [online]. [2019-02-20]. Available at: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tYrXkw6sYk>.

³⁰ Nestle Toll House Morsels Commercial: „Cookie Pizza“ 2018. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <www.ispot.tv/ad/dl9T/nestle-toll-house-morsels-cookie-pizza>.

³¹ Hershey’s Kisses TV Commercial 2018: Valentine’s Day With A Kiss. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <www.ispot.tv/ad/wJ6N/hersheys-kisses-2018-valentines-day-with-a-kiss>.

in food ads during this study: the „Anthropomorphism“ as described by Andrews, et. al. in their book *Hidden Persuasion*. According to the authors, anthropomorphism is „when a brand or product is seen as human-like“, which tends to result in consumers liking it more and „feeling closer to it.“³² In this Hershey's Kisses commercial, kisses are shown being patted lovingly by other kisses as they dance down the conveyor belt to be catapulted into the human female's hands. Before entering the catapult, one kiss gives another flowers thus cementing the idea of anthropomorphism as a means of making consumers feel closer to chocolate kisses.

The idea of anthropomorphism was also evident in the 2018 Crunchy M&M's Pampered Commercial with the famous M&M candy characters. This ad, however, takes the idea even further with humans acting as slaves to the candy characters. In the ad, consumers are encouraged to „Try them all and vote for their favorites“.³³ The idea that humans are slaves to the chocolate candy is an interesting one and signifies the way most food addicts feel about their physical cravings and their inability to control them.

Another significant portion of the ads viewed reinforced additional characteristic of food addiction: eating alone with 25% of the commercials including portrayals of people eating alone. While at first this may not seem significant, it's important to keep in mind that eating alone to hide how much food is eaten is one of the main characteristics of food addiction and paired with the large percentage of images using food to replace relationships or as a means of bonding, the two combined present even more reinforcement for addictive behavior.

Some examples of eating alone can be seen in the previously-mentioned Dove Chocolate advertisement as well as ads for Pepperidge Farm Milano Cookies, Lay's Potato Chips, Ruffles Potato Chips, Cape Cod Chips, Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Sara Lee Snack Cakes, Honey Nut Cheerios, Honey Bunches of Oats, Cinnamon Toast Crunch Cereal, Nature Valley Granola Bars, Kashi Granola Bars, Marie Callender's Pot Pie, Lean Cuisine Farmers Market Pizza, Healthy Choice Steamers, Activia Yogurt, Yoplait Yogurt, and Chobani Yogurt.

Though some of these ads also contain images of people eating together, there are also portrayals of individuals eating alone, which appears to be advertisers both encouraging the solitary, addictive behavior of addiction while also promoting the use of food as a means of bonding, which is also a characteristic of food addiction thus covering all bases.

Similarly, 24% of the ads viewed included representations of eating large amounts of food. Some of these ads were for Ben & Jerry's Light Ice Cream, Turkey Hill Ice Cream, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, Oreo Cookies, Chips Ahoy Chocolate Chip Cookies, Keebler Fudge Cookies, Lay's Poppables, Pringles Potato Chips, Wavy Lays Potato Chips, Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Entenmann's Donuts, Cinnamon Toast Crunch Cereal, Subway Sandwiches, KFC Fried Chicken, Domino's Pizza, Stouffer's Frozen Entrees, and Dannon Two Good Yogurt.

While it's important to note the addictive characteristics present in the ads viewed, it's equally as noteworthy to highlight those lower percentages or characteristics not present. These include Behavioral characteristics, B3: Portrayals of frequent dieting/appetite control/grazing throughout the day (0%); B4: Evidence of frequently checking the mirror for body flaws (0 %) as well as Emotional characteristics, E2: Indicators of feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, disgust with eating (2%); E3: Evidence of distress before or after eating (2%); E4: Portrayals of feeling uncomfortable eating around others (0%); and E5: Representations of negative feelings about body weight/size/shape (2%) and Physical characteristics, P2: Indications of eating quickly (5%); P3: Signs of difficulty concentrating due to food presence/thoughts (2%); P4: Portrayals of weight fluctuations (2%); and P5: Indicators of stomach/gastrointestinal distress/complaints (2%).

³² ANDREWS, M., LEEUWEN, V., BAAREN, V.: *Hidden Persuasion: 33 Psychological Influence Techniques in Advertising*. Netherlands : BIS Publishers, 2013, p. 104.

³³ M&Ms Commercial 2018 Crunchy M&Ms Pampered. [online]. [2019-03-02]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sON3ARGmNU>>.

The majority of these characteristics, if not all of them, indicate the negative or dark side of BED/food addiction. Obviously, this is not an effective method of selling food nor something advertisers want to highlight. Yet, they are the very real effects experienced by both food addicts and those affected with BED.

Instead, advertisers focus on highlighting the thrill that goes along with tasting something delicious or the unsubstantiated hidden promises of zero consequences to eating unhealthy, high calorie, high fat foods. This is evidenced by the myriad of food ads that contain images of healthy people participating in physical activities such as white dirt biking in the desert (Nature Valley Granola Bars); children riding bikes (Quaker Chewy Granola Bars), young adults dancing with ice cream bars (Haagen-Dazs), adults and children dancing and using hula hoops (Cheerios), or children playing stickball (Breyer's Ice Cream).

Clearly, these images are designed to take away viewers concerns about obesity and gaining weight from eating these products. This idea mimics Gerbner's „Happy Violence“ in his classic studies of whether or not television violence affects viewers. As he outlines in „Profiling Television Violence“ with Morgan and Signorielli, „*This happy violence is swift, cool, thrilling, painless, effective, designed not to upset but to lead to a happy ending and to deliver an audience to the advertiser's message in a receptive mood.*“³⁴

It's easy to translate the „Happy Violence“ concept into food advertising which promotes „Happy Eating“ moments. These moments were visible in 100% of the ads viewed while the consequences of eating ultra-processed foods and the resulting obesity were absent. Some of these are,

Strokes occur more frequently among the obese, which usually results in paralysis or even death. With obesity, the death rate from heart disease, primarily caused by blood vessel disease, is approximately 50% higher in men and 75% higher in women than in the normal-weight population. Likelihood of cerebral hemorrhage or stroke is about 60% higher than normal, and the presence of kidney disease appears to be approximately 100% higher.

Recent studies also indicate that there is an increased risk of breast and endometrial cancer (cancer of the inner lining of the uterus) in obese individuals. Cancer of the liver and gallbladder is 70% more frequent in obese men and 110% more frequent in obese women than it is among their normal-weighted counterparts. Incidence of cancer of the intestines and rectum is 15% higher, and cancer of the female organs is 20% higher. Additionally, when compared with the normal-weight population incidence of diabetes is 300 percent higher in people who are obese. Cirrhosis of the liver is 150% higher; appendicitis, 120%; hernia and intestinal obstruction, 50% higher; gallstones, 100%; complications during pregnancy, 60%; and cancer of the pancreas, 50% higher in obese women.³⁵

Clearly none of these obesity consequences are present in American food advertisements. Quite the opposite. „Happy Eating“ moments abound with 100% of the ads viewed promising emotional change or satisfaction. Taking the ever-growing obesity rate into consideration and the health of Americans in general as a result of this, and it becomes clear exactly how dangerous these portrayals of „Happy Eating“ are.

As Gerbner, et. al. note in their study about television violence, „Happy violence“ is the by-product of a manufacturing and marketing process. The real problem of television violence reflects structural trends toward concentration, conglomeration and globalization in media industries and the marketing pressures fueling those trends.³⁶

³⁴ GERBNER, G., MORGAN, M., SIGNORIELI, M.: *Profiling Television Violence*. [online]. [2019-03-02]. Available at: <<http://web.asc.upenn.edu/gerbner/Asset.aspx?assetID=1804>>.

³⁵ DANOWSKI, D., LAZARO, P.: *Why Can't I Stop Eating? Recognizing, Understanding, and Overcoming Food Addiction*. Center City, MN : Hazelden, 2000, p. 38.

³⁶ GERBNER, G., MORGAN, M., SIGNORIELI, M.: *Profiling Television Violence*. [online]. [2019-03-02]. Available at: <<http://web.asc.upenn.edu/gerbner/Asset.aspx?assetID=1804>>.

Gerbner's ideas about „Happy Violence“ reflect the food advertisements viewed in this study and also the consequences of „Happy Eating“ throughout America. Analysing American advertising for promotion of BED/food addiction portrayals is a critical first step in a „Food Advertising Literacy“ program to make people aware of the dangers of desensitization to the messages normalizing addictive behaviour.

Expanding the scope and number of advertisements analysed would benefit future studies in this area as would an examination of additional types of NOVA classified Ultra-Processed Foods.

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Author



Debbie Danowski

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

Dr. Debbie Danowski is an Associate professor at Sacred Heart University in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts where she teaches advertising, public relations and journalism courses including Food Advertising and Magazines and Body Image. She is the author or co-author of several journal articles about body image and wellness including „One Size Doesn't Fit All: New Continua of Figure Drawings and Their Relation to Ideal Body Image”, with Jocelyn Novella, and Jennifer T. Gosselin in the Journal of American College Health as well as five popular books about food addiction and body image, including the best-selling Why Can't I Stop Eating?: Recognizing, Understanding, and Overcoming Food Addiction co-authored with Dr. Pedro Lazaro. She is currently working on an academic book titled Stuff Your Face and Lose Weight, Too: Food Addiction in American Advertising.



Igor Kanižaj, Stela Lechhammer

The Role of Organisations of Journalists in Promoting Media Literacy – Building Credibility and Trust

ABSTRACT

In the previous research (ANR TRANSLIT, Mapping media literacy practices and actions in EU 28) organisations of journalists were identified as stakeholders in promoting media literacy. Their role was seen as essential in promoting credibility as a competence based on the truthfulness and relevance of content and sources. Furthermore, in 2014 they were identified as key actors by UNESCO within the Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in Digital Era. Credibility is still seen as fundamental media capital. Although media organisations were one of the first stakeholders promoting credibility, recent research has showed that their activities in promoting media literacy were outnumbered by NGOs. According to the European Federation of Journalists, one of the main goals of journalists' organisations is to defend values such as freedom of the press, independency, quality and credibility. In this study the authors research the existing activities of organisations of journalists in promoting media literacy throughout the EU. The results of a survey done within organisations of journalists and the results of content analysis of websites are presented. The authors' goal is to examine how organisations of journalists are engaged to promote media literacy and to what extent they produce additional activities to tackle disinformation, fake news and media manipulation.

KEY WORDS

Media literacy. Organisation of journalists. Credibility. Trustfulness.

1. Introduction

In April 2018, within the nationwide campaign *Days of Media Literacy (Dani medijske pismenosti)*¹, 974 primary and secondary school students of eighteen Croatian counties visited eleven media companies. This was the first time that only in a one-week period of time, within the public campaign organised and coordinated by UNICEF and the Agency for Electronic Media (as the media regulator), students had the opportunity to visit diverse media companies and have an insightful perspective of the journalistic profession and of work in a newsroom.

One could expect that this kind of activity is to be organised by journalists and media outlets themselves and/or in coordination with journalists' organisations and not exclusively by the regulators, as it occurred in the case of Croatia. In the time when traditional media are fighting for their audiences as the media owners and editors fail to attract younger audiences, this could have wide implications for their future business, their market position as well as their position in society. Furthermore, we will discuss the connection between media literacy programmes and media credibility.

Although the analysed associations did not recognise the whole potential of media literacy projects, we will provide an overview of the valuable projects initiated, organised and hosted by media companies and individual journalists concerned about illiteracy. „*There is a potential risk, that in the future, fewer and fewer people will be able to properly use newspapers' publications, either on paper or in digital format.*“² In the article *Journalists' Role in Media Education in Poland in Time of Globalization* Biernacka-Ligieza provides a detailed list and explanation for each media literacy project initiated by the media and claims that „*Polish media representatives have decided to take an active role in the media education process.*“³ New projects have recently been initiated in the Czech Republic as well. According to the research conducted by Lucie Stastna (2017) there are also several projects initiated by print and electronic media. The journalists interviewed within Stastna's survey specified several reasons for being involved in media literacy programmes. One of them reported that „*journalism would benefit from actively advocating media literacy, especially with the goal to improve trust in the media*“ and „*the other one thinks that „media literacy is a precondition for protecting democracy in the Czech Republic.*“⁴

In the northern part of the EU examples of best practice can be found. In 2017 a project called *Faktana, kiitos!* was launched in Finland. Journalists visited schools with the idea to share „their expertise on journalistic practices and social responsibility“ with the main focus on fake news. In the course of the project 124 journalists met around 7,200 school students, according to organisers.⁵ This is indeed a good example of how journalists can initiate new media literacy programmes with great interest demonstrated by students. Another project comes from the UK. In 2018 *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* launched a media literacy programme for all secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges. Ten schools participated in the pilot programme. Martin Ivens, editor of *The Sunday Times* emphasised that the media literacy programme would share extensive experience in investigative reporting „*to ensure that future readers have the*

¹ A campaign initiated by the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF with a view to building a long-term platform whose main task is to raise the awareness of media literacy and capacities of teachers, parents and children in Croatia. [online]. [2019-03-27]. Available at: <<https://www.medijskapismenost.hr/rezultati-prvih-dana-medijske-pismenosti-u-hrvatskoj/>>.

² BIERNACKA-LIGIEZA, I.: *Journalists' Role in Media Education in Poland in Time of Globalization: Reflection on Media Education Futures*. In SIRKKU, K., KUPIAINEN, R. (eds.): *International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media*. University of Gothenburg, Sweden : Nordicom, 2015, p. 68.

³ Ibidem. p. 69.

⁴ STASTNA, L.: *Journalists and Schools Work Together to Teach Media Literacy*. [online]. [2019-03-03]. Available at: <<https://en.ejo.ch/ethics-quality/journalists-schools-work-together-teach-media-literacy/>>.

⁵ KOPONEN, H. M.: *New Finnish project brings journalists to schools to teach media literacy*. [online]. [2019-03-04]. Available at: <<https://ipi.media/new-finnish-project-brings-journalists-to-schools-to-teach-media-literacy/>>.

tools to verify they are reading well-researched, accurate, and impartial journalism.⁶ The listed projects and activities are valuable case studies of media literacy programmes organised and implemented by diverse media companies.

On the basis of the existing research⁷, apart from CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) that have been recognised as key stakeholders in media literacy, there cannot be identified better stakeholders and partners than media and journalists' organisations. With new challenges such as disinformation, misinformation, fake news, algorithms malfunctioning, propaganda, native advertising and sponsored content, bots, trolls, hoaxes and other kinds of manipulations, we believe that media literacy programmes could empower the audiences and help them choose credible, reliable and trustworthy media outlets. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, journalists were the first to implement fact-checking departments at the beginning of the 20th century and to recognise credibility as the ultimate criterion for accountability.

For some of the above-listed reasons, countries in the EU have a history of media literacy programmes organised by media and journalists' associations. There are outstanding examples of leading national newspapers becoming the promoters of media literacy, such as *The Irish Times*. They work collaboratively with education institutions through a project entitled *Newspaper in the Classroom*.⁸ The importance of cooperation between organisations of journalists and the school system has also been identified in Croatia.⁹

Media literacy programmes provided by journalists have a long history in the world primarily through the programme *Newspaper in Education (NIE)*. It started back in 1930s with *The New York Times*. The idea behind it was to improve media literacy by using the newspaper as an education tool.

„The digital or print editions can be used to provide lessons in basic reading, mathematics, politics, science, social studies, geography and critical thinking. NIE can be carried out at all levels of education and the lessons can be designed to tie in with the national school curriculum.“¹⁰

According to the data from WAN-IFRA, there are more than 700 NIE programmes internationally with print and e-editions today.¹¹ The same source argues that „newspaper associations in Finland and Sweden became continental Europe's early practitioners in the 1960s.“¹² This article will give an overview of the existing projects and practices initiated and coordinated by organisations of journalists in EU 28.

2. The connection between media literacy, credibility and trust

In the existing research papers and studies, one of the most cited definitions of media literacy is the one proposed by Patricia Aufderheide. „A media literate person - everyone should have the opportunity to become one - can decode, evaluate, analyse and produce both print and

⁶ News UK. [online]. [2019-03-04]. Available at: <<https://www.news.co.uk/2018/06/the-times-and-the-sunday-times-launch-the-uks-first-free-media-literacy-programme-for-schools/>>.

⁷ KANIŽAJ, I.: The role of civil society organisations in promoting media literacy, transliteracy and media and information literacy in EU. In *Revista Fuentes*, 2017, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 69-80.

⁸ MATOVIĆ, M., JURAITĖ, K., GUTIERREZ, A.: The role of non-governmental actors in media and information literacy: a comparative media systems perspective. In FRAU-MEIGS, D., VELEZ, I., FLORES, M. J. (eds.): *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe*. New York, USA : Routledge, 2017, p. 167.

⁹ KANIŽAJ, I., CAR, V., KRALJ, L.: *Media and Information Literacy in Croatia (2013), ANR TRANSLIT national research report, 2014*. [online]. [2019-27-03]. Available at: <http://ppemi.enscachan.fr/data/media/colloque140528/rapports/CROATIA_2014.pdf>.

¹⁰ HENRIKSSON, T.: *Some Frequently Asked Questions about News in Education (NIE*)* [online]. [2019-03-17]. Available at: <<http://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2012/04/17/some-frequently-asked-questions-about-news-in-education-nie>>.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media.¹³ In 2011 R. Hobbs suggested five essential dimensions of digital and media literacy that include: access, analyse, create, reflect and act.¹⁴ Our understanding of media literacy is also all about empowering the public for critical thinking about media content. However, one of the outcomes could refer to the increase in trust in those media organisations that provide reliable, transparent and unbiased content by promoting accountable and socially responsible journalism.

At the beginning of the 90s Claude-Jean Bertrand suggested a new deontology model for journalism. He called it NODO – ways of ensuring social responsibility. It included every possible non-governmental activity or tool used to make media accountable to the public. It is probably the most comprehensive accountability framework. The author also recognised the importance of media in school programmes.¹⁵ „*Although accountability is primarily considered as being for the public benefit, it also serves the media as a form of feedback from the public.*“¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is not just about feedback and transparency.

„*In order for a democratic society to function, a quality journalism is necessary, which, on the other hand, requires media literate citizens. Professionalism, quality and credibility of information are largely determined by the users' media competence, and their expectations of the media.*“¹⁷

Rouba El Helou, as quoted in *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*, offers a different perspective: „*Equipping people with the skills needed to decode various messages is an ongoing struggle that media educators and journalists are all asked to join. Media Literacy helps people to find an equilibrium between trust of news sources and the necessary suspicion to question them.*“¹⁸

Credibility has always been the fundamental media capital as suggested by Thomas A. Bauer.¹⁹ „*What type of media system is founded, which quality standards media generally accomplish and to what degree of media literacy the audience was brought very much depends on the quality of democracy. All these factors of media and communication culture reflect the democratic quality of life in a society.*“²⁰ Bauer conceptualises media credibility as a two-way agreement: „*Credibility should be expected from both sides - competence in the context of media production (meaning professionalism) as well as the competence of media consumption.*“²¹

Bauer argues that media should „*create a climate of trust and create a cultural use environment to set up (conditions for) credibility, which, on the other hand, is also a contribution of a recipient who can be a reliable partner if he is willing to contribute with his media literacy or with a habit to be interested in the truth.*“²² The author further explains that credibility is the dimension of mutual trust because the cultural attitude of the recipient in the use of the media is as relevant as the organizational use of the media by the producer. In this respect it can be seen that media literacy gives new opportunities to media companies and audiences for establishing a trust-credibility relation with the public. Even more obvious connections with media literacy can be seen in the work by Najil Kurtić.

¹³ AUFDERHEIDE, P.: *Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Queenstown, MD. : Aspen Inst., 1992, p. 1.

¹⁴ HOBBS, R.: *Digital and media literacy: connecting culture and classroom*. Corwin, USA : Thousand Oaks, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁵ BERTRAND, C. J.: *Deontologija medija*. Zagreb : ICEJ & Sveučilišna knjižnica, 2007, p. 95.

¹⁶ MCQUAIL, D.: *Journalism and Society*. London : Sage, 2013, p. 154.

¹⁷ CAR, V., TURČILO, L., MATOVIĆ, M.: *Medijska pismenost – preduvjet za odgovorne medije: zbornik radova s 5. regionalne znanstvene konferencije Vjerodostojnost medija*. Sarajevo : Fakultet političkih nauka, 2015, p. 62.

¹⁸ IRETON, C., POSETTI, J.: *Journalism, "Fake News" & Disinformation – Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*. Paris : UNESCO, 2018, p. 78.

¹⁹ BAUER, T.: *Vjerodostojnost medija – društveni kapital medijskog društva*. In MALOVIĆ, S. (ed.): *Vjerodostojnost novina*. Zagreb : ICEJ & Sveučilišna knjižara, 2007, p. 21.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 22.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 23.

²² Ibidem, p. 30.

„Why is the issue of media credibility important after all? The feature of credibility becomes the crucial determinant in choosing the news in the situation of the glut on the market. When there are more different, and sometimes contradictory news of the same event, we will choose the news in which 1) we recognize more components of credibility and 2) which come from branded sources (which have already been proven as sources and transmitters of credible news).“²³

Kurtić actually emphasises the need for media literacy and the competence of the public to recognise credible content with multiple sources. „Credibility is a complex concept that applies simultaneously to all components of the communication process; both to real truthful message quality (news) and to communicators, the nature and reputation of the media and ultimately to all the factors that determine the communicative behaviour of the communicant (recipient).“²⁴ In last several years we have witnessed a great number of credibility challenges in our media and have faced diverse channels promoting the content that is not credible. For this reason we think that the journalists' organisations ought to become an important actor in promoting media literacy by providing projects for building trust and credibility between them and the public.

3. Why should organisations of journalists care about media literacy?

The formal framework for the development of media literacy and the importance of the planned and coordinated action of all the key stakeholders was recognised in many documents. It was already the UNESCO Grünwald Declaration on Media Education to recognise that „the media education will be most effective when parents, teachers, media personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge they have a role to play in developing greater critical awareness among listeners, viewers and readers.“²⁵ In the UNESCO Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Era there is a special annex about „Significance of key actors“, while the Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape notes that „different stakeholders and creators are in a dynamic relationship with one another.“²⁶

The media, journalists and their professional organisations and associations are detected as key stakeholders in promoting media literacy in all the above-cited documents. In some parts of the documents the importance of their role is additionally emphasised and explained in detail. First, UNESCO Grünwald Declaration on Media Education said that „the role of communication and media in the process of development should not be underestimated“²⁷ and that „the greater integration of educational and communications systems would undoubtedly be an important step towards more effective education.“²⁸ Then, the UNESCO Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Era concluded that it is important to encourage media „to integrate media and information literacy priorities in their strategic plans and governance.“²⁹ In its annex, an extended explanation of why media literacy should be important for journalists can

²³ KURTIĆ N.: Bosna i Hercegovina: Između profesionalnih standarda i očekivanja čitatelja. In MALOVIĆ, S. (ed.): Vjerodostojnost novina. 39–67, Zagreb : ICEJ & Sveučilišna knjižara, 2007, p. 39.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ UNESCO Grünwald Declaration on Media Education. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/MEDIA_E.PDF>.

²⁶ UNESCO Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/riga_recommendations_on_media_and_information_literacy.pdf>.

²⁷ UNESCO Grünwald Declaration on Media Education. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/MEDIA_E.PDF>.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ UNESCO Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in Digital Era. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/In_Focus/paris_mil_declaration_final.pdf>.

be found: „*Media and information literacy matters to them because they need to think reflexively about their practices and because they need an audience that understands their functions and to whom they should ultimately be accountable. (...) Their professional status and their values can benefit from further training in media and information literacy for better investigation and promotion of their ideas in a pluralistic setting.*“³⁰

In the UNESCO *Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape* there is a specific chapter entitled „*Call on media & information providers.*“ It was written to address the „*public and private broadcasters, over-the-top content providers, film rights holder and distributors, games distributors, news media, advertisers and advertising agencies.*“³¹ These stakeholders are urged „*to join in partnership with the education sectors and MIL communities to make media and information content available to children and young people to foster their media and information literacy.*“³²

4. What have we learned from previous research?

The studies conducted in the field of media literacy have dealt with a wide range of topics such as literature overview of media literacy, examples of good practices, public policies, national regulation, activities of the key stakeholders, to name but a few. Since this study is focused on the latter, in this chapter the authors will give a brief overview of the main research results related to stakeholders, and, more specifically, to the activities of organisations of journalists in promoting media literacy.

Civil society, Public authorities, Academia, Audiovisual content providers, Online platforms, Media Regulatory Authorities and Journalist Associations are identified as the main stakeholders in the report *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*.³³ It is explained that 878 out of total 939 identified stakeholders „*were categorised into these seven broad sectors with another 61 stakeholders being categorised as ‘Other’.*“³⁴ The research showed that „*sector with the smallest number of main media literacy stakeholders was ‘Journalist Associations.’*“³⁵

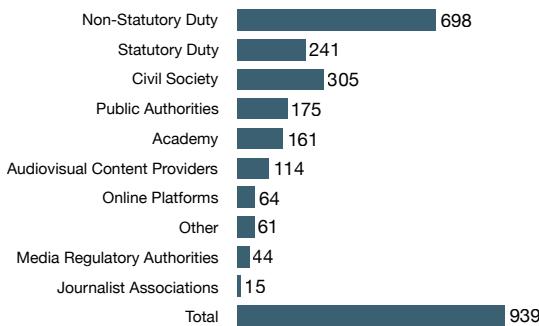


CHART 1: Stakeholders identified in the report *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*

Source: EAO, 2016

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ UNESCO *Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape*. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/riga_recommendations_on_media_and_information_literacy.pdf>.

³² Ibidem.

³³ *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28* is one of the most extensive reports in that field. It was prepared by the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) for the European Commission which „*has considered such a mapping necessary for identifying good practices and for promoting the transfer of knowledge between member states*“ (EAO, 2016: 1). The report on the most significant media literacy projects carried out since January 2010 was published in 2016.

³⁴ *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*. Strasbourg : European Audiovisual Observatory, 2016, p. 36.

³⁵ Ibidem.

The national experts who participated in conducting the research „were asked to identify the main stakeholders involved in the promotion of media literacy and indicate which stakeholders had a statutory duty and which had a non-statutory duty in relation to media literacy.“³⁶ They identified a total of fifteen associations of journalists from nine countries active in the field of media literacy, which means they concluded that in twenty countries there are no organisation of journalists that could be identified as key stakeholders in promoting media literacy. These are Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

| Country | Number of associations of journalists identified as media literacy stakeholders |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Finland | 3 |
| The Wallonia-Brussels Federation | 2 |
| France | 2 |
| Greece | 2 |
| Slovenia | 2 |
| Flanders | 1 |
| Bulgaria | 1 |
| Italy | 1 |
| Lithuania | 1 |

SCHEME 1: Number of associations of journalists identified as key stakeholders in promoting media literacy by countries

Source: EAO, 2016

Associations of journalists were involved in just three out of the 109 cross-sectoral collaborations on the „case study“ projects.³⁷ However, these organisations were identified as significant media literacy projects, especially in Belgium, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, with the project *Journalists in Classrooms (Journalistes en classe)*. In Estonia a practical training workshop was organised by *Young People's Media Club*, a network of young professionals. „*This younger generation of established journalists and media and communication specialists are aiming to raise awareness and teach practical skills and knowledge around media literacy to secondary and high school students around Estonia.*“³⁸

In Finland one of the twenty recognised projects is *Yle Uutislukka (Yle News Class)*, „*a media education project, where students have a chance to make their own news with Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle's professional journalists.*“³⁹ There is also *Faktabaari (Fact Bar)*. „*Faktabaari is a Finnish web-based fact-checking service bringing accuracy to the public debate. It is a non-partisan journalistic project using the Internet and social media for collecting and distributing factual information.*“⁴⁰ In France, „*the media literacy projects of CLEMI are realised with teachers and journalists.*“⁴¹ The journalists' engagement is recognised as well in *Les Clés des médias (Keys for understanding media)*. Greek journalists were active in the project *Oh where*

³⁶ *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*. Strasbourg : European Audiovisual Observatory, 2016, p. 34.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 49.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 156.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 172.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 179.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 184.

*has my truth gone? - Playing with Journalistic Practice.*⁴² In Croatia media literacy has brought together academics, NGOs as well as the representatives of the public radio and television (HRT) within the ERASMUS+ project Y-NEX (*European Youth News Exchange*). Lithuania had similar training activities with the *Training Programme for Socially Responsible Young Journalists*.⁴³ One of the examples of national campaigning can also be found in Lithuania in the project *Media4Change*.⁴⁴ In Luxembourg there is the project *Competition „jeune journaliste“* by Conseil de Presse and Script.

ANR TRANSLIT⁴⁵ is another large research project focused on the analysis of media and information literacy policies in Europe. It brought together 29 national reports from 2014 with detailed analyses of key stakeholders in each of the analysed countries. This research project has also mapped the activities of journalists' organisations in media and information literacy. Similar to the EAO project there are countries in a European context and outside EU28 without any existing activity by journalists' associations just like Croatia: „journalists and news professional organisations are not engaged.“⁴⁶ As far as countries with long histories in media literacy are concerned, such as Finland, the report says that „promoting media literacy has become widespread in media sector companies“ and that „Finnish Newspaper Association organises newspaper education and the Finnish Broadcasting Company has funded many kinds of media education projects.“⁴⁷

5. Research Design and Methodology

To examine the role of journalists' organisations in promoting media literacy we combined two research methods in this study - survey and content analysis of the websites. One of the aims of this study was to get the data directly from national organisations of journalists rather than carrying out solely secondary analysis of their work.

Our research was based on the following research questions:

1. How are organisations of journalists engaged to promote media literacy?
2. What are the main audiences addressed in their media literacy programs?
3. How are they promoting media literacy programmes on their official web sites?

In the first part of the research, a questionnaire with sixteen questions was sent to all 28 national organisations of journalists in the European Union. The questionnaire instrument was chosen as the optimal research technique for several reasons. First of all, considering geographical distance and time frame, an online questionnaire was the only feasible option.

Most of the previous studies in the field of media literacy had been carried out in the European Union. We decided that national organisations of journalists in the European Union form the sampling frame of this study to enable comparisons and referrals to previous research results. The questionnaire was sent out to all 28 national organisations of journalists in the

⁴² Ibidem, p. 196.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 254.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 260.

⁴⁵ The French research project ANR TRANSLIT explores the socio-technical, political, economic and educational implications of this emerging transliteracy. [online]. [2019-27-03]. Available at: <<http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/Project-ANR-12-CULT-0004>>.

⁴⁶ KANIŽAJ, I., CAR, V., KRALJ, L.: *Media and Information Literacy in Croatia* (2013), ANR TRANSLIT national research report, 2014. [online]. [2019-27-03]. Available at: <http://ppemi.enscachan.fr/data/media/colloque140528/rapports/CROATIA_2014.pdf>.

⁴⁷ KOTILAINEN, S., KUPIAINEN, R.: *Media and Information Literacy in Finland* (2013), ANR TRANSLIT national research report, 2014. [online]. [2019-27-03]. Available at: <http://ppemi.ens-cachan.fr/data/media/colloque140528/rapports/FINLAND_2014.pdf>.

European Union. Consequently, the sample was formed from those who responded (19/28). The survey was conducted in February 2019 and the response rate to the questionnaire sent to national journalists' organisations was 67,8%. In total, nineteen out of 28 organisations sent their answers back, which authors evaluated to be as expected. The national journalists' organisations that answered the questionnaire are those from Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

Questions were categorised into three sections: „General opinion on media literacy“, „Present activities“ and „Past activities“. The first set of questions examined opinion on the necessity and importance of media literacy programmes and activities. In the second and third sets of questions organisations were asked to define their present and past activities as well as to define for whom they are/were organised.

In the second part of the study, we also analyse the official website content of all 28 national organisations of journalists in order to find out if they have published any content connected to media literacy.

6. Results and Discussion

As the questionnaire itself was divided into three sections of questions, so are the results which vary noticeably – from examining opinions to examining actual present and past activities of national organisations of journalists. The big gap between what organisations think they should do and what they actually do can be noticed.

All nineteen organisations find engaging and promoting media literacy by journalists' organisations „necessary“ or „very necessary“, but only eleven of them completely agree that organisations of journalists should be more engaged in promoting media literacy. It shows that they recognise the necessity of media literacy in theory and that they do not deny their role and responsibility. However, organisations did not provide new programmes and initiatives in media literacy. One possible reason may be the fact that they are aware of not being sufficiently engaged and that, on the other hand, their greater engagement is not currently possible due to difficulties such as lack of money, people, knowledge and other resources.

Furthermore, seventeen out of nineteen interviewed organisations think media literacy is „important“ or „very important“ to general audiences, but answers vary more when it comes to examining the importance of media literacy in specific fields. It is significant that literature reviewed in the theoretical framework of this study strongly emphasises the importance of media literacy for building credibility and trust. Yet, organisations of journalists still do not show a higher degree of agreement on this subject. In order to have more insight into the attitudes of representatives and members of these organisations new research is needed.

- Media literacy can increase trust in media.
- Media literacy can empower citizens to recognize and reveal fake news and disinformation.
- Media credibility can be increased with efficient media literacy programs.

1 (Totally disagree)

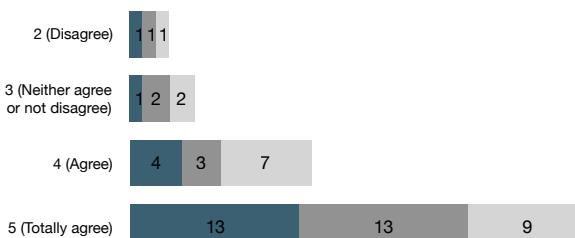


CHART 2: Results of the survey on the general opinion on media literacy
Source: own processing, 2019

In examining present and past activities, there is also a visible difference in relation to the perception of the importance and necessity of media literacy. Currently, twelve out of nineteen organisations carry out at least one activity in promoting media literacy while seven of them do not. The authors find particularly worrying the fact that the results are exactly the same when it comes to past activities in the last twenty years, which indicates that there is no innovative progress. The results are even more discouraging when it comes to financial support of activities in the field of media literacy. Only 7 out of 19 organisations financially support at least one media literacy activity at the moment, and eight of them did so at least once in the past.

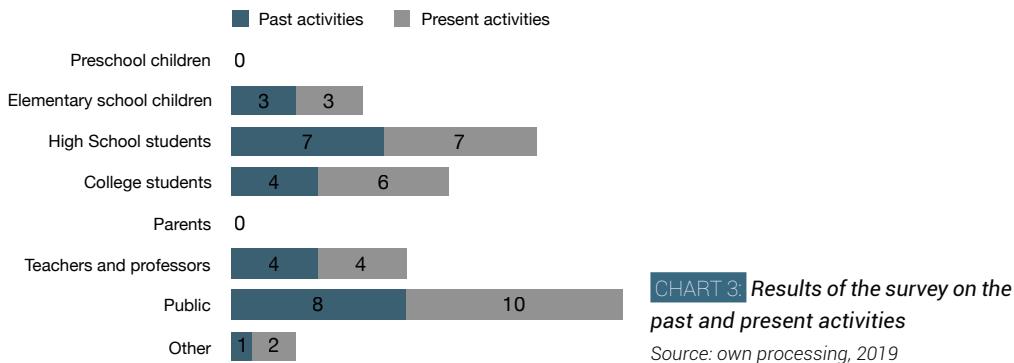
There are five organisations that have never carried out an activity in promoting media literacy in the last twenty years, nor they are carrying out any now. The national organisations of journalists in question are the ones of Belgium (Flanders), Italy, Malta, Poland and Romania. It is interesting to note that journalist associations of Flanders and Italy were identified as stakeholders in promoting media literacy in the report *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*.⁴⁸ It is also significant to find that the Italian organisation, in spite of the fact it has never carried out any programme, has financially supported programmes in the last twenty years. The Flemish Organisation of Journalists declared in additional notes that in Flanders media literacy activities are mostly done by NGOs, which is a good thing but as a journalist Federation they would like to be involved. SDP has organised many conferences regarding manipulation and disinformation. In the last three years SDP has been involved in international project Stop Fake, but nothing fully dedicated to media literacy yet, notes Polish Journalists Association (*Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich, SDP*).

When it comes to the type of activity in the field of media literacy that is or was carried out by organisations of journalists, one-sided activities prevail, such as organising and holding conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures. Only three organisations used to hold individual consulting, and four of them still do that. National organisations of journalists of Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain currently support creating media literacy curricula in schools, but only Denmark and Luxembourg did it in the past as well, so the progress is visible in this field. This kind of activity is emphasised in the above-listed declarations and these best practices should be promoted more at the European level. Building a new curriculum in collaboration with schools is an effective way of promoting media literacy and empowering both pupils and teachers.

Our opening line in this study concerns a programme where students of primary and secondary schools in Croatia had the opportunity to visit media companies, but within the activity organised by the media regulator. The Croatian Journalists' Association did not participate as a partner in this activity and other national journalists' organisations did not meet the expectations either when it comes to organising visits to media newsrooms although it would be expected from professional journalists. Only the National Association of Hungarian Journalists has demonstrated continuity in organising visits both in the past and today. The Union of Journalists in Finland used to organise this kind of visits, but it is not conducting this activity at the moment, while Portuguese journalists are currently organising visits to media newsrooms, which they did not do in the past. Only the Union of Journalists in Finland added an additional activity to the list of activities they are organising. „We participated“ in a project „Facts, thanks“ where 160 volunteer journalists visited schools to tell about journalists' work”, they explained and said that they also in the past organised school visits by journalists.

Answers to the questions as to for whom these activities are/were intended are very similar in the past and in the present. They are and were mostly intended for the public, high school students are in second place, for university students. The Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic and the Union of Cyprus Journalists added „journalist“ to lists in the section „other“.

⁴⁸ UNESCO Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/riga_recommendations_on_media_and_information_literacy.pdf>.



These results correspond to the results of the report *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28* according to which „80 of the 145 „case study“ projects targeted the broad audience group of ‘Teens and older students.’⁴⁹ It also notes that „half the projects that target teenagers and older students are aimed at parents.“⁵⁰ However, the results of this study show that not one single media literacy project conducted by organisations of journalists was intended for parents. In the report on Public policies in media and information literacy in Europe it was also noted that „*The role of parents in MIL outside of the school system diverged noticeably from one country to another, with parents being co-actors or coaches in the learning process (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, etc.) or parents and parents’ associations simply ignoring the issue of MIL (the Czech Republic, Portugal).*“⁵¹ In any case, this study shows that organisations of journalists do not see parents as key subjects in media literacy. It is worrying that there is no programme for preschool children either in spite of the fact the it was already included in UNESCO’s *The Grünwald Declaration* of 1982 how important it was to „initiate and support comprehensive media education programmes - from pre-school to university level, and in adult education.“⁵² The research conducted in Croatia by Ciboci, Kanižaj and Labaš in 2013 „revealed that the media are an integral part of children’s lives starting at the very earliest age, according to which an overwhelming 98.8% of parents reported that their preschool aged children are involved in some kind of media use.“⁵³ Since children in Croatia „start to learn about the media only in the first grade of primary school, as part of Croatian language courses, until then, it is up to their parents to teach their children about media content.“⁵⁴ It shows why quality media literacy programmes are necessary for both pre-school children and parents and organisations of journalists should recognise it.

Our results overview will be concluded with a content analysis of the official websites of journalists’ organisations. The researchers reviewed their content to find out if they had published any content connected to media literacy. The result shows that only ten out of 28

⁴⁹ UNESCO Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/riga_recommendations_on_media_and_information_literacy.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ FRAU-MEIGS, D., VELEZ, I., FLORES, M. J.: *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe*. New York, USA : Routledge, 2017, p. 52.

⁵² UNESCO Grünwald Declaration on Media Education. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/MEDIA_E.PDF>.

⁵³ UNESCO Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in Digital Era. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/In_Focus/paris_mil_declaration_final.pdf>.

⁵⁴ CIBOČI, L., LABAŠ, D., KANIŽAJ, I.: Media Education from the Perspective of Parents of Preschool Children: Challenges and Trends in Free Time Media Use. In *Medijska istraživanja*, 2014, Vol. 20, No 2, p. 53.

websites published some kind of content connected to media literacy. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasised that even among these websites, many are outdated and their content is very poor. Organisations often define content about fake news and advice for journalists as “media literacy content” but it is not entirely so.

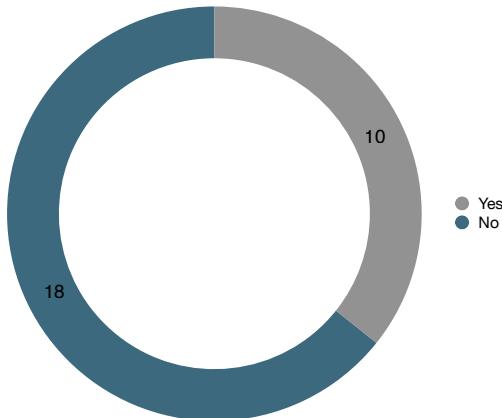


CHART 4: Results of the content analysis of the official websites of organisations of journalists

Source: own processing, 2019

7. Conclusion

One hundred years ago journalists were the first to recognise the problems of disinformation as a side effect of the *penny press era* that brought about a completely new approach to the audience. At that time, the first fact-checking departments were organised in newsrooms. Most of these activities were organised with the goal of obtaining credibility and trust. A great number of similarities with today's societies can be identified. Therefore, the same as at the beginning of the 20th century, journalists can be recognised as relevant stakeholders in promoting media literacy programmes.

Fact-checking activities started within media companies (at that time newspapers and magazines), probably with the idea to build primarily the reputation of a specific company or newsroom. Today media companies and journalists' organisations are facing far more challenges than before and they need media literacy programmes for at least two reasons: investing in future readers/audiences and empowering the public to recognise and acknowledge quality and professional journalism vs. disinformation, „fake news“ and different kinds of manipulation.

For this reason, we believe that organisations of journalists should assume a more active role in introducing media literacy programmes and coordinating activities between journalists, media companies and audiences. Although most of the research presented in this study suggest that in the last ten years organisations of journalists have been the least active in comparison to other stakeholders in promoting media literacy, this could be also due to the fact that media companies have been providing media literacy programmes on their own, yet focusing occasionally on only one segment of the public. Media literacy should be initiated by journalists, their organisations and companies not only because of the above-listed declarations, recommendations, codes of practice or even laws, but because of the fact that we need to empower audiences to be able to discern trustworthy, ethical, professional, credible journalism and distinguish it from many new forms of manipulation and disinformation produced by various channels.

A great number of opportunities missed by organisations of journalists can be identified. According to our research they have recognised the whole potential of media literacy programmes but there have been almost no activities intended for preschool children and parents initiated by organisations of journalists. Furthermore, the content analysis of their websites shows that it is hard to find specific information on media literacy.

In further research one has to analyse the difference between media literacy programmes provided by commercial vs. public media. However, a detailed analysis of the long-term effectiveness of the existing programmes is needed as well. There is also the important question of financing, which was not addressed in our research. Organisations of journalists have a great opportunity and responsibility to become active promoters of media literacy but this cannot be achieved without an exchange of the best practices between members of the organisations and opening up to the public that should recognise journalists, media companies and journalists organisations as the primary promoters of credibility in our societies.

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Authors



Igor Kanižaj

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

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

Stela Lechpammer

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



Stela Lechpammer, MJ., received her master's degree in Journalism at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb in 2016. She has been working as a journalist in a Croatian daily newspaper since 2014, and she is a teaching assistant at the Department for Journalism and Media Production at the Faculty of Political Science of University of Zagreb. She enrolled in a PhD study in 2018 at the Faculty of Philosophy, at the Department of Information and Communication Science. She published more than 2000 newspaper articles and she has been on the list of the 150 most quoted journalists in Croatia for the last three years. As a Teaching Assistant at the Faculty she is teaching printed journalism.

Crînguța – Irina Pelea

The Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence, Human Communication and Ethics. A Futuristic Perspective: Utopia or Dystopia?

ABSTRACT

In today's society, Artificial Intelligence is continuously evolving, with remarkable speed and it has a considerable impact on the community as a whole, starting with medicine, education, industry, and it affects communication in human relations. Once one can no longer deny this technological advancement with many implications on our lives, a new topic of discussion and academic research arises: to what extent will it be necessary to redefine the parameters of communication and the relationships between the individual, the group, the society, and the Artificial Intelligence. The present research tackles several problematic aspects related to AI in the present and some that may arise in the near future when robots will probably become a commodity. First, the author will investigate the communication relationship between AI and the individual, now, given the fact that the excessive use of technology recalibrates and reformulates the way one perceives and envisages the harmony and the efficiency of the communication process. Second, the connection between AI and ethics is another topic of high interest now, and even though the flourishing development of AI supposedly has as a mission the benefit of humankind, many ethical dilemmas keep arising and feed collective social anxiety, while no satisfying and consistent solutions seem to be found. Globalisation and technological progress mark another turning point for contemporary society, which witnesses an unforeseen academic impasse of knowledge, meaning that it is prone to reconfigure stable academic disciplines and to estimate the emergence of new ones, dictated by post-contemporary global necessities. For example, the ethics of robots or AI has high chances to become a well-established academic discipline soon, given the present turbulent and dynamic technological context, constantly shaping humanity's life. Considering the future implications of ethical and communication nature becomes a stringent necessity even at its earliest stages, not only for researchers of various departments and ethics committees but also for governments, corporations, and other industry branches. Therefore, creating and engraving a culture of social responsibility towards AI represents one of the most difficult challenges of our times, and finding the balance will make the difference between utopia and dystopia, where AI is a miracle... or an evil.

KEY WORDS

Artificial Intelligence (AI). Ethics. Robots. Communication. Challenges. Utopia. Dystopia.

1. Introduction

What has dictated the necessity of the present study is the accelerated development of AI, which continues to generate increased interest in AI and the countless possibilities its usage might offer. However, media and various products of popular culture abound in apocalyptic images and supposedly warn humanity of the imminent, lurking and yet lurking danger represented by AI.

Even though countless studies have been conducted on this topic, the novelty of this study lies in presenting an integrated and multifaceted perspective, combining two major problematic aspects – how humans will communicate with AI and the necessity of handling AI ethically.

After taking into consideration the above-stated topic and the research focus, the content of the study is organised as follows: the first section is dedicated to issues related to the communication relationship between humans and AI, while also summing up various well-known or little-known problems for the readers. The second section explains in detail various ethical aspects and concerns associated with the usage of AI in the contemporary world and intuitively estimates those soon to be. In the next section, the author will engage himself in an intercultural comparative analysis, on how culture influences and shapes humans' attitudes, behaviour, mentality, and communication with robots. The two cultural poles chosen to exemplify the current antithetic positioning are the Orient and the Occident, more specifically, Japan and America. These two countries metaphorically represent „utopia“ and „dystopia“, as futuristic emerging spaces for the developing robotic industry, dual concepts used as an allegory for two strikingly different attitudes towards AI. The final section is where the author discusses the conclusions and future work. However, the first disturbingly complicated question the author brings into the discussion is given by the difficulty of estimating how humans will communicate with robots.

2. A new approach to human-robot communication

Artificial Intelligence, otherwise known as „AI“ represents the intelligence shown by machines or software, and includes reasoning, natural processing language, and even various algorithms are used to put intelligence in the system.

Although until now, many researchers have approached the topic either from a technological, social, political or ethical perspective, there are still fewer insights on the academic domain of social robotics or more specifically, on how the human will communicate and reposition towards AI and robots, this being a binomial applied today to almost every domain of life and activity.

While being keen on just a set of fields, a large number of researchers seem to throw into oblivion a simple, yet unanswered question – what parameters one should consider as marking efficiency and harmony in communicating with robots.

In the ubiquitous contemporary society, where computing is omnipresent, everything is interconnected. Therefore, the AI revolution can be associated with almost every sphere of human activity.

While underlying the main question seems straightforward, answering it is far more complicated than it appears at the beginning.

Robots will challenge not only their communication relationship with humans but also human communication in general, given the fact that they enhance a trans-mediated reality, dictated by an overwhelming technological development. Moreover, the way robots will communicate with each other represents another dilemma. Therefore, this is a three-dimensional communication relationship: humans and robots, humans and humans, and finally robots and robots.

However, the primary topic for the present research is how one might envision the way humans and robots will communicate in the proximate future, and until now, very few consistent studies have been conducted on how humans and robots will interact with each other.

It is undeniable that technological change and the digital revolution shapes culture and the way individuals communicate nowadays, from the simplest tech apps to the most complex robots capable of engaging in a conversation with a human partner and completing tasks with a higher degree of difficulty.

The efficiency of communication, no matter the nature of the communicators is highly dependent on each one's ability to understand the other. It is no exception in the present case.

When it comes to the human-robot communication relationship, there are at least three parameters worthy of attention: the purpose of the communication (the exchanged information), the direction of the communication (from whom does the information flow), and the communication media (through what media is the information transferred).¹

While verbal communication appears to be the easiest way to make a robot execute tasks, there are also other ways of communicating, such as via joystick or silent communication.

However, in a broader context, there are at least two aspects, which are worthy of being mentioned: first, the arbitrariness of the communication relationship decreases drastically, while the planning becomes proactive; the second one concerns the fact that both human and robot co-participate in a virtual mediated reality. Therefore, these two aspects have a substantial impact on permanently re-shaping the communication relationship. Humans' strength or weakness (from some points of view) is their emotive communication, one that the robots of nowadays lack.

Unlike them, humans have a unique capacity of permanently adapting to highly dynamic situations or making fast decisions based on judging various and sometimes even contradictory circumstances. However, this is where the limit of the present analysis emerges: there is no clear evidence or specific estimation of how the robotic industry will evolve in the next 50 to 70 years, and if these present weaknesses will be solved or at least improved.

While humans have an excellent adapting capacity, robots are known to have a remarkable performing ability of highly constrained tasks (i.e., taking the best photograph, after calculating the variables and best parameters).

Besides the execution as mentioned above of tasks and monitoring the robot in achieving it, another critical aspect concerning human-robot communication is related to the learning process, which is associated with both parts. At the first look, it might seem natural that the smartness of a robot can reduce the discomfort and burden of the human user, but one should look closely at therapeutic robots or those used primarily with a pedagogical purpose.

Within this broader context, another significant aspect that is worthy of being mentioned is the existence of a common vocabulary, capable of satisfying both their needs.

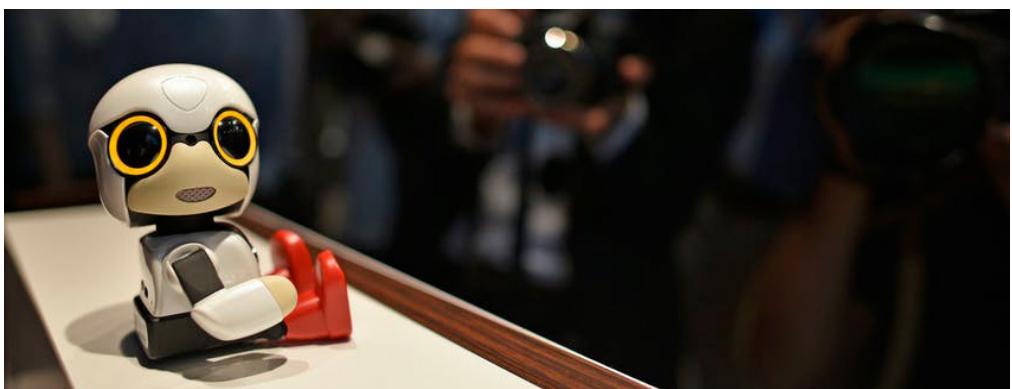
Moreover, from a social and cultural point of view, the emotionless state and lack of humanity characterise this communication relationship. One might presume that any communication relationship is highly dependent on the trust invested by both parties, in a futuristic scenario. What factors are prone to determine the level of the robot's trustworthiness? Alternatively, can one assume that in the near future, it will also become necessary to establish a measurement scale of a human's trustworthiness, in a robot's perception?

The human response towards the existence and the dynamic evolution of robots is complicated: social, cultural, political, economic, and nevertheless, psychological and psychiatric. Similarly, with video game addiction or the hunger for virtual reality of many young people, the author presumes that a similar obsession for robots is highly likely to be developed, up until the point humankind will be confronted with the necessity of new psychological symptoms or psychiatric conditions. It is not unfamiliar for people to bond with machines, even robots, but the empathy seems to be, at least until now, only one-sided.

¹ DEMIRIS, Y., KLINGSPOR, V., KAISER, M.: Human-Robot-Communication and Machine Learning. In *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 1999, Vol. 11, No. 7, p. 6. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/2824923_Human-Robot-Communication_and_Machine_Learning>.

A fascinating example² is one of robot-human teams trained to operate bomb disposal equipment. After working together for an extended period with their human partners, the robot has frequently put themselves in harm's way to keep the humans safe. The soldiers ended up feeling that the robot saved their lives and wanted to keep it at their side. This could explain why iRobot, the manufacturers of the Packbot bomb-disposal robots, have received more than one box of shrapnel with the robots' remains after an explosion with messages asking to have the robots fixed. Although the company was more than willing to send a new robot to the unit, several teams of soldiers refused and insisted that they want that one fixed. In the author's personal interpretation, this attitude is a reflection of human nature, because the teams of soldiers looked upon the robot as „a pet“ or even more, „a friend“ that was ready to die with them, a loyal friend that they wanted to keep by their side and one they trusted with their lives.

Similarly, the development of robot babies has become a popular trend in Japan³, and it has raised numerous questions of moral and ethical nature, regarding the bonding of potential parents with these robotic babies. In a rapidly ageing nation that has been confronted for the last two decades with a severe decline of population and childbirth, robot babies are highly likely to cause serious emotional issues to the parents, especially given their baby like appearance and their portrayal of human-like behaviours.



Picture 1: JAPAN TOYOTA ROBOT: Toyota to launch 'Kirobo Mini' robot

Source: EPA/FRANCK ROBICHON. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<http://www.epa.eu/economy-business-and-finance-photos/company-information-computing-it-photos/toyota-to-launch-kirobo-mini-robot-photos-53048049>>.

Nevertheless, in this case, as well, the bonding is one-sided and mimicking a child-parent relationship raises other issues: are the parents justified to select the robot's characteristics and how should they proceed, once the child „grows up“? Is their communication relationship prone to freeze temporally or is it possible to transfer the emotional attachment to a new robot embodying an older child?

These examples lead the present article to another critical point, namely the social status of the robot. Is it predefined or does it depend on each one's personal preference and system of beliefs? What social and moral relationship can a human have with a robot? Can a robot achieve an interpretation of the world, concerning his experience?⁴

² CARPENTER, J.: Just Doesn't Look Right: Exploring the Impact of Humanoid Robot Integration into Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams. In LUPPICINI, R. (ed.): *Handbook of Research on Technoself: Identity in a Technological Society*. Hershey, PA : Information Science Publishing, 2013, p. 621.

³ ANDERSON, M. R.: *Robot babies from Japan raise all sorts of questions about how parents bond with AI*. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<https://theconversation.com/robot-babies-from-japan-raise-allsorts-of-questions-about-chow-parents-bond-with-ai-66815>>.

⁴ FONG, T., NOURBAKHSH, I., DAUTENHAHN, K.: A survey of socially interactive robots. In *Robotics and Autonomous Systems*, 2003, Vol. 42, No. 3-4, p. 146.

With increasing activities and roles in the fields of health care and education, it becomes a genuine challenge to establish the robot's position, rights and obligations in a society centred on humans, above all.

3. Ethics and AI

Countless ethical and philosophical issues have arisen, concerning the AI and its impact on humans' lives, from their place in humans' society to their ability or right to make decisions. The fact that AI continues to change and to improve our lives in domains such as health care, education, transportation, industry productivity, entertainment, public safety and so many more.

Therefore, ethics has high chances of making the difference and playing a bordering role between the utopian and dystopian future frequently imagined in mass-media, movies, literature or academic research. Accordingly, at least three ethical aspects have been identified concerning AI⁵: „ethics by design“ (principles intended to support providers, developers and users and it represents the inclusion of ethical reasoning capabilities into service design and product per se); „ethics in design“ (the engineering methods that serve to the analysis of ethical issues). The final one is „ethics for design“ (the codes of conduct and standard principles, which should be adhered to by developers and users as well, throughout the process of researching, designing, constructing or using artificial intelligence systems).

However, there are multiple perspectives of this domain; for example, from the perspective of human's ethical behaviour, the ethics of robots can refer to the ethics of robotic design and architecture, the ethics of protecting the robots, and the ethics of humans towards robots⁶. The examples in this direction and the moral dilemmas are countless.

At the design level, the three *laws* of Isaac Asimov served in the beginning as the foundation of Robotics, and are frequently mentioned by researchers and public, but these principles did not solve the ethical and moral controversies that keep arising, even after more than 75 years since their debut. As for the following, the laws are:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow human nature to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such rules would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

However, not even Asimov's perspective is unassailable. These laws, which restrict robots' behaviour, are set to protect humans from being harmed by robots but inherent contradictions, ambiguities, loopholes hide in the rules, and this has led to awkward and counterintuitive robot behaviour. The semantic ambiguity of the laws in stating the difference and definition of words such as „human“ and „robot“ is another weakness of the laws, and one should always remember that Isaac Asimov created these laws as a literary device, and even in his science fiction universe, the laws failed.

Moreover, in the context of the highly evolved field of robotics, the ethical guidelines envisioned by Asimov are in urgent need of updating, to correspond to the continuous growth and dynamism of this industry full of surprises.

⁵ DIGNUM, V.: Ethics in artificial intelligence: introduction to the special issue. In *Ethics and Information Technology*, 2018, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 1-3. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10676-018-9450-z.pdf>>.

⁶ KUKITA, M.: The possibility of Robot Ethics. In *The Prospectus: The Laboratory Bulletin of the Philosophy Department*, 2009, Vol.11, No. 11, p. 3. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/71114>>.

Besides this urgent updating, another challenge is designing an ethical template accepted on a global scale and internationally recognised, with the same purpose of creating safe, robust, and compliant robots. However, what are the chances of establishing a single ethical guidebook followed by all the nations, in the long term? This situation seems to be gloomy and depressing.

With the increasing ability to make autonomous decisions, one of the most critical issues is the necessity of rethinking the *responsibility* of robots.⁷ Moreover, if components such as empathy and care interfere in the communication relationship, the decision-making process becomes even more complicated. A suitable example is one of robots caring for the elderly, a type of situation that has gained increasing attention in the public space. On the one hand, the elderly adults confront themselves with physical weakness, mental diseases associated with ageing, and some of them are in the situation where they can no longer independently live at home, without the assistance of trained personnel. On the other hand, given the current stage of the technological evolution, robots are far from what a human caregiver can offer.



Picture 2: *RIBA, the world's first nursing care robot, developed by the research institute Riken, Japan.*

Source: *Nursing Care Robot Lends a Helping Hand*. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <www.nippon.com/en/features/c00502/>.

If the robot acts as a caregiver, this could also turn into deception, because elders will be prone to believe that robots care for them and that they will establish a long time emotional relationship.⁸

Recently, new concepts, such as „*artificial empathy*“ and „*artificial emotions*“ are emerging, and even though the affective developmental robotics is in an early stage, philosophical, moral, and ethical debates concerning these topics continue to arise. Besides the above-mentioned ethical issues, there are many social challenges and risks interposed by the usage or the over-usage of robots: human unemployment caused by automation, recalibration of the job market,

⁷ Dignum, V.: Responsible autonomy. In *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI'2017)*, 2017, p. 4699. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ijcai.org/proceedings/2017/0655.pdf>>.

⁸ SPARROW, R., SPARROW L.: In the hands of machines? The future of aged care. In *Minds and Machines: Journal for Artificial Intelligence, Philosophy and Cognitive Science*, 2016, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 151. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225790670_In_the_hands_of_machines_The_future_of_aged_care>.

the usage of AI with a destructive purpose, sometimes of a military nature, the altering of human intelligence, the alienation of humans, and so on.

The continuous morphing of ethics and morality corresponds to the advancement of technology, which explains why the complexity of ethical issues increases, with every additional step AI takes into our lives. A Manichean approach is not the answer in reaching a consensus between how humans will or can communicate ethically with robots.

One option could be aligning a machine's objectives to a human's objectives through ethical conduct and values⁹, but even if inculcating the set of values and morals takes place at the programming level or through observation and active learning, failure is prone to happen. An even more straightforward solution, albeit not satisfying for the human side, is to transfer the entire responsibility of AI's actions, even the ones caused by design and functional errors, to humans.¹⁰

Creating an ethical paradigm upon which robots and humans should guide their conduct becomes vital, to ensure the sustainability of an AI-friendly society. Henceforth, before deciding what should be considered „ethical“, in a robot's behaviour, humans have the chance to reflect upon their own ethical and moral values and to re-evaluate them, to support the reshaping of the present society at a deeper level.

One final issue arises in how people from different cultures and societies will reach consensus in their interactions with robots. For instance, cultural differences play a significant role in determining people's response to robots.

4. Utopia or dystopia: an intercultural and futuristic perspective on AI

At the intersection of ethics, social robotics, and communication, the culture exercises probably one of the most significant influences on people's response to robots. In the present study, the author has used the words „utopia“ and „dystopia“ as metaphors for two antithetic attitudes and reactions towards robots. Japan has intertwined a utopic future surrounding AI, while America envisions a dystopic future doomed by apocalyptic images, where robots are to blame for humankind's extinction. For a Japanese person, robots are more likely to be „cute“ (kawaii), and kind (yasashii), but for Americans, and many other people living in the Occident, robots will be regarded as scary.

What can adequately explain these antagonistic perceptions of robots? Several factors are underlying the significant perception difference that is also prone to influence the harmony of a possible global ethical code, followed and respected by all nations equally.

The first one is *religious* in origin.

Japan, unlike America and many other European countries, is areligious, while its history and past have been influenced by the coexistence of more than one religion: Buddhism, Shintoism, Christianity, and even Judaism. However, within this national religious mosaic, in Japan's early religious history, Shinto has a very distinct and unique place.

Being one of Japan's dominant religions, Shinto embodies an expression of *animism*, one of the world's oldest religions. According to its doctrine, animism considers that every element existing in this world (be it animals, plants, insects, rocks, forest, rivers, spirits of deceased

⁹ RUSSELL, S., NORVIG, P.: *Artificial intelligence: A Modern Approach*. New Jersey : Pearson, 2010, p. 37.

¹⁰ PAVALOIU, A., KOSE, U.: Ethical Artificial Intelligence – An Open Question. In *Journal of Multidisciplinary Developments*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 21-22. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <<https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1706/1706.03021.pdf>>.

human beings, weather-related phenomena and so on) is alive and in possession of various and distinct spirits. The non-existence of an interspecies hierarchy is what ensures the maintenance of the sublime harmony.

Animism explains, on an ancestral level, the positive and engaging attitude of the Japanese people, when it comes to interacting with robots or with messages, ideas, and images related to AI. Thus, animism reinforces the idea that the robot has its identification but must act under the law of social harmony, by serving as a tool to the human owner. As long as the human treats the robot properly, the robot should behave ethically as well.

However, from the religious perspective, America stands at the opposite pole. In a country characterised by the predominance of monotheistic faiths, such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism, in people's conscience the idea prevails that only God should create humans. Therefore, the image of humans building human like robots is almost like blasphemy and can be easily equated with being a form of usurping the divine role. Such actions cannot go unpunished, and Western mentality becomes imbued with a cultural, not logical fear of the robotised future.

As the world's leading country in the robotic industry, Japan has invested outstanding governmental budgets, to expand the robot industry and to ensure its top position globally. The striking difference between the social acceptance of robots in Japan versus America or the West can be explained only by examining the Japanese people's psychology, cultural and social customs.

Henceforth, the next important factor has a *psychological* and *philosophical* nature. Before starting an endless debate about how ethics in Western conception, and its translation in the Japanese language, „*rinri*“¹¹ (the Eastern perception) differ, the author would like to add only the fact that Japanese ethics is uniquely characterised by the superiority of social harmony, over the individual subjectivity.

Moreover, the robot corresponds in essence to the ideal of perfection, existing in Japanese mentality, and satisfies a social expectation in the context of a nation praising technology, innovation, and excellence. Whereas, in American conception, the idea prevails that robots are built to serve us exclusively, without having such social values as mentioned.

By way of contrast, in America, ethics and religion intersect, and many may assume that it is just not ethical to create a machine resembling to some extent humans. What could inculcate a sense of anxiety towards machines is the fact that robots often exhibit unnatural human reactions, despite sharing a great physical resemblance.

Japanese *popular culture*, through *anime* and *manga*, represents the following factor that has played a tremendous influence in shaping Nippon's attitude towards robots. Created in the 1950s by Osamu Tezuka, known as the godfather of anime and manga, Astro Boy or Tetsuwan Atomu is a robotic hero boy, with supernatural powers – he can fly, speak around 60 foreign languages and detect whether a person is good or bad.

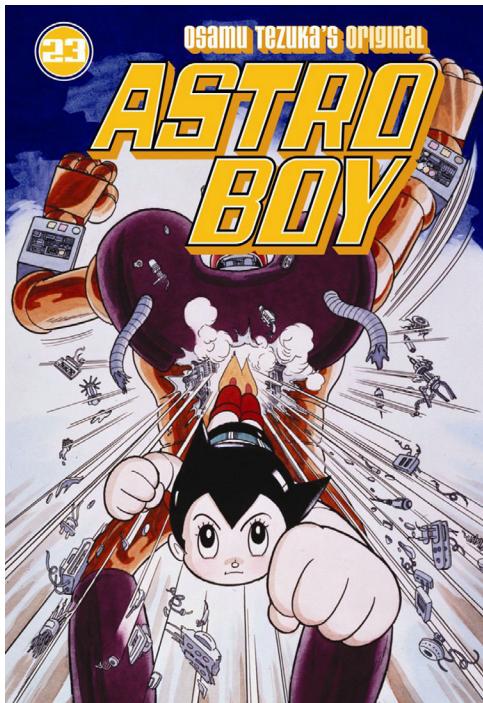
Even though he resembles the appearance of a young boy, his superpowers are gifted by the most modern technology. This hero, who continuously fights to protect humanity from evil, is powered by an atomic reactor in his chest and by a computer for a brain. The cultural icon symbolises the peaceful use of nuclear energy and manga and anime's narration explore the latent utopian usage of nuclear power, which now is used to bring peace, rather than to destroy.

The series enjoyed huge popularity and shaped the mentality of a young generation living in a Japan shocked and devastated by the effects of the Second World War and which were enduring hardship and deprivations without precedent. Besides living at a time when food, fuel, and money were scarce, the nation struggled with severe post-war trauma and depression. In this context, anime and manga were born to heal and to help the Japanese people spiritually to be reborn and to fight for rebuilding what was at that time a shattered country.

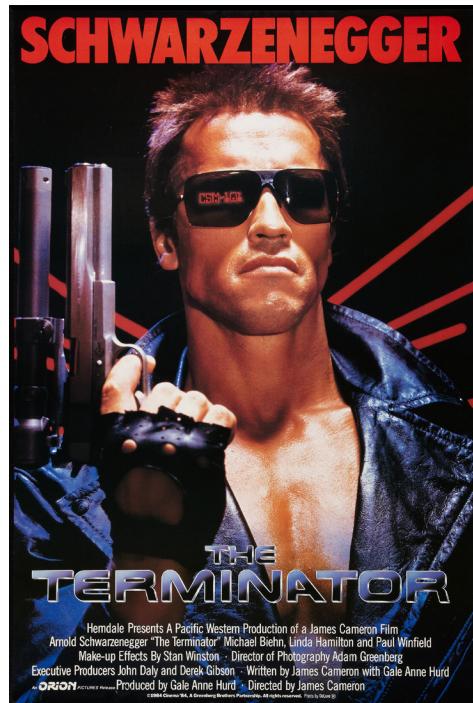
¹¹ KITANO, N.: *Rinri: An Incitement towards the Existence of Robots in Japanese Society*. In *International Review of Information Ethics*, 2006, Vol. 6, No. 12, p. 81. [online]. [2019-02-11]. Available at: <http://www.i-r-i-e.net/inhalt/006/006_full.pdf>.

The appearance of Astro Boy marked the development and spread of popularity for mecha anime (robot anime), with robot protagonists, such as „Gundam“, „Evangelion“, „Mazinger“ or „Ultraman“.

All these productions enjoyed national and international recognition and played an interactive role in reshaping Japan's culture and society. Moreover, robots were depicted as characters with their distinct personality, not only inorganic lifeless machines, with their sole purpose to serve humans unquestionably.



Picture 3: „Astro Boy“ Vol. 1 by Osamu Tezuka, 1952.
Source: „Astro Boy“ Vol. 1 by Osamu Tezuka, 1952. [online].
[2019-02-19]. Available at: <<https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/456411743457994889/?lp=true>>.



Picture 4: Terminator (1986) – official poster.
Source: Terminator (1986) – official poster. [online].
[2019-02-19]. Available at: <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088247/>>.

Therefore, this is a country where children grew up being intensively exposed to anime and manga picturing robot heroes and successful human-robot teams, which were envisioned as fighting for humanity's future, good and peace, robots that were our allies, friends, and supporters, and did not represent any danger or threat, like other enemies.

One can also assume that the presence of robots in Japanese popular culture had a compensatory role and fuelled the imagination of a largely and still impoverished nation, by giving it hope and smiles.

Manga and anime educated the conscience of nowadays' Japan, which exhibits a genuine fondness for robots. Japanese people do not feel the same social anxiety when they encounter robots or the idea of robots, unlike Americans or other Westerners.

In American popular culture, Terminator symbolised the stereotypical image of robots and contributed to strengthening the apocalyptic fear of Westerners for robots. Similarly, the story of doctor Frankenstein, first published in 1818, by Mary Shelley, illustrates how the creation of a fictional scientist, who sewed together a corpse, comes to life and turns evil.

The futuristic scenario of a crushed utopia where initially machines, which initially served humans rebelled and enslaved their creators is very frequent, and this explains to a certain measure the antipathy and the anxiety felt by a vast majority of the western public when coming in contact with robots or the idea of a robot. The western attitude towards robots has roots in the recurrent negative cinematic depictions and their ramifications in popular culture.

Hence, in the Western conception, creating robots is associated with defying the divine, which is prone to be severely punished, and this ideological, cultural, and social environment bred an early form of robophobia. Terminator is the marking point of the critical Western dystopia and the human extinction, where machines have crushed humans, whereas Astro Boy can be considered the genesis point of the Japanese utopia, the alternative solution for progress, and universal peace, all in the universe of robots.

This is how two strikingly different settings of popular culture trigger reflexive, ideological and cultural specific responses from two nations, displaying unique and peculiar mentalities, but sharing the same robotised near future.

5. Conclusion

In the context of a society's continuing struggle with globalisation and robotisation, humanity needs to reconsider AI with its multiple and varied representations, not only from a scientific and engineering perspective, but also from a cultural, ethical, and social one, addressing their inclusion, adaptation, and communication with their human counterparts.

On one hand, given the broadness of the selected topic, the present research has not addressed in detail some aspects, such as robot rights, rights and issues of using robots under certain circumstances, technical problems etc. On the other hand, the study focused on underlining aspects such as ethics and communication of AI in a multicultural and complex environment and explored in a comparative analysis the dual and antithetic attitudes towards robots in the West (America) and the East (Japan).

The immense power of AI can no longer be ignored, but the one problematic issue that arises is not technological, but instead is that of a social, moral, ethical, and communicational nature: reaching a consensus and harmony in the human-robot relationship seems to be the biggest challenge.

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Author



Crînguta – Irina Pelea

Titu Maiorescu University
Calea Văcărești,
No. 187, 4th District, Bucharest
ROMANIA
cringuta.irina.pelea@gmail.com

Crînguta – Irina Pelea is a Lecturer in the Department of Communication and Public Relations, Titu Maiorescu University, Bucharest, Romania, where she has been a faculty member since 2018. Crînguta – Irina Pelea completed her Ph.D. degree in Sciences of Communication, 2014, at the University of Bucharest, Romania, with a thesis on Japanese popular culture in the Romanian context, and her undergraduate studies at the same university. Dr. Pelea is also proficient in the Japanese language, the reason why her doctoral thesis and other research papers as well focused on Japanese language content and its reception by the Western public. Her primary research field is intercultural communication, and her secondary research fields are popular culture and cultural anthropology. Dr. Pelea has published a volume and research articles, which address a wide spectrum of subjects ranging from Japanese contemporary popular culture, political and diplomatic communication crisis, the globalisation of cultural icons, to the problematics of protecting one's cultural identity or social robotics and ethical issues concerning AI.

Christina Hicks-Goldston, Amy Ritchart

The New Digital Divide: Disinformation and Media Literacy in the U.S.

ABSTRACT

This research addresses the impact of disinformation and media illiteracy on civil discourse and informed societal activity in the United States. The research provides analysis of the conditions surrounding disinformation and media illiteracy, as well one proposed solution for the problem: a media literacy educational program for both digital and non-digital natives via an international alliance of experts. Initially, the „Digital Divide“ of the early 21st century referenced individuals unable to access digital information with the same efficiency as those individuals in a household with a personal computer. In 2007, the introduction of smart phone technology transformed some of the Digital Divide population by providing information previously restricted to individuals with PC access to anyone who owned a phone. However, frequency of use is not the equivalent of mastery or thorough understanding. In 2016, the disinformation campaigns surrounding the U.S. presidential election, and later popular culture campaigns such as supposed controversy surrounding Disney's *The Last Jedi*, emerged as foreign interference with American culture exploiting cultural divides. This research addresses two things: (1) Recognition of a caveat to the Knowledge Gap Theory in 21st century media interaction; and (2) Creation of a media literacy educational program via an international coalition for the sole purpose of combating disinformation..

KEY WORDS

Media literacy. Disinformation. Knowledge Gap Theory. Propaganda. Digital Divide.

1. Introduction

In February 2019, the New Knowledge cyber security company released „The Tactics and Tropes of the Internet Research Agency“ a report on Russian online interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI).¹ The New Knowledge report provided background on the IRA, which originated in mid-2013 in St. Petersburg and operated „*like a sophisticated marketing agency in a centralized office environment*“.² The analysts who prepared the New Knowledge report arrived at three forms of Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election of 2016:

1. Attempts to hack online voting systems (as detailed by a U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report).
2. A cyber-attack targeting the Democratic National Committee, executed by the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU, which led to a controlled leak via WikiLeaks of email data related to the Clinton presidential campaign.
3. A sweeping and sustained social influence operation consisting of various coordinated disinformation tactics aimed directly at U.S. citizens, designed to exert political influence and exacerbate social divisions in U.S. culture.³

The same week of the New Knowledge report issuance, *The New Yorker* reported on Americans' unwillingness to understand that propaganda is not always something clear-cut and easily identified with a specific agenda. Often, propaganda's purpose is to „*remove the public's ability to perceive reality*“.⁴ The article concluded with the cynical observation that the goal of the propaganda was proliferation of *noise* – creating a reality in which nothing is sincere or insincere – just noise.⁵

Additionally, disinformation and Americans' general lack of ability and desire to analyze, interpret and evaluate messaging, particularly on social media, is not confined to foreign interference. A 2018 study of U.S. election-specific ads titled „The Stealth Media? Groups and Targets behind Divisive Issue Campaigns on Facebook“ found groups that spread divisive disinformation aimed at voters fell into several categories within the United States, including nonprofits: *astroturf groups*, a category for grassroots-based groups composed of citizens or coalitions primarily created and funded by corporations, industry trade associations, political operatives or PR firms, as well as unidentifiable foreign entities.⁶ Real-time analysis of user-based digital and tracking tools targeting patterns for 5 million paid ads on Facebook found only one of six of the groups was Russian. Kim et al. point out that anonymous issue campaigns by U.S. non-profits are increasing, and that most of the groups behind issue campaigns online did not report to the U.S. Federal Election Commission (FEC). They observed that half of these groups were in their „*suspicious*“ category, stating, „*the majority of groups behind issue campaigns on Facebook are 'anonymous' groups whose true identity is little known to the public*“.⁷

¹ PINEDA, CH.: *The Tactics and Tropes of the Internet Research Agency*. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.hsl.org/c/tactics-and-tropes-of-the-internet-research-agency/>>.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ GESSEN, M.: Why the Russian Influence Campaign Remains So Hard to Understand. In *The New Yorker*. Released 22nd February 2019. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <<https://www.newyorker.com/news/ourcolumnists/why-the-russian-influence-campaign-remains-so-hard-to-understand>>.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ KIM, Y. M. et al.: The Stealth Media? Groups and Targets Behind Divisive Issue Campaigns on Facebook. In *Political Communication*, 2018, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 518.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 531.

For people who eschewed politics in favor of popular culture, another kind of Russian meddling emerged in a supposed hate campaign against the Disney release, *The Last Jedi*. Bay analyzed the fan rhetoric surrounding the release of *The Last Jedi* and observed that the film inspired more conservative audiences to see the themes of gender, race, and class equality in the film as a leftist takeover of the franchise: „*The Last Jedi fan conflict is not just an interesting case because it is a microcosm of the overall political discourse on social media in the Trump era, but also because it is possible to identify organized and deliberate attempts at right-wing political persuasion and/or defense of conservative values, as well as sexism, racism and homophobia in the social media discussions about the film...it appears political activists have used bots and sock puppet accounts to troll left-wing fans, and there is even evidence that Russian influence operators have inserted themselves into the debate to exploit and exacerbate the conflict, thereby securing more media attention to the conflict, which again helps spread the perception that America is divided and in chaos*“.⁸ The author offered that identity-based political values combined with traditional party politics and issue-based politics created a polarization of Star Wars fan critique found in more than half of the study.⁹

This explosion of disinformation campaigning and its intersection with social media dialogues in both the political and popular culture arenas reveals a need for increased media literacy in the U.S. about the origins and execution of propaganda and disinformation. This research addresses two things: (1) Recognition of a caveat to the Knowledge Gap Theory in 21st century media interaction; and (2) Creation of a media literacy educational program combating the spread of disinformation among the population targeted at both the consumers and content producers, such as journalists.

2. Literature Review: Disinformation and Propaganda

Disinformation

Bennett and Livingston explored the origins of democratic and disinformation disruption, cautioning against becoming immersed in examination of „fake news“ and failing to acknowledge the other disruptive patterns of civil, democratic societies that are challenged.¹⁰

Fallis proposed „necessary and jointly sufficient“ conditions for disinformation and constructed a conceptual analysis for effective diagnosis of disinformation, finally concluding that its prevalence created a need for immediate identification as a preventative measure.¹¹ Fallis re-visited the topic in 2015 and added the concept of disinformation’s *function* of misleading people as lies or propaganda, or as conspiracy theories and fake alarm calls.¹²

Fried and Polyakova authored a document suggesting the following possible actions for countering disinformation in the U.S. and Europe: the role of governments, the role of civil society, the role of the private sector, and tools for long-term resistance, including formation of Counter-Disinformation Coalition composed of U.S. and European like-minded individuals from the public and private sector.¹³ Kumar and Geethakumari proposed an algorithm for detection of false information which would enable users to make informed decisions about what information

⁸ BAY, M.: Weaponizing the Haters: The Last Jedi and the Strategic Politicization of Pop Culture through Social Media Manipulation. In *First Monday*, 2018, Vol. 23, No. 11. p. 6.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 22.

¹⁰ BENNETT, W. L., LIVINGSTON, S.: The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and the Decline of Democratic Institutions. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2018, Vol. 33, No. 2, p. 135.

¹¹ FALLIS, D.: A Conceptual Analysis of Disinformation. In *iConference 2009 Papers*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina : Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, 2009, p. 2-7. [online]. [2019-02-28]. Available at: <<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/15205>>.

¹² FALLIS, D.: What is Disinformation? In *Library Trends*, 2015, Vol. 63, No. 3, p. 413.

¹³ FRIED, D., POLYAKOVA, A.: *Democratic Defense Against Disinformation*. Washington, DC : Atlantic Council, 2019, p. 5-12.

to spread throughout social networks, labelling it a „prevention rather than a cure“ for the spread of false information in social networks.¹⁴ Kumar, West, and Leskovec explored so-called „hoax articles“ on Wikipedia, including their real-world impact, frequency of reference in web documents, and the success of humans versus artificial/automated intelligence in determining hoax articles; humans were less successful at spotting a hoax.¹⁵ Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook observed the abundance of misinformation’s adverse influence on society, arguing that successful study of misinformation must include analysis within the larger political, technological, and societal context.¹⁶ McGeehan offered counter-measures against Russian disinformation campaigns, such as using Artificial Intelligence to detect and divert disinformation from further dissemination, containment of disinformation stories by social media and other media, education on the nature and process of disinformation, as well as a role for the military.¹⁷ Morgan provided a set of conditions that created the current climate of disinformation and „fake news,“ such as the deliberate spread of disinformation, resultant financial gain from advertising on social media, and a loss of credibility for established information sources and institutions.¹⁸ Posetti and Matthews provided a „learning module for journalists and journalism educators“ from the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) for educating students on disinformation, including a „selected timeline of ‘Information Disorder’ through the ages“, learning module aims and outcomes, module format, and both theoretical and practical applications of the material in online and in-classroom learning environments.¹⁹ Swire, et al., investigated the cognitive processing of true and false political information, concluding, „*the real-world consequences of this study suggest politicians can seemingly spread misinformation without dramatic negative consequences of losing supporters – the results of the 2016 election are consistent with this interpretation*“.²⁰ Tucker et al. authored a report for the Hewlett Foundation „*to provide a comprehensive overview of the scholarly literature on the relationship between three factors that may be undermining the quality of democracy: (1) social media usage; (2) political polarization; and (3) the prevalence of disinformation.*“²¹ Zhang, et al. offered that defense against misinformation had to be holistic in nature, including initiatives such as reputation systems, fact-checking, increased media literacy, revenue models, and public feedback working together for an improved system. The authors proposed a shared vocabulary for representing credibility by creating a defined set of indicators of credibility – content indicators and context indicators.²²

¹⁴ KUMAR, K. K., GEETHAKUMARI, G.: Detecting Misinformation in Online Social Networks Using Cognitive Psychology. In *Human-Centric Computing and Information Sciences*, 2014, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 14. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13673-014-0014-x>>.

¹⁵ KUMAR, S., WEST, R., LESKOVEC, J.: Disinformation on the Web: Impact, Characteristics, and Detection of Wikipedia Hoaxes. In BOURDEAU, J., HENDLER, J. A. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on World Wide Web*. Montreal, Canada : International World Wide Web Conferences Steering Committee, 2016, p. 600.

¹⁶ LEWANDOWSKY, S., ECKER, U. K., COOK, J.: Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the „Post-Truth“ Era. In *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 2017, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 365.

¹⁷ MCGEEHAN, T. P.: Countering Russian Disinformation. In *Parameters*, 2018, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 53-56.

¹⁸ MORGAN, S.: Fake News, Disinformation, Manipulation and Online Tactics to Undermine Democracy. In *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 40.

¹⁹ POSETTI, J., MATTHEWS, A.: *A Short Guide to the History of Fake News’ and Disinformation*. International Center for Journalists. [online]. [2019-03-25]. Available at: <<https://www.lcfj.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/A%20Short, 20>>.

²⁰ SWIRE, B., et al.: Processing Political Misinformation: Comprehending the Trump Phenomenon. In *Royal Society Open Science*, 2017, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 18. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rsos.160802>>.

²¹ TUCKER, J. et al.: *Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature*. New York : William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2018, p. 4.

²² ZHANG, A. X. et al.: A Structured Response to Misinformation: Defining and Annotating Credibility Indicators in News Articles. In GANDON, F., CHAMPIN, P. A. (eds.): *Companion of the Web Conference 2018 on The Web Conference 2018*. Lyon, France : International World Wide Web Conferences Steering Committee, 2018, p. 603-604.

Propaganda

Lee, an American sociologist who worked regularly with the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937 – 1942), outlined five interrelated approaches to effective propaganda analysis: (1) societal – recognizing propaganda's emergence from social tensions and struggles within a culture; (2) social-psychological – acknowledging the propagandist's understanding of what will stimulate or provoke the audience's consciousness; (3) communicatory – recognizing the need for analysis of the character of the communicator and medium used; (4) psychological – observes the psychological traits of the propagandist, as well as the propagandist's communicatory gifts of persuasion and audience analysis; and (5) technical – using the propaganda devices in a more thorough analysis than merely labeling each device.²³ Fawkes & Moloney labelled public relations as „weak propaganda“, arguing for a European IPA staffed by field experts and ethicists to establish criteria for ethical behavior and messaging in PR.²⁴

The Knowledge Gap Hypothesis

When addressing the problematic nature of disinformation and propaganda, researchers always reference another key issue/factor – an educated or knowledgeable public. Currently, the American public is somewhat aware of disinformation and propaganda events, although their attitude would not be labeled „vigilant“. Instead, there is a sense of distanced disregard for the alarm surrounding disinformation or propaganda, a kind of „Knowledge Gap“. The Knowledge Gap hypothesis, authored by Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien in 1970, states: „*As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than lower social segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease. This „knowledge gap“ hypothesis does not hold that the lower status population segments remain completely uninformed (or that the poor in knowledge get poorer in an absolute sense). Instead, the proposition is that the growth of knowledge is relatively greater among the higher status segments.*“²⁵ In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Knowledge Gap Hypothesis became the „Digital Divide“ – a separation of individuals who were more schooled in computer technology and terminology was contrasted with individuals who were not able to access computers. By 2007, Apple's iPhone and its „smartphone“ technology bridged the Digital Divide enormously. However, the smartphone phenomenon could only extend knowledge as far as the users' abilities to critically consider information.

3. Discussion

A Proposed Caveat to the Knowledge Gap: Media Literacy

Media literacy should be a part of the Knowledge Gap hypothesis, with the „gap“ referencing degrees of media literacy within the population. In the following pages, this research presents a plan that supports media literacy within the population. For purposes of this research, media literacy should include the following factors: (1) An understanding of how media products are created, including both the technology and the different professional positions associated with media production; (2) Knowledge of how to critique and analyze media products from a critical-cultural perspective; (3) Awareness of different media delivery models; and (4) Knowledge of media history and its place in the history of a culture.

²³ LEE, A. M.: The Analysis of Propaganda: A Clinical Summary. In *American Journal of Sociology*, 1945, Vol. 51, No. 2, p. 128.

²⁴ FAWKES, J., MOLONEY, K.: Does the European Union (EU) Need a Propaganda Watchdog Like the US Institute of Propaganda Analysis to Strengthen Its Democratic Civil Society and Free Markets? In *Public Relations Review*, 2008, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 212.

²⁵ TICHENOR, P. J., DONOHUE, G. A., OLLEN, C. N.: Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1970, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 159-160.

3.1 Understanding Media Production

Audiences/media consumers should be aware of the nature of production. Such knowledge demystifies the process; a media consumer must understand the use of framing and filters and film/video editing techniques; a media consumer must understand post-production visual effects that drastically alter the final product, from digitally erasing imperfections (or entire people) to completely creating visual „performances“ by editing existing sounds or dialogue and digitally animating participants. A media literate consumer develops a critical eye for content/message construction and is less vulnerable to media „tricks of the trade“.

3.2 Critique and Analysis of Media Products from a Critical-Cultural Perspective

Audiences/media consumers should be educated in propaganda analysis and disinformation analysis. If they are aware of embedded cultural ideologies, they can better discern whether or not they choose to agree with the proposed message. For example, the message for U.S. consumers each Christmas and Valentine’s Day that expensive jewelry is proof of affection is distinctly a capitalist-consumer message. A media literate consumer is less vulnerable to embedded ideological messages.

3.3 Awareness of Different Media Delivery Models

Audiences/media consumers should understand the role of economics in media production and be knowledgeable about different media delivery systems. They should know whether media is subsidized or directly accessed and understand the difference between state-owned media and corporate media. Media outlets in the United States, in recent years, have come under increased centralized corporate ownership. They should also be aware that sponsorships and subsidies often create ethical issues, depending on the goal of the media project. A media literate consumer recognizes economic forces being reflected in media messages, including corporate ownership, product placement, and script content.

3.4 Knowledge of Media History and Its Relationship to the History of a Culture

Finally, audiences/media consumers should be aware of media history within their own culture, as well as other cultures. U.S. citizens should acknowledge that the freedom of the press concept emerged from colonial American experiences in which the British government interfered with early newspaper content. They should be aware of radio and television’s role in bringing historical events into the American living room, or the film industry’s role in raising morale for Depression-era audiences or providing wartime propaganda during World War II. The media literate consumer places media history adjacent to cultural history and cultural expression.

Establishment of a Coalition

The idea of organizational oversight in combating disinformation was frequent in research accessed for preparing this article. This research proposes establishment of an international organization to monitor both propaganda and counter disinformation. Our proposed name could be The International Alliance for Truth and Ethics in Communication, with the mission of overseeing propaganda (like Fawkes and Moloney’s suggestion for a European IPA) and

exposing lie(s) in disinformation campaigns. The IATEC's message would be „The seeds of democracy flourish in the light of truth and ethical utterances“. The organization would be an ideological version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; instead of a military collective defense, the organization would be an ideological collective defense against disinformation and propaganda. IATEC would serve as a consolidation point, supporting efforts of already-existing organizations combating disinformation and promoting media literacy educational programs.

Rationale

In the United States, the success of the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, as well as the success of the American counter-disinformation group, the Active Measures Working Group in the 1980s through 1992, suggests success for such an organization. Although the Active Measures Working Group was created within the U.S. State Department and later attached to the United States Information Agency, a counter-disinformation organization should exist without governmental attachment. Research for this article from organizations such as the Atlantic Council, the Hewlett Foundation, or the cyber security firm New Knowledge were not government agencies, yet they provided thorough analyses and counter measures to disinformation campaigns. Ideally, the organization would mimic IPA in terms of employing experts from a variety of backgrounds: social scientists, educators, historians, journalists, opinion leaders, and ethicists. The staff would include experts from media production who could spot fakery, and psychologists to crack the „disinformation code“ and decipher its root appeal for audiences. Within the organization, groups would be assigned to disinformation campaigns on every social media platform, both print and broadcast formats, and other possible information outlets. The staff would begin dismantling each disinformation campaign by publicly fact-checking and publicizing the lie(s). This approach of publicly denouncing disinformation was profiled on HBO's *Vice News Tonight* in May of 2017. The *Vice News Tonight* crew visited Kiev, where the show *Stop Fake News* was uploaded online in both English and Russian. The show also had a website and published 100 copies of their newsletter each month, which was hand-delivered to Ukrainian-held territory in the eastern part of the country. Most of *Stop Fake News* staff were volunteers who worked out of the journalism school in Kiev; the *Vice News* reporter noted that a staff of 29 volunteers were battling the Russian disinformation machine. Unfortunately, the fallout from disinformation campaigns like the one Russia waged against Ukraine was a lapse of trust in journalists, and that inspired the *Stop Fake News* crew to reintroduce the trust in their profession.²⁶

In 2018 in the Czech Republic, university students developed a game for teaching teenagers at the secondary school level how to distinguish between reliable sources and disinformation. The game, Fakescape, was played at schools across the country as part of a counter measure to disinformation. In December 2018, the Czech Republic experienced a new pro-Kremlin disinformation campaign to undermine democracy, a reminder that efforts like Fakescape must remain in action.²⁷

The interactive museum of news, Newseum, in Washington, D.C., opened in 2008 with a mission to promote the importance of a free press and the First Amendment in the United States. Newseum additionally created an online educational repository, NewseumEd, dedicated to media literacy instruction material for students grades 3 through college. This media literacy material includes lesson plans, primary multimedia sources, artifacts, workshops and various interactive learning tools. Two sections of NewseumEd focus exclusively on analyzing and identifying misinformation, as well as on the role of the individual in assessing the veracity of information on digital platforms and overall in digital information.²⁸

²⁶ HASSAN, H. (Reporter): Navajo Coal & Ukraine's War on Fake News: Vice News Tonight. Broadcast on 11th May 2017. HBO New York: New York, 2017.

²⁷ Fakescape: Czech Game Fights 'Fake News'. [online]. [2018-11-12]. Available at: <https://youtu.be/E7_L0UwJB2U>.

²⁸ NewseumED. [online]. [2019-02-22]. Available at: <<http://www.newseum.org/>>.

Perhaps most notable is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations' 2018 warning about the public's lack of media literacy and publication of educational solutions. UNESCO reports, „*Political, technological, economic and social transformations are inexorably reshaping the communications landscape and raising many questions about the quality, impact and credibility of journalism*,“ and this is happening at the intersection of groups launching „*orchestrated campaigns to spread untruths via disinformation*.“²⁹ UNESCO targets *disinformation*, which is „*false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country*“, *misinformation*, which „*is false but not created with the intention of causing harm*“ and *mal-information*, which is „*based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organisation or country*.“³⁰ The international cooperative's open-access online *Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education Training*, combined with its seven downloadable teaching modules could serve as a centerpiece for collective efforts aimed at the general public.

A proposed central organization would create and disseminate media literacy materials in the tradition of IPA's campaigns at engaging citizens to critically think about both propaganda and disinformation. The Fakescape game is a solid example of the kind of material that could effectively engage students to critically approach a communication message. Media literacy materials would be on social media platforms, supported by young opinion leaders for further dissemination. In the tradition of Public Service Announcements (PSA's), opinion leaders could advise followers to fact-check and consider media messages before sharing them.

The organization would create materials and learning modules similar to those supplied by the ICFJ and NewseumEd to assist journalism educators in countering disinformation. Such learning materials would regularly be updated for continued relevance and application in the classroom. The organization would need a repository for materials such as fact sheets to support the ongoing counter-disinformation campaign. An accompanying website similar to that of www.propagandacritic.com would allow visitors to retrieve information for propaganda analysis. For example, the Propaganda Critic site was inspired by the work of the IPA, and features information on topics such as „Social Media and Fake News“, „Bots“, „Sock Puppets“, and „Sleeper Effect“ on the home page, allowing visitors to learn more about those topics. Housing deployable materials for combating disinformation and propaganda within the umbrella of a single organization would increase accessibility for media content producers, educators and the general public, allowing easier access to this information. Combating disinformation requires assaults on multiple fronts. A centralized coalition would serve as an avenue for organizing the division of labor, as well as assessing and disseminating various types of counter-disinformation materials.

Organizational Structure:

1. *Leadership* – composed of journalists, social scientists, educators, historians, ethicists, opinion leaders, psychologists, and media production. This collection of experts is a crucial point: online activity has produced *pseudo experts* – individuals who tout obscure/false credentials supporting their online activity. These individuals are the 21st century version of the traveling salesman with a „magic tonic“. The expert panel representing the proposed organization must have a counter-disinformation campaign focused on debunking „fake expert status“.
2. *Creation of organizational website for online publication of mission, FAQ's, distribution of materials, and contact information for appropriate staff members to report disinformation or propaganda* – self explanatory.

²⁹ *Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education Training*. [online]. [2018-11-15]. Available at: <<https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>>.

³⁰ Ibidem.

3. *Establishment of a communication code of ethics* – the organization must draft a set of standards for communication and create a list of questions for media consumers to ask about every news report, broadcast, social media post, or any other communication outlet ensuring veracity before sharing content. Promotion of the questions should become a ubiquitous campaign, reminding the public to ask if the message meets the organizational standards. One of the key questions should be to check if the originator of a message has previously been flagged for sharing/promoting fake information. Organizations such as Reuters, the BBC, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA), and the National Press Photographers Association could be key stakeholders in developing frameworks for news standards.
4. *Continued refinement of algorithms for discerning fake information* – algorithms, proven to be helpful in determining „fake“ content, should be used in conjunction with human review; algorithms would need to be routinely modified to keep up with the disinformation campaigns.
5. *Creation of regional offices for exposing fake news in different parts of the world, focusing on stories in the immediate area* - the local arms of the counter-disinformation coalition would receive reports, track stories, and focus on debunking local and regional stories.
6. *Creation of educational content for widespread use by educators and employers, and recruitment and alignment with universities and colleges at local levels* - local universities could create content such as the Fakescape game created by Czech Republic students.
7. *Request adoption/adherence to the organization's algorithms, principles, and code of standards, and at least one organizational representative be at the headquarters of every social media platform* - the Silicon Valley „marketplace of ideas“ exhibits a naivete about the threat level of disinformation to democracy, and that must end. The organization could express support for passage of the Honest Ads Act, a bipartisan measure proposed by Senators Amy Klobucher, Mark Warner, and the late John McCain (Fried and Polyakova, 2018). The measure would extend disclosure requirements to social media, matching the standards of other media; television political ads, print political ads, and radio political ads are required to disclose who paid for the ad under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, but social media ads are not currently required to disclose. The bill would amend the law to make „reasonable efforts“ to ensure the ads are not purchased „directly or indirectly“ by foreign countries. The bill would require companies to disclose how advertisements were targeted, and how much the ads cost. There is a companion bill in the House of Representatives (HR 4077) sponsored by Representative Derek Kilmer.³¹
8. *Request partnerships with Non-Government Organizations to support the cause of counter-disinformation* – finding support among other organizations allows for increased visibility and promotion of democratic principles.
9. *Headquarters for the counter-disinformation organization* should be in a location that best serves the global public and may be determined by members of the organization.

4. Conclusions

While this analysis and corresponding suggested practical actions have focused primarily on disinformation campaigns targeting political issues, there are other areas of disinformation that must be addressed by counter-disinformation misinformation campaigns. Although not discussed in this research, targeted disinformation and diffuse misinformation occur in other narratives and debate surrounding divisive issues such as vaccine/disease control narratives, environmental science narratives, and in the U.S., racial tensions and corresponding narratives.

³¹ *The Honest Ads Act*. [online]. [2019-03-25]. Available at: <<https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/the-honest-ads-act>>.

The other factor for consideration in the U.S. is the general arrogance surrounding disinformation. Currently, the public sphere dismisses the idea that they were victims of disinformation campaigns, though the data reveals the opposite is true. The public must lose the denial perspective. One important tactic for deployment should be widespread publication of the New Knowledge report, the Hewlett Foundation report, the Atlantic Council report, and the October 2018 discussion paper, „The Fight Against Dis-information in the U.S.: A Landscape Analysis“, by Legg and Kerwin. The authors characterize disinformation as a by-product of the mass and speed of information and the rise of the „Attention Economy“, observing that the digital age has brought new challenges. They quote Buzzfeed media editor Craig Silverman, who offered that society has never before been deluged by the barrage of biases and misinformation at such scale and speed.³² They referenced the „collapse of local journalism“ world-wide as enabling disinformation to spread and dominate narratives in important issues. Legg and Kerwin advocate for building up media literacy, applying platform pressure and disrupting nefarious actors.³³

The development of an organized alliance to effectively consolidate fragmented efforts of combating the spread of disinformation and promoting continued efforts to teach media literacy to the general public, as well as in formal education settings, would provide a way for those cataloged in Legg and Kerwin's report to coordinate efforts and resources. The solution is more local journalism, more circumspect narrative journalism – not a reactionary shift to compete for entertainment regardless of the veracity of its message, or for short attention spans. The efforts described in this paper would support endeavors to this end and additionally provide an alternative avenue for media consumers seeking thoughtful and well-constructed news narratives, as well as the guidance and ability to discern truth from disinformation in the age of digital disruption, chaos, and polarization. This would allow more of the American public to become astute, media literate consumers who recognize disinformation and propaganda. It would also address a related issue, the rise of the pseudo-expert. The pseudo experts must be debunked and dismantled. The pseudo-expert noise must be eliminated – whether it is found in debate about politics, disease control, environmental science, or other narratives where logical fallacies are introduced.

Both consumers and practitioners must work to minimize the effects of the spread of disinformation and misinformation. Accurate and transparent disclosure must become a requirement on social media platforms as self-governance has failed and the „marketplace of ideas“ has become the marketplace of dissent. Disinformation is a serious problem, and media literacy for both content creators and the consumer public is the first line of defense. The need for increased media literacy is not a hopeful vision for a better future – it is crucial for the future of democratic process. All of the research material recognized the need for recognition of disinformation as a threat to democracy, and the need for addressing the social context driving the messages. Failure to do so is not an option.

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³² LEGG, H., KERWIN, J.: *The Fight Against Disinformation in the U.S.: A Landscape Analysis*. [online]. [2018-11-28]. Available at: <<https://shorensteincenter.org/the-fight-against-disinformation-in-the-u-s-a-landscape-analysis/>>.

³³ Ibidem.

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Authors



Christina Hicks-Goldston

Department of Communication
Austin Peay State University
P.O. Box 4446
Clarksville, TN, 37044
USA
hicksgoldstonc@apsu.edu

Christina Hicks-Goldston is an Associate Professor of Communication at Austin Peay State University, where she teaches courses in Popular Culture, women's studies in communication, and diversity.

Amy Applebaum Ritchart

Department of Communication
Austin Peay State University
P.O. Box 4446
Clarksville, TN, 37044
USA



Amy Applebaum Ritchart is a journalist and teaches full-time at Austin Peay State University. Her research areas of interest include media literacy, literary journalism, women's studies in communication, and service-learning in journalism education.

Authors collaborated on a research paper and presentation in 2018 titled, „*The New Progressives? Modern Day Muckraking and Unexpected Voices*“ for the International Organization for Social Sciences and Behavioral Research conference and journal, where they received the Best Paper Award. They have collaborated on presentations about depictions of domestic violence in journalism and popular culture, as well as service learning in higher education.



Magdaléna Švecová

Location-Based Games as a Method of Teaching Seniors in the Field of Digital Technologies

ABSTRACT

Research on the education of seniors is a continually developing area of educational studies. However, current researchers emphasize the need for further exploration, due to ongoing social and civilizational changes, as well as the fast digitization of society to which seniors are not able to accommodate very quickly. The author of this study will present results of research experiment named *LoGaSET* which is based on comparing two teaching and learning concepts: edutainment and the classic linear way of education. The concept of edutainment (including the use of location-based games as an educational method) is gaining popularity as a form of teaching. However, there are only a few studies verifying the effectiveness of its use. What is especially important, is that location-based games as an educational method are aimed particularly at young learners. Furthermore, it is not used in teaching ICT. That is the reason why the fundamental idea of the *LoGaSET* project was the creation of a course for seniors in the field of smartphones. This course was conducted using two methods: the class-lesson method and the location-based game method. After creating both didactic models and scenarios and testing them, researchers conducted educational courses for seniors at the local level. As a result, we can now assume some main conclusions regarding education of seniors in the field of smartphones based on the quantitative and qualitative data we observed during experimental teaching.

KEY WORDS

Digital gap. Digital immigrants. Edutainment. Linear teaching. Location-based games. Smartphones.

1. Seniors in digital world

Seniors living in the 21st century not only face the age-related life changes, but they also witness the fast digitization of society. The ageing process takes place on several levels. We know the physical, psychological and social aspects of ageing which possibly influences seniors' access to modern technologies in both positive and negative ways. According to genetic theory aging causes the weakening of the senses (hearing, sight, etc.), as well as the functioning of the muscular (arthrosis), digestive (teeth loss, low absorption of nutrients), nervous system (Alzheimer and Parkinson's diseases) body systems or others.¹ Seniors very often suffer from polymorbidity, which is the simultaneous occurrence of multiple diseases at one time.² Of course, these health complications have a negative impact on the lives of seniors, whether they need regular visits to doctors and hospitals, and it also affects the psychic condition of individuals, because not everyone is doing well with deteriorating health. Physical aspects of ageing also influence seniors' interactivity with new technologies, especially those with touch screens or small controllers.

As we mentioned above, ageing accompanies many life changes. Seniors often feel lonely, get bored as a result of retirement, or struggle with illness. K. Svobodová talks about increased density of important and serious events in the life of the senior, especially life losses (deaths of relatives, friends or acquaintances), as well as changes in housing, retirement and many other changes that accompany old age and which we have already mentioned in previous lines. The death of a lifetime partner can completely destroy the individual, but on the other hand many widows or widowers can live quality lives. Loneliness of a person after the death of a partner often leads to his/her relocation to a retirement home, as children do not care, do not know, or do not have time to care for a lonely relative. A senior in a retirement home knows he has moved there forever, feeling lonely, missing her or his life that the senior has led so far. On the contrary, there is also the possibility of finding new contacts in the home, replacing the deceased partner.³ Digital communication technologies could help staying in touch with family and friends and also with rest of the world. Psychological aspects of ageing are largely related to social aspects. New opportunities resulting from the termination of economic activity should lead to the creation of new ones or the restoration of those that the individual did not have the time for during an active life. Life needs to be fulfilled by new programs and perspectives to prevent retirement crisis. All demographic forecasts predict population ageing in Europe in particular. That is why professionals and institutions are developing the phenomenon of active ageing.⁴ In Slovakia, the concept of active ageing is still a distant to reality, as seniors understand the retirement age as passive spending of leisure time. Preparation for this period was until recently a concept that the seniors did not consider. For future seniors, it is appropriate to plan for retirement already. It is a positive attitude not only for the person himself, as he/she might avoid potential negative emotions such as sadness, boredom or acrimony, but also for society as the seniors will have the energy to use time efficiently. One of the best ways to spend time with seniors is to educate, not only in terms of personal development or enrichment, but also in the field of new knowledge in the field of technology.⁵

Although the lack of digital skills in seniors' lives may appear as a banality in the context of ageing, it is in fact a phenomenon whose solution would significantly improve the quality of seniors' lives and bridge the digital divide between generations. The digital divide is a phenomenon where a certain group of society has almost no contact with new technologies

¹ STUART-HAMILTON, I.: *Psychologie stárnutí*. Praha : Portál, 1999, p. 23.

² ZAVÁZALOVÁ, H.: *Vybrané kapitoly ze sociální gerontologie*. Praha : Karolinum, 2001, p. 23.

³ SVOBODOVÁ, K.: Sociálně psychologické aspekty stárnutí. In *Demografie*, 2007, Vol. 49, No. 2, p. 91.

⁴ STOJÁKOVÁ, M., PAVELKOVA, J.: *Sociálny rozmer starnutia populácie*. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <<http://www.prohuman.sk/socialna-praca/socialny-rozmer-starnutia-populacie>>.

⁵ Ibidem.

(ICT, Internet, smartphones), especially for financial, social, regional, educational or health reasons, but also because of higher age or absence of relatives, children and young people, who could teach seniors the basics. We are talking about the absence of digital literacy,⁶ which is the ability to acquire and use technical and cognitive knowledge to use new digital technologies to use and search for diverse information. Digital literacy involves the proper use of computers, smartphones or tablets, and their software and applications, as well as safe Internet usage based on critical thinking.⁷ The solution is training in this area, whether on the side of employers or at the public or social level.⁸ We include seniors into the category of digital immigrants. The term describes current seniors who need to adapt to changes in society, based on digitization and technical progress, when so many offline activities are moving to online spaces. Within this division, we also distinguish a group of digital settlers (colonist) who lived in both analogue and digital times. They know how to use the Internet and their skills in using digital technologies are sophisticated, but they still rely to a large extent on traditional analogue forms such as newspapers, magazines, CDs, and more.⁹ Better word for describing seniors in the new technological environment is the term digital strangers. G. Molnár, Z. Szuts and K. Nagy point out that digital immigrants are slowly becoming strangers in the sense of their attempt to be accepted by a certain group of people. As an example, the United States of America, where digital natives make up only ¼ of the population, but social components such as marketing activities, ICT companies, and a modern education system, puts much more attention on them. Others become either strangers, or they adapt to the situation, even though digital immigrants have just built up to the current world of digital natives. They will remain forever only as foreigners, immigrants.¹⁰ This is also related to the theory of M. Prensky who gives some examples of digital immigrants' behaviour towards new media, which he calls accent - every immigrant who learns the language of the new country will always remain with a certain accent. In the case of digital immigrants, for example, they prefer to find information first offline before going to the Internet or reading lengthy instructions on how to use a particular program, as they would expect the program to teach them on their own. Digital immigrants prefer to print documents rather than read them on a monitor. This process of adapting to new technologies, or learning to learn new technologies and digital media, is like learning a new language. The foreign language, whose rules and vocabulary is acquired by a person later than in childhood, is deposited in another part of the brain. This is also the case with digital skills.¹¹

2. Location-based games as an educational tool

Location-based games are based on the concept of edutainment. There are several definitions of edutainment that make up its overall profile.

- Edutainment is a learning program designed to promote entertaining learning through interaction and communication, as well as a learning by doing model.¹²

⁶ VELŠIC, M.: *Digitalna priečasť v generáčnej optike*. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <http://www.ivo.sk/buxus/docs//publikacie/subory/Digitalna_priečasť.pdf>.

⁷ How To Define Digital Literacy. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <<https://online.cune.edu/defining-digital-literacy/>>.

⁸ VELŠIC, M.: *Digitalna priečasť v generáčnej optike*. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <http://www.ivo.sk/buxus/docs//publikacie/subory/Digitalna_priečasť.pdf>.

⁹ PALFREY, J., GASSER, U.: *Born Digital - Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. New York : Basic Books, 2008, p. 4.

¹⁰ MOLNÁR, G., SZUTS, Z., NAGY, K.: *Digital Immigrants – Strangers*. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <<https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/auscom.2017.4.issue-1/auscom-2017-0004/auscom-2017-0004.pdf>>.

¹¹ PRENSKY, M.: *Digital natives, Digital Immigrants*. [online]. [2018-01-28]. Available at: <www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>.

¹² SHULMAN, J.L., BOWEN, W.G.: *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*. New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 82.

- F. Colace describes edutainment as a type of entertainment which aims to educate with the help of multimedia, internet, video, movies, digital games and games.¹³ Buckingham also adds that these elements are based on visualization.¹⁴
- According to Charski, edutainment is designed to make the students learn to use the acquired knowledge by analyzing, evaluating and comparison.¹⁵
- E.D.Fossard thinks that edutainment is the use of certain methods to attract student attention for the individual development of the student.¹⁶
- M. Wang and colleagues think that edutainment should provide students with high-quality and well-spent time, and should also provide the experience that is needed in the real life.¹⁷
- Z. Okan adds that students should be interested in edutainment by themselves and it should (not?) enhance negative feelings towards learning.¹⁸
- According to A. Druin and C. Solomon, students should not only have fun, but they should learn something.¹⁹

We can assume that edutainment is playful education with a fun context that aims to teach with pleasure from entertainment. It should evoke pleasure, hold more attention and also encourage students to think or synthesize knowledge.

In addition to edutainment, gamification is part of location-based games. Gamification is the implementation of gaming elements, primarily from digital games into the non-gaming environment and has diverse goals. One of the goals is to increase the activity and productivity of employees or customers, but also to simplify various complex systems, physical training and, last but not least, the learning process.

Gamification has generally several layers at which it operates:

- raises the initiative,
- increases motivation,
- increases interaction with and among students,
- increases loyalty.²⁰

With its positive effects regarding efficiency, gamification is having its use in education, marketing, mentoring, human resources or technology.²¹ We can encounter gamification in the form of loyalty cards also in the purchase of products. A common implementation of gamification elements is points, rankings, levels usage in applications, organizations, or institutions.²² But the gaming process works with much deeper meaning.

¹³ COLACE, F., DE SANTO, M., PIETROSANTO, A.: *Work in Progress: Bayesian Networks for Edutainment*. [online]. [2018-02-03]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224061273_Work_in_Progress_Bayesian_Networks_for_Edutainment>.

¹⁴ BUCKINGHAM, D., SCANLON, M.: Parental Pedagogies: An Analysis of British Edutainment. In *Magazines for Young Children Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 2001, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 284.

¹⁵ CHARSKY, D.: From Edutainment to Serious Games: A Change in the Use of Game Characteristics Games and Culture. In *Games and Culture: A Journal of Interactive Media*, 2010, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 182.

¹⁶ FOSSARD, E.D: *Using Edu-Tainment for Distance Education in Community Work*. New Delhi : Sage Publications India, 2008, p. 19.

¹⁷ WANG, M., ZUO, X. L: *Edutainment Technology – A New Starting Point for Educational Development of China*. [online]. [2018-02-03]. Available at: <<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/4417873/>>.

¹⁸ OKAN, Z.: Edutainment: Is Learning At Risk? In *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 2003, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 257.

¹⁹ DRUIN, A., SOLOMON, C.: *Designing Multimedia Environments For Children: Computers, Creativity And Kids*. New York : John Wiley and Sons, 1996, p. 56.

²⁰ *Introducing to gamification*. London : Association for Project Management, 2014, p. 9.

²¹ ZICHERMANN, G., CUNNINGHAM, CH.: *Introduction. Gamification by Design: Implementing Game Mechanics in Web and Mobile Apps*. California : O'Reilly Media, 2012, p. 182.

²² BUZOVÁ, K.: *Implementácia gamifikácie do knížnic s využitím sociálnych médií*. [online]. [2016-12-21]. Available at: <http://itlib.cvtisr.sk/archiv/2014/1/implementacia-gamifikacie-do-kniznic-s-vyuzitim-socialnych-medii.html?page_id=2618>.

Neuroscience claims that gamification creates an effect similar to gambling or other competitive activities, when the brain also produces feelings such as euphoria, pleasure and excitement, with the help of chemical substances such as dopamine responsible for the feeling of happiness and satisfaction considered as a natural system of rewarding the brain itself. Constantly rewarding the nervous system with dopamine encourages motivation, which makes the individual more involved in the activity.²³

An important factor, which is actually the result of cooperation and the appropriate combination of gaming mechanisms, is primarily motivation. It goes side by side with fun, another characteristic feature of the game. Motivation is a psychological process that influences the intensity of our behaviour aiming at achieving goals. Likewise in games, motivation is the main aspect of the progress of individual players which we included into our experiment.

| Edutainment | Linear teaching |
|---|---|
| winning possibility | no winning possibility |
| didactics are hidden, story is more important | didactics are clear |
| obstacles (drawing-off attention on purpose) | no obstacles (no drawing-off attention) |
| game rules | only application explanation |
| students are in the centre of educational process, teacher is only a helper | teacher is in centre of educational process |
| role-play | students are in their social roles, they are who they are |
| city/public | classroom |

SCHEME 1: Differences between edutainment and linear (class method) teaching

Source: own adaptation/LoGaSET project

3. Methods

First of all, we should define the most important goals of our research, as well as the purposes of our activities under the *LoGaSET* project. The main objective of the research was to find out what form of seniors' teaching and learning in ICT, specifically smartphones, is more effective among seniors and also suits them the most in various scenarios. The main goals of this phase of research were:

- comparison of traditional and edutainment teaching and learning,
- evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of both educational approaches,
- formulation of advice for potential educators trying to enhance elderly peoples' skills related to smartphone use.

Generally, we wanted to set basic rules for seniors' teaching in the field of smartphones and to describe the whole experience of their learning process. The main research method was an experiment that consists of implementing mobile application education training for seniors over the age of 62 years into practice. The course took place simultaneously over 10 days, with 20 seniors randomly divided into two identical groups, one being taught through the games and edutainment we described in the second chapter and the other by traditional classroom methods. During gamified lessons, seniors were taught in non-classroom areas using games that made them use various mobile applications to complete quests. On the other hand, the linear class had a strict schedule based on verbal explanation and exercises.

²³ *Introducing to gamification*. London : Association for Project Management, 2014, p. 11.

We chose ten mobile applications to develop certain digital skills:

1. App Store/Google Play - installing applications - first class
2. Qr Codes Scanner - basics with touchscreen interaction - second class
3. Camera - taking a photo - third class,
4. Video - filming - fourth class
5. Dictaphone - audio import - fourth class
6. WhatsApp - communication - fifth class
7. Google Maps - orientation - sixth class
8. Cp.sk - orientation through public transport - seventh class
9. Google Translator - import of commands - eighth class
10. Trip Advisor - searching information - ninth class
11. Tenth class was dedicated to recapitulation.

Apart from that, we measured several quantitative factors in both experimental groups. At the beginning of the course, our educators interviewed seniors regarding their smartphone skills. Seniors were asked three questions with increasing difficulty regarding every application. They could answer negatively or try to accomplish tasks. Observers and educators measured the time of the whole interview and the number of questions seniors asked to fulfill tasks. At the end of the course, this process was repeated with slightly changed tasks. Seniors were also tested after every class on the subject they were learning the previous day. Again, observers measured the time to finish tasks and the number of asked questions. During the class, researchers were observing the number of asked questions related to the subject of the lesson by seniors.

We were also interested in seniors' impressions and feelings which they were facing during the whole course. After every class, seniors received questionnaires with five questions regarding their amount of fear, happiness and other emotions. At the end of the training, seniors also expressed their satisfaction with the whole course: whether it fulfilled their expectations, what applications were the most useful (or least) and whether their emotions were positive or negative.

We also organised focus group interviews with both groups as well as with educators and researchers to receive more qualitative data.

It is important to say that the whole research lasted two years and was organised in four European countries. This study is only describing the Slovak experience and only the third stage of research which was conducted using the following steps:

1. Preparation stage: partners planned location-based games, traditional method. They also tested games in real life and made changes.
2. Pilot stage: testing of games and research tools with 12 seniors.
3. Main stage: training of educators and observers, experiment implementation,
4. Evaluation of experiment.
5. Preparing Good Practice Book and organization of Multiplier event for future educators in this field.

4. Results

In this chapter we will try to summarize the most important and significant results of the research. First of all, we would like to present how seniors reacted during the classes and games. The table below shows how many questions seniors asked during the teaching on average. It has to be noted that both groups received manuals on how to use applications.

| Method | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 | Day 10 | Average per day |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------|
| LBG ²⁴ | 6,36 | 7,54 | 8,27 | 4,36 | 16,09 | 10,54 | 11,27 | 6,54 | 6,27 | 9 | 8,62 |
| CLM ²⁵ | 10,22 | 2,22 | 5,33 | 5,44 | 9,77 | 10,33 | 2,33 | 4,11 | 9,55 | 9 | 6,83 |

SCHEME 2: Average amount of asked questions during training by method

Source: own adaptation

Seniors taught by game methods asked about two more questions per class than their class method colleagues. We can assume that seniors received more detailed explanations about particular applications during the class method of learning. They also had more time and space to read instructions and manuals about how to use applications. On the other side during location-based games, seniors had to concentrate on the game and did not have a calm space to get to know applications. They were asking educators during playing as they could not continue the game due to a lack of ability to control the application. According to asked questions, the most complicated application for seniors is WhatsApp as they asked 16 questions in the LBG method and 10 questions in the CLM method. The second most difficult one is Google Maps. During the last lesson dedicated to recapitulation, seniors in both groups asked 9 questions on average which is quite a good result.

We were also interested in seniors' ability to remember new skills from previous days. After every lesson or game we proposed them individually to accomplish a simple task.

| LBG | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 | Day 10 | Average |
|------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Questions | 3,81 | 2,63 | 1,45 | 2,00 | 2,45 | 1,54 | 1,00 | 0,09 | 2,72 | 1,96 |
| Time | 138,09 | 48,36 | 21,90 | 67,72 | 68,18 | 84,27 | 84,45 | 42,90 | 113,36 | 74,35 |

SCHEME 3: Amount of asked questions and time (in seconds) of handling control tasks in location-based games

Source: own adaptation

| CLM | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 | Day 10 | Average |
|------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|---------|
| Questions | 3,33 | 3,22 | 1,77 | 1,55 | 2,33 | 2,00 | 2,00 | 1,22 | 2,00 | 2,15 |
| Time | 537,44 | 374,11 | 51,33 | 63,77 | 200,88 | 469,44 | 240,66 | 74,44 | 137,55 | 238,84 |

SCHEME 4: Amount of asked questions and time (in seconds) of handling control tasks in class method

Source: own adaptation

This data shows that regarding method effectiveness, location-based games prove their meaning. Seniors in gamified groups asked less questions but not significantly less. What is more important, is that seniors in the class method needed more time for accomplishing each task. It means that they had to think more about every step in a particular application. They were not prepared for real smartphone usage in real life and they were slow. On the other hand, seniors from the edutainment group could handle tasks easily by themselves without

²⁴ LBG - location-based games²⁵ CLM - class method

any help. They remembered how to control applications more in detail and they did not rely on the help of lecturers. Regarding recapitulation of all skills, the most difficult applications were Google Play or App Store because they were the very first applications seniors learned how to control and they did not have developed digital skills very well at that time. In the gamified group, it was also Trip Advisor which has many functions and it was the last application. We think the game designed for Trip Advisor was effective, so the main reason for bad results is fatigue from the whole course. In the class method, the second most difficult application was Google Maps, which is also a very complex application. The reason why is that seniors did not train on the application in real life like the edutainment group. The same reason is also related to QR codes. We consider interesting that the WhatsApp application which took a lot of energy to teach as well as to learn because of the complicated user interface was not such a problem for seniors.

When we have a look at post tests results, they are different than with the day to day review tasks. While average time of post-test in the location-based games group is 1805,53 seconds, in the class method group it was only 1638,11 seconds which is approximately two minutes difference. An even bigger difference occurs among asked questions during the post-test. Members of the edutainment group asked 15,9 questions per member (average). Class method participants asked only 4,22 questions per senior. Our hypothesis, that location-based games are more effective methods was not accurate regarding long-term memory.

Describing seniors' emotions during the course, we need to admit that they did not differ under the teaching method. Participants from both groups were feeling strong emotions during lessons and games, mostly fear, nervousness and on the other side joy from learning something new. The edutainment group described their learning experience as funny and with the opportunity to socialize. On the other hand, under the class method there were not such many possibilities to socialize.

At the end of the course, we also asked for feedback which was quite positive. Seniors felt involved and creative and were feeling that they were learning something. The main positive of whole course is time spent with educators who had the patience which seniors' families do not have. Advanced seniors improved their skills regarding smartphones and those who were only beginners got to know smartphones more in detail. They learned how to use applications but everybody at their own pace. According to participants, some applications were chosen well, others not, for example QR codes which are useless. They also prefer to learn how to shop and deal with current business online or edit photos. Some apps could be taught more in detail to learn all the functions, according to participants. On the other hand, seniors complained about the pace of the course, for some participants it was too fast, for some it was too slow. Some of the participants were slower and the rest of the class had to wait for them or educators did not have enough time for everybody. Seniors also noticed that the LBG lesson is not appropriate for people who have health problems limiting movement and educators should give more explanation before games to total beginners, as well. Students also recommend putting the course programme on the website to know the whole programme of lessons before it starts. Some seniors think that 2 hours a day is not enough as well as two educators are not enough for the group of ten people. For some seniors the two-week duration is a lot because of the active lives they lead.

Educators and observers agreed on several issues regarding seniors training in the field of ICT which are described in our next lines. The whole course is very good idea because it is devoted to an almost forgotten group in our society and also the course can teach seniors very important skills - digital competences. Socialization of seniors is a strong part of the whole course. Participants developed relationships, they had fun and they were supportive of each other. They also liked to be in touch with young people - educators. The connection of generations is a positive aspect. Seniors also liked gamified lessons because they were fun. They were very cooperative, especially in the LBG group because they had the same purpose

- to win. They did not consider playing in public as embarrassing. According to educators and observers, a strong part of the course was the fact that seniors had very strong motivation to learn how to control smartphones. In both groups it was the main goal of each participant. Educators and observers noticed that seniors learned a lot during the course, they improved their skills, even created relationships with their smartphones. They also highlighted repetition as a good aspect in teaching and learning. Also educators recommended that there is a need of smartphone basics' explanation at the beginning of course regarding settings and knowing the user interference of a smartphone (get to know smartphone, icons).

The main problem of the course was that seniors were not divided into groups according to their level of digital competences but randomly, which slowed down the whole course. Some smartphones did not work properly, they were old or in bad technical condition which slowed down the whole training, as well. Educators and observers described a few negatives of both edutainment and class method training.

- Seniors asked questions with no connection with the subject of the lesson often.
- Some participant were very quick doing tasks and it demotivated others.
- Some of the games were too complicated to understand.
- There were a lot of papers to handle.
- Seniors had to conduct a lot of tests and surveys.
- Seniors are very demanding and asked a lot of questions.
- At the end of lessons seniors were rushing home.
- Lack of educators. Observers had to do educators' jobs which might influence their research. Educators did not have enough time for every senior. Some seniors were jealous of the others (less skilled) because they had more attention from educators (especially in the CLM method). Some seniors needed educators only for confirmation if they did the task well.

Young educators liked most of all the time spent with the elderly population because seniors were happy and very thankful. They gave thanks for everything and they really appreciated the educators' work. Educators gained respect for the older generation. On the other hand participants liked educators because they were patient, they had time which their children or grandkids do not have. Also they were blessed and found new perspectives spending time with young people. Participants had good relationships with educators as with their grandchildren.

On the grounds of a focus group with educators and observers we also designed several pieces of advice for future educators who would like to teach seniors how to control their smartphones.

1. Educators should play games before they teach them.
2. It is needed to explain how to use Browser, also which news app seniors should download and explain them what an advert is.
3. CLM and LBG lessons should be mixed. Firstly seniors should be educated traditionally in the class and then practice skills through games.
4. Seniors also should learn how to make payments via smartphone, how to read news or play games.
5. In the future we should pair educators with seniors to find out if there is a connection between educator approach and senior's success.
6. Games should be connected with a story, difficulty of levels should rise. Some games were too complicated which influenced the learning process in negative way. For example games with WhatsApp or camera and voice.
7. Various user interferences of smartphone which makes teaching more difficult.
8. Touchscreen controlling can be upgraded by using a special pen for touch screen.
9. Knowing apps in all operational systems or apps' diversity regarding operating systems.

5. Conclusion

Our research team aimed to find out how to teach seniors in the field of ICT, especially smartphones. Location-based games as a method of edutainment seemed to be efficient. But now we know that the best solution is the interconnection of class methods and edutainment. Seniors need to get explanations, learning new functions step by step. But practical aspects of location-based games are the best way to learn how to use smartphones in real life, stressful conditions and in public, not like in sterile classroom environments. There are three most important things during the teaching of seniors controlling smartphones. First one of all, patience. Seniors do not get enough attention from their children or grandchildren. If seniors have some problem with their smartphone, younger generations of relatives do not have time to explain certain features repetitively and they prefer to fix the problem instead of the senior. It is our duty to answer all their questions, explain the same thing multiple times without stress. The second most important rule is socialization. It is strongly connected with edutainment and gamification. Common goals to win and gain points or pass levels increase cooperation among peers and their team spirit. The second most important aspiration to take from this course was socialisation right after learning something new. We should support it as seniors do not socialize as much as they would like to. The third most important rule is to divide seniors into groups according to their skills and abilities. This will reduce time consuming explanations of the basic settings of smartphones. Also, it is important to start with teaching the basics, for example how to set up wifi, operational systems, how to multitask, how to write on smartphone keyboards etc. We also need to think about low motor coordination of some seniors. Special pens designed for touch screen controlling can help seniors to be faster and more accurate during screen tapping. The last idea is about senior education in the field of ICT. It is important to dedicate time and energy to this social group because seniors need to feel part of the new digital world, they should have the right awareness about technologies and get to know their useful application in real life.

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Authors



Magdaléna Švecová

Faculty of Mass Media Communication,
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Nám. J. Herdu 2, 917 01, Trnava
SLOVAKIA
magdalena.svecova@ucm.sk

She focuses on a number of topics such as media literacy and the development of digital skills for seniors. While working in the international LoGaSET project, she explored the appropriate way to train seniors on smartphones and mobile applications. She also deals with the changes and effects of traditional and digital journalism. She has published a textbook Web Journalism, which deals with this topic in detail. Magdaléna Švecová follows especially current trends in journalistic production, interaction, ethics and the way of work of modern journalists



Milena Tsvetkova, Darina Pachova

Multidisciplinary Explanation of the Reading Voice as a Medium: Challenge to Family Media Literacy

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the gaps in knowledge regarding the unique energetics of the reading voice in its role as a medium for the development of stalwart future readers. We take into consideration Maryanne Wolf's reminder about the special need to „foster“ readers due to the fact that reading is „unnatural“. The purpose of this study is to identify the position of reading aloud as a basic media practice in parenting strategies dedicated to cultivating future readers in order to prove that the energetics of the human voice can serve as a communication medium. This study is committed to finding a solution to a specific scientific problem: could the media modality of the environment involving reading aloud from birth be the crucial factor for developing unfailing future readers? The multidisciplinary reading research analyzes the results of a quantitative sociological 32-item survey which assesses the level of awareness and perceptions towards parent-child reading of 71 families in Bulgaria. The analysis focused on parental attitudes towards pre-reading skills before the child learned to read in the conventional sense. From a new perspective, the study looks at the role of the human voice as a medium of unique energetics for family communication. The study demonstrates that the reading voice adds unique energetics to the parent-baby environment by elevating it with non-verbal rhetoric as well as maintaining it in mode of attention and affectionate sound register. These findings can inform decision-making to improve family media literacy on the protection of children's key right to a highly energetic cognitive environment that nurtures avid readers.

KEY WORDS

Media literacy. Family literacy. Reading studies. Reading as communication. Reading aloud. Pre-reading skills. Reader-centric home environment.

1. Introduction

The functional energetics of reading aloud to newborn babies is becoming an increasingly pressing and challenging issue. Research on the matter reveals the exceptional potential of acoustic reading,¹ or audio-reading^{2,3} and the overall developing reading environment as key factors for cultivating unfailing future readers. Reading aloud is becoming an increasingly popular means of communication between parents and their newborn child. A proposition that has already been tested in several of our earlier studies is as follows: babies are readers, albeit mere audio-readers, while still in their mother's womb.^{4,5} The motivation to engage in new research stems from our interest in the possibilities offered by acoustic reading as a unique medium for shaping future readers in the context of diminishing reader competence and increasingly poor reading habits among students and adults alike.

The rationale for undertaking research on the matter was found in the yet undefined *socio-cultural family responsibility for cultivating unfailing readers and maintaining a reader-centric home environment*. IFLA is one of the first global organizations to assert its policy of promoting family reading. In 2007 it published „Guidelines for Library Services to Babies and Toddlers“, which stated, „*The child's environment contributes significantly to the development of pre-reading skills.*“⁶ The same conclusion was reached by the European Commission's Expert Group on Literacy in 2012, i.e. the proposition that school is responsible for teaching children to read and write is false. Greater responsibility lies with parents and friends, followed by healthcare and, lastly, employers.⁷

In the 20th century the development of reading readiness and skills was considered a priority for pedagogues and care-givers in the education system. Today, attention is increasingly being paid to the role of the family in creating a developing reading environment where the reader can acquire the necessary habits and skills. This shift in focus is not surprising given the developments in medicine, neurology, neurophysiology, and diagnostics during the last nearly 30 years, which have made us increasingly aware of the workings of the brain and its learning capabilities as well as the possibilities for a positive impact on the formation of individuals as future readers. It is not just international literacy reports that highlight the paramount importance of early impact through reading aloud. Evidence supporting this proposition can be found in numerous discoveries in the field of development neurobiology (brain science), learning, and brain activity maturation. Several theoretical models show that the brain has laid the groundwork for self-reading before birth, and that the preparation is particularly intensive from birth to 12 months old.^{8,9} Babies learn in a physical book-mediated information environment by using all

¹ MCLUHAN, M.: *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 134.

² See: TSVETKOVA, M.: Reading with the Ears: Radio as a Factor in the Transformation of Reading. In *Viva vox*. Sofia : Univ. press Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2008, p. 135-148. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3221923>>.

³ See: MELENTIEVA, Y.: Audioreading: Historical Background and Present Situation. In *Nauchnie i tekhnicheskie biblioteki*, 2008, No. 9, p. 45-51. ISSN 0130-9765.

⁴ See: TSVETKOVA, M.: Reader in the brain. In *Media and social communications*, 2011, No. 11. ISSN 1313-9908. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <<http://www.media-journal.info/?p=item&aid=162>>.

⁵ See: PACHOVA, D.: *Environment Developing the Reading and Media Functions of the Book: Approaches and Attitudes Towards Early Formation of the Reader*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Sofia : Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, 2018. 296 p.

⁶ IFLA: *Guidelines for Library Services to Babies and Toddlers*. The Hague : IFLA Headquarters, 2007, p. 3. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-professional-reports-100?og=8708>.

⁷ EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy. *Final Report*. Luxembourg : Publications Office of the European Union, 2012, p. 97-101.

⁸ ABRAMS, D.A. et al.: Neural circuits for mother's voice perception predict social communication abilities in children. In *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2016, Vol. 113, No. 22, p. 6299.

⁹ See also: UCHIDA, M.O. et al.: Effect of mother's voice on neonatal respiratory activity and EEG delta amplitude. In *Developmental Psychobiology*. 2018, Vol. 60, No. 2. p. 140–149. ISSN 1098-2302.

their senses: sight (looking at pictures books), hearing (reading aloud, sound books, rustling book pages), sound uttering (dialogic reading aloud, acoustic interaction), singing (rhymes, songs), grip and touch (tactile books).

A 2017 review identified a key shortcoming of 46 earlier studies on the outcomes of targeted family literacy programmes. This shortcoming is the lack of information on the real engagement in „family communication through reading aloud“ and a clear and documented effect from it.¹⁰ The need to examine home (or family) attitudes towards the earliest possible communication with the youngest children by means of reading has also been reinforced by the insistence of media literacy experts to address the lowest age group: „*It will be important to extend research to under-threes in the future.*“¹¹ Numerous supporters of children’s causes have long been drawing public attention to the importance of early literacy but it was not until 2014 that the American Academy of Pediatrics formally endorsed the issue. The academy published a new political statement recommending that pediatricians and politicians promote daily reading aloud from very early childhood – before the age of 1.¹²

Despite the large number of conclusions and proposals with regard to the impact of family environment on the development of unfailing young readers, there is currently *no theoretical justification of the reading voice as a medium* or the possibility to integrate this medium in the reading-pedagogical function of the family. There is a consensus on the statement that reading aloud is one of the major ways of bonding among family members. In recent years experts, educators, and scientists have shared the view that reading aloud should be practiced from the earliest possible moment. In Bulgaria reading aloud from birth lies mainly within the focus of libraries. The current study is the first one to explore the attitudes of Bulgarian parents (mothers and fathers of babies from 0 to 12 months old) towards reading aloud as an opportunity for creating a developing reading environment and laying the groundwork for the early development of pre-reading skills in the baby. We are interested both in the living voice as well as the technical sources of voice – interactive books for kids, audio recordings, and educational programmes (television or online).

We are convinced that there is a need for greater parental involvement and a reduction in parents’ passivity towards the development of primary reader culture in children. Today when we demand media literacy from children, we should insist on media literacy for parents first.

2. Methods

2.1. Statement of the Research Issue

The present research is committed to finding a solution to a *specific scientific problem*: Could the modality of the environment involving reading aloud to a baby from birth to age one be among the main factors for developing stalwart future readers? The research problem stems from several preliminary questions which have not been answered definitively to date: Could the unsatisfactory reading quality in children, the difficulties in reading at school age and the refusal to read at all ages be rooted in children’s late introduction to reading? In effect, the big question is: Could children acquire reading skills and start preparation for acquiring reading

¹⁰ RIE, S. et al.: Implementation quality of family literacy programmes: a review of literature. In *Review of Education*, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 91.

¹¹ SCOTT, F. et al.: Digital Literacies in Early Childhood. In NOBLIT, G. W. (ed.): *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. USA : Oxford University Press, 2018. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <<http://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-97>>.

¹² MAUGHAN, S.: *American Academy of Pediatrics Backs Reading Aloud from Infancy*. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/63008-american-academy-of-pediatrics-backs-reading-aloud-from-infancy.html>>.

maturity before they have learned how to read in the conventional sense? Our efforts are motivated by overcoming the scientific barriers of letter-centricity and book-centricity, which prevent us from acknowledging all parameters and aspects of reading as a mental activity within the framework of oral tradition (reading aloud or reading as listening).

We take into consideration Maryanne Wolf's reminder about the special need for „ostering“ readers due to the fact that reading is unnatural, i.e. it is not an innate but an acquired human trait: „Young readers do not have a genetically based program for developing reading-brain circuit. Reading-brain circuits are shaped and developed by both natural and environmental factors, including the medium in which reading is acquired and developed.“¹³ Hence, our thesis statement is that the formation of reading reflex and attitude in children depends on the communication environment in which they have been developing before and immediately after birth, and this circumstance should be used to reinforce the family's pedagogical responsibility and place the media function of the reading voice at the centre of early (family) reader pedagogy.

The basic hypotheses of the study are two. Firstly, reading aloud has a different impact on the baby as compared to ordinary speech due to the combination of the melody of the natural human voice and the rhythm of the written word reproduced orally. The first assumption is based on the theories of voice of P. Zumthor, E. Husserl, J. Derrida, M. McLuhan, and voice production – the phonation theories of Demosthenes, Hippocrates, Galen, Boethius, Leonardo da Vinci, Andreas Vesalius, Raoul Husson and others. Secondly, it is not the content of the text read (genre or topic) that matters but the reading human voice and its energetics as a medium. This means that any text the parent is reading to themselves (a novel, a textbook, a monograph, a report, etc.) could be read aloud to the baby as long as it is read expressively. The second assumption is based on A. Mehrabian's „pyramid of inconsistent impact“ which illustrates the psychological burden of the variety of expression channels in communication (the „7–38–55% Rule“). The strongest influence in asymmetric personal communication (such as the adult-baby communication) is exerted by the speaker's body language (eyes, mimics, and gestures) – 55%, which is at the bottom of the pyramid; next in terms of significance is the impact of the speaker's voice (tone) – 38%, and last (top of the pyramid) comes the impact of the speech content – 7%.¹⁴

The purpose of this study is to identify the position of reading aloud as a supportive cultural-pedagogical activity in parenting strategies dedicated to cultivating future readers in order to give proof of the energetics of acoustic reading in the period immediately after birth as a pre-requisite for developing sustainable readers.

2.2. Approach

The study has been conducted using an interdisciplinary approach based on the methods of induction, deduction, and scientific data synthesis. The phenomenon of reading aloud to babies has been explored interdisciplinarily by means of analytic-synthetic and critical processing of scientific results in reading theory studies, media studies, bibliopsychology, neuropsychology, cognitive psychology, child psychology, and child pedagogy.

The theoretical basis of this study comprises the views of reading aloud researcher M. Fox who presents this process not only as a way of communication but as an event which has an impact on one's entire life¹⁵; the neurobiological findings of C. Shatz, Professor of Neurobiology of Stanford University on the „windows of opportunity“ and the significance of early experience

¹³ WOLF, M.: *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World*. New York : Harper, 2018, p. 7-8.

¹⁴ MEHRABIAN, A.: *Silent messages*. Belmont : Wadsworth Pub, 1971, p. 75-80.

¹⁵ See: FOX, M.: *Reading Magic: Why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever*. New York : Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008.

in the developing brain¹⁶; the education methodology of M. Ibuka related to the first three years of life¹⁷; research by P. Kuhl on the perception of speech at age 0 to 12 months¹⁸; the work of L.E. Berk on the different stages of cognitive and communication processes in children up to three years old¹⁹; the theory of S. Dehaene on the neurophysiological basis of the reading process from birth²⁰; the works of cognitive neuroscientist and expert on the science of reading M. Wolf²¹; the works of M. Tsvetkova expanding the communication theory of reading, including audio-reading²². We also take into consideration recent debates about familiar theories on chronologically early „reading readiness“ whose ultimate purpose, also shared by UNICEF²³, is maturation of the basic circumstances leading to a non-reader child becoming a reader. For the purposes of the study, a review has been done of extant research on early reading approaches and methods as well as family and home literacy research, including reports of the International Literacy Association, the European Commission (including EPALE), the Family Literacy and Learning Programmes of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Words Alive's Family Literacy and Read Aloud Programmes*, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, etc.

The empirical sociological methods include developing and conducting a targeted survey for Bulgaria using a questionnaire on „Baby in a developing reading environment“. Prior to designing the survey instrument, relevant scientific publications were reviewed, including examining the attitudes of researchers and educators from different countries towards early reading, with a view to deciding on the best approach to examining attitudes towards new forms of acoustic reading. Based on the findings from the literature, appropriate questions were devised, revealing an overall response towards early home reading practices on the part of parents.

2.3 Concept and Terms

The study uses the communication definition of reading: a complex mediated process built on the individual's readiness for visual, tactile or auditory stimuli from written messages, which is essential for the formation of intellectual, social and emotional experience in the recipient of these messages. In our research scope, reading includes not only letter-based reading but also „tactile reading“, „audio-reading“, and „audio-visual reading“.^{24, 25} The term „read out loud“ or „reading aloud“ is not identical with the term „read-aloud“. The subject of our study is acoustic reading or reading aloud to babies by adults rather than the oral reading of a text by the reader themselves. The term „reader-reciter“ denotes the person who reads aloud. The category „babies“ comprises children from birth to 12 months old. It determines the books

¹⁶ See: SHATZ, C.J.: *The Developing Brain*. In *Scientific American*, 1992, Vol. 267, No. 3, p. 60-67. ISSN 0036-8733.

¹⁷ See: IBUKA, M.: *Kindergarten is too late*. London : Souvenir Press, 1977.

¹⁸ KUHL, P.K. et al.: Infants' brain responses to speech suggest Analysis by Synthesis. In *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2014, Vol. 111, No. 31, p. 11238–11245.

¹⁹ BERK, L. E.: *Development Through the Lifespan*. Hoboken : Pearson Education, 2018, p. 201-202.

²⁰ See: DEHAENE, S.: *Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How we Read*. New York : Penguin Book, 2009.

²¹ See: WOLF, M.: *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. London : Icon Books, 2010.

²² See: TSVETKOVA, M.: Audiobook and audioreading: Between benefit and risk. In *LiterNet*, 2011, Vol. 139, No. 6. [online]. [2018-11-25]. Available at: <<http://liternet.bg/publish3/mtzvetkova/audiokniga.htm>>.

²³ UNICEF: *School readiness: a conceptual framework*. New York : United Nations Children's Fund, 2012, p. 14-15.

²⁴ See: FEDOROV, A. et al.: Media and audiovisual literacy to empowerment and social change. In *Opcion*, 2017, Vol. 33, No. 82, p. 160-189. ISSN 1012-1587.

²⁵ See: TSVETKOVA, M.: Compromise duality between mobile reading and stationary reading: An analysis of culture of the media nomadism. In *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 2018, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 159-167. ISSN 1994-4160.

discussed and recommended by us for babies from birth to age one. The term „pre-reader“ denotes babies who can perceive the reading voice. We examine them as „future readers“ in line with the popular librarian's term that promotes reading to babies and draws young mothers to libraries by means of non-standard materials and advice on early childhood reading.

We operate with the term „family literacy“, which was introduced in 1982 by Denny Taylor to denote the relationship between parents and their youngest children based on text. We believe it is important to note that when defining „family literacy“ as „a part of the very fabric of family life“²⁶, the author also means the books parents read aloud to their children who take the role of listeners. Despite the ambition of modern research paradigms to declare this view old-fashioned and shift the focus of attention in family literacy towards the technological metamorphoses of communications and multimodal literacy, including removing reading aloud from broad home literacy²⁷, we are convinced that during the earliest period from birth to the first year of the child reading aloud should regain lost ground and be maintained as an axiom due to its fundamental role in cognitive development.

3. Results

We have conducted a survey on „Baby in a developing reading environment“ for Bulgaria. The emphasis is on reading aloud as a key activity for the formation of a future reader in the „parent-baby“ contact zone during the first year after birth. We refer to this period of developing a future reader as „pre-reader“. The questions address the second of the three stages of pre-reading, which are also essential stages in human cognitive development: first stage – pre-natal (unborn), second stage – from 0 to 12 months old (baby), and third stage – from 1 to 3 years old (child). The reasoning for the above structure of the preparatory reading cycle is the theoretical-empirical setup that the process of perceiving the modalities of text read aloud begins before birth and is instrumental in programming the future reader during the first three years of life.

The study sets out to reveal, analyze and summarize the home practice of „reading aloud“ in Bulgaria and the effects parents observe in babies from 0 to 12 months old. The survey covers a total of 71 parents (aged 19 to 44, 97% women and 3% men). The method used is a survey by means of a specially designed non-standardized questionnaire with 32 questions, 6 of which are demographic. 24 of the questions are limited to a single answer (indicator: n = 71). 8 questions allow multiple answers, and several questions provide pre-text options in which respondents choose the most appropriate combination of answers for each particular question (indicator: n ≠ 71). 17 of the questions are mandatory and questionnaires without answers to them have been considered invalid. 6% of the questionnaires were completed on study and the remaining 94% were filled out electronically. The results were collected between 27th June 2016 and 1st January 2017. The data obtained in the research was analyzed using SPSS. We acknowledge the possibility of data distortion due to the Internet platform used for filling out the questionnaires. All online questionnaires were completed under the supervision of the researcher. The online questionnaire contained pre-programmed notes that did not allow skipping mandatory questions. We do not claim that the study is representative. All submitted data and conclusions were made based on the questionnaires filled out by the respondents.

The following assumptions were made with regard to the survey: (a) The babies' mental development is normal for their age; (b) The babies see and hear without difficulty; (c) The mothers' course of pregnancy occurred without complications. The situation examined does

²⁶ AYLOR, D.: *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write*. Portsmouth : Heinemann, 1983, p. 87.

²⁷ See: HARRISON, E., MCTAVISH, M.: „i'Babies: Infants' and toddlers" emergent language and literacy in a digital culture of iDevices. In *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 2018, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 163-188. ISSN 1741-2919.

not involve the component of „preliminary organized training for parents“. Respondents were not subject to external intervention but represented a natural, unbiased and spontaneous parenting community.

3.1 Participants in the process of reading aloud in the baby's environment

Reading aloud is a way of communication that could start even before birth. Out of all the participants in the survey, 78% pointed out that the mother's environment entailed reading aloud during her pregnancy. This process is of varying intensity – 20% stated, „Yes, every day“, 24% chose the answer „Yes, several times a week“, while 22% of the parents questioned had no observations. The largest group of parents read aloud to their child post-birth several times a week (48%). Only 10% of the participants stated they do not read aloud to their baby. The results obtained demonstrate that parents are more likely to read to the baby after birth rather than before. The number of people who read several times a month remains the same before and after the child was born. A positive trend is that the number of parents who do not read aloud decreases after birth.

Different people in the baby's environment read aloud to it. The largest group is comprised of parents – 89%. A grandmother/grandfather also participates in the process (as stated by 23% of the respondents), and a brother/sister (10%). The option „relative (member of the extended family)“ was selected by 6% of the people questioned while „someone from our friend circle“ was chosen only by 3% of the participants. 6% of all parents had no observations. There is only one respondent who said that a babysitter reads aloud to the child. The results obtained clearly outline the trend that parents are the main readers-reciters to their babies. The second most active participants in the process are grandmothers and grandfathers.

3.2 Parameters of reading aloud to the baby

These questions explore the general parameters of the practices applied by the participants when reading aloud to their babies.

Beginning of the reading aloud practice. 67% of all people questioned started reading aloud when the baby was 0-3 months old. The next group in size are participants who began reading aloud to the baby in the period 4-6 months (23%). The remaining 10% read aloud after the baby turned 6 months. This is a positive trend which shows that reading aloud is one of the earliest means of strengthening the parent-child bond after birth.

Content of the read aloud materials. Participants in the survey read aloud different materials to their babies. The largest number of parents read aloud prose works for children (66%) and children's poetry (62%). The number of participants who chose any of the other answers is considerably smaller: „Prose (which parents read for themselves)“ is read aloud by 23% of the respondents. 3% less (20%) read „Articles from newspapers and magazines, including online (that I read for myself)“. 11% of the respondents chose „Study materials (that I read for myself)“ and another 11% – „Specialized or scientific journals (that I read for myself)“. The smallest number of the people questioned, 4% each, chose the following answers, „Poetry (that I read for myself)“ and „Internet forums“. The results obtained clearly show that parents prefer to read children's books in rhymes and prose. A positive trend is that parents also read aloud other types of text, including specialized and scientific publications. This shows that parents and the rest of the people reading aloud in the baby's environment are interested in broadening the youngest family member's horizons.

Selection of the read aloud materials. The largest number of respondents (73%) pointed out that they select the material to be read aloud from what is available at home. 35% of the participants in the survey stated that they read the same books they were read to in their childhood. An equal number of respondents select the works by choosing between „Shared by friends and acquaintances“ (17%) and „Random picks on the Internet“ (15%). 13% of the participants consulted librarians from the children's section. Only one respondent sought specialist advice on what to read. We can only assume that buying books and borrowing them from the library involves discussion with the relevant specialists. The general trend outlined by the answers to this question is that the respondents read what is available at home or what they remember being read to in their childhood. Such an approach is understandable because it involves the easiest and most pleasant to read aloud material that evokes positive memories from the parents' early childhood years. Emphasis is placed on the refusal to consult experts in the field, even librarians and booksellers.

Reading aloud rituals. The reading ritual is an important aspect of developing babies' positive attitude as future readers. 39% of the people questioned do not have a reading ritual. 28% of the respondents answered they hug the baby and read aloud to it, or create a quiet and relaxed atmosphere to read to the baby. 23% place the baby in a sitting/lying position and begin reading. Only 11% prepare the baby for sleep and then start reading. The answers given make it clear that the respondents aim to provide a relaxed and cosy atmosphere as well as suitable posture and sound background to support reading.

3.3 Effects from reading aloud in person

Reaction of the baby during ongoing reading as compared to when reading stops. Parents observe different reactions after starting to read aloud to their babies, and when they stop reading. We have compared these reactions by means of a crosstab analysis (*Table 1*). When choosing the type of reaction, multiple answers are possible. The reactions were evaluated subjectively on the basis of the reactions the baby demonstrates towards all other aspects of life. According to the results obtained, babies show delight and become more active when they are being read aloud to. When the process ceases, the largest number of parents (43%) do not observe any particular reaction. None of them chose the option „It cries“. Only 1% of the babies show delight when reading aloud stops. It is noteworthy that an equal number of participants chose the option „The baby starts whining“ during the process and upon its completion. The overall observation is that reading aloud elicits positive emotions from the baby, which are expressed most naturally.

| Baby's reaction | During reading aloud | When reading aloud stops |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| It calms down | 28% | 8% |
| It shows delight | 39% | 1% |
| It becomes more active | 31% | 21% |
| Its physical activity decreases | 25% | 4% |
| It starts whining | 11% | 11% |
| It cries | — | — |
| No reaction observed | 11% | 43% |

SCHEME 1: Baby's reaction during reading aloud as compared to when reading stops at the discretion of the parent (n = 71)

Source: own processing

Reaction of the baby based on the type of read aloud text. Reading familiar texts is a frequent practice that reinforces already developed models of speech. Only 34% of the parents believe that the baby demonstrates different reactions to different literary works. Most of the parents do not notice particular differences in their babies' reactions regardless of whether they read the same or different texts.

Attention towards the illustrated material. Pointing at the illustrations while reading aloud, alongside with interaction between text and pictures is practiced by a total of 38% of the parents. The number of respondents who draw the baby's attention to the illustrations is significantly larger (83%). 70% of all parents explain the relationship between the text being read and the illustrations. The results show that based on its age and interest towards the object placed in front of it, the baby focuses its attention with a varying duration on the illustrations that are an additional element to the text. 80% of the respondents stated that the baby focuses or rather focuses its attention on the illustrations.

Attention to written text sources in the baby's environment. Of all the participants, 62% stated definitively that the baby demonstrates interest in the text source read from, regardless of whether it is a book, newspaper, magazine, sheet of paper, tablet, smartphone, computer or other. Only 9% answered that the babies rather or definitively show no interest in the source they are being read to from. Babies are curious and learn about the world around them with increased intensity. Results show that babies demonstrate a marked interest towards sources of written text in their environment regardless of whether a person reads aloud to the babies or reads for themselves.

Free access to sources of written text is an important part of developing a positive reading environment. If the baby is prohibited from „reading“ from particular sources, this would hinder the development of reader habits at a later age. Free access to sources of written text has been provided to 60% of the babies. Only 10% of all parents chose the option „I do not think it is necessary“ while the remaining 30% stated „No“.

Books as play items are widely popular and all participants offer such toys to their babies. The only difference is that parents offer them at different periods of the babies' development. The largest number of parents provide books as play items to their babies at the age of 4-6 months (46%). 31% of the respondents indicated age 0-3 months. 20% offer their baby books as play items at age 7-9 months. The lowest share (3%) is made up of those who chose the „10-12 months“ response. A positive trend is that parents offer books as play items from a very early age. This is an important element in developing reader environment.

3.4 Technical sources of voice

We are equally interested in the technical sources of voice in the babies' environment. One of these sources is audio recordings of fairy tales. Most parents (59%) do not play audio recordings to their babies. The rest do so with varying frequency. Of the parents who play audio recordings of fairy tales, most stated that the baby shows delight (14%) or the baby calms down (13%). Educational programmes on television or online are another potential source of text read aloud to babies. 60% of all respondents do not play similar programmes. 18% of the participants use them as an entertainment tool on a daily basis while 11% do so several times a week. Out of a total of 41% of parents who play educational programmes, 21% stated that the baby shows delight and another 21% – that it calms down. 13% stated that they notice a decrease in physical activity. Results show that over a half of the respondents do not use technical sources of voice targeted at the baby. Parents who do not play audio recordings of fairy tales do not play educational television or online programmes either. Of the two sources, educational programmes are preferred for daily entertainment.

Using crosstab analysis, we have compared the frequency of reading aloud and the preference for technical sources of voice (*Table 2 – 3*). The largest share of respondents (29%) read aloud to their babies several times a week and do not play children's audio recordings. The largest percentage of respondents (27%) read aloud several times a week but never play educational programmes. Only 1% read aloud every day and play educational (television and online) programmes.

| Frequency | | Children's audio recordings | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| | | Every day | Several times a week | Several times a month | Once a month or more rarely | Never |
| Reading aloud | Every day | 3% | 3% | 3% | 1% | 7% |
| | Several times a week | 1% | 7% | 6% | 4% | 29% |
| | Several times a month | 1% | 1% | 1% | 4% | 8% |
| | Once a month or more rarely | — | — | — | 1% | 7% |
| | Never | — | — | 3% | — | 7% |

SCHEME 2: *Reading aloud or listening to audio recordings (n = 71)*

Source: own processing

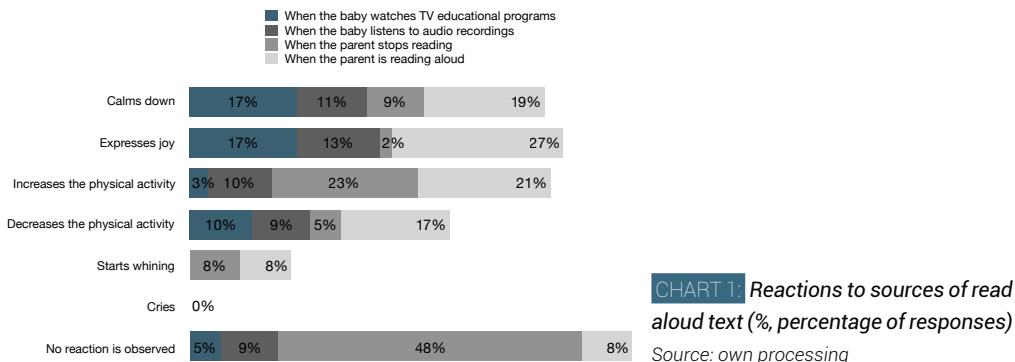
| Frequency | | Educational programmes (television or online) | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| | | Every day | Several times a week | Several times a month | Once a month or more rarely | Never |
| Reading aloud | Every day | 1% | —% | 1% | — | 14% |
| | Several times a week | 8% | 7% | 1% | 4% | 27% |
| | Several times a month | 3% | 4% | 1% | — | 8% |
| | Once a month or more rarely | 6% | — | 3% | — | — |
| | Never | — | — | — | — | 10% |

SCHEME 3: *Reading aloud or watching television or online programmes (n = 71)*

Source: own processing

3.5 Comparative analysis of babies' reactions to different sources of acoustic reading

Babies respond differently to the different sources of acoustic reading. We have carried out a comparative analysis between the various stimuli and the responses elicited by acoustic reading and a reading voice from a technical source (*Figure 1*). It can be seen that the babies' reactions depend on the type of stimuli. It needs to be highlighted that the number of parents using audio recordings and educational programmes to entertain their babies is significantly lower than the ones who read aloud to them in person. The overall observation is that regardless of the source, babies respond happily in all acoustic reading modalities.



4. Discussion

The questionnaire survey presented revealed the multi-dimensionality of acoustic reading in terms of the person who does it, specifics of their voice, selection of reading material, interaction with words and illustrations, and variety of sources of read aloud texts. It has been determined that illustrations have multiple functions during reading aloud as they transform the words into pictures and help the „audio-reader“ (baby) get to know the world in an *integral format* – by simultaneously listening and reading, performing an active role in a communication field between reader-reciter and reader-listener. The multi-functionality of interactive books for kids in which text is augmented by sound, color, and images accessible via mobile applications has also been established.

The results demonstrate the specifics of the Bulgarian reading parent. Several negative and positive trends have emerged. The leading negative trend is that parents believe that reading aloud makes sense only after the child has been born and mostly as its age progresses. A large number of future mothers *do not perceive their unborn child as a „reader-listener“* – 50% of the parents questioned admitted they did not read aloud during pregnancy. However, when the baby was born and during the first 12 months only 10% of the respondents did not apply this method. Another negative trend is that parents *do not seek expert opinion* on the choice of books to read aloud. They do not consult librarians or library psychologists as to the most appropriate reading materials. A positive trend is that parents prefer to read aloud to their children in person instead of using technical substitutes (audio recordings or television). It is a well-acknowledged fact that every baby responds to reading aloud „in a cultured way“ as early as the first year of life.

Although the results of the questionnaire survey cannot be generalized, we believe they are significant enough to draw attention to a new object of research studies, namely the reading voice as a communication medium.

The specific approach of the present study is to promote the body along the line of physiologizing communication as a possible pre-cultural connection to books and reading. By default, the body is a „communication supporter“ of the book insofar as it lays the text in its scope, objectifies it, makes it comparative to it, and arranges both book and text in a common object chain. Reading aloud by the mother is of paramount importance in our case as it lengthens the communicative chain of body–book–voice. It creates conditions for the metonymic pairing of mother and book in which the book acquires the positive characteristics of the mother in a psycho-analytic sense, while reading becomes a part of the child's experience through the mother's psychological repertoire of care, caress, and satisfaction.

In order to deduce the advantages of the communication practice of reading aloud hereby referred to as „acoustic reading“, it is first necessary to identify the specifics of the voice that allows it to function as a medium, that is, to have an impact on the recipient and govern the

communication processes among people. Our thesis on the voice as a medium is based on the theories and views of Nicomachus (c. 60–c. 120 AD), Boethius (c. 477–524 AD), I. Kant, J. Herder, E. Husserl, J. Derrida, T. Adorno, H.U. von Balthasar, M. McLuhan, P. Zumthor, B. Felderer, P. Kivy, M. Tiainen, and O. Bulgakowa.

Genealogically and historically voice precedes speech. „For there is no greater path to the soul than through the ear. Therefore when rhythms and modes enter the soul by this path, there can be no doubt that they affect and remodel the mind into their own character“, as Boethius (c. 477–524 AD) writes in his treatise „*De institutione musica*“.²⁸ The voice is the natural medium for transmitting messages, both language (meaningful) or emotional. The phenomenon of sound has a decisive role in meaning – it can exist on its own, amplify or even circumvent speech. This key mediating position between language expression and the phonetic act of sound, between logos and emotion, assigns the human voice a leading role in the pre-verbal period of primitive people and newborn children alike.²⁹

Voice is an aerial extension of the human body. In his research, oral communication expert P. Zumthor treats the voice simultaneously as a source of information and a mediator between the neurophysiological and cultural aspects of human activity, as a fundamental carrier and out-of-the-body channel of oral speech and oral poetry. Through the body that creates it, the voice gives information about the particular person – in other words, a person „reveals their secrets“ more easily through their voice than through a look or facial expression^{30,31}.

The voice springs from the bowels of the body and begins its autonomous life as a physiological substrate of speech. The inseparability of the voice as a medium of corporeality from the environment, i.e. from the other media, is the reason why it is easily translatable into other communication languages.³² It can be translated into gesture, mimic, written sign, fire and smoke, an electric impulse or byte all the way to modern intelligent voice control programmes – *Voice Control, Google Voice*, etc.

The voice has an important social and symbolic function – it safeguards the value of speech and creates forms of group social connectedness and morale as well as generating and expressing symbols and feelings. When gesture is complemented by voice, the latter becomes the most important source of energy of the ritual act. When feeling and written (recited) word merge with voice, it becomes the organizer of the richest syncretism of the pre-written era – „oralite mixte“.³³

In this mixed reality, the air yields something new – an objectified voice, a voice-medium, an independent voice-body or vocalic body shaped through sound in a different physicality (this is the interpretation offered in „*Pygmalion*“ by B. Shaw). The voice born inside leaves the body and is realized in space, thus becoming a cultural phenomenon. The voice always seeks the other and becomes a conductor of intersubjectivity.³⁴

The voice as a medium governs the mode of listening. P. Kivy explains that the recipient is conscious of the medium in-between him and his content when the medium „has received the impress of the artist's hand“.³⁵ What the recipient hears is the medium which completely engulfs him: „he is listening to singing“. In the sensual voice emission, the listening mode is transformed into a mode of attention, which means that the primary role is taken by the source

²⁸ See: BOETHIUS, A. M. S.: *Fundamentals of Music*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989.

²⁹ See: FELDERER, B.: *Phonorama: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Stimme als Medium*. Berlin : Matthes & Seitz, 2004.

³⁰ See: ZUMTHOR, P.: *Introduction à la poésie orale*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1983.

³¹ See: ZUMTHOR, P.: *La lettre et la voix: De la "Litterature" médiévale*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1987.

³² See: BULGAKOWA, O.: *Golos kak kulturnyj fenomen*. Moskva : Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015.

³³ See: ZUMTHOR, P.: *La lettre et la voix: De la "Litterature" medieval*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1987.

³⁴ See: FELDERER, B.: *Phonorama: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Stimme als Medium*. Berlin : Matthes & Seitz, 2004.

³⁵ KIVY, P.: Speech, Song, and the Transparency of the Medium: A Note on Operatic Metaphysics. In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1994, Vol. 52, No. 1, p. 67.

of the voice (the one speaking or singing). The listener's attention determines whether the voice will remain merely physical sound or will work as a medium. However, governing the mode of attention does not depend on the listener's aural competences but on the skill of the source of the voice.³⁶

Just like any body-based sound phenomenon, the reading voice cannot lie. Auditory recognition of sound phenomena is „locked in the mind which, equipped with the criteria of truth, is never misled“, according to Boethius.³⁷ The relationship between subject and object, reader and listener, transcends the psychological state of empathy (*Einfühlung*). The listener belongs to the other and surrenders to him. The voice as a medium can never be erased or vaporized in pure form.³⁸ According to Balthasar, this reveals the difference between ear and eye – „the open landscape of the eye, where sight is always seeing, and in the open sphere of hearing, where the ear is always hearing“.^{39,40} The eye is the organ that makes possession of the world possible, and seeing takes control of it. The ear is the channel of subordination to the world because hearing is involuntary. The listener is in a relation of defenselessness, on the one hand, and of connectedness, on the other.

M. McLuhan provides the same explanation: the ear, the radio, and audio media in general are „hot“ media, i.e. channels that attack directly, without deficits or the need for assistance on the part of the recipient, unlike speech or telephone, which are defined as „cool“ media. The listener is a captive of the stream of sound and perception does not require any effort on his part.⁴¹ Insofar as listener-oriented communication is „hot“, i.e. ancient and natural, it can be concluded that reading aloud as „reading for the other“ is the most direct and richly informative expression rehabilitating the frankness of primary „orality“ and the magical essence of the „world of the ear“.

As P. Zumthor⁴² reminds us, the voice is also a sign of presence. Its function in the unconscious phase of child development naturally does not require auditory competence and is exhausted by presence. Thus reading aloud with its typical sensuality, intonation, and melody becomes evidence of the mother's proximity by psychologically activating the relationship with her and positioning itself as an archetypal need following the psychoanalytic reasoning about the impact of childhood on the mature person.

To summarize, a concise answer to the question of how the voice functions as a medium of reading can be provided as follows:

- by virtue of the natural sound of each object, as explained by Nicomachus (c. 60–c. 120 AD) in his „Manual of Harmonics“;
- by virtue of the music emitted by every moving object and its infusion into the „harmony of spheres“ as described by metaphysicians during the 16th–17th century; hence spoken word also carries a musical imprint;
- through the natural musicality of oral reading, which is the most powerful intellectual component of the written word;

³⁶ KIVY, P.: Speech, Song, and the Transparency of the Medium: A Note on Operatic Metaphysics. In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1994, Vol. 52, No. 1, p. 68.

³⁷ BOETHIUS, A. M. S.: *De institutione musica*. In GERCMAN, E. V.: *Muzykalnaja Bojeciana*. Sankt-Peterburg : Glagol, 1995, p. 196.

³⁸ KIVY, P.: Speech, Song, and the Transparency of the Medium: A Note on Operatic Metaphysics. In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1994, Vol. 52, No. 1, p. 66.

³⁹ BALTHASAR, H.U.: *The glory of the Lord: a theological aesthetics*. Vol. 1. Edinburgh : T&T Clark, 1982, p. 394.

⁴⁰ OAKES, E.T.: *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. New York : Continuum, 1997, p. 138.

⁴¹ MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York : McGraw Hill, 1964, p. 22–25.

⁴² See: ZUMTHOR, P.: *La lettre et la voix: De la "Litterature" medievale*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1987.

- through the special technique of poetic reading – the „musical tone“, which was perfected as early as the ancient oral reading of poetry (Homer's, for instance) and was used in Shakespeare's century to perform not only his sonnets but also any works of drama.
- The voice is an organic extension of consciousness, a transformed form of physicality, and a „hot“ medium between bodies. Such a medialogic conclusion reinforces the significance and value of acoustic reading.

5. Conclusions

Our research, which aimed to discover the earliest possible stage to initiate the programming of future readers, has outlined a new research field of reading as acoustic-verbal communication. Based on the empirical study conducted we have put forward arguments to support the functional energetics of reading in the context of a physiology of communication mediated by the reading voice and the child's socializing audio-receptive modality. In order to establish the long-term effect of the family practice of the earliest possible communication by means of reading to babies aged between 0 and 1, at least two more follow-up studies need to be conducted among the same empirical group – the first one in two years' time when the babies have reached the age of 3, and the second one in two or three years' time when the children will be 5 or 6 years old and should already be able to read. At this point the use of family diaries and direct behaviour measurement (i.e. video or audio observations) will be recommended. This will aid the collection of operative documentation to enhance the validity of the behavioral guidelines which parents provide to their children, and will possibly lead to more reliable and long-lasting effects of early communication by means of reading aloud.

A theoretical basis necessary to re-examine extant views on laying the groundwork for the so called reading maturity has also been proposed. The theoretical review of the most recent scientific results confirmed the assumption that developing reader attitudes in children depended on the media modalities of the environment in which the babies had been developing immediately after birth. New evidence emerged on the huge potential of the audio environment charged by the energetics of reading aloud or the so-called audio-reading or acoustic reading. The methodological framework of acoustic reading as physiologized and sub-medial communication was also validated and enriched with new parameters i.e. with the reader's voice as a medium and its sub-media – rhythm, metrics, intonation of speech (melody, pause, intensity, tempo, timbre, etc.) as well as with illustrations as sub-media of books and the physical presence of the reader-reciter as a loving adult.

The research is based on the premise of *value conservatism* which at present introduces not only the mother but the whole family as an environment to develop the child's cultural identity through reading. The family has been assigned purposeful pedagogical tasks which are not exhausted at the level of raising and educating the child but, according to Marshall McLuhan's classification, support its early integration into written civilization. All of this is possible while the child is still a „captive audience“ – in the womb, in nappies, being physically taken care of in order to become „a reader“ before knowing about books or his or her own existence. The present study has also armed the family with a technique for *cultural pressure* which must be applied during the first year of the child's life because later on the cultural pressure of modern society will be in a different direction. The cultural pressure on the part of the family will presumably be subconsciously retained in the child's memory and in future will affect its identity by „governing“ it.

Developing reading environment for the future reader changes along with the new views parents adopt as a result of the growing popularity of brain sciences, neurophysiology, embryology, psychology, pedagogy, and the heuristic theories about baby development. It was our responsibility to offer parents the evidence and information necessary to show them

the choices available for designing their progeny's future. It is an optimistic trend that a growing number of parents recognize that the earlier they begin reading to their baby, the more solid its talent as a stalwart reader will be. The generalized properties of the human voice as a medium prove that it has unique energetics for the parent-baby environment – it elevates it with *non-verbal rhetoric*, while reading aloud maintains it in *mode of attention* and transmits the information in an *affectionate sound register*.

The present research has reviewed the topical issue about the interrelation between the media functions of reading and the parents' responsibility for developing a reading child, which will hopefully motivate future research directions in the science of reading. The methodological framework of audio-reading as physiologized and sub-medial communication is applicable in modern family literacy approaches. In terms of its nature, the matter is also open for re-examination of the contribution of the reading voice as a medium for family communication and maintaining a home cognitive environment.

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Authors



Milena Tsvetkova

Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production
Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
1000 Sofia, 49 Moskovska str.
BULGARIA
milenaic@uni-sofia.bg

Milena Tsvetkova is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the Sofia University, Bulgaria. She holds a PhD degree in Sociology. Her research interests include media studies and reading studies. She is a scientist whose books include „Reading – Antimanipulated filter“ (2000), „Information Culture: The Name of Reading“ (2009), „The Book as Medium“ (2012), „Reading as Communication Echo“ (2017), „Book Science“ (2018). Tsvetkova also has served as editorial board member of „Russian Journal of Sociology“ (Russia), „Newmedia21“ (Sofia University, Bulgaria), „Media and social communications“ (University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria), „BBIA online: The Journal of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association“. She has been working as a professor in Sofia University since 2001.

Author's identifier profiles:

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9414-7174>

ResearcherID: <http://www.researcherid.com/rid/M-6081-2016>

Scopus Author ID: <http://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.url?authorId=57193443124>

Library of Congress: <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n2004041334>



Thouraya Snoussi

New Media and Cultural Mediatisation: Case Study

ABSTRACT

New technologies of information and communication content spread via the Internet are enhancing globalized interpersonal interaction and reshaping social relations. Many Arab E-media appeared to advocate to Arab and Muslim societies features, in order to preserve their stereotypical image and prohibit local identity extinction. The case study of an Arab E-Magazine led to a generalized content including spiritual messages and features, some of them were specific to the Arab and Muslims but a great number were universal. The Happy Arabic Family concept treated by the E-Magazine seemed to be inspired by global morals and ethics. Sticking with universal morals and virtues seemed to be the way to preserve local identity in a multicultural space. Besides, a limited audience interest was noted leading to reducing the efficiency of the E-Magazine and driving the researcher to ask the question about the identity of the ideal „communication bowl“ for Family Media.

KEY WORDS

Mediatisation. Culture. New Media. Family. Case study.

1. Introduction

ICT appears as a primordial motor of changes related to Culture fundaments. This study will start from a cultural studies approach to study the correlations between Culture and Society. A special emphasis is put on the potential contribution of many research studies related to media critique and literacy.

According to Douglas Kellner¹, Radio, Television, films, popular music, the Internet and social networking, and other forms and products of Media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities, including our sense of selfhood. Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values. Media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture.

Cultural studies apprise the role of Media in education. Mass Media are a profound and frequent source of cultural pedagogy; they contribute to educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear and desire-and what not to. Media can also enhance individual sovereignty via-a-vis media culture and give people more power over their cultural environment.

Based on this central role played by Media, both its traditional and digital aspects, this study will focus on educational and pedagogical messages spread by the electronic Magazine „Happy Family“, in order to extrapolate the most important Arab values, principles and ethics that e-readers must adhere to, according to the e-magazine authors.

Many researches evoked problems related to the dual: Digital Media VS Local Education. The proliferation of digital technology contributes to the erosion of local cultural values and practices. This cultural degeneration in return leads to loss of identity and pride among young people, disrupting their focus and productivity, ultimately retarding social progress. Several scientific studies treated the subject from the main perspective: How can technology help preserve elements of local culture in the Digital Age?

Providing access to more local content is crucial to keep people in touch with their roots. Thankfully, technology has evolved to a stage where there are many tools easily available to create the software, graphics, websites, music and videos that will let each society transmit aspects of their culture to the youth, and indeed share their identity with everybody in a globalized world.

Julie B. Wiest² tried in her study to introduce a new media model that clearly illustrates the role of mass media in the transmission of cultural messages and helps to explain variations in the reception and employment of cultural messages by members of the same culture.

The researcher found that Mass media are significant transmitters of cultural messages and play an influential role in shaping culture, yet the process is complex. There is great variety in which messages are accepted by different consumers, how they are interpreted, and how they ultimately are employed (or not). Further, cultures that include contradictory messages are more likely to inadvertently promote deviant paths to culturally valued goals.

The new model introduced by Wiest clearly illustrates the complex process by which cultural messages are transmitted to receivers via mass media. Second, the model introduces the concept of „cultural capacity“ to complement existing concepts and advance understanding of the operation of culture.

¹ KELLNER, D.: *Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism and Media Culture*. [online]. [2018-08-06]. Available at: <<https://philpapers.org/rec/KELCSM>>.

² WIEST, J. B. et al.: The Role of Mass Media in the Transmission of Culture. In ROBINSON, L., SCHULZ, J. (eds.): *Communication and Information Technologies Annual Studies in Media and Communications*. Bingley : Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016, p. 203-219. [online]. [2018-08-06]. Available at: <<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S2050-206020160000011019>>.

Saptarshi Kolaya³ explored in his paper „Cultural Heritage Preservation of Traditional Indian Art through Virtual New-media“, contemporary research in virtual cultural heritage by arguing for an enhanced user-driven approach through new-media for the diffusion of knowledge.

Yehuda et al.,⁴ also consider that translating the pool of data, worthy to be preserved and diffused among a larger mass, into a popular paradigm like new-media is found more accessible by new generations and can act as an educative tool. Overall, it is obvious that nowadays, digital media is the favourite tool for diffusing culture, education and appraising identity belonging. This study will explore the important features of the Arab and Islamic culture that the E-magazine „Happy Family“ invites its audience to adhere to through its published articles, to limit the domination of western culture and Arab youth alienation?

2. Objective

- Identify the kind of Arab morals, traditions, rules and ethics posted and supported through the E-Magazine „Happy Family“,
- Analyzing the stereotypical image of the Arabic family that the sender is trying to convince his audience about its value and virtues,
- Measure out the readers interest towards the E-Magazine content, through the space reserved for comments and the tracked numbers of viewers.

3. Methods

A content analysis of the 47 articles published in the studied E-Magazine was conducted. In this research, the author tried first to identify the kind of published text (subjects, meanings, main discourse...etc.). This quantitative method that analyses the written words (conceptual analysis), can provide descriptive data such as the existence, frequency, direction and intensity of concepts in the text published via the studied E-Magazine, as well as articles lengths. A particular focus was also put on the various formats used (journalistic and non-journalistic), and the chosen pictures if any. The goal of choosing a content analyst is to evaluate and interpret the given data and determine the main cultural messages mediated via „Happy-Family“.

4. Results

Through this study, several results were obtained: The home page of E-Magazine contains nine (9) main rubrics and two (2) short ones. The first named „Our lens“ is dedicated to pictures covering the e-magazine's owners' academic and educational activities, and the second is about „the versions of the writings“, a promotional rubric, with selling audio tapes with educational content. The home page includes also an interactive space entitled „Chat with us“; inviting E-readers to answer a question about the value of the paper book.

³ KOLAY, S.: Cultural Heritage Preservation of Traditional Indian Art through Virtual New-media. In *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 225, p. 309-320. [online]. [2019-03-23]. Available at: <https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042816307157/1-s2.0-S1877042816307157-main.pdf?_tid=35327d50-7028-4a3d-81e2-a73b7dc1d5d5&acdnat=1520007960_ddd6162d7bc6eba730f0ed3bb82ebcf3>.

⁴ YEHUDA, K., KVAN, T., AFFLECK, J.: *New heritage-new media and cultural heritage*. London, New York : Routledge, 2008, p. 13.

| No | Rubrics | No. of Articles | % | No. of Words | % |
|-------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1 | Our News | 5 | 10,63 | 347 | 0,26 |
| 2 | Family news | 7 | 14,89 | 2040 | 1,54 |
| 3 | by Al Mutawaa | 5 | 10,63 | 1884 | 1,42 |
| 4 | Happy Family | 5 | 10,63 | 111103 | 84,17 |
| 5 | Husbands and wives | 5 | 10,63 | 3145 | 2,382 |
| 6 | Parents | 5 | 10,63 | 2200 | 1,666 |
| 7 | Approaching to marriage | 5 | 10,63 | 3381 | 2,56 |
| 8 | Family budget | 5 | 10,63 | 5446 | 4,12 |
| 9 | Suspicions and responses | 5 | 10,63 | 2440 | 1,84 |
| Total | | 47 | 100 | 131986 | 100 |

SCHEME 1: Content of „Happy Family“ articles

Source: E-Magazine “Happy Family”, own processing

Each of the nine rubrics is composed by five (5) press articles, except the rubric „family news“ with seven (7). All articles were written in 11 bold Typed in „Arab traditional font“. The researcher used the program Word Count in counting the words numbers and revealing the quality of boldface.

A description of each one of the articles included in „Happy Family“ was conducted to give an idea about the sample content.

The rubric „Our News“ contained in the main page the headlines of an article covering the graduation of a new batch of „Al-Nour Chair“. Five links were archived in the interior pages.⁵

The topics related to the rubric „Our News“ are the following:

1. „*The graduation of a new batch of Nour Chair*“ : A press release covering a graduation ceremony. It contains the graduate students' picture.
2. „*Religion is morality*“: An article covering an oral presentation held by the e-magazine owner during the scientific conference.
3. „*First Meeting at schools: Applying a global fun approach*“: The article highlighted a lecture by Dr. Jassim Al Mutawa, as the President of the Governing Council of library „global“ about global educational methods.
4. „*The education cycle*“: an old advertisement announcing a conference dating back to the year 2010.
5. „*I want Security not Happiness*“: A TV program advertisement, produced by Dr. Jassim Al Mutawa, the owner of the e-magazine.

Overall, the rubric „Our News“ was devoted to promote the e-magazine's owner's educational and professional activities. It was a marketing tool rather than educational container.

The rubric „Family News“ included five articles addressing several issues of concern to the family:

1. *Discussions on the Child health in the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood*: A written coverage of a conference about childhood and motherhood without pictures.
2. *Hitting children helps them to succeed*: The article summarized the results of a study published in the newspaper „Daily Telegraph“, about the called „benefits“ of hitting children.

⁵ Time. [online]. [2019-03-21]. Available at: <<http://time.com/money/4776640/money-tips-married-couples>>.

3. *work in distance in Saudi Arabia...women is the biggest beneficiary:* An old article published since 2006, about the results of the research study issued by the Council of the Development of Human Resources in Saudi Arabia.
4. *20 days in the desert to help persons with disabilities:* A long article describing an emirite young man walk trip that lasted for one (1) month in the Empty Quarter desert for purpose of collecting donations to persons with disabilities.
5. *Women's skin is more wrinkling than men's:* An article summarizing the results of a medical research study made by a group of westerner's doctors.
6. *Warning of the growing of sexual harassment:* A coverage of the symposium program dedicated to sexual harassment in Cairo, without going deeper in raising the subject from ethical, social and religious perspectives.
7. *Muslims in Britain:* A translation of an English article published in „Sunday Times“ about an official report entitled „the integration of Muslims in the Western society“, prepared by the Open Society Institute in Britain.

To conclude, the second rubric was fully dedicated to cover international cultural events like conferences, international organization announcements...etc.

The rubric „by Al Mutawaa“, included four articles with diversified topics:

1. *Omar Mokhtar is still alive:* an article describing some touristic places linked to the historic personality of „Omar Mokhtar“ in Libya.
2. *I asked my son who is the rich?* An article exploring the different criterion of wealth and poverty.
3. *Youth technology from Al Medina Al Monawara:* Media coverage of a lecture about „Youth and modern Tools of communication“. This article dealt with the concept of technological intelligence and the question of its use to serve Islam and Muslims.
4. *A State without Children:* The author discussed the idea of reluctance on marriage, focusing on its implications for the society.
5. *More importantly how we consider dilemma when it comes?* An article that listed two tales about suffering and proposed considering suffering as a way to paradise.

The rubric „Happy Family“ included five diversified articles as the following:

1. *Prior agreement on role distribution inside the Family:* A detailed-research article on principles of sharing house burdens.
2. *Guide to prevent the deterioration of couple's relationship:* An article narrating the „Guide to marital relations“ details in Brazil.
3. *10 Ways to Get the Quiet Life:* A lecture listing 10 rules for family stability.
4. *How can couples avoid the danger of jealousy:* A lecture about the need to overcome doubts between couples and to maintain mutual respect for family stability.
5. *A practical program for happy marital life:* A short lecture about „how to discuss within the family“?

We can summarize that the rubric was fully dedicated to raise couples' issues and problems from the academic and social researches perspective. The rubric doesn't include any topics related to sons or daughters. Only couples' relationship's particularities were the subject of focus.

The rubric „Husbands and wives“ was composed of five shorts articles dedicated to womens' issues:

1. *How to become a fine wife and win your loving heart husband?* A lecture on how to deal with the husband on a daily basis.

2. *Blind point in the marital dialog*: A lecture on the importance of listening during conversations between couples. The writer used several views of psychological and social western scientists, especially „John Gorhoul“, a specialized researcher on the study of marital relations.
3. *Problems of the past are poisoning the life of couples*: A summarized translation study carried out by a US Journal, on the causes of daily marital disputes. At the end of the article, the writer stressed the necessity of dialog.
4. *How to turn marital violence to a quiet dialog*? This article focused on the causes of family violence and warns of resorting to beatings in case of disagreement between couples.
5. *Psychological touches in marital life*: A critical point of view concerning family differences. The writer tries to answer the following question: what should the husband do so as not to lose his wife?

This rubric appeared as continuity to the previous ones as all the articles were dealing with couple's daily problems and how to avoid misunderstandings.

The five articles included in the rubric „Parents“ were addressing important issues relative to the relationship between parents and children:

1. *The deadly mistakes of marriage*: The article listed the divorce reasons based on some experimental social studies results.
2. *Our relationships in Family sphere.... Does it change after marriage*? The article dealt with relationship fluctuations that occur at home between couples freshly married.
3. *Five tips for marriage without problems*: The shortest article in the magazine⁶ in which five points were listed to keep the ghost of family problems and disagreement away.
4. *Dialog between Couples*: A long lecture dealing with the importance of Dialog between couples and its safe foundations.
5. *Understanding the partner is the basis of a successful marriage*: The article tackled the importance of mutual understanding between husbands and wives.

Even though the rubric was dedicated to parents, the relationship between husbands and wives was raised in many paragraphs if not in the entire articles belonging to this rubric.

„Family Budget“ was a financial rubric in which the writer tackled five educational lectures about how to manage the family budget:

1. *Extravagancy in cleaning materials usage is a danger*: An article dealing with the disadvantages of chemical substances included in cleaners or fresh air perfumes and called for less extravagance in the purchase and use of materials due to their extreme danger for family members.
2. *Family Budget*: The article called for the need to identify the family budget, enriched with examples of the Sunna. It is one of the longest articles published in the examined electronic magazine.⁷
3. *How to calculate the annual income of the family*: A detailed lecture on how to determine annual income.
4. *Ways to measure the budget*: The article gave answers to the question: how to optimize family consumption. The text was relatively brief and non-in-depth like previous texts.
5. *The family budget... the problem of expenditure*: The article was exposed to several examples of the problems experienced by some families as a result of mismanagement and certain financial regulations.

⁶ Note of the author: this article contains only 71 words.

⁷ Note of the author: this article contains 3206 words.

„Suspicions and responses“ was the last rubric that the E-Magazine allocated to talk about several topics of interest to women from religious and legitimacy perspectives.

1. *They claimed that revealing is the right of women, and the veil is injustice:* This article was addressing the issue of religious ideological concern to Muslim women and the imposition of the veil.
2. *Veil is conservative and religion is attainable:* This article also raised the veil topic, from the holy Koran and Sunna perspectives.
3. *The suspicion that the legacy of the female is just half of the legacy of the male:* The article raised the question of inheritance in Islam.
4. *The understanding of „Hadith“ that it is not authorized for women to fast without the permission of her husband:* An article about the necessity of the husband's permission before fasting. The writer's argument was based on the holy Koran and the Sunna.
5. *The suspicion that the woman is a distorted bone:* An opinion article about considering women as a distorted bone.

To conclude, the content seemed to be diversified and rich in terms of treated topics: Relationship between kids and parents, husbands and wives; the question of the legitimacy of the Muslim women's hijab, family budget management...etc.

The studied E-Magazine combined a mixture of short, medium and long articles: The first rubric „Our News“ consisted of 347 words all articles included, and the third rubric entitled „Happy Family“ reached 111103 words. The sender seemed to be not aware of Online Journalistic shapes and formats. In the next step, focus was put on the journalistic formats used in the studied E-Magazine „Happy Family“.

| Rubrics | Non-Journalistic Formats | | | Journalistic Formats | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Lecture/Lesson | Add*8. | Investigative article | Opinion article | Report | Short news |
| Our News | - | 2 | | | - | 3 |
| Family news | - | | | | 6 | 1 |
| By Al Mutawaa | - | | | | 5 | |
| Happy Family | 4 | | | | 1 | |
| Husbands and wives | 4 | | | | 1 | |
| Parents | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Approaching to marriage | 4 | | 1 | | - | |
| The family budget | 4 | | | 1 | - | |
| Suspicions and responses | | | | 5 | - | |
| Total | 19 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 4 |
| | 21 | | 26 | | | |
| % | 40,42 | 4,25 | 2,13 | 14,89 | 29,78 | 8,52 |
| | 44,67 | | 55,33 | | | |

SCHEME 2: Journalistic formats

Source: E-Magazine "Happy Family", own processing

8 *add: advertisement

In reference to the Table 2, the E-Magazine content is almost divided in two categories: 55,33% of the posted articles adhere to the journalistic formats: Short news, reports, opinion articles and investigations, while 44,67% were presented in lecture format. Also, it is important to mention that 29,78% of articles were Journalistic Reports being a form of the press located in the middle stage between fast and short news, and journalist investigation. The researcher recognizes that electronic/cyber space is an environment that allows storage and saving of precious educational content, which gives the E-reader the possibility to go back to the information whenever he/she wants. Thus, the extra length of these articles may frighten E-readers and push them to avoid following the online publications. Concerning the picture usage in the E-Magazine, the researcher obtained the results summarized in the Table 3.

| No | image | Number | % |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------------|
| 1 | Writer's picture | 3 | 6,38 |
| 2 | City | 4 | 8,51 |
| 3 | Logos | 1 | 2,12 |
| 4 | Muslims in a Mosque | 1 | 2,12 |
| 5 | Old woman | 1 | 2,12 |
| 6 | Symbolic picture | 37 | 78,72 |

SCHEME 3: *Journalistic images*

Source: E-Magazine "Happy Family", own processing

78,72% of the images published in the e-magazine were symbolic.⁹ The researcher believes that the absence of powerful and meaningful images in an online sphere is fatal because a story without a photo is like a body without a heart. It provides evidence that the news happened and paints a whole new picture to the story. Pictures make it more real for the reader. As the Chinese proverb says, „pictures are worth a thousand words“. The way people consume their information is changing dramatically. With the rise in mediums such as blogging, live-tweeting, and video streaming, the way we reach cyber readers is not the same as in the printing area, and it's no longer good enough to just report on important news or write a well-furnished article.

To measure the level of interest and satisfaction of the studied E - Magazine readers, the reading numbers of each article were tracked. A collection of comments if any from all the posted material was proceeded.

| Rubrics | No. of Readings ^{*10} | % | No. of Comments | % |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------|----|
| Our News | 35480 | 5,19 | 00 | 00 |
| Family news | 14498 | 2,12 | 00 | 00 |
| by Al Mutawaa | 66758 | 9,77 | 00 | 00 |
| Happy Family | 3391 | 0,05 | 00 | 00 |
| Husbands and wives | 164519 | 24,10 | 00 | 00 |
| Parents | 74543 | 10,91 | 00 | 00 |
| Approaching to marriage | 134400 | 19,681 | 00 | 00 |

⁹ The exposed photos were not accurate; sometimes painting was used to furnish the article. Besides, we noticed the use of old non-coloured photos about something indirectly related to the topics.

¹⁰ JENNINGS, N.: Medias and Families: Looking Ahead. In *The Journal Of Family Communication*, 2017, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 203-207. [online]. [2017-01-06]. Available at: <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15267431.2017.1322972?journalCode=hjfc20>>.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| The family budget | 146189 | 21,40 | 00 | 00 |
| Suspicions and responses | 43114 | 6,31 | 00 | 00 |
| Total | 682892 | 100 | 00 | 00 |

SCHEME 4: *The proportions of the cyber reader's interest per each rubric*

Source: E-Magazine "Happy Family", own processing

According to the numbers above, 24,10% of readers were interested by husband and wives' issues followed by family financial aspects with 21,40%. The reading size of the article entitled „how to become a fine wife and win your loving heart husband?“ exceeded eighty thousand readings¹¹. It occupied first place in the reading numbers of the magazine.

Due to the absolute absence of readers' feedback, the interest must be considered as very limited¹². Besides, the tracked numbers for the readings do not necessarily mean that the reader really finished the redaction of all and each one of the exposed articles. Reading the headlines or just a small paragraph is very possible.

5. Discussion

Many observations should be discussed in this study: The E-Magazine content analysis showed the diversity of the social, moral and cultural subjects treated. Despite the fact that the „Happy Family“ E-Magazine team claims to have as their target the preservation of Arabic and Muslim cultures, the main message was not limited to stress on local educational and cultural virtues; many universal morals and humanitarian causes were revealed and pointed as valuable. This statement shows that according to the sender, Arab and Islamic values are values for all humanity, and that the essence of this civilization derives its origins from universal principals, which makes us assert that no real threat is coming from globalization or western hegemony over Arab minds.

As we know, culture encompasses norms, beliefs, behaviours, values, traditions, languages, myths, ways of life, and so forth. Through the media, groups can create and represent cultural identities, and the media play an influential role in the cultural practices of individuals. Media are manipulating minds some times, and controlling them. Powerful media nowadays such as social networks are able to wash brains and reshape identities especially for people who are not well educated. That is why adhering to good morals and human values, is the only way according to the E-Magazine owner to preserve our original identity and prevent our Arabic and Islamic morals from vanishing.

Despite the relevance of this view, modern technologies, in our belief, will affect identity in some form and create a kind of cross-cultural interaction within one human soul. But we must not be certain that this blending is always negative and threatens the original identity of individuals. Cultural and educational interaction also has its advantages and is a factor contributing to the development of humanity. Therefore, technological development cannot in itself constitute a threat to local and ethnic identities and cultures, but the real danger lies in some negative connotations that tend to move away from human virtues, such as inciting hatred, racism and not accepting differences in race, religion or beliefs. Therefore, adhering to human values can be considered among the constructive solutions towards reducing the impact of negative implications that threaten national civilizations.

¹¹ See detailed tabs at the appendix No. 2.

¹² No comment was registered in any of the posted articles.

New Media may help shape our view of the world and could deepen our virtues. It helps us to constitute a common culture, built based on a universal „Identity-Model“, that goes beyond local culture but doesn't destroy it; on the contrary, it could reinforce its roots, maintain its fundamentals and facilitate its adaptation in a globalized world.

This statement adheres with the model of Wiest and his concept of „cultural capacity“, introduced to complement existing concepts and advance understanding of the operation of culture. Mass media are significant transmitters of culture and education, and a huge influencer in shaping culture, but we have to admit like Wiest did, that the process is complex. There is variety in what messages are accepted by different consumers, how they are interpreted, and how they are ultimately employed or not.

So, the content was generally relevant and rich despite serious imperfections related to the shape: How it was said? In this matter, it is noticed that the sender seemed to be not aware of Online Journalistic shapes and formats: Writing scripts for online environment should be harmonious with cyber reader's needs and demands. Good online articles are usually 300–500 words in length and mostly accompanied by an image. Some features can be longer, but it doesn't have to appear as if it is the dominant style of writing in the E-Magazine. Long articles must appear as exceptions. The cyber reader is always a quick visitor who scans the content in seconds to decide if the posted materials are attractive enough to be read. A short article with hyper-text, interactivity and multimedia is a good tool for attraction in online journalism.

The published formats do not seem to adhere to the E-Newspaper effective rules of writing, described in „the pointer“.¹³ It is in fact a strategy that many journalists defend. The concept of electronic publication goes through the investment of the text that is being edited for publication in the printed media with the addition of the design and the integration of multimedia¹⁴.

Thus, it becomes frequent to read an article in E-newspapers or E-magazines that reminds us about printed press rules of writing, including lengthy articles. The electronic newspapers become a „News Bowl“ in printed newspapers, limited to re-publishing these articles with strengthened linkages and create interactive elements with the browser.

Despite the criticism that this trend has been exposed to, especially about the question of elaboration, many e-journals and e-magazines are still furnished by articles already published in printed newspapers. Jonathan Dubb said in this regard: „*that the main approach in the great majority of electronic newspapers is to provide printed materials, already published, plus other elements such as multimedia applications and connectivity referral through connections. The so-called REPACKAGE.*“¹⁵

The lack of interest of adding pictures in the magazine to published articles is a very critical point that could lead to total disinterest from the readers, which is confirmed already by the total absence of readers' feedback. The journalist must make sure that his audience stays on his page, shares his article, cares enough to comment and, most of all, remembers what he said: All benefits that visual content can give nowadays, is the era of featured images, infographics and in-article snapshots. According to Zach Kitschke, only 20% of what the audience read from the text sticks. However, if the writer puts that information into an image, suddenly the percentage of retained information takes a huge leap to 80%.¹⁶

¹³ JOHNSTON, L., G.: *Business writing. Talk, tips, and best picks for writers on the job.* [online]. [2019-03-21]. Available at: <https://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing>.

¹⁴ REASON, R.: *WED: The Integration of Writing/Editing/Design.* [online]. [2018-08-19]. Available at: <<https://www.poynter.org/news/wed-integration-writingeditingdesign>>.

¹⁵ LARRONDO URETA, A.: The Challenge of Online Journalistic Language to Narrative Forms. The Special Report Case Study on Spanish Press Websites. In *Zer English Edition*, 2007, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 41. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259740116_The_Challenge_of_Online_Journalistic_Language_to_Narrative_Forms_the_Special_Report_Case_Study_on_Spanish_Press_Websites>.

¹⁶ KITSCHKE, Z.: *Why Visual Communication Is the Most Important Skill for Journalists.* [online]. [2015-05-28]. Available at : <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/zach-kitschke/post_9445_b_7456664.html>.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to answer the question: „What are the most important features of the Arab and Islamic culture that the E-magazine „Happy Family“ invites its audience to adhere to through its published articles to limit the domination of western culture and Arab youth alienation?“

Based on a content analysis study, the researcher can claim that many features were raised through the 47 articles posted in the E-Magazine; some of them lead to universal virtues like love, mutual respect, compassion, peace and mercy:

Many articles were inviting readers to hold on to these features:

- Honouring parents and taking care of them even after marriage,
- Solving family problems through dialogue,
- Good management of family budget,
- Mutual respect between husbands and wives,

Besides, the researcher pointed out some topics specific for Arab and Muslim people, inviting Arabic and Muslim people to be committed to their religious principals and Arabic habits and traditions like:

- Women's inheritance in Islam
- Women's veil in Islam
- Arab and Muslim integration in western society
- Adhering to authenticity

The studied E-Magazine incorporated also subjects of wider than family interest like the article describing a trip in Tripoli (Libya), and the one dedicated to public awareness of chemical products danger.

Overall, in order to preserve „Happy Family“ high standards, the studied E-Magazine incorporated a set of spiritual principles and features, some of them are specific to Arab and Muslim cyber readers but a great number are universal and general that can be valid for all families over the world. The researcher at this stage confirms the diversity of media content posted through the studied E-Magazine „Happy Family“. Nevertheless, she pointed out the existence of general topics exceeding the family sphere. The studied E-Magazine almost targeted all categories and age groups composing family: Parents, sons and daughters, husbands and wives...etc. but small children were ignored. In the meantime, a gender distribution has been noted; the E-Magazine incorporated many articles treating topics relative to women in terms of aesthetics and behaviour.

The main message was not limited to stress on local educational and cultural virtues; many universal morals and humanitarian causes were revealed and pointed to as valuable. This statement shows that Arab and Islamic values were pointed to as homogeneous with other values, and that the essence of this civilization derives its origins from universal principals. This makes the owner of the magazine recognize that there is no danger of what we are dealing with through the new media channels as long as we stick to our original human values that unite with each other and make us compatible with other cultures in many virtues and principles.

Sticking with universal morals and virtues as a way to preserve local identities and cultures in a multicultural sphere seems to be a relevant approach. It surely helps to constitute a common culture built from a universal „Model-Identity“ that enriches local culture and education particularities without destroying their foundations and pillars.

Concerning the interest showed by cyber readers towards E-Magazine content, the attraction tends to be limited due to the absolute absence of comments and feedback or interactivity. We believe that the nature of educational subjects treated in E-Magazines, in addition to the

length of a large number of its articles, and the lack of pictures, made it difficult to interact. These results make us assert that the impact of the studied E-Magazine on its audience is limited and marginal. This last interpretation drives us to ask questions about the identity of the ideal „communication bowl“ for Family Media.

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| Photos/pictures | Article Title |
|----------------------|--|
| Graduates picture | Graduation of a new batch of Al-nour chair for the rehabilitation of the leaderships |
| Writer's picture | opening conference of Sweden |
| Writer's picture | first meeting at schools: applying the approach of the delightful global |
| picture of Abha City | education cycle |
| Writer's picture | I want security not happiness |
| Logo | Discussions on the health of the Child at the National Council for Childhood |
| Symbolic Image | Hitting children help them to succeed |
| Image of a newspaper | Work in distance in Saudi Arabia ...women is the biggest beneficiary of |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Symbolic Image | 20 days in the desert to help persons with disabilities |
| Image of old-curled woman | This skin of women is more curled than men |
| Symbolic Image | Warning from the growing of Arab sexual harassment |
| Image of Muslims in Mosque | Muslims in Britain |
| Writer's Image in Libya | Omar Mokhtar is still alive... |
| Symbolic Image | I asked my son ... who is the rich? |
| Symbolic Image | Youth and technology (from Al Medina Al Monawara) |
| Vatikan picture | A state without children |
| Symbolic Image | More importantly how we consider a dilemma when it comes |
| Symbolic Image | Prior agreement between the parents on the division of roles |
| Symbolic Image | couples Guide to prevent the deterioration of the marital relationship |
| Symbolic Image | Ten ways to get the quiet life |
| Symbolic Image | How can couples avoid the danger of jealousy |
| Symbolic Image | Practical program for happy marital life |
| Symbolic Image | How to become a fine wife and win your loving heart husband? |
| Symbolic Image | Blind point in the marital dialog |
| Symbolic Image | Previous problems are poisoning the life of couples |
| Symbolic Image | how to turn marital violence to a quiet dialog |
| Symbolic Image | psychological touches in marital life |
| Symbolic image | Children and the anger of the parents |
| Symbolic image | How to deal with the changing mood of your son? |
| Symbolic image | The compatibility of the parents stabilizes the behavior of children |
| Symbolic image | How to encourage your son to dialog with you? |
| Symbolic image | Teach your child the confidence from the moment of birth |
| Symbolic Image | The deadly mistakes of marriage |
| Symbolic Image | Our relationship to our Family.... Does it change, after marriage? |
| Symbolic Image | Five Tips for marriage without the problems! |
| Symbolic Image | dialog between Couples |
| Symbolic Image | understanding of partner is the basis of the successful marriage |
| Symbolic image | The extravagant in cleaning materials is danger! |
| Symbolic image | The family budget |
| Symbolic image | How to calculate the annual income and expenditure for family? |
| Symbolic image | Ways to measure the family budget |
| Symbolic image | Family budget, and the problem of spending, and the need to save |
| Symbolic Image | They claimed that revealing is the right of women, and the veil is injustice |
| Symbolic Image | veil is conservative, and the religion is attainable |
| Symbolic Image | the suspicion that the legacy of the female is just half of the legacy of the male |
| Symbolic Image | The „Hadiath“ that it is not authorized for women to fast and her husband is present, only with the permission |
| Symbolic Image | The suspicion that the women is a distorted bone |

APPENDIX 1: Pictures used in the E-Magazine

Source: E-Magazine "Happy Family", own processing

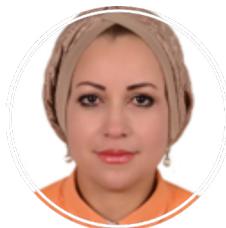
| Font | Size | Number of Words | Article Title |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 54 | Graduation of a new batch of Al-nour chair for the rehabilitation of the leaderships |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 48 | opening conference of Sweden |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 59 | first meeting at schools: applying the approach of the delightful global |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 58 | education cycle |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 128 | I want security not happiness |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 162 | Discussions on the health of the Child at the National Council for Childhood |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 232 | Hitting children help them to succeed |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 583 | Work in distance in Saudi Arabia ...women is the biggest beneficiary of |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 276 | 20 days in the desert to help persons with disabilities |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 222 | This skin of women is more curled than men |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 335 | Warning from the growing of Arab sexual harassment |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 230 | Muslims in Britain |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 422 | Omar Mokhtar is still alive... |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 374 | I asked my son ...who is the rich? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 338 | Youth and technology from Al Medina Al Monawara |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 347 | A state without children |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 403 | More importantly how we consider a dilemma when it comes |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 29133 | Prior agreement between the parents on the division of roles |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 22507 | couples Guide to prevent the deterioration of the marital relationship |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 24117 | Ten ways to get the quiet life |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 12148 | How can couples avoid the danger of jealousy |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 23198 | Practical program for happy marital life |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 768 | How to become a fine wife and win your loving heart husband? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 575 | Blind point in the marital dialog |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 276 | Previous problems is poisoning the life of couples |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 524 | how to turn marital violence to a quiet dialog |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 1002 | psychological touches in marital life |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 228 | Children and the anger of the parents |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 151 | How to deal with the changing mood of your son? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 261 | The compatibility of the parents stabilizes the behavior of children |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 509 | How to encourage your son to dialog with you? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 1051 | Teach your child the confidence from the moment of birth |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 392 | The deadly mistakes of marriage |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 1069 | Our relationship to our Family...Does it change, after marriage? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 71 | Five Tips for marriage without the problems! |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 720 | dialog between Couples |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 1129 | understanding of partner is the basis of the successful marriage |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 115 | The extravagant in cleaning materials is dangerous! |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 3206 | The family budget |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 844 | How to calculate the annual income and expenditure for family? |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 338 | Ways to measure the family budget |

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|---|
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 943 | Family budget, and the problem of spending ,and the need to save |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 203 | They claimed that revealing is the right of women, and the veil is injustice |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 539 | veil is conservative and the religion is attainable |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 739 | the suspicion that the legacy of the female is just half of the legacy of the male |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 447 | The understanding of „Hadiath“ that it is not authorized for women to fast and her husband is present, only with the permission |
| Traditional Arabic | 11 | 512 | The suspicion that the women is a distorted bone |

APPENDIX 2: Article sizes in the E-Magazine

Source: E-Magazine "Happy Family", own processing

Authors



Thouraya Snoussi

College of Communication
University of Sharjah
P.O.Box 272272, Sharjah
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
tsnoussi@sharjah.ac.ae

Dr. Thouraya Snoussi is appointed as Associate professor and Academic College Coordinator in Khor fakkan and Kalaa branches of the College of Communication in the University of Sharjah since Sep. 2018. Prior to this, at Al Ghurair University in Dubai (Sep. 2015 to Aug. 2018), Thouraya served as Acting Dean of the College of Mass Communication and Associate Professor. Thouraya worked at Emirates College of Technology as assistant professor and Media coordinator. She has also a great career in print and broadcasting Journalism both in Tunisia and Canada. She published more than 35 researcher papers in conferences proceedings and ranked refereed Journals. She is also author for four research books. She got international recognitions: Leader in Humanities and Social Sciences in Jan. 2018, in India, and Woman in Education Leadership Award, in July2018, in Singapore.

Innovation of Methodical Sheets for Teachers of Civics from the Need of Prevention of Extremism Manifestation and Education Towards Democratic Society Point of View¹

ABSTRACT

The Department of Political Science of the Alexander Dubček University in Trenčín during 2018 - 2020 aims to solve the project of the Cultural and Educational Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic (known as KEGA project). The KEGA Project The Innovation of Methodical Sheets for Teachers of Civics from the need of Prevention of Extremism and Education for Democratic Citizenship is focused on the analysis of the phenomenon of extremism and the other forms of intolerance towards other members of society in terms of several social sciences (political science, international relations, history, sociology, massmedia studies) with the intention to innovate methodical sheets for civics education teachers. In the final phase of project a synthesis of these views will take place to make curriculums easier to use for teachers within civic education courses and at the same time, to strengthen the acute need to prevent angry demonstrations. This synthesis should create more effective upbringing and education towards democratic citizenship. The aim of the project is to analyze selected aspects related to issues of extremism in theory, the synthesis of which contributes to problem solving, resulting in new methodical sheets in an online available format. The acquired knowledge will be available to the professional public, especially to primary and secondary school teachers in the Slovak Republic, in the framework of workshops, thematic lectures and summer schools.

KEY WORDS

Extremism. Values. Methodical book. Civics. Prevention.

1. Introduction

In spite of the active education in citizenship and democratic values in the Slovak Republic, angry demonstrations in society had grown within the last few years, at the same time started appearing opinions which doubt even the Holocaust and also admire totalitarian regimes and their representatives.

The alarming threat of spreading extremism in schools is highlighted by the results of the 2016 Survey, which was conducted by the State School Inspectorate on a sample of students of the 8th year of elementary schools and of the 2nd year of high school. The majority of elementary and secondary school students met at school with the symbols and manifestations of extremism, whether in the form of t-shirts and other clothing with typical symbols, but also through the propagation of materials that promote extremism. As per the authors of the

¹ Performed within the project KEGA 003TnUAD-4/2018: Innovation of methodical sheets for teachers of civics from the need of prevention of extremism manifestation and education towards democratic society point of view.

publication „*Current Rightward Extremism and Ultranationalism in Slovakia. Status, Trends, Support*“ Grigorij Mesezníkov and Ol'ga Gyárfášová from the Institute for Public Affairs, the success of rightward extremism in Slovakia is largely based on the failure of standard political parties and institutions to fulfil their expected roles. According to Grigorij Mesezníkov, the co-author of the study, the example of the radicalization of political parties in Slovakia caused the refugee crisis.

Those against the reallocation of refugees on the basis of the so-called „mandatory quotas“ included not only former Prime Minister Robert Fico but also representatives of opposition parties.

The teaching of civic education in Slovak schools is in line with the concept of education reform after 2008. The aim of this concept is activating students in lessons, introducing innovative teaching methods and learning for practical lives. The teaching of civic education is formed by several generally binding legal norms in the education sector. The basic norm is Act no. 245/2008 Z.z. which defines several principles on which education and upbringing are based in the Slovak Republic. (Kredátus, 2013, p. 6) Another norm, resp. the legal norm which regulates the teaching of civic education is the State Educational Program - the education area Humans and society for the 2nd level of elementary school taught in Slovak and of course, the framework teaching plan for grammar schools taught in Slovak, which is valid since 2011. The State Pedagogical Institute, in accordance with the fulfillment of the tasks resulting from the Conception of Combating Extremism for the years 2015-2019, also published an 11 pages brochure on the topic of Prevention of Extremism and Radicalism.

However, the issue of radicalization and extremism is extensive, diverse and difficult, especially for teachers working with youth. In addition, radicalization is a dynamic process influenced by the changing of external conditions and the behavior of key figures. For example, key figures from an extremist environment regularly change strategies to avoid interference from state security forces, while at the same time being able to influence as many potential adherents as possible. On the other hand, students and young people especially often change their unstable attitudes to current social issues. We agree with the views of several experts that it is necessary to work on further updated teaching aids in this area for schools.

Focus and description of the project

The proposed project focuses primarily on the thematic area of the Development Program of Maternal, Primary and Secondary Education (Perspectives), addressing multiple content themes in the thematic area. Based on the analysis of the state of the framework teaching plan and educational norms for the subject of civic education under the State Educational Program in the Education Area of Humans and Society in Regional Education, new methodical sheets for the subject of civic education will be proposed, which will be part of the lifelong education of pedagogical staff at elementary and secondary schools.

The main objective of the present project is to create a concept and content of modern electronic methodological sheets of civic education, reflecting the content of the subject with the requirements and needs of society and practice so as to be able to eliminate extremist demonstrations more effectively, to build natural patriotism, to strengthen teaching of human rights and to improve education and upbringing for democratic citizenship in schools, in society.

In view of the effective fulfilment of the set goal, we have also set partial goals (PGs), which are the following:

- CP1: Draw up a project implementation plan.
- CP2: Analysis of the status of the framework teaching plan and educational norms for the subject of civic education in the framework of the State Educational Program in the Educational Area Humans and society from the current need to prevent stronger

expressions of extremism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, terrorism and other forms of intolerance, from the multidisciplinary perspective of several social sciences (political science, international relations, history, sociology, mass media studies).

- CP3: Implementation of empirical research on extremism and education for democratic citizenship by the teachers of civic education at elementary and secondary schools.
- CP4: Start a new web presentation of the project.
- CP5: Implementation of modern electronic methodical sheets into practice in the context of lifelong education of pedagogical staff at elementary and secondary schools, in the form of organizing and implementing a cycle of workshops and discussions during summer schools as an experience form of education for teachers in elementary and secondary education.
- CP6: Organizing and conducting a professional seminar.
- CP7: Active participation of research team members at scientific and professional events in Slovakia and abroad with a view to presenting on-going tasks of the project.
- CP8: Publishing professional and scientific articles of the members of the research team in books and periodicals in Slovakia and abroad.

Status of the project

The research project is currently in its second phase.

In the first phase of the project, the members of the team conducted empirical research on extremism and education for democratic citizenship at the teachers of civic education at elementary and secondary schools. In the initial phase of the research, they focused on the elaboration of relevant theoretical backgrounds, the conceptual origins of the research, the methodical process and the definition of the research file. The collected data were analyzed, interpreted and created the basis for the processing of methodical sheets.

In the first phase of the project, an analysis of the status of the framework teaching plans and educational norms for the subject of civic education within the framework of the State Educational Program in the Education Area of Humans and Society was also elaborated on the current need to prevent intensifying expressions of extremism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, terrorism and other forms of intolerance from the multidisciplinary point of view of several sociological disciplines (political science, international relations, history, sociology, mass media studies). A new website for the project was launched at <http://stopextremizmu.sk/>.

During the second phase of the project, at the Alexander Dubček University in Trenčín, a summer school for citizenship education for teachers of secondary and elementary schools of civic education was launched. This summer school was organized on the 27th and 28th of August 2018 in Trenčín. This summer school was connected with the discussion of the phenomenon of extremism in Slovakia. The Summer School of Education is also being prepared for the summer months in 2019, where besides lectures and workshops a discussion with publicly known politicians and experts in the area of extremism and education of democracy in schools will also be organized.

At the same time, the team members of the project organized a professional symposium on Education and Upbringing for Democratic Citizenship in the Slovak Republic, which took place on 8th March 2019 in Trenčianske Teplice as part of the Scientific Conference on Policy Issues VIII. Within this event, the ongoing achievements of the set goals of the project were presented. The next part of the second phase is the publishing of professional and scientific articles at domestic and foreign events.

In the third phase, the results will be implemented into the creation of modern electronic methodical sheets of civic education, reflecting in their content the needs of society and practice so as to be able to more effectively eliminate extremist expressions, to build natural patriotism,

to strengthen education for human rights and to overall improve education and upbringing for democratic citizenship in schools and in society. In the final phase of the project, these views will be synthesized in order to make them easier to use for pedagogues in the teaching plans of civic education, while reinforcing the acute need to prevent hate demonstrations and create more effective education for democratic citizenship.

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Marcel Lincényi
Marcela Barčáková

Tackling Misinformation in an Open Society

ABSTRACT

This article explains how to respond to misinformation and disinformation when the cure risks being worse than the disease. It refers also about potential harms and threats to open societies from over-reaction but also urgent actions to protect democracy and elections. It is also important to talk about the building of public resilience and a future-proof response to changing technology.

KEY WORDS

Disinformation. Misinformation. Open Society. Tackling.

Introduction

This article explains the work of Full Fact staff. It is devoted to factchecking in a public debate. The original work gives a unique evidence base about how misinformation arises and spreads. It is divided into several parts. First of all, the paper points out the lack of research about the extent of the harm caused by misinformation and disinformation. The facts of it are well-established, but without evidence of the scale and impact of the problem it is harder to design some proportionate responses. An example should be set internationally. For instance, how open societies should respond. Secondly, the paper argues for two actions to protect the integrity of elections and democracy generally. That is to mandate transparency for political advertising in real time and in machine readable formats and also imprint rules to apply online.

The third part is dedicated to the fact that the UK has an array of independent public bodies capable of informing public debate. Giving quality and trusted information is an important sign of an open response. The last part referring to moves towards regulation aimed at tackling misinformation should be scrutinised anxiously and preceded by a much more careful analysis of both the players and also the principles at stake.

Talking about misinformation and disinformation, the UK and many other countries around the world are in the process of considering how they should respond to the range of harms. The actual tasks to answer are: Should we be regulating the internet? How can we protect our democracy? The Full Fact document aims to share thinking and experience of what can work, and also where the risks lie.

Defining problem

The term 'fake news' names problems associated with misinformation and disinformation. There are voices against this claim. As well as the issues in scope being narrowing and confusing, the phrase has been effectively weaponised and subsequently made redundant by politicians. Also, by media across the globe using it as a means of dismissing inconvenient dissent. However, we should have some background to the terms before we start to talk in connection with them. In general, misinformation stands for the inadvertent spread of false or misleading information. Disinformation is the deliberate use of false or makes for misleading information to deceive audiences. However, in the Full Fact paper there is a word that covers both definitions under the overarching term 'misinformation', by which is meant the full range of issues that are captured by the UK's policy response to misinformation and disinformation. When we refer to 'disinformation', we say this with reference to known actors or intent, for example state sponsored disinformation campaigns. This allows focussing the effort on the harms that exist in the modern information environment. Misinformation has existed in various forms for a very long time. Since we have lived in the Internet era, it has only expanded this issue. It is easier than ever to hide knowledge and on the other side harder for people to know where to place their trust. This is the right time for knowing how to respond to misinformation, not only in terms of government, but also as a society.

Harm from misinformation

It is important to understand the types of harm and the evidence of their impact before deciding whether is necessary or appropriate for the government to take action. There are four main categories of harm that may arise from misinformation:

- No Harm – people are getting things wrong online;
- Disengagement from Democracy – abuse of power and disengagement and distrust;
- Interference in Democracy – election interference and also effect on beliefs or attitudes;
- Economic Harm – includes individuals, companies and systems;
- Risk to Life – it is meant public, health and radicalisation.

Misinformation can cause harm in an open democratic society. However, the risk of harm from over-reacting is potentially much greater. Talking about open society, the people who can do most damage are the people with power. It is known that one temptation for government is often to assume that doing something is always better than doing nothing. Freedom of speech must be the principal concern of any approach to tackling misinformation. Effective regulation and freedom of speech are not incompatible, but it is important to consider the range of ways

free speech can be protected. Any step to tackle misinformation must be cautious about potential unintended consequences on free speech and civil rights. Even relatively simple choices about what content should be amplified can suppress the speech of certain groups. Even though, the Internet is spread worldwide, offline sources are still highly significant for the general population, and for companies who seek to get their attention. The Ofcom News Consumption report 2018 says that the most-used platform for news is television.¹ Advertisers are still putting significant resources into reaching people offline. Despite owning huge online advertising platforms, Google and Facebook still advertise on TV because they understand the role it plays in information consumption.

Urgent steps to protect democracy

Currently, it is possible for a candidate to run a thousand different political campaigns to win the same seat, promising something different to each group they target. If we do not act, we risk undermining the principle that democracy is a shored experience. Recognising official warnings of election interference campaigns, it would not be prudent to wait for definitive evidence of the impact of this harm to update the law to ensure that longstanding principles continue to apply to the online world. An open society means transparent democratic processes and elections. Also, companies have taken several steps to improve democratic decision making. Action is now urgent in two areas. The first of them is political advertising and the second is the so-called imprint rule. When talking about transparent political advertising it is important to enable accountability by three tests:

1. There must be full information on content, targeting, reach and spend.
2. It should be in machine readable formats.
3. It must be provided in real time.

The imprint rule requires that some campaign materials state who is promoting them. Unfortunately, it still not applied online. The recommendation is to extend the current imprint rule online. This would require details of who created, paid for and promoted the campaign to appear in all online election material, allowing voters to understand the source of any material they see online. There are two more steps to protect elections and they fall under the role of the Electoral Commission. This will be crucial in implementing and enforcing changes to maintain standards in political marketing. At the moment, they are not prepared to do this because of many other responsibilities. The second is to understand the data of disengagement. The marked electoral register should show who has voted and who has not. Legislation should allow access to academics and charities seeking to promote engagement with the electoral process. That is the evidence we have of the extent to which people are being dissuaded from taking part in democracy.

Open information can tackle misinformation

Independent public institutions should be given a mandate to inform the public. Tackling misinformation must be about more than just trying to remove or regulate it. Telling people when they are reading something that is not true will only drive us away. In isolation it can cause the fuelling of further distrust and disengagement. Nowadays, people have a harder

¹ *News consupption in the UK*. [online]. [2018-02-06]. Available at: <<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand/news-media/news-consumption>>.

time knowing what to trust than ever before. The main reasons are the proliferation of sources, the speed of information flow, the comparative ease of making something appear credible, and the difficulty of knowing the true source of material online. These are the reasons why public institutions urgently need to adapt to modern information needs. Providing people with unbiased and good quality information, linking to sources and setting claims in context builds a resilience and trust by providing accountability. However, we cannot expect this to happen organically. Independent public bodies have a clear role in establishing and supporting a good information framework for the UK.

The UK is an open society and already has many of the tools it needs to tackle misinformation. It only needs to learn how to harness them more effectively. Also important is to have a number of high quality and structurally independent institutions, with staff who are skilled and required to provide the public with unbiased information. It is also mentioned that the government needs to provide a research function to support and evaluate the provision of high-quality information in public debate and provide a clear understanding of the spectrum of misinformation. They have to be able to do three things. Firstly, to understand the potential target audiences for misinformation, correct information and the extent of any harm. Secondly, establish and share evidence on best practice and lastly, they have to evaluate public information communication, including public trust and public understanding.

How to respond without fighting the last war

We can already say that tackling misinformation online will require a more wide-ranging response than the actions which have been identified so far. As well as considering what the response should be, we also need to think about how to ensure it is fit for the future. Even though internet regulation belongs to those sensitive issues the world should deal with, misinformation needs to be treated with great caution. Any proposal for such a regulator to be tasked with tackling misinformation should be scrutinised carefully. A necessary first step towards a proportionate policy framework for internet companies is a more sophisticated understanding of how they work and the policy issues they raise. There is an urgent need for a more future-proof approach. It is important that we can use the window of opportunity available to us. Before the political debate and news shifts entirely online, we have to have this debate properly. We need to construct lasting solutions based on principles the public respects and which will survive changes in technology.

Summary

To sum up, this issue is really complicated to generalise. First of all, handling this problem should consist of a reaction that starts by not overreacting. Later, we should recognise that the biggest risk is that of government overreaction and we should put the protection of free speech at the forefront of every discussion about tackling misinformation in its many forms. We should take advantage of the window of opportunity we have to consider and deliver a proportionate response. Improving transparency is achieved by updating election law. It means creating a public database of online political adverts, provided in real time, in machine readable format and with full information on content, targeting, reach and spend. Once the planned public consultation has ended, the government should act quickly to extend the current imprint rule from print to online. It is also necessary to review funding for and refocus the role of the Electoral Commission and to secure the implementation and enforcement of democratic protections in a digital world. After that, pass legislation to enable access to the marked electoral register for academics and charities seeking to promote engagement with the electoral process.

Another step is to build resilience through strong public institutions. First of all, invest in communication skills across government and public bodies to ensure that the public has access to, understands and trusts the evidence that is used to make decisions. Then, give public institutions a clear mandate to inform the public, and consider the roles of other bodies. It is also very important to establish a public-facing Centre of Excellence to provide a research function that can support and evaluate the provision of high-quality information in a public debate and provide a clear understanding of the scale of the problem of misinformation.

Work connected with future-proof misinformation policy needs to be done. Mainly for setting a clear intellectual framework for understanding the harms, players and functionalities, but also the principles at stake before any attempt is made to introduce regulation.

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Lubica Bôtošová

Report of Pew Research Center
about How Teens and Parents
Navigate Screen Time and Device
Distractions

ABSTRACT

54% of U.S. teens say they spend too much time on their cellphones and two-thirds of parents express concern over their teen's screen time. However parents face their own challenges of device-related distraction. Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. The Center studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends. Amid rolling debates about the impact of screen time on teenagers, roughly half of those ages 13 to 17 are themselves worried they spend too much time on their cellphones. Some 52% of U.S. teens report taking steps to cut back on their mobile phone use, and a similar percentage have tried to limit their use of social media (57%) or video games (58%), a new Pew Research Center survey finds.

KEY WORDS

Teens. Parents. Cellphones. Report. Time.

Teens and time spent with cellphones

Teens' sometimes hyperconnected relationship with their devices is also evident in other findings from the Center. Fully 72% of teens say they often or sometimes check for messages or notifications as soon as they wake up, while roughly four-in-ten say they feel anxious when they do not have their cellphone with them. Overall, 56% of teens associate the absence of their cellphone with at least one of these three emotions: loneliness, being upset or feeling anxious. Additionally, girls are more likely than boys to feel anxious or lonely without their cellphone.

Parents, too, are anxious about the effects of screen time on their children, a separate survey shows. Roughly two-thirds of parents say they are concerned about their teen spending too much time in front of screens, and 57% report setting screen time restrictions for their teen in one way or another.

At the same time, some parents of teens admit they also struggle with the allure of screens: 36% say they themselves spend too much time on their cellphone. And 51% of teens say they often or sometimes find their parent or caregiver to be distracted by their own cellphone when they are trying to have a conversation with them.

Additionally, 15% of parents say they often lose focus at work because they are distracted by their phone. That is nearly double the share of teens (8%) who say they often lose focus in school due to their own cellphones.

These are some of the main findings of the Center's survey of 743 U.S. teens and 1,058 U.S. parents of teens conducted between March 7-April 10, 2018. Throughout the report, „teens“ refers to those aged 13 to 17, and „parents“ refers to parents of at least one child aged 13 to 17.

Teens and new technology

Teen life is suffused with technology. The vast majority of teens in the United States have access to a smartphone, and 45% are online on a near constant basis. The ubiquity of social media and cellphones and other devices in teens' lives has fuelled heated discussions over the effects of excessive screen time and parents' roles in limiting teens' screen exposure. In recent months, many major technology companies, including Google and Apple, have announced new products aimed at helping adults and teens monitor and manage their online usage.

When it comes to evaluating their own online habits, teens express mixed views about whether or not they themselves spend too much time on various screens. Roughly half (54%) believe they spend too much time on their cellphone, while 41% say they spend too much time on social media. By contrast, only around one-quarter (26%) believe they spend too much time playing video games – comparable to the portion (22%) who say they spend *too little* time gaming. Meanwhile, roughly four-in-ten teens say they spend about the right amount of time on social media or gaming.

Boys and girls have differing perceptions of the amount of time they spend using various technologies. Girls are somewhat more likely than boys to say they spend too much time on social media (47% vs. 35%). By contrast, boys are roughly four times as likely to say they spend too much time playing video games (41% of boys and 11% of girls say this). There are no notable statistically significant differences by race, ethnicity or household income.

Waking up with a cellphone

Cellphones are deeply embedded in the everyday experiences of most U.S. teens. Most notably, 72% of teens say they at least sometimes check for messages or notifications as soon as they wake up (with 44% saying they often do this). 57% feel they often or sometimes have to respond

to messages from other people immediately. Meanwhile, 31% of teens say they lose focus in class because they are checking their cellphone – though just 8% say this often happens to them, and 38% say it never does.

Teens across a range of demographic groups respond in similar ways to these questions about their cellphone use. However, teens aged 15 to 17 are particularly likely to say they check for messages as soon as they wake up – 49% say they often do this, compared with 37% of teens aged 13 to 14.

Parents and their time spent with cellphones

Along with asking teens about their views of screen time and distractions due to technology in their lives, the Center also fielded a separate survey in which parents of teenagers shared their views about a subset of these issues. At a broad level, this survey finds that parents are somewhat less concerned about their own technology use than teens are about theirs. Around one-third of parents (36%) say they spend too much time on their cellphone, and 23% say the same about their social media use. Slightly more than half of parents (55% in each case) believe they spend the right amount of time on their cellphone or on social media. For the most part, parents of different genders, races and ethnicities, and income levels report similar levels of concerns about their own technology use.

When asked to reflect on their teen's cellphone use, a majority of parents (72%) feel their teens are at least sometimes distracted by their cellphone when they are trying to have a conversation with them. Indeed, 30% of parents say their teen often does this. At the same time, this sense of distraction caused by cellphones is not an entirely teen-specific phenomenon. When asked this question about their parent's behaviour, half of teens say their parent is distracted by their own phone at least sometimes during conversations between them (51%), with 14% of teens reporting that their parent is often distracted in this way.

Comparing teens and parents

When responding to questions related to their cellphone use, parents and teens diverge in some ways but not in others. Teens are much more likely than parents to say they often check their cellphone for messages or notifications as soon as they wake up (44% vs. 26%). However similar levels of parents and teens often feel as if they have to respond to others' messages immediately (18% of teens and 20% of parents say this). Also parents are actually more likely than teens to report out-of-home distractions due to their cellphone. Some 15% of parents say they often lose focus at work because they are checking their cellphone – double the share of teens (8%) who say they often lose focus in class for that reason.

Conclusions

While teens' opinions about whether they spend too much time on technologies vary, parents largely agree that too much screen time for their teen is an area of concern. Overall, around two-thirds of parents (65%) say they worry to some extent about their teen spending too much time in front of screens, with one-third saying this worries them a lot. Additionally, more than half of parents (57%) say they limit when or how long their teen can go online or use their cellphone, including about a quarter who say they often do this. Using a somewhat different question wording, a 2014-2015 Pew Research Center survey of parents found that a similar number of parents said they never set screen time restrictions for their teen.

Interestingly, parents who express heightened worries about their teen's screen exposure are more likely to say they set screen time restrictions than those who do not. Some 63% of parents who worry a lot or to some degree about their teen's screen time say they at least sometimes set limits on that behaviour, but that number falls to 47% among parents who worry not too much or not at all. Not only do the majority of parents take actions to limit their teen's screen time, but most parents are at least somewhat confident that they know how much screen time is appropriate for their child (86%). This pattern holds true across multiple demographic groups such as gender, race and ethnicity, and educational attainment. In fact, four-in-ten parents are very confident about the right amount of screen time for their teen.

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Slávka Gracová

Research Report of Project VEGA
1/0192/18 Formation of Attitudes of Generation Y in the V4 Geographic Area to the Issue of Migrants Through Digital Communication on Social Networks

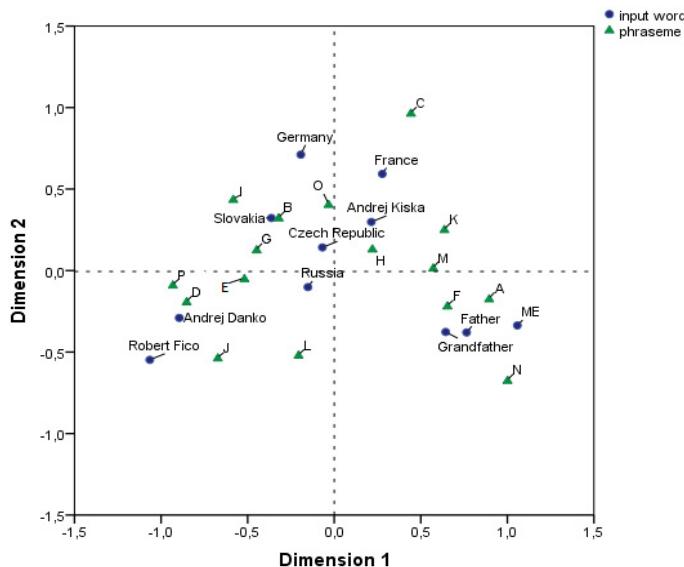
ABSTRACT

The refugee crisis and the rising number of asylum seekers is one of the primary concerns of the EU. Political discussions reflect humanitarian, social and economic implications of the constant influx of new asylum seekers coming mainly from Syria. Within the political sphere in the V4 countries it is possible to observe negative attitudes. In this context, it is very important to emphasize that we are living in a democratic society, where media represent the role of democracy guardians. On the other hand, social media offer space for expression to the general public opinions, and their potential is also fully exploited by political leaders. The potential of social media must be perceived also against the backdrop of risks stemming mainly from disinformation and manipulative tendencies. In order to identify and clarify the presence of manipulative techniques in the communication of political and social groups to the attitudes of Generation Y in the sphere of migrant tolerance we present some introductory findings under the scope of project VEGA 1/0192/18.

KEY WORDS

Social change. Democracy. Social media. Refugee crisis. Migration.

The Internet and social media represent the background for the voice of an alternative perspectives, feelings and opinions. Undoubtedly, social media offer space for the presentation of noble and magnanimous ideas, but it is questionable to what extent and in what way this potential will be utilized. These issues are addressed particular in the issue of online discussion about migrants through social networks. Content recipients should be able to think critically while evaluating the information offered in this online media space to avoid potential threats of fake-news or manipulative messages. In order to identify and clarify the presence of manipulative techniques in the communication of political and social groups to the attitudes of Generation Y in the sphere of migrant tolerance were presented some introductory findings under the scope of project VEGA 1/0192/18. Domestic and foreign scientific cooperation was established due to project realization and except Constantine the Philosopher University was project attended by Comenius University in Bratislava, the Metropolitan University in Prague, the Charles University in Prague, Ignatianum Academy in Krakow and the Institute of Polish Philology of Pedagogical University in Krakow. Within the framework of this project have already been carried out several studies which briefly summaries are going to be presented on the following lines.



Picture 1: Perception of the Slovak political leaders/elites to migration evaluated by correspondence analysis (complete set).

Source: SPÁLOVÁ, L., SZABO, P.: Migration Policy in the European Union – Methodological Modification of Psychosemantic Methods. In STANIČKOVÁ, M., MELECKÝ, L., KOVÁŘOVÁ, E., DVOROKOVÁ, K. (eds.): International Conference on European Integration 2018 : Proceedings from 4th International Scientific Conference ICEI 2018. Ostrava : VŠB, 2018, p. 1334-1342.

The study titled *Migration Policy in the European Union – Methodological Modification of Psychosemantic Methods*¹ was focused to identification of the social representation of relation between political leaders in the Slovak Republic (President Andrej Kiska, Prime Minister Robert Fico, Head of Parliament Andrej Danko) and the political topic of security and migration in the EU context. Authors identified the stance of the politicians in relation to the issue of refugee crisis in

¹ SPÁLOVÁ, L., SZABO, P.: Migration Policy in the European Union – Methodological Modification of Psychosemantic Methods. In STANIČKOVÁ, M., MELECKÝ, L., KOVÁŘOVÁ, E., DVOROKOVÁ, K. (eds.): International Conference on European Integration 2018 : Proceedings from 4th International Scientific Conference ICEI 2018. Ostrava : VŠB, 2018, p. 1334-1342.

the semantic field of adolescents. Their study was based on the results of previous qualitative analysis of the media discourse of the already mentioned political leaders in the period from July 2017 to January 2018 and the results of a modified semantic selection test² and confronted with results of study *Media Image of the Refugee Issue in Main Quality Newspapers SME and Mladá Fronta Dnes*³. Correspondent analysis has clearly identified the current perception of significant Slovak political elites by „Generation Z“ (to comparison there were also analyzed terms Me, Father, Grandfather and countries France, Germany, Slovakia, Czech Republic). **Andrej Kiska** and term France activated **positive anchoring**, whereas were associated with following phrasemes **He keeps his fingers on the pulse, He is a person of good repute, He speaks words of wisdom, He can put two and two together.** Political elites Robert Fico and Andrej Danko reflected negative perception. This quadrant included the explicitly negative phrasemes: **He preaches water, but drinks wine. He does not have a clue. He has bats in the belfry. A leopard cannot change its spots. He is a yapper.** Selected EU countries *Germany, Slovakia and the Czech Republic* were I relation to migrants and refugee crisis associated on the adolescent semantic map in conjunction with the following phrasemes: **He has a skeleton in the cupboard.**

They pick on him. He is buttoned down. In this case, we **can see the critical approach of adolescents to migration policy** reflecting the **mistrust in the solution of the migration issues by the political representatives** of the countries concerned.

In the case of analysis of attitudes and perception of the issue of migration by the Y Generation is very important to take into account the *image* of the refugee crisis offered not only by political representatives, but also by representatives of democracy themselves – public media. Two studies were processed by this analysis: *Current discourse on them of migration in selected Slovak online media: thematic analysis in context of the European Union and V4 countries*⁴ and Media discourse on the migration were analyzed also by study titled *Media discourse on the migration theme in reflection of political caricatures in countries V4*⁵. Štrbová and Púchovská identified and categorized topics arising within the framework of current public media discourse. Identified topics were subsequently divided according to their polarity into positive, neutral and negative ones. The analysis focused on mainstream (sme.sk), news (aktuuality.sk, dennikn.sk), alternative (slobodnyvyber.sk, hlavnespravy.sk), and tabloid (topky.sk) online media. Among the **mainstream and news** online media **were identified topics of all polarity linked with the political, social and legal solutions with the dominance of negative polarity. Tabloids have presented only positive or negative discourse and the main topics were political, economic, social, legal solutions and assessment of current situation.** The **analysis of alternative online media proved that content was mostly thematically related to the V4 countries representing mainly political and social solution to the migration problem and the assessment of current situation.**

² SPÁLOVÁ, L., SZABO, P.: Mediálny diskurz témy migrácie vo vyjadreniach politických elít SR vo vybraných mienkovorných denníkoch a na Facebooku. In ŠTEFANČÍK, R. (ed.): *Jazyk a politika. Na pomedzí lingvistiky a politológie III.* Bratislava : Ekonóm, 2018, p. 350 -361.

³ SPALOVÁ, L., SZABO, P.: *Media Image of the Refugee Issue in Main Quality Newspapers SME and Mladá Fronta Dnes.* In CIBULA, A., KLENKA, M., VLKOVÁ, E. (eds.): *International Relations 2017: Current issues of world economy and politics : Conference proceedings 18th International Scientific Conference Smolenice Castle 30th November - 1st December 2017.* Bratislava : Ekonóm, 2017, p. 909-919.

⁴ ŠTRBOVÁ, E., PÚCHOVSKÁ, O.: *Current Discourse on Theme of Migration in Selected Slovak Online Media: Thematic Analysis in Context of the European Union and V4 Countries.* Paper presented at International Scientific Conference Marketing Identity 2018 – Digital Mirrors. Smolenice, Slovakia, presented on 7th November 2018.

⁵ SZABÓOVÁ, V., SPÁLOVÁ, L. WALOTEK-ŠCIAŃSKA, K.: *Migrácia a výroky politikov s ňou spojené ako námet pre karikatúru v krajinách V4.* Paper presented at International Scientific Conference Marketing Identity 2018 – Digital Mirrors. Smolenice, Slovakia, presented on 7th November 2018.



Picture 2: **Caricature exceeding into the Polish context**

Source: CHAPPATTE, P.: Poland and Hungary's March Rightward Released on 12.03.2019. [online]. [2019-03-22]. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/16/opinion/poland-and-hungarys-march-rightward.html>>.



Obrázok č.2: Karikatúra *Slovenská inkvizícia*
Zdroj: Denník N, 23.07.2015

Picture 3: **Caricature of Róbert Fico from June 2015**

Source: SHOOTY: Slovenská inkvizícia. Released on 12.03.2019. [online]. [2019-03-12]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/195393/shooty-slovenska-inkvizicia/>>.

The analyses of media discourse on the background of political caricatures identified significant areas of perception of the positions held by the V4 political leaders (figure 5) by the authors of political caricature, and critically reflected the negative attitudes of the V4 political elites. It is important to note, that there have been identified also some differences in the depiction of migration in the Slovak, Czech, Hungarian and Polish context: in the **Slovak context, the Prime Minister Robert Fico and his statements were the primary source of political caricatures (figure 3)**, the **Czech caricature (figure 4)** was more symbolic and artistic and depicted the topic more generally, and we noted a **weak representation of authorial creations and media censorship in the Hungarian (figure 2) and Polish context**.

The elimination of political humor and satire in **Hungarian and Polish context** draws our **attention to the lack of participation in public life and political apathy**.

Presented results confirmed a dominant negative discourse of migrant and refugee crisis during the period, the so-called **cultural threat strategy**, and **security risks** in the political communication in the V4 countries.



Picture 4: *Winning caricature Uprchlíci a Evropané ako „Blbouni nejapní“ by Marek Simon*

Source: KLEMPÍŘ, D.: Evropané ako „blbouni nejapní“. Česká karikatura roku reaguje na uprchlíky. Released on 12.03.2019. [online]. [2019-03-12]. Available at: <<https://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-kultura/359769/evropane-jako-blbouni-nejapni-ceska-karikatura-roku-reaguje-na-uprchliky.html>>.



Picture 5: *Caricature of the dispute between Viktor Orbán and Angela Merkel*

Source: The Economist: Point taken, Mr Orban. Released on 12.03.2019. [online]. [2019-03-12]. Available at: <<https://www.economist.com/europe/2015/09/24/point-taken-mr-orban>>.

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Lucia Spálová
Ol'ga Púchovská

Searching for Alternative Facts: Analyzing Scriptural Inference in Conservative News Practises

ABSTRACT

In her report Francesca Tripodi analyses the attitudes and behaviour of individuals spread around the United States and who consider themselves as Christians, conservatives and Republicans. The conservatism in the account is characterised by several observed principles: an emphasized connection between faith and patriotism through repeated rituals like Christian prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and reciting the Virginia Republican Creed; the problem of separation of church and state and a need to protect racial and religious identity with subsidized defence strategies. In this ethnographic work, the author presents how two Republican groups are searching for the truth in the contemporary media environment. The author conducted several individuals who describe themselves as Christians, conservatives and Republicans and she analysed how they conceptualize truth. The findings of the work provide a new foundation for understanding the relationship between so-called „fake news“ and contemporary conservative political thought.

KEY WORDS

Alternative Facts. Fake News. Christians. Conservatism. Republicans. Scriptural Inference.

Using „conservative“ in general identification does not necessarily mean all Christians are conservative, but the author demonstrates how reading practises „trickle down“ into Republican discourse. For analysing and comparing the attitudes of individuals, it was necessary to start with an analysis of how their political rituals are connected to a Christian worldview. In the research, the respondents desired communication about the separation of church-state. While institutions of education emphasize a government centred model of separation, preventing the church from unduly influencing policy, conservatives defend a church-centred version, where the separation is about protecting the church from the government. Protecting the church not only aligns with „law and order“, but it also evokes a reference to protecting eroding ideals and their religious interests. For the respondents, Protestantism and patriotism are inextricably linked to protectionism. Conservatives believe that the United States is a Christian nation. For them, there is historical evidence that the US is fundamentally, rather than incidentally, Christian, and this belief spills over into how conservatives conceptualize the need to „protect“ their nation. Commitment to protecting the nation was discussed in terms of physical safety but revolved around the protection of religious (i.e., Christian) and racial (i.e., white) identity. Protestantism, patriotism, and protection represent racial rationality and symbolic practices that reify racism in American politics. Conservatives are rearticulating the belief in „white victims“ routinely evoked in news broadcasts and political campaigns. As such, „protection“ efforts disproportionately target non-white and non-Christian Americans.

In fact, one of the most important findings of the research was how conservatives utilize theological teachings to unpack texts like the Constitution or other forms of media. The author labels these media literacy practices scriptural inference, and argues that understanding this conservative approach to Biblical interpretation can shed light on contemporary solutions to „fake news“. The increase in spreading „fake news“ through social networks was, according to journalistic interpretation, the reason why Donald Trump won the election. This is why experts call for an increase in media literacy among conservatives because they are passive receivers, not the active audience. On the contrary, the author introduces the lives of several conservatives around the country and their behaviour in politics, gathering information and their evaluation. She states the respondents consume a wide variety of sources of information and they are critical of the content. They were encouraged at schools, by family and friends, to read a variety of different newspapers and journals. Conservatives frequently refer to the original source, where they can find information without any commentary and they read information before they start digesting what everybody else thinks about it. It is revealed that conservatives rely on scriptural inference to find the truth, but they do not trust anyone.

The way conservatives were able to detect media bias (i.e., „fake news“) was by going back to speeches given by Trump and other Republican politicians and comparing what they said in the speech to the media coverage. Relying on scriptural inference, they came to the conclusion that media outlets like CNN had „twisted his [Trump’s] words“ or „amplified“ part of what he had to say while hiding other parts of his speech. The author finally argues that scriptural inference goes beyond textual translation of the Bible, the Constitution, the president’s speeches, or mainstream media coverage. It is rooted in an idea that to find truth one needs to dig in and do one’s own research. Considering respondents’ behaviour, conservatives who practice scriptural inference are not blindly latching onto „fake news“ stories.

The second part of the research was focussed on searching for information on Google in order to find the truth. The author asked where respondents go for news they trust and most of them answered they do not have a regular source for news and information. However she followed up by asking how they had learned about the candidates they voted for and their answer was interesting. Few people mentioned Facebook but most of the respondents said: „I Googled it.“ Conservatives routinely described the need for people to „do their own research“ in order to find „accurate“ or „unbiased“ news. Yet when the author asked them to explain what doing their own research looked like, one hundred percent began with a Google query. People hardly understand Google searches rarely revealed alternative points of view. However, they did not consider how their returns were tied to their own search practices or Google’s algorithmic ordering of information. This pattern indicates that Google users do not have a consistent or accurate understanding of the mechanisms by which the company returns search results.

Finally, this report indicates a need for more research regarding how Google organizes the connections between different types of alternative media content. In the work, the author highlights the work of journals like PragerU which are not only exploiting the practises of scriptural inference, but also relying on search engine optimization and suggested content to elevate their messaging.

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Nikola Kaňuková



New Media Technologies Should Not Isolate Us. Just Extend Our Range of Social Skills

Interview with Gorġ Mallia

ABSTRACT

The interview focuses on Gorġ Mallia's views on the major challenges in the educational system and touches on the topics of media literacy, new media and power and utilization of social media. It deals with the ongoing discussion about the traditional linear model of education and introduces the theory of a hypertextual system. The given topics also refer to the transformation and shifts brought to society with the introduction of social networks, digital games and also other different new media. It points out social media can be a massive support to actual learning which has an impact, especially for the younger generation.

KEY WORDS

Social media. Education. Media literacy. New media.



Gorg Mallia

University of Malta
Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences
Msida MSD 2080
Malta
gorg.mallia@um.edu.mt

Gorg Mallia is a communications academic, author and cartoonist working on the island of Malta. He is the Head of the Department of Media and Communications at the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta. He has a B.A.(Hons) in English Literature and an M.A. in Communications, both from the University of Malta, and a PhD in Instructional Technology, from the University of Sheffield, UK. He specializes in Print and Presentation Media, Personal Communications, Personal Branding, and Instructional Design and Technology (particularly Transfer of Learning). His present research is mainly on the processing change incurred by new media technology immersion. He has presented at a number of international conferences, and published in his areas of expertise. He has been a guest lecturer at the University of Malmö, and has lectured at the University of Lund, both in Sweden. Dr. Mallia has also produced and presented a number of programmes on national television and radio. He was the chairman of the National Book Council of Malta between 2005 and 2013. He is on the steering committee of the annual International Conference on Information, Communication Technologies in Education (ICICTE) that is held in Greece.

Ivan Rokošný (I.R.): So Dr. Mallia, you are pretty well-known in the academical and also the artistic environment in Malta and also in Scandinavia. Could you describe yourself in few words? Do you feel more like professor, illustrator, artist or all combined?

Gorg Mallia: I am one of those people, who finds it very difficult to sit for a very long period of time and be occupied with one thing. I am massively interested in any type of visual media. So yeah, I am a cartoonist, I also do illustrations for books, but not only that. I also wrote nine children's books and have also written literature for adults. I have published extensively in journals abroad, with focus on scope of my favourite areas and I have also written extensively in newspapers, especially about arts and literature and things like that. I have a variety of degrees, which I feel is really important – to have a proper educational background. That's the reason, I suppose, why I do all of this. I obtained my first degree in English literature, a general in Maltese literature. Later on, I did my masters in media and communications, which was the very first masters in that area at the University of Malta. Then I finished my PhD in educational technology. That's why I have a massive interest all around in a variety of areas. I continued in the academical sphere, and became head of the department of media and communications at the University of Malta. Apart from that, I've done television and radio and all of these things, generally because I like them. I like experimenting with different media, I like trying to find new and different ways of communicating with people.

Ján Proner (J.P.): What do you think is behind the rapid growth of social media use in the recent years?

Gorg Mallia: Well, first of all, there has been more of a change in the way we communicate in the last decades, than there had been in the previous two hundred years and the reason is very simple. It's an avalanche. People are social animals. You see, we cannot live in a vacuum, we can't live by ourselves. That is why we created societies, cities, villages. To be together, as a community. So obviously we are social people. When there is the possibility of being

social, all the time, it obviously changes everything. And then media technologies developed so fast that they allowed us the possibility of not just being social when you meet a person, but you can be social through your computer or smartphone, which we carry all the time with us. That means that you have just extended your range of social abilities. Logically it is in the nature of the beast - humanity, that we want to reach out and self-express our ideas – that's the nature of humanity. We can see this from the very beginning of civilization. For example, arts and the self-expression in the cave of Lascaux. It was not enough for those painters to catch the animals, they wanted to draw them on the wall. We need this, it could be instant gratification. The point is, in the past it was difficult to get instant gratification, in other words, it was difficult to get immediate reaction to what you say. Now it's easy, because of social media. Social Networks like Facebook, like Twitter, like Reddit, all of them. The whole point for them is that there is an instant reaction to what you pronounce, what you write, say, post, and that's of course, is what we are thriving on. Lots of people who are massively into social media, they get this buzz, that adrenaline rush, which you get when you start getting likes, that is all the reason behind it. I have to admit, I also do it, I also enjoy it. All of this spread like wildfire, because it hit in an area that makes it feel good. Because it's a socialisation process, which is 24/7, in other words, always there. In technology, even we, as researchers, can't keep up, with the advancement of the technology, because one thing leads to next, and with the massive advancement of bandwidth it is becoming close to impossible. The speed with which we can communicate, the speed with which we can actually convey our messages is astonishing. Even high-resolution images, moving from text to static images. now moving images. Just notice how a high percentage of what we see are animated gifs, or actual movies, none of these are just static images, and there is less and less text. The symbolic is slowly fading out of the picture, and we are becoming more and more *homo videns* instead of *homo sapiens*.

I.R.: Let's stay a little bit in the shift mentioned before. What do you think was the biggest shift brought to the society with the introduction of social networks, digital games and also another different new media which have the impact especially for the younger generation?

Ģorģ Mallia: Well let me start with this one. It's not just for the young generation, it is about immersion, how immersed you are, not only in social media. Funny thing, we used to call them, a few years ago, which seem like a hundred years ago now - new media technologies. In other words, technology that allows us to communicate directly with each other or indirectly, doesn't really matter in the end if the person is there. My theory and something I published a couple of papers on, is that what is happening is a conceptual change. We no longer process linearly, we process latterly, or in other words, what I like to call hypertextual processing. You know, I'm 61 years old. When I grew up without internet, without computer etc., the only way I could actually follow any thoughts was through the logical sequentiality, in other words, chronological processing – you go 1,2,3,4,5, etc. because that is the way you turn the pages of a book. Not anymore, now it is hypertext, now you go to a page, you click somewhere, you go somewhere else, not linearly. So, my theory is, that is the way a brain is also being wired now. That we no longer think in terms of linearity, but we actually jump from one note to the next. The only way, we can actually organize, this random hypertextuality is through tapping into the nodes of hypertextuality, like hyperlinks in the brain and actually get them to be ordered. And that is complex and problematic. What I do see, and this is pretty clear, from teachers who have been in post for a very long time for example. I have comments about how much less attention span students have now compared to a few years ago. They will talk about how they multitask a lot more than a few years ago. How they tend to jump from one subject to the next, and also how much more informed they are. There is enormous storage of information there, but the problem is accessing it. it's not easy, because there is no logical key for it, everything is random. So, this is the challenge, that's where we are, that's what the change is in my opinion. Predominantly for

the younger generation. We have gone beyond Prensky's digital natives and digital immigrants, we have gone way beyond that, because the generation that followed the digital natives, is made up of much more than natives, they are basically almost symbiotically linked to media technologies and I'm not talking just about the hardware, but also the actual environment, that they become part of. And when we move towards the virtual reality of course, that is not just becoming psychological, but is becoming actually physical. But this is for a discussion for another day because that's something, that really fascinates me because, the change is massive. And the problem is, that schools actually don't realise it - schools still teach linearly.

J.P.: Perfect. So, we can actually continue and link your last answer to the next question. Do you think that social networks, or digital games can be integrated in the educational process of classic school models and what pros and cons do you see in that?

Gorg Mallia: Of course, they can be, the point is, that there is a contradiction in terms. It is said that social media are by their very own nature entertainment media instead of educational ones, and we are on social media, and we are enjoying them, because we know we are not doing it to learn something. So that is the reason for it. So, the moment you try to apply social media directly to pedagogical aims, you have subverted it. It's no longer the social media that we know, it's a totally different thing all together. So that is, where the problem is. The secret is in utilizing social media, if you like peripherally, in other words, don't try to utilize them in the way you utilize a VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). Because the VLE is a carrier of learning. And social media are not a carrier of learning, they are carriers of information, entertainment, and all those things that we do willingly and voluntarily and not because we think we can learn from them. But social media can be a massive support to actual learning. Yes, there have been instances where experimentation has been done, with utilizing, for example, Twitter, for questions & answer sessions, or especially MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) now. But Even with MOOCs, don't try to integrate social media, let the participants in MOOCs interact with each other, converse, and discuss assignments on social media. For every single unit I teach, students have an informal social Facebook page, that is a closed page very often, where they discuss things, where they say negative things about lecturers (*laughter*). But it is a brilliant way of supporting educational organization. If we utilize them that way, it would be a massive success. If you try to actually subvert them in any way, you'll fail. I mean yes, you have for example Edmodo, which is basically Facebook for education, but how many people are on Edmodo? That's my question. I don't think there is an enormous number of people on it. It has been fed to us Edmodo, you know, as clean Facebook. And then there are places like Israel or Canada, where teachers cannot interact with students using social media. It is illegal to do so, so they use Edmodo or something similar, because they are educational. But in the end, I do believe: One, that there should be an interaction between students and teachers, which goes against the criteria a lot of countries are now following, where there is a prohibition, if you like. And two, that there should be an ethical line, where the ethics are clearly specified as to what can be done, and what can't be done, because this is very important, because abuse is extremely easy in cases like these. In the meantime, this peripheral use of social media is encouraged. Because, teachers are a bit cowardly, they are massively afraid of being upstaged. The point is that, they don't realize they have been upstaged entirely by technology by now. The old concept was that the teacher was on the stage and then constructivism sort of decided that there was no more stage, but he or she was the guide on the side. And it goes beyond that, the guy on the side is now the computer. It's now a mobile phone. The teacher is a skill giver, the teacher is the person who actually helps students make sense of what they see. Teachers are no longer instructors, but educators and that is the true. Unfortunately, schools don't always notice this. There are a number of education institutions that are experimenting with this sort of loose curriculum. I know one in Denmark, in Copenhagen for example, and



there are definitely other cases. But in the main, top down schooling remains. I don't know how it is in your country, but in my country, there is an effort being made to make education more comprehensive. But in the main, it remains, the teacher up there, the students down there. Basically, the top down method, where the teaching is linear. So, that's my opinion, I'm quite controversial, whenever I discuss this there can be a lot of heated argument. I actually edited a book on the use of social media in education a few years ago. It was a weird book, actually it started as a workshop in a conference I co-organized. I started the discussion half-jokingly, let's discuss it: how about social media and education. Jokingly, because I knew the answers would be: "no it can't be done, social media is not intended for pedagogical aims". And I was amazed about the discussion we had. And a few of the academics there went home and spent a year experimenting. Somebody in Israel created a Facebook page about a dead Palestinian mathematician, who was fictionally working as admin of the page. And the kids actually interacted, sent question, got answers and it was massive experimentation and then they came back the following year with papers for the conference. That actually kicked off the idea for the book, which was apparently massively popular. Not so long ago I was proposed to update it with a newer version.

I.R.: I would like to continue little bit in this area. In your research area, you often touch the topic of media literacy. I would like to connect it and ask. In the educational process, what do you think about the older generations of lecturers. Should they change their methodology or do you think it is not possible?

Ĝorg Mallia: The older generation, we don't want to talk across the board, especially in media literacy, a lot of teachers my age, are massive users of technology, etc, and very media literate. And then there are people half my age or less, who are actually, well, I'm using a word, which is no longer popular: Technophobes. It is reality, you see it, I lecture, among other things, also about software like Photoshop and you see young people just looking at it and not knowing what to do. The point is, more than the older generation I'm talking about across all of teaching. Yes, younger teachers are of course more from Prensky's digital natives' side, and logically there is going to be more interaction on their level. As I said before, teachers are massively afraid to be up staged, and they are terrified of students, knowing more than they do. And we are living in the age of mobile information giving and getting. In other words, every student

who needs to know something, all S/he has to do is just look it up and S/he has it. And because they are afraid of being upstaged teachers would rather leave that aspect out of the classroom. Which is ridiculous, because that means those kids who now live and breathe the technology and use it as their interaction with the world out there, are deprived of it. Meaning, they are feeling completely out of context. So, what teachers need to do at this point of time is accept that students are better instructed in the technology than they are, and take it from there, instead of the top down style in which the teacher knows best and the student knows nothing. We must accept that students know a hell of a lot, and the teacher has still powerful abilities, considering s/he knows pedagogics, and who is capable of actually understanding how the mind works, will help the student get most out of that learning. That's what we need to do, but unfortunately that's not going to be easy, because of ego. First thing we need to do is accept, that this is the reality of the day, because there is always someone who says: "ah, back in the good old days, etc." This is it, it is reality.

J.P.: Ok, let's take it from there. I would like to continue with a concrete example, so how do you approach media education, here, at your department or university in Malta?

Ġorġ Mallia: The Department of Media and communications started off as a program of the Faculty of Arts, and then moved on as a department of the Faculty of Education. It was decades ago, and the intention was, that teachers cannot, make it without a solid understanding, of what media and communication are all about. That was the whole point of that. Then we moved on to our own centre and eventually faculty. What we do is, we try to acclimatize our students to understanding what is happening around them. It's not easy. Why? Speaking of our students, it's mainly because the immersion is so massive. I will come to teachers in a minute. In fact, I have accepted a number of student's teachers to, attend a lot of courses, the we give here. There is an agreement between me and the head of department of primary education, so that their students join a few of our classes. It's because we address their needs particularly. What the teacher is, is a communicator. Full stop. The teacher is a communicator. When the teacher is a bad communicator, that's not a teacher. Teachers and other communicators communicate ideas, thoughts, as clearly as possible to human beings. So, what we try to do in this department, is to actually, desensitize the concept of media communication. I'll put in a brief example, or metaphor if you like. We are in the middle of a crowd, and it is really hard to say how big the crowd is, it's really difficult to understand who the people around you are, because you are in the middle of it and you can't. But then somebody takes a drone photo of the crowd and you see it and you realize how big the crowd is and you actually individuate the individuals. We are in middle of a communication crowd. We are immersed in commutation and media, it's part of our life, it's who we are. There is no telling to 18-19 years-olds: "Okay, so here is the change" because there is no change in their mind. This is their one reality. This is what we need to do, desensitize that. We need to explain about the change, we need to understand exactly, what it is, and what impacts it is having on, individual as well as collective lives and communities. And how to actually utilize all of that in such a way that you are not just an acceptor of what's happening, but also a producer of what is happening as well. You are in a circle, you need to understand it in order to do it. So obviously, when teachers are there, we direct, the learning to the classroom, because there you have a captured community and it becomes much easier to communicate with a collective. Media and communication studies open minds, and make you more aware on what is happening. We can manage that, and we succeed in this biggest step. Taking it from there is bonus, creating your own videos, creating your websites, using social networks in your own way, all of that, for me is a bonus. The essential thing is understanding, knowing impacts. Being able to do research in an area that you will then gain a lot more knowledge about what is happening. Because we are so immersed that it very difficult to have an honest view of what's happening.

I.R.: Let's move on to another scope, which is also connected with previous answers. In your work you write a lot about the term informal learning. Can you deconstruct that in a few words?

Görj Mallia: Well, that shouldn't be problem, because that's my next book by the way (*laughter*). First of all, what I like to call, it is not just informal learning. It is also independent, informal, accidental, acquisition. It's quite complex. Why? Because when we talk about informal learning, we are doing that right now. We are having a chat. As informal learning you have a bit of information from me, you are absorbing it, you are applying it to your own ideas, etc. It's happening quite a lot and you don't even know about it. The problem of all of this is again in the organizational base of it. Because there is so much of it. It used to be called useless information. Because we have lot of it. And all of this is also difficult to access. Because, we as a university institution, we try to assess people, in the end. We want to know how much you learned so what we do is set tests, assignments, exams, etc. And we base a skill level on the grade. How can you do that with informal learning? Basically, you don't. Lots of universities across the world now are actually adopting a policy of accepting what we call prior learning. For example, if you have worked as a computer engineer for a long time, but you don't have formal learning, you will be accepted in a computer engineering course. Because you have been doing it. France started it, I think Australia does it a lot. A lot of people are doing it. Obviously, that is definitely the case with MOOCs, because obviously what you know, is what you will bring to the table. And of course, there is Blockchain now, which will create a much more user-based assessment methodology than formal analysis, that institutions like universities apply. Blockchain, can for example, create a register, where a lot of people put information, and because they put a lot of things in there, an independently administered register of learned abilities is generated that, in the end, becomes the assessment, which leads to your certificate. The certificate is based on what has been put in there by a large number of people who have met you, who worked with you, etc. That concept leads to incorruptibility, if you like. There is the possibility, that, in the future that might be the way we assess informal or prior learning. Things you acquire along the way. The problem with informal/incidental learning is, that it is not easily accessed by formal institutions, who actually give out certificates that you then need to get work. My argument is, that this is the downfall of universities in a sense, unless they actually take this on board and utilize it. There is going to be quite a problem. Things like MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses which were actually reacted against, by most universities to begin with, are now being taken on by them. They are most specifically intended to utilize the learning that people get along the way. My argument is very simple. Going back to my own theory of hypertextual processing, the more people process hypertextually, the less room there is going to be for formal institutions, and more for the acquisition of knowledge on the go, especially with technology advancing towards mobiles/smartphones. So, I think, we are going to see, in the future, less people going for formal education and more people just getting the learning on the go. So, with formal universities or institutions, it's a conflict, it a massive conflict. I mean, the University of Malta is also a traditional teaching university. You get it everywhere in the world, I also lectured in two universities in Sweden. The first is quite traditional and this is one of the best universities in the world Lund University, where I guest lectured. And then there is Malmö University, which has been promoted from a college to university recently, and it looks at the practical side of things. The wonderful thing about places like Sweden is, that you can do a few units in Lund and then you can do few other units in Malmö. I actually taught students in Lund who then came for courses in Malmö. So that's the wonderful thing. That is the way forward. But when you keep being institutional minded and limiting yourself and creating barriers, in my opinion it's a way back.

J.P.: So, we discussed the current situation, even looked back to the past. This question might sound a bit relative but, what do you personally honestly think about the future of media literacy. What are the challenges for example in 10 years' time?

Gorj Mallia: We will be going further, and further towards this point of informal acquisition. It is already clear. People like myself, who adore face to face lecturing, are going to become rarer and rarer, because students already object to be in a classroom context. And of course, you can get something within a classroom context that you can never get on an individual level outside of it. But the flexibility and the fact that you want to do this on your own, voluntarily, to get this information are assets. You know, I'm the sort of person, who, if I like something I want to know everything about it. If I like a bit of music by someone, I'm going to look that person up, I'm going to listen to all the songs that person released. Read about the person, go through Wikipedia (to begin with) and take it from there. I'm just like that. And if I'm like that, I can just imagine how younger people are. In the past the information was doled out, now the information is at source. So, the best change that happened in an educational context is, that, there is a thirst for information, and there is also a source for that information for that thirst to be satiated. For me, the only way forward for institutions is to accept this change and run with it. There is so much that can be done. You know, the concept of *this is education*, it's quite old now. People like Michael Grahame Moore - one of the people who created the concept of distance education. That was brilliant at the time, because it moved learning away from the institutions, from the geographical institutions, which is absolutely wonderful because it meant that you could actually work from home. But even that is no longer enough, a lot of universities shifted ordinary learning from the classroom to online portals. Even that is not enough, because it still formalizes the way of teaching. I think we need to put in a lot of money to research, how we can the way of informal/independent learning. How institutions can take that on board. How they can create the contexts in which that learning can be made more concrete and more utilizable. Because there is a large amount of wastage of that learning, because it's not controlled learning, it's totally uncontrolled. So, it's in the control of that learning, it's in the skills that you need to be able to elicit from that learning. It's in the keys to draw memories out for individual bits and pieces of that learning. That educational institutions need to aim it. They need to learn how to do that in order to convey it and utilize it, and believe me, that means we no longer spend all time giving information, but go immediately to the procedural. It's the procedural, that we need to work with, no longer content, because content is already there.

Prepared by **Ivan Rokošný** and **Ján Proner**

REVIEWS



THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VIDEO - SHARING PLATFORMS

BLÁZQUEZ, F. J. C., CAPPELLO, M., FONTAINE, G., RABIE, I., VALAIS, S.: *The Legal Framework for Video-sharing Platforms*. Strasbourg, France : European Audiovisual Observatory, 2018. 125 p. ISBN 978-92-871-8608-9.

We live in times when publishing and sharing videos on the Internet is very popular and easily available to individuals, as well as various companies, institutions, businesses, organisations, etc. However, not everything that appears on the Internet meets the criteria of suitability or dignity and, many times, the videos are on the verge of affronting one's dignity or violating human rights. From the point of view of media's impact on children and youth, also these groups of media recipients are endangered by the inappropriate content of videos they like to watch

and share and which might have a negative impact on their perception, behaviour and mental development. The legal aspects of video sharing platforms are the scope of a book called *The Legal Framework for Video-sharing Platforms* by Blázquez, Cappello, Fontaine, Rabie and Valais from the European Audiovisual Observatory.

The first chapter deals with the characteristics of video sharing platforms, such as Youtube, Dailymotion, Facebook Watch and others. The authors deal with the differences in estimated numbers of audiences that can be reached through video sharing. The text of the whole monography comes complete with numerous references to other sources, which enables the reader to quickly search for other relevant information and details. At the same time, on the basis of several surveys, the authors compare the time spent by the young watching videos with the time they spend watching television. The chapter also engages with the economic impact of video sharing platforms and social media when the profit arising from videos hits high figures and further growth is anticipated, considering the rising trend of video watching and sharing. These platforms, however, bring about numerous new situations and challenges, which, from the legal point of view, means that the most suitable ways of defining what applies to video sharing platforms need to be decided in the first place. This is the most important first step to enable us to clearly judge what falls within the rights and what falls within the obligations in the context of these legal subjects. Within a public discussion in September 2015, for the first time, the European committee pronounced the definition of the term „online platforms“: „an undertaking operating in two (or multi-) sided markets, which uses the Internet to enable interactions between two or more interdependent groups of users so as to generate value for at least one of the groups“ (p. 6). The chapter further deals with legal challenges and basic rights in relation to video sharing platforms.

Another chapter is devoted to international and European legal structures. It deals with basic legal regulations in the online environment and speaks also of commercial communication via these platforms. An important issue dealt with in the second chapter is the protection of minors and human dignity. This requirement has already been addressed several times in numerous regulations and recommendations issued by the European Union. Another important part of

this chapter concerns the protection of data and privacy; the text deals with current issues in the area of the protection of rights in the context of e-privacy – GDPR and the implementation of these regulations in 2018. The text describes the anchoring of GDPR in much detail.

The third chapter focuses on the development of national regulations for video sharing platforms, specifically in France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The authors used relevant data sources from other available researchers to analyse this information, however, they also used their own IRIS Merlin database, which provides access to more than 8,000 articles related to legal events in the context of video sharing platforms.

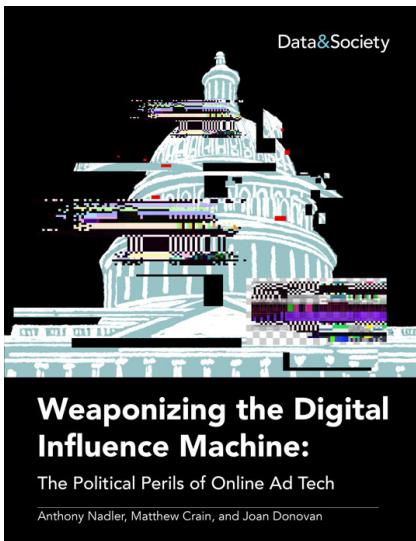
An interesting part of the book is its fourth chapter engaging in the self-regulation mechanisms of EU and pan-European initiatives. In recent years, numerous rules, European programmes and self-regulation initiatives have been implemented in order to enhance the protection of children and minors in connection with videos, as these make violent, pornographic or other unsuitable content available to the above-mentioned groups of users. The aim of the programmes and initiatives was to help the target groups acquire skills and tools leading to a safer and more responsible use of the Internet. Besides these programmes and regulations, two most popular platforms, Youtube and Dailymotion, have created their own regulations, different from the above-mentioned ones, which are specifically described in this chapter. The text of the chapter further deals with the fake news phenomenon, copyright protection and targeted advertising limits on online platforms.

The fifth chapter refers to online platforms judicature in relation to the European Court of Human Rights. It deals with the issue of self-expression in comparison with spreading hate on the Internet. It contains numerous transparent tables.

The other two chapters are devoted to the current state and different variables in the process of adjusting and creating legal anchoring within the issue of video sharing platforms. At the same time, they deal with initiatives that focus on the protection of rights or data, fighting fake news, etc. The last, seventh, chapter is dedicated to appendices – transparent and supplementary tables.

The publication provides the reader with a detailed insight into the issues and the current state of video sharing platforms in several contexts from the point of view of Europe's legislation and law, as well as through the perspective of particular chosen nations. Thus, the book enables the reader to understand the issue of rights and obligations better, not only within video sharing, but on the Internet in general. It contains a large amount of overview information, as well as sources extending the opportunity to grasp the issue.

Henrieta Hubináková



WEAPONIZING THE DIGITAL INFLUENCE MACHINE: THE POLITICAL PERILS OF ONLINE AD TECH

NADLER, A., CRAIN, M., DONOVAN, J.: Weaponizing the Digital Influence Nachine: The Political Perils of Online Ad Tech. New York : Data&Society Research Institute, 2018, 46 p.

We live in time period when advertising dominates both in media and marketing environments. Advertising becomes an absolute and necessary part of the functioning of companies, media concerns and individuals. Individually oriented advertising is often put into the context of politics, especially in times of significant socio-political changes, such as elections. We think that political advertising and political marketing currently represent an important

tool of self-presentation and visibility of political opinions and preferences (e.g. in the parties) as well as the candidates themselves in elections. Since today it is increasingly difficult to influence or affect public opinion as a result of a differentiated voter spectrum, electoral campaigns are becoming more and more professional, dynamic and diverse. They often reflect themselves as „rational“ fights for voters. To succeed in elections, political actors acquire different forms of political communication, they work with political market surveys or voter market segmentation to target voters as effectively as possible in their electoral campaign. One of the most significant environments where politicians present themselves is the cyberspace and virtual online interface. For example, in the USA, more money is spent on digital political advertising than on any other media. Analysts even expect that by 2020 more than a half of all global advertising costs will be used for digital advertising.

The publication *Weaponizing the Digital Influence Machine* discusses the issue of political campaigns and threats and risks that are brought by unfair practices of online marketing political actors. The authors of the publication are Anthony Nadler, Matthew Crain and Joan Donovan, who represent Data & Society's Media Manipulation Initiative (MMI), which is dedicated to providing access to new forms of media manipulation to journalist organizations, civil society, platforms and policy makers to ensure an informed relationship between technology research and socio-political opinions. The authors analyse and inform the reader about the functioning, specific examples and practices of the American media and political scene that are related to the impact of digital advertising tools and computers. They thus become a powerful weapon in the hands of political and undemocratic actors.

The publication is divided into several chapters that logically follow each other. The authors focus on the fundamental implications of digital advertising infrastructures and how online advertising can become a weapon of policymakers to exploit the weaknesses of the audience rather than addressing their preferences and interests. The first chapter focuses on a general introduction to the issue of political advertising and its digitalization. The authors define the term Digital Influence Machine to identify the technologies, conditions and tactics that make today's digital advertising a weapon in the hands of politicians who can disseminate misinformation, accuse other candidates, or favour selected consumer products. These activities are often implemented by strategic communication platforms such as Google or Facebook, advertising agencies or other specialized data and information technology companies. Digital advertising companies are constantly striving to streamline their campaigns and collect consumer data

to ensure that advertisers are convinced that their money is well and appropriately spent (e.g. cookies, digital footage of users – likes on Facebook, shared photos and videos, market transactions, etc.) As one headline says: „Facebook knows you more than your mother.“ An important strategy to influence behaviour is also the correct targeting of advertising, e.g. based on psychological aspects and audience profiling (dog owners, diabetics, etc.). An interesting fact presented in this context was that Donald Trump's presidential campaign contained 50,000 – 60,000 variations and combinations of Facebook ads each year, each aimed at a different voter segment. The second chapter is aimed at defining several factors that have allowed digital advertising to become a weapon and threat tool in the USA media environment. The authors describe a decline in professional journalism, saying that social media has become a key source (for about two thirds of Americans) of understanding and information – so confidence in the mainstream news media is declining. Such space creates opportunities for political advertisers for more control. Another factor is the way of financing the campaign itself, while the authors draw attention to the group of so-called campaigns „dark Money“, where the source of financing is secret, respectively negotiable. The third major factor is the absence of online advertising regulation, which also contributes to the dissemination of misinformation and politically incorrect activities. In the third chapter, the authors focus on defining several specific tactics and strategies that policymakers use in the process of weaponizing digital political advertising. It is for example, politicians' effort to strengthen and intensify certain perceived threats and fears of the audience, while exploiting their vulnerability. As the authors say: „We consider it as a weapon whenever an advertising system is used to prioritize vulnerability over the relevance.“ An interesting tactic is also the application of psychological-behavioural aspects that can influence audience behaviour in favour of manipulators.

In conclusion, the authors present concrete steps that USA policymakers and technical companies can take to minimize the risk of abuse of digital ads for manipulation. For example, they propose categorical refusal to cooperate with so-called dark Money groups, publishing financial donors and costs of campaigns or more regulation and ethical guidelines and standards related to the implementation of digital political advertising activities. The activities presented can greatly help justice, development, respect for human dignity and transparency, which are the pillars of the functioning of a democratic society.

The publication *Weaponizing the Digital Influence Machine* is well-designed and systematically processed with logical structure and ordering, with a detailed explanation of information, enabling readers to gain greater and more complex insight into the subject matter. The reader can better realize the power of the digital media and technology, especially in the context of threats and political manipulation, based on concrete examples from the authors. The book can be clearly regarded as one of the possible tools to help us navigate, see real problems, and put forward some relevant solutions to combat threats.

Vladimíra Hladíková

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Media Literacy and Academic Research's Editorial Board offers a possibility of publishing original theoretical or research studies, reviews of monographs or text books and other articles related to the focus of the journal, which have not been publicly published yet. Media Literacy and Academic Research journal consists of the following sections:

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SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS



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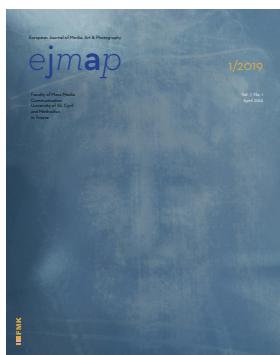
Scientific journal of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia

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