



# Media Literacy *and* Academic Research

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## About the Journal

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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In May 2019, Facebook published an important Community Standards Enforcement Report, which presents how Facebook is performing and preventing the display of content that goes against their Community Standards. Given that it is still the largest social network in the global context, this is a very important report showing concrete results of their efforts to combat toxic content. These are contributions that are contrary to general democratic principles and can be very harmful, especially for children and adolescents.

The largest social network currently monitors 9 categories of potentially dangerous content - Adult Nudity and Sexual Activity; Bullying and Harassment; Child Nudity and Sexual Exploitation of Children; Fake Accounts; Hate Speech; Regulated Goods: Drugs and Firearms; Spam; Terrorist Propaganda (ISIS, al-Qaeda and affiliates); Violence and Graphic Content. For media literacy and critical thinking experts, data and metrics are important to show which categories are most problematic in terms of violating Facebook community standards. The positive news is that Facebook has a great self-detection rate between 90 – 99,9% when it detects content like Adult Nudity and Sexual Activity, Pornography, Child Nudity and Sexual Exploitation of Children. Equally good results are in uncovering content aimed at promoting terrorism. Facebook detected and blocked up to 2,2 billion fake accounts between October 2018 and March 2019. However, the Bullying and Harassment category remains problematic, with Facebook alone revealing only about 14% of the 2,6 million cases. The remainder came from cases reported directly by users of this social network.

Positive news is that Facebook is expanding its activities to include another platform, whose popularity is increasing particularly among users of younger ages. Since 2019, Instagram has begun using a range of approaches - including artificial intelligence - to detect and eliminate fake, offensive, and disinformation content. If Instagram marks a post as false, the user has the option to appeal against the decision and provide an explanation. Instagram then examines this content and reconsiders the case. Instagram is also testing additional tools such as pop-ups, which should pop up when looking for certain topics that are characterized by the spread of misinformation, such as medicines, vaccines, and the like.

In the current global media environment, social networks are clearly at the forefront of user interest, and academic research and media literacy development initiatives should also pay close attention to them. We also try to regularly address these topics in *Media Literacy and Academic Research*. We believe that in this way we can contribute to a fruitful discussion of academics and other stakeholders and thus improve the „quality of life“ in social networking environments.

Pleasant reading,

**Norbert Vrabec**  
Editor-In-Chief

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Magdalena Kaltseis

# Cold And Distant Or Hearty And Human? The Visual Portrayal Of Vladimir Putin On Russian Television

## ABSTRACT

Sharply dressed, smooth, and sporty—these are probably among the first attributes associated with the Russian president Vladimir Putin. This image is promoted by television which still remains a powerful medium in Russia. While the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014 initially led to an increase in the popularity of Putin, his approval rating has significantly fallen since the signing of pension reforms in autumn 2018. This could explain why in September 2018 a new talk show called *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin*, which offers a synopsis of Putin's working week, began its broadcast. By analyzing the „new“ image of Putin portrayed in this show and comparing it with his visual presentation in the news program *Vremia* and the annual talk *Priamaia Linia s Vladimirom Putiny*, the following paper examines the visual portrayal of Putin transmitted on television. By focusing on the visual, the analysis reveals that the president's image, and the attributes assigned to him, are established and communicated mostly via the content and arrangement of (moving) pictures. Thus, the study suggests that visual communication on television significantly shapes and influences the perception of the Russian president. This work therefore contributes to a better understanding of television in general and of mass media communication in Russia in particular.

## KEY WORDS

Visual communication. Vladimir Putin. Russian television. Talk show. Mass media. Visual images. Visual representations. Russian president.

# 1. Introduction

Television is one of the most powerful and influential forms of media in Russia. According to opinion polls, most Russians rely on television as their primary source of information.<sup>1</sup> The two dominant state-owned channels, *Pervyi kanal* (Channel One) and *Rossia-1* (Russia-1), are free of charge and based on the soviet transmission system, reaching more than 90% of Russia's inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is unsurprising that President Vladimir Putin, after coming to power in the year 2000, took immediate steps to regain control over the then partly privatized television sector. The Kremlin's control over television not only influences the content of news from abroad and decisions of internal policy, it also concerns the content transmitted about the president and his visual portrayal. More precisely, it is Russian television that guides and selects the information the Russian public receives about the president, in turn shaping ideas and opinions of him. After the first attempts under his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin is the first Russian president to professionally use the media to portray a particular image of himself that advances his political agenda.

Despite the increased popularity of Putin after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014, his approval rating has dropped significantly since signing pension reforms in October 2018.<sup>3</sup> This might explain why a new talk show called *Moskva. Kreml'.* *Putin* started its broadcast in September 2018 on *Rossia-1*. It seems that the goal of this new TV show is to improve the image of the president by offering a favorable synopsis of Putin's working week and by providing insights into his leisure activities.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this article is to analyze the visual representations of Putin in this new talk show and to compare them with his visual presentation in two older and established TV formats: the daily news program *Vremia* (Time) and the annual television special *Priamaia liniia s Vladimirom Putinyim* (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin). Thus, the current study examines the visual representations of Vladimir Putin as transmitted through three TV talk formats. Using techniques of description and interpretation of the visual by basing the analysis on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as developed by Machin and Mayr (2012), the current study exposes how television shapes the president's image. In doing so, this study contributes not only to a better understanding of visual communication on Russian television, but in a broader sense it also provides a better understanding of television and mass media communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 2. The Use of Visual Communication for Political Purposes

### 2.1 The Ubiquity of Visual Communication

Images and pictures pervade modern human life and society. Public areas, the media, shopping centers and mobile phones – everything is dominated by images. With the ongoing development of mass communication, images have become more important than ever before. The term

<sup>1</sup> *Kanaly informatsii*. Released on 13th September 2018. [online]. [2019-08-20]. Available at: <<https://www.levada.ru/2018/09/13/kanaly-informatsii/>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Reporter ohne Grenzen*. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <[https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/uploads/tx\\_ifnews/media/ROG-Russland-Bericht-2013\\_web.pdf](https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/uploads/tx_ifnews/media/ROG-Russland-Bericht-2013_web.pdf)>.

<sup>3</sup> *Doverie piatoi chasti rossiian poterial Vladimir Putin za proshedshii god*. Released on 8th October 2018. [online]. [2019-08-20]. Available at: <<https://www.levada.ru/2018/10/08/doverie-pyatoj-chasti-rossiyan-poteryal-vladimir-putin-za-proshedshij-god/>>.

<sup>4</sup> This claim is supported, for example, by news articles reacting to the first episode of the show (see e.g. TAROSHCHINA, S.: *Ves' etot MKHAT. Moskva. Kreml'. Putin: rabochii grafik prezidenta v zhanre poemy ekstaza*. [online]. [2019-08-20]. Available at: <<https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/09/04/77703-ves-etot-mhat>>.

„ocularcentrism“<sup>5</sup> describes the apparent centrality of images in Western society. For example, when comparing the front page of a newspaper from the early 1990s with a current newspaper, it is obvious that the amount of text has decreased while images have enlarged and proliferated. Consequently, newspapers are no longer a „text medium“; they have increasingly become a medium of visual communication.

This development is true for nearly all kinds of media: Today human communication functions mostly via images, and visual communication, which can be defined as the process of interpretation and creation of visual messages,<sup>6</sup> has become „a central aspect of our lives.“<sup>7</sup> Since communication is mostly visual today, the interpretation of and the critical reflection upon images or pictures is vital to understanding their impact. This ability, called visual literacy, is needed in contemporary times to navigate strategies of visual manipulation and persuasion occurring, for example, in advertisements and political campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2 Reception and Effect of Visual Images

Images or pictures can generally be defined as collections or combinations „of signs and symbols.“<sup>9</sup> Normally, each of these signs and symbols has a meaning<sup>10</sup> and by transporting meaning, pictures communicate. Showing pictures is therefore a communicative action between the image and the recipient. Three factors influence a recipient's understanding of an image: (1) the content of the image, (2) the context in which the image appears, and (3) the knowledge and the additional information the recipient has about the image.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding the impact of pictures, they are perceived differently than texts and they therefore have unique effects on the recipients. An example of this is the „picture superiority effect“<sup>12</sup>, which describes that, in contrast to text, visuals are received automatically, without much mental or cognitive effort.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, visuals activate the recipient and they are captured and processed faster than texts. When it comes to the effect of images on the spectator, they are better recalled and more memorable than a text.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, images imply a kind of „eyewitness-effect“ and involvement of the recipient through the impression of sensual immediacy. Therefore, visual images seem to be trustful and authentic. Interestingly, the trustfulness of images does not disappear when the visual information is proven wrong.<sup>15</sup> The memorizing effect is one of

<sup>5</sup> ROSE, G.: *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. Los Angeles, London et al. : Sage, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> BARNES, S. B.: *An Introduction to Visual Communication. From Cave Art to Second Life*. New York : Peter Lang, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> BERGER, A. A.: *Seeing is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication*. Singapore : Mc Graw Hill, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> BARNES, S. B.: *An Introduction to Visual Communication. From Cave Art to Second Life*. New York : Peter Lang, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> BERGER, A. A.: *Seeing is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication*. Singapore : Mc Graw Hill, 2012, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> In Social Semiotics the notions „image“ and „signs“ is commonly referred to as „semiotic resources“.

<sup>11</sup> MÜLLER, M. G., KAPPAS, A.: Visual emotions – emotional visuals. In DÖVELING, K., VON SCHEVE, C., KONIJN, E. (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media*. Oxon et al. : Routledge, 2011, p. 319.

<sup>12</sup> MÜLLER, M. G., GEISE, S.: *Grundlagen der Visuellen Kommunikation*. Konstanz, München : UVK, 2015, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup> BUCY, E. P., GRABE, M. E.: Taking Television Seriously: A Sound and Image Bite Analysis of Presidential Campaign Coverage, 1992-2004. In *Journal of Communication*, 2007, Vol. 57, No. 4, p. 654. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00362.x>>.

<sup>14</sup> GRABER, D. A.: Say it With Pictures. In *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1996, Vol. 546, p. 87.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 89.



the strengths of visual images making them very powerful. Visuals can also trigger associations and stereotypes. Besides, images have the potential to add drama to a story or an event and they cannot only depict, but also elicit emotions.<sup>16</sup> In terms of emotions, however, there is a difference between still images and images in motion because the latter can more strongly excite emotionally than still images.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, by transferring foremost moving images, television can be called an „*emotional medium*.“<sup>18</sup>

Visual communication is very powerful because viewers may have difficulty in remembering verbal information when it is in conflict with the visual message and because visual messages outweigh other messages when processed at the same time.<sup>19</sup> According to Graber (1996), however, it is the combination between the two—the visual and the verbal—which is most effective for mental processing and memory enhancement. The interaction, as well as the mutual effect of these two modes, have been the object of various studies.<sup>20</sup>

Political advisors are completely aware of the strengths and the power of visual images. Consequently, the visual dimension of messages in politics has become very important. In terms of research, visual aspects of political communication have attracted more attention in the last decade.<sup>21</sup> However, they can still said to be „*one of the least studied and the least understood areas*.“<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> MÜLLER, M. G., KAPPAS, A.: Visual emotions – emotional visuals. In DÖVELING, K., VON SCHEVE, C., KONIJN, E. (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media*. Oxon et al. : Routledge, 2011, p. 327.

<sup>17</sup> SCHILL, D.: The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. In *The Review of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 127. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.653504>>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g., HOLLY, W.: Besprochene Bilder – bebildertes Sprechen. Audiovisuelle Transkriptivität in Nachrichtenfilmen und Polit-Talkshows. In DEPPERMAN, A., LINKE, A. (eds.): *Sprache intermediär. Stimme und Schrift, Bild und Ton*. Berlin, New York : De Gruyter, 2009, p. 359-382., HOLLY, W., JÄGER, L.: Transkriptionstheoretische Medienanalyse. Vom Anders-lesbar-Machen durch intermediale Bezugnahmepraktiken. In SCHNEIDER, J. G., STÖCKL, H. (eds.): *Medientheorien und Multimodalität- ein TV-Werbespot – Sieben methodische Beschreibungsansätze*. Köln : Herbert von Halem, 2011, p. 151-169., STÖCKL, H.: Multimodalität – Semiotische und textlinguistische Grundlagen. In KLUG, N., STÖCKL, H. (eds.): *Handbuch Sprache im multimodalen Kontext*. Berlin, Boston : de Gruyter, 2016, p. 3-35.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g., CARPINELLA, C. M., JOHNSON, K. L.: Visual Political Communication: The Impact of Facial Cues from Social Constituencies to Personal Pocketbooks. In *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2016, Vol. 10, No. 5, p. 281-297. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/spc3.12249>>., O'HALLORAN, K. L. et al.: Interpreting text and image relations in violent extremist discourse: A mixed methods approach for big data analytics. In *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2016, Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 1-21. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1233871>>., NAGEL, F., MAURER, M., REINEMANN, C.: Is There a Visual Dominance in Political Communication? How Verbal, Visual, and Vocal Communication Shape Viewers' Impressions of Political Candidates. In *Journal of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 62, No. 5, p. 833-850. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01670.x>>., PYPE, K.: Visual media and political communication: reporting about suffering in Kinshasa. In *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2011, Vol. 40, No. 4, p. 625-645. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X11000504>>., SCHEUFELE, D., KIM, E., BROSSARD, D.: My Friend's Enemy: How Split-Screen Debate Coverage Influences Evaluation of Presidential Debates. In *Communication Research*, 2007, No. 34, Vol. 1, p. 3-24. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650206296079>>.

<sup>22</sup> SCHILL, D.: The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. In *The Review of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 119. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.653504>>.

## 2.3 Visual Images and Politics

Not only have visual images changed modern human life and society, they have also significantly influenced the way politics are conducted. As Schill (2012) points out, visual images play an important role in the construction of political images.<sup>23</sup> Despite the rapid growth of the Internet as an information source, in many countries, it is public television that remains the most important source for political information. Television has been characterized by Schill as the „*most important communication channel in contemporary political affairs*.“<sup>24</sup> One of the best known examples of how the media, in particular television, changed the way political communication is made, is the presidential television debate between Kennedy and Nixon in 1960. People who were watching the debate on television were in favour of Kennedy whereas people who were following the debate via radio preferred Nixon. The debate had not only a big impact on the outcome of the elections, but it also marked the „visual turn“ in political communication because the visual aspects eclipsed and dominated the verbal arguments. At that point, television became the dominant political medium and since then great importance is placed on the visual presentation of a political candidate. In this regard, Bucy and Grabe (2007) argued that visuals are often considered as first-hand information about politicians and political events and that they therefore can deliver substantial information to viewers.<sup>25</sup>

Schill (2012) stated that visuals serve at least ten functions in politics, five of which are especially relevant to the current analysis:

- **Argument Function:** This means that images „*can have rhetorical impact and make persuasive arguments to viewers*.“<sup>26</sup> When images are juxtaposed, they can „*suggest associations, causal connections, contrasts, analogies and generalizations*.“<sup>27</sup> Schill (2012) distinguishes two different types of the argument function: (1) the facial expressions and gestures of a person, and (2) the use of crowds. First, facial expressions and gestures work together with aural and contextual information to influence the viewer. An example here is, again, the presidential debate between Kennedy and Nixon which demonstrated that these nonverbal expressions are very powerful. Furthermore, as research shows, the attractiveness and physical appearance of a politician equally play an essential role in this regard.<sup>28</sup> Second is the politician's use of the crowds. Showing a politician surrounded by many people signals that he or she is popular, has widespread support and that, for this reason, he or she must be good.<sup>29</sup>
- **Dramatization and Emotional Function:** On the one hand, images can add drama to a story or a media event and on the other hand, they communicate emotions and thereby elicit an emotional reaction from viewers.
- **Identification Function:** Schill (2012) explains that „*the more a person identifies with a source, the more power that source has to influence the person*.“<sup>30</sup> People do more easily identify with visuals than with other communicative forms because they elicit emotional reactions and persuade viewers.

<sup>23</sup> SCHILL, D.: The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. In *The Review of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 119. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.653504>>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>25</sup> BUCY, E. P., GRABE, M. E.: Taking Television Seriously: A Sound and Image Bite Analysis of Presidential Campaign Coverage, 1992-2004. In *Journal of Communication*, 2007, Vol. 57, No. 4, p. 669. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00362.x>>.

<sup>26</sup> SCHILL, D.: The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. In *The Review of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 122. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.653504>>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

- **Image-building Function:** As citizens normally do not meet politicians or other officials in person, they mostly rely on television or other media outlets to learn about these persons. Hence, there do exist some „standard“ images which should raise the appeal of officials and politicians. For example, showing the latter with children or among family members aim at the viewers' compassion; while presenting a politician wearing casual or athletic clothes should demonstrate his or her ordinariness, capturing this person doing sports or attending a sports event, should transport the image of his or her physical activity and characterize him/her as „mythic athletes or outdoorsman.“<sup>31</sup> The visual information on a specific politician on television also targets the support of the voters. Besides the already mentioned „standard“ images, there are some further archetypical images which politicians or officials use in the media in order to portray a picture of themselves: The so-called „glad-to-see-you“ images are visual fragments showing the politician waving, pointing, giving a thumbs-up or shaking hands with a crowd.<sup>32</sup> Other stereotypical images are the politician as beloved leader, for example, when he/she is applauded or praised, the politician as a media star, as a father or as a family figure. As will be shown in the current analysis, these archetypical images can also be found on Russian television, when transmitting the image of Vladimir Putin.

As has been shown in this section, visual images play a central role in politics, especially when it comes to the representation of politicians on television. This is also true for Russia, where television is still the most important nationwide means of mass communication.

### 3. Visual Communication in Soviet Russia

Although visual images have always played a central role throughout Russian history, it was the Soviets who professionally began to use visual communication and emerging new media for propagandistic purposes. From the beginning of the Soviet Union, posters were the most important medium for „communicating with and educating“<sup>33</sup> the population of the USSR. Despite the growing importance of films since the late 1930s, posters remained an important medium for political propaganda. Posters are primarily a visual medium, combining visual and textual signs. Although there did exist various Lenin posters during his lifetime, they only became widespread after his death when visual images of Lenin were also transferred to other media, for example, plates, porcelain cups, or canvas. More and more, a fixed appearance of Lenin was established showing parallels to religious icons and folk traditions.<sup>34</sup>

After coming to power, Stalin initially visually demonstrated his closeness to Lenin, by linking his image with that of Lenin.<sup>35</sup> In the first years after Lenin's death in 1925, Lenin and Stalin appeared side by side on the posters. By the mid-1930s, however, Lenin was placed on a banner, a poster on the wall or represented as a statue while Stalin was situated on the ground.<sup>36</sup> From 1936 onwards, when „Stalin was referred to in superhuman terms“,<sup>37</sup> he did

<sup>31</sup> SCHILL, D.: The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. In *The Review of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 119. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.653504>>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>33</sup> PISCH, A.: *The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929-1953: archetypes, inventions and fabrications*. Acton : ANU Press, 2016, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> BONNELL, V. E.: *Iconography of Power. Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*. Berkley et al. : University of California Press, 1997, p. 147.

<sup>35</sup> PISCH, A.: *The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929-1953: archetypes, inventions and fabrications*. Acton : ANU Press, 2016, p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

very rarely appear together with Lenin on posters, but when they were represented together, they were mostly treated in the same way.

Until Stalin's death in 1953, the „*complex phenomenon*“ of the personality cult of Stalin was subtly elaborated showing Stalin as leader with „*superhuman abilities*“, as „*symbol for the Party, the state and the nation*“, as the Soviet „*new man*“, archetypal as „*the Father and Teacher*“<sup>38</sup> or as „*the Warrior and the Saviour*“.<sup>39</sup> One of the aims of these various visual representations of Stalin was, as Pisch (2016) stresses, to establish a unified nation.<sup>40</sup>

The visual representations and the personality cult of Lenin and then Stalin can doubtlessly be called the peak of the veneration of the Soviet *vozhd'*, a term used primarily for Lenin and Stalin. Both were associated with Christ and additionally Stalin „*(...) was endowed with many of the qualities of the Mother of God*“.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, when studying the visual image of Lenin and Stalin, it is evident that the Soviets had already used some of the visual „standard“ functions described in the previous section, for example the use of the crowds, the fixed appearance, or the portraits with children.

After Stalin's death, his successor Nikita Khrushchev began with the demystification of the personality cult around Stalin. However, today's Russia is making a step backwards in this regard because Stalin is becoming popular again and officially a slight cult of Stalin has been „*planted*“.<sup>42</sup> Some scholars (e.g., Cassiday and Johnson, 2010) have argued that the so-called „*Putin mania*“ or „*Putin cult*“ somehow „*mirrors*“ the Stalin cult and that his „*popularity serves ends similar to those of Soviet leader cults, particularly the cult of Stalin*“.<sup>43</sup> Notwithstanding some evident parallels between the Putin and Stalin cults, there are obvious differences. These differences as well as the emergence and the development of today's Putin cult will be discussed in detail in the next section.

### 3.1 Creating the Image of Putin

Since the year 2000, Putin has been the President of the Russian Federation. From 2008 to 2012 he was also the Prime Minister under his close associate Dmitry Medvedev and since 2012 Vladimir Putin is again serving as President of Russia. After the elections in 2018, the fourth term of his presidency began and this period will mostly be in the center of the current analysis.

What undoubtedly distinguishes Vladimir Putin from his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, is his presence in the media. In fact, Putin is the first Russian president to professionally use technology, especially digital media, in order to construct and convey his image.<sup>44</sup> For example, Putin is not only ubiquitous on television, but also in printed magazines, newspapers, and the Internet. In addition, there are many portraits, statues, films, songs and books about him. Following Goscilo (2013), it is the abundance and multiplicity of Putin images that is most prominent for the cult of „*Russia's major contemporary icon*“.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> PISCH, A.: *The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929-1953: archetypes, inventions and fabrications*. Acton : ANU Press, 2016, p. 136.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>42</sup> MERZLINKIN, P., SULIM, S.: Dazhe pochitateli Stalina ne khoteli by zhit' v te vremena. Spetsialisty rassuzhdaiut, proizoshlo li v Rossii razvenchanie stalinskogo mifa. Released on 30th July 2017. [online]. [2019-06-05]. Available at: <<https://meduza.io/feature/2017/07/30/dazhe-pochitateli-stalina-ne-hoteli-by-zhit-v-te-vremena>>.

<sup>43</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 685. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

<sup>44</sup> GOSCILO, H.: Russia's ultimate celebrity: VVP as VIP *objet d'art*. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

Putin's popularity and the „cult of personality“ around him already began in 2000, soon after his victory in the presidential elections. Enjoying widespread adoration, his portraits were quickly put on walls in official buildings and chapters in schoolbooks were dedicated to his life.<sup>46</sup> However, during his first term of presidency the image of Putin was anything but clear and well elaborated: Thus, he was repeatedly described as having a „*nebulous, all-embracing image*“<sup>47</sup> which was also compared to a mirror where everybody could see what he or she wanted.<sup>48</sup> In the same way it is argued that the phenomenon „Putin“ worked in the first years of his presidency mainly by establishing as many links as possible to already existing media representations.<sup>49</sup> Journalists, politicians and citizens alike „*could inscribe the qualities deemed lacking in past rulers*“<sup>50</sup> on him. It was only by 2004, that Putin's image had acquired several distinguishable qualities: He was depicted as a sober, intelligent and competent person, being physically and psychologically healthy and above all very manly and attractive.<sup>51</sup> In comparison to previous Russian or Soviet leaders, the apparent prominence of his male sexuality and masculine potency is one of the innovative aspects of Putin's image and it furthermore echoes the pop-culture in which his image is inscribed.<sup>52</sup> By 2007, this then elaborated image of Putin had been disseminated throughout Russia<sup>53</sup> and in the same year he was also awarded the title „Person of the Year“ by the famous American news magazine *Time*.

The success of the distribution of Putin's image is also linked to the gradual take-over of control over mass media in general and over television in particular since the beginning of his presidency. Therefore, the current media system in Russia is often labelled „*neo-authoritarian*“<sup>54</sup> or even „*neo-Soviet*“<sup>55</sup> as the media serves the interests of the state leaders and not of the citizens. However, Hutchings and Tolz (2015) emphasize the difference between the current Russian television and its Soviet predecessor, because today's television has to react to the changes in the discursive environment, which means that it has to consider and respond to the debate on the Internet and alternative media outlets.<sup>56</sup>

Concerning the difference between the Putin and the Stalin cult Cassidy and Johnson (2010) highlight that the Stalin cult was „*monolithic in structure*“, that is to say that every representation or narrative transmitted about Stalin was strictly regulated and carefully edited.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>46</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 685. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

<sup>47</sup> WHITE, S., McALLISTER, I.: Putin and His Supporters. In *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2003, Vol. 55, No. 3, p. 385. [online]. [2019-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3594606.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A88cc17e74c0dc1b0c8368314944af861>>.

<sup>48</sup> GOSCILO, H.: Russia's ultimate celebrity: VVP as VIP objet d'art. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 20., GORHAM, M. S.: Putin's language. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> BINDER, E.: *Persönlichkeiten in Politik / Gesellschaft des postsowjetischen Russland: Boris El'cin und Vladimir Putin*. [talk at Innsbruck University, 19.11.2013].

<sup>50</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 686. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 686.

<sup>52</sup> MIKHAILOVA, T.: Putin as the Father of the Nation. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 66.

<sup>53</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 683. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

<sup>54</sup> BECKER, J.: Lessons from Russia. A Neo-Authoritarian Media System. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2004, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 139-163.

<sup>55</sup> OATES, S.: *Introduction to media and politics*. Los Angeles : Sage, 2008, p. 41.

<sup>56</sup> HUTCHINGS, S., TOLZ, V.: *Nation, Ethnicity and Race on Russian Television. Mediating post-Soviet difference*. London, New York : Routledge, 2015, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 694. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

The Putin cult, in contrast, cannot be claimed to be monolithic because the material about Putin is very heterogeneous including texts, images or consumer objects and even foodstuffs e.g. ice cream, vodka, lollipops, etc. have borne his name.<sup>58</sup> This is maybe the most obvious difference to the Soviet leader because Putin has become a part of today's pop and consumer culture, presenting him simultaneously as a patriarch and leader as well as an international pop star. In this context, the Putin cult is an amalgamation of official and unofficial speech and it shows more creativity than the Soviet leader cult because the „overwhelming majority“ of today's artists „operate outside any obvious system of state control.“<sup>59</sup> This also explains why many objects, gadgets, and texts about Putin do often have an equivocal nature.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, although today souvenir shops and markets overflow with objects and gadgets with Putin's image, most of these products do not have a „real“ Putin-content.<sup>61</sup>

Accordingly, this is one of the two reasons why the Putin cult exists in Russia: On the one hand, the Putin mania is part of today's consumer culture where every consumer determines him- or herself the meaning of a specific object. Here, again, the Putin cult differs from the Stalin cult because despite the control of most media outlets by the Russian state, there is no official pressure or coercion to buy Putin objects, portraits or products.<sup>62</sup> People purchase these objects because either they see profit for themselves in them or because they intrinsically want to.

On the other hand, the Putin cult is part of the nostalgia for the Soviet past, which can be observed in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup> Because the Putin cult unites Soviet nostalgia and modern consumption it is no surprise that the images of him created by the media are very complex and sometimes even antithetical: Accordingly, Putin might be presented as a tsar, a Father of the nation or even as a saviour and master of animals. He sometimes may be depicted as a sportsman, a star or even as an artist.<sup>64</sup> In either case, Vladimir Putin can be called a „master of metamorphosis“<sup>65</sup> and an „entertainer“.<sup>66</sup>

Although Putin's image has only been described verbally so far in this article, the Putin cult is foremost a visual cult and therefore it is especially interesting to analyze, which image of Putin is represented officially on television. This is the question the current study tries to answer and in the next section, the aim of this analysis is explained in detail.

<sup>58</sup> GOSCILO, H.: Russia's ultimate celebrity: VVP as VIP *objet d'art*. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 696. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 692.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 695.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 697.

<sup>64</sup> In 2009, a painting called *Uzor* (engl. patterns), which was claimed to be a work of art made by Putin himself, was sold by auction for 860 000 euros.

<sup>65</sup> ENGELFRIED, A.: Zar und Star. Vladimir Putins Medienimage. In *Osteuropa*, 2012, Vol. 5, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> MIKHAILOVA, T.: Putin as the Father of the Nation. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 77.



### 3.2 The Current Study

Although Putin is a popular subject matter for many studies, the existing literature mainly focusses on the broader and general image of Putin,<sup>67</sup> his visual representations in photographs, works of art or caricatures<sup>68</sup> or on his language<sup>69</sup> and does not concentrate on his image as transmitted by a particular visual medium—television. As for many Russians television is still the most important medium for political information, it is especially interesting to analyze which image of President Putin is conveyed regularly into households. The current study therefore wants to close this gap by analyzing the image of Putin as presented in three different TV formats: First, the image of Putin as transmitted daily by the news program *Vremia* (Time). Second, the image of Putin conveyed one time per week by the talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin*. Third, the image of Putin presented one time per year on the annual talk show *Priamaia Linia s Vladimirom Putinyim* (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin). By doing so, the current study tries to answer the questions (1) what image of Putin is broadcasted visually via television, and (2) does this image differ across the three TV programs? The reason for the selection of these television talk programs as well as the methods used for the study will be explained in the following chapter.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Analytical Overview

This study uses Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to examine the visual representation of Vladimir Putin in three different TV formats. MCDA, developed by Machin and Mayr (2012),<sup>70</sup> is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as described and elaborated by Fairclough and Wodak (1997).<sup>71</sup> CDA is a linguistic approach that defines discourses as „broader ideas communicated by a text“<sup>72</sup> and it is used to draw out ideologies and power hidden in texts by looking at the words and grammar choices. Extending this, *Multimodal* CDA acts on the assumption that ideologies and power are not only communicated via language, but also via other semiotic resources, for example images, gestures or sound. This presupposes that images are used to say and express things that language cannot transmit. MCDA is not

<sup>67</sup> See e.g., CASSIDAY, J. A., JOHNSON, E. D.: Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, 2010, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 681-707. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <[https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41061898?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)>, ENGELFRIED, A.: Zar und Star. Vladimir Putins Medienimage. In *Osteuropa*, 2012, Vol. 5, p. 47-67., FRANZ, N.: 'Einen wie Putin': Herrscherlob und -verehrung im postmodernen Russland. In HOLTZ, B., MARGGRAFF, U. (eds.): *Herrscherlob und Herrscherkritik in den slawischen Literaturen. Festschrift für Ulrike Jekutsch zum 60. Geburtstag*. Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 2013, p. 241-257.

<sup>68</sup> See e.g., MIKHAILOVA, T.: Putin as the Father of the Nation. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 65-81., GOSCILO, H.: Russia's ultimate celebrity: VVP as VIP objet d'art. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 6-36., GOSCILO, H.: Putin's performance of masculinity. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 180-207.

<sup>69</sup> See e.g., GORHAM, M. S.: Putin's language. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 81-103., GORHAM, M. S.: After Newspeak. Language Culture and Politics in *Russia from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca, London : Cornell University Press, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> See e.g., MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: Personalising crime and crime-fighting in factual television: an analysis of social actors and transitivity in language and images. In *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2013, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 356-372., MAYR, A.: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). In KLUG, N., STÖCKL, H. (eds.): *Handbuch Sprache im multimodalen Kontext*. Berlin, Boston : de Gruyter, 2016, p. 261-276.

<sup>71</sup> See e.g.: FAIRCLOUGH, N., WODAK, R.: Critical Discourse Analysis. In VAN DIJK, T. (ed.): *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London : Sage, 1997, p. 258-285.

<sup>72</sup> MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal Introduction*. London et al. : SAGE, 2012, p. 20.

only interested in showing *how* images and other semiotic choices create meaning, but also in analyzing *what* they mean.<sup>73</sup> Thereby, this approach provides many tools for the analysis of semiotic choices, that is to say, the analysis of the words and images chosen in texts. Although language is in the center of multimodal analysis, MCDA is completely aware that language „is embedded within a frame of other semiotic resources“<sup>74</sup> and that for this reason, images have to be taken into consideration.

## 4.2 Procedure

The present analysis used MCDA mainly for the visual analysis, without neglecting certain aspects of linguistic choices made to represent Putin. The reason for focusing on the visual is, on the one hand, the already mentioned centrality of images on television. On the other hand, there is also a practical reason because the full linguistic transcriptions are only available of *Vremia* and therefore, the linguistic analysis primarily concentrated on this news program.

Regarding MCDA, the current study sequentially followed and examined the four categories of representation as described by Machin and Mayr (2013): the linguistic and the visual representation of social actors, as well as the linguistic and visual representation of transitivity.<sup>75</sup> The first two categories focus on the analysis of the representation of social actors in a text because the linguistic and visual choices made to represent people influence the way the recipients perceive these people and their actions, for example, when certain aspects of their identity are highlighted or omitted.<sup>76</sup> Linguistically, the representation of President Putin was analyzed by examining the nouns used to represent him (nomination and/or functionalisation),<sup>77</sup> which were detected and organized by means of the software program MAXQDA. Visually, the study looked at the choices which have been made to represent the Russian head of state and at the way he was represented (e.g., alone, in a group, in close shot, from distance). The visual observations made were collected while watching the broadcasts and afterwards, they were sorted and summarized. The other two categories, the linguistic and the visual representation of transitivity, concentrate on the question „*what people are represented as doing*.“<sup>78</sup> In linguistic terms, this category deals with verb categories giving the social actors character and agency.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the current study examined the verbs utilized to describe Vladimir Putin's actions. The fourth category, the visual representation of transitivity, was integrated in the analysis by asking how President Putin was represented visually when doing something. Here again, camera shots were examined as well as the different angles from which the viewer looks at the president, but also the circumstances (colour, shadows, light, etc.). Finally, a central concept of MCDA is „*recontextualisation of social practices*“ meaning that this method is interested in processes of deletion, addition, substitution and evaluation in a text. The current study also tried to consider this concept by looking for linguistic representations which were absent visually and vice versa.

<sup>73</sup> MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal Introduction*. London et al. : SAGE, 2012, p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> MAYR, A.: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). In KLUG, N., STÖCKL, H. (eds.): *Handbuch Sprache im multimodalen Kontext*. Berlin, Boston : de Gruyter, 2016, p. 263.

<sup>75</sup> MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: Personalising crime and crime-fighting in factual television: an analysis of social actors and transitivity in language and images. In *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2013, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 356-372., MAYR, A.: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). In KLUG, N., STÖCKL, H. (eds.): *Handbuch Sprache im multimodalen Kontext*. Berlin, Boston : de Gruyter, 2016, p. 261-276.

<sup>76</sup> MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal Introduction*. London et al. : SAGE, 2012, p. 77-79.

<sup>77</sup> MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: Personalising crime and crime-fighting in factual television: an analysis of social actors and transitivity in language and images. In *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2013, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 360.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>79</sup> Drawing on Halliday (1994) and Van Leeuwen (1996), Machin and Mayr (2013) distinguish six kinds of verb processes to answer the question „who does what to whom“.

## 4.3 Materials

The material of the study comprises eleven randomly selected issues<sup>80</sup> of the news broadcast *Vremia* on *Pervyi kanal* from April 2018 to March 2019, the issues of *Priamaia Linia s Vladimirom Putinyom* from 2013 to 2018 and five different issues of *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* aired from September 2, 2018, until March 3, 2019. All videos as well as the linguistic transcript of *Vremia* are available on the homepages of the two TV channels. The reason for the choice of this period of *Vremia* is the beginning of Putin's fourth term of office on March 18, 2018. *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* began its broadcast only on September 2, 2018, and therefore five shows until March 2019 are taken into consideration.<sup>81</sup> *Priamaia Linia* is aired only once a year and in terms of comparability, the six latest shows are examined in the current study.

## 5. Results

In order to capture the different visual representations of Putin, the study is structured around the three TV programs, starting with the two „older“ and longer established programs, *Vremia* and *Priamaia Linia s Vladimirom Putinyom*. After the examination of Putin's image in these two programs, the last paragraph analyzes the image of Putin in *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* as „a new page of Putiniana“<sup>82</sup>. Within each TV program, the results are organized according to the four categories of representation, which are all considered, to different degrees, in the analysis. The final comparison of all three programs is presented in the Discussion section.

### 5.1 President Putin in *Vremia*

*Vremia* (Time) is the primetime news program on *Pervyi kanal* and it is broadcasted every day at 9 p.m. Transmitted since 1968, *Vremia* is one of the most important news programs in Russia. President Putin appears very often in this news program and he is reported on nearly every evening. The news items usually refer to his meetings and actions during the day, to his telephone calls with other politicians or simply to his presence at some event. In eleven randomly selected<sup>83</sup> news items from April 2018 to March 2019 the linguistic and visual representation of Vladimir Putin is analyzed and presented in the following sections.

#### 5.1.1 Linguistic Representations of Vladimir Putin

Regarding language, Putin is mostly represented by personalization. Strikingly, his name „Vladimir Putin“ or sometimes simply „Putin“ is found in all the news items and often the president's first and last names stand at the beginning of the news headlines. This reference by name personalizes Putin and puts the emphasis on the question who he is. Putin is also referred to by functionalisation and honorifics by terms such as „prezident (Rossii)“ or „rossiiskii

<sup>80</sup> As all news items are available online, one news item per month was selected by randomly choosing a day on the calendar and by scanning the news headlines. When „Vladimir Putin“, „the Russian president“ or other nouns referring to President Putin figured in a headline, the news item was chosen and the same procedure was applied to the following month. By doing so, 11 different news items on Putin—one per month—were selected for the current study.

<sup>81</sup> As the show began its broadcast in September 2018, the first three issues of the talk show were examined. The other two selected issues were one show from February and one from March 2019.

<sup>82</sup> TAROSHCHINA, S.: *Ves' etot MKHAT. Moskva. Kreml'. Putin: rabochii grafik prezidenta v zhanre poemy ekstaza*. Released on 04th September 2018. [online]. [2019-08-19]. Available at: <<https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/09/04/77703-ves-etot-mhat>>.

<sup>83</sup> Only news items with headlines referring to the Russian president were chosen (see also footnote 80).

*prezident*“ (President of Russia/Russian president), „*glava (rossiiskogo) gosudarstva*“ (head of the [Russian] state) or „*rossiiskii lider*“ (Russian leader). These terms are more official than the personal nomination „*Vladimir Putin*“ and they signal respect and importance. Furthermore, they accentuate the function of Putin within the state and the role that he fulfills in Russia. Other social actors, in contrast, for example other presidents or state leaders, are often functionalized and personalized at the same time. First, their function „*prezident*“ or „*prem'er-ministr*“ (primeminister) is mentioned and second, the name of the leader's state and his/her name follow. One reason for this kind of reference is probably to remind the recipient, which important people President Putin is meeting with, who they are and where they come from. This type of representation is common for international guests of Putin, but when it comes to national guests, they are often only referred to by their function, especially in the headlines.

### 5.1.2 Visual Representations of Vladimir Putin

Visual representations of Vladimir Putin show him frequently individualised in medium close-up, when he is speaking to the public, to other ministers or having a conversation with somebody. The background of these recordings are often the colours of the Russian flag or gold, brown and red, referring to state power. The background of other participants when represented alone in medium close-ups for example during a tête-à-tête conversation with Putin, is often darker than the one of Putin and disturbed by the screen of a computer.

President Putin is not always represented alone. When he is meeting another politician or president normally both of them appear on the screen. When sitting at a table and discussing with others, Putin is sometimes represented as one amongst others. For example, in the 6<sup>th</sup> news item on March 19, 2019, during his meeting with young winners of a contest called „Leaders of Russia“ Putin sits side by side with them on a long table. However, when he is shown during meetings with his ministers, the scenery is strictly defined (see Figure 1).



PICTURE 1: Putin during a meeting with his ministers

Source: Vremia, News broadcast, 16.01.2019

In Figure 1, Putin is sitting at the top of the table. He is at the center of the events. His ministers or cabinet members sit on both sides lengthwise around him and are looking into his direction, their heads turned towards him. This also directs the gaze of the recipient towards Putin because the eyes follow the long table. This table symbolizes the so-called „*vertical of power*,“ which is defined as „*the top-down command structure established by Putin during his*

presidency.”<sup>84</sup> This screen shot of the 1<sup>st</sup> news item on January 16, 2019 (Figure 1) is a typical and recurrent example of the visual representation of Putin in the news and demonstrates how the visual transmits the picture of a very powerful president by establishing vertical distance. Furthermore, not only the table and the position of the attendees is strictly defined, but there is also a ritual, which is transmitted by moving images: Putin is the last person entering the scene, the others have to wait for him and often the news show a sequence where the ministers get up and sit down when the president enters the room. This whole mise-en-scene as shown in the news should illustrate and remind that everything is in Putin’s hands and that he directs the course of the events that it is him who guides the country and makes decisions.

### 5.1.3 Linguistic and Visual Representations of Transitivity

Transitivity concerns the question about what people are represented in doing. As regards Putin, the language used in the news items duplicates his visual portrayal and even reinforces it. For example, the headlines as well as the news texts themselves often use active verbs to describe Putin’s actions for instance „*potreboval*“ (he demanded), „*prodolzhit*“ (he continued), „*vstretit/vstretilsia s*“ (he met with), „*podpisal*“ (he signed) or „*obsudil s*“ (he discussed with), which all hint at the president’s activity. They also imply that Putin fulfills his role as a statesman by working very hard, discussing, meeting different people, making decisions, etc.

His power and assertiveness are represented by the quoting verbs used to describe his speech. While there are certain neutral verbs utilized for citing his utterances as „*skazal*“ (he said), there are also metapositional verbs<sup>85</sup> as assertives, for example, „*utochnil/poiasnil*“ (he made clear) and „*ob”iavil*“ (he announced), and directives, for example, „*utverdil pravo Genprokuratury*“ (he confirmed the right of the General Procuracy) or „*privlek vseh uchastnikov prezidiuma k obsuzhdeniiu voprosov*“ (he enlisted all participants of the general committee to discuss the matters). These examples not only illustrate that Putin is the one who explains or announces something, but also, that he grants permits and tells people what to do. As regards the speech of Putin’s conversation partners or other persons cited in the news items, there is a smaller variety of quoting verbs used and they are often neutral speech reporting verbs such as „*rasskazal(a)*“ (he/she told), „*skazal(a)*“ (he/she said) or „*otmetil(a)*“ (he/she remarked). If the speech of both conversation partners, Putin and another person is referred to, most often the neutral verbs „*obsuzhdali/obsudili*“ (they discussed) are utilized.

While the social action of Vladimir Putin in the news is linguistically represented as active and busy, the moving images also support this impression. Besides, his activity is visible in the amount of news items on Putin. For example, almost every evening there is at least one of average 12 news items dedicated to President Putin. This creates the impression that he is continuously working and officiating seriously.

In addition, the moving images provide a broader impression of his activities by showing him for example feeding fish, shaking hands, talking to children, etc. On the one hand, the moving images and the news text work together, when for example visually illustrating and duplicating what is said in the text. On the other hand, the moving images and the text complement each other, because the images often provide information about the attendees of an event, its location and the surroundings whereas the text presents dense information about its content and the decisions.

Concerning the „*recontextualisation of social practices*“ there is, for example, visual deletion which can be found in the news: The third news item on August 21, 2019, with the headline „*Vladimir Putin podpisal Ukaz ob ucherzhenii medali Za stroitel’stvo Krymskogo mosta.*“ (Vladimir

<sup>84</sup> MONAGHAN, A.: *The Russian Vertikal: the Tandem, Power and the Elections*. [online]. [2019-08-07]. Available at: <[https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/19412\\_0511ppmonaghan.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/19412_0511ppmonaghan.pdf)>.

<sup>85</sup> For the meaning potential of quoting verbs see the table in MACHIN, D., MAYR, A.: *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal Introduction*. London et al. : SAGE, 2012, p. 59.



Putin signed a decree on the establishment of a medal „For the construction of the Crimean bridge“) consists only of the studio sequence with the presenter and images of the Crimean bridge. Although Putin is referred to linguistically, he is visually completely absent. One possible reason for his absence could be that the Kremlin provides the journalists with many information about Putin's activities during the day and that the journalists are not supposed to take part in every action made by the president, which, in turn, forces them to illustrate the news items with already existing images.

## 5.2 President Putin in *Priamaia Linia*

Since its first broadcast on December 24, 2001, *Priamaia linia s Vladimirom Putinyim* (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin) has become an annual event.<sup>86</sup> It is a special TV show transmitted by the most important and popular TV channels in Russia. The concept of this four-hour show can be summarized as follows: Putin is asked questions from two journalists in the studio and Russian citizens by telephone, Internet or live video translation, which he tries to answer. There are several reasons for staging such a media event or „spectacle“<sup>87</sup> every year: On the one hand, the show aims at the creation of the image of a united and coherent Russian nation.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, it communicates the image of Putin as „a president of the people“<sup>89</sup> and constructs the image of his omnipotence.<sup>90</sup> Although this annual televised meeting with Russian citizens creates the impression of spontaneity, all participants prepare for the show.<sup>91</sup>

Because this annual talk show is a very important event for the Russian as well as for the foreign media, it is particularly interesting to look at the visual representation of Putin in this show. Therefore, the following analysis concentrates for the main part on the first two categories of analysis of MCDA.<sup>92</sup>

### 5.2.1 Linguistic Representations of Vladimir Putin

When Putin is introduced at the beginning of the show, he is referred to by functionalization, namely as „prezident Rossii“ (President of Russia). As he attends this show, he is directly and formally addressed as it is common in Russia by the forename and the patronymic „Vladimir Vladimirovich“ and by the formal personal pronoun „Vy“ (You). Linguistically, this show gives Putin the chance to present himself on Russian TV, his rhetoric skills and he makes use of it. The two journalists in the studio on his left and right side pose often vague and broad questions, which allows Putin to extend the scope of the questions and to give sometimes very general answers. He can also speak as long as he wants without being interrupted, which provides him the opportunity to show himself in a good light.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Even during the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev it was Putin who held this question-answer forum with the nation. Only in 2004 and 2012 there was no issue of *Priamaia linia*.

<sup>87</sup> RYAZANOVA-CLARKE, L.: The discourse of spectacle. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 108.

<sup>88</sup> GORHAM, M. S.: *After Newspeak. Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca, London : Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 155-156., RYAZANOVA-CLARKE, L.: The discourse of spectacle. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 107.

<sup>89</sup> GORHAM, M. S.: *After Newspeak. Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca, London : Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 156.

<sup>90</sup> RYAZANOVA-CLARKE, L.: The discourse of spectacle. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 120.

<sup>91</sup> GORHAM, M. S.: *After Newspeak. Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca, London : Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 141.

<sup>92</sup> The linguistic strategies used in this show have already been described, for example by Ryazanova-Clarke (2013), who has analyzed the verbal activities of the show participants.

<sup>93</sup> It has to be stated here, that as for example Mikhailova (2013, p. 77) noticed, Putin never engages in debates with his political opponents, who are prevented from appearing on state television channels.



Although the analysis of the rhetorical strategies and skills of Putin go beyond the scope of the current article, it is worth noting here, that Putin is known for his ability to switch between different voices in accordance to the context of his utterances.<sup>94</sup> While most of his speech can be described as neutral and technocrat, Putin may sometimes intersperse violent and colourful words or sentences into his speech. For example, in 2018, he called the Russian ex-agent Sergei Skripal in front of the cameras a „son of a bitch“ („podonok“).<sup>95</sup> Using substandard, vulgar or even Russian swear language called „mat“ normally strongly contradicts the representation of a respectable statesman. However, Putin uttering swear words is only one of his multiple representations in the media and by speaking the language of the people he gets closer to them, making them see him as one of their own.

### 5.2.2 Visual Representations of Vladimir Putin

Concerning the visual staging of the latest *Priamaia linia* issues, some points are striking: In the same way as in the news program *Vremia*, the vertical power is visually omnipresent in *Priamaia linia*. There is a big spatial distance between Putin and the two journalists: While the former always sits in the middle and thus on the top of a horseshoe-like table, the two journalists sit on both ends of the table and turn their heads towards the president.

While in the *Priamaia linia* issue of 2013 (see Figure 2), Putin is surrounded by the studio audience, his table standing on the same level as the first row, hence, creating the impression of being among the people and on the same level with them, in the following issues from 2014 to 2017, this image has already changed (see Figure 3). In these years, the table stands on a platform, which is not only higher and further away from the audience, but it is also visually highlighted: In 2014, 2015 and 2017 the table and the platform are accentuated by blue or white shining light. In 2016, in contrast, the whole platform is coloured brown. In each of these issues, the platform Putin is sitting on resembles an „island“ in the middle of the studio and it establishes a remarkable spatial distance to the audience. In 2016 and 2017, however, there is a visual connection, a kind of bridge to Putin's „island“, which probably could symbolize the accessibility of the president and his connection to the people. Whereas in comparison to previous years, the distance between the studio audience and Putin gets less in 2016 and 2017, the visual division is established by lighting and raising Putin's platform—from two steps in 2015, the platform raises to already three steps in the years to follow. Thereby, the show visually highlights and sets the president apart. Moreover, from 2014 to 2017 the studio audience is isolated visually by a small, striped, and knee-high divider from the rest of the studio. Accordingly, in this TV show, where the people get direct access to their president and can talk with him, it is communicated visually that Putin is still the one inaccessible, untouchable, and unreachable leader of the country sitting slightly above the people and on the top of the table, symbolizing the corridors of power. This visual staging of Putin evokes the seemingly intended association of Putin sitting on a throne and here the repeatedly drawn comparisons between Putin and a tsar become evident.

<sup>94</sup> GORHAM, M. S.: Putin's language. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 82.

<sup>95</sup> Dekoder. [online]. [2019-06-14]. Available at: <<https://www.dekoder.org/de/article/video-23-putin-skripal-ist-ein-dreckskerl>>.



PICTURE 2: Studio of the Direct Line in 2013

Source: Priamaia Linia, Annual Talk, 25.05.2013



PICTURE 3: Studio of the Direct Line in 2014

Source: Priamaia Linia, Annual Talk, 17.04.2014

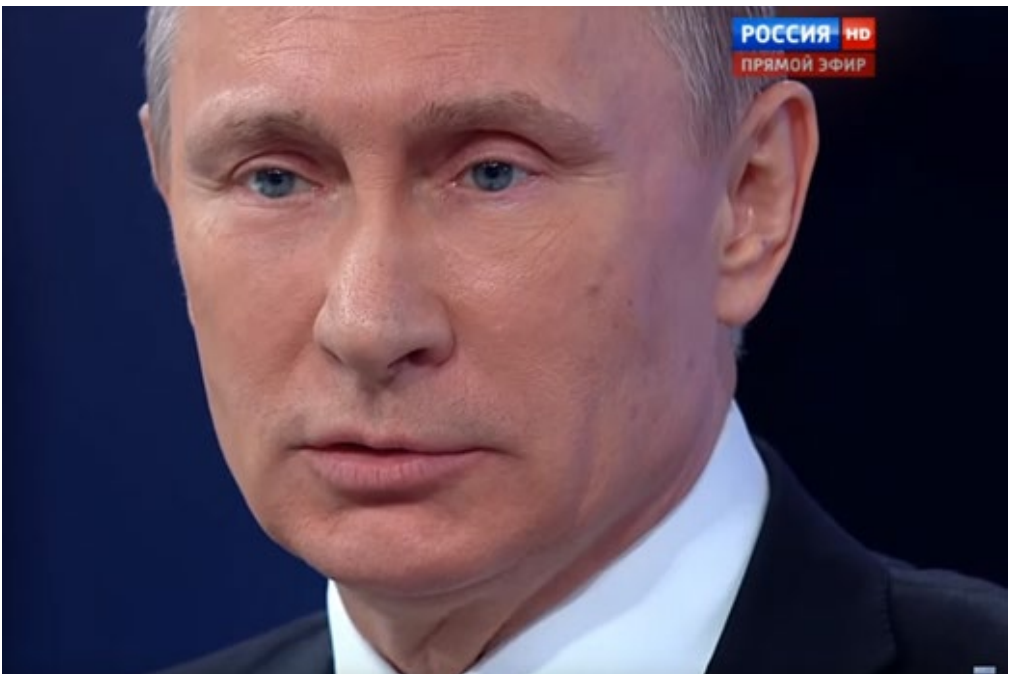
Although the changes over the last years are considerable, the most vivid change occurred in 2018, when completely emptying the studio of the audience. One of the journalists justifies the absence of the studio audience at the beginning of the show by claiming, that thereby the people in situ could ask more questions. However, the absence of a studio audience, which mainly contributes to the perception of the show as a live and public event, transfers it to a cool and sterile show, where nobody except of the journalists has access to the president in person. This could explain why the *Priamaia linia* issue in 2019, after Putin's approval rate had significantly fallen, seemed to react to this trend: First, the platform of Putin is in 2019 significantly lower than in the previous years and second, the studio audience is again present in this show. Third, the studio audience is not isolated from the rest of the studio and thereby, the show visually tries to establish again the proximity between Putin and the people.

Finally, it is also worth analyzing the camera shots in *Priamaia linia*. As the setting of the show is very stable and rigid, the dynamics is established by the movements and shots of the camera. While the studio seems very cold and distant because of the spatial arrangement of the participants as well as the colors used—mostly grey and blue—the medium and close-up shots of the president, taken from eye level, create a kind of closeness with Vladimir Putin (Figures 4 and 5).



**PICTURE 4:** Shoulder close up of Putin

Source: *Priamaia Linia*, Annual Talk, 14.04.2016



**PICTURE 5:** Extreme close up of Putin

Source: *Priamaia Linia*, Annual Talk, 16.04.2015

These camera close-ups are also known as „talking head format“ because the size of the person on TV screen is similar to the actual size of a person. This technique thereby creates the impression that the viewer is directly confronted to the person on the screen, thus getting closer to his person. In *Priamaia linia* this strategy is used to bring the president closer to each individual at home and to create the illusion of intimacy, of being with Putin.

Summing up, the *Priamaia linia* issues establish a similar image of Putin as in the news program *Vremia*. Although the annual TV show tries to present Putin as a „*president of the people*,“ the spatial arrangement emphasizes the distance between him, the journalists, and the public. Thus, it transmits the image of Putin as being superior and inaccessible. The show puts Putin on a throne not only by visually raising him on a platform, but also by the question-answer-format of the show, which is suggestive of Putin being omnipotent and omniscient. Here, the parallel to Stalin can be drawn, as one of the elements of the mythology of Stalin was his omnipresence and his appearance whenever needed<sup>96</sup> – an illusion which is nowadays created every year by *Priamaia linia*.

### 5.3 President Putin in *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin*.

The talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* was first aired on September 2, 2018. It is a weekly TV program, broadcasted on Sundays on *Rossia-1* after the main news program called *Vesti nedeli* (News of the week). Every Sunday evening this nearly one-hour TV show focusses mainly on one question: What has President Putin been doing during the week? The famous journalist Vladimir Solovyov hosts this program, which is a mixture of interviews in a studio and film clips featuring the president. Although the talk show is primarily about the Russian president, Putin himself does not come in person to the show—it is the journalist Pavel Zarubin, the Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov or other famous persons who are invited to the show in order to talk about the president, his activities, and meetings during the week.

Even the name of the show is very interesting: *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* linguistically establishes a zoom from the outside to the inside: from the big city, the capital of Russia—Moscow to the Kremlin, being in the center and the heart of Moscow, to Putin, who is working in the Kremlin. The title of the show elicits associations with the concentration of power: Being the capital city of Russia, Moscow is very important. The Kremlin is the centre of the city and it is the seat of the government, therefore being the seat of power. The whole power, however, cumulates in the hands of one person: Vladimir Putin. The talk show's name thereby reminds us of a funnel, in which the whole power flows together and at the end of which is sitting the president. Besides, „*Putin*“ is the only word printed in bold characters, which furthermore accentuates that he is at the focus of the show.

As previously stated, the content of the talk show is always very similar as it mainly consists of reports on the working week of Putin. However, this is anything but a novelty because the working week of Putin, his meetings with other politicians, etc. already appear in the news program. Therefore, it is worth asking the question of the purpose and the attractiveness for the public of this new talk show. First, the TV genre itself, the talk show, and its famous host Vladimir Solovyov attract the interest of the public as talk shows are very widespread on Russian TV and enjoy great popularity.<sup>97</sup> Second, this show can be claimed to be a good

<sup>96</sup> PISCH, A.: *The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929-1953: archetypes, inventions and fabrications*. Acton : ANU Press, 2016, p. 305.

<sup>97</sup> Opinion polls show that talk shows rank under the most popular TV shows in Russia. See e.g., VOLKOV, D., GONCHAROV, S.: „*Levada tsentr*“: *Televidenie ostaetsia glavnym istochnikom informatsii dlia 85% rossiian*. [online]. [2018-04-19]. Available at: <<http://r.media/news/tv/levada-tsentr-televidenie-ostaetsia-glavnym-istochnikom-informatsii-dlya-85-rossiyan.html>>.



example of so called „politainment“ as it present politics as entertainment and consequently, it makes politics accessible to everyone. While the show does often not provide information as regards content or political decisions, it certainly tries to transmit a more human picture of the politicians, for instance by precisely describing and filming the circumstances of political events. For example, in the issue of September 9, 2018, the politicians are captured eating dry fruits during a conference and it is reported on how they enjoyed eating them. There are also sequences of the journalist Pavel Zarubin filming backstage at the conference with his mobile phone thereby enhancing the sense of authenticity and thus giving the viewers the impression of being live-witnesses. Hand-held camera videos and shaky, sometimes even blurred pictures additionally support this sense of authenticity and immediacy created by the show. Furthermore, the camera frequently films the politicians or other important persons from short distance, which also adds to the impression of their humanization and immediacy.

A third novelty of the show is that the talk show guests are mostly people who work for the president and know him very well. They try to create a personal and somehow intimate portrayal of Vladimir Putin by telling the viewer how Putin „really“ is, what he likes, how he reacts emotionally, etc. in order to find out what happens „behind the scenes“ and what is normally not shown in the news.

Although the implementation of the talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* in September 2018 is often explained as a result of the decline of Putin's approval rating, the television critic and journalist Irina Petrovskaya (*Chelovek iz televizora*, 2018) proposes an alternative explanation. According to her, the reason for staging Putin every day in the news or in other TV formats is that he is the only good news and that people are waiting for it. If they see Putin on TV, they calm down and think that everything is as it should be. In this context, the talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* is also good news, but in condensed form.<sup>98</sup>

### 5.3.1 Linguistic and Visual Representations of Vladimir Putin

Linguistically, *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* superhumanizes Putin. For example, in the first show on September 2, 2018, when talking about the funeral of the prominent singer Iosif Kobzon, the talk show master Vladimir Solovyov states: „As I understand they have known each other for several years—it's hard to say that they have been friends—this is a category which is not very correct when speaking of the head of the state, but at least they talked very warmly.“<sup>99</sup> Hereby, the talk show host implies on the one hand that as a statesman Putin is supposed to keep his distance. On the other hand, Solovyov implicates that Putin cannot have friends because he is above all other people and therefore, inaccessible and unreachable. Another superhuman representation of President Putin in this show is that of him being extremely busy and of bearing more than normal persons. This representation is in particular created by showing Putin's attendants as less strong and resilient than the president. For example, the enthusiastic and young journalist Zarubin is asked by the moderator how he is still afoot after this busy week

<sup>98</sup> The original Russian statement has been translated into English by the author of the article: „Путин – это единственная хорошая новость и народ ее ждет, потому что если в новостях и в телевизионных других форматах есть Путин, то люди успокаиваются, и считают, что как Сталин на посту. Все идет как надо. Поэтому эта единственная хорошая новость будет присутствовать в концентрированном виде.“ *Chelovek iz televizora*. Broadcast on 8th September 2018. [online]. [2019-06-21]. Available at: <<https://echo.msk.ru/programs/personstv/2273690-echo/>>.

<sup>99</sup> The original Russian statement has been translated into English by the author of the article: „Ведь как я понимаю, много лет были знакомы и сложно говорить «дружили» - это такая категория не совсем корректной, когда речь идет о главе государства, но, по крайней мере, общались очень тепло.“ *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin*. (Full Video). Broadcast on 2nd September 2018. [online]. [2019-06-22]. Available at: <[https://russia.tv/video/show/brand\\_id/63170/episode\\_id/1901787/video\\_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/](https://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/63170/episode_id/1901787/video_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/)>.

and journey, after this literal „marathon“<sup>100</sup> with the president and the governor of the Tuvan republic is complaining in a video sequence that his feet are still hurting after the walking-tour with Putin. All these different utterances add to the image of Putin as a strong, healthy and virile person which is visually supported by showing him in single shots in the mountains, resembling somehow Indiana Jones (see Figure 6).



**PICTURE 6:** *Putin in the mountains*

Source: Moskva.Kreml'. Putin, Talk show, 02.09.2019

Despite that, the show creates both linguistically and visually a very human picture of Putin. For example, in the first broadcast the journalist Zarubin claims that contact with people is very important for the president. In the same broadcast the president's Press secretary Dmitry Peskov not only tells the viewers that Putin „reacts with great pain“ to such events as the death of Iosif Kobzon, but he also draws a parallel to the Soviet leader Lenin by claiming the following: „You know, Putin doesn't only love children. He generally loves people. He is a very human person.“<sup>101</sup> In addition, this humanization of Putin is consistently illustrated visually in several broadcasts of the show by filming Putin in a group of workers, in a crowd of people and with children. Especially capturing Putin with children seems to be very prominent as this motif appears in nearly every examined broadcast of the show. But also the literature described representation of Putin with animals can be found in the show. For example, the broadcast of March 3, 2019 presents an archive video of Putin with a polar bear.

### 5.3.2 Linguistic and Visual Representations of Transitivity

The image of Putin as the busy leader of the country also belongs to the category of transitivity as Putin is shown travelling around and meeting with different people, presidents of other countries, etc., which also adds to his representation as a world leader and good networker. For example, in the broadcast of September 16, 2018, Putin is filmed drinking vodka and eating

<sup>100</sup> Zarubin himself compared the week of Putin with a marathon: „He очень понимаю, как выдерживается такой график, такой марафон!“ Moskva.Kreml'. Putin. (Full Video). Broadcast on 2nd September 2018. [online]. [2019-06-22].

<sup>101</sup> The original Russian statement has been translated into English by the author of the article: „Вы знаете, Путин не только любит детей. Он вообще любит людей. Он очень человечный человек.“ Moskva.Kreml'. Putin. (Full Video). Broadcast on 2nd September 2018. [online]. [2019-06-22]. Available at: <[https://russia.tv/video/show/brand\\_id/63170/episode\\_id/1901787/video\\_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/](https://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/63170/episode_id/1901787/video_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/)>.



Russian pancakes with the Chinese president Xi Jinping. When Putin is shown meeting workers or talking to normal people in the streets, these images support the representation of Putin as an omniscient, watchful and caring leader as he seems to be present wherever and whenever needed throughout Russia.

It is difficult to imagine how Putin as a constantly working president can have a private life or free time. While the private life of the president is not addressed in the show and is still a taboo issue in the media, the question of free time is directly broached by Solovyov, who asks if Putin does not have weekends, which is immediately affirmed by the Press secretary. Nevertheless, Putin does find time for doing sports. Peskov, for example, tells the viewer that Putin does sports every day for about 1,5 hours.<sup>102</sup> In the broadcast on February 17, 2019, Putin is shown playing ice hockey, doing judo and going skiing. This image perfectly fits into the representation of Putin as being busy and never stopping working because he has business meetings even while doing sports, for example with the Belorussian president Alexander Lukashenko.

Besides doing sports and being very active, Putin is also represented as loving and enjoying the Russian wilderness. For example, in the first broadcast he is filmed climbing a mountain, collecting mushrooms and cowberries, watching wild animals, etc. This is indeed a very romantic theme and these images contribute to the representation of Putin as loving and venerating Russian nature and wilderness, which in turn make him being the perfect president for this country.

Summing up, the talk show *Moskva.Kremli'.Putin* can be called a real image show which imitates and pretends the accessibility of the president and at the same time adds to the creation of the myth of the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent leader.

## 6. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to analyze the image of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, as communicated and transmitted by Russian television. For this purpose, three different TV formats on the two most prominent television channels in Russia were examined by using MCDA. Although similar representations of the president were found in all three TV programs, every format presents its „own“ image of the Russian head of state.

First, the news program *Vremia* transmits a very formal and functional image of Putin who guides the country, makes decisions and meets with important people. *Vremia* transmits the image of the ever working and busy Putin as he appears nearly every day in the news, sometimes in several news items during one broadcast. In accordance with Irina Petrovskaya (*Chelovek iz televizora*, 2018), who claimed that Putin in the news is the only good news, it could be added that the news items on Putin are often pseudo-news. For example, reports on his telephone calls with other politicians do often not inform the viewer about the content of the conversation, but only about the fact itself that the call has taken place.

Second, in the annual TV show *Priamaia Linia* there exists a similar image of Putin as in the news. Additionally, the show represents Putin as being above all others by staging him on a high platform in the center of the studio. At the same time, the camera shots and the presence of the studio audience create the image of Putin as omniscient president directly speaking to every individual at home and as president of the people. *Priamaia Linia* therefore is a perfect example of Putin's self-staging on television.

Third, in the weekly talk show *Moskva.Kremli'.Putin* president Putin is on the one hand superhumanized by creating the impression of constantly working, meeting with important people and bearing more than others. On the other hand, by showing Putin with children, in

<sup>102</sup> *Moskva.Kremli'.Putin*. (Full Video). Broadcast on 2nd September 2018. [online]. [2019-06-22]. Available at: <[https://russia.tv/video/show/brand\\_id/63170/episode\\_id/1901787/video\\_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/](https://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/63170/episode_id/1901787/video_id/1963707/viewtype/picture/)>.

a crowd of people or wearing casual clothes, the show transports a very human image of the president and suggest his accessibility. Furthermore, the talk show also presents Putin as very active and sporty person, thus transporting the image of the physical strength and vitality of the president.

All of these visual representations of Putin on TV perfectly fit into the function of visual symbols in politics as described by Schill (2012). Especially the image-building function can be identified in the talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin* and hence, this show can be called an image show of the Russian president. The findings also reveal that there do exist various and diverse images on Putin, as for example Goscilo (2013) has stated. The variety of Putin images, however, only exists when taking into consideration all his representations, from portraits, caricatures to music videos, and souvenir products.

Although every TV format presents its „own“ image of Putin, all these images resemble, complete and even repeat each other by showing him as a busy, hard-working, superhuman, omnipresent, omnipotent, caring and human person. Therefore, these images could all be claimed to be different sides of the same coin: First, Putin is a statesman and for this reason he is a distant and unreachable person. Second, he is a person of authority, especially for his subordinate officials and ministers. These two images of Putin become most evident in the news program *Vremia* as well as in the *Priamaia Linia*. While the news transmits an inaccessible and distant Putin, the *Priamaia Linia* once a year creates the illusion of intimacy with and accessibility of the president. In line with his accessibility is Putin's portrayal as a very human person. This image of the human Putin is best transmitted in the new talk show *Moskva.Kreml'.Putin*. By showing him with children, animals or doing sports, the new talk show tells the viewer that Putin is an ordinary human being like everyone else, fulfilling thereby the identification function. At the same time, the new talk show also presents Putin as an extraordinary person above all others. By showing him travelling around, meeting important people and dedicating his whole life to politics and the state, the image of the superhuman Putin as an extremely busy person is established. This image is also increased by presenting Putin as a strong, virile and active man in the Russian nature and wilderness.

The overall image of Putin as established both on TV and by other media forms is twofold: On the one hand, it fulfills the want of a tough, reputable and competent state leader, as for example in the news broadcast or in *Priamaia linia*. On the other hand, the new talk show or gadgets, puppets, and other consumer products with Putin's images deliver the portrayal of a masculine, modern and entertaining representative of the Russian state, meeting the demand of today's consumer and pop culture. It is all these images together which add to the superhuman image of Putin, which mystify him and make him inaccessible and unreachable like a movie star or even a God. The new talk show and recently *Priamaia Linia* sometimes try to balance this image of Putin as a hero by placing him visually on the same level as the public and the people. At the same time, by staging him on a platform or by showing him as a busy and ever working president, they also transmit the superhuman image. Russian television thereby oscillates between two poles—Putin as the human and Putin as the hero. However, this is probably not only a characteristic of Russia, but of representations of state leaders as a whole, who can be even more godlike as for example dictators, or more human as for example some presidents of European countries.

## 6.1 Limitations

Although three TV programs on the two most important channels in Russia have been analyzed, the current study did not consider other TV channels or programs. Moreover, the analysis presents only an extract of the visual representation of Putin, focusing primarily on his fourth

period as President of Russia in 2018 and 2019. However, by analyzing several broadcasts of three different TV formats, the current study tries to overcome these limitations as it analyzes three programs differing in the time of broadcast on Russian television: *Vremia* is a well-established news program which had already started broadcasting in Soviet times. *Priamaia Linia* is a program which existed since Putin's first year of presidency and the talk show *Moskva. Kreml'. Putin.* is a very new TV program, which is broadcasted since his fourth term of presidency. Thus, the current study covers not only three different TV programs on two channels, but also three programs differing in the moment of their first broadcast.

## 6.2 Implications

The current study illustrates that the visual staging of Putin, for example in *Vremia* or *Priamaia Linia*, implies that he is the leader of the country by positioning him at the top of the table, symbolizing the vertical of power or resembling a tsar sitting on a throne. Therefore, being more attentive to the visual cannot only provide further information about a politician, but it also discloses how implicitly images work on television. As TV is foremost a visual medium, the visuals often transmit their own messages, which, as stated at the beginning of this article, stay very easily in the mind. However, TV is not the only medium working with pictures and it seems that visuals have become even more important today to which testifies the emergence of social media. A recent example of the importance of pictures can be drawn from the new occupational area of so-called „influencers“, who primarily work and „influence“ people by spreading perfectly staged pictures of themselves on social networks. Politicians, too, use social media to represent themselves and to be continuously present in the mind of people in order to persuade people to vote for them. The success of this strategy is demonstrated, for example, by the electoral success of the new President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, who conducted his election campaign in 2019 mainly via social media. Letting people take part in politicians life and thus, getting closer to the people, is maybe one reason for the success and importance of visuals in politics today. Although Vladimir Putin is not as present in social media as other politicians and doesn't provide people the opportunity to take part in his (private) life, the new talk show *Moskva. Kreml'. Putin* and *Priamaia Linia* try to simulate an intimate atmosphere and to make the president more accessible by using several media techniques.

The current study reveals some of these techniques and it illustrates that all visual representations and arrangements do convey a certain message. Therefore, being visually literate and aware of (visual) media strategies helps on the one hand to be more resistant to the manipulation of the images and on the other hand, it unveils visual communication strategies which otherwise would have been taken for granted.

## 6.3 Future directions

Although the present analysis tried to point out some interplays of visual and verbal elements, future research could focus more on their specific function and interaction. Furthermore, it would be interesting to analyze the visual portrayal of Putin on non-state TV channels, for example on the Internet channel *Dozhd'*, and carve out possible differences to the representation on state channels. Besides television, future research should also consider other media formats, for example, Instagram or Twitter, as these social media platforms play a crucial role in today's politics.

## 7. Conclusion

The current study shows that visual representations of Putin on television play a central role in the creation of his image. The analysis of three different TV formats revealed that the representations of Putin on TV always communicate between two different poles: On the one hand, Putin as the superhuman, ever working, omnipresent and busy statesman and on the other hand, Putin as a human, caring and accessible person. The image of Putin on television thereby includes both persons: the human and the superhuman hero. The reason for this duality could be the following: As a politician, Putin depends on votes and on acceptance within the Russian population. Therefore, the image of Putin as an accessible and ordinary human being is important to win the confidence of the people and to help them to identify with him. As the president and highest representative of the Russian state, the image of Putin has also to be the one of a tough, resilient, strong and masculine person, who can bear more than others can. Thus, the mythical image is crucial to communicate that Putin is the right person to guide the country and that he is unapproachable. The combination and variation of these two opposing images, the hearty and human as well as the distant and superhuman, are dominant on state television and the transmission of which finally depends on the TV format itself.

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# Challenges And Limits Of Current Student Magazine Production - Case Study

## ABSTRACT

The subject of the study is to review the current state of contemporary student journalism. The aim of the case study is to clarify the theoretical background and then evaluation of the state (challenges and limits) of selected student journals on the basis of defined attributes. Part of the authors' goals is also the identification of the most common errors and problems in the analysed school magazines. At the theoretical level, the authors define the main concepts of the issue, characterize the student media and the specifics of the creation of the media. Last but not least, the authors define the position of student media in the educational process and their contribution to education in the field of media education. Based on the theoretical definition of the issue, the authors' approach is to use qualitative analysis of selected student magazines. The case study focuses on six student magazines from six elementary schools in Slovakia, which are involved in a research project focused on material-didactic support of media education teaching at Slovak primary and secondary schools, as well as reflexive-productive media learning via full-time and e-learning courses. In the research part of the case study, the authors approach the journals via qualitative analysis in three defined categories: the content of the journal, the graphic aspect of the journal and the organization of work in the journal / editorial office. Within these categories, journals are analysed in several specified attributes, e.g. elaborated topics, journalistic genres, journal break, colourfulness, editorial process, editing process and others. The conclusion of the case study is to interpret and summarize the most important findings of the research and a set of recommendations that respond to the identified shortcomings of the analysed sample of student journals in the examined points.

## KEY WORDS

Student media. Student magazines. Periodicals. Media education. Media literacy. Case study. Qualitative analysis.

# 1. School magazines as instruments of media education

In order to gain a better understanding of the process of the creation of school magazines, it is necessary to realize for whom these periodicals are intended, what are their functions and who creates them, since the specificities and possible deficiencies in the creation of these journalistic units are derived. School / student periodicals rank among periodicals for specific groups of readers. „*Student periodicals are differentiated from other types of periodicals in their content focus, which usually targets a narrow group of students from individual schools. The form of school journals is mostly different from regular periodicals, since they have a low frequency and varied content.*“<sup>1</sup>

The difference in form, low frequency and varied content can be explained by the fact that students can afford to experiment more than ordinary journalists in terms of content. Students cannot compete with popular central periodicals in terms of finance, number of creators or experience. Student magazines mainly provide information for students, making them unattractive to people outside school. On the other hand, original and innovative topics from the local sphere can also be included in school magazines. Youthful courage also tends to motivate students towards being investigative.

Developing journalistic and media production at different levels of education is extremely important for several reasons. One of them is the development of democracy and free thought, which is also related to freedom of the press. Students should be given the freedom to express their opinions and reflect current social or local problems. Journalism and journalists are often referred to as the mirror of society, and the media reflect the society in which they are created. The student media should be independent of the school with the main task - to inform about its problems and activities.<sup>2</sup> In the past, especially in the United States and Western Europe, student media spread information about citizens' rights movements. For example, in the 1960s, many students were against the Vietnam War and presented these views through student media. It is a place for presenting political and ideological views, confronting feminism, war, racial and social problems.<sup>3</sup>

Another important function is to inform. School periodicals bring a lot of information from the school as well as the extracurricular environment, interviews with celebrities and much more. They also offer students the opportunity to participate in and be part of them, to try working in the media in various positions.<sup>4</sup> A. Tušer describes student magazines as a journalistic playground for students, a wonderful and relatively free space where they can develop their talents, ideas, energy, sensitivity, ferocity, organizational skills.<sup>5</sup> P. Herman, the juror of the *Štúrovo pero* (school magazine competition), also discussed the topic of the „journalist field“ or the place for the beginning of a journalistic career. He notes that in a school magazine, a pupil or student will learn to think as a journalist and learn the techniques of writing. He also mentions that the school magazine is a space for expressing opinions and to a certain extent, working there is also a matter of prestige among other classmates.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> TUŠER, A.: *Ako sa robia noviny*. Bratislava : SOFA, 2003, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> BOWEN, J.: *The role of student media*. [online]. [2019-07-28]. Available at: <<http://jeasprc.org/the-role-of-student-media/>>.

<sup>3</sup> COYER, K., DOWMUNT, T., FOUNTAIN. A.: *The Alternative Media Handbook*. London, New York : Routledge, 2008, p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> BAUMANNOVÁ, B. et al.: Vplyv študentských médií na aktivitu a angažovanosť študentov. In *ŠVOaUK 2015 : zborník príspevkov zo študentskej vedeckej odbornej a umeleckej konferencie*, Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2015, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica Ľ. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> HERMAN, P.: Ako sa stať dobrým novinárom a ako vydržať. In VITKO, P. a kol.: *Štúrovo pero. Dve desaťročia novinárskeho talentu*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica Ľudovíta Štúra, 2014, p. 189.

The specific role of student media, the practical acquisition of media skills, belongs to the media education portfolio, which we can approach from multiple angles. One of the approaches is the development of critical thinking as well as knowledge of the functioning and organization of the media, but also the real creation of mass media outcomes, which we are dealing with in this case study. In our case, it is mainly the creation of a journalistic whole in the form of a magazine. D. Petranová understands media competences as „the ability to handle the media, the ability to receive and interpret media content, and actively participate in the media communication process.“<sup>7</sup> In order for pupils and students to create high-quality school magazines, it is essential that they know and understand the functioning, nature, meaning and purpose of media and journalism. Students can get acquainted with the principles of the media world by means of real creation, so that both approaches are complementary.

In this case, D. Petranová talks about the concept of „learning by doing“. Pupils become familiar with a large number of influencing factors by developing their own media products and acquire skills that the theory cannot cover.<sup>8</sup> When creating a school magazine, pupils learn how to search for information and work with it in text form. They also include some graphic fundamentals, gain insight into the nature of marketing and finance, and improve overall creativity in inventing magazine content. Ms Hossová states on the basis of her nationwide survey that in terms of media education and creation of practical outputs, school magazines have the largest representation of radio or television broadcasting. If the school also does not have a magazine, pupils learn to write news or current affairs during Slovak language lessons and these are published on the school's website. Teachers involved in the production of the periodical agreed that publishing the journal develops pupils' creativity; they also learn to use specific journalistic genres and improve their ICT skills.<sup>9</sup> In addition to Slovak language, V. Kačínová also mentions other subjects in which pupils are able to realize themselves in journalistic work, such as the Art and Culture course, where they present their own media product, including a magazine or a newspaper.<sup>10</sup>

Students will also learn important soft skills during this creative process, such as communication and analytical skills, team work. All of these can be improved by the work in the school magazine. J. Kováčová and B. Brendza also draw attention not only to the writing itself, but also to journalism and editorial work. The aim is clear and simple – pupils who are able to create a model of the periodical and then, if the project is successful, establish a magazine. In addition, the activities in the editorial office should also reflect other publishing activities. J. Kováčová and B. Brendza include market analysis, marketing mix, creation of a working team in the editorial office, production planning through meetings and deadlines and marketing activities.<sup>11</sup>

However, N. Vrabec emphasizes that the aim of media education should not be to educate future journalists. The priority is to develop pupils' media literacy so that they can navigate the media world and critically approach different kinds of content.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, educators who

<sup>7</sup> PETRANOVÁ D.: Charakteristika predmetu mediálna výchova. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> PETRANOVÁ D.: Základné smery mediálnej výchovy a ich charakteristika. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup> HOSSOVÁ, M.: The Use of New Media and ICT as a Tool for Development of Pupils' Media Literacy. In PETRANOVÁ, D., MATUŠ, J., MENDELOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: Brands We Love Part II*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2016, p. 332.

<sup>10</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: Media Competence as a Cross-Curricular Competence. In *Communication Today*. 2018, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 42-44.

<sup>11</sup> KOVÁČOVÁ, J., BRENDZA, B.: Tvoríme školské noviny a časopisy. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> VRABEC, N.: Ciele vyučovacieho predmetu mediálna výchova. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 202.

lead school magazines should be aware that in addition to the product itself, it is important to constantly focus on concepts such as journalistic ethics, objectivity and critical analysis of texts and information that pupils have received.

In many cases, the specific conditions for the creation of school magazines rely solely on the enthusiasm of teachers and pupils, so in many cases, journals are downgraded after important students or teachers leave. Creating a magazine is also conditioned by the level of pedagogical knowledge of journalism, which depends on the interest of the teacher or pupils in this issue. Therefore, it is important to mention the basic principles of creating school magazines, which are universally valid and based on real practice.

Journalists R. Gehrrová and K. Kiššová wrote 13 hints for students and junior journalists. At the outset, before the school starts publishing, it is necessary to determine the basic characteristics of the periodical. It is important to define a name that should be memorable and philosophically related to school. It is also appropriate to determine how often the journal will be published in order to determine the production plan and the closing schedule based on the periodicity.<sup>13</sup> As we are still talking about printed journals, the editorial office needs to ensure production costs for printing. Either agree with the school management on the internal press or pupils find a sponsor or apply for a grant. At this point, it is also necessary to think about the cost and number of pages of the periodical. Funding raises the question of who should publish the magazine. It is necessary to clarify the relationship between the magazine and the school management. The ideal situation presupposes the independence of newspapers from educators, especially in terms of censorship, but achieving such a situation is not easy. The degree of autonomy depends on the understanding between school management, teachers and pupils.<sup>14</sup>

Another challenge is the composition of the editors. P. Škultéty reminds here that although the content should not be influenced by teachers, the help of a Slovak teacher and pedagogical supervisor is always an option.<sup>15</sup> R. Gehrrová and K. Kiššová recommend setting up the magazine accounts on social networks through which potential contributors can be reached.<sup>16</sup> It is advisable to publish the announcement also on the notice boards in the classrooms or on the school website. The online space will also serve to promote the magazine so that as many people as possible can learn about it and then show interest in it. Let us return to the editorial composition, which must be approached responsibly. The members of the editorial board must be motivated and also constantly monitored in the performance of their tasks and assignments. Gehrrová and Kiššová also draw attention to the importance of the editor-in-chief who should oversee the overall system of work, assign tasks and deadlines.<sup>17</sup> It is also important that the editors meet regularly to discuss not only the upcoming topics and workflow, but also to look critically at past editions of the school magazine so that both editors and graphic designers give feedback to each other.

Selection of topics is also a problem for many editors. Thinking of an engaging subject will give you as much effort as working it out. R. Gehrrová and K. Kiššová recommend following the events at school, conducting interviews with interesting people at school and in the city, processing news in technology, culture and so on or publishing pupils' literary and artistic work.<sup>18</sup> The magazine may also cover more relaxing topics and sections such as humorous

<sup>13</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>14</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica Ľ. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 36-37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In: *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



texts, competitions and quizzes, but also sports, history, graduation topics, etc.<sup>19</sup> Reading tips are also a good source of topics, so it is advisable to ask classmates and readers to send tips and suggestions to the editors, either directly or in a poll. There should be room for criticism in the student magazine. There is no reason to be afraid of open discussion.<sup>20</sup> The recipe is to write about what interests the readers.

In the area of graphic design, journalists recommend using internet manuals for graphics software. They recommend using beautiful, high-quality photos, but they should be copyrighted.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is good if the magazine has a photographer or uses photos from photobank, which provide photos for free use. However, the author must always be mentioned.

Finally, it is important to review the texts. Each article should be read by at least two people: an editor and a proofreader. Gehrerová and Kiššová also recommend applying for competitions where the editors will meet other representatives of school magazines. They have space to talk about the problems the magazines, get inspired, and learn something new based on the feedback of the jury experts.<sup>22</sup> Readers can also provide good feedback. P. Škultéty emphasizes the last part of the process, namely distribution. In addition to their own school readers, he recommends distributing the magazine in the library or other municipal facilities. He recommends that the editors exchange magazines among themselves.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Research Objectives and Methodology of Analysis

The study reflects the issue of student journalism. At the theoretical level, the authors focus on defining student/school media and defining their position in the educational process and in the process of developing media literacy (within media education). The aim of the case study is to clarify the theoretical background and the subsequent evaluation of the state (challenges and limits) of selected student journals on the basis of defined attributes. The authors aim to identify the most common mistakes and problems in the school journals. The present case study is of a qualitative nature. A case study is an in-depth survey of a specific phenomenon or project in real life.<sup>24</sup> It is a qualitative analysis of specific cases (i.e. school magazines) performed to identify established attributes and assess their current status.

The subjects of the research are six student magazines from six Slovak primary schools.<sup>25</sup> These primary schools are involved in a research project supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*project KEGA 010UCM-4/2018 - Material and Didactic Support of Media Education through the Media Training Center at FMC UCM*) Faculty of Mass Media Communication Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (FMC UCM in Trnava). The project is focused on material-didactic support of media education teaching at Slovak primary and secondary schools. As a part of this project, the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava established *Školiace mediálne centrum* (eng. the Training Media Centre, ŠMC). All activities within the project are implemented through the

<sup>19</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica L. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In: *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica L. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> SIMONS, H.: *Case study research in practice*. London : SAGE Publications, 2009, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Magazine Aktovka (Primary school and Kindergarten of Ondrej Caban in Komjatice), magazine Jaško (Primary school and Kindergarten in Jasová), magazine Kométa (Primary school and Kindergarten in Kolta), magazine KUKAJ SEM! (Primary school Semerovo), magazine Školáčik (Primary school and Kindergarten in Veľké Lovce), magazine Žitaváčik (Primary school, Hlavné námestie 14, Dvory nad Žitavou)

ŠMC, which are primarily day-to-day courses (excursions) for participating schools focusing on reflexive-productive media learning and subsequently completing an e-learning course in media education. E-learning courses run on an interactive multimedia learning platform, which, in addition to media education courses for primary and secondary school pupils, also provide methodological support for teachers (the learning platform will be fully operational in autumn 2019).<sup>26</sup> The e-learning course itself is preceded by a daily attendance course, which is fully adapted to the needs of a particular group of pupils, depending on the media product produced by the school. E.g. in the case of school magazines, course designers assess the school magazine and evaluate its positive aspects and shortcomings. The attendance course is then built in such a way that the pupils improve their work and eliminate any shortcomings of the magazine. After attending a course and subsequent e-learning (duration of about 2 years), the creators of the medium re-send their outputs for evaluation. The evaluation committee thus evaluates the „improved“ media products and assess the creators' improvement as well as the benefits of the implemented activities. The object of investigation in this case study consists of magazines whose authors are involved in this research project and have attended a daily attendance course.

We evaluate the student journals by qualitative analysis. By this analysis we understand the established procedures of data collection and selection, but also the division of the examined object into smaller parts (in our case the examined categories and attributes) and the subsequent interpretation of the findings.<sup>27</sup> According to S. Juszczuk, in this case we can talk about the analysis of documents or results of activities, which consist of describing and interpreting the results of the activity. The documents themselves can be various printed materials, publications or even films.<sup>28</sup> In our case, the documents are the student journals.

The student journals that make up the research sample are analysed in three categories, which include each attribute:

1. *Content of the journal*
  - a. covered topics
  - b. Journalistic genres
  - c. Structure of the journal (columns)
2. *Graphic page of the magazine*
  - a. photos
  - b. journal layout
  - c. colour scheme
  - d. Title-page
3. *Organization of work in the journal/editorial office*
  - a. Choice of editors
  - b. Editing process
  - c. Dressing

The first category *Content of the journal* contains three attributes: covered topics, journalistic genres and the structure of the journal (columns). Within this category, we discuss the topics that the editors handle (e.g. school updates, city events, sports events, pupils' achievements, etc.), as well as how these topics are translated into journalistic speeches and in which genre they are written (e.g. short report, extended report, report, reportage, review, etc.). Last but not least, we focus on the overall structure of the magazine, ie. in which columns are journalistic

<sup>26</sup> *Materiálno-didaktická podpora výučby mediálnej výchovy prostredníctvom školiaceho mediálneho strediska na FMK UCM.* [online]. [2019-07-17]. Available at: <<https://www.portalvs.sk/sk/prehľad-projektov/kega/11545>>.

<sup>27</sup> SEDLÁKOVÁ, R.: *Výzkum médií. Neužívané metody a techniky.* Praha : Grada Publishing, 2014, p. 397.

<sup>28</sup> JUSZCZYK, S.: *Metodológia empirických výskumov v spoločenských vedách.* Bratislava : Iris, 2003, p. 66-67.

speeches included. In the second category *Graphic page of the magazine* we focus on the use of photographs in the magazine, the overall colour (use of colours), the graphic level of the title page and the graphical arrangement of the magazine (column breaks, fonts, page template, etc.). The last examined category is the *Organization of Work in the Journal*. Within this category we analyse the composition of the editorial office, ie. we find out who is involved in the creation of the magazine, what positions in the magazine are occupied by teachers and pupils, etc. Furthermore, in this category we examine the process of editing (search and selection of topics, selection of journalistic and non-journalistic expressions, and creation of a periodical model). The last examined attribute is finishing, in the sense of final adjustment of journalistic expressions. At this point, we also follow the grammar and stylistic level of magazines. By examining the given attributes in each category, we get an idea of the current status, positive aspects and limits of the analysed journals. The analysis is the basis for the development of recommendations for improving the current situation and characterizing the challenges faced by student print media.

### 3. Results

Based on the set objectives and methodology of the research, we approach the evaluation of the results of the qualitative analysis, through which we evaluate the status of selected school journals and identify the most frequent errors and deficiencies in the school periodicals. As mentioned above, we analyse the research sample in three categories: 1. *the content of the magazine*, 2. *the graphic aspect of the magazine*, and 3. *Organization of work in the journal/ editorial office*.

#### 3.1 Content of the journal

In the first category we examine in more detail three defined attributes: *covered topics*, *journalistic genres* and *the overall structure of the journal (columns)*. The subjects of analysis in this category are the topics that the editors of individual journals deal with, as well as the way of processing them into journalistic speeches (journalistic genres). Part of the research in this category is also an analysis of the overall structure of the journals and thus their division into columns.

In terms of **covered topics**, in the student or school media we most often meet topics related to events and people at school. Thematically, however, the student media should also look at what is happening in the city in which the institution operates and thus capture the events of the immediate environment with which the school interacts. The balanced thematic representation of the student magazine (or any student medium) will fulfil its goal of satisfying the needs of its audience.

In the analysed sample of student journals, the most prominent are journalistic topics related to current events at school. These are various news and updates with the timeframe related to the periodicity of the publication of a particular magazine. Examples of such news are articles discussing school anniversary celebrations, events (eg educational concerts, ski trips, school trips, etc.). The above-mentioned journalistic topics are often followed by information about what is happening in the place where the educational institution operates, in the city, municipality, district or region. This information is in some way related to the pupils of the school or is significant in terms of the interaction of the educational institution and its location. In the analysed sample, we can find for example information about the local folklore ensemble, which is attended by many pupils of the elementary school, or information about municipal celebrations

and memorial days, sports events in schools and pupils' successes. Topics and content related to the teachers of the school are also strongly represented. Most often we can find interviews with teachers on different topics (e.g. revealing the private life of the teacher, commenting on current issues, etc.). An important part of the thematic focus of student magazines is also pupils' creations and free time, while in this area the magazines present mainly crossword puzzles, jokes, recommendations and reviews for films, music or various games.

The thematic units that are represented in the analysed sample of school magazines can be summarized as follows:

1. News and information from school life (current events at school),
2. News and information from the school location (current events in the city, municipality, district, region),
3. Interesting facts about current events or time period (eg customs and traditions related to the current period, holidays, anniversaries, etc.),
4. Interviews with teachers, pupils, prominent personalities (e.g. school or city visits),
5. Sports news and events (sports days, tournaments and pupils' achievements)
6. Pupil achievements (e.g. Olympics, recitation competitions, art competitions, etc.)
7. Pupil's work (textual and artistic work of school pupils),
8. Leisure and entertainment (recipes; crossword puzzles; jokes; recommendations for movies, books or games; polls, etc.).

The form of processing certain information, its content and form depends on the topic to which this information is related. Therefore, we are directly related to another analysed subcategory - **journalistic genres**. In this subcategory we focus on identifying the representation of journalistic genres in the analysed sample of student journals.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the research sample, we can say that in student journals news reports generally prevail over journalistic texts. It should be noted that many of the published news reports also have features of journalistic texts, which is reflected mainly in the personal interest and subjectivity of the authors. However, given that these are educational media that do not inform on fundamental socio-political issues and do not participate in shaping public opinion in the sense of social periodicals, this hybridization can be considered acceptable and natural.

In the student journals, short and widespread reports are the most common. The essence of the short report is generally to give brief information about an event, which does not clarify the context and does not look for the consequences. In the extended report, the author is approaching the context, giving wider information and enriching it (e.g. the statements of interested parties, etc.). In the analysed sample of magazines, the difference between the short and the widespread report is mainly in the extent of the journalistic presentation. In the form of a short report, the journals deal mainly with the aforementioned news and information on what is happening at school and in the city or town, information on sports and pupils' success. Longer reports occur especially when authors report on major events that occurred at a given school. These events are for example various excursions, foreign trips, big sports events and so on. It is interesting to note that on one topic, the editors often create more short journalistic speeches that observe the phenomenon or event from different perspectives. Thus, we often find several short or extended reports on one topic in the journals. This information could constitute a single, comprehensive journalistic expression (eg fictional reports - reports that are not present in the analysed sample). In student journals, polls are also quite common. Although we consider polls in newspapers as part of the so-called journalism, in the analysed journals, the surveys take the form of dialogical reports - news interviews.

The genre representation significantly lacks journalistic genres. Reporting and opinion genres (comments) are very rare. As mentioned above, more extensive topics are often dealt with in several journalistic speeches. On the contrary, some topics would require more extensive processing or processing in another genre. Compared to the rare occurrence of reports and commentaries, journalistic interviews are relatively frequent. These are most often interviews with teachers, and sometimes interviews with well-known or prominent personalities who have visited the school or city. The content of these interviews is mainly aimed at revealing the private and professional life of the interviewed person. They are relatively narrow in scope and their character is more informative than analytical and often lacks a thematic line. Another journalistic genre that occurs quite often is a review. The way of processing is more of a recommendation to readers than a criticism of works of art, which, however, we consider natural, given the nature of school periodicals. Reviews include movies, books, music and digital games.

To summarize the genre representation in the analysed sample of student journals, we can say that the most frequently occurring journalistic genres are short report, extended report, news interview/poll, journalistic interview and review. There are noticeably absent fiction reports (reports) or comments (opinions). They also lack eg. feuilletons and glosses, which are funny and readable, attractive critical genres and could be an interesting part of student magazines. In addition, the genre and content representation of the journals could be enriched by various photojournalisms, magazine attachments, listicles or various points of interest (e.g. articles on interesting information from various subjects). At this point it is necessary to note that the genres identified do not meet the criteria 100%. If we say that there are reports or reviews in magazines, it does not mean that we are talking about a report or review in the form in which they are known by journalistic definitions. The above-mentioned manifestations in school magazines often fulfil the essence of the same genre only by topic or content, but they lack the required scope, formal arrangement, lexicology and so on.

The final reviewed subcategory, which is closely related to the *subcategories of topics covered* and *journalistic genres*, is **the overall structure of the journal (columns)**. The division of any printed matter into columns contributes significantly to the transparency of the periodical. Moreover, if we divide the magazine into sections, we will in some way teach the reader where to find the individual topics, which will simplify the reader's orientation in this periodical. Equally beneficial is the division of periodicals into columns for authors. In fact, the sections define the thematic framework for themes. If the columns are missing in the magazine, if they are not labelled or incorrectly arranged, that leads to chaos and confusion.

In terms of structure, each periodical should have a more or less stable arrangement of content and thematic units; to have a stable model. In this way, the periodical can be divided into several thematic units, which should distribute to columns with distinctive titles. These units can be:

1. Title page of the journal
2. Editorial
3. Content
4. News - news, information from the school environment and its surroundings, sports, etc.
5. Topic - the most important topic (s) of a given edition of the magazine (e.g. 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school)
6. Journalism - interviews
7. Leisure part (reviews, entertainment, etc.)

Half (three out of six) of the analysed journals contain sections, but these are not permanent and do not have a fixed arrangement within the structure of the magazine. In three school periodicals, sections are completely absent. In cases where magazines have defined sections, these are in a truncated version of the arrangement mentioned above. Most of the examined titles contain editorial (except one magazine) as well as content of the edition. News as a



thematic unit are mainly represented by short and extended reports and divided into the following headlines: *News, School Life, What We Experience at School and Sport*. Journalistic genres and speeches are concentrated in a section titled *Interview*. Other thematic units and genres are concentrated in sections such as: *Our work, Pupils' work, Laugh or Leisure*. The problem of the analysed student journals within the overall structure of the periodical is mainly a disorder. Mostly, there is a problem of an illogical arrangement of the individual parts. In practice, this means that one column is replaced by the other, and then the first one continues and so on. The content of these sections is often the same; columns do not fulfil their role and do not separate the individual thematic parts of magazines.

### 3.2 Graphical aspect of the magazine

A significant drawback of most of the analysed school journals is their graphical aspect. In general, the problem is the non-uniform style of arrangement and work with photographs. It is the graphic design that fundamentally affects the readability and popularity of periodicals. The main cause of this problem is the absence of a template and also the graphic design of the manual in the editorial office that the graphic designer would follow.

These include a model of the periodical, which is part of the periodical project - a pilot definition of the magazine in the fields of columns, content and graphics, marketing and content pages. One of the reasons for the lack of graphical level of magazines is probably the software that editors use for creation, as except two magazines, all magazines use Microsoft Word, one editor uses the Apple version of this program and only one magazine uses the free version of Adobe InDesign, namely Scribus. Editing programs are designed to solve many drawbacks in the graphic design of magazines, as text editors do not have these features optimized. We have divided the most significant and most common problems that appeared in most magazines into several areas.



PICTURE 1: A sample of so-called orphan, funnel, and column breaks (left side)

Source: Školáčik, Kukaj Sem, Žitaváčik (left).

The most common mistakes include the absence of rules for text arrangement, its elements in columns and uneven text alignment. Arranging any text material is based on breaking longer text into columns, making it easier to receive such content. Since the text in newspapers and magazines is too small and the articles were to be broken into only one column, they would be more demanding in terms of perception and would possibly discourage readers from reading.

Selected school magazines should be aware that the overall transparency of the page and thus the graphics are influenced by the subtitling of the text. This simplifies reading by dividing the text into smaller parts. Creators of most magazines should not be afraid to work with information blocks containing, for example, added information. The use of perex should be a matter of course, as it also attracts the reader's attention. The school magazines at our disposal did not adhere to a stable number of columns within the magazine or within one magazine page, which is distracting and not visually appealing to the reader's eye. Just the above-mentioned template designed for specific sections would solve this problem. Since the nature of texts in school magazines is mostly news, we recommend choosing three-column text break. Individual parts of the text, which include subtitles, perex, infoblocks, but also the text itself should have a solid alignment structure. The aim is to preserve the text as a whole, so the elements must be kept in line. The uniform distances of the elements from the background edges as well as between the elements themselves increase the level of perception and attention towards the content of the topic. A common mistake is the emergence of funnels that are the result of text breaks in a paragraph, typical of official documents. The empty space thus unnecessarily takes the attention of the reader, as well as the so-called orphan, which is an orphaned word, for example, at the beginning of the next column.

Editors also do not have a clearly determined fonts used in texts, so we often find different fonts in articles and headlines. This is a distraction from the content itself.



PICTURE 2: Preview of different fonts of title and text in one edition

Source: Jaško

The colour matching of the magazine (headlines, column labels, highlighting of photo descriptions, perex, and other text components) should be related to the visual identity of the magazine. In the analysed journals, we did not find the effort to work with colours so that they are in an equal and related relationship. It is ideal to work with three colours or to adapt the colours to the topic of the article (eg autumn edition can be harmonized into autumn tones). It is important that the colours match each other. To solve this problem, there is a simple aid to follow the basic rules of colour combination based on the colour spectrum:

1. Monochrome: use shades of one colour.
2. Complementary: combining two contrasting colours - contrasts in different sizes.
3. Analog: selection of 2 - 5 colours adjacent to each other.
4. Split supplemental palette: a combination of one primary colour and two adjacent ones.
5. Triad: the colours are equidistant on the palette and divide the circle into equal parts. It is used more for pale shades.
6. Tetradic: choice of facing pairs of colours. There is one space between colours within the pair.

In addition to the right combination of colours, it is important to maintain contrast between objects. For example, it is not appropriate to include text (except for descriptions) in photographs, and vice versa, as we have seen in the analysed school magazines.

When analysing school magazines, we encountered awkward placement of photographs on the page. The **arrangement of the photos** copied the mistakes we described in the text even more intensively. It was mainly a chaotic alignment; the photos were not in line. The editors also placed too many photos on the page in order to publish all the material, which we consider negative. The photos are too small and it is not clear who and what is on them. In addition, there are no captions in photos that are particularly important because they are first read by readers and tend to bring attractiveness and interest to the topics. Even if the labels are present, they are not highlighted in some magazines, making them hard to read due to lower contrast. Photo imagery is as important as text content. They are the first to attract the attention of the reader. In selected school journals, we have found some major flaws in composition. In the photographs there is no use of the theory of golden section; often we could not determine what was the main motive in the photo, because the object was lost. Most of the photographs are either directed at school pupils or their creations where these rules can be used very well. Certainly, it is necessary that the photos should be selected prior to completion of the whole magazine. Important is also their subsequent adjustment, which may include the cropping of the photo or adjusting its contrast and colour.



PICTURE 3: Awkward photo layout on page

Source: Aktovka

The front page of the journal is an information medium designed to attract the attention of a potential reader, not only with selected content tips, but also with graphics. The examined periodicals use original drawings or photographs to create the title page. In most cases, the selection was fine. Some magazines should avoid the so-called collage photos on the front page, which should be decorated with one motif. The biggest difficulty in creating a cover page is the appropriate graphical placement of captions pointing to the content inside. These are often in bad contrast to the main photo or drawing on the front page, which makes them unreadable. It is also advisable that these captions are placed in one line and adapted to the current title page so they do not disturb the main motive. Regarding the placement of the name of the periodical, especially logos, most periodicals had no problem with that. However, one should not forget about the unobtrusive placement of bibliographic data, namely the issue and year, which must be present, but not very markedly.

In conclusion, the graphic aspect of the examined school magazines is most fundamentally defined by disarranged and inconsistent graphics that do not meet the basic criteria for smooth reading. Editors should improve colour work and text arrangement in particular.

### 3.3 Work organization in the journal/editorial office

First of all, the system and organization of work in school periodicals are influenced by a number of factors, notably the continuous generational exchange and the active collaboration of the teacher with the pupils, since they are children between the ages of 9 and 15. Editors consist of an average of 8 members of the ranks of pupils (not counting educators), with the largest crew having 13 members and the smallest only 4. Two teams had 10 members, one 5 and the last 7. As far as the functions are concerned, the team is led by the editor in chief and in

addition to this function we also find there graphic designers as well. However, the role of the editor and proofreader is replaced by teachers, so that the pupils themselves learn especially editorial and journalistic skills.

**The editing process** always starts with the selection of topics suitable for processing. In this case, not only the pupils cooperate, but also the teachers themselves. The creation and writing of articles is the sole responsibility of the pupils, but we have also found in the periodicals several contributions written by teachers, not only those who work directly in the creation of the magazine, but also teachers who promote their activities through the magazine, such as extra-curricular lessons. In the sense of finishing the text, in all cases, only teachers are involved in this activity, which also helps the pupils to arrange the magazine.

In this case, it is important to note that in addition to normal editorial work, it is necessary for magazines to work on the transfer of experience and knowledge to younger grades. This will avoid repeating the same mistakes. In addition, it is appropriate to involve older pupils in the process of editing, in particular the finishing of texts, in order to teach this important activity in terms of acquiring media competences. Last but not least, the magazines should avoid the prevalence of texts written by teachers. The school magazine belongs to the pupils and they should create 100% of its content.

Next to mention is the **finishing process**, which is a grammatical and stylistic modification of the text. As the texts are subject to teachers' proofreading, we did not find a significant number of grammatical errors, except for misspellings. At the stylistic level, the articles lack a logical division to an introduction, core and conclusion. The information is not organized by logic, continuity and importance. Due to their low experience with written texts, pupils have a simple syntax, which is manifested mainly by simple sentences in large numbers in a row. Pupils do not use synonyms and words are repeated in the text. In this section, we also included the work with the headline, which is very poorly used in school magazines. Text titles are often primordial and have no informative value. They lack a verb and do not carry information that would force the reader to read the article further.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The case study deals with the challenges and limits of contemporary student journalism. The assessment of the current state and identification of the most common errors is approached through an in-depth qualitative analysis of selected student journals. In the introductory part of the study we define the basic theoretical background, the aim of the research and the used methods. We analyse the students' journals in selected categories and attributes, paying particular attention to the content of analysed periodicals, their graphical aspect and organization of work in the editorial office/magazine.

Within the content of the journal, we focused more closely on the researched topics, genre representation and overall structure of the journal. In the subcategory covered topics, the most frequent are the school environment, events or people related ones (pupils, teachers, graduates). On the other hand, news from around the school, ie. from a city, municipality, county, or region were also present in the analysed sample. Student journals also contain various points of interest that relate primarily to the period of publication of the periodical (eg. customs and traditions in a certain period, holidays, etc.). Frequent topics are also sports news, interviews with personalities and information about the success of school pupils. A separate category within the covered themes in school magazines are the so-called recreational ones, which include pupils' creations, leisure and entertaining reading (eg. crossword puzzles, jokes, polls, etc.). The choice of topics is directly related to the form of their processing and thus the genre representation in the analysed sample. In this subcategory, we found that in student magazines, news genres predominate over journalistic genres.



The most common are short and extended reports, but also news interviews (in terms of polls or opinion polls). Among the journalistic genres, the most frequent are journalistic interviews and reviews. On the contrary, student periodicals do not contain other major genres that would ensure genre diversity. Absolutely absent are comments or feitons. In addition, the genres present in student journals do not meet the conditions and characteristics as defined by genre. Journalistic expressions in school magazines often fulfil only one of the characteristic features of the genre (most often thematic focus), but they do not have the required scope, text structure, lexicology, etc. The last examined attribute within the content is the overall structure of the journals, how the student journals are divided into columns and how they are organized. In this subcategory we have found that the analysed sample of magazines does not have a permanent arrangement into columns. These sections are arranged illogically, thus losing their importance.

The second analysed category is the graphic aspect of the magazine. At this point, we focused mainly on text arrangement, photographs, pictures, colours and the title page of the periodical. We found that the sample of analysed student journals did not have fixed rules for arranging text, photos or images. The text in most of the journals is not organized in columns or divided into paragraphs. Editors very rarely use subtitles and perex, the elements that clearly improve the clarity and structure of the text and attract the reader's attention. A significant drawback of the analysed periodicals is also the use of a large number of fonts, which contributes to the inconsistency and confusion of the graphic aspect of the magazine. A similar problem is the arrangement of photographs and illustrations. Although photographs in the periodicals play an important role and have an informational function, the editors of the analysed school magazines often use too many photographs without the necessary selection, which is detrimental to the overall visual of the magazine. In addition, many photographs have a bad composition (e.g., people shot from behind, etc.) and lack descriptions. The choice of colours in the magazine is closely related to the photographs and the text. This is a fundamental deficiency in the analysed sample. Editors often use too many colours to attract the attention of the reader, forgetting the need to contrast the image and text. At this point we have encountered problems with the clarity and readability of magazines. Similarly, the front pages of the periodicals had similar deficiencies, which most often lack proper layout, choice of colours, or the necessary information.

The last examined category was organization of work in the editorial office of the magazine. In this category we studied the choice of members of the editorial office and the process of editing and finishing texts. The teams of the analysed student magazines have an average of 8 pupil members. In addition to the pupils, however, the process of creation also involves teachers who perform the functions of editor and proof-reader. However, we have also often encountered teachers as contributors to the magazine, which we do not find beneficial. As part of the editing process, we found out, that teachers are significantly involved in the creation of magazines as graphic designers. On the other hand, the involvement of teachers is contributing to the relatively good level of grammar of magazines. The stylistic level of the texts has more significant shortcomings. Journalistic speech often lacks logical ordering, sentences that are too long or too short. Authors forget to divide the text into introduction, core and conclusion and so on. Working with the headline is also problematic. The subtitles do not contain a verb, they are too austere and do not serve its function.

Based on the above summary of the analysis of student journals, we identified **the shortcomings and errors** and we deliver relevant recommendations. In terms of the content of magazines, the absence of columns is a major problem. For this reason, magazines are often confusing and the reader has no idea where each topic is listed. A simple solution is to organize the content of the magazine into the following sections: *Title page of the magazine; Editorial; Content of the heading; News - news, information from the school environment and its surroundings, sport, etc.; Theme - the most important topic(s) of a given edition of the journal*

(eg 100th anniversary of the school); *Journalism* - interviews and opinions; *Leisure part* (reviews, entertainment, etc.). Another major shortcoming is the lack of genre and thematic variety. As mentioned above, in the genre, school magazines are mainly limited to news genres, especially short reports that inform about the school and its surroundings. Editors should therefore focus on the wider surroundings of the school, informing of the happenings in the city or region, and should process this information in different genres. Various sporting events, ski tours, school trips should be covered in the form of reportage. The genres of opinion should also be given space, e.g. comments where pupils could comment on current issues and problems resonating in school, city, town or region. Thematic and genre stereotype could also be enriched by various supplements to magazines (e.g. calendars, timetables, etc.) or processing of interesting facts into articles (so called listicle - e.g. ten healthy meals that are cooked in our school canteen etc.).

Text arrangement is the most common problem in the graphic aspect of a magazine. Editors do not arrange text in columns. There is no uniformity and fixed number of columns and text alignment in the magazine. If the magazine content is modelled in columns, these are too narrow or wide, causing funnels and orphans to be formed. The solution to these shortcomings is clearly the use of a graphic program. Although, these programs can be costly for schools, there are also free versions. By using them, magazines will gain clarity and form that will look more professional and at a higher level. A common mistake is also the use of different fonts in texts. When choosing fonts, editors should think in particular that the font chosen should be a permanent part of the visual identity of the magazine, but also that any other chosen fonts should be easy to read. When using photos and images, we recommend that editors think about the contrast that is often absent. The colours of the magazine are an important part of its graphics. The analysed periodicals often use colours that do not match. This can be avoided by applying the rules of colour spectrum combinations (monochrome, complementary, analogue, triadic or tetradic colour combinations). More attention should also be paid to the photographs themselves and to compliance with the composition rules. A good solution is to develop a graphic design manual that summarizes all the rules, including the model of the periodical. This should contain precise rules for creating individual sections and their placement in the magazine.

From a stylistic point of view, we see the most common problems in using dull words. The headlines of journalistic speeches are often meaningless and the speeches themselves are purely informative. In this sense, we recommend that editors apply the rules for creating headlines – e.g. use of verbs in the headline, outline of carrier information, attract the attention of the reader, etc. The text of articles should go deeper and below the surface of processed phenomena. It should be of an analytical nature and also reflect on the consequences and the context of the information to be provided. For a more varied and engaging processing of information, authors should use more dynamic ways of building reports (e.g. the structure of the inverted pyramid). The authors should think about the rules of legibility of texts, which means in particular the alternation of longer and shorter sentences, avoiding repetition of the same words in the article. The important is also division of the text into introduction, core and conclusion. Other textual elements that are absent in the current form of magazines could significantly help in the visual and content diversity of journalistic expressions, e.g. perex, intertitles or so-called infoblocks.

From this summary of the most fundamental and common mistakes and shortcomings of school magazines, it is evident that the editors of these student media face a great challenge. By their activities, they already undoubtedly contribute to the development of their own media literacy and fulfil many of the aims of the media education process. They develop their knowledge of the functioning of the media, as well as psychomotor skills associated with the creation of media content. On the other hand, their products have a number of shortcomings. Removing them can raise the level of their products and thus create a fully-fledged media product of

their own school institution, which will provide space for realizing productive media education in the school system. It is the building of media competencies associated with journalistic production that is nowadays a priority in several European countries (Sweden, Italy, Malta, Estonia), including Slovakia.

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Oh Hui Kun, Shahreen Mat Nayan

# Jom Main! (Let's Play!): Promoting The Values Of Malaysia Traditional Children's Games Through The Media

## ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a nation rich in culture and heritage because of its multi-racial society that consists of different ethnic groups. Part of this rich cultural heritage are the various traditional children's games that have existed for a long time, such as *Congkak* (filling the wooden board), *Batu Seremban* (tossing the stones), *Sepak Takraw* (kicking the rattan ball), *Gasing* (spinning top), *Wau* (kite flying) and many more. However, with the development of digital technologies and the impact of globalization, traditional children's games that were once very popular in our society are now slowing fading away. This campaign is carried out using social media, with the aim to explore the values of Malaysian traditional children's games and to reintroduce these games to children and the general public. The project consisted of a traditional children's games workshop and an online campaign using Facebook, which targeted a larger audience. The findings of this project revealed that traditional children's games are beneficial to a child's growth and development, cultural values and teaching practices. Therefore, it is important for the present generation to preserve, promote and relive Malaysian traditional children's games and to pass them on to the next generation.

## KEY WORDS

Traditional children's games. Cultural preservation. Heritage. Child's growth and development. Education. Facebook. Social media. Campaigns.



# 1. Introduction

In Malaysia, a „child“ refers to someone who is below eighteen years old.<sup>1</sup> Being one of the members of the United Nations, Malaysia has officially agreed to follow the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1995,<sup>2</sup> to protect and care for the welfare of its children. One of these is the right to play. According to the Convention, „*children have the right to rest and leisure, to engage in sport and play in recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*“<sup>3</sup>

In the past few decades, with the modernization process and the rapid development of electronic gadgets, children's toys and games have gone through a drastic change, from what we call traditional children's games to modern toys and games. With the mass media promoting and exposing us to electronic games and toys that are commercially produced in the market, more and more gadgets, such as handheld game consoles, computers and mobile phones have entered our children's daily lives. If we look at the children of today, one major difference between their childhoods and the previous generation is the lack of engagement with traditional children's games. Examples of traditional games include *Congkak* (filling the wooden board), *Batu Seremban* (tossing the stones), *Sepak Takraw* (kicking the rattan ball), *Gasing* (spinning top), *Wau* (kite flying) and many more. The older generation used to play a variety of simple yet fun indoor and outdoor games and activities, while modern children spend most of their time on screen-based activities, such as looking at iPads, playing with smartphones and computer games. Most children, especially those who live in urban cities, have replaced traditional toys and games with modern toys and games, such as remote-control toys, video game consoles, computer and mobile games.

With digital products, undeniably our children have become more technology savvy. However, what is worrying is the negative impact brought by modern games and electronic gadgets, such as addiction to internet and video games, isolation and sedentary lifestyles. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2017 released by the Institute for Public Health, National Institutes of Health, Ministry of Health Malaysia, 86% or every 6 out of 7 children between the ages of 13 to 17 in the country were active internet users.<sup>4</sup> The survey also found that 29% or every 2 out of 7 children from the same age group were addicted to the internet.

The Internet Users Survey 2017 conducted by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), also revealed that in Malaysia, more than 80% of children between 5 to 17 years old are internet users.<sup>5</sup> According to the report, 93% of the children in the survey accessed the internet from smartphones and their main online activities were „text communication, social networking, getting information and watching videos“.

Apart from that, as reported by The Star Online,<sup>6</sup> findings indicated that about 9% of secondary school students in Malaysia spent more than 10-hours a week gaming online and 63% played games on their smartphones. Failing to address these issues may eventually lead to children being exposed to inappropriate content and activities, such as pornography, violence,

<sup>1</sup> ACT 611, CHILD ACT 2001, from 1st March 2018. [online]. [2018-11-05]. Available at: <<http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/uploads/files/Publications/LOM/EN/Act%20611%20-%2027%202%202018.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS OF MALAYSIA. Human Rights. [online]. [2018-11-05]. Available at: <[http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/index.php?r=portal2/left&menu\\_id=L2YvK3oycE5FSIg1NGNmTGFJdINdz09](http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/index.php?r=portal2/left&menu_id=L2YvK3oycE5FSIg1NGNmTGFJdINdz09)>.

<sup>3</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child text, from 2nd September 1990. [online]. [2018-11-05]. Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>>.

<sup>4</sup> OTHMAN, F., ZAKI, A., AHMAD, M. H.: National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2017: Key Findings from the Adolescent Health and Nutrition Surveys. [online]. [2018-11-06]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331033418>>.

<sup>5</sup> Internet Users Survey 2017 Statistical Brief Number Twenty-One. [online]. [2018-11-07]. Available at: <<https://www.mcmc.gov.my/skmmgovmy/media/General/pdf/MCMC-Internet-Users-Survey-2017.pdf>>.

<sup>6</sup> THE STAR.: Internet Abuse Growing Rampant Among Youths. [online]. [2018-11-07]. Available at: <<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2018/08/19/internet-abuse-growing-rampant-among-youths/>>.

cyberbullying, communicating with strangers and online scams. To help counteract these negative consequences, re-introducing traditional children's games may be seen as a viable alternative.

Children love to play and they spend most of their time playing. Therefore, it is important to fill children's play time with the right toys and games. In Europe and Western countries, studies have shown that while technology has changed the way our children live, the inactivity figures in children have also become higher.<sup>7</sup> Another study also revealed that kids who spend more than two hours daily watching television, mobile phone, tablet or computer screen, failed to meet guidelines on sleep, exercise and screen time.<sup>8</sup>

The World Health Organisation (WHO) for the first time, in the 11th edition of its International Classification of Diseases, has announced „gaming disorder“ as a new mental health problem.<sup>9</sup> The organisation believes that gaming disorder will lead „to significant distress and impairment in personal, family, social, educational or occupational functioning. The impact may include disturbed sleep patterns, diet problems, and a deficiency in physical activity.“<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the Lancet Child & Adolescent Health report also found that, „too little sleep and excess screen time were clearly linked to a drop off in cognitive skills, such as language ability, memory, and task completion.“<sup>11</sup>

Based on recommendations by the WHO, children and teenagers from 5 to 17 years old should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. The organization has suggested that the longer the physical activity time the merrier, and that physical activity should be aerobic, „includes play, games, sports, transportation, chores, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise, in the context of family, school, and community activities.“<sup>12</sup>

Considering all of the above, this project aims to explore the values of traditional children's games, in particular their benefits to the physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth of a child. On top of that, this project also seeks to examine the educational impact of traditional children's games in teaching and learning; as well as the importance of traditional children's games in Malaysian cultural preservation.

This project is carried out using a campaign to promote the values and benefits of playing traditional children's games as well as exploring the ways to pass on the knowledge of traditional children's games to the present and younger generation. The campaign consists of a Malaysian traditional children's games workshop, specially designed for a group of children to share the knowledge of Malaysian traditional children's games. Additionally, an online campaign is also carried out on the social media platform Facebook, to create public awareness with regards to Malaysian traditional children's games.

<sup>7</sup> ZOLLINGER-READ, P.: *How Technology and Inactive Lifestyles are Changing Our Children*. [online]. [2018-11-06]. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/technology-inactive-lifestyle-changing-children>>.

<sup>8</sup> THE STAR. *Too Much Screen Time, Too Little Horseplay for Kids: Study*. [online]. [2018-11-06]. Available at: <<https://www.thestar.com.my/tech/tech-news/2018/09/28/too-much-screen-time-too-little-horseplay-for-kids-study/>>.

<sup>9</sup> WHO. *Gaming Disorder*. [online]. [2018-11-07]. Available at: <<http://www.who.int/features/qa/gaming-disorder/en/>>.

<sup>10</sup> SCUTTI, S.: *WHO Classifies 'Gaming Disorder' as Mental Health Condition*. [online]. [2018-11-07]. Available at: <<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/18/health/video-game-disorder-who/index.html>>.

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<sup>12</sup> WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health 5 - 17 Years Old*. [online]. [2018-11-08]. Available at: <<http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/physical-activity-recommendations-5-17years.pdf?ua=1>>.

## 1.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The main objective of this project is to reintroduce Malaysian traditional children's games to the public, especially children, parents and educators so that they can have a better understanding about Malaysian traditional children's games and their values.

Research objectives (RO) and research questions (RQ) are outlined below:

*RO 1: To educate children about traditional children's games so that this unique heritage can be passed on to the younger generation.*

*RQ 1: To what extent do Malaysian children know about Malaysian traditional children's games? (Have they ever heard about and played any Malaysian traditional children's games before?)*

*RO 2: To highlight the significance of traditional children's games in reference to cultural preservation, children's growth and development, as well as education.*

*RQ 2: What are the significance of Malaysian traditional children's games with regard to cultural preservation, children's growth and development, and teaching practices?*

## 1.2 Significance of the Research

This project will contribute to the benefit of society in many aspects. First, it aims to provide useful information on the values and benefits of playing Malaysian traditional children's games. Second, children will be exposed to Malaysian traditional children's games and learn about the evolution and development of toys and games through a games workshop. With this, the unique heritage of Malaysian traditional children's games can be passed on to the next generation. Thirdly, this project may help raise public awareness through social media platforms, in which more people can engage in recollecting and sharing the benefits of playing Malaysian traditional children's games. Last but not least, this project aims to encourage more people to treasure and preserve Malaysian traditional children's games. Ideas will be shared with the general public, especially parents and educators, on how to incorporate traditional children's games in both their teaching and learning to support and safeguard traditional children's games in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Cultural Values of Malaysian Traditional Children's Games

In „Culture is Ordinary“, Raymond Williams argues, „*Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.*“<sup>13</sup> As defined by Barker, „*culture is the arts and values, norms and symbolic goods of everyday life.*“<sup>14</sup> A children's game, as stated in Encyclopaedia Britannica, „*is any of the amusements and pastimes of children that may involve spontaneous, unstructured activity, based mostly on fantasy and imagination, or organized games with set rules.*“<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a traditional children's game is any game that is passed from the previous generation to the next generation in a society, and is engaged in by children during their free time.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> BARKER, C.: *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (4th Edition)*. London, United Kingdom : SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> THE EDITORS OF ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA. *Children's Game*. [online]. [2018-11-10]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/childrens-game>>.

<sup>16</sup> SALMA, H.: *Traditional Children's Games of the 90's and Children's Games Today in Malaysia*. [online]. [2018-11-10]. Available at: <[https://www.academia.edu/9060190/Traditional\\_Children\\_s\\_Games\\_of\\_the\\_90\\_s\\_and\\_Children\\_s\\_Games\\_Today\\_in\\_Malaysia\\_2013\\_](https://www.academia.edu/9060190/Traditional_Children_s_Games_of_the_90_s_and_Children_s_Games_Today_in_Malaysia_2013_)>.

The National Department for Culture and Arts under supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia has listed Sepak Takraw, Congkak, Batu Seremban, Gasing, Wau, Gajah Panjang (long elephant), Guli (marbles) and Sepak Bulu Ayam (kicking the feathers), as traditional games of Malaysia.<sup>17</sup> Apart from that, Silat (Malay martial arts), Wayang Kulit (puppet-shadow play) and Sepak Manggis (traditional Bajau game similar to Sepak Takraw) are also some of the traditional games of Malaysia, as listed by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the above-mentioned games, other activities played by children in the past also included outdoor games, such as *Lompat Getah*, *Sorok-sorok*, *Ketingting*, *Ibu Ayam*, *Ceper* (bottle caps), *Baling Selipar* (throwing slipper), *Tarik Upeh*, *Konda-Kondi*, *Chup Tiang* and *Pepsi Cola*. While some of the indoor games that are popular among children, include hand games like *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, *Lat Tali Lat*, *Break Finger Game*; card games like *Donkey*, *Happy Family*, *Old Maid* and *Snap*; and classroom games like *Conquer*, *Hangman*, and *Eraser Game*.

Historical evidence shows that traditional children's games are not just games, they also relate to social values, beliefs, religions and customs. They are part of our history, culture and traditions. With traditional games, we can better understand our roots, sense of identity and belonging within a group. For example, *Sepak Takraw*, *Wau*, *Gasing* and *Congkak* are traditional games popular in the Malay community. They were brought to Malaysia about 500 years ago by foreign traders travelling to the Malacca Kingdom.<sup>19</sup>



**PICTURE 1:** Congkak is a Malay traditional game often played as an indoor activity or as a competition

Source: SUNWAY CITY. Congkak: One of the Malaysians Traditional Games. [online]. [2019-09-19]. Available at: <<https://www.sunway.city/jommalaysia-carnival/congak/>>.

<sup>17</sup> JKKN. *Traditional Games*. [online]. [2018-11-10]. Available at: <<http://www.jkkn.gov.my/en/traditional-games>>.

<sup>18</sup> TOURISM MALAYSIA. *Games and Pastimes*. [online]. [2018-11-10]. Available at: <<http://www.malaysia.travel/en/my/about-malaysia/culture-n-heritage/games-and-pastimes>>.

<sup>19</sup> See also: AVINESHWARAN, T.: *The Legacy of Sepak Takraw*. [online]. [2018-11-11]. Available at: <<https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/archive/2013/03/08/the-legacy-of-sepak-takraw/>>., MANAN, S. A., RAMLI, Z., HAMZAH, A. H.: *Wau Bulan Kelantan: Keindahan Permainan Tradisi Rakyat*. Kelantan : Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, 2015. [online]. [2018-11-11]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305258782>>.; HO, S.: *Gasing*. [online]. [2018-11-11]. Available at: <[http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_401\\_2004-12-09.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_401_2004-12-09.html)>.; SINGAPORE KITE ASSOCIATION. *SKA History*. [online]. [2018-11-11]. Available at: <<http://singaporekites.blogspot.com/p/ska-history.html>>., TAN, B.: *Congkak*. [online]. [2018-11-11]. Available at: <[http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1733\\_2010-11-26.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1733_2010-11-26.html)>.





**PICTURE 2:** *Gasing was introduced to Malaysia by traders about 500 years ago*

Source: SIESTA. Gasing, Permainan Tradisional yang Eksis Sejak Zaman Penjajahan. [online]. [2019-09-19]. Available at: <<https://sporttourism.id/siesta/belum-diketahui-sejak-kapan-gasing-dimainkan-di-indonesia>>.

Some people also see traditional children's games as other means of transmitting traditional information and the ancient wisdom of agour ancestors. For example, the design of *Wau* demonstrates the highest possible level of aesthetics as it combines the creativity of the Malays, their skilled workmanship, beautiful colours and patterns.<sup>20</sup>



**PICTURE 3:** *Wau-making requires tremendous skill and patience*

Source: TOURISM MALAYSIA. Pesta Wau Antarabangsa Kelantan. [online]. [2019-09-19]. Available at: <<http://www.malaysia.travel/en/in/events/2014/5/pesta-wau-antarabangsa-kelantan>>.

<sup>20</sup> FARAH. *Wau Bulan is A Symbol of The Unique Heritage and Traditions Era Ages (The Art of Wau Bulan)*. Released on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009. [online]. [2018-11-12]. Available at: <<http://the-art-of-wau-bulan.blogspot.com/2009/09/wau-bulan-is-symbol-of-unique-heritage.html>>.



Samovar, Porter and McDaniel also further defined traditional children's games as „cultural symbols, which enable a culture to preserve what it deems important and worthy of transmission.“<sup>21</sup> For example, the Central Bank of Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) featured the *Wau Bulan* (Moon Kite), *Congkak* and *Gasing* design on its 1989 series of coins. *Wau Bulan* is also used for the design on the new RM1 banknote.<sup>22</sup> The national carrier of Malaysia, *Malaysia Airlines* (MAS) also uses *Wau Kucing* (Cat Kite) in its logo design.<sup>23</sup> Apart from being a part of the country's national symbols, traditional games are considered as an integration tool that unites people in the country.<sup>24</sup> The government uses traditional games to promote intercultural dialogue and peace, fosters unity and relationship within communities and societies.

Since the culture of a society is dynamic and subject to change with creativity and social reproduction, Graburn has suggested that culture should become tradition, with the effort „continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost.“<sup>25</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) as intangible cultural heritage that need to be promoted and safeguarded for a few reasons, such as they are „an efficient and effective means to convey values of solidarity, diversity, fair-play, inclusion, and cultural awareness; they contribute to logical thinking, mathematical and civic education, they reflect cultural diversity, and foster mutual understanding and tolerance among communities and nations.“<sup>26,27</sup>

Traditional children's games are valuable assets. It is important for us to learn, to share and to transmit. The Heritage Cycle developed by Simon Thurley suggests how we can turn the past to be part of our future, which is by „understanding it, value it, caring it and enjoy it.“<sup>28</sup> In other words, it is important to get people enjoy traditional children's games, because when people enjoy them, they want to learn and understand more about them, and so the circle goes on.

## 2.2 Traditional Children's Games Contribute to Child's Growth and Development

With the creation of modern digital products, undeniably our children have become more technology savvy, however these kinds of games and toys also bring adverse effects, such as addiction to internet and video games, more isolation, passive behaviours, victory-oriented, and in most cases, inactive. On the contrary, unlike many modern games which are usually sedentary, most traditional games promote healthy physical activities that involve a lot of body movement, such as jumping, running, hopping, leaping, walking, bending, stretching and

<sup>21</sup> SAMOVAR, L. A., PORTER, R. E., MCDANIEL, E. R.: *Communication Between Cultures* (8th edition). Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2012, p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> BANK NEGARA MALAYSIA. *RM1 Polymer Banknote: Traditional Sport*. [online]. [2018-11-12]. Available at: <[http://www.bnm.gov.my/microsites/2011/banknotes/06\\_RM1.htm](http://www.bnm.gov.my/microsites/2011/banknotes/06_RM1.htm)>.

<sup>23</sup> MALAYSIA AIRLINES. *Did you know that our logo was inspired by a traditional Malaysian kite known as the 'Wau'? on Twitter*. [online]. [2018-11-12]. Available at: <<https://twitter.com/mas/status/978466673819873280?lang=en>>.

<sup>24</sup> NOR'AZMAN, N.: *Permainan Tradisional Pupuk Perpaduan Rakyat*. [online]. [2018-11-13]. Available at: <<http://www.jkkn.gov.my/ms/permainan-tradisional-pupuk-perpaduan-rakyat>>.

<sup>25</sup> GRABURN, N. H. H.: What is Tradition? In *Museum Anthropology*, 2000, Vol. 24, No. 2/3, p. 6. [online]. [2018-11-13]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230505685>>.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO. *Innovative Ways to Preserve and Share Knowledge About Traditional Games Explored in Beijing*. [online]. [2018-11-13]. Available at: <<https://en.unesco.org/news/innovative-ways-preserve-and-share-knowledge-about-traditional-games-explored-beijing>>.

<sup>27</sup> See also: UNESCO. *Traditional Sports and Games: A Challenge for the Future*. [online]. [2018-11-13]. Available at: <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/physical-education-and-sport/traditional-sports-and-games/>>.

<sup>28</sup> What is Cultural Heritage. [online]. [2018-11-13]. Available at: <[http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/Cultural\\_Heritage/What\\_is\\_Cultural\\_Heritage](http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/Cultural_Heritage/What_is_Cultural_Heritage)>.

swinging of arms. Studies have shown traditional games can play a significant role in children's growth and development, which help to improve the basic skills of children, such as physical health, thinking skills, interpersonal and social skills.<sup>29</sup>

On top of that, traditional gameplay can also help shape the character values of a child, such as religious values, nationalist, independent, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and integrity.<sup>30</sup> Based on recommendations by the World Health Organization, children and teenagers from 5 to 17 years old should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. The organization has suggested that the longer the physical activity time the merrier, and such physical activity should be aerobic, „includes play, games, sports, transportation, chores, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise, in the context of family, school, and community activities.“<sup>31</sup>

According to the WHO, physical activities can help in growing „healthy musculoskeletal tissues (i.e. bones, muscles and joints); healthy cardiovascular system (i.e. heart and lungs); neuromuscular awareness (i.e. coordination and movement control); facilitates maintenance of a healthy body weight; improving control over symptoms of anxiety and depression; and assisting in social development by providing opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, social interaction and integration.“<sup>32</sup> An example of such an activity would be Lompat Getah or rubber jump (rope jumping). It is listed as „an ideal brain exercise, bone builder, and one of the most efficient ways of improving cardiovascular fitness in as little as ten minutes“<sup>33</sup> by the Jump Rope Institute founded by US Olympian Buddy Lee. The institute also pointed out, „the American Heart Association endorses jump rope and uses it as a key fundraiser for heart research by encouraging millions of children to jump their way into cardiovascular health.“<sup>34</sup>

Educators also believe that *Ketingting* or hopscotch improves a player's motor and thinking skills. According to the Department for Education of South Australia, hopscotch helps develop children's motor skills such as balancing, hopping, and eye-hand coordination so that they can move around safely.<sup>35</sup> It also helps to develop children's creativity and reasoning as they need to recognise numbers and the way that they are ordered.

<sup>29</sup> See also: SAPUTRA, N. E., EKAWATI, Y. N.: Traditional Games in Improving Children's Basic Abilities. In *Jurnal Psikologi Jambi*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 49. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <<https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/jpj/article/view/4796>>; KHASANAH, I., PRASETYO, A., RAKHMAWATI, E.: Permainan Tradisional Sebagai Media Stimulasi Aspek Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini. In *Jurnal Penelitian PAUDIA*, 2011, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 91. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <<http://journal.upgris.ac.id/index.php/paudia/article/view/261/230>>; ABDULLAH, B.: The Effects of Traditional Games on the Gross Motor Skills Development Level Among Early Schooling Children. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <[http://www.educ.upm.edu.my/dokumen/FKKDI1\\_Abstract\\_5-2011.pdf](http://www.educ.upm.edu.my/dokumen/FKKDI1_Abstract_5-2011.pdf)>; AKBARI, H., ABDOLI, B., SHAFIZADEH, M.: The Effect of Traditional Games in Fundamental Motor Skill Development in 7-9 Year-Old Boys. In *Iranian Journal of Pediatrics*, 2009, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 124. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/43559972>>.

<sup>30</sup> See also: SAPUTRA, N. E., EKAWATI, Y. N.: Traditional Games in Improving Children's Basic Abilities. In *Jurnal Psikologi Jambi*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 51. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <<https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/jpj/article/view/4796>>; ANDRIANI, T.: Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini. In *Jurnal Sosial Budaya*, 2012, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 131. [online]. [2018-11-14]. Available at: <<http://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/SosialBudaya/article/view/376/358>>.

<sup>31</sup> WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health 5 - 17 Years Old*. [online]. [2018-11-08]. Available at: <<http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/physical-activity-recommendations-5-17years.pdf?ua=1>>.

<sup>32</sup> WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health 5 - 17 Years Old*. [online]. [2018.11.08]. Available at: <<http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/physical-activity-recommendations-5-17years.pdf?ua=1>>.

<sup>33</sup> DUTCH, D.: *Benefits of Rope Jumping*. [online]. [2018-11-15]. Available at: <<http://www.jumpropeinstitute.com/benefits.htm>>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION. *A Game of Hopscotch*. [online]. [2018-11-15]. Available at: <<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting-and-child-care/parenting/learning-your-child-greatstart/being-active/game-hopscotch>>.

Studies have shown that if we frequently use our brain, it stays healthy. Traditional games not only aid physical development, they also help to boost brain power as they „demand staying focused, being alert, thinking strategically, employing different tactics, placing oneself in the opponent’s shoes, quick and smart thinking, and memory power.“<sup>36</sup> For example, *Galah Panjang* or runner and tagger game involves a lot of running, and requires strategy and teamwork from the players. Playing *Sorok-sorok* or hide and seek also offers children many developmental benefits, such as fostering creativity, understanding volume, getting exercise, increasing balance, agility and coordination, teaching patience, building trust, raising safety awareness and overcoming a fear of the dark. The game also helps to develop the children’s senses, such as sight, touch, sound, smell and trains their observation powers, to stay focused and alert to movement. The players also need to employ strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, such as to lure the one who hides out of their place or to find new hiding places to avoid being discovered by the seeker.<sup>37</sup>

*Batu Seremban*, also known as *Selambut*, *Batu Serembat*, Five Stones or tossing the stones game, was popular among Malaysian children in the old days. It is believed that the game originated in Ancient Asia, during the Siege of Troy in 1184 BC.<sup>38</sup> *Batu Seremban* is good for eye sight and memory training, as well as building one’s concentration and aiming skills. When a player throws the stones into the air while using the same hand to grab the others, it helps to improve the player’s motor skills and develop hand eye coordination.



**PICTURE 4:** *Batu Seremban helps to improve hand, eye and brain coordination*

Source: GEGARIA. You Definitely Grew Up In Malaysia If You Played These 10 Games When You Were A Kid. [online]. [2019-09-19]. Available at: <<https://says.com/my/lifestyle/how-to-play-malaysian-traditional-games>>.

<sup>36</sup> SELVARAJ, P. J. S.: *How Traditional Childhood Games Boost Brain Power*. [online]. [2018-11-16]. Available at: <<https://www.parentcircle.com/article/how-traditional-childhood-games-boost-brain-power/>>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> TAN, B., WANG, D.: *Five Stones*. [online]. [2018-11-16]. Available at: <[http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_194\\_2005-01-07.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_194_2005-01-07.html)>.

While modern games tend to focus on interactions between children and machines, most traditional games are group activities, which require a lot of interaction with people. When children are involved in a game, they pick up communication skills, learn about team spirit and emotional management. Take *Ibu Ayam* (eagle and chicks' game) as an example, children learn about team work and how to handle their emotions, such as disappointment and annoyance after a loss, excitement and enjoyment after a win. The game improves the relationship among the players and strengthens their social bonds.

Simple hand game like Rock, Paper, Scissors or what the locals refer to as *One, Two, Som* or *One, Two, Jus* and card games such as *Donkey, Happy Family, Old Maid and Snap*, also contribute to children's psychological and social development. It is suggested that hand games are games of psychology because they involve „*observation, mindfulness, manipulation, emotional intelligence, strategy, and skill*.“<sup>39</sup> Children also learn to problem-solve through these games as we also often see them using this to settle disputes. While traditional card games, such as *Happy Family*, offer educational benefits for children in counting, sorting, matching and pairing skills, early literacy, familiarity with different occupations, communication, language, social etiquette and following game rules.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.3 Traditional Children's Games in Teaching Practices

Traditional games can provide benefits for children who are sitting for a prolonged period playing modern games and improve children's skills on different aspects. The teaching Piramide Method framework which gives teachers concrete strategies for promoting child development and early education has highlighted „*the play and learning environment supports children in their play and stimulates their initiative learning and make their own decisions*.“<sup>41</sup> According to Roopnarine and Johnson, research has shown an association between high-level play skills and children's academic learning and children who do not have these skills „*must be specifically taught these skills in order to benefit from their play*.“<sup>42</sup>

Traditional children's games have been proven effective in teaching practices and can positively impact school-related tasks. Research has found that motivation and learning performance are inter-related. According to the study done by Trajkovik, Malinovski, Vasileva-Stojanovska and Vasileva, „*integration of traditional games in the elementary schools can provide increased learning outcomes, not just on test scores, but also in children's interest and engagement, as well as interaction with the teacher and classmates. .... Such GBL (Game-Based Learning) activities that increase students' motivation in class, can invoke critical thinking, boost information processing and collaborative activities, while creating experiential learning environments that increase the level of students' achievements*.“<sup>43</sup>

UNESCO has suggested schools and teachers putting „play“ back into formal classroom teaching and lesson planning or use it in co-curricular activities because „*traditional children's games are embedded with a rich repository of historical, environmental, social, scientific, mathematical, social, kinesthetic, visual and musical knowledge, values and skills, inherited*

<sup>39</sup> FABER, N.: *The Surprising Psychology of Rock-Paper-Scissors*. [online]. [2018-11-16]. Available at: <[www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-blame-game/201504/the-surprising-psychology-rock-paper-scissors](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-blame-game/201504/the-surprising-psychology-rock-paper-scissors)>.

<sup>40</sup> WINTLE, S.: *Happy Families*. [online]. [2018-11-16]. Available at: <<http://www.wopc.co.uk/games/quartet>>.

<sup>41</sup> ROOPNARINE, J. L., JOHNSON, J. E.: *Approaches to Early Childhood Education (Sixth Edition)*. New Jersey, United States : Pearson, 2013, p. 306.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>43</sup> TRAJKOVIK, V., MALINOVSKI, T., VASILEVA-STOJANOVSKA, T.: Traditional Games in Elementary School: Relationships of Student's Personality Traits, Motivation and Experience with Learning Outcomes. In *PLOS ONE*, 2018, Vol. 13, No. 8, p. 8. [online]. [2018-11-17]. Available at: <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327132159\\_Traditional\\_games\\_in\\_elementary\\_school\\_Relationships\\_of\\_students\\_personality\\_traits\\_motivation\\_and\\_experience\\_with\\_learning\\_outcomes](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327132159_Traditional_games_in_elementary_school_Relationships_of_students_personality_traits_motivation_and_experience_with_learning_outcomes)>.



over time and through experience.”<sup>44</sup> The international organization suggested that schools and teachers adopt games-based pedagogy, which is to add games into both teaching and learning materials. The advantages of adopting game-based pedagogy include improve the class atmosphere for learning, help children develop skills and concepts relevant to their cognitive (mental or thinking), affective (emotional or feeling for oneself and others) and psychomotor (physical or doing) development.<sup>45</sup>

As reported by UNESCO, „*skills developed from playing traditional children’s games are compatible with skills targeted in subjects at the primary school level*”<sup>46</sup>, such as language, mathematics, science, strategic thinking, values and ethics, social studies or history, art and health sciences. Through traditional games playing, children can learn cultural knowledge and values, such as local dialect, vocabulary, songs and rhymes.

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework – Social Cognitive Theory and Media Effects

Technology has changed how we live, and the way we consume media is no exception. Developed by Marshall McLuhan, Technological Determinism Theory suggests that „*the dominant way of communicating in a society will affect the way social interactions and social organizations develop and evolve*.”<sup>47</sup> As media have changed, it also changes the way we think, feel and act, as well as the culture in a society; part of this is the way kids grow up.

Children today are living in a world surrounded by new technology and the internet. With the diffusion of information and communications technology (ICT) within families, children also become part of a digital generation and are exposed to the use of smart phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. Without proper guidance and teaching in media literacy, children can be easily influenced by powerful media.<sup>48</sup> Children will observe, learn and imitate whatever media messages they receive, including actions and values, as is suggested by Social Cognitive Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory, also called Social Learning Theory, Modelling Theory or Observational Learning Theory, was developed by Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1960s. This communication theory posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling.<sup>49</sup> According to Bandura, „*most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action*.”<sup>50</sup>

To support the theory, Bandura conducted his famous and influential series of experiments known as the Bobo Doll Experiments during the 1960s on observational learning. In the experiments, children were exposed to an adult who either played gently or aggressively with a Bobo doll. The study supports the idea that children learn how to act by watching how the adult model acts.

<sup>44</sup> UNESCO ISLAMABAD. *Traditional Games: Honing Skills and Dexterity*. [online]. [2018-11-17]. Available at: <[http://unesco.org.pk/culture/documents/publications/Teachers\\_Resource\\_Kit/Traditional\\_Games.pdf](http://unesco.org.pk/culture/documents/publications/Teachers_Resource_Kit/Traditional_Games.pdf)>.

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO. *Teacher’s Guide for Incorporating Traditional Children’s Games in the Classroom*. [online]. [2018-11-17]. Available at: <[www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/culture/ICHCGLPs/Full\\_Teachers\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/ICHCGLPs/Full_Teachers_Guide.pdf)>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> ROSENBERRY, J., VICKER, L. A.: *Applied Mass Communication Theory – A Guide for Media Practitioners (Second Edition)*. New York and London : Routledge, 2017, p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> UNICEF CANADA. *Media Literacy for Development & Children’s Rights*. [online]. [2019-02-25]. Available at: <[http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/lesson-plan/Lesson\\_Development\\_and\\_Childrens\\_Rights.pdf](http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/lesson-plan/Lesson_Development_and_Childrens_Rights.pdf)>.

<sup>49</sup> NABAVI, R. T.: *Bandura’s Social Learning Theory & Social Cognitive Learning Theory*. [online]. [2019-02-25]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267750204>>.

<sup>50</sup> *Modelling Theory*. [online]. [2019-02-25]. Available at: <[www.communicationtheory.org/modelling-theory/](http://www.communicationtheory.org/modelling-theory/)>.



This theory is usually applied in the study of media violence on children, however it can be applied in other situations as well when the focus of attention is on children and how they can learn effectively through media. Since media teaches people in three main ways, which are through observation, inhibition and disinhibition,<sup>51</sup> children will be able to gain better understandings of Malaysian traditional children's games if they are given a chance to participate in a games workshop. Children can explore the games themselves and learn how to play those games. They can learn through observing games experts who teach the games, as well as learning from their friends during games interaction. Furthermore, Social Cognitive Theory is also one of the media effects theories which explain how mass media influence the thoughts, attitudes and behaviour of an individual or audience. Traditionally, media effects theories are separated into three types, namely *strong effects* theories, *limited effects* theories and *varying effects* theories. Early media studies, such as the Hypodermic Needle or Magic Bullet Model suggested that mass media is influential, having direct, immediate and powerful effects on those who pay attention. Moving to the second phase, which was the era of „limited effects“, Personal Influence Theory and Two-Step Flow Theory proved that media was not as powerful as previously thought, the effect of media on the audience is limited and people can resist media influence in numerous ways. In the third phase, with the arrival of television in the 1950s and 1960s, researchers believed that this is the return to powerful mass media.<sup>52</sup> However, mass media was seen as having long-term, cumulative effects on individuals instead of immediate and short-term effects. Some of the theories which fall under this type include Agenda Setting Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Cognitive Theory and Media System Dependency Theory.

In today's society, with the significant increase of internet users and more and more people are relying on social media to get news and information, there is also the growing influence of social media on people. Online campaigns which run through social media platforms can help to create public awareness in the long term. Audiences can get to know more about certain issues or topics when they are exposed to repeating campaign messages.

### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the reasons for using a mix of offline and online campaigns to carry out the project will be provided. Additionally, the instruments, participants and procedure for carrying out the project will also be further explained. The following sections are divided into the offline campaign and the online campaign after introducing the project design.

#### 3.1 Project Design

This project aims to reintroduce some of the traditional children's games to children and the general public, especially parents and teachers, so that they will know the values and benefits of playing Malaysian traditional children's games, as well as pass on these valuable cultures and traditions to the younger generation.

The title of this project, „*Jom Main! – The Values of Malaysian Traditional Children's Games*“ reflect the main objective, that is to encourage children and adults to play Malaysian traditional children's games. „*Jom Main!*“ means „Let's Play!“ in the Malay language. The theme is easy to understand and remember, especially for children. By looking at this title, people can immediately relate it to „play“ or „games“ and hopefully, feel happy and motivated to engage in the activities.

<sup>51</sup> ROSENBERRY, J., VICKER, L. A.: *Applied Mass Communication Theory – A Guide for Media Practitioners (Second Edition)*. New York and London : Routledge, 2017, p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> BORAH, P.: Media Effects Theory. In MAZZOLENI, G. (eds.): *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. Donsbach : Wiley-Blackwell, 2015 p. 2. [online]. [2019-02-26]. Available at: <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314119579>>.

In this project, a mix of offline and online campaigns were used to explore the knowledge and values of Malaysian traditional children's games, as well as promote Malaysian traditional children's games among the present and younger generation. The offline campaign is a Malaysian traditional children's games workshop designed for a group of children. The games workshop allowed the participants, who were children, to explore Malaysian traditional children's games. The effectiveness of the games workshop was evaluated through observation and a feedback survey. The online campaign used a social media platform to create public awareness on the issues discussed. Specifically, a Facebook fans page was created to share information on Malaysian traditional children's games. The social media metrics were able to provide data and statistics that gave insights into the campaign performance.

### 3.2 Offline Campaign - „Jom Main!“ Malaysian Traditional Children's Games Workshop

The offline campaign was a two-hour workshop on Malaysian traditional children's games specially designed for a group of children. The name of the games workshop was „Jom Main!“ and emphasized learning through play, in which participants (children) received hands on experience to make origami, play with Malaysian traditional children's games, and learn about the evolution of children's toys and games. In this project, Bud's Educare, an educational centre situated in Petaling Jaya, Selangor agreed to send 44 of their students aged between 7 to 9 years to join the games workshop. Bud's Educare also sponsored a location to conduct the games workshop. Apart from Bud's Educare, GohKaki Childhood Museum, a company specializing in traditional children's games preservation and education also agreed to send two of their games experts as instructors to teach the children how to play traditional children's games free of charge. The company also lends out the traditional games' tools for teaching and learning purposes during the workshop, as well as sponsoring the workshop materials for the event.

The duration for „Jom Main!“ workshop was 2 hours. It started with 30 minutes of introduction on the evolution of toys and games in which children were briefed on the differences and types of old toys and modern toys. After this, the games workshop continued with 30 minutes of hands-on DIY sessions, whereby children made their own „Mulut Itik“ (duck's beak) origami, from which they can keep the final artwork as a token of remembrance (souvenir?). Last but not least, GohKaki team shared and taught 5 to 8 games, including *Batu Seremban*, *Congkak*, *Ceper*, *Gasing*, *Coconut Shoes*, *Metal Car*, *Tin Toys* and *Zero Point*. Children were given 45 minutes to engage with these games and play with toys brought by the GohKaki team, such as card games, *Animal Chess*, *Chinese Checkers*, *Tangram* and *Connect Four*. This session helped participants gain a deeper understanding about Malaysian traditional children's games.

At the end of the programme, participants (the children) were required to fill in a survey questionnaire to provide feedback on the games workshop. The survey form consisted of seven questions which helped to evaluate the effectiveness of using a workshop as a communication tool to educate children on Malaysian traditional children's games. The survey questions consisted of close-ended questions, which only required respondents to answer „yes“ or „no“. A list of the questions can be seen on the following page. Workshop survey questions:

1. Have you ever heard about Malaysian traditional children's games before?
2. Have you ever played any Malaysian traditional children's games before?
3. Did this workshop help you better understand Malaysian traditional children's games?
4. Can you name some of the Malaysian traditional children's games after this workshop?
5. Do Malaysian traditional children's games help to exercise your body and brain?
6. Do you learn about team spirit through Malaysian traditional children's games?
7. Would you like to have Malaysian traditional children's games as activity tools in any school subjects?

### 3.2.1 Brief Background of Bud's Educare

Bud's Educare is an educational centre founded by Mr Mak Wai Kean and his wife Ms Chan Yein Ning in 2000. Mr Mak specializes in educational events and organizing activities. He is also a parenting columnist, and the ex-editor of a Chinese newspaper, *Nan Yang Siang Pau* (educational section and student magazines). His wife, Ms Chan graduated from the University of Malaya, majoring in Chinese Literature Studies. She has ventured into the education line for nearly 20 years. The couple established Bud's Educare with the aims to provide care and education to primary school children. Their services include character building programmes, tuition, daycare and holiday programmes. With all the effort and hardwork that has been put in, Bud's Educare has grown from a small educational centre to two branches today. The two branches are located in Taman Megah, Petaling Jaya, and Bandar Utama, Selangor. Currently, both the centres are taking care of more than 200 Malaysian students from different backgrounds. Their ages range between 7 and 12 years old. The centres are assisted by 23 experienced teachers and tutors.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2.2 Brief Background of GohKaki Childhood Museum

GohKaki Childhood Museum is the first Nan Yang traditional games museum in Malaysia,<sup>54</sup> in which „Nan Yang“ refers to South of China in Mandarin and it is a term familiar to everyone of Chinese ancestry from Southeast Asia. Located in George Town, Penang, GohKaki Childhood Museum was established on 30th August 2015 by Mr. Chang Kim Hua, a 56 year old cultural practitioner, and his daughter Catherine Chang, a 29 years old event planner and traditional games enthusiast. Since 2001, Mr. Chang has been active in promoting Nan Yang traditional games of the 60s and 70s, as well as grooming a young team to join in the effort.<sup>55</sup> Chang's passion has inspired his daughter, Catherine, to join in an effort for toy preservation. According to GohKaki Childhood Museum, its mission is to keep the traditions and pass them down through generations. The company hopes by doing so, the young generation of today will be able to experience different kinds of education, which are back to the basics and culture.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the Museum aims to promote learning through playing with traditional games; raise public awareness of the need of interaction and education through Malaysia traditional games; provide a memorable experience for all ages of audience; promote Malaysia traditional culture to an international audience; and back to basics - by using nature resources inspired by creativeness and self-exploration.<sup>57</sup>

Currently, GohKaki Childhood Museum has collected more than 100 different types of indoor and outdoor traditional games. These games ranging from the 1950s to present day, which include wooden toys, card games, indoor games, metal toys, natural material games, outdoor games, tin toys, IQ games, board games, fishes and bugs.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> BUDS EDUCARE 豆芽苑: Our Story. [online]. [2018-11-20]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/BudsEducareOfficial/>>.

<sup>54</sup> GOHKAKI CHILDHOOD MUSEUM. GohKaki Childhood Museum. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<http://www.gohkaki.com/>>.

<sup>55</sup> GEORGE TOWN HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS. Mr. Chang Kim Hua. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <[https://web.facebook.com/GeorgeTownCelebrations/photos/sepatah-conversation-keynote-speakerssession-2-bukan-main-main-sajamr-chang-kim-h/1127892403950734/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr=](https://web.facebook.com/GeorgeTownCelebrations/photos/sepatah-conversation-keynote-speakerssession-2-bukan-main-main-sajamr-chang-kim-h/1127892403950734/?_rdc=1&_rdr=)>.

<sup>56</sup> GOHKAKI CHILDHOOD MUSEUM. About Us. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<http://www.gohkaki.com/about-us.html>>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> GOHKAKI CHILDHOOD MUSEUM. Our Games. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<http://www.gohkaki.com/our-games.html>>.

The Museum also conducts education sessions and consultation, entertainment and special events on traditional children's games for schools, companies, organizations, fairs and festivals.<sup>59</sup> Previously, the Museum had participated in Penang Chinese New Year Celebrations, various community cultural activities, as well as in official tourism carnivals.<sup>60</sup> In 2015, the museum also organized „Childhood Main-Main Bishop Street“ in conjunction with National Day celebrations, in which the biggest attraction at the event was the 72 wooden rocking horses, where these horses were sold for RM1000 each to raise funds for orphanages and schools.<sup>61</sup>

GohKaki Childhood Museum also specializes in rare, vintage and hard to find toys, collectible gifts, hands-on toys, self-made wooden toys, traditional toys and tin toys which are valuable for collection.<sup>62</sup>

### 3.3 Online Campaign

Social media has become a popular and important platform for marketing campaigns. In this project, apart from the above-mentioned games workshop, the campaign to promote Malaysian traditional children's games was also carried out on the social media platform Facebook, with the aim to create public awareness about those games. The target audiences for the online campaign were Facebook users from Malaysia. Facebook was chosen as the social media platform for this project because it is a popular channel among Malaysians. The online campaign started on 19th February 2019 until 26th April 2019. To begin the online campaign, a Facebook fans page was created and the name of the page was „Jom Main!“<sup>63</sup> This is to fit the theme of the project. The page is still available today.

At the beginning of the online campaign period, the main focus was setting up the page, such as designing a profile picture and cover photo for the page, adding an introduction and information about „Jom Main!“ campaign, inviting friends to like the page, and preparing content for posting. Throughout the whole online campaign period, the „Jom Main!“ page shared different information about Malaysian traditional children's games, including the history and background of traditional children's games, fun facts about the games, values and benefits of playing the games. Demonstration videos on how to make and play the games, as well as some future events and activities related to Malaysian traditional children's games were also posted. The page shared one post everyday beginning on 19th February 2019. All posts were published in multiple languages, which included English, Chinese and Malay. To help explain the topic, the page used photos, videos, graphics, websites, and YouTube links.

Additionally, the page also used hashtags (#)<sup>64</sup>, tagging (@) and story highlights as its social media strategy. Hashtag is a topic or phrase adding with the number sign, „#“ in front, to help people find posts about topics they're interested in on social media websites.<sup>65</sup> Tagging is

<sup>59</sup> GOHKAKI CHILDHOOD MUSEUM. *What We Do*. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<http://www.gohkaki.com/wwwd.html>>.

<sup>60</sup> GEORGE TOWN HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS. *Mr. Chang Kim Hua*. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <[https://web.facebook.com/GeorgeTownCelebrations/photos/sepatah-conversation-keynote-speakerssession-2-bukan-main-main-sajamr-chang-kim-h/1127892403950734/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/GeorgeTownCelebrations/photos/sepatah-conversation-keynote-speakerssession-2-bukan-main-main-sajamr-chang-kim-h/1127892403950734/?_rdc=1&_rdr)>.

<sup>61</sup> THEVADASS, L.: *Adults Happily Join Kids to Play Traditional Games*. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/community/2015/08/31/back-to-childhood-fun-adults-happily-join-kids-to-play-traditional-games/>>.

<sup>62</sup> GOHKAKI CHILDHOOD MUSEUM. *GohKaki Childhood Museum*. [online]. [2018-11-21]. Available at: <<http://www.gohkaki.com/>>.

<sup>63</sup> JOM MAIN. *About*. [online]. [2019-02-12]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/>>.

<sup>64</sup> The hashtags created for the Page include #JomMain, #PermainanTradisional, #Malaysia, #TraditionalGames, #OldSchool, #ChildhoodMemories, #Nostalgia, #Throwback, #Fun, #Cool, #MomentumMMS, #MomentUs19 and #童玩.

<sup>65</sup> Facebook. *How do I Use Hashtags?* [online]. [2019-02-28]. Available at: <[https://web.facebook.com/help/587836257914341?helpref=faq\\_content&\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/help/587836257914341?helpref=faq_content&_rdc=1&_rdr)>.

attaching an „@“ to someone to create a link to their social media profile.<sup>66</sup> Facebook story was used when we wanted to highlight a photo or video with friends or followers.<sup>67</sup> The story was available for 24 hours. The uses of hashtags, tagging and story helped attract new followers and create public awareness on the page's content. Additionally, the page also ran online contests to attract the public's attention and interest. Last but not least, the page also through various channels and sources, invited friends to follow the page.

To track the campaign effectiveness in promoting Malaysian traditional children's games and create public awareness through the online platform, data and statistics received from the page were analysed from time to time, and adjustments would be made to improve the page's performance. All comments and feedbacks received on „Jom Main!“ were observed to provide insights into the project and for further improvement, as well as help to gain better understanding of Malaysian perception and knowledge towards traditional children's games.

Scheduled topics for the first month of the online campaign included the introduction of various Malaysian traditional children's games, such as *Sepak Takraw*, *Wau*, *Gasing*, *Marbles*, *Fighting Fish Game*, *Card Games*, *Tepuk Terup Game*, and *Bamboo Dragonfly*. The background and how to play these games were posted. The page also shared the preparation work of the „Jom Main!“ Malaysian traditional children's games workshop and information about the workshop sponsors from time to time. Once the games workshop was finished, event photos and videos were also shared online. The page published thank you notes to followers and ran a Facebook giveaway contest once the page reached a certain number of fans.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Project Findings for Offline Campaign („Jom Main!“ Workshop)

This section discusses the data collected from the survey questionnaire distributed to „Jom Main!“ workshop participants. The survey form consisted of seven questions and all questions were close-ended questions, which only required respondents to answer „yes“ or „no“.

#### 4.1.1 Respondents' Demographics

Findings in this section are all related to respondents' demographics such as gender and age. The data was collected from survey questionnaires in which all participants were required to fill in their name and age in the survey form.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	23	52%
Female	21	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 1:** Respondent's gender

Source: own processing, 2019

Scheme 1 shows that of 44 respondents, half of the respondents who answered the questionnaire were male students, reporting 23 of them (52%) while the other half of the respondents were female students, reporting 21 of them (48%).

<sup>66</sup> FACEBOOK. *What is Tagging and How Does it Work?* [online]. [2019-02-28]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/help/124970597582337?helpref=search&sr=3&query=what%20is%20tagging>>.

<sup>67</sup> FACEBOOK. *Stories*. [online]. [2019-02-28]. Available at: <[https://web.facebook.com/help/126560554619115?helpref=hc\\_global\\_nav&\\_rdr=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/help/126560554619115?helpref=hc_global_nav&_rdr=1&_rdr)>.



Age (years old)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
7	1	2%
8	37	84%
9	6	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 2:** Respondent's age

Source: own processing, 2019

According to Scheme 2, a majority of the respondents were 8 years old, recorded 37 of them (84%). This was followed by 6 respondents (14%) at the age of 9 years old. There was only 1 respondent (2%) at the age of 7 years old.

#### 4.1.2 Respondents' Knowledge on Malaysian Traditional Children's Games

The findings in this section were related to the students' knowledge and understanding level of Malaysian traditional children's games before and after joining the „Jom Main!“ workshop, such as have they ever heard about and played any Malaysian traditional children's games before joining the workshop? Did the games workshop help participants gain a better understanding of Malaysian traditional children's games? Were they able to name some of the games after participating in the workshop?

Question: Have you ever heard about Malaysian traditional children's games before?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	75%
No	11	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 3:** Respondents' knowledge on Malaysian traditional children's games before joining „Jom Main!“ workshop

Source: own processing, 2019

Scheme 3 revealed that a majority of the respondents had heard about Malaysian traditional children's games before participating in the „Jom Main!“ workshop, reporting 33 of them (75%) while the rest of the respondents had never heard about Malaysian traditional children's games, reporting 11 of them (25%).

Question: Have you ever played any Malaysian traditional children's games before?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	29	66%
No	15	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 4:** Respondents' interaction with Malaysian traditional children's games before joining „Jom Main!“ workshop

Source: own processing, 2019

According to Scheme 4, more than half of the respondents had played Malaysian traditional children's games before, recorded 29 of them (66%) while 15 of them (34%) had never played any Malaysian traditional children's games.

Question: Did this workshop help you better understand Malaysian traditional children's games?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	91%
No	4	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 5:** Respondents' understanding level on Malaysian traditional children's games after joining "Jom Main!" workshop

Source: own processing, 2019

Scheme 5 shows a majority of the respondents agreed that „Jom Main!“ workshop helped them gain better understanding of Malaysian traditional children's games, reporting 40 of them (91 %) while 9 of them (9%) do not think that the games workshop help them better understand Malaysian traditional children's games.

Question: Can you name some of the Malaysian traditional children's games after this workshop?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	61%
No	17	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 6:** Respondents' knowledge on Malaysian traditional children's games after joining "Jom Main!" workshop

Source: own processing, 2019

According to Scheme 6, 27 of the respondents (61%) were able to name some of the Malaysian traditional children's games after participating in the games workshop, while 17 of them (39%) couldn't name some of the Malaysian traditional children's games even though they participated in the workshop.

#### 4.1.3 Values Learned through Malaysian Traditional Children's Games

The findings in this section were related to the values and benefits gained from playing Malaysian traditional children's games, such as improving physical health, thinking skills, interpersonal and social skills, as well as building team spirit.

Question: Do Malaysian traditional children's games help train your body and brain?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	42	95%
No	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 7:** Benefits of Malaysian traditional children's games to body and brain

Source: own processing, 2019

Scheme 7 showed that most of the respondents *do* think Malaysian traditional children's games help train their body and brain, reporting 42 of them (95%) while only 2 of them (5%) do not think the games help to train their body and brain.

Question: Did you learn about team spirit through Malaysian traditional children's games?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	82%
No	8	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 8:** *The role of Malaysian traditional children's games in building team spirit*

Source: own processing, 2019

According to Scheme 8, 36 of the respondents (82%) learned about team spirit through Malaysian traditional children's games, while 8 of them (18%) did not think that they learned about team spirit through playing Malaysian traditional children's games.

#### 4.1.4 Malaysian Traditional Children's Games in Teaching Practices

The findings in this section are related to the role of Malaysian traditional children's games in teaching practices, particularly incorporating games into school subjects as activity tools.

Question: Would you like to have Malaysian traditional children's games as activity tool in any school subjects?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	41	93%
No	3	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SCHEME 9:** *The role of Malaysian traditional children's games in teaching practices*

Source: own processing, 2019

Scheme 9 revealed that most of the respondents would like to have Malaysian traditional children's games as an activity tool in any school subjects, recorded 41 of them (93%) while only 3 respondents (7%) disagree with the suggestion.

#### 4.1.5 Summary of the Findings from Offline Campaign

The data obtained from 44 respondents was analysed and shown in the tables above. A majority of the respondents revealed that they gained more knowledge of Malaysia traditional children's games after participating in the workshop. This included, getting to know the evolution of toys and games, how to differentiate traditional toys and modern toys, and discovering the names of some Malaysian traditional children's games.

The result also shows that most of the participants do think that Malaysian traditional children's games improve their physical health, mental skills and social skills after they were given the chance to explore and play various traditional games. Participants were required to move their hands, legs, and body when they played with games such as *Zero Point*, *Coconut Shoes*, *Batu Seremban*, *Ceper* and *Gasing*. They also learned to use their brain and stayed focussed when playing with games like *Congkak*, *Animal Chess*, *Chinese Checkers*, *Tangram*, *Connect Four* and *Card Games*. Participants also learned to work with team members and communicate when they played in a group.

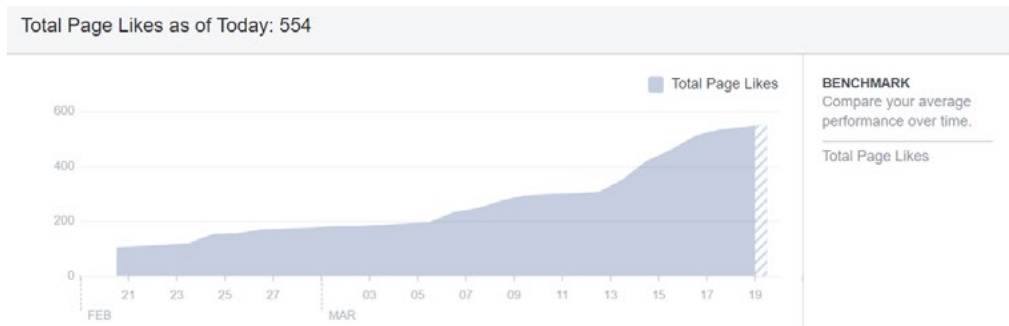
The findings also revealed that participants wish to include Malaysian traditional children's games in school subjects as a majority of the participants responded in the survey questionnaire that they agreed to use traditional toys and games as an educational or learning tool in school subjects.

## 4.2 Project Findings for Online Campaign („Jom Main!“ Facebook Page)

This section discusses the data and statistics collected from the „Jom Main!“ Facebook page during the first month of the online campaign period, which was from 19th February 2019 until 19th March 2019. The data collected includes the total number of likes and followers for the „Jom Main!“ page, demographic data about the people who like the page, the reach and engagement for each post during the first month of the online campaign period.

### 4.2.1 Fans and Followers Demographics

The findings in this section are related to the demographic data about the people who like the „Jom Main!“ page based on the age and gender information they provided in their user profiles. The number was an estimate as at 19th March 2019.



**FIGURE 1:** Total number of fans on „Jom Main!“ page

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.



**FIGURE 2:** Total number of followers on „Jom Main!“ page

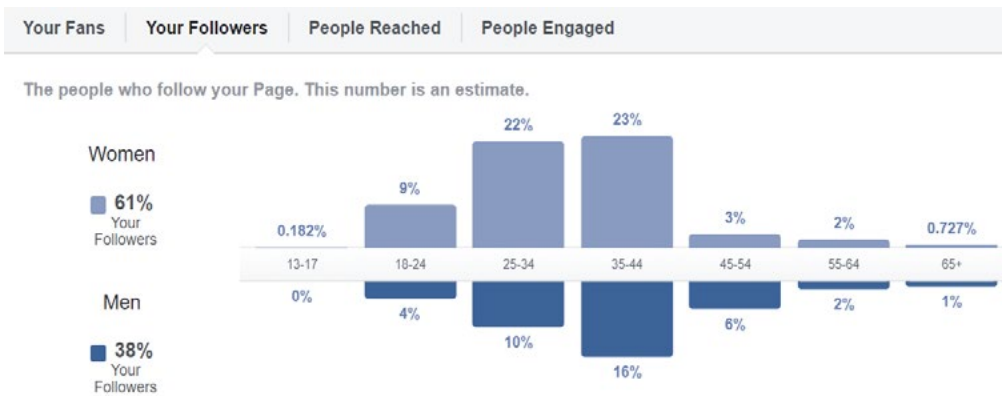
Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Figures 1 and 2 indicated that as at 19th March 2019, the total number of fans and followers on the „Jom Main!“ page were 554 and 552 respectively. The page was created on 12th February 2019 and published to the public on 19th February 2019. According to the insights provided by Facebook, in the first four weeks of the online campaign period „Jom Main!“ managed to invite and attract more than 500 people to like and follow the page, and this translates to an increase of 138 fans per week.



**FIGURE 3:** Demographic data about fans based on age and gender

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.



**FIGURE 4:** Demographic data about followers based on age and gender

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

According to Figure 3, which is a screenshot from Facebook, a majority of the fans of the page are women, recorded 61% of the total fans, while 38% of the fans are men. The same goes to followers, based on Figure 4, a majority of them are women, recorded 61% of the total followers, while 38% of the followers are men. In terms of the age of fans and followers, most of the women fall under the age range of 35-44 years, reporting 23%, followed by age 25-34 years, which recorded 22%, and age 18-24 years (9%). While for men, most of the fans and followers are between the age range of 35-44 years, reporting 16%, followed by age 25-34 years (10%) and age 45-54 years (6%).



Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
Malaysia	443	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	224	English (US)	212
Singapore	29	Penang Island, Penang...	36	English (UK)	145
Australia	10	Singapore, Central Re...	29	Simplified Chinese (Chi...	124
Hong Kong	10	Johor Bahru, Johor, Ma...	27	Traditional Chinese (Ta...	32
China	5	Klang, Selangor, Malay...	20	Malay	11
United Kingdom	5	Petaling Jaya, Selango...	20	Traditional Chinese (H...	11
Philippines	5	Hong Kong, Hong Kong	10	French (France)	4
India	4	Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia	8	German	2
Japan	4	Puchong, Selangor, Ma...	8	Dutch	2
Taiwan	4	Seremban, Negeri Se...	7	Arabic	1
See More					

**FIGURE 5** Demographic data about fans based on country, city and language

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Country	Your Followers	City	Your Followers	Language	Your Followers
Malaysia	443	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	224	English (US)	212
Singapore	29	Penang Island, Penang...	36	English (UK)	146
Australia	10	Singapore, Central Re...	29	Simplified Chinese (Chi...	123
Hong Kong	10	Johor Bahru, Johor, Ma...	27	Traditional Chinese (Ta...	32
China	5	Klang, Selangor, Malay...	20	Malay	11
United Kingdom	5	Petaling Jaya, Selango...	20	Traditional Chinese (H...	11
Philippines	5	Hong Kong, Hong Kong	10	French (France)	4
India	4	Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia	8	German	2
Japan	4	Puchong, Selangor, Ma...	8	Dutch	2
Taiwan	4	Seremban, Negeri Se...	7	Arabic	1
See More					

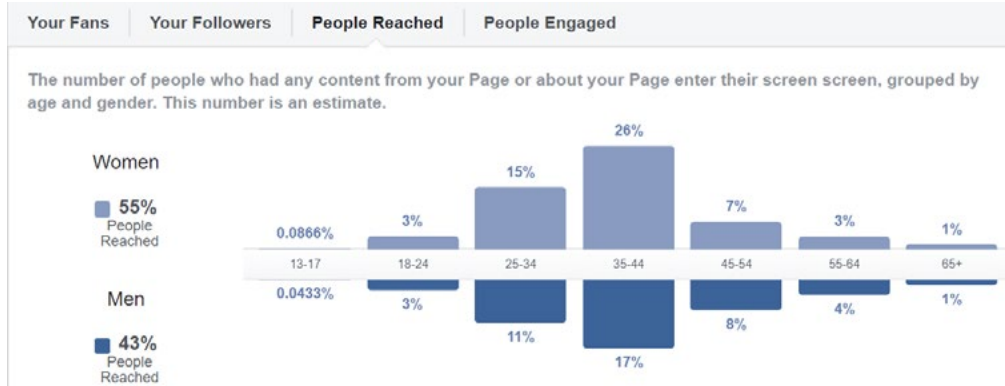
**FIGURE 6** Demographic data about followers based on country, city and language

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Based on the insights provided by Facebook, Figures 5 and 6 showed that with respect to the location and language of the page's fans and followers, most of them are from Malaysia, recorded 443 (80%) of the total, followed by Singapore (29), Australia (10) and Hong Kong (10). Among these Malaysian fans and followers, the majority are staying in Kuala Lumpur, reporting 224 (40%) of the total, followed by Pulau Pinang (36) and Singapore (29). The major language used by the page's fans and followers is English (64%), followed by Chinese (30%) and Malay (2%).

#### 4.2.2 Reach and Engagement from the Use of Online Campaign

The findings in this section are related to the number of people who had reacted to the „Jom Main!“ page or posts, such as likes, comments, shares or clicks, discussing the page, or any content from the „Jom Main!“ page. The following graph shows age, gender, country, city and language. These numbers were an estimate as at 19th March 2019.



**FIGURE 7:** People reached by age and gender

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

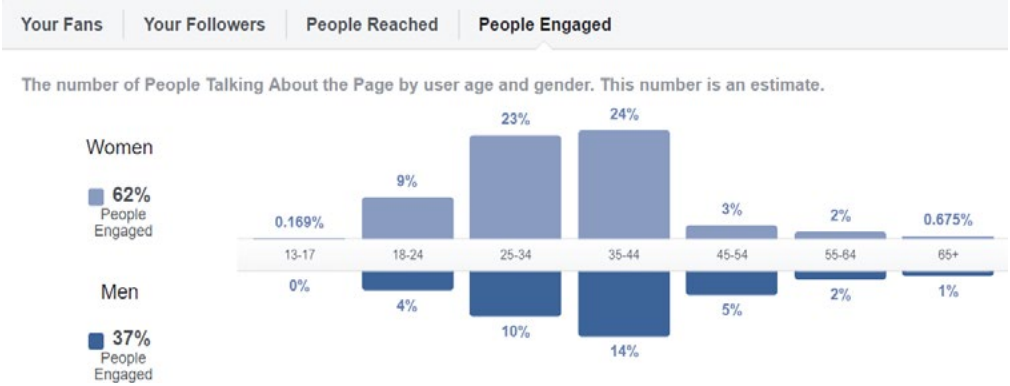
Figure 7 indicated that a majority of the people who saw the „Jom Main!“ page and its content were women, reporting 55% of the total, while the other 43% were men. Most of these people are fall under the group of 35-44 years old category, which recorded 26% for women and 17% for men. This is followed by the group of 25-34 years old, in which women recorded 15% of the respondents and men reporting 11%. For the group of 45-54 years old, 7% were women and 8% were men.

Country	People Reached	City	People Reached	Language	People Reached
Malaysia	2,033	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	970	English (US)	1,086
Singapore	144	Penang Island, Penang...	269	English (UK)	526
Philippines	19	Petaling Jaya, Selango...	182	Simplified Chinese (Chi...	510
Australia	17	Singapore, Central Re...	144	Traditional Chinese (Ta...	95
Hong Kong	13	Kuantan, Pahang, Mal...	73	Malay	45
Taiwan	13	Klang, Selangor, Malay...	58	Traditional Chinese (H...	29
United Kingdom	10	Johor Bahru, Johor, Ma...	52	Indonesian	3
United States of America	9	Puchong, Selangor, Ma...	40	Japanese	3
China	7	Shah Alam, Selangor, ...	33	Vietnamese	3
Japan	7	Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia	32	Arabic	2
See More					

**FIGURE 8:** People reached by country, city and language

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

In terms of people reached by country, Figure 8 showed that a majority of people who saw the „Jom Main!“ page and its content were from Malaysia (recorded 2033), followed by Singapore (144) and Philippines (19). The Figure also indicated that, most people who saw the page’s content were staying in Kuala Lumpur (reporting 970), followed by Pulau Pinang (269) and Petaling Jaya, Selangor (182). Among these people, a majority used English as their main language (recorded 1612), followed by Chinese (634) and Malay (45).



**FIGURE 9:** People engaged by age and gender

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Figure 9 indicated that a majority of the people who talked about the page, react, comment, shared and clicked the post, were women (reporting 62% of the total), while the other 37% were men. Most of the women who engaged with the page and posts were between the age 35-44 years (recorded 24%), followed by 25-34 years (23%) and 18-24 years (9%). Most of the men who engaged with the page and posts were between the age of 35-44 (recorded 14%), followed by 25-34 years (10%) and 45-54 years (5%).

Country	People Engag...	City	People Engag...	Language	People Engag...
Malaysia	471	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	243	English (UK)	251
Singapore	31	Penang Island, Penang...	37	English (US)	183
Hong Kong	10	Singapore, Central Re...	31	Simplified Chinese (Chi...	121
Australia	10	Johor Bahru, Johor, Ma...	27	Traditional Chinese (Ta...	25
Philippines	7	Petaling Jaya, Selango...	23	Traditional Chinese (H...	10
United Kingdom	5	Klang, Selangor, Malay...	20	Malay	9
India	5	Hong Kong, Hong Kong	10	French (France)	4
China	5	Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia	9	German	2
Japan	4	Shah Alam, Selangor, ...	8	Dutch	2
Taiwan	3	Puchong, Selangor, Ma...	7	Italian	1
See More					

**FIGURE 10:** People reached by country, city and language

Source: FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Figure 10 showed that a majority of the people who engaged with the „Jom Main!“ page are from Malaysia (recorded 471), followed by Singapore (31) and Hong Kong (10). Most of these people stayed in Kuala Lumpur (reporting 243), followed by Pulau Pinang (37) and Singapore (31). People who engaged with the page and its posts mainly used English (434), followed by Chinese (156) and Malay (9). In the first month of the online campaign, there were a total number of 29 posts published. The content included introduction of *Sepak Takraw*, *Wau*, *Gasing*, *Marbles*, *Fighting Fish Game*, *Card Games*, *Tepuk Terup Game*, *Bamboo Dragonfly*, „Jom Main!“ Malaysian traditional children’s games workshop, and Facebook giveaway contest. The published topics for the „Jom Main!“ Facebook page from 19 February to 19th March 2019 in brief are as follows:

Date	Topic	Type
19-2-2019	Various Malaysian traditional children’s games	YouTube link
20-2-2019	Sepak Takraw as Malaysian national game	Photo
21-2-2019	Traditional games used as Bank Negara coins design	Video
22-2-2019	Preparation on „Jom Main!“ workshop	Photo
23-2-2019	Traditional games and activities for weekend	Website link
24-2-2019	Kite Flying – Introduction	Video
25-2-2019	Wau - Introduction (1)	Photo
26-2-2019	Wau - Introduction (2)	Photo
27-2-2019	Kite Festival in Pasir Gudang	Website link
28-2-2019	Marbles – Introduction	Photo
1-3-2019	Thank you note to „Jom Main!“ workshop sponsors	Photos
2-3-2019	Recap on „Jom Main!“ workshop (1): Various games	Photo album
3-3-2019	Recap on „Jom Main!“ workshop (2): Briefing session	Photo album
4-3-2019	Recap on „Jom Main!“ workshop (3): Origami session	Photo album
5-3-2019	Recap on „Jom Main!“ workshop (4): Games interaction	Photo album
6-3-2019	Coconut Shoes Race – Introduction	Video
7-3-2019	Tin Toys and Games – Introduction	Video
8-3-2019	Introduction to GohKaki Childhood Museum	Website link
9-3-2019	Mickey Mouse and traditional games crossover	Video
10-3-2019	Fighting Fish Game – Introduction	Video
11-3-2019	Gasing – Introduction	Photo
12-3-2019	How to play Gasing	YouTube link
13-3-2019	Card Games – Introduction	Video
14-3-2019	Bamboo Dragonfly – Introduction	Photo
15-3-2019	Thank you note to followers	Graphic
16-3-2019	Tepuk Terup Game – Introduction	Video
17-3-2019	„Jom Main!“ page round 1 giveaway	Graphic
18-3-2019	Sepak Takraw – Introduction	Photo
19-3-2019	How to play Sepak Takraw	YouTube link

**SCHEME 10:** „Jom Main!“ Facebook posts from 19 February to 19 March 2019

Source: own processing>.

In terms of posts reached, out of the total 29 posts published in the first month, as at 19th March 2019, there was 1 post that achieved more than 600 reached, 2 posts above 500 reached, 1 post above 400 reached, 8 posts above 300 reached, 6 posts above 200 reached, 8 posts above 100 reached and 3 posts below 100 reached.

Reach	Number of posts
600 – 699	1
500 – 599	2
400 – 499	1
300 – 399	8
200 – 299	6
100 – 199	8
0 – 99	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

**SCHEME 11:** *Numbers of posts and reached achieved*

Source: own processing, data extracted from FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

Based on Scheme 11, it is clearly shown that most of the posts reached are in between 100 to 400, in which reporting 76% of the total posts. While for post engagement, during the first four weeks of the campaign period, as at 19th March 2019, out of the total of 29 posts, there is 1 post with more than 250 engagement, 4 posts with more than 100 engagement, 12 posts with more than 50 engagement, and 12 posts with less than 50 engagement.

Engagements	Number of posts
250 – 299	1
200 – 249	0
150 – 199	0
100 – 149	4
50 – 99	12
0 – 49	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

**SCHEME 12:** *Numbers of posts and engagements*

Source: own processing, data extracted from FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.

According to Scheme 12, most of the posts have achieved 0 - 100 engagements, recorded 83% of the total. Scheme 13 showed the top 5 posts from 19th February 2019 to 19th March 2019 with the most total reached and engagement as at 19th March 2019.

Published	Post Content	Type	Reach	Engagement
1-3-2019	„Jom Main!“ Malaysian traditional children’s games workshop	Photo	645	259
28-2-2019	Marbles	Photo	526	91
17-3-2019	„Jom Main!“ page round 1 giveaway contest	Photo	520	120
24-2-2019	Kite Flying	Video	438	121
6-3-2019	Tepuk Terup Game	Video	397	90

**SCHEME 12:** *Top 5 posts from 19 February to 19 March 2019*

Source: own processing, data extracted from FACEBOOK. People. [online]. [2019-03-19]. Available at: <<https://web.facebook.com/jommainmain/insights/?section=navPeople>>.



### 4.2.3 Summary of the Findings from Online Campaign

The data and statistics collected from the „*Jom Main!*“ Facebook page between 19th February 2019 and 19th March 2019, showed positive progress. The number of fans and followers for the page steadily increased since it was first published on 19th February 2019. According to the figures provided by Facebook, at least 100 new followers joined the page's community every week. The page also managed to reach its targeted audience as the data showed that more than 80% of the total fans and followers are Malaysian. These people are staying in urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, Pulau Pinang and Johor Bahru.

In terms of posts reach and engagement, the data also revealed that about half of the women and men saw the page's content, however, most of the people who reacted to the page, such as liked, shared and comment on the posts were women. The data also indicated that people who are actively engaged with the page were mostly young adults and those in the middle-aged group from 25 to 44 years old.

The result showed that out of the 29 posts published from 19th February to 19th March 2019, nearly 90% of the posts performed well, in which they got more than 100 reached. About 10% of the posts were out-performing and got more than 500 reached. This means the content not only reached out to followers, but also non-followers on Facebook.

The study also found that most of the posts recorded engagement with followers. The followers reacted to the posts published, such as liked, shared and commented on the posts. The most engaging post during the one-month period was the sharing on the „*Jom Main!*“ Malaysian traditional children's games workshop. This is followed by posts on the Marbles, giveaway contest, Kite Flying and *Tepuk Terup* Game. Followers also responded to topics on *Coconut Shoes Race*, *Gasing*, *Card Games*, *Bamboo Dragonfly* and *Sepak Takraw*.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Malaysian traditional children's games have been around for generations. There is plenty of research about the values and benefits of playing traditional children's games, but there is very little research about how we can effectively preserve, promote and relive Malaysian traditional children's games and pass them on to the next generation. Hence, this project is vital to provide beneficial insights on the effectiveness of using a campaign as a media communication tool to educate and share knowledge on Malaysian traditional children's games to children and the general public. The primary goal of this project is to reintroduce Malaysian traditional children's games to the public, especially children, parents and educators using a campaign method, so that they can gain a better understanding about the games and their values. In this project, there were two research objectives. Research objective one was to educate children on traditional children's games so that this unique heritage can be passed on to the younger generation. Research objective two was to highlight the significance of traditional children's games in reference to cultural preservation, child's growth and development, as well as education. To address these objectives, a mix of offline and online campaign strategies were carried out through a games workshop and a Facebook fans page. Both research objectives were achieved. The results from both games workshop and Facebook page confirm that a social campaign is an effective tool for promoting Malaysian traditional children's games among the public and children.

The research on the „*Jom Main!*“ Malaysian traditional children's games workshop discusses the values of Malaysian traditional children's games from a children's perspective. The games workshop has allowed the researcher to gain insights from the participants. The data collected from the survey showed that participants benefited from the games workshop, such as getting to know more about Malaysian traditional children's games, learning how to play the games and experience the benefits brought by traditional children's games.

Apart from the quantitative data obtained through a survey, the researcher also conducted observations on the responses and body language of the participants. Participants were seen happily participating in every session of the two-hour games workshop. They paid attention to the briefing on the evolution of toys, and expressed strong interest when games experts looked for games demo volunteers. In the hands-on session, participants were also able to follow instructions on how to make origami and did not hesitate to ask questions if they needed further assistances. During the games' interaction session, participants were seen actively playing and engaged in different types of traditional children's games. At the end of the games workshop, students also expressed their wish to have more learning through playing sessions like these in the future.

The overall result gained from the „*Jom Main!*“ workshop supported the belief that Malaysian traditional children's games are effective educational tools for learning and motivating. The understanding of students' perceptions on using such games as an educational tool provided ideas for educators to incorporate traditional children's games in classroom teaching and learning in the future. The research on the games workshop also indicated that a social campaign is helpful and productive in delivering messages to its target audience and meeting its objectives. Children learned how to play the games by imitating how the games experts played the games. They watched what their friends did during the games interaction session and took them as a model. The result was similar to those proved in the Social Cognitive Theory.

In terms of the online campaign, the research findings from the „*Jom Main!*“ Facebook page were also beneficial for researchers, campaigners, cultural and arts workers in designing their research and communication methods. Based on the findings, the data and statistics collected from the „*Jom Main!*“ Facebook page between 19th February 2019 and 19th March 2019 showed that the online campaign progressed smoothly and effectively in creating public awareness of Malaysian traditional children's games. The page managed to reach its target audience and the number of fans and followers grew steadily. Moreover, when the page's followers were exposed to repeating campaign messages, they also responded and reacted to the message delivered. The result showed that an online campaign brought impact and influence to the audience in the long run, as suggested by the Social Cognitive Theory and media effects theories.

The results from the online campaign also revealed several practical implications. Unlike other media channels, such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television which require the campaigners or marketers to pay for any media placement, social media such as Facebook is a low or no cost platform for those who are working on a tight or no budget. With Facebook, users can reach out to a wider audience or target a specific group of people who are interested in certain topics or issues based on location, age, gender, interests and more. Facebook is easy to use, and it also gives flexibility in terms of the number of postings, time to publish the posts, and the creativity in using photos, videos, graphics, texts and links as content. Additionally, whatever is published by the page admin on Facebook, it is forever on the page unless the page admin removes it. This allowed all the campaign messages to stay online for a longer period of time, so that the users and public can visit the page anytime and retrieve the content.

The purpose of this project was to promote Malaysian traditional children's games to children and the public so that they can gain values and benefits from playing Malaysian traditional children's games. It is undeniable that children nowadays are mostly surrounded by modern games. Malaysian traditional children's games can be used as an alternative, effective tool for learning and teaching. The research objectives for this project were achieved. Through the use of a games workshop and Facebook campaign, the results from both findings revealed that a social campaign is one of the most appropriate mediums to pass on the knowledge of traditional children's games to the present and younger generation.

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## Axiocentric Teaching And Learning About Media In The Context Of School Practice

### ABSTRACT

Axiocentric teaching and learning about media is one of the ways of media teaching and learning that emphasizes the values and evaluation process in relation to the media and its products (Kačínová, 2015). The focus of the educational process is on the formation of personality through the media. It also pays attention to the value orientations and value systems of individuals in the context of media presentations and to those developed under the influence of the media or during interaction with it. At the same time, this kind of media teaching and learning cultivates the critical thinking of pupils in the interaction with the value representations promoted by the media, thus revealing the intentions of media content creators in this area. This kind of media learning leads directly to the essence of media education being perceived as an educational topic in the content of school education. The main aim of our study is to provide a theoretical background to this topic and present the results of empirical research which focused on an analysis of case studies of school practice, observation of teaching and interviews with teachers, through which we demonstrate ways of implementing axiocentric teaching and learning about media in selected Slovak schools. At the end of the paper, we clarify the importance of the educational process for the development of the individual in their interaction with the media.

### KEY WORDS

Values. Media. Axiocentric teaching and learning about media. Critical thinking. Primary and secondary schools. Slovakia.

# 1. Introduction

The media in each era of its development is associated with an impact on the mentality of society and the individual. Through the development of society, we can see how powerful the influence of the media is.<sup>1</sup> The changes it brings about are of a strong socio-cultural nature, since, when under the influence of the media and its content, individuals think about and understand the world differently and their experiences change their value systems.

The cultural and social changes that the media and its content cause are related to the promotion of a wide range of value frameworks. Multiplied by the influence of postmodernism with its characteristic instability, fluidity,<sup>2</sup> variability, dynamics, plurality and fragmentation,<sup>3</sup> and therefore characteristics that also affect the perception of value categories and norms, a maze of values in the context of media culture is created. This is particularly difficult for young people to orientate and the value meanings presented by the media often contradict each other.<sup>4</sup> Changes deriving from continuous technological advancement and global communication are also reflected in the superficiality of thinking that has profoundly pushed<sup>5</sup> a transient and provisional lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> Postmodern young people under the influence of a climate of relativization or the rejection of constant ethical norms and principles find themselves in a state of value confusion as they lack support points and remain dependent on themselves, their decisions, opinions and feelings. Polačková also recalls Jurina's statement which says that if a person rejects moral and ethical principles, they can start wondering until they find themselves in real chaos.<sup>7</sup> Gáliková Tolnaiová also says that postmodernism is paradoxical, full of fear, uncertainty and contradictions.<sup>8</sup>

Developing the ability to orientate in the media and in the values presented by it, as well as highlighting significant value representations, is realized through axiocentric teaching and media learning, which concentrates on the values and the evaluation process in interactions with the media and its products.<sup>9</sup> In a process in which the media acts as objects and means of shaping the axiological and moral aspects of personality,<sup>10</sup> pupils develop a primary sensitivity to the values presented in the media, as well as critical thinking towards value media presentations. This makes the selection of quality content conditional on the values being the subject of observation, analysis, comparison, evaluation and subsequent internalization.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HUBINÁKOVÁ, H., MIKULA, M.: The importance of the Internet in the Life of Students of Media Studies. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> BAUMAN, Z.: *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge : Polity press, 2000, s. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> REIFOVÁ, I.: *Slovník mediální komunikace*. Praha : Portál, 2004, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: *Teoretické východiská učenia (sa) o médiách*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2018, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> MOGHADDAM, A. A. et al.: Three of concepts: Modernism, Postmodernism and globalization. In *Elixir Soc. Sci.*, 2012, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 6648. [online]. [2019-09-13]. Available at: <[https://www.academia.edu/2112210/Three\\_of\\_concepts\\_Modernism\\_Postmodernism\\_and\\_globalization](https://www.academia.edu/2112210/Three_of_concepts_Modernism_Postmodernism_and_globalization)>.

<sup>6</sup> TORNERO, J., VARIS, T.: *Media literacy and new humanism*. Moscow : UNESCO, 2010, p. 13. [online]. [2019-09-13]. Available at: <<https://iite.unesco.org/pics/publications/en/files/3214678.pdf>>.

<sup>7</sup> JURINA, J.: *Stručný prehľad dejín filozofie: Postmodernizmus*. Ružomberok : Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku, 2007, p. 156.; According to: POLAČKOVÁ, A.: Krátka reflexia k ponímaniu moderny a postmoderny. In *Annales Scientia Politica*, Prešov : Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 2012, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 74. [online]. [2019-08-15]. Available at: <<https://www.unipo.sk/public/media/17464/ASP%201-2012%20Polackova.pdf>>.

<sup>8</sup> GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: *Problém výchovy na prahu 21. storočia*. Bratislava : IRIS, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: *Teoretické východiská učenia (sa) o médiách*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2018, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: *Teória a prax mediálnej výchovy: mediálna výchova ako súčasť všeobecného školského vzdelávania*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2015, p. 51.

Axiocentric media education, which fulfills what professionals<sup>12</sup> dealing with modern media educational concepts lack, therefore supervises the formation of the value system, the attitudes of the individual and the formation of what he/she should be, not only what he/she should know.<sup>13</sup> It tries to „interpret“ individual values, their meaning in accordance with their true nature, and at the same time, tries to find a meaningful place in the life of the individual for them. It teaches pupils to establish a relationship with their own lives, with themselves and with the values that the individual professes.<sup>14</sup> This kind of media teaching and learning teaches pupils not to be passive, but tries to make them realize the influence of the media and to reveal the value messages that they are trying to put out to the recipients. Active recipients, on the other hand, will not surrender to these media pressures. They can think soberly and critically and reevaluate the quality of value statements in relation to their own lives. This kind of media learning, in particular, not only develops social-affective qualities, but also cognitive qualities of individuals (with a critical approach that is key to media education).<sup>15</sup>

For the process of value transmission in the educational process, the centre of such media education, the starting point is the process of affective learning, including the formation of feelings, emotions, attitudes, values, interests, attention and motivation. In the context of media education, a model has been proposed which is the application of the taxonomy of educational goals in the affective area by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1969) and its basic levels: receiving, responding, evaluating, integration and the integration of values.<sup>16</sup> According to Kačínová's model<sup>17, 18</sup>, these are the following stages<sup>19</sup>:

- 1. Receiving of the values presented by media** – The first step is to realize the values presented in the media; there is then a willingness to accept them and pay particular attention to them. It is therefore important for pupils to actively search and discover the values in the media, be able to distinguish them and assess their importance. This is due to the fact that the media often produces less valuable content.
- 2. Responding to the values presented by media** – This requires active attention and is where the recipients can express their consent and take a positive attitude to the values presented in the media. What is important is a strong motivation for pupils to be able to receive and internalize the desired values. This can be problematic because pupils may have a resistant attitude towards values that are inconsistent with their current value settings. For effectively responding to presented media values, it is necessary to change users' habits and their ability to orientate their attention to valuable media content.
- 3. Evaluating the values presented by media** – The recipients are convinced and aware of the significance of the values presented in the media and can evaluate them and take a positive attitude towards them. At the same time, they can identify with them and

<sup>12</sup> El consejo de Redacción. Editorial: La Formación del Profesorado en Educación Mediática. In *Educación mediática y formación del profesorado. Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 2018, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 11-12. [online]. [2019-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.aufop.com/aufop/revistas/artb/impresa/206/editorial>>.

<sup>13</sup> See also: GUTIÉRREZ, A., TYNER, K.: Educación para los medios, alfabetización mediática y competencia digital. In *Comunicar*, 2012, Vol. 19, No. 38, p. 31 – 39. ISSN 1134-3478.

<sup>14</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: *Teória a prax mediálnej výchovy: mediálna výchova ako súčasť všeobecného školského vzdelávania*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2015, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> PETRANOVÁ, D.: Does media education at schools develop student's critical competences? In *Communication Today*, 2011, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup> KRATHWOHL, D. R., BLOOM, B. S., MASIA, B. B.: *Taxonomy of educational objectives. The classification of educational goals. Handbook II.: Affective domain*. New York : Rerp. D. McKay Co., Inc., 1969, p. 196.

<sup>17</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: *Teória a prax mediálnej výchovy: Mediálna výchova ako súčasť všeobecného školského vzdelávania*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2018, p. 51 – 52.

<sup>18</sup> See also: KAČINOVÁ, V., PETRANOVÁ, D., KOLČÁKOVÁ, V.: Axiocentric media education as a strategy for the cultivation of media recipients. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> We add our own commentary to the original characteristics as mentioned in the sources.



integrate them into their value systems. They prefer media content with positive values. It is important to develop critical thinking so pupils can assess the quality of values and their true meaning or reveal their distortions.

4. **Organization of the values presented by media into the personality value system** – To integrate the media's presented values into their own value system, it is important to synchronize values into one whole and create meaningful relationships between them.
5. **Characterization by a value – integration of the values presented by media into personal character structure** – This is the final and most important point because it is a demanding process in terms of time and the internal motivation of individuals. The values are arranged into a coherent unit in the character structure of personality. These changes in personality are permanent and desired through different forms of education.

The current situation in Slovak primary and secondary schools in the teaching of axiocentric media education is favourable because schools include value-oriented topics in their curriculums. This has been demonstrated by an analysis of two methodological manuals, *Examples of Good Practices in Media Education Teaching at Primary and Secondary Schools*<sup>20</sup> and *Good Media: Examples of good practices in media education teaching at primary and secondary schools*.<sup>21</sup> The issues of advertising and the impact of social networks and the Internet are mostly dealt with in schools. The states of educational practices in this given area have become the subject of our research.

## 2. Objective and methodology of the research

Our study focused on the presentation of results of qualitatively designed research on school practices regarding axiocentric media education. The research problem takes the form of three research questions:

1. What is the relationship of pupils to the selected media's presented values or their values in relation to the media (level of receiving, responding, value valuing)?
2. Do pupils realize the influence of the media on their own value orientation and value systems?
3. How do teachers teaching media education perceive the importance of value-oriented media education (also in competition with other media education orientations)?

The following methods were chosen to address the core questions of the research problem:

- Case study – for a thorough and in-depth examination of the implementation of axiocentric media education at selected schools;
- Structured observation – to determine the relationship of pupils with the values presented in the media space and to identify if pupils feel the impact and influence of the media on their own personalities;
- Interview – to identify the perception and opinions of teachers on the importance of an axiocentric focus on media education.

When implementing the research, we applied an observation sheet made by us. It consisted of a table containing 10 monitored activities and focused on the process of value processing by pupils in connection with the media. These monitored activities enabled us to answer research questions no. 1 and 2.

<sup>20</sup> See also: KAČINOVÁ, V. et al.: *Príklady dobrej praxe výučby mediálnej výchovy na základných a stredných školách*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> See also: KAČINOVÁ, V. et al.: *Dobré médiá : Príklady dobrej praxe výučby mediálnej výchovy na základných a stredných školách*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2017.

Value transmission algorithm	Monitored activities	Pupils' response
Receiving	Are pupils aware of the value of the media?	
	Are pupils sensitive to the value of the media?	
	Can pupils correctly designate (identify) value in relation to the media?	
	Do pupils understand what a particular value means in relation to the media?	
Responding	Are pupils willing to pay active attention to the value of the media?	
	Are pupils active in the debate on the topic of concrete value in the context of the media?	
	Do they respond to what the teacher says about the values?	
Valuing	Are pupils convinced of the significance of values in the media?	
	Do pupils have a positive or negative attitude towards the values presented in relation to the media?	
	Are they willing to follow the values in their lives? (practice the values)	

SCHEME 1: Observation sheet

Source: own processing, 2019

For the interview, we used pre-prepared questions for teachers that focused on identifying their perception and opinions on axiocentric media education in relation to answering research question no. 3.

## 2.1 The research sample

The selection of the research sample determined the topics the schools discussed regarding media education. It was crucial for us that there were topics about values and evaluation in relation to the media in the thematic teaching plan. After addressing several schools, we finally selected a research sample consisting of three schools: the Private Joint School in Námestovo, a secondary grammar school in Bratislava and a private primary school in Banská Bystrica. Media education is classified as a separate school subject at all the above mentioned schools.

Name of the school	Topic of the school subject	Time for media education	Observed class
Private Joint School, Námestovo	Opinion or fact in the news	0,5 hour per week	fifth
Secondary grammar school, Bratislava	Manipulative techniques - Disinformation campaign	0,5 hour per week	second
Private primary school, Banská Bystrica	A true and virtual friendship	1 hour per week	eighth

SCHEME 2: Research sample overview

Source: own processing, 2019

## 3. Results

The research was realized at the selected schools from March to April 2019. In accordance with **research question no. 1**, we observed the teaching process and investigated the first stages of value processing by pupils according to the abovementioned theoretical parameters. The other two were irrelevant to our research as their evaluation goes beyond the context of the observed teaching.

### 3.1 The level of receiving

The result of the observation was the finding that the pupils were aware of the values of the media (truth, friendship). On the topic of differentiating between factual information and opinion or media spread disinformation and manipulation, they showed that they understood what the value of the truth is based on their own experiences from the Internet and under the influence of tabloids. They could correctly identify the value of truth in a disinformation context. They used their inner vigilance to not let someone put them under pressure to say something or accept a foreign, unverified opinion without using critical thinking. At the same time, it was shown that students have more difficulty reading opinion-based news because news is not entirely attractive to them (due to their ages and interests). Reading and analyzing the given texts in the classroom, however, provided the opportunity to think more about the value of truth in media content.

Regarding the value of friendship, pupils feel the difference between real and virtual friendships. They can recognize the qualitative differences between both forms (positives and negatives), also in respect to themselves. They also showed sensitivity to threats coming from the virtual world (being influenced by news flow, the dangers coming from interactions on social networks) as they perceive them as very real because they commonly encounter them on their own or in an educational setting (from discussions with experts or media education lessons). They were able to take a relevant attitude to the topic because they are active users of social networks and are therefore very close to this topic.

### 3.2 Level of responding

Due to their ages and interests, the students actively responded to the values that the teacher explained and initiated discussion on (without pressure), and with pedagogical support, they participated in the discussions individually or in groups. The teaching activities in the lessons stimulated their attention and increased the interest of the pupils and provided a space for deeper thinking and feedback about the value received from the media (also in the form of arguing their own opinions on the topic). On the topic of media disinformation, the teacher appropriately selected interesting topics from various areas (history – „*Adolf Hitler as a perfect manipulator*,“ health care – „*the supposed danger of vaccinations*“ and so on), which, thanks to their timeliness, kept the pupils' permanent attention and motivated them. With the value of friendship, as we have already stated, pupils have experience with the virtual world so they have also tested it themselves, and consequently can approach the value based on personal experience. Students also enjoyed the exchange of views in teams on given topics.

### 3.3 Level of valuing

The students were obviously convinced of the significance (importance) of the examined values in relation to the media. We could see from their responses that they appreciated the topics in the context of expanding their own outlook and knowledge in the areas in which they take part daily (media, social networks). They were happy to discuss the possible threats from virtual space and to hear the opinions of other class members and then confront them with their own perception of the problem and their own opinions on values. On the subject of truth, students agreed that the truth is currently hard to find, not only in the media. In the media space, disinformation and assumptions are circulated by people who make posts. They realized the importance of this value for their own and social good. They also found that they just cannot take in all the information from the media and how important information balance is. At the

same time, the students expressed the opinion that the subjectivity of journalists in the media's description of an event can be very difficult to eliminate. On the topic of misinformation, pupils showed that they have experience with manipulation, and therefore are aware of the problem. However, they are willing to follow the value of truth and turn things around in their „favour“ – to go into active defense, or rather „counterattack“ (e.g. by verifying information). On the topic of friendship, the liveliness of the pupils was recorded as they wanted to personally speak about the topics because they were convinced of their individual abilities to present their positive attitudes on the subject. The teaching lesson was part of the initiated process and certainly contributed, in the case of a given value, to its better perception for pupils. According to our evaluation, the pupils were ready to think more about whether to reconsider their friendships, including virtual ones.

In **research question no. 2**, through the increased activity of pupils, we observed that they are aware of the influence of the media on their personality and value orientation and that the media can shape their character. At the same time, they are aware of the importance of selecting the media messages they receive because they have a significant impact on their personality, opinion, attitudes and behavior. On the topic of truth, students agreed that an individual can succumb to deception and half-truths without having sufficiently verified information and by receiving information that is not important for their life and having an absorbing personality. On the topic of disinformation (manipulation), the students confirmed that they not only encounter manipulative techniques in the media, but also in direct contact with other people, and have proven that they are not indifferent to manipulation and are able to diagnose it, taking their ages into consideration. On the topic of friendship, they also showed that they perceive the value of a true friend that everyone needs in life, and at the same time, they understand the difference between online and offline friendships.

In **research question no. 3**, we investigated how teachers perceive axiocentric media education. Based on the responses from the interviews, we can conclude that they are aware of the value of the media to their pupils' personalities and consider this direction of media education to be an important part of teaching and media education itself (i.e. different directions). This comes, for example, from the evaluation of one of the teachers: *„I think (media education) is very important because in today's world, young people are missing it and (...) those children tend, especially those who are not so educated, to take in information that is manipulative and engrossing. They are not able to orientate. (...) The media has a great power in terms of manipulation. (...) They are still being pushed by idols, pseudo-models, and those children (...) let the information take over without critical thinking.“*<sup>22</sup> Strengthening critical thinking and its training in the educational process is also perceived by teachers as the centre of focus in the context of the occurrence of disinformation in the media. Pupils should learn to search for multiple sources of information as well as how to check and verify the credibility of websites, especially when they provide disinformative content.

Teachers also expressed what topics they think are important in relation to the media. Despite different opinions, the consensus on the value of truth in the context of media reality prevailed. This finding corresponds to the current situation that we mainly encounter in the Internet environment, where a lot of false and misleading information circulates. This is expressed by one of the teacher's statements regarding pupils' need to direct *„their attention to the fact that what they consume in the (...) media world may not always be true, or that there are those hidden intentions of someone who sends this information out to the world. (...). The most important things nowadays are misinformation and conspiracy theories which are part of their world.“*<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview with Mgr. Katarína Miková, Námestovo, 19.3.2019

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview with Mgr. Slávka Molnárová, Bratislava, 28.3.2019

Teachers also noticed their pupils' feedback in the media education lessons. Therefore, they observed what attitudes they took towards particular values and realized that pupils' attitudes are not identical and depend, for example, on their particular family setting. In the interview the opinion that the media has the power to „educate“ was also presented, but still the greatest responsibility lies with schools. Teachers also said that they partially perceive the results of students' acceptance as being due to an increased alertness to their occurrence in the media world. In one case, we came across a way to measure the value system and critical thinking of pupils from the teachers' side through the IPAO (Institute for active citizenship) methodology.<sup>24</sup> One teacher stated that despite the more difficult possibility of modifying attitudes, there was a slight improvement with pupils.

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<sup>24</sup> IPAO (Institute for active citizenship) is an institute whose goal is to educate citizens that are active and critically thinking. Primary and secondary schools in Slovakia can participate in the Institute. The Institute focuses mainly on improving the civic competence and skills needed for life. According to: *Školy, ktoré menia svet*. [online]. [2019-08-28]. Available at: <<https://ipao.sk/portfolio-items/skoly-ktore-menia-svet/>>.



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*Mariana Kitsa, Iryna Mudra*

## Smartphones In Journalism

### ABSTRACT

Nowadays the smartphone is an inalienable attribute of the journalist. Journalists use it as a supplement to professional equipment or as a substitute. It depends on the quality of the smartphone and the scope of the work of the journalist. If a journalist works in print media or online media, he can completely refuse the use of professional techniques, because modern smartphones have good built-in voice recorders and a camera that can help record an interview and make a photo of the hero of the material. For online and radio journalists, the smartphone is usually a complement to professional equipment. Special video and audio applications on smartphones help journalists quickly assemble the material and send it to the editor. Smartphones also allow journalists to broadcast live broadcasts from current affairs and be indispensable during journalistic investigations, where the use of professional techniques is impossible. This research analyzed journalistic materials in Ukrainian online media, where a smartphone was used to create journalist material, and also interviewed Ukrainian journalists to find out what features and applications of a smartphone they use for their professional activities.

### KEY WORDS

Smartphone. Journalist. Mass media. Programs. Internet media.

# 1. Introduction

The rapid development of the latest technology enables the instantaneous transmission of text, sound, picture or video at any distance and makes the cardinal review of the principles of work in many spheres, especially in journalism. Marina Ghersetti and Oscar Westlund<sup>1</sup> declare that the future of journalism and media accessing carry much significance for the future of crisis communication. Different generations have formed distinct media habits, and their uses vary in different situations. In journalism, there is a revolution in the use of smartphones instead of the usual laptops, cameras and voice recorders. Even the well-known editions (for example, The Hindustan Times) specifically teach how to use a smartphone in their work. Smartphone (smart-phone) is a cellular phone with a built-in computer and other functions such as an operating system, a browser and the ability to run software applications<sup>2</sup>. They have become fully-fledged computers that can fit into our pockets. They can download special professional software and mount video, audio, edit photos and much more, which simplifies the work of the journalist. There is no point in a broadcast journalist standing around the place of event and waiting for the camera crew to arrive when he has what he needs in his pocket. Twan Spierts says „*The best camera is the camera which you have with you.*“<sup>3</sup>

The New York Times was one of the first to determine the potential of smartphones. It began to equip its reporters with iPhones from February 2011. Ann Derry called the Apple iPhone 4 a „gaming device“ for mobile media production. The Guardian in London began a similar process in June 2012, giving employees 20 iPhones with the opportunity to shoot videos, take photos and send out materials<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, this practice has not been used in the Ukrainian media. But in their professional work Ukrainian journalists are beginning to use smartphones increasingly. After all, smartphones allow journalists to report on news wherever it happens, regardless of computers or a large number of expensive cameras and other equipment. The journalist with a smartphone can report from anywhere, armed only with a mobile phone, provided that there is adequate software and a reliable 3G or WiFi connection. But even if there is no Wi-Fi or 3G connectivity, the reporter can save video or audio on his smartphone and transfer content when he finds a reliable connection. A journalist can shoot in places where it is he not allowed to work with a video camera. Also, one can interview people with a mobile phone, when a conversation with a full television team may be an awkward. For example, Yusuf Omar uses a smartphone to cover many events. The most famous of its breed with the help of a smartphone is the material used in the Snapchat application. This is a photo application that allows you to overlay a mask on an image. Omar used it in an interview with victims of sexual abuse. Masks allowed women to defend their identity and for the first time to tell their stories without fear of becoming a subject of public debate about rape. We can hear the voices of these women, see their facial expressions - this is very important for such material. Yusuf commented so: „*Broadcasters blur their faces using silhouettes, and I feel that so much information is lost. Facial expressions are critical when people try to understand. First of all, we must see whose identity was hidden, but we have to see our eyes. You can see a piece of jaw, expressions at the head. It's much more intimate for a viewer who is trying to take a look at history.*“<sup>5</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> GHERSETTI, M., WESTLUND, O.: Habits and generational media use. In *Journalism studies*, 2018, Vol. 19, No. 7, p. 1040.

<sup>2</sup> KOLOSKOV, S.: *Smartfon, komunikator, mobilnyi telefon: yak rozriznyty y shcho vybraty dlia sebe*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <[http://media.mabila.ua/ua/articles/techno/smart\\_vs\\_comunic\\_phone/](http://media.mabila.ua/ua/articles/techno/smart_vs_comunic_phone/)>.

<sup>3</sup> SPIERTS, T.: *Up close and personal? Mobile journalist Twan Spierts on reporting with smartphones*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://onlinejournalismblog.com/2017/09/28/twan-spierts-mobile-journalism-tips/>>.

<sup>4</sup> HODGE, K.: *Journalists Creating Killer Content with Smartphones*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://contently.com/2012/12/26/journalists-creating-killer-content-with-smartphones/>>.

<sup>5</sup> BERKHEAD, S.: *Journalist of the month: Yusuf Omar*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://ijnet.org/en/story/journalist-month-yusuf-omar>>.

Yusuf himself says: „I managed to record such videos because people simply forgot that I was recording our conversation on their phone. Who wants to talk about rape, if your camera is directed to you? I'm sure that using a smartphone is the best way to tell stories.“<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Methodology

We also decided to interview Ukrainian media workers if they use their smartphones in their professional activities. The survey was held with the help of the social network Facebook. We sent messages only to those who create materials for the media, so in general 465 respondents were interviewed: radio journalists (6,5%), TV journalists (15,1%), freelancers (28%), journalists working in print media (8,6%), those who work in the Internet media (23,7%), in news agencies (5,4%), press services (8,6%), PR (1,1%), others - 3%. We posted a questionnaire on the social network Facebook, and also sent direct messages to journalists on social media. The age of interviewed respondents is as follows:

18-24 – 19,4%

25-40 – 78,5%

41-50 – 1,1%

51-65 – 1,1%

66 and more - 0%.

The questionnaire contained 11 questions, and almost each of them had the option „Your response“, which made it possible not to limit respondents to our answer variants. This helped a lot, because the respondents via their own answers have enriched our questionnaire and helped us to learn about other programs and features of the smartphone which journalists use in their professional activities. The respondent could choose more than one answer option in several questions.

## 3. Discussion

Mobile tools and applications can help journalists to reach a more specific audience. At the same time, ordinary eyewitnesses to events with their own smartphones create their own materials, and the media often publish them. That is, this gadget also helps to develop public journalism. Moreover, J. Watkins, L. Hjorth and I. Koskinen<sup>7</sup>, say that smartphones have become a poignant symbol for rethinking cultural and media studies today.

Researchers Eva Lavin de las Heras and Alba Silva Rodriguez<sup>8</sup> colligate using smartphones in the professional journalism with the emergence and developing of citizen journalism. Accordingly to their exploring, one of the most obvious consequences was the democratization of information with the so-called citizen journalism... But after this step, we are seeing a new change, these media are also beginning to use smartphones with reporters themselves not only informing through social networks but to do their work, photographers take photos with the mobile phone camera and journalists have live signals without help or other tools than their mobile phone. This allows cost savings for the environment and greater speed when reporting from anywhere so many media that are heading towards this change.

<sup>6</sup> GOSCILO, H.: Russia's ultimate celebrity: VVP as VIP objet d'art. In GOSCILO, H. (ed.): *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> WATKINS, J., HJORTH, L., KOSKINEN, I.: Wising up: Revising mobile media in an age of smartphones. In *Continuum*, 2012, Vol. 26, No. 5, p. 667.

<sup>8</sup> HERAS, E. L., RODRIGUEZ, A. S.: The Smartphones: Revolutionizing Journalism. In *2015 10th Iberian conference on information systems and technologies (cisti)*. Aveiro, Portugal : IEEE, 2015, p. 2.

In journalism studies there is a scientific question – what to call journalism, which in mostly done by using smartphones. In the book „Digital Sports Journalism“ (C. MLambert)<sup>9</sup>, the term „digital“ is used to refer to types of journalism that have been made possible by: the invention of the world wide web, the prevalence of smartphones, and the ability to collate and manage large amounts of data. He also considered „smartphone journalism“, as almost all the journalism featured in his book was designed to be consumed on a phone; but this term risks confusion with journalism actually produced on a smartphone.

Another term which is also often used to name journalism made by smartphone is „new journalism.“ In particular Alba Silva Rodriguez and Francisco Campos Freire<sup>10</sup> believe that the information designed for the „fourth screen“ had to meet the patterns of brevity, clarity, concision and accuracy, and mobile editorial platforms such as The Atavist or The Atlantic have demonstrated that the „new journalism“ has also a place on handheld devices.

We believe that the most appropriate qualification for this case is mobile journalism, though during extreme spreading of new technologies, soon there will be no need to single out different kinds of journalism, depending on the sources which were used to make the journalistic material.

Martin Vaz Alvarez<sup>11</sup> emphasizes that the latest technical improvements in mobile devices (smartphones and tablets), together with the proliferation of apps and gadgets adapted to these systems open up a new spectrum of possibilities for journalists, it being already possible to film and edit audiovisual pieces simultaneously of broadcast quality and with a much lower budget than standard television equipment needs. The work of journalists requires the fulfillment of many diverse tasks: identifying new topics, conducting research and analyzing them, using social networks, editing photos and videos, and organizing all of this. And there are many smartphone apps that can optimize your work and make it more comfortable and efficient. Attachments for journalists are an important part of the materials released on phones. They can greatly simplify and reduce the same work that we perform on a laptop. A professional journalist often does not have enough standard programs offered by smartphone manufacturers, so there is a need to find new programs that will help them in their professional activities.<sup>12</sup>

On the one hand, smartphones can help professional journalists do their work more quickly and more easily. In particular a lot of specific skills and as a result suitable applications are needed by photojournalists. Stuart Allan and Chris Peters<sup>13</sup> while examining the new tendencies in photojournalism declare that professional photojournalism's discursive authority is shown to be open to challenge by the alternative ethos of citizen imagery, with respondents' perceptions raising questions over realness, authenticity and truth-value complicating, and at times destabilising, familiar professional–amateur normative binarisms.

On the other hand, as state MV Alvarez and XP Farina<sup>14</sup>, some processes in the production of information have been shortened by new media, making epistemological expertise and technical expertise converge in the definition of the multimedia journalist. The relation between the author and the public has also morphed the meaning of authorship, now that the audience

<sup>9</sup> LAMBERT, C.: *Digital Sports Journalism*. London : Routledge, 2019, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> RODRÍGUEZ, A.: Reports in and from Smartphones: A New Way of Doing Journalism. In FREIRE, F. et al. (eds.): *Media and Metamedia Management*. Santiago de Compostela, Spain : Springer, 2017, p. 149.

<sup>11</sup> ALVAREZ, M. V.: The Future of Video-Journalism: Mobiles. In FREIRE, C. F. et al. (eds.): *Media And Metamedia Management*. Santiago de Compostela, Spain : Springer International Publishing, 2017, p. 463.

<sup>12</sup> VERCLAS, K., MECHAEAL, P.: *A Mobile Voice: The Use of Mobile Phones in Citizen Media*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <[https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadm040.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadm040.pdf)>.

<sup>13</sup> ALLAN, S., PETERS, C.: The "Public Eye" Or "Disaster Tourists". In *Digital Journalism*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 477.

<sup>14</sup> ALVAREZ, M. V., FARINA, X. P.: New Technologies and New Experts An Insight on the Idea of Expertise in Relation with New Media. In ROCHA, A. et al. (eds.): *Recent advances in information systems and technologies*, Porto Santo Island, Madeira, Portugal : Springer International Publishing AG, 2017, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 214.



plays an active role in the stories. Furthermore, using the smartphone in different spheres of life, in particular, as a means for self presentation has led to such phenomenon as selfie journalism. Undoubtedly, there are several important aspects in the area of 'selfie journalism' that require further research. For instance, the socio-economic aspects of such a practice and the qualitative alteration of the news content; on the one hand, 'selfie journalism' includes the element of citizen journalism in terms of amateur practices of sharing witnessing tokens and, as such, may pose a real threat to professional journalism.<sup>15</sup>

We definitely agree with Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Andrew Williams, Richard Sambrook, Janet Harris, Iñaki Garcia-Blanco, Lina Dencik, Stephen Cushion, Cynthia Carter and Stuart Allan<sup>16</sup>, who say that for both citizen journalists and professionals, the increasing sophistication of smartphones for news production and sharing might offer new possibilities which are particularly significant in enabling reporting in distant locations, and often empowering disenfranchised groups.

One more opportunity for journalists using smartphone is chat apps. V. Belair-Gagnon, C. Agur and N. Frisch<sup>17</sup> find that there are differences of trust depending on the functionalities of individual chat apps, and that interactions in journalistic sourcing in face-to-face and online environments affect the generation and output of news stories. Chat apps allow reporters to use open or closed networks, and adopt one of several approaches: trust the network, master the network, or abandon the network. HMSGonzales and MSGonzalez<sup>18</sup> accent on one more kind of the app chats such as chat bots. They say that journalism has tools that use artificial intelligence and instant messaging systems to send filtered and personalized information to users. These systems are known as chatbots, or conversational applications. While big media companies are developing their own applications via Messenger or Telegram, there are other companies that provide this type of service as well.

So, as we see, smartphones can help journalists in their professional work, so it is worth examining in detail the possibilities of modern phones and their use by mediaworkers.

## 4. Results

A journalist in their professional work can use any smartphone that allows them to connect accessories (tripod, lighting, etc.). The choice of a smart device usually depends on four key factors: platform, manufacturer, smartphone capabilities, cost and functionality.<sup>19</sup>

As for the types of smartphones, in the publication *Smartphone Buying Guide Part 2: Types of Smartphones*<sup>20</sup> they are divided by price level, screen size and operating system.

The price of a smartphone, as a rule, depends on the brand name and its features. So, smartphones at the price range can be divided into such levels: base, medium and high. Base-level smartphones are smartphones that do not offer anything more than a basic set of features and cost less than \$ 200. The use of a base-level smartphone usually will not be effective for

<sup>15</sup> MANIOU, T., VEGGIS, A.: Selfie Journalism: Current Practices in Digital Media. In *Studies in Media and Communication*, 2016, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. et al.: The Future of Journalism. In *Digital Journalism*, 2016, Vol. 4, No. 7, p. 809.

<sup>17</sup> BELAIR-GAGNON, V., AGUR, C., FRISCH, N.: Mobile sourcing: A case study of journalistic norms and usage of chat apps. In *Mobile media & communication*, 2018, Vol. 6, No. 11, p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> GONZALES, H. M. S., GONZALEZ, M. S.: Bots as a news service and its emotional connection with audiences. The case of Politibot. In *Doxa comunicacion*, 2017, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 122.

<sup>19</sup> BURUM, I. M.: *The Mobile Journalism Handbook: How to Make Broadcast Videos with an iPhone or iPad*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <[https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=n9osCgAAQBAJ&rdid=book-n9osCgAAQBAJ&rdot=1&source=gbs\\_vpt\\_read&pcampaignid=books\\_booksearch\\_viewport](https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=n9osCgAAQBAJ&rdid=book-n9osCgAAQBAJ&rdot=1&source=gbs_vpt_read&pcampaignid=books_booksearch_viewport)>.

<sup>20</sup> ASHBURNER, J.: *Smartphone Buying Guide Part 2: Types of Smartphones*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://smartphone.ninja/smartphone-buying-guide-part-2-types-of-smartphones/>>.

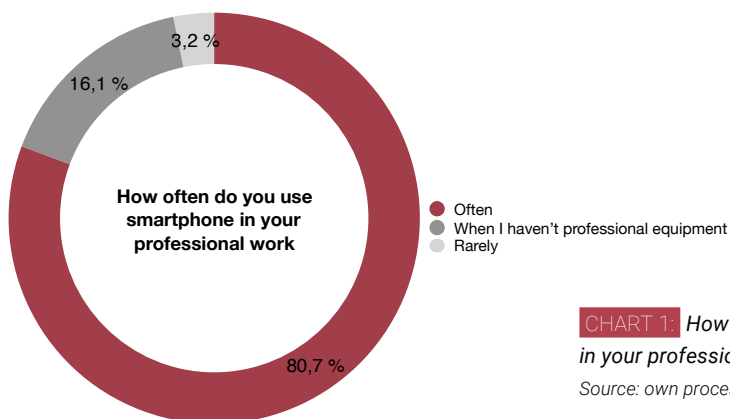
journalist work, because of the low quality of camera, small amount of memory etc. This is a good option if a journalist needs a temporary phone or for a difficult trip, where he does not want to risk taking his expensive high-speed smartphone. It can also be used simply as a method of communication.

Mid-range smartphones cost not less than \$ 200. We categorize their price from 200 to 500\$. Thanks to their powerful dual-core or quad-core processors and sufficient memory, they are capable of running programmes for journalists. They also have plenty of storage space for multimedia files, a large screen and a good camera.

These smartphones are sufficient for journalist work because they have all the necessary features and the ability to run applications.

High-end smartphones are flagship devices that cost more than \$ 500. High-speed smartphones have premium and stylish design, crisp FHD and FHD + displays, powerful processors, huge amount of RAM and megapixel cameras. They are also represented by the latest operating systems and are the first to receive updates after the release of new software. For a journalist, this level of smartphone is really powerful and will be no worse to use than a computer. With all its features it will be possible to create quick material right on the spot and promptly submit it.

Ukrainian journalists often (80,6% of respondents) use smartphones in their professional activities. Very rarely use - 3,2%, do not use at all - 0% (see Chart 1). Usually Ukrainian journalists use smartphones of average price level as the average journalist salary in Ukraine is 200-500 dollars (49,5%). Only 22,6% have smartphones for more than \$ 500, and 1,1% use a phone more expensive than \$ 1000.



**CHART 1:** *How often do you use smartphone in your professional work*

Source: own processing, 2019

Smartphones can be also divided by operating system. Android, iOS and Windows Phone are the dominant operating systems among smartphones, which means that any smartphone one buys today is likely to work on one of these three platforms.

Through Google's open source policy, Android is the world's most widely used mobile operating system, which employs about 85 percent of global smartphones<sup>21</sup>. IOS is also a popular operating system. Compared to Android, iOS is a closed operating system that can only be used on Apple devices. Perhaps the biggest advantage of purchasing a Windows-based smartphone is the continuous integration with Windows desktop and laptop computers, where you can sync music, videos, photos and documents on all your Windows devices that will be convenient for the journalist and can save time. However, despite this, Windows Phone still remains in third place among major mobile platforms, particularly because of the low app optimization and a not-too-popular app store.

<sup>21</sup> TANENBAUM, E., BOS, H.: *Sovremennyye operatsionnyye sistemy*. St. Petersburg : Piter, 2015, p. 56.

We believe that the best method for a journalist is the Android operating system or IOS. The choice between these two depends on the preferences of the journalist's interface. They have a large number of applications and opportunities for creating materials. Windows Phone can not be called optimal, but it has a significant advantage in the ability to synchronize all documents on Windows devices. Ukrainian journalists mostly use the Android operating system (59,1%), iOS 39,8% and 1,1% use Windows .

So, in order to get acquainted with the choice of a smartphone, one needs to match all the data that is collected. Choosing the perfect smartphone for a journalist is an individual matter. Here it is necessary to take into account how the journalist wants to create materials. Perhaps they want to create professional materials only with a smartphone. Then they need a powerful device, with a great camera, large screen and all other features of expensive smartphones. But the journalist will also have enough opportunities with a smartphone of average price level, which will also be able to create good material. It also depends on where the created materials will be published. In particular, if it is for Internet media, then it is quite possible to deal with a medium-sized smartphone, and it is sometimes impossible to distinguish material which was created on an expensive smartphone from that which was made by using professional equipment. Speaking about smartphones of a low price level, with poor performance, it is better to use them only as a means of communication.

When choosing a smartphone it is important to determine which additional devices or accessories are available for it. Ivo Borum gives examples of devices that he himself uses. He emphasizes that optics are very important. A wide-angle lens will give a wider perspective and make the image from the smartphone more stable. The wide lens also helps to get closer to the subject, which helps to improve the sound quality. For example, MCam, from ALM, has a solid camera lens frame with plenty of mounting points, accessories and removable objects. ExoLens Pro is a new system that uses a Zeiss lens. It is pocket sized, also has points for attachment and comes with six adapters for connecting to six types of smartphones. This wide-angle lens does not give a difference in the corners of the pictures. About the tripod, he recommends a small tripod that is easy to carry and can be used as a handle to stabilize hand-shots. If we need extra height - attach it to the car's roof or to the wall or to the cabinet. Manfrotto Pixi is manufactured with excellent quality, equipped with a rotary connection. If you need a bigger tripod and you are not against extra weight, you can try a monopod with sliding legs. The best choice is the Manfrotto 560B1. Ivo's uses a 6000 mAh Mofa battery, which gives 24 to 100 additional charge hours<sup>22</sup>.

Ivo Borum also lists his set of additional tools: *„My set consists of a wide-angle Zeiss Exolens lens, which helps to stabilize the image when working with hands. It also means that I can get closer to the subject, which helps to get a better sound recording. I also add a Manfrotto Pixi tripod, Rode Video Micro, Smart Lav + microphone, LUMIE Muse, Airstash USB flash drive, and a headset set.“*<sup>23</sup> Ukrainian journalists often use the following built-in functions of a smartphone in their professional activity: the camera (89,2%), voice recorder (71%), browser for information search (95,7%), social networking (89,2%), GPS- maps (58,1%), MS Office (54,8%), Notes (2,2%), Graphic Editors (1,1%), File Editors (1,1%). This can be both for searching and verifying information, and in order to find the hero of the material, arrive at the meeting place and conduct an interview with him and send the material quickly to the editor.

Undoubtedly, some of the most useful applications for journalists are video applications. If you want to have a career on television or in the online media, creating video content will be absolutely necessary. Often, you will not have access to a professional camera when suddenly an important event may happen in front of your eyes. So, downloading a few video applications

<sup>22</sup> BURUM, I.: *Mojo Workin' – Essential Mobile Journalism Tools*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://gijn.org/2017/04/11/mojo-workin-essential-mobile-journalism-tools/>>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

is a must. One among such applications today is FiLMic Pro. It should be noted that we will list those programs that are most popular among journalists according to the results of our survey. FiLMic Pro basically transforms our phone into a good HD camera with features including 4xzoom, focus, exposure, white balance, and more. It also has headphones for audio correlations. This program is a great solution if you can not afford a camera. After shooting with FiLMic Pro we will need to edit the material.

Another good application is Adobe Premiere Pro- a professional non-linear video installation program. This program allows you to mount and edit the video to a high quality. It allows you to add special effects and graphics. This program is not difficult to use.

According to the results of our survey, 50,5% of the respondents did not use programs to create and edit videos. Among the other 49,5%, the following programs are used: Adobe Premier (36,6%), FiLMic Pro (11,8%), Quik (2,2%), Sony Vegas (1,1%), Splice (1,1%), Final cut (1,1%). Well-known applications such as Promptware Plus, Bambuser and Voddie are not used by the survey respondents. We would encourage journalists to pay attention to them and use in their professional work. To make a complete and professional video, one of the best video and audio editing programs is Voddie. It gives you the ability to work with two video tracks and four audio tracks and send multimedia files over Wi-Fi after playback. You can also stream videos made by other users and one's own, and share content through social networks Facebook and Twitter.

Bambuser and Ustream allow you to broadcast video directly to private groups of people or to the whole world. You can also stream videos created by other users and share content over social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

For those who dream of becoming a TV presenter, it's now possible to practice reading with the Promptware Plus program. It is possible to input your stuff directly into the app or copy and paste it there. You can also set the font and the speed of the text, as well as experiment, to see what's right for you. This app is good for bloggers.

Image editing applications for journalists are important, especially when quality images are required that accompany content uploaded to a website or blog. It is worth paying attention to the Snapseed app - it is a photo editor for iOS and Android operating systems. This app is suitable for beginners as well as for professional photographers who need to quickly edit their photos.

Snapseed can be used to quickly edit photos taken on a smartphone. This will be useful before you send it to the editorial office or social network. It has a very simple and intuitive interface. All you need is: 1) run the application, 2) select the photo you want to edit, 3) apply the elements and features you want to work with. Snapseed allows you to choose very precise settings. For example, we can choose the instantly finished style that is already configured and simply overlaid on the photo, their list is large enough. There is for example a photo with a pink tinge or a change from black to white and many others. And you can edit it yourself by using tools such as: editing, detailing, curves, white balance, crop, rotate, perspective, extension, fragments, brush, point correction, HDR effect, gloss, tone contrast, drama, vintage, grainy, retro, grange, white-black, eclipse, potret, blur, vignette, double exposition, text, frames. Next, we can quickly transport the image, wherever we need it.

Another interesting photo editing application is Taggly. It allows you to quickly add names, logos, addresses, time stamps and more to the photo.

It's also convenient to edit photos on your mobile device with Adobe Photoshop Fix. Fix can remove unwanted moments from your photos. You just need to select and cut the object that we want to remove, and the combination of surrounding pixels will fill the empty space. Fix saves these edits in layers so that the product is dimensional rather than flat. These images can be transported through the Creative Cloud for later use. However, you need to be careful and understand what can be edited, and what can not.

According to results of the survey, respondents most often use the following image editing applications: Adobe Photoshop (62,4%), Inshot (20,4%), Taggly (1,1%), Snapseed (32,3%), Adobe Lightroom (2,2%), Photofox (1,1%), VSCO (1,1%), Light room (2,2%), standard image editors that are embedded in the phone (2,2%). In general, software for image editing is not used by 18,3% of respondents. The respondents did not use the program Touch Blur. Touch is a notably useful program because it allows you to blur a person's face or brand simply by clicking on the screen of your smartphone. Sometimes your sources may not want to be called, or sometimes you should blur your face and hide your identity for your own safety. This photo editing application gives us a simple brilliant solution to these problems, and the best thing is that it happens in seconds.

Audio applications are no less important than video applications, especially if we are interested in radio. Even if you work in other types of media, sound recording is important, and we will need to do it during a journalistic career. Here are some of the most useful audio applications for journalists: one of the most cool and useful apps - Sound Cloud - is an application for sharing audio files. We can view sound recordings, songs and interviews. Also, many records can be freely used and shared by their own creators. We can keep track of celebrities and discover popular audiofilms or view tracks by genre.

Adobe Premiere and Audio Editor are simple and easy to use audio editors that will help journalists cut and send the necessary audio fragments to editors (for example, an official comment).

The interviewed respondents most often use Sound Cloud (20,4%), WaveEditor (2,2%), Adobe Premiere (30,1%), Audio Editor (24,7%), Adobe Audition (1,1%). 45,2% of respondents do not use it - mostly those who do not work with audio materials. Unfortunately, interviewed journalists do not use SaidWhat. This application allows you to record shortenings of your records, organize them in any order you want and share them on social networks or email. This app has many features and is ideal for recording interviews, podcasts, music and any other sounds we need. You can also import files using Wi-Fi and edit them using sound tools.

Apart from these programs, journalists can use others which can help them in creating high-quality journalistic material, and some even save time and effort. One such application is Cube ACR (6,5%), Automatic Call Recorder (19,4%), CallU (4,3%), TapeACall (1,1%). These applications allow you to record all incoming and outgoing calls. This is very convenient when you are interviewing by phone. And it is free. Unfortunately, 61,3% of respondents do not record their interviews with this program.

Respondents also said that they mostly decipher audio / video recordings on working computers, only 14% of the respondents decipher on the smartphone. Of those 14% of respondents, 4,3% use Transcribe, 8,6% use Audio to Text, and only 1,1% use corporate applications.

Writing a script can be one of the most time-consuming tasks, for example, for a documentary film. Here Transcribe can make our life much easier. This application translates the language into written text, so you can dictate everything to your phone and it will write it. This will definitely save time, it also supports over 16 languages.

AudioBoom is an application that allows us to listen, record, and edit applications, all in one place and in one application.

Shozu - is a commercial application that allows users to easily transfer content from their mobile phone to various social networks. Shozu users can also publish their media. For example, BBC, CNN, Reuters and iTV.com - all of them are integrated with the smartphone application Shozu. Also, a journalist can simply publish the photo that has just been made online on the media page.

Also a good application is Layar, as it uses a camera from a mobile device to overlay multimedia on real images to create animations, videos and webpages. Also, this application can scan images, videos and even QR codes.



Our respondents also use such applications in their professional work: AudioBoom (12,9%), AudioCopy (10,8%), Shozu (2,2%), Layar (1,1%), Movavi (25,8%), PDF Scanner (50,5%).

So, after all of the listed applications, we see that their number is extraordinary, and the variety of functions that they perform is impressive. And this is far from a complete list of what our smartphone is able to do.

Journalists have more options than ever before. Nowadays the right combination of applications and tools makes it possible to create unique material. Most of these applications can be obtained free of charge or at a minimal cost.

After analyzing the content of the Ukrainian media, we found out that there is material that was taken using a smartphone. For example, the magazine „XXL“ is the first magazine in Ukraine, which uses photos taken on the smartphone on the cover. Nikita Dobrynin, who is a guest editor of the „XXL“ magazine, says: *„It's possible to say that taking the covers on the smartphone in the world is already a new trend. With the cover photos, made on the smartphone were also experimenting „TIME“, „Billboard Magazine“, „Condé“, „Nast Traveler“, „Bon Appétit“ and other renowned editions. We decided to be the first to do it in Ukraine.“*<sup>24</sup> That is, in this regard, Ukrainian magazines are already following foreign models. The photos really turned out to be professional. From the set of features offered by this smartphone it is evident that it is competing with professional technology.

In „BBC Ukraine“, material shot on a smartphone is also frequent. For example, a video on which Saakashvili appears on the roof. The video is just a human being, it is constantly shaking and the maximum convergence is applied, because of this the quality of the video is low. But this is not important because the information is unique. Air Force journalists processed the video by adding subtitles explaining the event and highlighting the author. And the video is taken from Facebook, where the author downloaded it.

It is worthwhile to focus on the typical material from BBC Ukraine. There is material about the Agung Volcano in Bali, which used a timelapse of the eruption itself. Video journalists processed and added subtitles in Ukrainian, which explain everything that is happening. It looks like this dangerous action is really beautiful, since the bottom of the frame is an active movement of people. And in the long run - it's an eruption. You can create such materials in two ways. The first one is with the help of many photos, which are formed by creating a fast video. And the second way is just to speed up the standard video. This material uses a second way, because it is easier to create and edit. To create such a video, we need a reliable tripod because the camera should not move. Also important is a memory card, because such videos for a good effect need to last for a minimum of 10-20 minutes. Of the 20 minutes taken, approximately 10 seconds will be released. Depending on the device and the planned length of the video, an additional battery may be needed. All applications work in roughly the same way, so we will analyze the process of creating the material only by the example of one application - Movavi. First download and install the app. Then create a new project, next choose the files that you want to use. After that, we select the video that we want to speed up and set up as many times as possible. In this add-on, you can speed up the video up to 10 times, which is quite enough. The important thing is that changing the speed of the video changes the sound. Therefore, it is desirable to remove or replace the accelerated sound with another melody. Then we save the received video and distribute it wherever we want.

Mahmudur Rahman, Mozhgan Azimpourkivi, Umut Topkara and Bogdan Carbunar<sup>25</sup> produce one more program for live stream, called Vamos, the first user transparent video „liveness“ verification solution based on video motion, that accommodates the full range of camera

<sup>24</sup> *Fashionable Ukrainian gloss shot cover photo on smartphone.* [online]. [2019-09-01]. Available at: <[https://espresso.tv/news/2017/06/09/modnyy\\_ukrayinskyy\\_glyanec\\_znyav\\_foto\\_obkladynky\\_na\\_smartfon](https://espresso.tv/news/2017/06/09/modnyy_ukrayinskyy_glyanec_znyav_foto_obkladynky_na_smartfon)>.

<sup>25</sup> RAHMAN, M. et al.: Video Liveness for Citizen Journalism: Attacks and Defenses. In *Ieee transactions on mobile computing*, 2017, Vol. 16, No. 11, p. 3250.

movements, and supports videos of arbitrary length. Vamos uses the agreement between video motion and camera movement to corroborate the video authenticity. Vamos can be integrated into any mobile video capture application without requiring special user training.

Ukrainian journalists use streams (live broadcasts of current affairs), live streams are often conducted from the smartphone. In Ukraine, live broadcasts from smartphones began when the Euro-revolution started (2014). One could see what actually happens on the Maidan, watching events as if we were present on the spot. A team of volunteers from Spilno.TV organized broadcasting of EuroMaidan. Streamers not just stopped showing the picture, but took part in these events, communicating with people. Various applications are used for live broadcasts, including Ustream, Livestream, and live streaming services provided by Facebook, Twitter and YouTube social networks.

72% of respondents do not use apps for strides in their professional activities. We can assume that these respondents do not keep track of events, and therefore do not use special applications. Those who are bouncing are using Ustream (5,4%), Livestream (20,4%), and the rest use tools provided by the social network Facebook.

Thus, Ukrainian journalists are actively using smartphones in their professional activities, but this is mostly done by journalists who work in the Internet media and who are freelancers. Speaking about radio or television journalists, then for them a smartphone is just an addition to professional activity and it is used quite rarely. Also they almost never take a smartphone camera because they are afraid that the quality of the video will not be sufficient for TV. Also, according to our research, few respondents use programs for audio and video and stream, this is primarily due to the fact that among our respondents only 21,6% are radio and television journalists.

On Ukrainian TV channels, a video shot on a smartphone appears, but very rarely. This is usually videos of eyewitnesses, or investigative journalists who were able to document the event or fact when hidden, only with the help of a smartphone.

There is also data about using smartphones by professional journalists abroad. For example, the Irish television company RTÉ, which explores the potential of smartphones in journalism since 2010. On its account there is a lot of smartphone material. Particular attention should be paid to the reportage. Journalist „RTÉ“ Philippe Bromwell filmed a report „Wind Phone“ by intriguing passers-by in the Dublin Mountains<sup>26</sup> on iPhone. This is a story about a phone box, taken completely on the iPhone. Phone Fon Gaoithe - The Wind Phone - this is an installation that appeared in the Dublin Mountains. The project team says it is a private place for meditation and reflection on life and loss. Broadcasts on this were broadcast on RTÉ on 10.08.17. It was shot on an iPhone 6S Plus with the FiLMiC Pro application, which we mention above. Journalists partly edited the colour. A tripod and an optional microphone were also used to record audio. So in this report the simplest technologies were used, and the effect is impressive.

The following is an extraordinary reportage of this TV channel: „Meet the Ancestors of the Book of Kells“, about four rare Irish manuscripts from the Dark Ages that were retained by Trinity College Dublin after a three year program. This special report by RTÉ News was filmed and edited on the iPhone 6S Plus.

When we analyze material made on smartphone, we must remember that the phone is a powerful tool. We can create a whole range of high-quality products, as did Al Jazeera. The program „People and Power“ is a complete documentary made by smartphones. Syria is a difficult place to work as a journalist, so they used the iPhone to be able to work there more safely and easily. The news agency itself writes about this program and about using the phone by a journalist: „*With Al Jazeera cameras banned inside Syria, it was too difficult and dangerous*

<sup>26</sup> BROMWELL, P.: 'Wind Phone' intriguing passers-by in Dublin Mountains. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2017/0810/896531-wind-phone-dublin-mountains/>>.

to openly use a camcorder, but it was ok to use a mobile phone. On his tiny camera, taken off the secrets from the streets, through car windows and behind the closed door, he was able to assemble images depicting ordinary people demonstrating extraordinary courage.”<sup>27</sup> This is the case when the phone made safer work for journalist and was able to bypass what is prohibited.

Some stories happen so fast that they need to be shown before the camera crew team gets there. Then smartphones and journalists who can use them will be extremely useful.

Harriet Hudfield is a „Sky News“ reporter, who runs live broadcasts using the smartphone. Harriet, in her reportage, uses the following auxiliary tools: a microphone with an iPhone cable, a lightweight headband headrest, a case (which the smartphone attaches to a tripod), lights, microphone, external charger, iPhone 6+ and an optional phone.<sup>28</sup>

Of course, this toolkit helped Hudfield to broadcast urgent news repeatedly. When in February 2014, Flight 702 „Ethiopian Airlines“, which flew to Milan and was hijacked and landed in Geneva, Hudfield was the first to report this. She was just there, was the first on the scene and broadcast for two hours, ahead of all competitors.

So, the smartphone is a multipurpose and powerful tool that can be used for a wide range of content. But it is a good tool only for a smart journalist. One that will be able to use it correctly. And examples of such use exist in the material listed above. This is what modern journalism should strive for.

## 5. Conclusions

So, nowadays smartphones play important roles in the new journalism. With the fast spread of technologies and convergence in journalism, demand for using smartphones in the professional work of journalists increases. It is also worth noticing that smartphones and their applications can help future journalists in their work. On this idea focusses Lily Canter<sup>29</sup>. In turn I.Burum and S.Quinn<sup>30</sup> declare that as journalism becomes increasingly competitive, students and emerging professionals need a broader skillset to make themselves more employable, whether as mainstream or entrepreneurial journalists.

Using smartphones in the work of journalists is especially relevant while spreading convergence, when one worker should make material for different kinds of media. You never know what information you will get and what media is the most appropriate for this reason, so smartphones can replace the absence of professional equipment.

However, we should also remember that the facility of using smartphone in journalism should not become a tool for the neglect of the professional standards or for bad intentions. We shouldn't use and publish photos and videos of people without their agreement, make montages of different frames to distort the content, make hidden photos and so on.

Thus appears a demand to provide new study courses and programs in the universities where future journalists study. Students should be taught how to use smartphones in their future work, to test different programs, which could be helpful for them while working as a journalist.

For practicing journalists it is worth providing different training, where experts should teach how to use such functions of smartphones, which are of high quality and could help to improve the work of journalists.

<sup>27</sup> Syria: *Songs of Defiance*. [online]. [2019-08-09]. Available at: <<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2012/03/201231213549186607.html>>.

<sup>28</sup> FAIRWEATHER, T.: *How a Sky News reporter uses her mobile phone to 'go live' in 90 seconds*. [online]. [2019-10-01]. Available at: <<https://www.newsrewired.com/2016/03/16/how-a-sky-news-reporter-uses-her-mobile-phone-to-go-live-in-90-seconds/>>.

<sup>29</sup> CANTER, L.: Online journalism: the essential guide. In *Journal of Media Practice*, 2015, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 171.

<sup>30</sup> BURUM, I., QUINN, S.: *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook*. New York : Routledge, 2016, p. 212.

Also an important part of preparing future journalists is educational materials. In Ukraine there are no books, textbooks, which expose the possibilities of smartphones for professional work by journalists. But there are foreign books, which could be recommended for future journalists.

So, the digital transformation of the media industry should involve changes in the professional education and training of journalists.<sup>31</sup> However as predicted by Tatjana Vulic and Marta Mitrovic<sup>32</sup>, since mobile technologies continue to evolve, no one is able to predict with certainty the future shape of communication channels and which will be preferred by the young.

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# The Selfies As A Step Forward To Become „More“ And „The Most“ By Giving Up „The Self“

## ABSTRACT

As the most obvious provision of social media in the individual world, „selfie“ is confronted at a point where self-confidence is increased or lost. Nowadays, the use of social media starts at a very early age, and self-efficacy beliefs are also developing at an early age. However, the madness of selfie is becoming more of an „infantilized“ action. Thus, it can be argued that it functions as a counterfeit of the self and serves as a mirror in the individual's world. It is also true that this „new or pseudo mirror“, which shows us both to ourselves and to others, also raises concerns about perceptual development, curiosity and visibility in the era of self-discovery throughout the developmental process. The concept of self-reflection and „selfie“ in its social media term emerges at a point where the individual's internal communication is broken. It brings a „dual-dyadic“ concept on one hand and a „triad theory“ on the other. The study aims to analyze „selfie“ madness in social media, providing examples and assumptions within the framework of these theoretical discussions. The study aims to add new dimensions to the concept of self portrayals of individuals within national and international examples in the light of current media scrutiny.

## KEY WORDS

Selfie. Hybrid Society. Building Identities. Social Media. Values.

# 1. Introduction

The word „selfie“ was welcomed by the Oxford dictionary for the first time in 2013, and quickly reached wide usage as a global phenomenon and provoked widespread technological possibilities. Concentrating more on the fact that people need to „be“ and they need to „become“ somebody, the concept of the selfie was first criticized as a kind of selfish behavior or a „narcissistic“ reflection not to be regarded as something important. Thus, apart from the needs of the individuals such as being famous, looking better or feeling happy and with the emerging mobile technologies as well as the possibilities of the new apps to create ways to play with raw photos, the concept of the selfie improved a lot. Instead of its initial reaction, positioned as „vain“ and, as a „one-sided“ product, it has become more and more appreciated by the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

Selfie covers many other concepts such as identity, youth, change, differentiation, reflection, self-expression, individualism, egoism, makeup, allure, exhibition, show-off, sharing, super identity, role playing, attention, emulation, moment, instantaneous, nostalgia, past and future.

Research on the selfie seems to be focusing on the negative aspects rather than the positive aspects of the phenomenon. As statistically proven in a wide range of different and focused studies, it seems that the selfie is much more associated with concepts such as loneliness, narcissism, and an anthropocentric approach.<sup>2</sup>

According to Lim, nowadays, rather than evaluating the selfie as a self-portrait or a product of photography, it is important to be able to make use of the boundaries of interdisciplinary concepts such as marketing to reach results for specific purposes.<sup>3</sup> This would yield more sociological, chronological and historical aspects of the phenomenon of the selfie, and social media environments. Thus, the seemingly innocent essences are, in fact, now regarded as an organized attitude and behaviour or as part of marketing strategy whose main value would be emerging later. Presi, Maehle, and Kleppe<sup>4</sup>, as well as Iqani and Schroeder<sup>5</sup>, are providing a similar thesis.

If you search the internet for pictures using the term „selfie“, you might be surprised to find that most of the top results are not made up of selfies but of pictures of people taking selfies (see Picture 1).

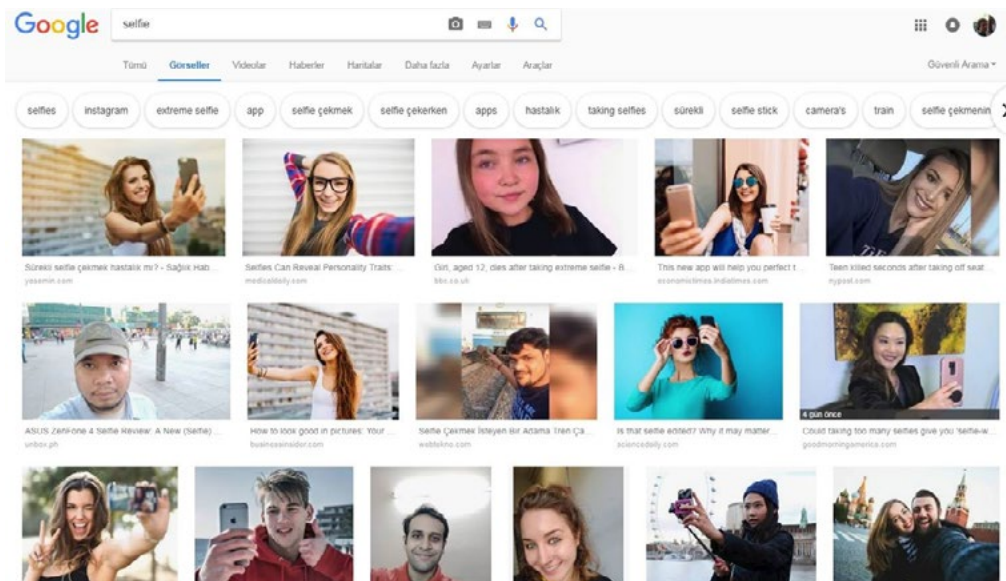
<sup>1</sup> SHAH, R., TEWARI, R.: Demystifying 'selfie': a rampant social media activity. In *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 2016, Vol. 35, No. 10, p. 865.

<sup>2</sup> CHAROENSUKMONGKOL, P.: Exploring personal characteristics associated with selfi-liking. In *Cyberpsychology*, 2016, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> LIM, W. M.: Understanding the selfie phenomenon: current insights and future research directions. In *European Journal Of Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 50, No. 9/10, p. 1778.

<sup>4</sup> PRESI, C. et al.: Brand selfies: consumer experiences and marketplace conversations. In *European Journal Of Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 50, No. 9/10, p. 1824.

<sup>5</sup> IQANI, M., SCHROEDER, J. E.: #selfie: digital self-portraits as commodity form and consumption practice. In *Consumption, Markets & Culture*, 2016, Vol. 19, No. 5, p. 408.



PICTURE 1: Screenshot of a Google search with the search term „selfie“

Source: screenshot (December 26th 2018)

Kedzior and Allen, on the other hand, consider the selfie as an expression of authenticity and self-empowerment as a type of experience, as well as an expression of existing social control and power relations.<sup>6</sup> While these two perspectives seem rather incompatible, they relate to different levels of analysis of the individual and social. On one hand, the direction of strengthening authenticity, value and experience are well documented in existing circumstances, but on the other hand the mechanisms of control and weak points have not been adequately conceptualized.

Selfie is a very complex issue having so many different structures, forms, functions, indicators and symbols that cannot be counted one by one. In this sense, it has a „Heterotopic“ structure, in the words of Foucault. In other words, it can be assumed as something like a museum, a cemetery or library, which can accommodate many layers of different times and places within a single place, and as an open text with the capacity of being interpreted in very different ways through backward or forward readings.

As Rokka and Canniford have pointed out, escapism destabilizes the branded communities of social media by going beyond tourist attractions in the form of the selfie.<sup>7</sup> With the help of digital technologies, the research on selfies of a certain brand users and how consumer-focused and self-produced images are shared in the social media prove that the producers really care about their presence and representation in individual selfies. So, a selfie is not individual at all, it has even more collective and attributed meanings to it. Not only selfie producers but also all other producers taking part in the selfie care about it. Famous brands are aiming to move good selfies to the front row and pushing critical ones backward. The fact that self-regeneration can be argued that it can destabilize the spatial, temporal, symbolic and material aspects of brands makes us think about how mobile applications cause new challenges.

<sup>6</sup> KEDZIOR, R., ALLEN, D. E.: From liberation to control: understanding the selfie experience. In *European Journal Of Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 50, No. 9/10, p. 1895.

<sup>7</sup> ROKKA, J., CANNIFORD, R.: Heterotopian Selfies: How Social Media Destabilizes Brand Assemblages. In *European Journal Of Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 50, No. 9/10, p. 1793.

The search for the selfie in interpersonal communication also proves to have very intense content, and the results support some kind of a limited mediation model between the selfie and the perception of the relationship as poor or high quality. The argument proves that, in this way, both jealousy and online idealized personality might have a negative influence on the existing romantic relationship over time.<sup>8</sup>

Sorokowska and colleagues studied a sample of 1296 males and females on online social networking sites that played a number of roles, ranging from communication to entertainment.<sup>9</sup> In one of their surveys they tested the hypothesis if individuals sharing selfies have a positive and associated resonance with their social exhibitionism, outwardness and self-esteem or not. The researchers found out that the sample participants they questioned were sharing around 650 selfies monthly via various social networks. Only 2,9% of these selfies were emphasizing the self, and only 1,4% of them include a romantic inclusion. Even if the females shared more selfies than the males, these had more proportionate relation with their self-respect whereas this was less proportionate for males. However, individual personality differences seem to have more impact on the different modes of selfie mailing.

There is no need to question how much love today's individuals' lack. Research conducted by Mascheroni and colleagues examines how children aged 11-16 in three European countries (Italy, England and Spain) develop their online identities and interact with their peers.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the creation of an online identity in social media via digital images focuses on a mutual agreement between peers and investigates how their peer-mediated presentation contracts are harmonized, legitimized, or resisted in this pre-teen and youth discourse. In this respect, mobile communications and social networking sites have an important role in providing „full-time“ access to peers and peer culture in the process of self-presentation and presentation. Findings prove the existence of gender differences and double standards in peer normative discourses. Mascheroni and colleagues observed that girls are more exposed to peer mediation and oppression than boys. Targeting and attempting to increase their online popularity, teenagers are starting to publish more and more open, racy and even sexy photographs and they may probably agree or prefer to comply with stereotyped patterns as a socially acceptable medium. At this point they see social media as a tool that is socially accepted by peers even if it's full of increased sexual connotations and invite them to become one of the uniformed patterns.

They are also identifying themselves with a kind of „perfectness“, with the impression of always being „perfect“ in online pictures. Whereas there might be some international changes from one society to another, a double standard of gender roles can be observed in all three countries. These insights into existing behaviours provide an important reason for supporting young people at the learning stage of managing image-focused social media. Another research by Doring et al. also discovers that all of the selfies step by step are uniform.<sup>11</sup> The research also emphasizes that the frequency of use and sharing starting by the age of 11-12, shows a great decline after 23.

<sup>8</sup> HALPERN, D., KATZ, J. E., CARRIL, C.: The online ideal persona vs. the jealousy effect: Two explanations of why selfies are associated with lower-quality romantic relationships. In *Telematics And Informatics*, 2017, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 118.

<sup>9</sup> SOROKOWSKA, A. et al.: Selfies and personality: Who posts self-portrait photographs? In *Personality And Individual Differences*, 2016, Vol. 90, p.119.

<sup>10</sup> MASCHERONI, G., VINCENT, J., JIMENEZ, E.: Girls are addicted to likes so they post semi-naked selfies: Peer mediation, normativity and the construction of identity online. In *Cyberpsychology*, 2015, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> DORING, N., REIF, A., POESCHL, S.: How gender-stereotypical are selfies? A content analysis and comparison with magazine adverts. In *Computers In Human Behavior*, 2016, Vol. 55, p. 956-957.



## 2. Aim and methodology

As the most obvious provision of the social media in the individual world, „selfie“ is confronted at a point where self-confidence is increased or lost. Nowadays, the use of social media starts at very early ages, and self-efficacy beliefs are also developing at an early age. However, the madness of the selfie is becoming more of an „infantilized“ action. Thus, it can be argued that it functions as the counterfeit of the self and serves as a mirror of the individual's world. It is also true that this „new or pseudo mirror“, which shows us both to ourselves and to the others, also raises concerns about perceptual development, curiosity and visibility in the era of self-discovery throughout the developmental process.

The concept of self-reflection and the „selfie“ in its social media term emerges at a point where the individual's internal communication is broken. It brings a „dual-dyadic“ concept on one hand and a „triad theory“ on the other. The paper aims to analyze „selfie“ madness in social media, providing examples and assumptions within the framework of these theoretical discussions. The paper aims to add new dimensions to the concept of self portrayals of the individuals within national and international examples in the light of current media scrutiny.

## 3. Findings

It is very important what the selfie contains as well as what it is. From time to time, it emphasizes only the face, the eyes, occasionally hands or feet, shouting „I'm here“ messages containing the part of the body and self-focusing on the „self“ aiming to present data about the place, space, time, other persons and relations in the background. Since it contains so many different variables that cannot be quantified or quantified only, evaluation of the selfie is difficult and requires extensive semiotic analysis. On one hand, the image and the uniqueness of the image, the originality or the mundane is held as a questionable point, while on the other hand it is content that is united with context or separated from context. When the magical touches of art, aesthetics, shooting angles, camera focuses, light and shadow games as well as make-up and ornamentation applications are involved, it is indispensable to evaluate them from really different viewpoints and an interdisciplinary understanding.

The contemporary actuality and importance of the selfie as well as the number of participants all together, gains more importance with the design and presentation when considered together with identity. We can see that each essence has enough of information to write a book about, when body language and added infrastructure such as facial expressions, connections with current social agenda items, sub-texts enriched with textual, non-textual and inter-textual elements, etc. We can also have formal, structural, functional analysis; perform content analysis, semantic analysis, discourse analysis or representation analysis of the same selfie.

Perhaps the most difficult could be impact analysis. It may be very difficult for anyone to be able to stop and think about how they are influenced by others or to present it in a concrete way in an outfield where everyone struggles to exist in a different way. When we add measurement tools, such as questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and focus group exercises and data gathering techniques, we can find ourselves in a really difficult chess game.

### 3.1 Selfie as a Problem of Identity

When a child comes into the world, a child adds a nerdy perspective to today's values, with a transparent point of view, unfounded reality and truth-telling nature. Only because they can show courage to say „*But the King is naked!*“ However, over time, within the given cultures they were born they learn to look through the same „structured window“ as other adults around them, saying that it's the geography or the formed patterns, judgments and values through the influence of the socio-cultural background. The eyes which shone brilliantly knowing what to look for are now worried, fearful and insecure.

The value system we are in, is threatening us with the intervention of forces. For example, we cannot see the electronic and electromagnetic forces in the place we are in, but if we can collect and manage these forces, we can turn them into concrete wisdom, image, voice and communication. These powers, whether scientific, political or environmental, social, moral or legal, also have the ability to bring certain items to the foreground in certain cultures. As a result, even if global citizenship is targeted, to comply with the different forces created by certain cultures and fight their rivalries would only be possible with the choices made by individuals.

Steven Warburton states „digital identity“ can be understood as a continuum. At one end we find the „simpler“ or „narrow view“ where digital identity is a „collection of credentials online“ used in electronic transactions. In contrast, the other end of the spectrum is characterized as the „fundamental side“ or the „broader view“. Here digital identity is understood to be „the online representation of one's self“ or „one's representation in a digital space“. <sup>12</sup>

In 2013 there emerged a word that managed to portray the essence of Millennials, evoking their world and their world view in just two syllables: the selfie. Along with its lesser known antithesis, the unselfie, and other derivatives like shelfie (a Picture of one's books) and theftie (a picture of the thief of one's cellphone, taken automatically when the thief first tries to use it), selfie reflects the Millennials immersion in technology and social media; lives sometimes lived more comfortably online than in person; concern for their image; and generosity in offering their best selves to friends and the world. For Millennials, the selfie is the conjunction of technology with desire. <sup>13</sup>

The recent situation in Europe affects our social and economic, psychological evaluations as well as East and West Europe, North and South Europe evaluations, collapse of systems, change of borders, opening and closing of doors for refugees. It also affects our behaviors, attitudes, habits, view of life, standards and expectations of life as well as our identity and positioning ourselves in life.

When the selfie is concerned, the relative importance of time, space and values is gaining importance. For example, take the sentence „*Even if it's been more than a month I had my application, up to just two days ago I wouldn't think of saying these things to you, thus, I cannot figure out how you will be affected by all these things, but I can guess where you will be going tomorrow.*“ In such a sentence we are faced with so many expressions of time ranging from the past, up to today and future. The time span is scheduled very fast and can be summed up in a single sentence. Just like this example, it is difficult to sum up past, present and future expectations in a selfie since it's just a glimpse of time and all a sum of expressions.

If time can change so quickly in a single sentence, it will never be possible to control its release and balance its relativity. A similar swing and mobility situation is also the case for space. It may be the case that some places give peace to an individual and for others cause disquiet. In particular, values are finding a place in life with a very rapid and fluid oscillation.

<sup>12</sup> WARBURTON, S.: *Digital Identity Matters*. London : King's College London, 2010, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> METCALF, A.: *From Skedaddle to Selfie: Words of the Generations*. USA : Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 181-182.

The changes that exist in political, social, economic and other value systems make up a platform where people can „navigate“ to find meanings of messages, images and all other texts, since people can easily change their perception, understanding, acceptance or opposition.

The impact of globalization can be gathered under three headings. These can be evaluated as global mobility, migration, the „hyper-reality“ that the media created and the virtual reality that comes through the digital revolution. With the migration economy, the cultural diaspora, which is on the agenda, also affects our mobility that began with discovery wheels. Today, this mobility is driven by the global circulation of mobile phones and cultures. This leads to a multi-lingual, multicultural society of antagonism and the global circulation of concepts.

As a result, we can now see better how the digital sharing platform that lies in the deep roots of the phenomenon we call „selfie“ turns into a habit in such a short time and why it becomes a necessary and indispensable sharing space. This means that we do not see what we look at in its real sense; we only see what we are conditioned to see, what we expect to see and what we want to see. Leaving aside the real reality of the existing frame, we transfer our values to appearances; we load our own hopes and worries.

It must be mentioned here that there is also a kind of superficial reality that is often confronted with the influence of the mass media and can even change real reality. This upper reality or hyper-reality which is supposed to be finally accepted because it is offered by many different sources and is constantly presented and emphasized so that it is finally accepted throughout all surrounding people (around us). This hyper reality puts us between realities and dreams and causes individuals not to live in reality but in a world of „as if“.

Describing this kind of an individual, Bauman sums it up as living in a liquid society, changing constantly but not understanding what is changing. Thus, people are full of dreams; dreaming of being like this, like that or like anything but never realizing how they really are or never differentiate between reality and dreams. In such a world they are never those they feel or they try to be because they are becoming both through hybridization, they become none of them. By the end of this hybridization, they can never get back to their own selves even if they want because they never realize what it was. In this case, in terms of Marcel Proust, today, in the 21st century, instead of societies facing the future, there appear societies missing the past.

### 3.2 Selfie as the Problem of Accessibility

The impact of technology and the digital revolution on our life is the encountering with a concept of „virtual reality“. The 2011 Horizon Report has informed us of the future of electronic books and mobile accessories in less than one year and that game-based learning would become important in less than 2-3 years and that virtual reality would be accompanying people as a part of their lives and that this will soon become an important part of learning, analytical thinking and movement-based learning. So the impact of the digital revolution has begun to create an abyss between people very quickly and to put invisible obstacles between those having access and those without. Thus, accessibility has become the key term.

Most of the people who would like to have a selfie, would in fact like it to be accessible to others. They are aware of the fact that accessibility is becoming a power and if not accessible, they cannot resonate with others. Yet, no one wants to be the odd one out or fail in going with the stream since the cost of it is just being redundant or being excluded from the circle you belong to. Having the latest fashionable mobile phone does not only carry the message of being able to buy it but being able to be accessible as well.

As the platform of electronic media increases its coverage in our lives, the effects also increase rapidly. Just as individuals who spend five to eight hours a day in front of the television are affected by the media, the information between individuals who are ‘in touch’ with their

computers and mobile phones constantly and those who are far from them will endure at a tremendous pace. The information gap will get bigger and deeper.

As Lindström and Seybold stated in 2013, we used to see the world through a television screen in the past, and later we got used to seeing it through a computer screen with a mouse in the hand.<sup>14</sup> Now we seem to be observing the world through the screen of a mobile phone by just touching it with our finger tips. For most people, reality is just another window.

When multiple identities are added to all of these, the situation becomes much more complicated. In Europe, about 52% of the population aged 15 to 25 has multiple identities in 15 countries. This rate is 40% in the UK, 68% in France and 59% in the Netherlands. This means that a population of 226 million people in 2030 will have multiple identities. (This level was 177 million in 2007)

All these things are of course related with our choices and selfies. In fact, everything depends on our choices. But what is the importance of choosing this one or the other one? Or the reason behind your choice? Because now we smile even as we remember the days when we were 'zapping' among several television channels with a remote control in our hands. Now there are as many as 500 TV channels that we cannot zap between.

In the past, people were trying to identify themselves with the characters of television serials, yet now, they do not even watch television. In the past role models were television anchormen, now games and their virtual heroes and heroines have replaced them. Even television has actually lost its popularity. People now hate sitting and waiting for something to happen. They hate staring at the television screen for hours and consider it as a waste of time. For people today, computers have become everything. Do we have alternatives to the tradition of zapping on television? What do we do on cell phones or social media? According to Granovetter, loyalty and fidelity also became a problem of social networks. What can we say about people who appear to be online and offline in a minute, or continuously displaced ones, those who constantly shift from one network to the other!

This trend of rapid change through your youth also brings about a hybridization of society. In fact, this applies to all individuals who are connected to social networks from their own individual worlds due to peer pressure and the power of cyber dialogue which can make individuals move faster. However, this brings about a kind of separation of participants rather than a unification of them all. We now learn things not from our acquaintances, friends or the natural environment - in short not through human relationships, but with the help of tools in the form of different media.

Applications on mobile phones can tell us if we have friends around, in our neighbourhood. When we want to be visible, we are visible to them and we know about our freedom to disappear as well. On one hand, it's opening all the doors of sharing with others, but on the other hand it limits us, testing individuals with insecurities and indecisiveness. In conclusion on one hand we are fighting to emulate through the likeness of others, trying to be similar to them, to be just like them, and on the other hand, we try to be able to be ourselves, as unique.

When the selfie is considered to be a problem of identity, the freedom of having no identity or having multiple identities and changing them as you like brings a kind of eclectic approach to run away from the fear of being isolated or excluded. These kind of wearable identities and undressing them when needed is a comfort we cannot give up at this age, whatever culture you have.<sup>15</sup> The doors of the win or lose world are very wide and open to everyone. According to Gergen, the original self has become invisible in the ball of relationships, and ultimately has to be given up to be the self and is forced to change to look like others.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> LINDSTRÖM, M., SEYBOLD, P.: *Brandchild: remarkable insights into the minds of today's global kids and their relationships with brands*. London : Kogan Page, 2003, p. 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> RIFKIN, J.: *The European Dream*. USA : Penguin Group, 2004, p. 273.

<sup>16</sup> GERGEN, K. J.: *The saturated self: Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life*. New York : Basic Books, 1991, p. 38.

To summarize, an idealized, perfect self-presentation and the design of multiple identities are on the agenda. Of course, individuals may be subject to changing circumstances, but the confusion and disappearance of mobile individuals, released in the context of freedom, real reality, supreme reality and virtual reality, through multiple identities choices, is important. We are also able to transform all of these into positive and negative attitudes and behaviours.

Beyond prejudices, if we can truly see and evaluate things critically carrying it beyond the stereotypes, there will be no problems. However, there is a very effective method we can apply in order to facilitate many things as a result of rapid life: 'labelling' is important enough to be both a part of a group and to stay in a group. It is both a social acceptance and/or exclusion issue! Labelling is a phenomenon that provides both physical, economic, intellectual, social, cultural and virtual mobility, as well as the ability to prevent it. When we consider the functions of mobility as information transfer, information control, support and reward, on one hand each enactment makes it possible to perform the functions of labelling ourselves and makes us mobile on the other hand.

The period we live in is an age of information explosion. The tremendous developments of digital information and communication technologies have raised the problems of information overload or excessive production, consumption and complexity of information.<sup>17</sup> The new and utopian world created by the selfie is actually a reflection of the upper reality and the virtual reality we are influenced by. In this new world, we are here because we think that being a part of this utopian world will carry us to better places in life or perception of life. When we look at the new language creating characters in the surrounding environment, class relations, as well as culture and values, we want to be there and stay there, because it is our utopia. Because only in this utopian atmosphere the mobility of individuals and other participants is possible. And only through this way, the important could change to be unimportant, the major could turn to be the minor, the passive could be the active and the ordinary can be somewhat peculiar. This shift of paradigm and the change of values could only be possible with the change of the audience or their perspective.

In today's mostly visualized world, not only the meaning of the messages but also the image of the sender is important. Yes, it could be a „selfie“ but who is sending it! Also, modern individuals are more concerned with how „the self“ looks, and therefore the priorities of the way we transfer the self into another form are very important. There are different ways and these ways are also changing. For example, the observation of this transferred in the form of immediate feedback gains more importance than anything else. In a sense, we can talk about wearable identities such as clothes, shoes, glasses, that mean images can also be changed from the situation to limits „the self is in“. The images of portable identity are related to the concepts we care for since what we care about now is no longer a word. It's not what we say or how we say it, not even how we look when we say it. How this is perceived by other different individuals, how these different multiplied selves are interpreted, how many likes they get in the initial reaction of a few minutes are all contributors. In the 21st century, when virtual reality jumps almost into real reality, or gains even more place in our real agenda, it is getting more and more important that individuals see what they have on social networks than what they do in the real world or what they actually mean to the world or others.

Take it as the evaluation of the communicative position of the individual as an infinitely inflexible wave that allows participating individuals to look at themselves, their surroundings, and their correspondences again and again, to get new meanings and messages, just like a currency fluctuation, differentiating from day to day or multiplying it with virtual networks thousands of times. None of these can be considered as the projection of real communication, which does not hold the real self and identity of the individual.

<sup>17</sup> UNAL, S.: Are the New Information Environments of the 21st Century Threat or Opportunity? Information Overload and Anxiety in Digital Natives. In *Journal of Current Researches on Social Sciences*, 2018, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 309.



### 3.3 Theoretical Perspective and Selfie

The selfie is highly related with the „self concept“ of the individual which could be summarized as a somewhat stable understanding of who we are in relation to others-self-awareness. The selfie aims to express a kind of self-esteem to others as well that could be perceived as a kind of fluctuating evaluation of who we perceive ourselves to be. If it's high, the selfie would be energetic, smiling, expressing that high self-esteem. However, it is also possible to associate selfie with the „Communication Theory of Identity“ referring to different layers such as the Personal, Enactment, Relational, and Communal stages.<sup>18</sup> Selfie could also be considered as padding for „Identity Gaps“.<sup>19</sup>

Like the USA, in some cultures in which self presentation is important and adds more to a CV, the selfie could even be accepted as a kind or way of „Identity Management“ to perform multiple identities associated with our multiple relational roles. (ex: student-teacher, friend, sibling, parent-child, etc.) In that case, a person having different selfies for each different role could be assumed to be performing better on a social scale.

„Face Movements“ of the selfie person are a way of dealing with life. Understanding that a particular image is a selfie (rather than just a photograph of, say, a face) requires viewers to make inferences about the nondepictive technocultural conditions in which the image was made.<sup>20</sup> The selfie, then, is the culmination and also the incarnation of a gesture of mediation. It is an observable „sensory-inscription“ of the body in and through technological means.<sup>21</sup> The most important embodied constellation consists of (1) moving one's outstretched arm holding the smartphone or tablet at a calculated angle before the face or body, (2) the sensorimotor coadjustment of those body parts that are to be photographed (frequently the face and neck), and (3) the visual and spatial coordination of these two in composing the image to be taken via the device's screen. The very term „composition“ is reconfigured through this constellation. To „com-pose“ acquires a hyphen. No longer does it refer to the arrangement of elements in a representation whose origin it hides; now it refers to the act of posing together, mutually emplacing the photographing body and the depicted figure. The dominant figuration of the body shifts from the still, invisibly directed pose of others in traditional everyday photography to the dynamic, visible, self-animated gestural action of limbs and faces in selfies.<sup>22</sup>

However this does not mean that all selfies should bring the best photos of the individuals. Especially youngsters make use of their eyes, hair, tongue, making different faces, including a „Perceptual Distortion“ such as looking ugly, funny, naughty, shy, confused or sexy. Referring to different „Emotion Categories“, joyful/affectionate, hostile, sad/anxious people might get different reflections from their community and each different emotion requires a different type of care or attention.

These „Dimensions of Emotion“ require kinds of valence: neutral (surprise) or intensity: differing labels (anxiety, worry, terror) and triggers similar forms of emotions on the receiver's part. This infectious, transmission factor makes both the senders and receivers more attentive concentrating more on the details and the „Multidimensionality“ of the product, requiring perhaps different interpretations. This kind of involvement brings more and multilayered

<sup>18</sup> BERGQUIST, G. et al.: Investigating Layers of Identity and Identity Gaps in Refugee Resettlement Experiences in the Midwestern United States. In *Western Journal of Communication*, 2018, Vol. 83, No. 3, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> JUNG, E., HECHT, M. L.: Elaborating the communication theory of identity: Identity gaps and communication outcomes. In *Communication quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 52, No. 3, p. 268.

<sup>20</sup> FROSH, P.: The public eye and the citizen voyeur: Photography as a performance of power. In *Social Semiotics*, 2001, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> FARMAN, J.: *Mobile interface theory: Embodied space and locative media*. New York : Routledge, 2012, p. 30-31.

<sup>22</sup> FROSH, P.: Selfies The gestural image: The selfie, photography theory, and kinesthetic sociability. In *International Journal of Communication*, 2015, Vol. 9, p. 1612-1613.

communication skills both involving primary (joy, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust) and secondary (more complex, mixtures of primary emotions) emotions as well as codes of „Nonverbal Communication“.

Some others put on masks in order to hide themselves from the possible face recognition programs for the sake of their security. As they say „My Face Is Not for Public Consumption“<sup>23</sup> they react to being recognized via their faces. So the selfie might be regarded as a kind of process of managing the way the individual presents the „self“ to other individuals (mutual face protection, self-face protection, other face protection, mutual face obliteration).

In such cases, the „Perceptions“ created influence the how, when, where, why, and what we communicate to others as well as how we interpret messages sent by others. The process of perception is a matter of stimulation provided by the selfie itself provoking „Selective exposure, attention, perception and retention“. The way the selfie is perceived might differ depending upon the physiological differences, past experiences, the culture and/or the co-culture as well as the present feelings and circumstances.

All the messages embodied in the text of the selfie would be depending upon its organization, requiring not only a careful design of figure and ground, closure and proximity but also similarity and interpretation. Whatever the message hidden in the selfie it includes kinds of emotional communication as well as emotional contagion. This would make the likes reach higher degrees.

The selfie as a part of „Implicit Personality Theory“ might be regarded as a pattern of associated qualities we attribute to people that permits us to understand them. (halo effect, horn effect). In other words there should be a kind of consistency between the known personality and the newly made up „selfie personality“ to attach the images to each other. Or the selfie could be regarded as a part that we form impressions of through perceptions of physical qualities and behaviours, disclosures and information from third parties just as in „Impression Formation Theory“ (primacy effect, recency effect). The „(Causal) Attribution Theory“ also works for the selfie through which we seek to explain the behaviour and motives of other people in order to explain them. (circumstance, stimulus, person self, „Here I am“). Sometimes the same selfie gets several different reactions from different groups, everyone sees the world somewhat differently because each person views it from a different position- we are all unique. We call it the „Standpoint Theory“ and the selfie is a good example of it. In anyway, any selfie brings about „Politeness Theory“ as well since people from all cultures have a universal need to be treated with politeness. That's why in most cases, selfies get many likes and the people keep on taking selfies. In a way it is a dynamic, transactional process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to self designed stimuli.

Dean Barnlund, a communication theorist, suggests that the individual in the case of communication has six different appearances. Barnlund says that according to these six appearances, individuals appreciate and/or manipulate communication differently. Thus, our relationships and our beliefs about these relationships and our communication based on all these influence our social and individual existence as well as our mutual social and individual existence. In a way we put ourselves into a circle to differentiate ourselves with the help of the others affecting our relations and our way of communication.<sup>24</sup> When taken from the perspective of the „selfie“ the following aspects of communication can be countered:

1. Your view of yourself: It may also be the case that the act of having a selfie is the reflection of high or low self-esteem, the need for appreciation and acceptance, be it individual or social. Even if it is thought that the self-reflection is a kind of affirmation made more by those who see themselves in a good or better condition, have some admiration for themselves, or having high self-confidence, it's in fact seeking for it.

<sup>23</sup> RAJI, S.: 'My Face Is Not for Public Consumption': Selfies, Surveillance and the Politics of Being Unseen. In KUNTSMAN, A. (ed.): *Selfie Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan : Springer International Publishing, 2017, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> BARNLUND, D. C.: *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968, p. 394-398.

2. Your view of the other person: In the case of the selfie, there are two basic „images“ of the other. The first is the „others“ that we physically have with us; those are seen in the same picture with us. The individual, in a way, is able to position a kind of status depending upon the strength or weakness of the position regarding these others. It becomes more important when s/he sees himself at least equal or even better than those in the same atmosphere. When s/he sees the one in the „best“ position among them, questioning gradual importance is inevitable. The second type of others could be considered as followers. In this case, the status of the self can be important enough to affect the likelihood of updates and appreciation of followers' liking and being in TT. If we can really follow our followers and develop some predictions about what they like and dislike about themselves, these tips can help the individual and others.
3. How you believe the other person views you: This point of view as to be called „the other face of the other“ is predicated on the desire of seeing „the self“ and true self in the eyes of followers who fall into the classification of „others“. This brings forth the expectation of the number of the likes for example, having a certain number of consensuses that followers would appreciate this „selfie“ with great intensity. It's perhaps not only the face of the self but his/her being happy, admirable and the collaborative data such as the time, occasion, place and all the other accompanying things and people. Thus the selfie aims to provide all this data, approving or disapproving, changing or reinforcing everything in it.
4. The other person's view of him or herself: The selfie is at a point where followers are also like the target audience, a kind of determined followers who are volunteering to get the „product“ as if it's a subscribed newsletter or pre-ordered material. Of course, no one can foresee which of the followers would be adopting which of the millions of different perspectives towards that certain product. However, in the context of certain groups or categories, we can predict those possible reactions. The product at this point can be approached positively or negatively due to the millions of details embodied into the product. Nowadays, many people consider this situation serious enough to keep track of the number of the likes or comments and almost all reactions as if these are news/essays published online. We use the information gained from these public data to try to get clues about other individuals or groups and through their reflections we keep the track of ourselves.
5. The other person's view of you: The selfie brings a kind of inner reaction with it. To some it might be regarded as a tool of revenge, while for others it's just a need to express.
6. How the other person believes you view him or her: Some of the individuals can have sincere, friendly approaches, and others can be so ruthless, jealous, arrogant, or disinterested in the reactions they show. Some seem to be silent or indifferent and some might be so involved.

The things we perceive, we remember, we learn seem to be our own choices but to what extent! Which of the hundred billions of things we perceive and why we should remember one or any of them. The systems of the brain codes and encodes and classifies the important information in a different and special way. However, these storage codes should also be kept in mind. If the storage code is forgotten, the stored information may also be missing. One dimension of the perception is the „Triad theory“. It is known that women are generally stand closer to the triad theory, and that they remember the situation, the perception, are perfectly remember their decisions, feelings based on a hierarchical basis in their own world at a given time. In males, perception is usually resolved in two dimensions (competitive environment). To exemplify this, a man might say, „*I am richer than A, I am better than B,*“ but the woman may add the third dimension according to the triad theory and say, „*She is the luckiest one among all of us she is both richer than me and taller than B.*“

According to Şeker,<sup>25</sup> the dual process theory examines the formation of an event in two different ways or as a consequence of two different processes. Generally, one of these processes is hidden and the other is not. For example, let's consider a person's buying process for a product, let's say a car. There may be reasons such as the colour, design, the image of the car that the driver clearly shows when they are in the car, besides reasons such as cost, performance and fuel consumption of the car, that they do not say clearly and maybe do not even realize it. Here dual process theory is used to analyze the decision making process and analyze behavioural economics, psychology, sociolinguistics, clinical psychology, cognitive science, personality analysis, marketing, etc., which are used to understand and analyze a multitude of phenomena such as events, experiences, decision making processes, business models and other processes. It gives us a twofold way of thinking and William James is responsible for the term referring to it as a two different inference methods, namely the attached and the real inference.

The related inference is based on experiences in the past, symbols seen, memories remembered, images and sensations felt by the senses. Related inference is based on previous events and builds upon them and reproduces things, usually in the same way whenever it's necessary. Contrary to this, the real deduction is accepted to be one that is originating from unprecedented events that did not have a real inference, and that the person can objectively approach the problems and substitute a new solution or design for it.<sup>26</sup> Yet, people today, however, do not only live their own lives, they can become part of the lives of hundreds of others they interact with, and they can easily join them, mix with them, put them into the centre of their lives or tear apart all of a sudden. Thus, individual identity gradually becomes a kind of a mosaic identity that if we assume everyone having a different, a unique colour, and the colour from each different person mixes with the individual and the other expands in such a way that the texture also resides within it. The toile gets so wide that, ultimately, the real „me“ remains as a tiny point in that whole structure.

In order to be able to explain moral changes in social psychology, the Elaboration Likelihood Model should also be considered for the intuitive systematic model. In these approaches, simply the effects on one's thinking and the background factors that affect one's thinking are considered.<sup>27</sup>

For example, according to another model introduced in 2003 by Daniel Kahneman, feelings and logic are being examined as two different systems. To him, it is much harder to play or change minds having being fixed at a certain level yet, the faster and more automatic working structure of feelings on the emotional floor makes it harder. Kahneman refers to the second system, and in this level a system analysis is made through which decisions are made over a much longer time and to a higher and denser degree and judgments are made through long questioning periods. In this second system, the reasoning logic gains weight, and the feelings stay in the background.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> ŞEKER, Ş. E.: "Dual Process Theory". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<http://mis.sadievrenseker.com/2014/09/cift-surec-teorisi-dual-process-theory/>>.

<sup>26</sup> BAARS B. J: *The cognitive revolution in psychology*. New York : Guilford Press, 1986, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> BARRETT, L. F., TUGADE, M. M., ENGLE, R. W.: Individual differences in working memory capacity and dual-process theories of the mind. In *Psychological Bulletin*, 2004, Vol. 130, No. 4, p. 568.

<sup>28</sup> KAHNEMAN D.: A perspective on judgement and choice. In *American Psychologist*, 2003, Vol. 58, No. 9, p. 698.

## 4. Conclusion

Today, communication takes places not in environments where the individual is, but in environments lacking the individual. Therefore, what we used to call individual communication and interpersonal communication have now faded away. Even if we call this situation a kind of communication atmosphere in which the individual really does not take place, we position the individual as someone who is actually experiencing a great communication problem even with the closest people around since it's not a dyadic conversation but a kind of one sided, delayed, rhetoric depending upon symbols and references in general rather than real meanings, words and phrases, actions and mimes.

Individuals in real life can take more out of real communication environments rather than spatial communication mediums in which we communicate using different forms of communication through inner dialogues only because they behave unaware of the forms and environments of communication in our minds. Thus, preconceptions regarding the other, the prototypes, prejudices, stereotypes are all common in this part of inner communication. The things referred to or taken as a reference, symbolic field codes and cultural codes are the main tools to be used instead of the rich compliant of real communication situations.

Likewise, communication will take place as long as we assume the roles of communication that we envisage in our minds, and whether communication expectations are fulfilled, whether we are in the roles we establish in ourselves or in the form of interpersonal communication. Communication will also change when there are changes in the communication roles previously played in our memory, or when expectations are not fulfilled and other situations arise. Individuals will either change their roles and positions in their minds according to the changing form of communication or try to adapt to the communication environment according to the changes in these positions.

As the most obvious provision of social media in the individual world, the selfie is confronted at a point where self-confidence is super high or low. Nowadays, when we see that the age of social media usage is much lower than it should be, we can also see that the selfie is more of an „infantilized“ action. Thus, it can be argued that the counterfeit of the selfie serves as a mirror to the individual's world. It is also true that this „new mirror“, which shows us both to ourselves and to others, also raises children's concerns about their perceptual development, curiosity and visibility in the era of self-discovery.

There are great similarities between new teens, who do not want to leave the mirror at a certain part of their life, who try to perceive, see, and identify themselves during growth, assess their height, how they look great in their clothes, and try to compare and contrast themselves with their peers. The individual who sees themselves through the new media is not able to discover themselves in its real sense, nor can they really see their own image, in a real sense, socializing. It only captures a glimpse about how it might look, it can immortalize this picture, sealing it with the condition of being „there“ and the space and other participants witnessing it, and turning it out of individuality and turning it into social. In this context, an individual who wants to prove their existence in a sense might be able to look strong and able to do rather than looking „introverted“, meek and insecure. Experts, in their research conducted through social media and most of the selfie covers deeper stories behind the big act, such as exaggerated happiness and illusion and probably lying, portraying a world full of happiness.

The concept of selfie and reflection emerges at a point where individual internal communication is broken, bringing the concept of „dual-dyadic“ on one hand and the „triad theory“ on the other - both contradicts with the silence of self-bringing conflicts or reconciliations. The individual desires to be „more“ in dual settings or wishes to become „the best“ in a hierarchical order. Both mean giving up the „self“ or promoting the „self“ in case of any encounter. The study, providing examples and hypotheses in the light of these theoretical discussions, aims to add new dimensions to the concept of selfie with national and international examples.



We are in an era in which media culture has spread everywhere and celebrates almost all popular culture, mainly followed by celebrities. Social media membership, even though it is illegal, starting at early ages with children attending elementary school, brings up certain participation and follow-up habits. One of them is the selfie, the sharing of snapshots taken with a mobile phone or a digital camera via an online social network in general. This global habit emerging suddenly from one person to another and spreading rapidly throughout the world continues to reflect extremely interesting appearances with participants from 7 to 70. There are even some fringe points such as having a selfie with people almost dying in hospital or dead people who had an accident or so on. Those who think that the concept of the selfie will vanish like all popular events of the past. Yet, this idea seems to be quite misleading because it has become a form of life, a form of self-expression, rather than a just a picture of the self. Social media, which created a space and a great chance to create a heroic self via media, also offered the opportunity for individuals to re-live and collect reflections of themselves at different times and places. There is also another thing - we find that popular culture or mass-mediated culture found in capitalist nations has a mythologizing function.<sup>29</sup>

The media are owned and controlled by the ruling class and are used to generate false consciousness in the masses, or in Marxist terms, the proletariat. Adorno (1957) offers a typical example of the Frankfurt School's perspectives on mass media and mass culture: Rigid institutionalization transforms modern mass culture into a medium of undreamed of psychological control.<sup>30</sup> The repetitiveness, the selfsameness, and the ubiquity of modern mass culture tend to make for automatized reactions and to weaken the forces of individual resistance.

Almost all technical materials are designed regarding selfie possibilities. We have selfie sticks to make it possible in crowded public spaces. All smartphones now have a front camera for self-service. In fact, these cameras are becoming more self-centered thanks to their wide-angle, voice-sensitive and motion-sensitive features. In fact, even before smartphones with front cameras, the first self-portraits were also possible thanks to a convex mirror right next to the rear camera. The history of the selfies goes back a lot further looking back through history. We do not know who took the first selfie, but it's possible to come across many in Hoolywood films. Even the cover pictures of some movies are made up of selfies. *Thelma & Louise*, for example, made in 1991, is such a film cover. Reminiscent of other examples is *Whoopi Goldberg*, who starred in *Mr Bean's Rowan Atkinson's self-portraits* and *Rat Race*. The critics are still evaluating the *Mona Lisa* (1797) regarding the painting as a self portrait of Leonardo da Vinci. The first selfie in history is Robert Cornelius's own portrait in 1839. However, he does not hold the cam with one hand, and the absence of any object on the backplane makes it somewhat problematic and blurry.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the most famous of all was Ellen DeGeneres' group Oscar selfie, 2014.<sup>32</sup>

The world's first selfie exhibition „From Selfie to Self-Expression“ opened on March 31, 2017 in London's famous Saatchi Gallery and Huuawei partnership. The exhibition discussed the development of the selfie craze, a highly creative self-expression method, from past times on a daily basis.<sup>33</sup>

The exhibition also emphasizes the growing role of smartphones as an artistic tool in expressing the individual's self, for example, *Sacred Atman*, Tracey Emin, Van Gogh, Velazquez, Christopher Baker and Gavin Turk and Kardashians. In addition, everybody interested in the

<sup>29</sup> BERGER, A. A.: *Media Analysis Techniques*. USA : Sage Publications, 2014, p. 46.

<sup>30</sup> ADORNO, T. W.: Television and the patterns of mass culture. In ROSENBERG, B., WHITE, D. (eds.): *Mass culture: The popular arts in America*. New York : Free Press, 1957, p. 475.

<sup>31</sup> YILDIZ, M.: "Selfie Photos, What Does It Mean, Really?". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<https://www.dunya.com/teknoloji/selfie-fotograf-gercekte-ne-anlama-geliyor-haberi-348648>>.

<sup>32</sup> SMITH, P., RUNCIE C.: "Oscars 2014: the best celebrity selfies on Instagram". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/oscars/10672112/Oscars-2014-the-best-celebrity-selfies-on-Instagram.html>>.

<sup>33</sup> CEVHERIBUCAK, G.: "From Selfie to Selfie Exhibition in Gaatchi Gallery". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<http://www.brandlifemag.com/dunyanin-ilk-selfie-sergisi-saatchi-muzesinde>>.

self-racing competition announced as part of the exhibition was encouraged to send out the most creative selfie. The exhibition, which was open from March 31 to May 30, attracted great interest.

Recently the selfie has turned out to be more than a photograph, the madness of taking one's own photos with smart phone cameras doesn't seem to be just a fashion, and these photos can trigger an important digital conversion in many industries. The report, which is based on a survey of 6,500 European consumers in the UK, Germany, France and Spain, reveals that consumers are 'open to numerous potential applications' via mobile camera photography.<sup>34</sup> According to the results, young masses who love to take a selfie want to make it easier for many businesses to use these photographs. According to the report, in areas such as medicine, sports, entertainment, finance, security, selfie photography can be used more intensely. Even newer selfie tools that are specific to these areas have begun to be produced. For example, drone drives that attract selfies for use in sports and recreation areas have begun to be produced. In this respect, while you are running, you are taking both your photographs and measuring your speed and activity by following you on the one hand.

According to a survey, European people use selfies for different purposes at the moment. 40% of respondents in Europe are personally interested in sending pictures only for social media, while almost the other half (44%) to send them to their spouse or girlfriend. 40% of the participants stated that (10 out of every 4) they see the selfie as part of their daily life, as a kind of routine. More than half of them (52%), believe that will benefit from the selfie for more functional use soon. Future Scientist Ian Pearson explains the ways the selfie will change us. The report prepared by Sony Mobile, identifies the 10 most important aspects of consumer selfies developing over the next five years.<sup>35</sup>

1. Socialization: To attract people to accompany you to find out what other people actually think.
2. Medical: More than a quarter of people prefer to see a selfie or video call first with a general practitioner. Selfies as testimonials are very convincing.
3. Banking for the selfie belt: Selfies as a key to security is an important factor. Most banks now accept a selfie as a kind of security major. More than half of the age group of 25-34 with a „selfie“ feel more secure in banking. In a way this group of people do not resist the idea of becoming „Biometric citizens“ as Rettberg calls them.<sup>36</sup>
4. Free time: Most people are yearning to try new trends with selfies such as „selfie coaster“, a rollercoaster that gives you control of driving your experience while driving, close to half of your enthusiasm.
5. Fitness in the gym / fitness: Using selfies with AI (Artificial Intelligence) to capture body data, for example, to test your heart rate, or even to see how you can improve your technique and how well a movement is being performed.
6. Custom-made clothes: A 3D body image for individual clothes and how you look in your new clothes as well as your new hair style.
7. Retail: The use of a smartphone camera to test different body suits with one button press.
8. Social capital: Paying selfie when entering a cinema ticket or a tourist destination is becoming fashionable. Portraying yourself as a participant or visitor, the hotels design selfie points to be used for apps such as foursquare.
9. Robots: Control your drone or robots with your smartphone to attract selfies from other or extreme locations.
10. Home: With the help of a selfie, to secure and access our homes and vehicles.

<sup>34</sup> CEVHERIBUCAK, G.: "From Selfie to Selfie Exhibition in Gaatchi Gallery". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<http://www.brandlifemag.com/dunyanin-ilk-selfie-sergisi-saatchi-muzesinde>>.

<sup>35</sup> YILDIZ, M.: "Selfie Photos, What Does It Mean, Really?". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<https://www.dunya.com/tekn-trend/selfie-fotograflar-gercekte-ne-anlama-geliyor-haberi-348648>>.

<sup>36</sup> RETTBERG, J. W.: Biometric citizens: Adapting our selfies to machine vision. In KUNTSMAN, A. (ed.): *Selfie Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan : Springer International Publishing, 2017, p. 95.

As for our last words, we should agree what Dr Ian Pearson, creator of the Future Scientist and Selfie's Future Report, says: „It's a great experiment to take out the evolution map of selfie and smartphone photography. However, even more encouraging was the reaction of consumers, who showed that they were open to different future uses of selfies and video calls. The results show that selfies are becoming a technological phenomenon and become a matter of concern for many sectors. There is tremendous potential in it and it will be exciting to see the emergence of selfies through the upcoming years.“<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> YILDIZ, M.: "Selfie Photos, What Does It Mean, Really?". [online]. [2019-10-09]. Available at: <<https://www.dunya.com/teknolo-trend/selfie-fotograflar-gercekte-ne-anlama-geliyor-haberi-348648>>.

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Osakue Stevenson Omoera, Olugbenga Elegbe, Roselyn Vona Doghudje

## Gender Politics And Silences On Rape In The Nigerian Films „Tango With Me“ And „Code Of Silence“

### ABSTRACT

Current statistics indicate that about two in fifty cases of rape are reported in Nigeria, and the percentage of reported cases has continued to reduce over the years in spite of the observed consistent increase in the number of rape incidents. The burden of rape is more on women who do not have power balance with men to propagate or prosecute a majority of cases. The long silence of women due to the lack of support from male folk shows some kind of gender politics behind rape. Hence, the stigma associated with rape continues to discourage women from reporting rape cases. However, this issue has been continuously explored in many Nigerian (Nollywood) films. But to what extent have Nollywood films contributed to the mobilization of the Nigerian populace toward reducing incidences of rape in Nigeria? Using the framing theory of the media, this article examined two Nigerian films, *Tango with Me* (dir. Mahmood Ali-Balogun, 2012) and *Code of Silence* (dir. Emem Isong, 2015), which were purposively selected due to their storylines on rape. The movies were content analysed to highlight the role that men and women play, and the views of society towards rape incidences. The study also examined the gender roles vis-à-vis the stigma and trauma experiences of the victims (mainly the women) and the punishment meted out to the perpetrators of rape. Findings indicated that there is a code of silence; consequently, rape victims (mainly women) are not encouraged to speak out, for fear of losing their mental wellbeing and social status in society. The role of women in rape is passive and submissive to the dictates of a society which valorises patriarchy while the role of men shows aggressive and unrepentant behaviour, which society hardly punishes. The conclusion reached is that Nollywood content producers should help to raise the level of Nigerians' awareness through their productions to make rape victims see the need to promptly report rape incidents, so that offenders can be punished and deterrents can begin to emerge.

### KEY WORDS

Gender politics. Rape. Women. Nollywood content producers. Nigeria. Silences.

# 1. Introduction

The incidence of rape and gender related violence is on the rise.<sup>1</sup> The word rape derives from the Latin „rapere“, which means „to seize or take by force“. It is forced, unwanted sexual intercourse; it is sometimes also called sexual assault, which can happen to both men and women of any age.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Patricia Martin claims that rape is the embodied violation of another person, a felony in which a person is forced to have sexual intercourse without giving consent.<sup>3</sup> It is often a violent sexual relation intended to dehumanize the victim. Cooper-White asserts that rape is most often motivated by extreme anger toward the victim or a need to overpower the victim.<sup>4</sup> Also, it has been argued that the punishment often prescribed is skewed in favour of the male offender while more often than not, the female victim is stigmatized forever, with the possible consequences of being socially branded, divorced or neglected by the husband to whom she is already married, or ostracized, which may deny her the opportunity of getting a suitor to marry if she is yet unmarried.<sup>5</sup> The psychological effects associated with rape victims include severe anxiety, depression, difficulty in concentrating or sleeping, inappropriate guilt feelings, emotional numbness or irritability, negative flashbacks, nightmares and extreme fear.

Nevertheless, in Africa, many cases are never reported because parents want to save the honour of their daughters and protect their family from embarrassment. In a bid to avoid stigmatization, many rape victims do choose to suffer in silence. Awosusi and Ogundana observe that in Nigeria many sexually traumatized victims find it difficult to disclose the incidence or the assailant because of the need to protect their identity or family name. It is this kind of attitude that allows the pervasiveness of sexual violence to persist on the continent.<sup>6</sup> They further claim that „[...] the culture of double standard of social and sexual conduct for boys and girls may influence silence. For instance, a male child is seen as the cherished heir in developing countries like Nigeria. Everything a male child does is permitted by the culture but girls on the other hand, are treated as properties or commodities that must subsume their needs to males in the family. This culture could be blamed for the belief that men are unable to control their sexual urges and that women are responsible for provoking the sexual desire. Another reason for non-disclosure could be attributed to the cultural solution to sexual violence, whereby the sexually violated woman would be advised or forced to marry the assailant in order to preserve the integrity of the woman and her family.“<sup>7</sup> It has also been observed that a situation where the rape victim is related to the assailant who is the breadwinner, and who is socially influential, with strong community ties in rural areas may have aided silences on rape in Nigeria. The close-knit, self-contained and most often conservative rural culture tends to make it impossible for victims of sexual assault to turn to outsiders for assistance.<sup>8</sup> Odu et al. discovered that 50% to 90% of all rapes or attempted rapes were unreported and most cases of incest and molestation are never reported.<sup>9</sup> Elegbeleye

<sup>1</sup> Was I Raped? [online]. [2019-09-10]. Available at: <<https://www.medhelp.org/posts/Abuse-Support/Was-I-raped-Warning-Possibly-too-detailed/show/2355659>>.

<sup>2</sup> OMOERA, O.S., AKINWOLE, O.T.: A Review of Literature: Rape and Communication Media Strategies in Nigeria. In *Benin Mediacom Journal*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 1-2, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> MARTIN, P. Y.: *Rape Work: Victims, Gender, and Emotions in Organizations and Community Context*. New York : Routledge, 2005, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> COOPER-WHITE, P.: *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response*. 2nd edition. Minneapolis : Fortress, 2012, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> AKINTUNDE, D.: *Rape: An Infringement on the Rights of Women*. Ibadan : Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, 2002, p. 1.; ONYEJEKWE, C. J.: Nigeria: The Dominance of Rape. In *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2008, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> AWOSUSI, A. O., OGUNDANA, F. C.: Culture of Silence and Wave of Sexual Violence in Nigeria. In *AASCIT Journal of Education*, 2015, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> ODU, B. et al.: Prevalence of Violent Sexual Assault on South West Nigeria Girls. In *European Scientific Journal*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 7, p. 472.

reveals that one in five women reports sexual assault and one in three girls reports forced initiation into sexual acts.<sup>10</sup> Many factors may be implicated for the non-disclosure of the attack; nonetheless, the reasons for non-reporting of sexual violence are complex and multi-faceted. The poor disclosure of sexual violence has made many perpetrators escape being punished because the victims keep silent either due to the fear of being stigmatized or closeness of the assailants. Among the numerous reasons for under reporting sexual violence to professionals or concerned authorities are shame, concerns for confidentiality, guilt and fear of not being believed.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this established culture of not reporting rape,<sup>12</sup> the subject of rape has formed the central theme of a majority of movies produced in Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry. Based on the role of the media as a watchdog of society, to what extent have some of these films been able to break the silence of rape in their storylines and provide a new direction to redress the issue of rape in Nigeria? This study, through framing analysis, examines how the issue of rape is addressed through the character/characterization setting, traditional/cultural setting and storylines of two Nigerian films, *Code of Silence* (dir. Emem Isong, 2015) and *Tango with Me* (dir. Mahmood Ali-Balogun, 2012).

## 1.1 Conceptual Clarifications

The subject of rape has continuously pervaded Nollywood movies so much that it is becoming a cause for concern. That the movie industry in Nigeria produces films with rape as a major theme shows the trend of events within Nigeria's social and cultural development since the media always draws inspiration from societal trends. Rape, as earlier noted, is a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration perpetrated against a person without that person's consent. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an intellectual disability or is below the legal age of consent.<sup>13</sup> Petrak and Hedge contend that the word rape is sometimes used interchangeably with the term sexual assault. People who have been raped can be traumatized and develop post-traumatic stress disorder. Serious injuries can also result along with the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS.<sup>14</sup> A person may face violence or threats from the rapist, and, in some cultures, from the victim's family and relatives. Hence, Merrill conceptualises a rape situation as any sexual intercourse, or other form of sexual penetration, initiated by a perpetrator against a victim without their consent.<sup>15</sup> However, Maier claims that the statistical report on rape is inconsistent between governmental health organizations, law enforcement agencies, health providers and legal professionals which have varied historically and culturally.<sup>16</sup> Some countries or jurisdictions differentiate between rape and sexual assault

<sup>10</sup> ELEGBELEYE, O. S.: Is Rape in the Eye or in the Mind of the Offender? A Survey of Rape Perception among Nigerian University Stakeholders. In *Educational Research and Reviews*, 2006, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> AWOSUSI, A. O., OGUNDANA, F. C.: Culture of Silence and Wave of Sexual Violence in Nigeria. In *AASCIT Journal of Education*, 2015, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> ONYEJEKWE, C. J.: Nigeria: The Dominance of Rape. In *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2008, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. *Sexual Violence Chapter 6*. [online]. [2019-10-10]. Available at: <[https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/en/chap6.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf)>.

<sup>14</sup> PETRAK, J., HEDGE, B.: *The Trauma of Sexual Assault: Treatment, Prevention and Practice*. Chichester : John Wiley & Sons, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> MERRIL, D.: *Encyclopaedia of Rape*. Westport : Greenwood Press, 2004, p. 169-170.

<sup>16</sup> MAIER, S. L.: I Have Heard Horrible Stories... Rape Victim Advocates' Perceptions of the Revictimization of Rape Victims by the Police and Medical System. In *Violence Against Women*, 2008, Vol. 14, No. 7, p. 786.

by defining rape as involving penile penetration of the vagina, or solely penetration involving the penis, while other types of non-consensual sexual activity are called sexual assault.<sup>17</sup>

Omoera and Akinwale claim that rape is categorized as date rape, gang rape, marital rape, incestuous rape, child sexual abuse, prison rape, acquaintance rape, war rape and statutory rape. Also victims of rape or sexual assault come from a wide range of sexual orientations, genders, ages, and degrees of impairment or disability.<sup>18</sup> Perpetrators sometimes use objects for penetration, force the victim to penetrate the perpetrator, force the victim to perform oral sex or assault the victim with anal penetration. Furthermore, Widman and McNulty state that those experiencing non-consensual, forced sexual experiences and sexual assault include women, heterosexual men, homosexual men, boys, adolescent males, spouses, girlfriends, boyfriends, prepubescent girls and boys, adolescent girls, children, the elderly, and even infants. Forced sexual experiences can be committed over a long period of time accompanied with little to no physical injury.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the issues of consent in sexual situations can be complicated by language, context, culture and sexual orientation. Refusal or lack of consent is interpreted by cultural expectations of women which could be gender biased. This is instanced in a common view that women's refusal and non-consenting to sex can be misinterpreted to mean „keep trying“, or even „yes“. This, in a way, impels the men to claim lack of communication from women in which they can be coerced into consenting.<sup>20</sup>

While Widman and McNulty posit that sexual narcissism such as sexual entitlement, sexual exploitation, lower empathy and sexual skill predicted risk for sexual aggression,<sup>21</sup> Jewkes et al. claim that sexual narcissism predicted sexually aggressive behaviour such as unwanted contact, coercion and attempted or completed rape as perceived from a randomly selected sample of men from the general adult population in South Africa.<sup>22</sup> In a more recent study, Sigre-Leirós et al. found that factors associated with rapists in South Africa were having been raped by a man when younger; higher maternal education; gender inequality views on women; acceptance of physical violence against women; gang membership; higher scores on psychopathic personality; and sexual entitlement beliefs.<sup>23</sup> They further claim that rapists had higher likelihood to hold power and sexually aggressive beliefs about themselves.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Sadaf Ahmad (2016) content analysed some Pakistani films to demonstrate that there is a kind of gendered form of violence which serves multiple functions, providing the audience with gratuitous entertainment, developing the narrative and/or punishing women.<sup>25</sup> Ahmad further argues that the functions, which are by no means unique to Pakistani film, incite, excuse and normalise sexual aggression, encourage and legitimise rape, thereby supporting a strong rape culture because of the culturally specific honour-based ideologies in the films.<sup>26</sup> The WHO report documented by Krug et al. describes the negative consequences that may occur through these

<sup>17</sup> KALBFLEISCH, P. J., CODY, M. J.: *Gender, Power, and Communication in Human Relationships*. London : Routledge, 2012, p. 145-146.

<sup>18</sup> OMOERA, O. S., AKINWOLE, O. T.: A Review of Literature: Rape and Communication Media Strategies in Nigeria. In *Benin Mediacom Journal*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 1-2, p.173-177.

<sup>19</sup> WIDMAN, L., MCNULTY, J. K.: Sexual Narcissism and the Perpetration of Sexual Aggression. In *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 2010, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 929.

<sup>20</sup> THORNHILL, R., PALMER, C. T.: *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : MIT Press, 2000, p.16.

<sup>21</sup> WIDMAN, L., MCNULTY, J. K.: Sexual Narcissism and the Perpetration of Sexual Aggression. In *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 2010, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 929.

<sup>22</sup> JEWKES, R. et al.: Gender Inequitable Masculinity and Sexual Entitlement in Rape Perpetration in South Africa: Findings of a Cross-Sectional Study. In *PLoS ONE*, 2011, Vol. 6, No. 12, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> SIGRE-LEIRÓS, V. et al.: Preliminary Findings On Men's Sexual Self-Schema And Sexual Offending: Differences between Subtypes Of Offenders. In *Journal of Sex Research*, 2016, Vol. 53, No. 2, p. 204.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>25</sup> AHMAD, S.: Sexualised Objects and the Embodiment of Honour: Rape in Pakistani Films. In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2016, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 386.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 386.

acts as gynaecological disorders, reproductive disorders, sexual disorders, infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, pregnancy complications, miscarriage, sexual dysfunction, acquiring sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, mortality from injuries, increased risk of suicide, depression, chronic pain, psychosomatic disorders, unsafe abortion and unwanted pregnancies.<sup>27</sup>

The effect of rape was culturally viewed less as a type of assault on the female than a crime against the man due to female loss of virginity which was seen as a serious issue. The damage due to loss of virginity was reflected in her reduced prospects in finding a husband and in her bride price.<sup>28</sup> This was especially true in the case of betrothed virgins, as the loss of chastity was perceived as severely depreciating her value to a prospective husband. In such cases, the law would void the betrothal and demand financial compensation from the rapist, payable to the woman's household, whose „goods“ were „damaged“. <sup>29</sup> Omoera and Akinwole affirm that in most Nigerian traditional cultures, sexual infidelity is viewed as a serious infraction against the established community norm of morality.<sup>30</sup> Hence, offenders are severely punished. Unfortunately though, the punishment often prescribed is skewed in favour of the male offender.<sup>31</sup> More often than not, the female victim is stigmatized forever with the possible consequences of being socially branded, divorced or neglected by the husband, if she is already married, be socially ostracized, which may deny her the opportunity of getting a suitor to marry if she is yet unmarried. The woman at times can be sentenced to death where the community is yet fastened to the hard core traditional ways of doing things.<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, many cases are never reported because parents want to save the honour of their daughters and protect their family from embarrassment. In its description of the judicial and legal system concerning rape in Nigeria, the 2006 Amnesty International Report on Nigeria confirmed this observation. To avoid this social and cultural effect most times referred to as stigmatization, many rape victims keep silent and do not talk about it but rather suffer the medical and psychological effects in silence.<sup>33</sup> This culture of silence continues among rape victims with no legal or cultural reprieve or backing. The Nigerian authorities at both federal and state levels appear to have failed to address adequately gender-based violence, including rape. There are scanty federal or state legislations criminalizing violence against women, and most bills initiated by non-governmental organizations on violence against women are still pending.<sup>34</sup> The reflection of weak legislation, socio-cultural acquiesces, and victim silences are vividly expressed also in media representation, especially in the production of many Nigerian films about rape. These movies do not provide the right direction to solving victims' problems resulting from rape but rather present rape in a negative way, with gender bias favouring the men against the women, who are the worst hit.

<sup>27</sup> KRUG, E. G. et al.: *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization. [online]. [2019-09-06]. Available at: <[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/introduction.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/introduction.pdf)>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> OLSON, T.: The Medieval Blood Sanction and the Divine Beneficence of Pain: 1100-1450. In *Journal of Law and Religion*, 2006, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> OMOERA, O. S., AKINWOLE, O. T.: A Review of Literature: Rape and Communication Media Strategies in Nigeria. In *Benin Mediacom Journal*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 1-2, p. 166.

<sup>31</sup> AKINTUNDE, D.: *Rape: An Infringement on the Rights of Women*. Ibadan : Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, 2002, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> ELEGBELEYE, O. S.: Is Rape in the Eye or in the Mind of the Offender? A Survey of Rape Perception among Nigerian University Stakeholders. In *Educational Research and Reviews*, 2006, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: *Time for Justice and Accountability*. [online]. [2019-09-06]. Available at: <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR440202006>>.

<sup>34</sup> OMOERA, O. S., AKINWOLE, O. T.: A Review of Literature: Rape and Communication Media Strategies in Nigeria. In *Benin Mediacom Journal*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 1-2, p. 165.



## 1.2 Synopsis of *Code of Silence*

The movie opens with the main actress, Adanma, playing with her brother. Her beauty was later appreciated by the nurse in the hospital where she works. At night her fiancé proposes sex to her but she refuses. She with her friends at night were discussing sex, condoms and friendship when her brother overhears their discussion and this eventually leads to a disagreement between them. After the argument with her brother, Adanma decides that she wants to walk home without the company of her brother and she gets raped by a notable politician in the area. After being raped by the politician, she is raped by his men and dumped by the roadside. She becomes a topic for discussion in school, as the boys in class believe she was not raped. She starts having nightmares; her friend gives her some drugs to abort the pregnancy. She is about to use the drugs when her mother comes in. She eventually visits the hospital and gets medical attention and finds out that she is not pregnant and has no infection. The politician starts paying the in-laws to kill the case, the victim makes another attempt to kill herself and again, her mother comes to her rescue. They eventually get a lawyer but the mother still wants to keep quiet about it because of the stigma. However, with the help of the lawyer, her husband (a journalist) and another senator, the case begins to come into the public eye. The politician in his own case with a lot of promises asked his personal aide to claim the allegation that he, not his boss, raped the girl. The personal aide later exposes his bosses and the boss gets jailed. Adanma later gives birth to a baby boy and gets married to her jailed fiancé.

## 1.3 Synopsis of *Tango with Me*

The movie opens with the couple, Uzo and Lola, being joyous about their just concluded wedding. They head for honeymoon in a hotel. While the husband was waiting in the bedroom and dreaming about his wife, the wife was busy in the bathroom trying to undress for lovemaking. As both are preparing for a blissful first night of lovemaking some robbers come into the bedroom and while molesting the husband, the wife comes in and one of the robbers take a lustful interest in her and rapes her even as her husband pleads. The husband couldn't help but have flashbacks of the rape scene. Afterwards, both are appallingly shy and keep pushing the blame of the incident to each other. The husband consoles himself on hearing the news on the television that the robbers were shot dead after another robbery operation, he makes a move to make love to his wife but she is still too ashamed and traumatized. The wife tries to kill herself but the husband comes to her rescue. The wife watches a television programme which makes her give the marriage a second chance, but still, the husband finds it difficult to get the flashbacks of the rape out of his mind. This, unfortunately, leads to several conflicts between the couple. The wife eventually finds out that she is pregnant and they visit a doctor who counsels them to give the wife the opportunity to think and get prepared for abortion.

The husband, however, is desperate about having an abortion due to the shame of giving birth to a bastard. He hides behind a psychological trauma to avoid his wife and starts dating his boss who is desperately looking for a sex partner. Lola's parents support the option of aborting the baby to save the family's name. Lola eventually finds her husband Uzo in the company of his female boss in her matrimonial home. This deepens her confusion and drives the husband to guilt and alcohol. The guilt eventually leads the husband to a change of heart and to consider reconciling with his wife. He decides to reconcile with her and they afterward give birth to the baby in a happy reunion. The wife finally has another child through her husband.

## 2. Methodological Approach to Framing Theory

The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. In essence, framing theory suggests how something is presented to the audience (called „the frame“) and influences the choices people make about how to process information. The theory, that was first put forth by Goffman, states that people interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework.<sup>35</sup> Hence, framing is the way a communication source defines and constructs any piece of communicated information. However, studies have shown that framing analysis could be applied both theoretically and methodologically. Methodological approaches to frame analysis can be broadly divided in two categories, the deductive and the inductive. Deductive approaches rely on predetermined framing categories that are brought into contact with the media information. Such methods typically follow the logic of conventional quantitative content analysis and focus on measuring the frequency with which certain frames occur in a given text.<sup>36</sup> Shah et al., in their deductive study, examined the news framing of European politics through five frames - conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility - the frequency of which was measured through a series of questions to which the (de)coder had to answer „yes“ or „no“.<sup>37</sup> But Touri and Koteyko are of the view that the shortcomings of the deductive approach can be tackled by inductive methods. According to them, these methods are open and qualitative and extract frames through thorough interpretations of the text in connection to a given cultural context. Hence, the inductive methods of framing can examine the key issues or episode/themes of a media story which is more qualitative than quantitative.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.1 Materials

The study collated movies produced from 2012 to 2015 with specific themes on rape. However, 10 movies were selected but with themes on sexual exploitation, harassment and denials except two movies *Code of Silence* (dir. Emem Isong, 2015) and *Tango with Me* (dir. Mahmood Ali-Balogun, 2012), which categorically dealt with the theme of rape. These two movies were eventually selected for analysis in this study.

### 2.2 Procedure for analysis

This study uses qualitative narrative content analysis to gather information from the selected Nollywood films. Qualitative content analysis has been conceptualized as any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Mayring defines qualitative content

<sup>35</sup> GOFFMAN, E.: *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York : Harper and Row, 1974, p.1-2.

<sup>36</sup> TOURI, M., KOTeyKO, N.: Using Corpus Linguistic Software in the Extraction of News Frames: Towards a Dynamic Process of Frame Analysis in Journalistic Texts. In *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2015, Vol. 18, No. 6, p. 602.

<sup>37</sup> SHAH, D. V. et al.: Framing and Agenda Setting. In NABI, R., OLIVER, M. B. (eds.): *Handbook of Media Processes and Effects*. Los Angeles, CA : Sage, 2009, p. 83.

<sup>38</sup> TOURI, M., KOTeyKO, N.: Using Corpus Linguistic Software in the Extraction of News Frames: Towards a Dynamic Process of Frame Analysis in Journalistic Texts. In *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2015, Vol. 18, No. 6, p. 602.

<sup>39</sup> PATTON, M. Q.: *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage, 2001, p. 7.; DOSSOUMON, M.: *Class and Gender Representation in Nollywood Movies*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Edwardsville : Graduate School, Southern Illinois University, 2013, p. 3.

analysis as an approach of empirically and methodologically controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the framing theory was methodologically applied through a qualitative narrative content analysis approach that investigated the thematic perspective of how rape was portrayed in the two movies, *Tango with Me* and *Code of Silence*. The following stages were developed for the analysis of the two movies:

Stage 1: How the storylines of the films present the theme of rape

Stage 2: How the movies present the character being raped

Stage 3: How the cultural environment reacts to the issue of rape in the movies

Stage 4: How the setting contributes to the theme of rape in the two movies

Stage 5: How the theme of rape was resolved in the two movies

### 3. Findings and discussion

#### 3.1 Stage 1: How the storylines of the films present the theme of rape

*Tango with Me* relays the ordeal of a new wife raped by an armed robber while *Code of Silence* narrates the traumatic experiences of an eighteen years old medical student raped by a wealthy old politician. Both incidences were great misfortunes. However, both movies end cheerfully without the issue of rape being properly addressed based on the law and justice system operating in Nigeria. In *Tango with Me*, Lola, a new wife, was deflowered by the rapist in front of her helpless husband. Also, Ada, an eighteen years old student was kidnapped on a lonely path and deflowered by an old politician and a kidnapper. As regards these predicaments in the movies, a critical consideration should be given to the two scenes. Lola was so unfortunate to have stepped into the room which led to her molestation. Her case was such as an unavoidable prey for a hungry lion to devour. However, Ada's case in *Code of Silence* was a bit different. Although everybody has the right of movement, yet the kidnappers capitalized their crime based on her indecent dressing. They allege that she is a prostitute. Hence, the wicked politician also accuses her of being a „sinner“ whose prayers cannot be answered by God. Also, in the movie, a male student argues that most females attract rapists through their indecent dressing. However, the lawyer friend opposes that dressing does not have weight in committing such a crime. She maintains that a female has the right to dress based on her gender satisfaction just as her male counterpart does. This presupposes that a female's indecent dressing is not the basis for a male's uncontrolled appetite for sex. The fact that this issue is not properly resolved in the movie could easily encourage male dominance of the female gender in relation to sexual satisfaction.

Another critical issue to consider in the movies is virginity or faithfulness as revealed in *Tango with Me* where Lola jealously kept herself and waited for her wedding night to be deflowered by her husband. However, when the unforeseen event occurs, Lola is encouraged to still stay at home but Uzo engages in extramarital affairs with the burden of „being raped“ placed on his wife. This, in a concrete way, shows that the guilt or burden of rape is placed on the female gender while the man keeps enjoying himself. This situation was also exhibited in *Code of Silence* when it was even stated that the assault would reduce Ada's worth before her future husband. Yet, Chuks, the brother, who frolics and philanders with numerous girlfriends, sleeps around without reducing his worth in the eyes of society. The question is, between a male and a female, for whom is it mandatory to be a virgin, or to be faithful? The two movies show how empathy, love, care, support and unity can restore the hope and joy of rape victims. However,

<sup>40</sup> MAYRING, P.: Qualitative Content Analysis. In *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2000, Vol. 1, No. 2. [online]. [2019-06-09]. Available at: <<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2386>>.

the films under investigation did not promote the potency of the law and justice to handle the issue of rape except to a limited extent in *Code of Silence*. Hence, there is a need for gender balancing in storyline presentation in order to re-orientate the majority of the teeming audience who are consumers of Nollywood films in Nigeria and beyond.

### 3.2 Stage 2: How the movies present the character being raped

In the movie, *Tango with Me*, the protagonist, Mrs. Lola Dike (Genevieve Nnaji) is a victim of rape. This incidence which dishonours her virginity happens on her wedding night in front of her spouse. Although Lola keeps herself undefiled by any man and waits anxiously to be deflowered by her husband on her wedding night, an armed robber does. The storyline reveals her as helpless, unworthy and a weak character that cannot do anything to help the situation. She accepts the ordeal as a personal predicament. Her husband's lack of support or care as well as the myopic view of her parents who prefer to maintain tradition as justice for their daughter are further goads to her silence. This scenario compounds her helplessness, indecisiveness and dilemma. The option of abortion (an illegal termination of pregnancy in Nigeria) is not presented to her in an agreeable manner but as a revenge to hide her being raped and the family shame. Lola, however, agrees to bear the shame and agony in keeping the pregnancy. She suffers emotionally from this predicament. Her confidence is lost; her heart is filled with trauma; her home is silenced with agony while her marriage is on the verge of collapse. She sees herself as an inopportune object of the misfortune. Contrary to the title, Mrs. Lola Dike tangoes alone all through. The movie did not develop the character of Lola as an empowered woman who should be able to take decisive decision to deal with rape or related issues. This, in a way, goes a long way to mislead many young girls in society who may have been raped not to speak up but to tango along with their predicaments while the majority of the culprits (predators) go unpunished. Lola's character is weak and this has the potential of endorsing the temperament of silence in young girls that are being raped on a daily basis in society.

Adanma Uwueze, an eighteen years old medical student is the protagonist of *Code of Silence*. Her hope of keeping her virginity till her wedding night is ruined by a rape incident. This event transforms her into a silent, forlorn lady. Though she confesses the identity of the rapist, she is still being haunted by the sexual assault and the injustice done to her. Adanma accepts the ordeal as her fate and does not want legal action against the incidence. Her resentment is further incensed when her family members relay the consequences against publicizing it. She loses all hopes when they betray her trust for justice, all in the name of defending their family name (tradition). This situation makes her to recoil into silence. Also, Ada is presented as a weak character that cannot fight for justice in the face of tradition. However, Chief Artor Igwe (Kofi Adjorlolo), a political candidate is the antagonist to the heroine in the movie. He rapes an eighteen year old girl, Ada. Yet, he denies the accusation and uses his wealth to stop the avenging bendable kinsmen. He sees the crime he commits on the innocent lady as an enjoyment, and flimsy to take up with.

Lola's husband, Mr. Uzo Dike (Joseph Benjamin) in *Tango with Me* witnesses the rape of his wife on their wedding night. He could not rescue his wife from this sexual assault but powerlessly watches the unsightly scene. Initially, he sees it as a completed event of no consequence to their present marital life. However, the couple could not relate or discuss mutually. Consequently, it slowly drains his love, power and support for his wife, Lola. He later sees his wife as the only victim of the rape, which makes him involve himself in extramarital affairs as an escape route to forget the repulsive memories. He can not fulfil his marital vows to love and care for his wife in all situations. Hence, he leaves his wife to dance the tango of the rape ordeal. The weak character of Lola's husband can not even suggest any legal option to bring the justice needed to his wife. This, in a significant way, buttresses the weak justice system in Nigeria and

the hopelessness of rape victims. Lola's parents (Joke Silva and Ahmed Yerima) though react to the sad news of their daughter and feel embarrassed about their daughter's pregnancy, yet they encourage her to keep it secret to protect the family name. They are willing to suffer the shame of the pregnancy with her but will not support her to divorce her unfaithful and uncaring husband. They still prefer to take the risk of abortion, even at the risk of their daughter's life and to violate their religious laws; rather than supporting a broken marriage.

However, in *Code of Silence*, Mrs Ngozi Uwueze (Patience Ozokwor), Ada's mother, empathizes with her daughter who is sexually molested but too helpless to fight for justice. Therefore, she gives in to her kinsmen to defend the unfair treatment meted out on her daughter. The group of Amaka (Ini Edo); her lawyer friend; Chris (Ada's boyfriend) and Chuks (Ada's brother) want justice to prevail. They see the rape incidence as a great crime that must be punished. However, tradition and fear continue to render it hushed (silent) in the movie. The framing of weak and undeveloped characters downplays the theme of rape in the movies under investigation. Consequently, *Tango with Me* and *Code of Silence* cannot be seen as good antidotes to solving the issue of rape. Perhaps, the aesthetics of depicting the characters in the way they are portrayed in the films is to show the horrendous experience being confronted by rape victims, their parents and the negative influence of religion and tradition in dealing with the issue that is „silently“ ravaging society.

### 3.3 Stage 3: How does the cultural environment react to the issue of rape in the movies?

The movies show that the characters hold in high esteem their religious and cultural/traditional beliefs. We see two movies in which tradition and religion are sacrosanct regardless of the plight of the two rape victims, Lola and Adanma. The question from the two movies is on the role that tradition or religion should play in the event of rape. Lola, based on her religious conviction and for the family name not to be besmirched in *Tango with Me*, remains silent and bears the burden of being raped, while in *Code of Silence*, Ada, the brother and her mother are convinced by their kinsmen to remain silent on the rape incident so as to protect the victim from marital problems and stigma. The tradition holds that demanding justice against the culprit (oftentimes, a male sexual predator), by publicizing the incident may scare away suitors from Ada; or even reduce her bride price. What is more, they do not allow Ada to go for medical treatment; rather they prefer to remain silent and allow time to heal her physical and emotional pains. This shows that the movies indirectly reveal the decadence and gender biasness of certain aspects of Nigerian (African) traditions and religions which tend to favour male folk.

### 3.4 Stage 4: How the setting contributes to the theme of rape in the two movies

The producers make use of plot devices such as flashback and symbolism to effectively address the issue of rape in both movies. In *Tango with Me*, the producer utilizes flashback to connect the plot. Through a series of flashbacks, the story unfolds to show how Lola meets Uzo at 06:27 to 07:05; the ladies testimony time where Lola recounts how she and Uzo are able to stay celibate during their courtship and she is presented with a negligee that will eventually represent her saddest moment at 07:57 to 10:14; the wedding ceremony at 11:25 to 12:28 and the actual rape scene at 13:09 to 17:28. However, through a series of flashbacks in *Code of Silence*, Ada could not sleep because of the traumatic experience during her ordeal with her captor, Chief Igwe, who raped her. The setting establishes the circumstances of the movies linked with the reality and experience of rape victims.



### 3.5 Stage 5: How the theme of rape was resolved in the two movies

Mahmood Ali-Balogun, the director and producer of *Tango with Me*, presents an unsightly scenario between the new couples, Mr and Mrs Dike, who have to tango to overcome their dilemma. However, the wife is left alone in the ordeal because of her faith against the option of abortion. Yet, she stands firm and decides to tango alone. Eventually, the husband joins her in the final stage, a twist which turns the mourning dance into a melodious ball. *Tango with Me* presents the traumatic experience a rape victim goes through in her home. The movie empowers such victims to still stand and be hopeful, even against all odds. In a way, the producer appears to give a hopeful message to rape victims in society and encourages their friends and families to show love and support. Also in *Code of Silence*, the producer and director, Emem Isong, relates the experiences of innocent victims of rape in society. Most of these victims are denied justice due to financial problems to hire lawyers; or even tied down by their traditional cum cultural beliefs to continue the code of silence. Thus, wicked men are encouraged to molest females; both under-aged and aged, without any check. Nonetheless, the culprit is later apprehended in the movie. The distressed process undergone by the lawyer, who herself is also a victim of rape breaks the code of silence that the tradition might have encoded.

## 4. Conclusion

The aesthetic styles adopted by the producers of the two movies are strategically deployed to portray the trauma of the female gender, negative treatment of women, unequal opportunity for male versus female, lack of fairness and justice to women, social and cultural biases against women, display of women as sexual objects and men as chauvinists, sexual violence, harassment, powerlessness of the female and empowerment of the male. The film media in Nigeria, particularly Nollywood, tends to promote the male over the female and are discriminatory toward the female. A critical look at this approach might portray the Nollywood content producers as being biased in their productions. However, the style appears to present a realistic situation which many women are experiencing in Nigerian society. Also, the producers of the two movies attempt to display the evil of rape, the rapist, the traditional gender bias and the powerlessness of women, which manifest in their silence in the event of rape. It is, therefore, suggested that future productions by Nollywood content creators and indeed the broader media should project aspects of the law and justice system that address rape to further reinforce public confidence in them and, possibly begin the process of healing the wounds of rape victims.

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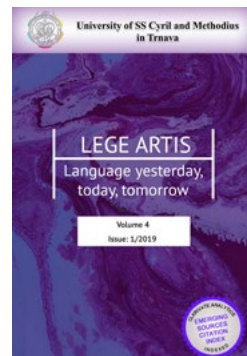
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