

<https://doi.org/10.31108/2.2023.2.29.10>
UDC 159.92:316.6

Aelita Skarzauskiene
Mariia Kononets

PERCEPTION OF FAKE NEWS BY UKRAINIAN RESPONDENTS

Skarzauskiene, Aelita, Kononets, Mariia. Perception of fake news by Ukrainian respondents.

Introduction. Today, the world's attention is riveted to Ukraine because of the war with the Russian Federation and counteracting the spread of fake news is more relevant than ever. That is why it is essential to highlight practices and interpretations of fake news from three perspectives: the perception and attitudes toward it, perceptions of interacting with it and opinions about countering it.

Aim. The article aimed to shed light on three perspectives related to fake news: the perception and attitudes toward it, perceived interaction with it and opinion on counteraction it from various stakeholder groups.

Methods: expert interviews, content analysis, qualitative analysis and supporting strategies: abstraction, deduction, contextualisation, interpretive content analysis and its "contextual" analysis.

Results. Our research indicates that Ukrainian media users single out the following threats posed by fake news: panic, disappointment, and change in worldview. In addition, Ukrainian media users search for opinion leaders who can offer information credibility assessments. They are sure that supporting activities concerning credibility information could be checking scientific databases, searching for contradicting information, and collaborating between media users, media organisations, scientists, communication managers, journalists and other important actors in the media ecosystem.

Conclusions. Our findings concerning Ukraine's media ecosystem may contribute to understanding the interaction of fake news in other European countries with similar media-cultural conditions and developing sensible policies, as ICT governance's success depends on all actors' willingness and participation in the media ecosystem.

Key words: fake news, perception, attitude, disinformation, propaganda, media.

Скарзаускене Аеліта, Кононець Марія. Сприйняття фейкових новин українськими респондентами.

Вступ. Сьогодні увага всього світу прикута до України через війну з РФ, за таких умов протидія поширенню фейкових новин є як ніколи актуальною. Тому дуже важливо виділити практики та інтерпретації респондентами фейкових новин з трьох точок зору: сприйняття та установки щодо них, уявлення про взаємодію з ними та думки щодо протидії їм.

Мета. Стаття спрямована на висвітлення трьох точок зору респондентів щодо фейкових новин: сприйняття та установки щодо них, уявлення про взаємодію з ними та думки щодо протидії їм з боку різних груп стейкхолдерів.

Методи: експертні інтерв'ю, контент-аналіз, якісний аналіз та допоміжні стратегії: абстракція, дедукція, контекстуалізація, інтерпретативний контент-аналіз та його «контекстуальний» аналіз.

Результати. Наше дослідження показує, що українські користувачі медіа є обізнаними щодо загроз, які походять від фейкових новин, зокрема: паніка, розчарування та зміна світогляду. Користувачі українських ЗМІ намагаються знайти лідерів думок, які можуть оцінити достовірність новин. За таких умов допоміжною діяльністю у пошуку достовірної інформації можуть бути: перевірка наукових баз даних, пошук суперечливої інформації та співпраця між користувачами ЗМІ, організаціями ЗМІ, науковцями, менеджерами з комунікацій, журналістами та іншими учасниками екосистеми ЗМІ.

Висновки. Наші висновки щодо медіа-екосистеми України можуть сприяти розумінню взаємодії фейкових новин в інших європейських країнах із подібними медіа-культурними умовами та розробці розумної політики, оскільки успіх управління ІКТ залежить від готовності та участі всіх учасників у медіа-екосистемі.

Ключові слова: фейкові новини, сприйняття, ставлення, дезінформація, пропаганда, ЗМІ.

Introduction. In 2016, the phrase “fake news” became one of the most common phrases in the US Collins Publishing House, which named “fake news” the Year's word. The use of this term in 2017 grew by 365%. “Fake news” is constantly mentioned in the press, social media and analytical materials. Recently, there has been an extensive discussion on falsified news, “aggressive speeches”, or the so-called “alternative facts”. It has grown into a worldwide phenomenon already. Today, preventing the spread of fake news and, in general, the fight against disinformation are fundamental aspects of the activity. Companies and governments are already taking concrete steps in this direction. For example, Google and Facebook have said they will hire more content reviewers, enforce terms of service, and remove fake and illegal content from their platforms. At the same time, representatives of state institutions from different countries of the European Union (for example, the Baltic countries) emphasise that they do not fight against fakes but promote their narrative. That is, leading state and non-state experts are abandoning reactive opposition to the spread of fake news to form their agenda in a competitive information environment. This approach avoids a plan imposed from the outside through external manipulation. However, it allows us to work on promoting messages in the information space.

One of the first entities to promote such a method of combating fake news is Ukraine's Ministry of Information Policy. This approach does not exclude the need to respond to fake news by checking, refuting false information and providing objective information on specific issues. However, the vigorous activity of state institutions regarding the competitive presentation of their communication position in the information environment was identified as a priority.

The word “fake” originated in Low English (criminal slang) in the 17th century (Lieberman, 2017). Some dictionaries need to include the term today, probably, because of its self-explanatory nature. The Cambridge Dictionary defines fake news as false stories that appear to be news spread on the Internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). A professor of journalism B. Cathcart (2017) thinks that fake news is topical information that is false by design and is disseminated through social media (Cathcart, 2017). H. Allcott and M. Gentzkow (2017) define it as intentionally and verifiably false news articles that could mislead readers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). There is also an opinion that fake news is media reports based on deliberately doctored or fabricated evidence (O'Loughlin, Szostek & Vaccari, 2017). According to Tandoc et al., there are six ways to determine the concept of “fake news”: satire, parody, fabrication, manipulation, propaganda, and advertising. Above mentioned definitions are based on levels of facticity and deception (Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2018).

According to C. Wardle (2017), fake news can belong to one of seven categories: satire or parody (no intention to cause harm but has the potential to fool); false connection (when headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content); misleading content (misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual); false content (when genuine content is shared with false contextual information); imposter content (when real sources are impersonated); manipulated content (when truthful information or imagery is manipulated to deceive); fabricated content (new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm) (Wardle, 2017).

Since 2016, research on fake news and the factors contributing to its spread has been conducted. Indeed, false information spreads on social networks six times faster than the truth. If bots were blamed for everything previously, nowadays, investigations conclude that research on fake news and the factors contributing to its spread has been conducted. According to J. Kreft & M. Hapek, the research on fake news is carried out in the following main fields: reliability of the information in the context of high trust towards the Internet as the information environment, trust towards Google and other social platforms as sources of information, in comparison to traditional media; identification, tagging and elimination of fake news; responsibility assumed by new media organisations for the dissemination of fake news – the search engine of Google, Facebook and Twitter platforms; creation and dissemination of fake news by social bots (which maintain contact with people who spread fake news are blame (Kreft and Hapek, 2019). Besides, studies on the use of bots in disseminating fake news show that bots are rarely used to diffuse false information considering the financial motivation of fake news creators. They are more frequently used to win political support (Kumar, Villa & Carley, 2017).

Fake news can influence political, economic and social well-being. To understand the process of fake news spreads, Twitter, from 2006 to 2017, investigated rumours. The investigation showed that 3 million people spread about 126,000 rumours. False news reached more people than the truth; the top 1% of false news cascades between 1000 and 100,000 people, whereas the truth rarely diffused to more than 1000 people. Falsehood also diffused faster than the truth. The degree of novelty and the emotional reactions of recipients may be responsible for the differences observed (Vosoughi & Roy, 2021).

Experts calculated that, on average, fake news reaches 1,500 social network users in just 10 hours, while trustworthy news reaches 60 hours. At the same time, on average, lies reach 35% more people (Borenstein, 2018).

Generally, disinformation is characterised by the author's intentions and arises when they intend their message to deceive or mislead their audience (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018). For example, journalists can present content as though it were the product of actual journalistic practices when, in fact, it was not. Content can mislead when people treat it as though it were news produced through traditional journalistic practices methods when it is not true (Fallis & Mathiesen, 2019), (Pepp, Michaelson & Sterkin, 2019). A. Gelfert supposes that fake news is reserved for the cases of purposeful design and presentation of (usually) false information or misleading statements (Gelfert, 2018). Disinformation also undermines the epistemological basis for truth validation. Instead, the affective component becomes the baseline for assessing the truthfulness of any information (Bjola & Papadakis, 2020). Features of fake news are that it has a 70% greater chance of spreading, but political disinformation is the fastest spread. Other popular topics are urban legends, business, terrorism, science, entertainment, and natural disasters. The ground for fake news is also often the deliberate publication of fictitious information, hoaxes, and propaganda (Douglas, Ang & Deravi, 2017). It is implied that propaganda is the intentional use of communication to influence attitudes and behaviours in target populations (Faris et al., 2017). Conspiracy theories are also the perfect material for fake news stories designed to manipulate people and stir up social or political unrest (Bilewicz, Cichocka & Soral, 2015; Douglas, Ang & Deravi, 2017). Fake news that appeals to the effect is an effective strategy. That is why W. Bennett and S. Livingstone (2020) called such forms of disinformation of citizens' disruptive communication. Disinformation, in its turn, they explained as intentional falsehoods or distortions, often spread as news, to advance political goals such as discrediting opponents, disrupting policy debates, influencing voters, inflaming existing social conflicts, or creating a general backdrop of confusion and informational paralysis (Bennett & Livingston, 2020). A. Zelenkauskaitė (2022) considers disinformation as a form of information warfare involving social media and news comments written by general public users (Zelenkauskaitė, 2022).

The spread of fake news online has far-reaching implications for people's lives offline. There is increasing pressure for content-sharing platforms to intervene and mitigate the spread of fake news, but intervention spawns accusations of biased censorship (Stewart, 2021).

In the media context, reliability is one of the most important factors in perceiving information; however, it is difficult to find explicit and undisputed reliability because it depends on receivers' perception, competencies and critical attitudes and even their level of cynicism. Hence, the evaluation of reliability remains subjective. The research on the reliability of information refers to the reliability of sources, the content of information and the medium (Metzger, 2009).

The emergence of such interest is due to the crisis of confidence in information after the presidential elections in France and the United States and the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (Khaldarova & Pannti, 2016).

According to M. Osmundsen, M. Petersen, H. Mazepus, D. Toshkov & A. Dimitrova (2022) people disseminate fake news online by focusing on the effect of perceived conflict on the endorsement of fake news in the context of a conflict with Russia. They found that perceptions of conflict between Ukraine and Russia significantly predictor fake news uptake among a sample of Ukrainian participants. Ukrainians who perceived Russia and their home country's interests to clash were likely to endorse fake news that denigrates Russia but rejected anti-European fake news narratives. These findings show that conflict perceptions operate over and beyond the strength of

national identity. Group identities, in other words, become a more potent motivational force when linked to perceptions of inter-group conflict (Osmundsen, Petersen, Mazepus, Toshkov & Dimitrova, 2022).

According to J. Kreft & M. Fydrych (2018) the potential use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a significant role in countering the spread of fake news (Kreft & Fydrych, 2018). K. Clayton believes that the function experts in this question may be able to play also receives more attention (Clayton et al., 2020).

As seen from the literature analysis, the spread of fake news has its specifics, which will help to identify and combat its spread. That is extremely important for conveying truthful information and counteracting the emergence of panic among Ukrainian citizens in a war.

Aim. The article aimed to shed light on three perspectives related to fake news: the perception and attitudes toward it, perceived interaction with it and opinion on counteraction it from various stakeholder groups.

Tasks:

1. Clarify the peculiarities of perception and attitudes of Ukrainian respondents toward fake news.
2. Reveal the features of the interaction of Ukrainian respondents with fake news.
3. Collect opinions on countering fake news from various stakeholder groups among Ukrainian respondents.

Methods: This research highlighted the features of interpreting the perception and possible ways to combat fake news from the citizens of Ukraine's point of view. We provide the respondent's answers overview to questions about attitudes, interaction and countering fake news, which reflects the current situation in Ukraine. In the first research stage, we used the author's questionnaire during semi-structured interviews for data collection. In the second stage, the data of the survey of respondents were processed, after which additional expert interviews were conducted, based on the results of which our conclusions are based. Expert interviews have some significant advantages over other data collection methods: this survey is uniquely aimed at obtaining reliable data because respondents have a high level of competence (Dorussen, Lenz & Blavoukos, 2005). Moreover, they eliminate the need to use additional clarifying questions hidden from the interviewer's views. All participants are Ukrainian citizens, so the authors conducted surveys and interviews in Ukrainian and translated them into English. Carefully following the conversation, the interviewers asked questions to the respondents and discussed them. The authors conducted a content analysis of the above interviews, identifying similar statements of respondents and presenting consolidated information about opinions, ideas and general conclusions per the structure of the conceptual analysis. While conducting qualitative analysis, we used supporting strategies: abstraction, deduction, contextualisation, interpretative content analysis and its "contextual" analysis. That made it possible to highlight similar and different opinions and assessments of the respondents. Atypical cases were also highlighted. We evaluated the findings against the literature and conceptual framework, using an iterative approach with inductive and deductive methods to the hermeneutic circle. Data were analysed in the context of respondents' opinions, arguments and ideas to deepen our understanding of the issues.

Respondents: Our conclusions are based on processing data from a survey of 21 respondents. Following guidelines of a "maximum variation sampling" strategy (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017), authors conducted face-to-face interviews with respondents from such stakeholders' groups: scientists (1), media managers (2), cyber security specialists (2), IT specialists (2), advertisers (1), HR managers (3), entrepreneurs (1), financiers (1), students of technical university which have experience in cyber security (8). It was interesting to analyse the opinions of different groups of Ukrainian respondents who, based on their knowledge and experience, can give a valid assessment of the topic of our study. The data collection period is from June to August 2022.

Results and discussion.

Our research was structured around three themes presented in Table 1.

*Table 1***Major and minor categories and semi-structured interviews**

Themes	Major categories	Minor categories
<i>1. Perception and attitudes of Ukrainian respondents toward fake news</i>	The distinctions between fake news and disinformation	Ukrainian respondents did not distinguish between "fake news" and "disinformation" concepts. Both are the deliberate spread of lies to change public opinion or divide people into several warring camps.
	Opinions about the threats coming from fake news	Threats: panic, disappointment, change in worldview, which can be a threat to national security.
<i>2. Features of the interaction of Ukrainian respondents with fake news</i>	Vigilance to fake news	The interviewees defined disinformation originating in Russia as the most common flow of fake news. All participants interacted with fake news and noticed the increased amount of disinformation in recent months in context of war with RF and some of them has opinion that such status quo is opportunity to develop critical thinking of Ukrainian citizens.
	Discovering fake news, trustworthiness of news sources	The majority of respondents believe that the central place in the creation of fake news is the media of the Russian Federation. As to the trustworthiness of news sources, respondents identify the some information resources.
	Trusted sources	The reputation of media source, the reputation of the author, authority, the sources of funding, references used for argumentation. Respondents rely on their analysis and critical assessment of the news.
<i>3. Countering fake new</i>	Collaboration between stakeholders in the media ecosystem	Journalists, researchers, public relations & communication specialists, bloggers, citizens as media users, politicians and specialists will process information to identify fakes, Internet technologies and robots.
	Methods of counteraction	Importance development of media literacy competencies and critical thinking skills, mass dissemination of truthful information access to information for foreign reporters, knowledge the methodology of propaganda, the controlling organization for tracking, state preventing and blocking sources of fakes, system of punishment for fakes.
	Preparedness to participate in process of managing disinformation	The majority of interviewees were willing to participate in counteracting fake news, but some were not. At the same time, some of the respondents are already involved in the fight against fake news.

1. Perception and attitudes of Ukrainian respondents toward fake news

1.1. The distinction between fake news and disinformation

Ukrainian respondents did not distinguish between "fake news" and "disinformation" concepts. According to the respondents, both are the deliberate spread of lies to change public opinion or divide people into several warring camps. Fake news and disinformation are created using altered or fictitious stories, crazy conspiracy theories, hoaxes, fake photos and videos, and their dissemination in the media. Respondents believe that fake news: aimed to spread opinions of a particular orientation creates a threat of "playing off" specific segments of the population and the spread of propagandist narratives. In addition, fake news is aimed at misleading, confusing and arousing fear to gain power over people's thinking and influence their perception.

1.2. Opinions about the threats coming from fake news.

Respondents who participated in this research expressed a negative opinion about fake news. More of them (29%) suppose that fake news is "a severe problem" and "the information war is a big threat. Especially when it happens every day". As for the consequences to which fake news leads, the respondents name the following: fake news provokes panic, fear, illogical actions, manipulation, psychological disorder, and hostility and contributes to the outbreak of war. In addition, respondents suppose that: when fake news is hammered into people's heads daily, it becomes the truth for people if there are no other channels of information, or the person does not want to check the news or does not have the opportunity. False information disseminated by the mass media in large quantities can lead to qualitative changes in people's thinking and behaviour. Besides, fake news has a strong negative impact on the so-called grey mass, on people without critical thinking. In addition, fake news threatens to change the perception of reality and leads to the moral decay of the individual in the direction of the so-called "correct position". Generally, fake news affects the worldview of people who believe it to be true. Abovementioned means that fake news influences their decisions and social connections. Trust in fake news causes a gradual deprivation of critical thinking and destroys a person's worldview. Most importantly, fake news is bound to have negative consequences because unverified information will lead to false judgments and sometimes even cause physical harm to the body. After all, fake news provokes wrong actions and reactions. In addition, some respondents (10%) suppose that: fake news misleads society, and as a result, people make bad decisions, become demotivated, disappointed and lose faith in victory, and fake news is a waste of time, loss of concentration, disappointment in Armed Forces of Ukraine and a threat to national security. That is why critically important to check all the information from several trusted sources and refrain from believing in something unverified.

2. Features of the interaction of Ukrainian respondents with fake news

2.1. Vigilance to fake news

The interviewees defined disinformation originating in Russian Federation as the most common flow of fake news. All participants interacted with fake news and noticed increased disinformation during the war with RF. Some respondents (10%) believe such a status quo is an opportunity to develop critical thinking in Ukrainian citizens. In addition, the respondents' answers indicate that fake news often concerns manipulating people's minds and gaining benefits for those who spread the news, as well as an excellent opportunity to demoralize the enemy's spirit.

2.2. Discovering fake news, trustworthiness of news sources

Most respondents (95%) believe that the central place in the creation of fake news is the media of the Russian Federation. In particular, respondents note that nowadays, fake news often concerns distorted information about the war with Russia: military front, military situation and fake fundraising. Respondents generally believe that fake news can relate to different areas - from health to politics, but mostly it is politics. Respondents consider the media and social networks, especially: Telegram, Facebook and Instagram - the primary sources for spreading fake news.

2.3. Trusted sources

Regarding the trustworthiness of news sources, 76% of respondents identify the following information resources: Telegram channels, among them: the official page of the President of

Ukraine (Twitter, Telegram, Facebook and Instagram); Telegram news service - <https://t.me/NEOWOFWARUKRAINE>, <https://t.me/lachentyt>, <https://t.me/bpzua>. In addition, respondents identify as reliable information resources: Radio Svoboda, NV, "Ukrainian Pravda", VOX, TSN, SNN, BBC, websites of ministries, international authoritative publications with long-term confirmed status, official state sources, international news agencies of the USA and the West. At the same time, 24% of respondents claim that they cannot trust any of the information sources presented in the media landscape.

Also very important is the complex examination of different sources of information by testing the credibility of news. Respondents rely on their analysis and critical assessment of the news: try to obtain information from various sources and think critically about it because of distrust. Respondents believe such verification is necessary and preferably receive information from ideological opponents and primary sources. For example, according to some respondents' opinions (10%), for a clear understanding of the information-required read the scientific literature, usually Google Scholar destroys the absolute majority of fakes. However, some respondents (60%) believe an attentive person receives truthful information not from "sources" but from the analysis of his/her observations.

3. Countering fake news from various stakeholder groups among Ukrainian respondents

3.1. Collaboration between stakeholders in the media ecosystem

A large group of respondents considered that the process of testing news should involve all stakeholders in the media ecosystem: 43% of respondents have an opinion that it must be journalists, 24% - researchers and public relations & communication specialists, 9% - bloggers, 24% - citizens as media users. Besides 5% of respondents believe humanity should create a separate speciality - specialists who will process information to identify fakes. 47% of respondents also think there should be a severe legal basis to counteract the spread of fake news, so politicians and government agencies should be involved. 10% of respondents believe that to detect fake news, there should be unique Internet technologies and robots (programs) for preparing trustworthy information and would immediately provide a photo and video. (Fig 1.).

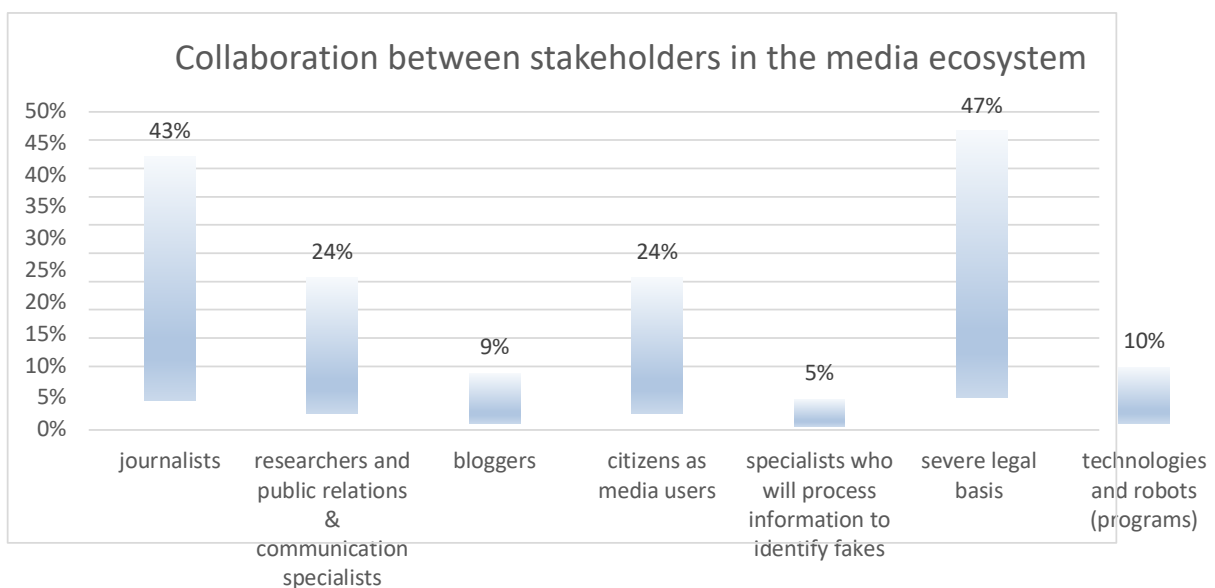


Fig. 1. Collaboration between stakeholders in the media ecosystem

3.2. Methods of counteraction

Trying to identify the possibilities to counteract fake news and disinformation: 57% of respondents emphasised the importance of developing media literacy competencies and critical thinking skills. 24% of respondents consider it necessary to mass dissemination of truthful information. 14% of respondents think creating a punishment system for fakes is important. 5% of respondents believe that to counteract disinformation, critically important knowledge of the methodology of propaganda; access to information for foreign reporters; the controlling organisation for tracking fake news; state preventing and blocking sources of fakes. (Fig. 2).

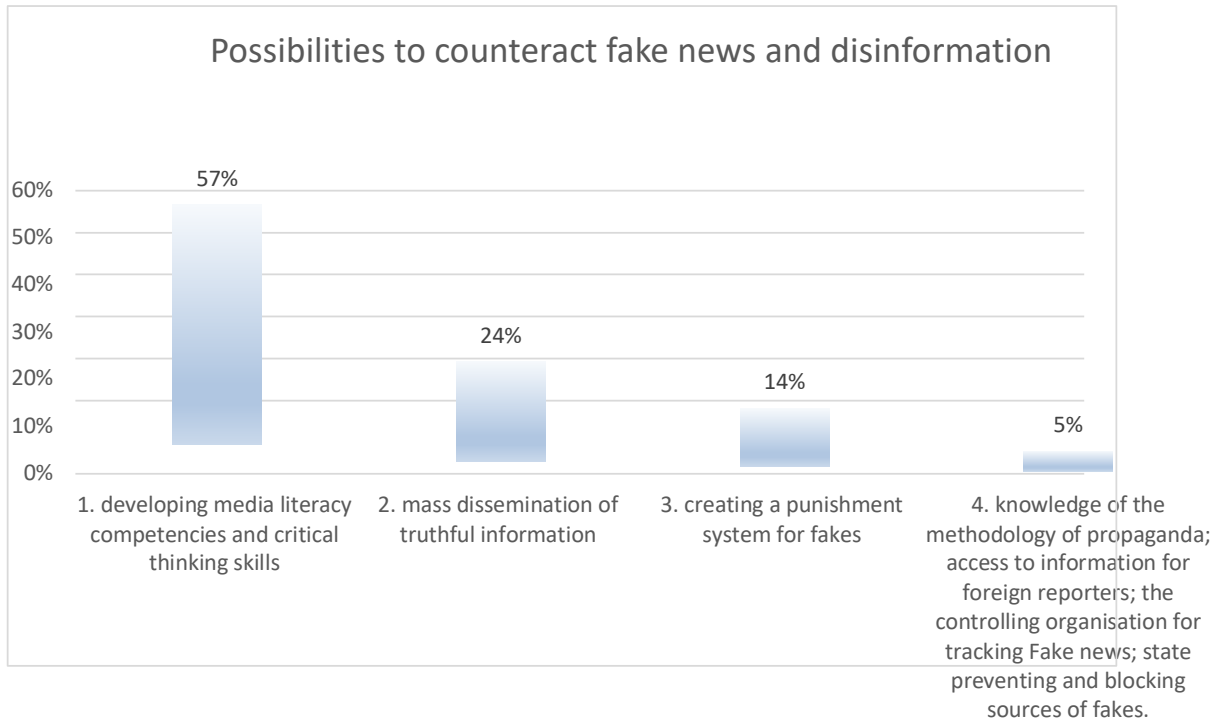


Fig. 2. Possibilities to counteract fake news and disinformation

3.3. Preparedness to participate in the process of managing disinformation

86% of respondents consider the problem of fake news and disinformation problem significant because the information war is on the same level as the usual one, and there are cases where it is even more difficult and dangerous. Under certain circumstances, disinformation can cost people their lives. For example, some respondents noted that their friends and family often fall prey to disinformation and start to panic. The problem of fake news and disinformation is important; still, it cannot be overcome due to the lack of desire of the majority of the population to think critically. At the same time, 14% of respondents do not consider the problem of disinformation very important.

71% of interviewees were willing to participate in counteracting fake news and disinformation because they were sure they could distinguish fakes from the truth and would be glad to work for the benefit of justice and truth. However, they often need to learn precise requirements and how this process is organised. 15% of the respondents are already involved in the fight against disinformation: spreading posts that some news is fake and joining those who fight against fakes; they even were blocking Russian fakes about the war due to specially created Ukrainian resources at the beginning of the war. Nevertheless, 14% of the respondents were not ready to participate in this process: some due to reluctance, and some there was no opportunity to waste time on activities related to identifying, tagging and eliminating fake news.

Respondents also share interesting opinions concerning the perception of information by people: some of them believe that fakes are impossible to overcome entirely and that a person cannot accept clear truth (10%). Opinions were also raised that the main thing is to form a person's value system before watching TV, and if what the presenter says is at least a little out of the norm, it is better to turn off the TV so as not to succumb to its persuasion to change their limits of truth. Some respondents (45%) consider it necessary to direct the vector of attention to the population's awareness as soon as possible, in parallel with the fight against fakes. However, some respondents (15%) believe that the problem of perception of fake news disinformation - inexperience and lack of personal hygiene in the perception of information - is why everyone needs to educate themselves to develop the right approach to information consumption.

Conclusions. After conducting an analysis of the answers of Ukrainian respondents regarding their opinions about the dangers posed by fake news, one can single out the following: panic, disappointment, and change in worldview, which really can be a threat to national security, especially during the war with the Russian Federation. Our research indicates that the current state of the media landscape forces users to search for opinion leaders who can offer credibility assessments. Respondents consider the media and social networks. As to the trustworthiness of news sources, respondents use information websites of ministries, international authoritative publications with long-term confirmed status, official state sources, international news agencies of the USA and the West. At the same time, some respondents claim that they cannot trust any of the information sources presented. Supporting activities could be checking scientific databases and searching for contradicting information.

The innovative character of the research is due to the focus on underexplored social factors of collaboration between media users, media organisations, scientists, communication managers, journalists and other important actors in the media ecosystem. Many participants agree that testing news should involve all stakeholders in the media ecosystem. There is an opinion among the respondents that they should create a separate speciality - specialists who will process information to identify fakes. Some respondents believe that to detect fake news there should be unique Internet technologies and robots (programs).

Trying to identify the possibilities to counteract disinformation, the interviewees emphasised the importance: of the development of media literacy competencies and critical thinking skills, mass dissemination of truthful information, access to information for foreign reporters, knowledge of the methodology of propaganda, the controlling organisation for tracking, state preventing and blocking sources of fakes, a system of punishment for fakes. Regarding collaboration between stakeholders, most of the interviewees expressed their preparedness to participate in counteracting disinformation. Indeed, proactive citizen organisations could be an important catalyst for fostering stakeholder collaboration.

Prospects for further achievements. The study has several limitations. It was conducted in Ukraine, where news consumption practices differ from other countries. The research was conducted as an exploratory study with a small number of participants. It should be expanded to other stakeholders' groups and places and supported by representative survey results. Future research also may test for correlations between the three analysed topics to gain deeper insight into causal relationships between general attitudes, perceived interaction and opinions on counteraction while targeting various groups defined by demographic factors. Further research is needed on targeted attitudinal or behavioural change, perception differences, the ideological motive influence of age, education and income on attitudes and interaction, and many other variables. The results show that future research should involve methodologies for critically responsible news sharing and the deconstruction of false news.

References

1. Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 31(2), 211-36. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211>
2. Bennett, W., & Livingston, S. (Eds.). (2020). *The Disinformation Age* (SSRC Anxieties of Democracy). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-41 <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108914628>
3. Bilewicz, M., Cichocka, A., & Soral, V. (Eds.). (2015). *The psychology of conspiracy*. Hove, UK: Routledge, 222. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315746838>
4. Borenstein, S. (2018). *Study finds false stories travel way faster than the truth*. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-us-news-ap-top-news-international-news-massachusetts-institute-of-technology-8da97e49a9064b36baa047d98bb72272>
5. Bjola, C., & Papadakis, K. (2020). Digital propaganda, counterpublics and the disruption of the public sphere: the Finnish approach to building digital resilience. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 33(5), 638–666. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1704221>
6. Cambridge dictionary, “Fake News” Definition. Available online: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/fake-news>
7. Cathcart, B. (2017). Written evidence submitted by Brian Cathcart, UK parliament: culture media and sport committee (FNW0050). March. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/culture-media-and-sport-committee/fake-news/written/48065.html>
8. Clayton, K., Blair, S., Busam, J. A., Forstner, S., Glance, J., Green, G., Kawata, A., Kovvuri, A., Martin, J., Morgan, E., Sandhu, M., Sang, R., Scholz-Bright, R., Welch, A. T., Wolff, A. G., Zhou, A., & Nyhan, B. (2020). Real solutions for fake news? Measuring the effectiveness of general warnings and fact-check tags in reducing belief in false stories on social media. *Political Behavior*, 42(4), 1073–1095. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09533-0>
9. Dorussen, H., Lenz, H., & Blavoukos, S. (2005). Assessing the reliability and validity of expert interviews. *European Union Politics*, 6(3), 315-337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116505054835>
10. Douglas, K., Ang, C. S., & Deravi, F. (2017). Farewell to truth? Conspiracy theories and fake news on social media. *The Psychologist*, 30, 36-42. KAR id:60679
11. Fallis, D., & Mathiesen, K. (2019). Fake news is counterfeit news. *Inquiry*, pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2019.1688179>
12. Faris, R., Roberts, H., Etling, B., Bourassa, N., Zuckerman, E. & Benkler, Y. (2017). Partisanship, propaganda, and disinformation: Online media and the 2016 US presidential election. *Berkman Klein Center Research Publication*, 6. <https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2017/08/mediacloud>
13. Gelfert, A. (2018). Fake news: a definition. *Informal Logic*, 38(1), 84-117. <https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v38i1.5068>
14. Khaldarova, I., and Pantti, M. (2016). Fake news: The narrative battle over the Ukrainian conflict. *Journalism Practice*, 10(7), 891–901. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1163237>
15. Kreft, J., & Fydrych M. (2018). VI power of Google and Facebook and Fake News. *Proceedings of the 32nd International Business Information Management Association Conference, IBIMA 2018 - Vision 2020: Sustainable Economic Development and Application of Innovation Management from Regional Expansion to Global Growth*, 15-16 November. https://ruj.uj.edu.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/item/72528/kreft_fydrych_vi_power_of_google_and_facebook_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
16. Kreft, J., & Hapek, M. (2019). Fake news: possibility of identification in post-truth media ecology system. *Zarządzanie Mediami*, 7(3), 133-142. <https://doi.org/10.4467/23540214ZM.19.009.11120>
17. Kumar, S., Villa, R.A., & Carley, K.M. (2017). Identifying bots that spread Fake news. http://sbp-brims.org/2017/proceedings/papers/challenge_papers/IdentifyingBots.pdf
18. Liberman, A. (2017). A fake etymology of the word “fake,” with deep thoughts on “Fagin” and other names in Dickens, OUPBLOG, Aug. 23. <https://blog.oup.com/2017/08/fake-fagin-etymology/>
19. Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2017). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Sage publications. Print ISBN 9781452256825, 1452256829
20. Metzger, M. (2009). *The study of media effects in the era of Internet communication*. In: R. L. Nabi & M. B. Oliver (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2, 561–576. ISBN: 9781412959964 1412959969
21. O'Loughlin, B., Szostek, J., & Vaccari, C. (2017). Apr. Written evidence submitted by New Political Communication Unit - Royal Holloway, University of London (FNW0066). <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/culturemedia-and-sport-committee/fake-news/written/48178.html>
22. Osmundsen, M., Petersen, M., Mazepus, H., Toshkov, D., & Dimitrova, A. (2022). Information battleground: Conflict perceptions motivate the belief in and sharing of fake news about the adversary. 24 Jan. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/s2atu>
23. Pepp, J., Michaelson, E., & Sterkin, R. K. (2019). What's new about fake news? *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 16(2), 67–94. <https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v16i2.629>

24. Stewart, E. (2021). Detecting fake news: Two problems for content moderation. *Philosophy & Technology*, 34(4), 923–940. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-021-00442-x>
25. Tandoc, Jr. E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “Fake News”. A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>
26. Vosoughi, S., & Roy, D. (2021). A semi-automatic method for efficient detection of stories on social media. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 10(1), 707–710. <https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/ICWSM/article/view/14809>
27. Wardle, C. (2017). Fake News, it's complicated. FIRST DRAFT, Feb. 16. <https://firstdraftnews.com/fake-news-complicated/>
28. Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2018). Thinking about “information disorder”: formats of misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. In Ireton, C., & Posetti, J. (Eds.) *Journalism, “fake news” & disinformation: handbook for journalism education and training*. Unesco Publishing, 43–54. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265552/PDF/265552eng.pdf.multi>
29. Zelenkauskaitė, A. (2022). *Creating Chaos Online. Disinformation and Subverted Post-Publics*. Publisher: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12237294>

Information about authors

Skarzauskiene, Aelita, Doctor of Social Sciences, Research Professor, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania.

Скарзаускене Аеліта, докторка соціальних наук, професорка-дослідниця, Вільнюський технічний університет імені Гедімінаса, Вільнюс, Литва

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1606-0676>

E-mail: aelita.skarzauskiene@vilniustech.lt

Kononets, Mariia, PhD (Psychology), Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine. Junior research fellow of Department of Entertainment Industries, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania.

Кононець Марія, кандидатка психологічних наук, доцентка, доцентка кафедри психології та педагогіки КПІ ім. Ігоря Сікорського, Київ, Україна. Молодша наукова співробітниця Вільнюського технічного університету імені Гедімінаса, Вільнюс, Литва

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9303-707X>

E-mail: kononets.maria@gmail.com

Отримано 3 травня 2023 р.
Рецензовано 29 травня 2023 р.
Прийнято 03 червня 2023 р.