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RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC DEMAND FOR RELIABLE INFORMATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The article aims to identify the problems of the infodemic based on the monitoring of digital media and social media. This study develops a communication strategy aimed at identifying society's demands for high-quality information and the development of information and media literacy based on the identified picture of the infodemic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the study is to create information resources for the prevention of infodemic in the field of media communications and journalism in Kazakhstan; research, analysis and assessment of society's requests for high-quality information during the COVID-19 pandemic; identification of the problem of infodemic based on the monitoring of digital media and social media. The scientific novelty and significance of the work lies in the actual aspects of creating information resources for the prevention of infodemic in the field of media communications and journalism in Kazakhstan. The authors applied methods of social research. The main methods included quantitative and qualitative research, in particular, questioning, expert analysis of the work of domestic, Western and Russian researchers; classifications were made on the methodological basis of the study.

The scope of the study include such areas as media and communications, health, sociology, etc. The value of the study is that information and methodological resources have been developed to prevent the infodemic in the media space of Kazakhstan and enhance the quality of national journalism and communications, including crisis ones. The practical value is determined by the development of new approaches to the training of competent communication specialists and journalists in Kazakhstan.

The article presents the results of research by the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the topic: IRN AP09562324 "Development of information resources for the prevention of infodemic in the field of social media education."

Key words: infodemic, pandemic, media communication, journalism, prevention, COVID-19, information and media literacy.

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COVID-19 пандемиясы кезеңінде қоғамның сапалы ақпарат алуға сұраныстарын зерттеу, талдау және бағалау

Мақала сандық БАҚ және әлеуметтік медиа мониторингі негізінде инфодемия мәселелерін анықтауға арналған. Бұл зерттеу COVID-19 пандемия кезеңіндегі инфодемияның анықталған көрінісі негізінде қоғамның сапалы ақпарат алуға және ақпараттық-медиа сауаттылықты дамытуға деген қажеттіліктерін анықтауға бағытталған коммуникациялық стратегияны әзірлеуді көздейді. Инфодемия – жалпы әлемдік ауқымдағы және маңызы бар проблема, әсіресе Қазақстанға қауіп төндіреді.

Зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстанның медиакоммуникациясы және журналистикасы саласында инфодемияның алдын алу үшін ақпараттық ресурстар құру; COVID-19 пандемиясы кезеңінде қоғамның сапалы хабардар етуге сұраныстарын зерттеу, талдау және бағалау; сандық БАҚ және әлеуметтік медиа мониторингі негізінде инфодемия проблемасын анықтау.

Жұмыстың ғылыми жаңалығы мен маңыздылығы медиакоммуникация және Қазақстан журналистикасы саласындағы инфодемияның алдын алу үшін ақпараттық ресурстарды құрудың өзекті аспектілерінен тұрады. Инфодемия, ақпараттық қауіпсіздік саласындағы зерттеулер, негізгі теориялық мәселелер мен гипотезалар, медиа және коммуникация саласында маңызды болып табылатын зерттеу стратегиясы мен тәсілдері егжей-тегжейлі қарастырылады.

Мақаланы жазу кезінде әлеуметтік зерттеулердің қолданбалы әдістері пайдаланылды. Сандық және сапалық зерттеулер, атап айтқанда, сауалнама, отандық, батыс және Ресей зерттеушілерінің жұмыстарына сараптамалық талдау, жіктеу зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізінде жасалды. Зерттеу нәтижелерінің мемлекеттің саяси жүйесінде ақпараттық-коммуникациялық процестерді жүзеге асыруда үлкен практикалық маңызы бар.

Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасы Білім және ғылым министрлігі Ғылым комитетінің АР09562324 ЖТН «Әлеуметтік медиабілім саласындағы инфодемияның алдын алу бойынша ақпараттық ресурстарды әзірлеу» тақырыбы бойынша зерттеу нәтижелері ұсынылған.

Қолдану саласы: медиа және коммуникация, денсаулық сақтау, әлеуметтану және т.б. Жүргізілген зерттеудің құндылығы Қазақстанның медиакеңістігінде инфодемияның алдын алу және ұлттық журналистика мен коммуникациялардың, оның ішінде дағдарыстық коммуника-циялардың сапасын күшейту үшін ақпараттық-әдістемелік ресурстар әзірлеу болып табылады.

Практикалық маңыздылығы Қазақстанда коммуникация бойынша құзыретті мамандар мен журналистерді даярлаудың жаңа тәсілдерін әзірлеумен айқындалады.

Түйін сөздер: инфодемия, пандемия, медиакоммуникация, журналистика, алдын алу, COVID-19, ақпараттық-медиа сауаттылық.

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Исследование, анализ и оценка запросов общества на качественное информирование в период пандемии COVID-19

Статья посвящена выявлению проблем инфодемии посредством мониторинга цифровых СМИ и социальных медиа. В данном исследовании разрабатывается коммуникационная стратегия, направленная на выявление запросов общества на качественное информирование и развитие информационно-медийной грамотности на примере цифровой дезинформации в период пандемии COVID-19.

Цели исследования - создание информационных ресурсов для профилактики инфодемии в сфере медиакоммуникаций и журналистики Казахстана; исследование, анализ и оценка запросов общества на качественное информирование в период пандемии COVID-19; выявление проблемы инфодемии на основе анализа цифровых медиа.

Научная новизна и значимость работы заключаются в актуальных аспектах создания информационных ресурсов для профилактики инфодемии в сфере медиакоммуникаций и журналистики Казахстана. Подробно рассматриваются исследования в области информационной профилактики инфодемии, основные теоретические вопросы и гипотезы, исследовательская стратегия и подходы.

При работе над статьей применялись прикладные методы социальных исследований. Количественные и качественные исследования, в частности, анкетирование, экспертный анализ работ отечественных, западных и российских исследователей, классификации были сделаны на базе данных методов.

В статье представлены результаты исследований Комитета науки Министерства образования и науки Республики Казахстан по теме: ИРН АР09562324 «Разработка информационных ресурсов по профилактике инфодемии в сфере социального медиаобразования».

Область применения: медиа и коммуникации, здравоохранение, социология и т.д.

Ценность проведенного исследования состоит в том, что были разработаны информационно-методические ресурсы для профилактики инфодемии в медиапространстве Казахстана и усиления качества национальной журналистики и коммуникаций, в том числе кризисных.

Практическое значение определяется разработкой новых подходов к подготовке компетентных журналистов и специалистов по коммуникациям в Казахстане.

Ключевые слова: инфодемия, пандемия, медиакоммуникация, журналистика, профилактика, COVID-19, информационно-медийная грамотность.

Introduction

From June 30 to July 16, 2020, the World Health Organization hosted the first conference devoted to the topic of infodemic. WHO noted that the infodemic phenomenon, which emerged in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, has taken on such proportions that there is need for a coordinated response. Infodemic is defined as an oversupply of information that occurs during an epidemic, which can be either accurate or unreliable. This makes it difficult to find reliable sources of information and credible advice. Even with access to quality information, there are still barriers that prevent taking the recommended action. Like pathogens during an epidemic, false information spreads quickly and widely, complicating the implementation of anti-epidemic measures (**1st WHO Infodemiology Conference,2020**).

Infodemic creates difficulties in informing about the situation as such and about the need to follow certain mandatory measures. It promotes the spread

of inaccurate and false information, which makes it difficult to implement actions to counter COVID-19. From this perspective, it becomes obvious that the infodemic cannot be stopped; it become an international problem faced by Kazakhstan, as well as other countries. However, this issue can be counteracted. WHO encourages states to adapt, develop, validate and evaluate new evidence-based interventions and practices aimed at preventing, detecting and suppressing the dissemination of inaccurate and false information.

In a pandemic, the life and health of the population depend on quality information. The pandemic has claimed the lives of over one million people and infected more than 30 million people in 190 countries. According to official data, in Kazakhstan the number of cases of COVID-19 at the end of October 2020 exceeded 110 thousand people (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan ,2021) . The Minister of Health, Alexei Tsoi, announced that a second wave of cases was expected in November-December (Kuzekbai A. 2021). It is evident that danger has not passed. Moreover, the WHO Committee on Emergencies has called for the need to adopt long-term control strategies, as the pandemic is projected to last at least until the end of 2021, but the echoes of the health and communications crisis could have an effect for coming decades (COVID-19, 2021).

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, noted that the undeniable fact was that the world was not ready for a pandemic. The pandemic has exposed critical gaps in health systems, social protection and serious structural inequalities within and between countries. It is important to learn serious lessons from this crisis, which means engaging all sectors of society and investing in alert systems that trigger action by health authorities. Pandemic preparedness and response are global public goods that require large-scale investment (António Guterres, 2021).

The problem of infodemic is at the heart of the problems of quality response and warning, as well as coverage of the pandemic and the necessary response measures. The Kazakhstani specialist are fully aware of this issue, as it becomes a new challenge in the fight against coronavirus infection in the country. This was stated by Slyamzhar Akhmetzharov, senior researcher of the Department of Social and Political Research of the KazISS under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Akhmetzharov, 2021).

The UN Department of Global Communications points out that infodemic hinders the chances of an effective public health response and creates an atmosphere of distrust and confusion among the population. There was a flood of rumors and misinformation such as "the virus cannot survive in hot weather", "taking a large dose of chloroquine drugs will protect you" or "eating a lot of garlic and ginger will definitely protect you". To counter such misinformation sources there was created a special team of "myth busters" that works Internet companies such as Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Tencent, Twitter, TikTok, Youtube and many others (Cybercrime, 2021).

According to media reports, these companies are actively blocking and removing information that does not correspond to reality: inaccurate medical advice, rumors, conspiracy theories and other records that could endanger public health. An unexpected but positive decision to remove the posts of one of the heads of state on Facebook and Twitter platforms, in which he incorrectly stated that there is a ubiquitous drug that treats coronavirus (Akbarova, 2021).

In connection with this situation, questions arise about what measures can counter false and inaccurate information, increase trust in information, create a culture of correct media consumption, and strengthen information and media literacy among the population.

Modern technologies are not only becoming a way of informing citizens, but also actively spread disinformation. Informing citizens by media representatives is called into question. The crisis has demonstrated that journalists need specialized skills to cover pandemic, health, countermeasures, and research related to drug and vaccine development. There is a demand for scientific and medical field journalists who will be able to correctly cover important information and fight the spread of misinformation.

However, currently there are virtually no training programs for medical and scientific journalism in Kazakhstan. It is necessary to scale up efforts and resources to train specialists in the field of media and communications throughout the country; both master and bachelor level students, as well as practicing media specialists in the fields of health and science. The development of information resources on the prevention of infodemic in the field of education will make it possible to create manuals that can become the main educational programs. Such advanced training materials could improve the quality of informing the population and resist infodemic in the media field of Kazakhstan.

In the modern scientific community, there is a number of studies devoted to the topic of infodemic counteraction. Among them are empirical

sociological researches in Europe. Based on these studies, the European Council adopted conclusions on shaping Europe's digital future. The scopes of the conclusions range from connectivity, digital value chains and e-health to the data economy, artificial intelligence and digital platforms.

This project also monitored media, social media, and analysis of media consumption and media behavior of the population, as well as developed information and methodological resources for the prevention of infodemics in the media space of Kazakhstan. It aims to strengthen the quality of national journalism and communications, including crisis communications, development of new approaches to preparation competent communication specialists and journalists in Kazakhstan, meeting modern criteria and situation.

As part of the study of the topic, comprehensive studies were carried out, which relied on interdisciplinary sciences in the fields of social, humanitarian, mass communication, fact checking and infodemic prevention. In terms of terminology, the emphasis is on an article by Edson C. Tandoc, Zheng Wei Lim and Richard Ling, in which they reviewed 34 scientific articles that used the term "fake news" between 2003 and 2017. This led them to a fake news typology, which included news satire, news parody, falsification, manipulation, advertising and propaganda. These definitions are based on two dimensions: activity levels and deception. Researchers proposed this particular typology to identify the meaning behind the term "fake news". Further using the terms fake news we rely on the typology of these scientists (Tandoc Jr., Lim, 2017).

Literature review

In the study titled "Spreading Misinformation: How Social Media Users React to Fake News and Why", Edson C. Tandoc, Darren Lim, and Richard Ling expanded their understanding of the spread of disinformation by examining the mechanisms and reasons behind social media users respond to fake news. Using a mixed-method approach in explanatory-sequential design, the study combined the results of a national survey of 2501 respondents with a series of in-depth interviews with 20 participants from a small but economically and technologically advanced country Singapore. This study found that most social media users in Singapore simply ignore the fake news reports they encounter on social media. They will only suggest fixes if the problem matters to them and to the people with whom they have strong and close interpersonal relationships (Tandoc Jr, Darren, Ling, 2019). Thus, the problem of infodemic can be viewed from various angles, among which there are interpersonal relationships. This is also supported by research by Andrew Duffy, Edson C. Tandoc, and Richard Ling in the study on the social benefits of fake news. While fake news has been widely studied as an attack on democracy, less has been written about its threat to interpersonal relationships. Social media is becoming more popular for sharing news and as a result, it creates fertile ground for the spread of fake news. This article examines the impact of spreading fake news on interpersonal relationships, especially in circumstances where the participant either does not know or does not suspect that the news he is sharing is fake. This distinction is important because while sharing information and news can be construed as a social good, sharing news that turns out to be fake can negatively affect relationships (Dufyy, Tandoc, 2018). We see significant risks to social cohesion, which in turn only exacerbate the spread of misinformation. This is an important factor, since in Kazakhstan the dissemination of information by sending it to each other takes place. As a result, fake information is also sent, which increases the risks to life and health associated with such information in a pandemic.

In the article, "Fake News as a Critical Incident in Journalism" by authors Edson C. Tundoc, Joy Jenkins and Stephanie Kraft examined how American newspapers comprehended the problem of fake news. By analyzing newspaper editorials and treating fake news as a critical incident faced by journalism, one study found that news organizations in the United States recognize fake news as a social problem while recognizing the difficulty of defining it. As a rule, they viewed fake news as a social media phenomenon that thrives on political polarization driven mainly by ideological but sometimes financial motives. Therefore, they blamed the rise of fake news on the current political environment, on the technology platforms Google and Facebook, and on the audience (Tandoc Jr, Jenkins, Craft, 2019). Another study found that while participants rated their Facebook friends as more reliable and more similar to themselves than a news organization, they also rated news articles as more reliable when shared on Facebook by a news organization than when their own friends shared them (Tandoc, 2019). Thus, it again brings us back to the complex and multifaceted field of the study of infodemics and fake information, which affects both the political aspect and interpersonal relations. However, such an approach does not provide a clear understanding of the situation; it also reduces the area of possible solutions.

Based on an analysis of the literature and responses to open polls of 2501 Singaporeans, researchers Edson C. Tandoc, Richard Ling, Oscar Westlund proposed a conceptual framework for understanding how people authenticate information they encounter on social media. In general terms, they found that people rely on both their own judgment of the source and the message itself, and when this does not provide an adequate final answer for them, they turn to external resources of news authentication (Tandoc Jr., Ling, Westlund, 2020). This leads us to the fact that in principle it is possible for the society to work with fact checking methods.

The involvement of the topic in the research carried out worldwide was determined by the following factors. As the experience of developed countries shows, infodemic is recognized as a serious problem for society and is studied from different approaches and angles. Kazakhstani society also suffers from infodemics and the dissemination of false information, which is a root of significant damage to all information campaigns such as preventive measures, vaccination, compliance with the necessary requirements. However, our society was formed and continues to evolve in different conditions. Realities are driving the need to explore our own approaches to infodemics and false information. As part of this task, research was carried out and articles were published in journals recommended by KKSON, and one article in a journal indexed by Scopus database.

In Kazakhstan, the problems of the pandemic have been studied and described in detail since 2020. Raushan Dulambayeva and Taisiya Marmontova note that the crisis, which has acquired a global character, is gaining weight for the public administration system. Using sociological methods, the researchers confirmed that COVID-19 spreads through social relationships, so the only way to reduce the number of infected people is through social distancing measures. In the Kazakhstani media space, there are conflicting opinions about the facts that affect the dynamics of the number of active cases. Therefore, channels such as official government websites and their pages in social networks are the most optimal ways for adequate and timely dissemination of information about the incidence rate and preventive measures (Dulambaeva R., Marmontova T., 2021).

Orazai Kydyrbaev, in the article "The image of a powerful social state in the media", analyzes how a state of emergency was declared in Kazakhstan after the registration of the first case of COVID-19, the state leadership, spreading information that the well-being and health of the population is the main value, are working on threat prevention and more. Due to the fact that the state media epidemic is under complete control, an appeal was published calling for unity and patriotism; it was noted that assistance will be provided to citizens who have lost their jobs, additional funds will be allocated so that the economy does not collapse. However, in social networks and independent publications, many materials were published about the increase in the number of infected people, the lack of places for patients and medical staff, the shortage of medicines in pharmacies. The state tried to implement its social policy with the onset of the pandemic. In particular, this is a support for small and medium-sized businesses and employment, that include payments to medical workers and minimum payments to citizens who have lost their jobs. The social policy implemented by the government during the pandemic began to reach the population through state media (Kydyrbaev O., 2021).

Natalia Voroshilova, in her article "Information reports of the pandemic period of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the impact on the distribution of coronavirus infection in the city of Shymkent", pays special attention to the fact that the pandemic caused by the coronavirus has put the health systems of the countries of the world to a standstill and revealed the accumulated shortcomings in the information sphere. The society has witnessed the mediatization of social transformations, as a result of which researchers have called the COVID-19 pandemic a "psycho-pandemic". Who also confirms that for information on COVID-19, you should refer to the data of health authorities (Voroshilova N., 2021).

Galym Zhusupbek emphasizes that the health care system, medical services and the pharmaceutical sector have been commercialized and even become a commodity. It is necessary to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the system of private and public health from the point of view of human rights. Neoliberal capitalist ideology was born from such ideas as the maximization of income and commodification (conversion into goods) of human life, as well as health and education. The pandemic showed that there is a need for discussion in the field of health, social protection and infrastructure programs of the state power in Kazakhstan. The general and preliminary assessment of media materials and the discourse analysis of the content of the Kazakh media during the pandemic period showed that a lot of critical materials were published. From the point of view of the analysis of the state of the health system, some of them have a high quality.

However, without taking into account the views of experts, most of the articles and posts criticizing commercialization and privatization are inaccurate (Zhusupbek G., 2021).

Research methodology

The article published in the Journalism Series Bulletin of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, considered the role of social information in shaping the country's image and made a comparative analysis of cases in Kazakhstan, Russia and Japan. The article discusses the problem of creating the image of the state, region in a new communication environment. It showed the tools and technologies of regional image making and the main components of the formation of the state's image. The structural models of the state image, the concept of territorial image making were analyzed. It noted the great influence of the image during a global pandemic on the inner layers of society, such as tourists and investors. The image of the state is one of the most important resources for its political, socio-economic and cultural development. The positive image of the state is a successful foreign policy activity, the state's status in world politics, is directly related to the possibility of attracting foreign investment, as well as to competitiveness in various spheres of public life. The purpose of this study was to emphasize the importance of a sociological approach to the formation of the country's image on the example of three states: Kazakhstan, Russia and Japan. The study applied methods of statistical data analysis, which are the result of 28 years of work of the inhabitants of these countries in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology, medicine, literature, cinema, music, mathematics, biology, agriculture, architecture and people fighting for peace. It also carried out a comparison of the results obtained with international ratings of the image indices of states, which emphasized the direct relationship between social activity and the image of the country. The results of this study are important in the work carried out by states to form the external image of the country. In particular, the results of the study prove that when shaping the country's image, it is important to pay attention to the conduct of foreign and domestic policies, economic aspects, subtleties of the influence of the media industry. Moreover, the social component plays significant role such as the level of poverty of the country's population, achievement of the international level in science, culture, sports and other areas A positive image of a country is important because it can attract tourists,

investors, convince buyers to buy goods from this country, thereby increasing exports, incomes and living standards (Markabayeva, Zhusupova, Sultanbaeva, 2021) .

As it was already mentioned, the problem of infodemia also affects the political aspect. The role of information in the life of a person and the state, individual social groups and society is very important. Information is the result of a communicative process aimed at adapting a person to the environment. Information is also a means of communication between the authorities and the target group. In other words, the communication of the state with various segments of society in domestic and foreign policy is carried out through information. Based on the results of studying this problem, the article "Problems of researching information and communication processes in the political sphere" was published in the Journalism Series Bulletin of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The purpose of this study is to focus on the main issues of studying information and communication processes in the political system of the state, their classification; analysis of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of the concepts of "information" and "communication"; identification of state peculiarities in the study of information and communication processes in the political sphere. The authors also strive to determine the main stages of the emergence and development of political communication. Research objects were information and relationships formed through it, that is, communication.

The work uses applied methods of social research. Quantitative and qualitative research, in particular, questionnaires, expert analysis of the works of domestic, Western and Russian researchers, classifications were made on the methodological basis of the research. The research results are of great practical importance in the implementation of information and communication processes in the political system of the state. The results of the work can be used in the methods of political science and journalism, political communication in the media (Steve, Sundetbay, Sultanbaeva, 2021).

Since, according to the results of the research work, television was designated one of the main channels for obtaining information in Kazakhstan during the pandemic, this angle was also studied.

Research results

The research results were published in the article Gender division and television consumption

in Kazakhstan in the Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies, indexed in the Scopus database. Television remains the most visible and influential form of Kazakh media. According to the results of this study, 98% of all households in the country have at least one TV.

This study analyzed data collected during a survey of the population of Kazakhstan in order to assess gender differences associated with their TV viewing habits, to assess their level of TV consumption and their attitudes to television in general. The collected dataset also contained information on other related factors, such as the administrative status of the respondents (rural and urban), their age and occupation, in order to determine a more detailed profile of the average Kazakhstani TV viewer (Ashimova, Sultanbayeva, Kendirbai, Kertayev, Lozhnikova, 2021).

Interesting data is contained in the article "Tell Me Who Are Your Sources. Perception of the Reliability of News on Social Networks" by Edson C. Tandoc. This study found that while survey participants believed their Facebook friends were more reliable and more similar to themselves than news organizations, they rated news articles as more reliable when shared on Facebook by a news organization than when shared by their own friends on Facebook.

The author connects this with motivation. News articles published by a news organization are rated as more credible only under high motivation. With low motivation, there were no significant differences between the sources (Tandoc Jr., Ferrucci, Duffy, 2017).

Infodemic is a problem of global scale and importance, it is especially urgent and threatening to Kazakhstan. Research shows that the issue of training specialists is of great importance, for whom, based on the results of the project, a resource for training has been prepared. It will be posted in the public domain.

Sources of obtaining and verifying information about the pandemic, as well as attitudes towards official reporting, may differ among different age cohorts. Understanding these differences can help to build a new educational paradigm in training and professional development in the context of infodemics and disinformation.

Methodology.

The aim of the survey: To determine the formation of a culture of digital consumption and correct media behavior of the population.

Research objectives:

– determining access to information during a pandemic;

– determination of the level of confidence in infodemic;

– identifying the level of the culture of digital consumption;

– describing of the practices and preferences of the audience in relation to the correct media behavior of the population.

Research subjects: Kazakhstani citizens over 18 years of age.

Expected results:

Assessment of reliable sources of information on the use of confidence in the information disseminated by these sources;

Segmentation of the Kazakhstani audience by consumption style during a pandemic;

Features of media preferences depending on the different characteristics of the respondents;

Determination of the specifics of media consumption of television media.

500 respondents were interviewed among students of different years and the teaching staff of the al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The survey was conducted in 2020-2021 online in 2 languages, Russian and Kazakh.

Information collection methods:

Specificity of the method: Mass online survey (quantitative method) is carried out on the basis of a questionnaire interview.

The sample quota of 500 respondents makes it possible to consider the studied area through the prism of such demographic parameters as gender, age, level of education.

The sample represents the adult population of Kazakhstan over 18 years old.

The sample size is at least 500 respondents. Coverage include students and lecturers of Al-Farabi KazNU.

To calculate the marginal error (Δ) of the sample, the following formula was used:

$\Delta = t\sqrt{((s^2(1-n/N))/n)}$,

where s^2 is the variance of the feature;

n is the sample size;

N is the volume of the general population;

t - Student's test ("confidence coefficient")

Tables show the distribution of respondents who took part in the survey by age and gender.

Table. Distribution of the respondents by age

Age statistics	
Age	Total
19-25	226
26-35	172
36-40	37
40-50	50
50+	15
Total	500

The first question of the survey was "Where do you get information about the pandemic?" The possible replies also included the option "Other" where respondents could fill in their own answers. There responses in the latter category varied greatly, and included such replies as "Subscribed to a scientific journalist", "I read scientists' tweets on this topic and scientific publications", "I follow bloggers", "I receive information directly as a journalist", "People related to this issue tell me directly." The chart below (Figure 1) provides a breakdown of responses by age cohort. The predominant sources of information for all age cohorts are the media and the official line of information.
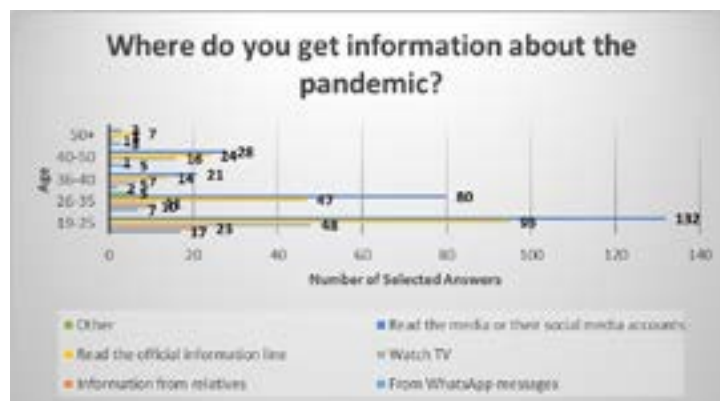

Figure 1. Breakdown of pandemic reporting sources by age

The respondents were asked to choose what information in connection with the pandemic they consider relevant to themselves (it was allowed to choose several options). In addition to the suggested options, they could also choose the option "Other" and suggest their own option. The answers in the latter category included such suggestions as "None" and "Does not matter." A breakdown by age is shown in the diagram (Figure 2).
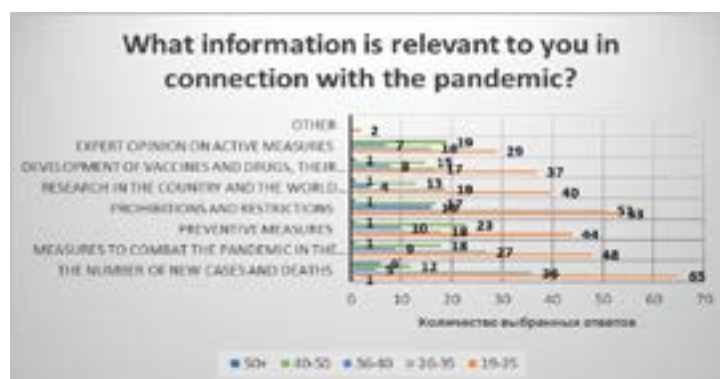

Figure 2. Breakdown of responses by current pandemic information by age

The respondents were asked to choose the criteria by which they judge whether the source of information is trustworthy (they could choose several options). Participants could also suggest their own criteria, among which they listed such as options as "Foreign sources of information", "Links to databases or scientific research," and even "I doubt everything". Among cohorts aged between 19-25, there is a large representation of trust in opinion journalism and official communication. Confidence in the data from the official line of information is quite high among respondents aged between 19-25, who were mainly represented by the students. A similar attitude towards the official line and state media outlets was also presented in this age section in the answers to the question about the assessment of the quality of sources. Further, the ratio begins to fluctuate.

The more trusting attitude towards opinion journalism, specifically expert opinion, was high among respondents aged 19-25 is presented in the context of the desire to see experts on the topic of the pandemic and authors of medical advice.

The question of what was missing and how to improve the information was open-ended, and the respondents could enter their options. The main options among the proposed were:

– Accurate statistics of cases and information on what exactly to do if you get sick;

– To give trustful information;

– More data on restrictions and control measures, fixing the position of ministers and those responsible for deterrent measures;

– Responsibility of the authorities for decisions made, which are constantly changing and are not properly explained;

– A single source of information on all prohibitions, restrictions, news, procedures, vaccines, so that you do not have to search on different platforms;

– Too much information;

– Analysis of measures taken;

– Translation of research on the topic;

– The stories of people who survived the disease;

– Vaccine development internationally and domestically;

– Objective opinions;

– Situation forecasts;

– It is time to stop talking about it altogether; I do not care;

– Doctors' opinions;

– Information about the costs of fighting the pandemic and where the budget funds spent;

– There is a need information from independent sources not affiliated with government agencies;

– Evidence-based research in decision making and control;

– Explanations from the authorities, what and why they are doing, how it will help;

– Honest mortality data.

A quantitative analysis of information issues was carried out on social media networks. Emphasis was also placed on the study of television, especially in connection with the gender aspect. So, the Khabar TV channel published 8 publications on its Instagram account during the pandemic. User engagement was expressed mainly in "Likes", there were practically no comments.

It is noticeable that users do not actively comment even on high-profile news or on issue that might cause misunderstanding. Since infodemic is associated with an overabundance of information and its insufficient quality, a hypothesis arises that users receive information and explanations in some other way. It was decided to test this hypothesis by the questionnaire method .Informing the population about the pandemic in the media has been conducted since the first cases appeared in Kazakhstan. However, reporting has long followed the policy of reporting and covering of quantitative data.

In accounts on social networks, there are articles without links to statistical sources, authors of recommendations or announcements, statements without links to scientific research, on which they are based.

The media can themselves become a source for the dissemination of false information, which may be the result of insufficient training of journalists.

Conclusions:

Preliminary results, based on data from 500 respondents, look quite controversial. So, according to the survey, the predominant sources of information for all age cohorts were the media and the official information line, which is generally unsurprising since the survey was conducted among students and faculty of the Faculty of Journalism. Among the most relevant information about the pandemic were "Bans and restrictions", "The number of active cases and deaths", "Measures to combat the pandemic in the country", which may be associated with mobility and the need to organize professional activities, teaching and learning.

The results are of interest in the context of work on approaches to the study of working with sources and their assessment by future journalists, since few are willing to study primary sources and rely more on whether they trust the source of information and how official it is. The survey shows the need to focus on working with sources and their assessment in training specialists and improving their qualifications.

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Fact checking is one of the most important components of a media professional`s job. We present a selection of simple tools that anyone can use to fact-check certain information. In the first part of the material - online services for working with social networks. You probably know some resources, some of the recommendations will not be suitable for a specific situation. However, the more verification tools you use, the more reliable the final journalistic story will be.

To check accounts on social networks, specialists use a number of tools, such as:

Facebook Graph Search;

LinkedIn

Twitter Advanced Search;

Topsy - search for users, tweets, videos, photos, Twitter links;

Webmii - tracks online user data - photos published on various resources, Wikipedia, news (Yahoo), social media profiles.

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Information is an important resource, and access to it is an inalienable civil right. The main distributors of information are media workers and specialists in the field of communications. In times of crisis, such as a pandemic, the life and health of citizens can literally depend on information. Because journalism is not a "view from nowhere", but a practice that needs transparency so that the public believes that there is a correspondence between broad verification standards and public interests, regardless of the range of issues covered and the prospects associated with them.

Conclusions based on the results of the research performed.

The main conclusions based on the results of the survey of the society on quality information during the COVID-19 pandemic:

– the population was informed about the pandemic in the media from the moment the first cases appeared in Kazakhstan, but for a long time it was only a notification about the number of cases.

– according to the survey of respondents, the main sources of information for all age categories are represented by the media and the official information line.

– since the survey was conducted among students and faculty of the Faculty of Journalism, such results could be predicted based on the need for the organization of professional activity, teaching and study.

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