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YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND ITS POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES (ON THE CASE OF ARMENIAN YOUTH IN YEREVAN)*

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Abstract. To discover the geopolitical orientation and opinions of the Armenia's youth regarding the war in Ukraine in the context of regional security issues, a sociological study was conducted in Yerevan and Armenia's provinces in 2022. It was carried out by specialists from the Faculty of Sociology of the Yerevan State University, in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation office in Armenia, and Socies expert center. The study aimed to discover the youth's perceptions of the reasons for the war in Ukraine, which started on February 24, 2022, including its possible impact on the region. The research was carried out from October 22, 2022 to November 22, 2022 with youth (18-35 age group) residing in Yerevan (the capital of Armenia) and all provinces of Armenia, using the focus group discussion method. In this paper, we discuss conclusions drawn from focus group discussions with Yerevan residents. The perceptions of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict by Armenia's youth refers to its geopolitical nature, to the interests of Russia, NATO, EU, USA, Turkey in the post-Soviet space, as well as to personal qualities, approaches, and issues of the leaders of Russia and Ukraine. In general, according to Armenian young people, Armenia should remain as neutral as possible in its position on the war in Ukraine, taking no side in this conflict.

Key words: *War in Ukraine, Russia, Karabakh War, youth, Armenia, perceptions, interests, regional security*

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խարհաքաղաքական կողմնորոշումներն ու հայացքները բացահայտելու նպատակով Երևանի պետական համալսարանի սոցիոլոգիայի ֆակուլտետի մասնագետների կողմից «Կոնրադ Ադենաուեր հիմնադրամի» հայաստանյան գրասենյակի և «Սոցիես» փորձագիտական-վերլուծական կենտրոնի հետ Երևանում և ՀՀ մարզերում 2022 թ. հոկտեմբերի 22-ից նոյեմբերի 22-ն իրականացվել է սոցիոլոգիական հետազոտություն: Նպատակն էր բացահայտել երիտասարդների պատկերացումներն ու կրախնական պատերազմի պատճառների, զարգացման հնարավոր սցենարների, տարածաշրջանի և հատկապես Հայաստանի անվտանգության վրա ու կրախնական հակամարտության և պատերազմի հավանական ազդեցության մասին: Ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվել է Երևանում և Հայաստանի բոլոր մարզերում բնակվող երիտասարդների (18-35 տարեկան) շրջանում՝ ֆոկուս-խմբային քննարկումների մեթոդով: Սույն հոդվածում ներկայացնում ենք Երևանի երիտասարդների հետ ֆոկուս-խմբային քննարկումների արդյունքները: Երևանաբնակ երիտասարդության կողմից ու կրախնական հակամարտության ընկալումը կապված է դրա աշխարհաքաղաքական բնույթի, հետխորհրդային տարածքում Ռուսաստանի, ՆԱՏՕ-ի, ԵՄ-ի, ԱՄՆ-ի, Թուրքիայի շահերի, ինչպես նաև Ռուսաստանի և Ուկրաինայի ղեկավարների անձնային որակների, մոտեցումների և տեսակետների հետ: Ընդհանուր առմամբ, ըստ հայ երիտասարդության, Հայաստանը պետք է հնարավորինս չեզոք մնա ու կրախնական պատերազմի հարցում՝ չսատարելով որևէ կողմի:

Բանալի բառեր – *պատերազմ Ուկրաինայում, Ռուսաստան, Ղարաբաղյան պատերազմ, երիտասարդություն, Հայաստան, պատկերացումներ, շահեր, տարածաշրջանային անվտանգություն*

ВОСПРИЯТИЯ АРМЯНСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖЬЮ ВОЙНЫ НА УКРАИНЕ И ЕЕ ВОЗМОЖНЫХ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЙ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ МОЛОДЕЖИ ЕРЕВАНА)

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Аннотация. Для выяснения геополитической ориентации и взглядов армянской молодежи на войну в Украине в контексте вопросов региональной безопасности, в 2022 году в Ереване и областях Армении было проведено социологическое исследование. Его провели специалисты факультета социологии Ереванского государственного университета в сотрудничестве с офисом Фонда Конрада Аденауэра в Армении и экспертно-аналитическим центром Социес. Исследование направлено на выявление представлений молодежи о причинах войны в Украине, в том числе о ее возможном влиянии на регион. Исследование проводилось с 22 октября 2022 года по 22 ноября 2022 года среди молодежи (возрастная группа 18-35 лет), проживающей в Ереване (столице Армении) и во всех областях Армении, с использованием метода фокус-групповых

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обсуждений. В данной статье мы обсуждаем выводы, сделанные в ходе дискуссий в фокус-группах с жителями Еревана. Восприятие украинского конфликта молодежью Армении связано с его геополитической природой, с интересами России, НАТО, ЕС, США, Турции на постсоветском пространстве, а также с личностными качествами, подходами и взглядами лидеров России и Украины. В целом, по мнению армянской молодежи, Армения должна оставаться максимально нейтральной в своей позиции в отношении войны на Украине, не занимая ничьей стороны в этом конфликте.

Ключевые слова: война в Украине, Россия, карабахская война, молодежь, Армения, представления, интересы, региональная безопасность

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The war in Ukraine that started on February 24, 2022, was a consequence of fundamental problems in the Russian-Ukrainian political relations, the escalation of disagreements, lack of conflict resolution mechanism, and involvement of third parties in the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation, which intensified and expanded the conflict. Being close nations in geographic, economic, military, political, demographic, religious, historical, cultural, and other senses, the Russian and Ukrainian nations were also founding republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and have been the main pillars of the Soviet security structure. The circumstances of unity, common history, and mutual strategic irreplaceability underlined a combined effort by both states to mutually exclude any disagreement or sources of conflict. One manifestation of the close relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian nations was the decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet to transfer Crimea, which had been part of Russia since 1783, from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (February 19, 1954). The decision was made “to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the reunification of Ukraine with Russia” and to “evinced the boundless trust and love the Russian people feel toward the Ukrainian people” (Kramer, 2016).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of fifteen new republics, including Russia and Ukraine, created new possibilities and challenges, including those in the security domain, for each of those republics. While closely cooperating with Russia within the Commonwealth of Independent States - of which it was one of the founding members (together with Russia and Belarus (Malishev, 2019) - Ukraine rejected repeated offers by Russia to enter the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and to become part of a unified security complex together with Russia and a number of other post-Soviet republics.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, along with many other former Soviet republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan) participated in a multitude of NATO programs, but none of those programs led to membership in that security organization. The relationship dynamics between Russia and Ukraine took a turn after the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” that took place in November 2004 which—just as in the case of the Georgian “Rose Revolution” that took place a year earlier (2003)—rejected post-Soviet heritage (including non-democratic regimes) and attempted to move the country out of Russia’s sphere of influence and align Ukraine with Europe (Fairbanks, 2004).

Active participants in Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" included pro-Western political opposition, NGOs, and nationalist forces (Lane, 2008), which, according to analyses, were under the influence of Western soft power (Nye, 1990), and, consequently opposed the prospects of maintaining on a future with Russia based on the two country's common past. This is why the Ukrainian revolution has also been compared to the 1968 anti-Soviet anti-socialist (anti-Russian) revolution in Prague ("Prague Spring" (Aslund, 2010)).

Since its independence, Ukrainian foreign policy geared towards expanding and intensifying cooperation with the European Union, including: Ukraine's participation in EU's Eastern Partnership initiative; signing the Association Agreement with EU; Ukraine's inclusion in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area; the establishment of a visa-free regime between Ukraine and EU; and, because of the 2022 the war in Ukraine, Ukraine becoming an EU candidate member (Sologub, 2022). The Ukrainian leadership did not hide their pro-European sentiments or the steps they took to further integrate with Europe, but it was during the "Orange Revolution" that these sentiments took nationalist and anti-Russian overtones. These changes put Ukraine on a different path than Armenia in terms of their cooperation with the EU, with the latter trying to constantly balancing its relations between Russia and the West (Terzyan, 2019).

A further concern for Russia has been Ukraine's and Georgia's anti-Russian policies after the "Color Revolutions" as well as NATO's engorgement on Russia's borders by expanding to include new members in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In this time period, Russia and Ukraine reanimated some of their historical disputes. Some of these disagreements escalated, highlighted and promoted—sometimes artificially—to sow discord among both societies towards each other. On the one hand, Russian society and elites continued to consider Ukraine a country close and important to them, and considered Ukrainian and Russian nations to have common roots creating a need by Russia to block Ukraine from orienting towards Europe and consequently towards an anti-Russian path. On the other hand, anti-Russian sentiment in Ukraine was becoming the state rhetoric, a part of the social mentality. However, even with these escalating divides, Russia and Ukraine still shared a number of common issues including: Russian language (which was widespread in Ukraine and was on par with Ukrainian in terms of usage); the existence of a significant number of Russian-Ukrainian families through intermarriage; the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationed at the Crimean city of Sevastopol; the Russian fuel supply to Ukraine (at reduced rates); and the Russian fuel transit through Ukrainian territory to European countries. The Black Sea Fleet and its deployment in Crimea in particular had a historically important strategic significance for Russia, including the prevention of possible threats from Turkey (as a member of NATO) in the Black Sea. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, international land-rental agreements were signed between Russia and Ukraine to secure the deployment of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. In 2010 these agreements were extended to last until 2042.

Meanwhile several issues started aggravating the Ukraine-Russia bilateral relations. Thus, the Ukrainian leadership periodically requested the reduction of Russian gas prices sold to Ukraine, which was rejected by Russia on the grounds that

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the price of natural gas supplied to Ukraine was almost at the internal Russian market price. As a response, the Ukrainian political elite regularly called for the annulment of rental contracts and agreements on the deployment of Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. Alternatively, there were calls for increasing the rent of land lease so high to make it impractical for Russia to pay the lease.

Moreover, after the “Orange Revolution” the pro-European aspirations of the Ukrainian society became less compatible with the policies of the pro-Russian President V. Yanukovych and the Party of Regions he led. The pro-European sentiments of the post-revolution Ukrainian opposition and its strengthening social basis contributed to another internal political crisis. One of the main reasons leading to mass protest in 2013 was the postponement of signing a cooperation agreement with the EU. Thus, for six years, Kiev had been negotiating an agreement to strengthen its political and economic cooperation with the EU which was set to be signed in November 2013 at the then-upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. It was around that time that Russia proposed Ukraine join the Moscow-led Customs Union (later known as the Eurasian Economic Union), but Kiev rejected the offer. As a response Moscow put direct pressure on Yanukovych and forced the signing of the EU-Ukraine association agreement to be postponed.

A similar situation occurred with Armenia preceding the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit. Up until that point, an extensive and transparent process of preliminary bilateral negotiations around the process of Armenia’s association with EU was conducted, but on September 3, 2013, after a meeting with the Russian President in Moscow, Armenia’s President, Serzh Sargsyan announced that Armenia will instead join the Russian-led Customs Union. Consequently, the signing of the association agreement with the EU was postponed indefinitely leading to protests in front of the Russian Embassy in Yerevan.

Meanwhile, anti-Russian protests in Ukraine had reached a level of mass public demonstrations featuring thousands of people and turned into another “Velvet Revolution” (*Euromaidan*), as a result of which, on February 22, 2014, the *Verkhovna Rada* (parliament) of Ukraine recognized the administration of the pro-Russian President Yanukovych as illegitimate and announced snap presidential elections (Pishchikova, Ogryzko, 2014).

Kiev was leaving Russia’s traditional security sphere, turning from a territory of vital significance for Russia into a pro-Western state, with a possible anti-Russian leadership and a partially pro-Russian population. Ukraine was not only debating the Russian presence, cooperation with Russia, and their common history (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, Sakwa, 2016), but also the deployment of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, which had a major significance for Russian military interest.

To secure, at least partially, its strategic presence in a changing Ukraine, on March 16, 2014 and only a month after Euromaidan protests, a referendum was held in Crimea. The disputed referendum received military and political assistance from Russia and was supposed to address the desire of Crimea’s and Sevastopol’s population and the local pro-Russian authorities to become part of Russia. On March 21, 2014, the State Duma of Russia confirmed the decision on incorporating the Crimea Oblast and the city of Sevastopol into Russia. While the incorporation of Crimea into Russia was supported both in Russia and in Crimea (according to the results of the referendum) and was being called “Crimea’s return home”, in Ukraine

and Western countries there was a radically negative sentiment, calling what happened an annexation of Crimea by Russia.

The referendum and subsequent annexation of Crimea fueled similar sentiments in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast (which both had sizeable ethnic Russian population) where the local administration and the population to become secede from Ukraine and become independent. These sentiments, which were supported by Moscow, escalated the confrontation between the authorities of these Oblasts and Kiev and further escalated the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

These events led to a systemic detachment of Russian-Ukrainian relations at political-institutional and public levels. Moreover, the confrontation between Russia and the international community over Crimea's disputed annexation by Russia became the foundations to introduce sanctions against Russia, inadvertently leading to the geographic expansion of the conflict.

The severance of Russian-Ukrainian relations, the bilateral propaganda of an image of an enemy, territorial and human rights issues, the interests of global and regional states, and a number of various other systemic factors, as well as insufficient attempts at conflict resolution and the absence of necessary effort on both sides, contributed to the rapid escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

After the Crimean referendum, the escalating confrontation between Kiev and the local authorities of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, as well as Russia's support to the population and authorities of these Oblasts led to Moscow recognizing the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics on February 21, 2022. The following day, the Federal Council of Russia allowed the deployment of Russian armed forces outside Russia's territory, and on February 24, 2022, Russia started the war (official know in Russia as "Special Military Operation" (Kotoulas and Wolfgang Pusztai (2022)).

Thus, the 2022 war in Ukraine was a consequence of an escalation of the previous stages of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. This conflict is multidimensional and includes military, political, economic, demographic, informational, and cultural components. Not only does it have a prospect of a long-drawn war and to escalate further in the military and political senses, but it also has the potential to impact the region's economic, energy, and demographic securities (Bowen, 2022).

Apart from the systemic factors, the Russian and Ukrainian presidents' personal roles are also believed to be factors in the war in Ukraine. In the case of Russian President V. Putin, his imperial aspirations are mentioned, them being explained by Putin being a follower of the Russian foreign policy tradition (Marten, 2015). In that context the launch of the Ukrainian war by Putin is considered to be a result of erroneous calculations (Lebow, 2022).

Putin's decision to transform the conflict with Ukraine into an all-out war could be explained by his concerns about NATO's expansion into Russia's vital sphere of influence. According to that point of view, the leaders of Western countries intentionally did not value Russia's security concerns thus provoking Putin to resort to military action (Mearsheimer, 2022).

In the case of Ukrainian President V. Zelensky, it is his patriotic zeal (in his regularly uncourteous addresses to Western colleagues to equip Ukraine with weapons, financial-economic means, and other capabilities) or catering to the interests of Western countries that are mentioned as contributing to the continuation of the conflict (Pisano, 2022).

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Individual qualities of these countries' leaders as well as the societal qualities are often mentioned by (or on the) media and online platforms. Such discussions are often outside the professional or even factual scopes; they insult the dignity of both people and ethnicities and only escalate the hostility between the two states and nations.

It should be mentioned, that as a result of Western sanctions against Russia, a generally negative image of the Russian President and a generally positive image of the Ukrainian President have been widely spread by the international media. This has contributed to the further polarization of public opinion about the war in Ukraine even in societies which geographically or otherwise are not connected to the conflict.

To a large extent, public opinion in Armenia on the war in Ukraine reflects the perspectives of the global media, keeping in mind that these perspectives are conditioned by Armenia's internal and foreign policy agendas. Education, being the most westernized institution in Armenia, has led to the more formally educated young Armenians to be wary of the Russia's ambiguous policy. Armenia's youth, whose future is on the political agenda, cannot remain indifferent to the security challenges raised by the war in Ukraine. Unlike the older generation in Armenia that has the experience of being citizens (along with Russians) of the Soviet Union, the young generation's perceptions about the conflict and the war, stems mostly from situational or institutional foundations, rather than ideological or social ones.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

The research tried to address some issues via the focus group discussions, including:

1. Present the ideas of the youth about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict dynamics, including the direct and indirect parties in the conflict, its causes, and the interests of the participants involved.

2. Assess the youth's concerns regarding the probability of the expansion of the war in Ukraine.

3. Find out the opinion of the youth about the possible impact of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the war in Ukraine on the security of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and on the current state of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

4. Discover the youth's opinions about the possible consequences of the war in Ukraine.

The focus group discussions were conducted via questionnaires. The discussion participants were initially informed about the purpose of the research, the objectives, the organizations implementing the research, the rights of the discussion participants, and the protecting the privacy of opinions and answers they provide to the questions. In this paper, the results of focus group discussions with young people residing in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, will be presented.

Six focus group discussions were conducted in Yerevan, with 45 participants in sum, including 24 women and 21 men of 18-35 years old.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Reasons of the Conflict

Among the reasons for the war in Ukraine, young people have mentioned Russia's actions (offensive, aggressive, preventive), as well as the West's (provocative, world-dividing) and Ukraine's politics (aimed at the unification with the European Union, treacherous from Russia's perspective). Particularly, the reasons mentioned for the conflict are:

- Russia's desire to show off its power and superpower status to the world (it's also an attempt to restore the Soviet Union)
- the war was Russia's reaction to the NATO-states' unified policy against Moscow (NATO provoked Russia)
- another process of world division is taking place, the territory of Ukraine being one of the targets of that division
- Ukraine attempted to get out of Russia's traditional influence and move towards the West, which Russia considered as a threat to itself and tried to prevent it.

“Ukraine is trying to develop and does not see Russia as a source of development, and is trying to get out from under it, and that is not in Russia's interest, that is why the war has started.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“European values or democracy were established in Ukraine; it was harmful to Russia and it could not control it.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The discussion in all groups demonstrated sufficient awareness, in-depth knowledge analytical skills, and approaches, of the youth. The following statement is an example of a thought that concisely expresses the opinion of many participants about the conflict dynamics:

“It started from Ukraine's orientation, which wasn't in Russia's interest as a superpower, and for that an excuse was needed to strike preemptively or use the guide of the rescuer, to save Lugansk and Donetsk. It was initially planned that Putin would occupy Ukraine, to bring the government to a pro-Russian, instead of a pro-Western orientation. But when that was unsuccessful, it went with its heroic, superman costume to free those two cities from the so-called “Nazi Ukrainians”. It seems to me that the main reason [for the war-Ed.] are the interests of the superpowers and the threats they perceive.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

During the discussions, one widespread opinion was that Russia acted preemptively to prevent further NATO's expansion. According to this perspective, Russia has tried to control Ukraine's foreign policy to prevent its rapprochement with the West, trying to prevent NATO from engorging on Russia's immediate border, and was met with retaliatory actions:

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“They [NATO-Ed.] wanted to put Russia in the same situation as Iran is in – economic blockade, sanctions, etc., and Ukraine was a good tool to turn these brotherly nations against each other and to weaken Russia. We see the consequences now, how they are arming Ukraine, but not including it in NATO so that they don’t send troops to Ukraine. In fact, there is no Russia-Ukraine problem, it’s mainly a Russia-West problem, which is the logical continuation of the Cold War.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“I think if this war had been avoided, the clash would have happened in a different place at a different time, it would have been inevitable. I look at this from the perspective of the Russia-USA conflict, I give very little importance and role to Ukraine.”

Female 26-35 age group, Yerevan

The explanation of Russia’s actions as being reactive, and responsive, also contained criticism, connected with the idea that it aimed at harming and causing losses to Ukraine as a very close nation to Russia. At the same time, it’s noticeable that evaluating the situation from various perspectives, instead of just direct accusations against Russia, observations were also made about the provocative actions of other parties in the conflict, including Western states, along with systemic problems:

“Brzezinski’s *The Grand Chessboard* (*the discussion participant refers to (Brzezinski, 2006), eds.*) tells that there is one superpower in the world, which is the US, and it decides the pace at which life goes on in the world. And now Russia has appeared, with ambitious Putin who, with his ideas and thoughts, has the history and the reality of the Soviet Union being a powerful state, and is trying to bring it back, so now that struggle is happening. Realizing it, the US will never let another power rise and take everything into its hands, and Russia is trying to counteract in every way. And in all of this, third world countries, ourselves and Ukraine, are suffering in that conflict. Russia and the US are fighting in Ukraine against each other.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Direct and indirect participants of the conflict

In all discussions, Russia and Ukraine, then Russia and the West (USA, NATO) were mentioned as direct participants in the conflict. In cases where Ukraine and Russia were mentioned as direct participants, the European Union, USA, and NATO from Ukraine’s side, and individual CSTO countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan) from Russia’s side, were mentioned as indirect participants or parties. Armenia wasn’t mentioned in any discussions as a direct or indirect participant or party to the war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the Republic of Armenia has its own interests, which define Armenia’s reaction to the conflict (more on this below).

In cases, where Russia and the West were mentioned as direct parties to this conflict (in the context of a global conflict, including for the purpose of dividing Ukraine and

Western presence in the Ukrainian territories), and USA, EU, United Kingdom, and Israel were mentioned as active representatives on the Western side.

“I think that everything is being controlled by England and Israel. England is in charge, at the heart of everything is England with its plan. But I am in favor of Russia because Ukraine is a Slavic nation and there was no point in joining the West. What connection did the USA have with Ukraine? Russia has been on their side their whole life. And now the US is building a nuclear power plant in Ukraine, it’s building toxic laboratories. I’ve heard that Russia was angered because the nuclear power plants built in Ukraine by the USA were to be operational, and Russia was against it because if something happened, it would spread into its country as well. In fact, the leader of Ukraine is weak, just like in our country, he is like a puppet. See, the US provides weapons but doesn’t do anything certain. It’s like a show because if the US was really against this, this war would have been stopped long ago.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Those participants of the discussions, who considered the war in Ukraine in a global context, as a manifestation of the superpower struggle, drew parallels between this conflict and other modern conflicts in the post-Soviet space (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh) and in the Middle East (Syria). From this perspective, Turkey was mentioned as an actively involved third party in the war in Ukraine, and, according to the participants, actively taking advantage of this conflict under the guide of a mediator:

“Currently, Turkey is one of the only Western countries that doesn’t use sanctions. On the contrary, it is developing good relations and the South Stream gas pipeline. Turkey is profiting, it transits the gas, which will ensure both its economic performance, as well as be a leverage on Europe. Like, look, the transit is ours, we will close it, if we want to, we will open it, if we want to. They can also increase the gas prices. It’s now presenting to be the state that can be the mediator to keep the connection between Russia and Ukraine.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

China was also mentioned as a state with certain involvement in the global context of the war in Ukraine, guided by its own interests:

“It’s China, but China is supporting Russia because NATO is the second enemy for them.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The war in Ukraine has had direct and indirect impacts on the South Caucasus region. The three republics of which, according to the participants of the focus group discussions, have different interests in this conflict, and have diverging approaches towards it. Georgia, considers Russia as a threat, does not support it, and follows the West’s lead. However, according to young people, this hasn’t necessarily made Georgia pro-Ukrainian.

Azerbaijan, according to the participants of the discussion, has adopted a dual approach: on the one hand, it ostentatiously presents itself as closely cooperating with Russia, but on the other hand, indirectly supports Ukraine. That support is

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mutual: in 2020, during the Karabakh War, Ukraine supported Azerbaijan and congratulated them afterward:

“Following the Azerbaijani press and news media, I can say that Azerbaijan is extremely anti-Russian. It has sent enormous amounts of medical aid to Ukraine and has expressed through statements that it stands by Ukraine. Lately, a number of Azerbaijanis have provided assistance to the Ukrainian army.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“Ukraine’s president, who officially congratulated Azerbaijan that they won, called them a brotherly state, etc. I don’t know how they can be a brotherly state. In this case, it would be shameful for us, if, knowing this, we expressed some kind of a positive attitude [towards Ukraine-Ed].”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Armenia’s position regarding the war in Ukraine is defined by several circumstances. On the one hand, according to young people, since Armenia is essentially dependent on Russia, a pro-Russian position should be expressed on this matter as well. Among the reasons for Armenia’s pro-Russian positions are the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Ukraine and Georgia’s anti-Russian stance, from which Armenia’s position, as Russia’s ally, should differ.

“Perhaps Armenia has expressed a more or less neutral position in our region, but it has more of a pro-Russian direction, because Georgia is exclusively pro-Ukrainian and it doesn’t hide its enmity with Russia, and well, Azerbaijan is arming Ukraine.”

Female, 26-35 group, Yerevan

“In fact, Russia’s influence is so great in our region, that no one will oppose Russia out of their own interests. For example, everything is connected with Russia.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

On the other hand, Armenia is trying to not worsen its relations with the West, to balance out the influence of Russia and the West in the region, which is connected with Armenia being a cross-road, with scarce resources, a serious security threat, which force Yerevan to take an ambiguous position:

“Since the US has started to be interested in our region, we have also started to please the East and the West in some way, to sell a territory, in metaphorical sense. Geographically, we are a very bad but an important link, we are a link between the world and Iran, a tiny country between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which lies in the middle of the Great Turan and blocks it. And everyone understands it, not that Russia has set up a base here because they like us very much. It is for its Southern security. We should be able to “sell” our important geographic position to someone. Nobody in the world says they are in favor of someone, and that’s it.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Thus, in the context of the war in Ukraine, Armenia's position is not considered unequivocally pro-Russian. At the same time, according to young people, it is more pro-Russian, than the position of other states, and is second only to Belarus. In addition, as mentioned, if Armenia's position on this matter is more pro-Russian than anti-Russian, then the attitude of the Armenia's society to this conflict is less pro-Russian than that of Armenia's authorities. Despite Ukraine's pro-Azerbaijan stance, Armenia also tries not to worsen relations with Ukraine:

“We should support Russia as a state, although as an individual I support Ukraine. These days only Russia does something [good-Ed.] for us.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

During almost all discussions, the idea was expressed that during the war in Ukraine, together with the increase in the price of real estate and apartment rent in Armenia, the market and tourism became active, which was seen as a favorable factor for Armenia's economy:

“Russian citizens have come to Armenia more than Ukrainian citizens. They opened so many new organizations, they pay taxes, and they spend so much. I, as a hotel employee, see that the traffic has grown this year. Last year the hotel was on the verge of closing, and now that the war has started, until recently we have not had a day when there would be a free room. So much money comes in, and if the government uses it wisely, it can cover a very large part of the foreign debt.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The course of the war and possible developments

In all focus group discussions, the war in Ukraine was evaluated from the perspectives of the military-economic potential of Russia and Ukraine, the possibility of EU and NATO intervention, and the possibility of the Third World War. The views can be divided into four groups. The representatives of the first group discussed the issue of Russia's military actions, noting their duration, losses, and the low effectiveness of the Russian military not foreseen at the beginning, which, according to the young people, could be due to the overestimation of the capabilities of Russian armed forces, and the underestimation of the Ukrainian potential, the significant importance of the support provided to Ukraine by Western allies, as well as by the inadequate calculation by Russia's ruling elite of their own capabilities.

“A simple truth I know is that the strong are not being attacked. If you don't want war to happen, you must be so powerful and represent something out of yourself, so that others fear attacking you. Likewise, if it was possible to balance the Russian-Ukrainian war through negotiation, there would be no war if Ukraine had a very powerful army or was a very powerful state, and Russia was afraid of it. Apparently, the Russians did not expect such a counterattack. I am deeply convinced that Putin was given false information about the Ukrainian army and their readiness, and the Russians thought that they would enter in a couple of days, do their job, and this topic would be closed, while it has been going on for several months.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

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The second set of opinions of the participants refers to the fact that the war was the personal error by Russian president Vladimir Putin, and if he prevented it on time or didn't start it, but used other possible means, the war could have been avoided.

“The conflict could have certainly been avoided, but only if there was a president with a different mindset instead of Putin. I mean, if that president was more democratic and didn't act like an aggressor.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

The third group of opinions concerns the actions of the Ukrainian president Zelensky, which, according to the opinions of young people, together with the Western support ignited Russia's actions, and provoked them:

“On the one hand, Ukraine didn't act properly either, knowing that Russia has a bad relationship with the US, and elected a former comedian as prime minister, who lost control of the situation and did whatever he wanted. On the other hand, Russia is also to blame, because it openly created this situation, although the US also understood it well and used its resources in Ukraine, and Ukraine agreed to it. Ukraine was more to blame.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“In general, Russia also makes statements against NATO, and if Sweden and Finland enter the “borders” of the USA, so to speak, then these “borders” with Russia will increase, and the probability that there will be clashes is not small.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The fourth group of opinions concerns the inevitability of the war in Ukraine. According to this position, this is a part of a global conflict, a manifestation, and is connected with another division of the world into spheres of influence, the emergence of new forces in the international arena attempts to influence the weak states and competition amongst them.

“I think if this war has been avoided, the clash would have happened at a different place a few years later, it would have been inevitable. I look at this from the perspective of Russia-USA conflict, I still give very little importance to Ukraine. In my opinion, hadn't been Ukraine the point of the clash, it would have been a matter of years to decide where these forces would clash.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

According to the young people, the probability of a Third World War is lower than the ongoing regional wars between Russia and the West in the “third world” (Ukraine, South Caucasus, and the Middle East).

Armenia's friends and enemies in the context of the war in Ukraine

In almost all group discussions, Yerevan-resident youth mentioned Armenia as having no friendly states and many enemies. Turkey, Azerbaijan, Israel, and Pakistan were mentioned as enemy countries:

“Israel and Pakistan are among the enemies because they are supporting Turkey.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

France and Iran were mentioned among the few friendly states, over which there were almost no disagreements. France is considered Armenia’s traditional friendly state, which, according to the opinion of the young people, actively supports Armenia today as well, including in the Karabakh conflict. These days, Iran has taken a more unequivocally anti-Turkish and anti-Azerbaijani position, which contributes to the protection of Armenia’s interests. The role of Western countries, including the USA, in regional issues derives exclusively from the interests of the USA, and the support expressed to Armenia is more of a lip-service. This is also how young people also explain the visit of the former speaker of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, Nancy Pelosi, to Armenia:

“At the moment, only Iran is a true ally, because it is only in Iran’s interest that Armenia does not become a part of Russia, and especially, of Turkey. On the other hand, I don’t equate our war with the Russia-Ukraine war, because if I look at it from Russia’s perspective, it is normal, because it’s like if Karabakh had a separate president now and was separated, but it’s still Armenia, and as if Karabakh now announced, saying, “Armenia, I don’t want to help you, I am now going to help the Turks.”

Female, 26-35 group, Armenia

“De jure we have allies, there are treaties, but de facto we don’t. I consider Nancy Pelosi’s visit [to Armenia-Ed.] as an act against Russia.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

In this sense, some of the participants, comparing Western countries’ and Russia’s role in Armenia’s security issues, prefer Russia:

“Why do I emphasize the role of Russia, not liking them that much? So many times during the war it became clear that there was no response to the calls of different countries: the US, France, etc., but just as Russia urged them [Azerbaijan-Ed.] not to shoot, it happened immediately.”

Male, 26-35 group, Yerevan

“If, for example, I had to choose between the US and Russia, I would definitely be in favor of Russia.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The role of Russia as Armenia’s ally is not certain in young people’s perceptions and is being strongly criticized. Despite the war in Ukraine being the main subject of the discussions, criticism of Russia was mainly due to the provision of improper support to Armenia, pursuing its own interests, and, in young people’s opinions, with the regular past and contemporary attempts at sacrificing Armenia. According to them, the relations with Russia can be called “forced relations”.

“Well, we should not forget that Russia is the largest supplier of everything to us, from food products and gas to other things. And it’s also our ally, at least officially.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

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“For Russia, we are a Southern buffer, that’s the extent of their alliance, that’s why there is a base in Gyumri, etc.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“I definitely consider Russia to be main enemy, because I have recently entered the university, studied Armenian history and all our defeats I only connect with Russia, we are just a toy in its hands. It’s obvious that our real enemies are Azerbaijan and Turkey.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

While Russia-Armenia relations are mostly described as rather friendly, according to all discussions Armenia has no grounds for friendly relations with Ukraine. Ukraine was not a friendly state during the Karabakh conflict and especially during and after the 2020 war, including arming Azerbaijan and providing diplomatic and information support. This was mentioned during all group discussions:

“Ukraine was the first to congratulate Azerbaijan after our 44-day war.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“We should not forget that Ukraine was selling weapons to Azerbaijan, including phosphorus, which is banned for use during wars.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“4-5 years ago Ukraine was one of my favorite states, but I was disappointed when they helped Azerbaijan during the war. Well, they didn’t care about our war. And when their war started, in the beginning, they were indifferent towards us, then they thought that as now it’s happening to them, we have to sympathize. I was very disappointed by that.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

Despite the sentiments mentioned above, young people do not want to use that as a foundation for anti-Ukrainian stance in the war in Ukraine. At the same time, they consider pro-Ukrainian slogans and certain attempts to support Ukraine in this war inappropriate:

“I have never seen a relationship between us [Armenia and Ukraine-Ed.], and it’s strange that we have become very Ukrainian-loving now. We have considered them the same Slavic nation. The change occurred after 2020 when it was said that Ukrainian phosphorus was used in the war, and our children died. Everyone said that Ukraine is protecting Azerbaijan, and one year later we suddenly forgot about the phosphorus, them helping Azerbaijan, and became peace-loving, kind teddy bears who think, “Oh no, the Ukrainian people are being massacred!”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

Changes in Armenia as a result of war in Ukraine

Young people participating in the discussions fear or express fears about a number of phenomena, including:

- Armenia's security situation, the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh and other Armenian territories, and human casualties
- Armenia being divided by other states
- the threat of another war, but this time in the territory of Armenia
- uncertainty of the future
- possible influx of Turks
- losing the country
- emigration
- Third World War

"I'm afraid that this tiny piece [of Armenia-Ed.] too, which was saved somehow, half of it will go to the Russians, and the other half to the Turks. After the loss of Artsakh, I thought I shouldn't be afraid of anything else, but turns out it was not the end. We are falling so fast, that in the end, only a core will remain, a province called "Russian Province", as it was back in the time, Yerevan province."

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

"It frightens me that the role of Russia has significantly decreased in the region, and from the other side, Turkey's and Iran's appetites have increased. After the recent incidents, 140 hectares of our territory have been occupied, and Russia is not able to respond to it in any way. It's not the Russian-Turkish brotherhood, it's the fact that Russia is not in a good condition, and as a result, we are suffering, as its domain of influence."

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

The negative impact of war in Ukraine on Armenia's security was manifested in the Karabakh conflict, including in 2020, with Armenia's defeat in the Karabakh War and the emergence of further security problems. Russia's preoccupation with the war in Ukraine, and Moscow being sanctioned by Western countries, and then the military actions taking place in Ukraine did not allow Russia to provide proper support to Armenia.

"It seems to me that Azerbaijan took advantage of the situation, saw that Russia is busy taking away territories from Ukraine, so they didn't miss the moment and invaded our borders."

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

"The more Russia is busy with Ukraine, the less it is involved in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which gives Azerbaijan the opportunity to unleash further attacks. Azerbaijan says, get the Russian army out of Artsakh, it doesn't want Russia to be present here and is against Russia providing help to Armenia."

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

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Armenia's security, interests, and necessary position in the conditions of war in Ukraine

One of the main subjects of the focus group discussions was Armenia's necessary position regarding war in Ukraine. According to young people, it is neutral.

“Our official position is that we are like-minded with Russia, but we also don't treat Ukraine that bad, we are neutral.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“Our official position is as neutral as possible. They show a bit that they are pro-Russian, but still are as neutral as possible.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

At the same time, Armenia shouldn't be wary of a possible Russia defeat, because that might strengthen the positions of other states in the region, including Turkey and Azerbaijan, with their anti-Armenian policies.

“How ready are we to have a neighbor like Turkey in the region without a strong Russia?”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“Since the Russian troops are guarding our borders, it wouldn't be wise to go against it.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“In my opinion, Ukraine is more right in this conflict, but if Russia won't stand at our side, we will face bigger problems, that's why we must support Russia, as much as they are wrong.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Russia's defeat in its war in Ukraine, according to young people, could be situational, but a complete defeat is hard to predict.

“If Ukraine wins, it means that the US wins, and Russia's influence will weaken to some extent. But it's too powerful to go down, even if these sanctions are not affecting it. Even Europe is weakening itself to some extent by closing and moving out many businesses. But Russia is able to deal with it in such a way that they won't have a large-scale effect on it. No matter how much Russia weakens, its influence will remain in the region anyway.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“If Russia loses, in my opinion, its reputation as a serious superpower with a strong army will suffer in the world and in the region. It will lead to the appetite and the programmed aggression of Azerbaijan toward Armenia increasing because there will be nothing to restrain them. I think if Russia loses, we, Armenians, will have much harder consequences.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

According to young people's opinions, it's difficult to draw parallels between war in Ukraine and the Karabakh conflict. Some tried to see a similarity between

Armenia and Ukraine fighting in a war to defend their respective territories, some denied this similarity, because, in their opinion, no one supported Armenia during the 2020 war, while Ukraine is supported by all Western countries.

“If we look at it more simply, one side is fighting to keep its homeland (Ukraine), and the second side is fighting to occupy the other’s homeland. The same is in our case, we fight to keep our historical lands, our sovereignty, and Azerbaijan fights to occupy more lands or their imaginary lands.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

In addition, the difference between the statuses of Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh was mentioned. If Ukraine is defending its territorial integrity, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were defending their right to self-determination. In this sense, the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh is more similar to the regions that want to leave Ukraine and join Russia.

“From the perspective of international law, Ukraine is a state with a separate government with its own borders, and Artsakh as a state with its borders is not internationally recognized. It’s just that it’s Armenia and there is an issue of self-determination, and it was different from Ukraine’s fight.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Young people’s forecasts about the future

Various forecasts-ranging from pessimistic to optimistic - were made about the future in the focus group discussions. It can be observed that pessimistic forecasts are the majority and are defined by both regional political processes and Armenia’s internal political situation, while the optimistic ones were few and not always substantiated:

“Armenia will become a luxurious country, like Monaco. They will pass through Armenia from all over the world. Armenia will be a rich country.”

Male, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

“Armenia’s condition will become very good in a couple of years. Not that it’s bad now, but only if the war didn’t happen, it would have been better. At the moment Armenia has normal police, a stable economy, we have mines, water, and other capabilities, we have good roads, we have patrol.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

Pessimistic forecasts refer first to the unresolved Karabakh conflict as well as to Azerbaijan and Turkey preparing military operations against Armenia; the escalation of conflicts in the region, and only then to the war in Ukraine. These are all manifested by the discussions of the young about their insecurity, fears, and uncertainty of their personal lives:

“You can’t be sure, that you are safe in your own country. You can’t be sure, that if you build a house, or buy a house, it will be there in a couple of days that another war won’t start. It’s a matter of seconds before Armenia could implode and cease to exist. It’s mainly connected with other countries. Armenia’s current government is not powerful, the general decisions about its future depend on other countries’ interests, it’s not sovereign.”

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Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“Honestly, I don’t see a future for Armenia, which is very painful to me. We wake up every day, watch the news, we see that someone was wounded, or killed, and it’s constant.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

Young people noted the situation caused by the consequences of the 2020 war, which is dangerous for the future of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In this context, talks and plans to end blockades (by Azerbaijan and Turkey) instill more concerns than hope:

“I don’t see a good future. If they provide the corridor, we will become like Syria’s north, meaning there will be so many acts of terrorism, that people will voluntarily leave the area through which the road passes. But it’s the worst-case scenario.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

The pessimistic forecasts of young people towards the future are also related to the internal political situation of Armenia, including the restriction of rights and freedoms, internal political threats to democracy, and widespread hostility and hatred in the society, which, in their opinion could lead to defeats and losses on the foreign policy front:

“For me, Armenia is not a democratic country, it will never become one. Authoritarianism remains, and we might gradually turn become totalitarian, because more and more laws are passed and I don’t think such a thing happens in a democratic state. The insult [on insulting public figures-Ed.], for example. Or, another example, a number of structures attached to the Prime Minister’s Office are going to be created, such as the National Guard, which will be a power structure and will protect his individual, personal, and physical existence. In addition, the state system is slowly collapsing, and when they appoint every random person to be a chief of the general staff or don’t appoint one for half a year, or some historian becomes the Minister of Defense, or when a person unrelated to that field becomes the head of the field.”

Female, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“It seems to me that if this government remains in power, our lands will decrease again in a year.”

Male, 18-25 age group, Yerevan

“If the majority of our nation votes for the same government again, it won’t achieve anything good.”

Female, 26-35 age group, Yerevan

CONCLUSIONS

The perception of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict by Armenia’s youth is conditioned by several factors, including:

- the perception of the warring sides in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the attitude towards those states
- political processes taking place in the region

- the process of the Karabakh conflict (including the consequences of the 2020 Karabakh War) which is currently relevant for Armenians and principally significant for the security dynamics of the region
- forecasts of the consequences of the influence of the war in Ukraine on the security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The perceptions of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict by Armenia's youth can be split into two groups. In one group the conflict is geographic in nature; it is a manifestation of yet another historical stage of division of the world, a struggle between superpowers and alliances for spheres of influence. In particular, some post-Soviet countries (Ukraine and Armenia in particular) are in the modern stage of geographic transformation, as well as some countries of the Arab world (Syria in particular), while Russia, the West (NATO, EU, USA), Turkey, compete with each other to bring these countries into their spheres of influence. From this point of view, the war in Ukraine is a battlefield, a manifestation of the Russia-West conflict.

In the other group, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and war are explained by the personal qualities, aspirations, approaches, and issues of the leaders of Russia and Ukraine.

According to the generalized opinion of Armenia's youth, Armenia should remain as neutral as possible in its stance on the war in Ukraine, independently from its alliance obligations, the nature of the conflict, and its manifestations. At the same time young people's opinions on the immediate parties of the conflict—Russia, and Ukraine—are ambivalent and are determined by the positions of Moscow and Kiev in the 2020 Karabakh war. The current disappointment in Russia, Armenia's strategic partner is related to the defeat of the Armenian side in the war, while the negative attitude towards Ukraine is based on Ukraine's position in the Karabakh War, with military and diplomatic support towards Azerbaijan and Turkey. Again, according to the generalized opinion of Armenian youth, Armenia preserving its neutrality in the current situation is the most appropriate approach, independently from subjective and objective factors.

Opinions on the possible developments of the war in Ukraine, as well as general forecasts by Armenia's youth are mostly pessimistic. The new security threats that emerged after the 2020 Karabakh War and the events that followed it are hard to overcome, while the instability of the region and the possible globalization of the crisis can create unprecedented difficult conditions for Armenians. Looking for relatively stable side to adhere to, young people note the probable destabilization of Russia and the escalation of the conflict not just with Ukraine but with all countries of the expanding North Atlantic Alliance. At the same time sanctions directed at Russia hurt EU countries, which may push the relationship of Brussels with Armenia further down on the EU agenda. Apart from that, Armenia's youth is concerned with Turkey's and Azerbaijan's strengthening, which contributes to the prolongation of the war in Ukraine. Turkey and Azerbaijan, by playing both sides in the conflict, are able to reap benefits from both Russia and Ukraine, while at the same time achieving their strategical goals to rebuild a security system in the South Caucasus in their benefit.

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**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON
MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTHERN STATES, NIGERIA***

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Abstract. *This study investigated the perceived influence of social media on multiculturalism in the southern states of Nigeria. The uncertainty reduction theory served as the theoretical support for the study. The survey research method was employed with a projected population of about 17,871 thousand people in select southern states of Nigeria. The Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator was used to derive 384 as the sample size. Multistage and purposive sampling techniques were used, and the questionnaire served as an instrument for gathering data while the data was analyzed using percentages, charts, and mean analysis. Findings revealed that residents in the southern states use social media for multicultural engagements to a large extent. Findings also show that social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria by way of enhancing communication competence amongst people from different cultures; it strengthens ties with people from other cultures; and it gives a sense of belonging in a culturally diverse group on social media. It was concluded that social media have a positive influence on multiculturalism in the southern states of Nigeria. It was recommended that residents of the southern states of Nigeria should be encouraged by those stakeholders who are cultural ambassadors to sustain their efforts in using social media for multicultural engagements. Users of social media should be on alert in order to guard against anyone that is capable of causing disunity or tribal war on the social media space. Such a person(s) should be reported so that appropriate action can be taken against them.*

Keywords: *Social media, multiculturalism, culture, groups, southern states, Nigeria*

**ԲԱԶՄԱՍԵՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎՐԱ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ՄԵԴԻԱՆԵՐԻ
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ՀԱՐԱՎԱՅԻՆ ՆԱՀԱՆԳՆԵՐՈՒՄ**

Իֆեյինվա Նսուդե

Էրոնիի նահանգի համալսարանի զանգվածային հաղորդակցության
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Իմոյի պետական համալսարանի գանգվածային հաղորդակցության ֆակուլտետի դոկտորանտ (ք. Օվերի, Նիգերիա): Էլ. փոստ՝ Etumnuemeka@gmail.com

Ամփոփում: Ուսումնասիրությունը նվիրված է Նիգերիայի հարավային նահանգներում ապրողների՝ բազմամշակութային միջավայրի վրա սոցիալական մեդիաների հնարավոր ազդեցության վերաբերյալ պատկերացումների բացահայտմանը: Նկարագրելով Նիգերիայի հարավային նահանգների պատմությունն ու ցույց տալով այդտեղ ապրողների բազմամշակութային կենսակերպի ձևավորման գործոնները՝ հիմնավորվում է սոցիալական մեդիաների և՛ դրական, և՛ բացասական ազդեցության հավանականությունը: Հաշվի առնելով բնակչության ընդհանուր թիվը՝ մոտ 17,871 հազար մարդ, և սահմանելով ընտրանքային ծավալը՝ 384 հոգի, իրականացվել է հարցաթերթիկային հարցում: Հետազոտության արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ այդ տարածքի բնակիչները լայնորեն օգտագործում են սոցիալական մեդիաներ, դրանց միջոցով շփվելով՝ նպաստում են բազմամշակութային միջավայրի ընդլայնմանն ու դրանում ավելի խորն են ինտեգրվում: Սոցիալական մեդիայի օգտագործումը նպաստում է միջմշակութային հաղորդակցությունների կարողությունների և փորձի ձեռքբերմանը: Խորհուրդ է տրվում ավելի լայնորեն կիրառել սոցիալական մեդիան հատկապես հանրային կարծիքի առաջնորդների կողմից՝ խթանելու բազմամշակութային երկխոսությունն ու կանխելու ցեղերի միջև հնարավոր հակասությունները, ինչպես նաև բացահայտելու նման հակասությունները սաղորդներին:

Բանալի բառեր – *սոցիալական մեդիա, բազմամշակութայնություն, միջմշակութային հաղորդակցություն, հանրային կարծիքի առաջնորդներ, հարավային նահանգներ, Նիգերիա*

ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ВЛИЯНИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕЙ НА МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРАЛИЗМ В ЮЖНЫХ ШТАТАХ НИГЕРИИ

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Аннотация. В данной статье исследуется воздействие социальных сетей на мультикультурализм в южных штатах Нигерии соответственно восприятиям самих жителей. Исходя из населения в 17 871 тысяч человек, была рассчитана выборка в размере 384 респондентов, с которыми был проведен анкетный опрос. Исследование выявило распространенность социальных сетей среди пользователей, а также их положительное воздействие на межкультурную коммуникацию и, соответственно, на взаимодействие культур различных сообществ, проживающих в южных штатах Нигерии. В частности, социальные медиа способствуют развитию у пользователей навыков межкультурной коммуникации и опыта. Рекомендуется более активное использование социальных платформ именно знаменитыми в обществе людьми, мнение которых влияет на общество, в целях преодоления возможных конфликтов и разногласий между представителями различных племен, а также в целях выявления тех лиц, которые провоцируют подобные противоречия.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, мультикультурализм, культура, группы, южные штаты, Нигерия

Introduction

In this globalized world where information is like oxygen, people from diverse cultures have frequent contacts which call for the need for cooperation. Thus, communicating across cultures presupposes not only a different language but a different culture and this presents both exciting and challenging times for nations. Exciting because of the ability to communicate with people from different cultures without barriers in time and space and this is challenging because technology is said to be furthering individualism and separatism in cultural, religious, and national affairs (Cambell, et al., 2014; Hoter, et al., 2020) and thereby posing a paradox of trust and a threat to the concept of multiculturalism (Bajrami & Shabani, 2019; Condorelli, 2018; Smith, 2008; Goshylyk & Goshylyk, 2010). In particular, Ezeobi (2011) mentions multiculturalism as one of the causes of conflict in Nigeria by pointing out that “Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria and Africa, in general, arise as a result of scarcity of political resources, multiculturalism, religion, militarization of ethnicity among others.”

Nigeria is made up of over 217 million people (Worldometre, 2022) over 250 ethnic groups, over 500 languages and over 1000 dialects and cultures (USCIRF Report, 2016; Ezeobi, 2021). All these make Nigeria a country with diverse cultures and a multi-ethnic nation-state. The lack of commonalities birthed by geographical and linguistic divisions often breeds strife, prejudices and stereotypical beliefs. That explains why the country is often riddled with ethno-religious quagmire and political tensions all the time. To this, Okechukwu, et al. (2019), observe that even villages that have “narrower identities defining them” often clash and sub-ethnic identities also exist within some ethnic groups (Mba, 2014)

The existence of different ethnic groups which are agitating diverse interests in Nigeria attest to the fact of lack of commonalities among the ethnic groups. Notably among such ethnic groups are the O’dua People Congress (OPC), Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), Igbo People Congress (IPC), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Arewa People’s Congress (APC) (Ezeobi, 2021).

The commonest conflicts in Nigeria are communal conflicts and ethno-religious

crises which often arise as a result of political tussles, land disputes, chieftaincy tussles, defence of community people, property and pride (Akinteye, 1999; Okechukwu, et al ., 2019; Onwe, et al., 2015) Nigeria has witnessed numerous communal conflicts such as Zango-Kataf crisis in Kaduna State 1999-2001, Tiv-Jukun crisis in Taraba State 1999-2001, Ife Modakeke in Osun State 1999-2000, Eleme-Okrika crisis, Itsekiri-Urhobo crisis 1999-2000, Itsekiri-Ijaw crisis, Aguleri Umuleri conflict in Anambra State 1995-1999, Umuode Oruku conflict, the Igbo-Ikom conflict in Cross-River State and the Ezza-Ezillo conflict in Ebonyi State among others (Mba, 2014; Okechukwu, et al., 2019).

Nigeria is in dire need of multicultural orientation in light of the recent happenings in the country, especially in the eastern geographical zone which has become a theatre of violence recently. A look at such ethno-religious crises will give a better understanding of the precarious situation. Over 1,800 inmates escaped from the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCOs) facility in Owerri, the state capital of Imo State, after gunmen stormed the police headquarters there, torching many cars in the process. Two officers were slain while inside the Police Zonal Headquarters at Ukpo in Anambra as a result of a bandit/terrorist attack. Over 18 persons were slain in an ethnic conflict between residents and armed herdsmen in Ebonyi State. The Oruku versus Umuode communal crisis that started in 1999 (Okechukwu, et al., 2019) is not an exception. Thus, since the inception of the present political administration of President Mohammad Buhari, the people do not have peace. Up until the time of writing this paper, the eastern part of the south still observes a stay-at-home order every Monday in protest for the release of one of the freedom fighters who had been docked by the administration. All these have led to a lack of trust among the southerners themselves, the other ethnic groups that sojourn in their midst and the government.

The purpose of the current study, therefore, is to examine the influence of social media on multiculturalism in four Southern States in Nigeria. The southern states include Ebonyi, Imo, Bayelsa and Rivers. Overall, this study ascertains whether or not residents of southern Nigeria utilise social media for multicultural engagements and the extent to which they utilize them.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge is always how to promote awareness of multiculturalism as well as increase people's competence in multiculturalism communication using social media (Emmenegger, 2019; Udebunu, 2011). Ethnicity is the opposite of multiculturalism and is a threat to national security since it often seems difficult for the cultures that coexist to assimilate themselves. "In ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, people have fewer friends, trust is lower, and altruism and community cooperation are rarer" (Robert Putman, 2007 as cited in Jandt, 2021, p. 556 citing). Occurrences like the civil war of 1967-1970 and the annulment of the 1993 polls by the military in Nigeria attest to the fact of ethnic rivalry and in consequence leading to social inequality and underdevelopment (Samuel, 2012; Nduba, Nnamdi & Chukwuebuka, 2020).

Chen (2012) and Zaw (2018) argue that new media serve as channels of free expression of opinions and relationship establishment. However, their role in promoting multicultural ideals is unstable as they tend to question the conventional

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definition of cultural identity through the weakening or strengthening of the significance of the relationships between people and communities. Some other scholars like Jandt (2021) and Chen (2012) have argued that new identities may be forged in virtual communities. All these attest to the fact of empirical gap and the need to ascertain the nature of the relationship between social media and multiculturalism.

Addressing the global sustainable development goals is a major concern to many countries including Nigeria. This is because the goals serve as a prosperity template to many nations of the world. Goal ten aims to reduce inequality, while goal sixteen aims to achieve peace, justice and strong institutions through the inclusion of every member of society without fear or violence. Further, the last goal advocates partnership of all people, for the attainment of the goals (UNDP, 2022). The attainment of these goals is arguably impossible without peace and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a prerequisite for peace since its central goal promotes the acceptability of all and their coexistence. Social media shape feelings and behaviour in the real world. With the Southern people in mind, this study seeks to establish how social media are mitigating cultural tensions and the understanding of the intersections between communication, technology and multiculturalism.

An underlying assumption in this study is that the twin concepts of social media and multiculturalism have not been adequately investigated (Cherng & Davis 2019; McQuail, 2010), especially in a culturally diverse country like Nigeria which requires multiculturalism for cohesion and development. McQuail (2010) suggested that the positive cultural potentials of photos and music whose distributions are made possible through new media should be investigated.

Scholars have noted that the technological reality of the 21st century provides the tools to combat the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices. It allows for the building of social relationships and acquaintances with other cultures based on common universal values in addition to the unique values of each culture, thus developing a more open, understanding and respectful dialogue (Postmes and Lea 1988; Hoter, et al., 2020, p.2).

Literature Review

Culture is some attributes possessed by a human group and it entails physical environment, religion, tools, practices, customs, traditions or the total way of life (McQuail, 2010). Individuals learn about other people's cultures through the media. In particular, cultural learning is made possible through media's surveillance, correlation and transmission functions (Wilson & Chao, 2013; Dominic, 2013). However, the conventional media have been accused of excluding certain cultures and even redefining some depending on the identity of who is involved whether in-group or out-group. This is evident in the concepts of cultural domination, cultural imperialism, ethnocentrism and media imperialism (Cherng & Davis 2019; Osuagwu, 2010; McQuail, 2010). Thus, the conventional media are said to instigate cultural bigotry.

The influence of the new media on culture is a much-debated scholarship (McQuail, 2010). Thus, cultural scholars have conflicting views regarding the influence on multiculturalism (McQuail, 2010). Some think that new media are further perpetuating negative stereotypes concerning culture (Wilson & Chao,

2013) In what they call "old problems linger in the new era" (p.116) Wilson and Chao, (2013) observed how multicultural challenges persist even in the new communications age. Similarly, McQuail (2010) observe that new technologies have made cultural experiences more accessible to people which in consequence is changing the meaning and salience of culture.

Social media are computer-based interactive and socializing platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and LinkedIn (Anim, 2013). According to Dominic (2011, p. 25), "Social media are online communications that use special techniques that involve participation, conversation, sharing, collaboration and linkage." Thus, the social media are internet based applications that were derived from the ideological basis of web 2.0 which allow creation and exchange of audio visual content as generated by users and in the end networks of acquaintances are enabled (Jumbo et al., 2023; Kaplan & Haelein, 2009; Mcquail,2010).

Multiculturalism also known as cultural pluralism or ethnic pluralism is the idea that different cultures or ethnicities acknowledge their differences within a dominant political culture and enter into dialogue and collaborations without any culture sacrificing its identity. It recognizes each culture as being an integral part of a whole. In other words, multiculturalism presupposes the ability of people of different cultures to coexist and benefit each other. Its major goal is to depersonalise or deindividualise people (Eagan, 2023; Postmes & Lea 2002; Reicher & Postmes, 1995) by breaching cultural boundaries.

Multicultural inclusion means building bridges to promote social inclusion. Austin and Anderson (2008), Akwuebu (2018) see multiculturalism as a term that affirms the recognition that diverse cultures can coexist in the same environment for mutual benefits (Goshilink & Goshilink 2010). The concept of multiculturalism stems from the fact that there is not just one human culture; people from diverse backgrounds are susceptible to communication barriers. However, the interconnectivity of the world makes the need for people from different cultures to communicate.

Some scholars have noted that contact and communication reduce tension and foster cultural tolerance, which is the goal of multiculturalism (Mostafazadeh, et al., 2015; Pettigrew & Troop, 2000; Pettigrew & Troop, 2004). Thus, technological affordances present the opportunity for people to interact deeply and share universal values while arguably retaining indigenous culture. Consequently, openness, dialogue and understanding are promoted (Chukwuere & Onyebukwa, 2018). In virtual interactions, people trust, like, and comment thereby building relationships (Gu et al., 2019; Walther & Bunz, 2005). In the same vein, McMullan (2020), Postmes and Lea (1998), earlier asserted that computer-mediated interactions build social relationships rather than breach them.

Although the cultural impacts of social media are still evolving (Dominic, 2011), a few studies that suggest a positive correlation between social media and multiculturalism exist. For instance, Mollov and Lavie (2001) and Mollov (2006) showed how a one-to-one religious communication medium like email could help in building religious trust and tolerance among the warring Jews and Palestinians. Austin (2006) reported a study that demonstrated the ability of technology (online social interactions) to change perceptions and combat cultural prejudices in Ireland. The study in reference took place between 1999 and 2008 and students and pupils of

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Northern and Southern Ireland were sampled. In the same vein, Winda, et al. (2019), in their study titled the "Role of Social Media in Intercultural Communication Competences using Students of Two Universities in Japan," showed that the majority of the students were on Facebook with the motivation to know more about their international friends. Still, Hoter, et al. (2020) using the contact hypothesis recently demonstrated how distance learning could serve the goal of promoting multiculturalism as their research demonstrated that collaborative learning via the internet and other technological tools were helping to reduce bias between Arabs and Jews.

In this regard, Chen (2012) argued that social media affordances allow people of diverse cultures to freely express themselves and establish relationships and communicate with diverse societies. This sounds exciting but poses a threat to ethnic and political unity and diversity. Cooperation is said to be rare in diverse states, yet it is a prerequisite for development. India is the most diverse state in the world and also the most diverse nation states are found in Africa (Jandt, 2021).

Scholars are divided on the role of social media in multicultural engagements. Some scholars have pointed out that people are using social media to create novel kinds of social solidarity and more encompassing identities (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Jandt 2021). In contrast, some have argued that social media harm culture because of the dominance of the English language, how to reflect the demographic realities of people has become a challenge and has been a concern to scholars. As Jandt (2021) noted, the challenge of intercultural communication is how to better understand groups with unique cultural identities and collaborate freely to tackle global challenges.

Social media are said to have facilitated communication between people from multiple cultures to fulfil the concept of the global village (Breckling, 2012; Metev & Veiko, 2013). However, Chen (2012) observes that although new media have brought about people's interconnectedness, they have also posed some challenges to the traditional definition of multicultural communication because of the need to connect with people from diverse cultures. For instance, through social media, the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people is showcased to the world through Atilogu dance as well as the cuisines of the Ogoni people in Rivers.

Brief History of Southern Nigeria

Southern Nigeria was coined in 1900 under the British Protectorate and was specifically called the "Southern Nigeria Protectorate" as a territorial label for those who live below the Niger River in Lokoja. It had its initial capital in Calabar until 1906 when Lagos was annexed to it, made its administrative seat (World History at KMLA, 2007) and was renamed "colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The protectorate system ended in January 1914 when southern and northern protectorates were amalgamated with Lagos as its capital (Falola, 2009). In 1939, Southern Nigeria was divided into Eastern and Western provinces.

Present-day Southern Nigeria covers the eastern and western regions of the colonial period and the first republic in Nigeria. It comprises two of the three major ethnic groups which include Yoruba and Igbo people and other minority groups like Ijaw, Ogoni, Ikwerre. According to Falola (2009, p.364) "in 1939, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was divided into two regions, Western Region and Eastern

Region. They remained as political zones for the remainder of the colonial period and into the early years of independence."

Southern Nigeria is made up of 17 states, including Notably, Ebonyi, Abia, Bayelsa, Rivers, Oyo, Ekiti, Enugu, Akwalbom, Delta, Lagos, Cross River, Osun, Ogun, Anambra, Imo and Edo states. The major occupations of the people are farming and fishing which are supported by its tropical and humid climates. The majority of the people of southern Nigeria practice Christianity as their religion (Falola, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Some of the theories that emphasize interactions among different cultures are relevant to this study. Such theories include the contact hypothesis, intergroup contact, social identity and uncertainty reduction theories (Berry, 2013). However, for this study, the choice is the uncertainty reduction theory.

The uncertainty reduction theory also called the initial interaction theory was developed in 1975 (West & Turner, 2010). It has its root in Shannon and Weaver's information theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Charles Chuck Berger and Richard Calabrese developed the uncertainty reduction theory to demonstrate how gaining information about other people can reduce uncertainty about them. Such gained information helps to predict people's opinions as well as their actions which are crucial to relationship development (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

As listed by West and Turner (2010), the assumptions of the theory include:

1. People experience uncertainty in interpersonal settings.
2. Uncertainty is an aversive state, generating cognitive stress.
3. When strangers meet, their primary concern is to reduce their uncertainty or to increase predictability.
4. Interpersonal communication is a developmental process that occurs through stages.
5. Interpersonal communication is the primary means of uncertainty reduction.
6. The quantity and nature of the information that people share can change through time.
7. It is possible to predict people's behaviour in a law-like fashion.

The theory, using a set of theorems, gave nine main axioms that serve as a lens for investigating and predicting the process of getting to know someone. West and Turner (2014) outlined theorems as seen below:

1. People experience uncertainty in initial interpersonal settings, which can be lessened as verbal communication increases.
2. Uncertainty is inversely correlated to nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.
3. Uncertainty is positively correlated with information-seeking strategies.
4. Intimacy and uncertainty are inversely correlated.
5. Reciprocity is positively correlated with uncertainty.
6. Similarities between individuals will reduce uncertainty.
7. Increased uncertainty results in decreased levels of liking.
8. Shared social networks reduce uncertainty and vice versa.
9. Uncertainty is inversely correlated to communication satisfaction

Types of uncertainty have been identified to include cognitive and behavioural. Cognitive uncertainty involves subject uncertainty which encompasses

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the degree of uncertainty associated with the beliefs and thoughts of other individuals. In contrast, behavioural uncertainty entails the level of uncertainty that relates to other people's actions (Redmond, 2015).

Furthermore, people tend to pursue uncertainty reduction goals for a single factor or a combination of three factors notably anticipation of future interaction (whether or not the person expects a future encounter with the other person) and lastly, Incentive value (whether or not the other person possesses the ability to reward or control something we aspire to have and deviance is verified (whether or not the other person they act in a manner that conflict with accepted norms). All these serve as the antecedents that help reduce uncertainty (Kellerman & Rodney, 1990).

The first encounter between strangers was divided into three stages by the theorists: the admission stage, the personal stage, and the exit stage. Interactional patterns that indicate like and disliking are present in each level. The beginning of a relationship is the entry stage. Here, behavioural norms like greetings and laughing at innocent jokes and conversations take place. All of these are dependent on cultural norms. The second stage is the personal stage. The personal phase occurs when strangers begin to find out one another's attitudes, values emotions and beliefs. The involvement at this level is higher than that of the first stage. This is because they have engaged in a plethora of interactions while perceiving each other as strangers. Thus, emotional involvement and disclosure are mutually exclusive. The final stage, the exit stage: is the phase at which the former strangers deliberate on the progression of relationship development or not and this is dependent on mutual liking or dislike (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

The theory explains further that people seek uncertainty reduction goals using three strategies. The strategies are passive strategy, active strategy, and extractive information seeking. The passive strategy involves a scenario where one person deliberately uses tactics to observe another person and obtain information without being noticed. An example is watching someone in a classroom, restaurant, or any public space without attracting attention. On the other hand, active tactics involve uncertainty reduction without direct contact. For instance, questioning someone's friends to derive information. Also, in interactive strategy, the individual engages his target in a dialogue to reduce the uncertainties between them (Berger, 1995). Still, the most recent strategy for uncertainty reduction is the extractive information-seeking strategy because it depicts the context of computer-mediated that allows gaining a huge amount of information about an individual online (Carr & Joseph, 2014). However, Sanders and Wiseman (1993) noted that some of the strategies for uncertainty reduction are culture-specific because some cultures have been found to involve more self-disclosure than others. Scholars later found that uncertainty reduction strategies are the same both offline and online and the asynchronous nature of online communication makes people disclose more (Gibbs, et al., 2011).

Gudykuns et al. (1987) noted that there are two different kinds of uncertainties, most notably proactive and retroactive uncertainty reductions. They went on to say that anticipating people's most likely alternate actions prior to the initial meeting requires proactive uncertainty reduction. These forecasts are made feasible by the past significance of earlier remarks, observations, or information discovered. The level of intimacy changes following this initial touch. Retroactive uncertainty

reduction, on the other hand, is the process of examining a situation after a contact; it includes providing justifications for the other person's actions and deciphering the significance of behavioural decisions (West & Turner, 2010).

The theory has been criticised for being a product of self-assessment of opinions which is a variable that is hard to measure (Brasher, 2001) and it is said to be only valid at an initial point of interaction after which it impacts negatively on the long run (Honeycutt, 1985) that it is action value and rewards attached to initial interaction determines positive relational experience rather than reducing uncertainty and that it is not in every scenario that people every communication encounter uncertainty neither do people experience anxiety the same way (Kramer,1999) and sometimes uncertainty could be too much that no one is interested in reducing it (Miller, 2005)

Criticisms like the ones above do not restrict the application of the uncertainty theory to this study. Especially in a multicultural setting, research has proven a relationship between uncertainty reductions through communication in multicultural settings. Although the initial scope of the theory was interpersonal communication, it was later expanded to include nonverbal communication, intimacy and reciprocity among others (Brasher, 2006). Still, in the present disposition, where most communication takes place offline, the challenge is how to reduce the uncertainties that are prevalent in online communication. Some scholars have used the theory to explain, for example, people's social network preferences for uncertainty reduction (Gambo & Ozad, 2020). Palmiery, et al., (2012) note the effect of Facebook self-disclosure on perceived uncertainty. In the same vein, Tong (2013) shows the merits of social network sites in stemming uncertainty after relationship dissolution. Also, some scholars have demonstrated the correlation between multicultural communication anxiety and uncertainty (Neuliep, 2012; Neuliep& Ryan, 1988).

Research methodology

The central purpose of this study is to ascertain the influence of social media on multiculturalism in Southern states of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the extent to which residents of the southern states in Nigeria perceive the use of social media for multicultural engagements.
2. Examine how social media is perceived to promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria.
3. Establish residents' behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southeastern states of Nigeria.

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent do residents of the southern states in Nigeria perceive the use social media for multicultural engagements?
2. How do you perceive social media in promoting cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria?
3. What are the residents' behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria?

This investigation was done using the survey method. The ideal research design for this study is a survey since it allows respondents' perspectives on the perceived influence of social media on multiculturalism in southern states, Nigeria (Asemah, et

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al., 2012; Tayo-Garbson, et al., 2019). The authors used this method to elicit responses from respondents on the perceive influence of social media on multiculturalism in southern states Nigeria. Their responses elicited through the structured questionnaire guided the researchers in measuring the perceive influence of social media on multiculturalism. The population of this study is 17,871,024 according to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2017), this figure is a combination of two southeast and two south-south states they are Ebonyi-2,880,383, Imo-5,408,756, Rivers-7,303,924 and Bayelsa-2,277,961. The rationale for the states selection was based on proximity to the researchers carrying out the investigation and for easy access to respondents. In order to derive the sample size for the study, the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator was used at 95% confidence level and 5% error limit. Therefore, the sample size was 384. The multistage and purposive sampling techniques were used in this study. At the first stage the researchers purposively selected the state capitals from the selected states. At the second stage from these capitals one LGA was purposively selected. They are Owerri (Owerri Municipal) Abakiliki (Abakiliki) Port Harcourt (Port Harcourt) Yenagoa (Yenagoa). The rationale for selecting the LGAs is based on the fact that most social media users are mostly seen in urban areas due to accessibility to strong internet connection and availability to data that can enable interaction amongst people of different cultural backgrounds. At stage three the researchers randomly selected two communities from each of the LGAs they are Owerri Municipal (Umuoyima and Umuororonjo), Abakiliki (AgbajaUnuhuand NkalikiUnuhu), Port Harcourt (D-line and Diobu), Yenagoa (Ekeki and Opolo). At stage four the researchers purposively distributed the 48 copies of questionnaire proportionately to respondents across the select communities. Questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. The instrument was developed from the objectives and research questions and it has a total of ten (10) items structured in dichotomous and Likert scale format. The 4 points Likert scale was used where strong agree is 4, agree 3, disagree 2 and strongly disagree 1. Also, large extent, moderate extent, little extent, no extent, favorable, unfavorable and neutral was used to measure the responses of respondents. The researchers formulated the questions in simple sentence in order to aid understanding of the subject matter being investigated. The researcher adopted the face-to-face approach to administer the instrument. The instrument was validated by an expert to ensure the instrument is well structured in line with the research questions. For reliability of instrument test, the researchers carried out a test- re-test on 15 respondents and the result showed .78 after computation with Cronbach alpha with the aid of SPSS version 21. This result shows that there is a high level of consistency with the instrument. Data were analysed using simple percentages, pie chart and mean analysis.

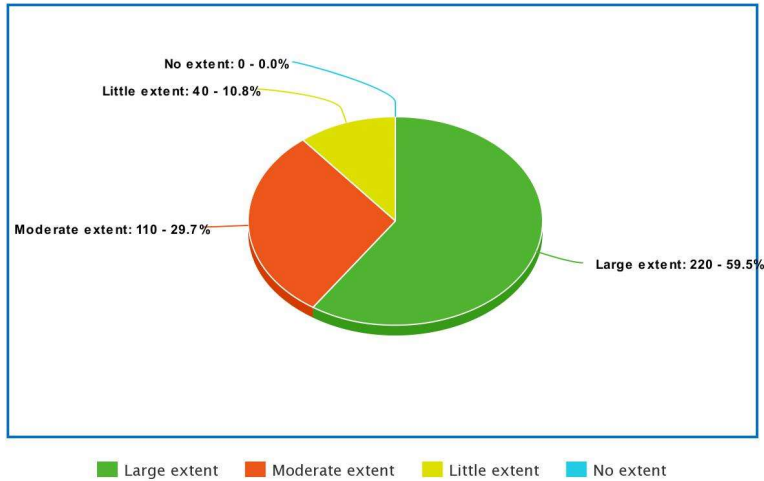
Presentation of Data and Analysis

From the 384 copies of questionnaire distributed to respondents 370(96.3%) were retrieved meaning 14(3.7%) copies were not returned. The return rate stood at 96.3% that is to say the 370 copies of questionnaire is valid for analysis.

Research Question 1: To what extent do residents of the southern states in Nigeria perceived the use of social media for multicultural engagements?

Fig 1

Respondents response on the extent people connect across cultures on social media



This question was intended to measure the extent to which people connect across cultures on social media. As such, the researchers raised options to be able to get a clear picture of the extent through the scale. Based on the pictorial representation of the data, it is quite obvious that 59.5 percent of the respondents confirmed strongly that they connect across cultures on social media platforms. By implication, the connections they have on these social media platforms will make enormous room for multiculturalism, even in a diverse society such as Nigeria. The statistical value shows that the response is way above average meaning that people leverage social media to connect in such a way that they will share cultural experiences and possibly learn from one another.

Research Question 2: How do you perceive social media in promoting cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria?

Table 1

Respondents Responses on how social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	TF	M	Decision
Social media enhances my communication competence with people from other cultures.	238 (64.3%)	132 (35.6%)	- (-)	- (-)	370 (100)	3.6	Accepted
Social media strengthens my ties with people from other cultures.	165 (44.5%)	195 (52.7%)	6 (1.6%)	4 (1.0%)	370 (100)	3.4	Accepted
A sense of belonging in a culturally diverse group on social media signifies cultural inclusion.	130 (35.1%)	210 (56.7%)	25 (6.7%)	5 (1.3%)	370 (100)	3.2	Accepted
social media's interactive nature gives room for cultural inclusion	145 (39.1)	215 (58.1)	7 (1.8)	3 (0.8)	370 (100)	3.3	Accepted
Average mean						3.3	

Source: Field survey, 2022

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Variables: SA=Strongly Agree, 3.3-4.0: A=Agree, 2.5-3.2: D=Disagree, 1.8-2.4: SD=Strongly Disagree, 1.1-1.7

Decision Rule:

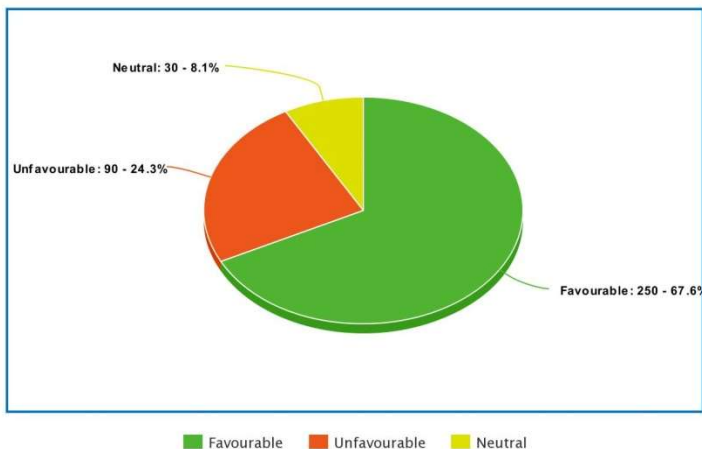
If the average mean score is less than 2.5 (1-2.4), the researchers conclude that the social media does not promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria. But if the average mean score is higher than 2.4 (2.5 – 4.0), the researchers decide that the social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria.

In order to answer research question two, the researchers framed these questions and put them in a Likert scale so as to be able to effectively measure the responses from respondents who were studied. From the first item on the scale the mean showed 3.6 which is an indicator that respondents agreed that social media enhances communication competence with people from other cultures. The second item revealed a mean of 3.4 which is an affirmation that social media strengthens ties with people from other cultures. Furthermore, a mean score of 3.2 revealed that a sense of belonging in a culturally diverse group on social media signifies cultural inclusion. Then analysis of data showed that at a mean of 3.3 respondents agreed that social media's interactive nature gives room for cultural inclusion. In summary, from the mean average 3.3 (N=370), it can be concluded that social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria. From the above responses it is crystal clear that social media play a great role in promoting cultural inclusion among people of diverse cultural groups who happen to be on the same social media space.

Research Question 3: What are the residents' behavioral dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria?

Fig 2

Respondents response on their attitude towards the spread of other people's cultural values on social media



This question was raised to ascertain respondents' attitude towards the spread of other people's cultural values on social media. As such, the options were favorable, unfavorable and neutral. This question provided the basis for the subsequent analysis which enables the researchers to establish the behavioral

dispositions of respondents in the study regarding social media and other cultural groups. Therefore, the Fig 2 analysis of data shows that 67.6% of respondents indicated that they have favourable attitude towards the spread of other people's cultural values on social media. It implies that majority of the respondents have positive attitudes towards the spread of other people cultural values on social media. From the analysis there is a statistical evidence to show the relationship between respondents' attitude towards the spread of other people's cultural values and social media.

****NB:** Analysis on table 2 was done based on the responses on fig 2

Table 2

Respondents responses on the behavioral dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	TF	M	Decision
I hardly discriminate against others from the different cultural backgrounds on social media.	125 (36.7%)	137 (40.2%)	70 (20.5)	8 (2.3)	340 (100)	3.1	Accepted
I use social media to support my interaction with people from other cultures.	120 (35.2%)	190 (55.8%)	25 (7.3%)	5 (1.4%)	340 (100)	3.2	Accepted
I use social media to learn more about people from other cultures.	170 (50.0%)	130 (38.2%)	26 (7.6%)	14 (4.1%)	340 (100)	3.3	Accepted
I use social media to talk about how important other cultures are irrespective of the level of their recognition in society.	145 (42.6)	101 (29.7)	78 (22.9)	16 (4.7)	340 (100)	3.1	Accept
Average mean						3.1	

Source: Field survey, 2022

Variables:SA=Strongly Agree, 3.3-4.0: A=Agree,2.5-3.2:D=Disagree, 1.8-2.4:SD=Strongly Disagree, 1.1-1.7

Decision Rule:

If the average mean score is less than 2.5 (1-2.4), the researchers conclude that respondents do not have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. But if the average mean score is higher than 2.4 (2.5 – 4.0), the researchers decide that respondents have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria.

To be able to answer research question three, the researchers framed Likert scale questions so as to effectively analyze and establish respondents perceived behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. From item one on the scale a mean of 3.1 revealed that respondents agreed that they hardly discriminate against others from the different cultural backgrounds on social media. The second item at a mean of 3.2 showed that respondents agreed in using social media to support interaction with people from other cultures. Furthermore, at a mean of 3.3 respondents agreed that they use social media to learn more about people from other cultures. The fourth item on the scale revealed that at a mean score of 3.1 respondents confirmed that they use social media to talk about how important other cultures are irrespective of the level of their recognition in society. In summary, from the mean average 3.1 (N=340), it can be

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concluded that respondents have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. This can be seen from their responses. Based on the analysis of data, the researchers infer that respondents have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. From the statistical evidence there is statistical relationship between the respondents behavioural dispositions and social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that at 59.5%, it was confirmed that respondents connect across cultures on social media. That is to say, they use social media for multicultural engagements to a large extent. The implication of this finding is that people in the southern state of Nigeria leverage social media to a large extent to connect across other cultures. When such occurs, the tendency of multiculturalism will be most likely, with the possibility of social media in the picture. In line with this finding, Pettigrew and Troop, (2000) and Pettigrew and Troop, (2004) revealed that the presence of social media presents the opportunity for people to interact deeply and share universal values while arguably retaining indigenous culture. Some scholars have argued that contact and communication reduce tension and foster cultural tolerance, which is the goal of multiculturalism. In consonance with this finding, Breckling (2012); Metev and Veiko (2013) noted in their study that social media are said to have facilitated communication between people from multiple cultures to fulfill the concept of the global village. Contrary to this finding, Chen (2012) observes that although social media have brought about people's interconnectedness, they have also posed some bottlenecks to multicultural communication because of the need to connect with people from diverse cultures. This finding is consistent with the uncertainty reduction theory, which holds that to demonstrate how gaining information about other people can reduce uncertainty about them; such gained information helps predict people's opinions as well as their actions, which are crucial to relationship development (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

The findings revealed that social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria. Further findings from the mean analysis 3.3 (N=370) confirmed that social media promote cultural inclusion in the southern states of Nigeria by way of enhancing communication competence amongst people from different cultures, strengthening ties with people from other cultures and giving a sense of belonging in a culturally diverse group on social media and its interactive nature. This finding is in line with Chen (2012), who asserted that social media space allows people of diverse cultures to freely express themselves, establish relationships, and communicate with diverse societies. In furtherance to the findings of Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) and Jandt (2021), their study revealed that people are using social media to create novel kinds of social solidarity and more encompassing identities. In a similar vein, scholars like Anderson (2008) and Goshilink and Goshilink (2010) revealed in their study that the online space has the propensity to aid multiculturalism where diverse cultures can be recognised and coexist in the same environment for mutual benefits. By implication of this finding, it is obvious that social media have a high tendency to encourage multiculturalism where even the minority groups can be recognised.

Findings from Fig 2 showed that the majority of respondents (67.6%) have a favourable attitude towards the spread of other people's cultural values on social media. Further findings revealed that at a mean average of 3.1 (N = 340), respondents confirmed that they have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. From their responses, as seen in table 2, it can be inferred that a majority of them affirmed positive attitudinal dispositions towards other cultures, irrespective of the level of recognition within the southern states. This finding is in consonance with Dominic (2011), who asserted that the cultural impacts of social media are still evolving and that there is a positive correlation between social media and multiculturalism. In a similar vein, Mollov and Lavie (2001) and Mollov (2006) in their studies noted that a one-to-one religious communication medium like email could help in building religious trust and tolerance among the warring Jews and Palestinians. Also, Austin (2006) reported a study that demonstrated the ability of technology (online social interactions) to change perceptions and combat cultural prejudices in Ireland. Besides, in tandem with this finding, Hoter et al. (2020) in their study revealed that collaborative learning via the internet and other technological tools was helping to reduce bias between Arabs and Jews and, as such, promote multiculturalism. According to the uncertainty theory, an interactive strategy used by an individual to engage their target in a dialogue usually aims to reduce the uncertainties between them.

Conclusion

The fact that social media have been used for multicultural engagements by residents of the southern states of Nigeria to a large extent is quite commendable. This could be the reason social media are being used to promote cultural inclusion by way of recognising and respecting even the smallest of cultural groups in the midst of other cultures that are dominant within this region. Based on the findings also, the researchers concluded that social media have a positive influence on multiculturalism because residents confirmed that they have positive behavioural dispositions on social media towards other cultural groups in the southern states of Nigeria. This study has been able to extend literature on previous studies on multiculturalism by adding social media and it will be resourceful for researchers who would want to carry out a study in similar area. Another unique contribution of this study is in the area of raising awareness of government agencies and other stakeholders who are in charge of promoting the unity of people of diverse cultures in Nigeria to the importance of the use of social media in promoting multiculturalism which on the long run can lead to national development when they co-exist without tribal conflict.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study primarily used quantitative data alone to establish the relationship between social media and multiculturalism. A qualitative method could be used, in future research, to get the direct voices of the respondents regarding how they are using the social media for multicultural engagement. Also, an experiment could be performed in future to measure the effect of social media on message effectiveness and multicultural engagements. Still, mixed methods could be used to establish

effect and to verify the most employed social media platform health in the promotion of multicultural communication.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Residents of the southern states of Nigeria should be encouraged by those stakeholders who are cultural ambassadors to sustain their efforts in using social media for multicultural engagements.

2. The fact that social media promote cultural inclusion is a welcome development. Hence, users of social media should be on alert in order to guard against any online engagement that is capable of causing disaffection, disunity or tribal war on the social media space. Such situations when avoided, the person(s) culpable should be reported so that appropriate action can be taken against them.

3. Residents should maintain the positive behavioural dispositions they have towards other cultural groups on social media or even beyond social media, especially in a period where tribalism and ethnicity are the order of the day in Nigeria.

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EVOLUTION OF THE “AMERICAN DREAM” AS A VALUE SYSTEM AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES*

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Abstract. *The “American dream” is a value system, which is the locomotive of the development of American society. It is one of the core elements of the American identity. The idea of the “American dream” presents the terminal values of equality, liberty, prosperity and happiness. Hard work, sacrifice, courage in the face of taking risks, diligence and the act of overcoming hardships are presented as instrumental values, which are required to achieve the terminal values mentioned above. The concept of the “American Dream” has evolved with the passage of time and faced different challenges, which resulted in a number of contradictions between the dream and the social reality. Hollywood movies are used as one of the tools to propagate the “American Dream” both inside of the United States and abroad. This article examines the representation of the terminal and instrumental values of the “American Dream” in Hollywood films (2018-2021) with anti-racist content, as well as films about family, the American Armed Forces, the US president, and the rule of law, through visual, verbal and audio means. Nevertheless, while the films communicate the same terminal and instrumental values, they also occasionally show the existing contradictions. Hard work does not always lead to achieving the “American dream”. Even though the fight for equality is going strong, inequality still exists. Along with the rule of law, there are also manifestations of corruption. At the same time, the USA continues to be presented as a safe, powerful and wealthy country.*

Keywords: *“American Dream”, value system, terminal values, instrumental values, propaganda, communication, Hollywood movies*

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Սույն հետազոտությունը ֆինանսավորվել է ԱՄՆ պետքարտուղարության Հասարակայնության հետ կապերի գրասենյակի դրամաշնորհի շրջանակներում: Այս հոդվածում արտահայտված է հեղինակների դիրքորոշումը, որի համընկնումը ԱՄՆ պետքարտուղարության դիրքորոշման հետ պարտադիր չէ:

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«ԱՄԵՐԻԿՅԱՆ ԵՐԱԶԱՆՔԻ» ԶԱՐԳԱՑՈՒՄԸ ՈՐՈՒՄ
ԱՐԺԵՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳ ԵՎ ԴՐԱ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՄԸ ՀՈՒՎՈՒԴՑԱՆ
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Մոնիթորինգի մասնագետ, Հայաստանի հանրային հեռուստաընկերություն:
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Ամփոփում: «Ամերիկյան երազանքը» արժեհամակարգ է, որն ամերիկյան հասարակության զարգացման հիմնական շարժիչ ուժն է: Այն ամերիկյան ինքնության հիմնական տարրերից է: «Ամերիկյան երազանքի» գաղափարը ներառում է հավասարության, ազատության, բարգավաճման և երջանկության տերմինալ արժեքները: Քրտնաջան աշխատանքը, զոհաբերությունը, ռիսկի դիմելու համարձակությունը, աշխատասիրությունը և դժվարությունների հաղթահարումը այն գործիքային արժեքներն են, որոնք անհրաժեշտ են վերը նշված տերմինալ արժեքներին հասնելու համար: «Ամերիկյան երազանք» հասկացությունը ժամանակի ընթացքում զարգացել է և տարբեր մարտահրավերների բախվել, որոնք հանգեցրել են մի շարք հակասությունների երազանքի և սոցիալական իրականության միջև: Հոլիվուդյան ֆիլմերը օգտագործվում են որպես «Ամերիկյան երազանքի» քարոզչության գործիք ինչպես ԱՄՆ-ի ներսում, այնպես էլ արտերկրում: Այս հոդվածում ուսումնասիրված է հակառասիստական բովանդակությամբ, ինչպես նաև ընտանիքի, ամերիկյան զինված ուժերի, ԱՄՆ նախագահի և օրենքի գերակայությանը նվիրված հոլիվուդյան ֆիլմերում (2018-2021) վիզուալ, վերբալ և աուդիալ միջոցներով «Ամերիկյան երազանքի» տերմինալ և գործիքային արժեքների հաղորդակցությունը: Թեև ֆիլմերը հաղորդում են տերմինալ և գործիքային նույն արժեքները, դրանք երբեմն ցուցադրում են նաև առկա հակասությունները: Քրտնաջան աշխատանքը միշտ չէ, որ հանգեցնում է «ամերիկյան երազանքին» հասնելուն: Թեև հավասարության համար ակտիվ պայքար է մղվում, անհավասարությունը դեռ գոյություն ունի: Օրենքի գերակայությամբ հանդերձ՝ կան նաև կոռուպցիայի դրսևորումներ: Միաժամանակ ԱՄՆ-ը շարունակում է ներկայանալ որպես ապահով, հզոր և հարուստ երկիր:

Բանալի բառեր – *«Ամերիկյան երազանք», արժեհամակարգ, տերմինալ արժեքներ, գործիքային արժեքներ, քարոզչություն, հաղորդակցություն, հոլիվուդյան ֆիլմեր*

ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ “АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ МЕЧТЫ” КАК СИСТЕМЫ ЦЕННОСТЕЙ И ЕЕ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ В ГОЛЛИВУДСКИХ ФИЛЬМАХ

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Аннотация: *«Американская мечта» — это система ценностей, которая является локомотивом развития американского общества и одной из основных составляющих американской идентичности. Идея «американской мечты» включает такие терминальные ценности как равенство, свобода, благосостояние и счастье. Трудолюбие, самопожертвование, умение рисковать и преодолевать трудности выступают в роли инструментальных ценностей, необходимых для достижения упомянутых выше терминальных ценностей. «Американская мечта» эволюционировала с течением времени и сталкивалась с различными вызовами, что выявило ряд противоречий между мечтой и социальной реальностью. Голливудские фильмы используются как один из инструментов пропаганды «американской мечты» как в США, так и за рубежом. В данной статье рассматривается репрезентация терминальных и инструментальных ценностей «американской мечты» в голливудских фильмах (2018-2021 гг.) антирасистского содержания, а также фильмах о семье, американских вооруженных силах, президенте США и верховенстве права посредством визуальных, вербальных и аудиальных средств. Хотя фильмы транслируют одни и те же терминальные и инструментальные ценности, они также демонстрируют существующие противоречия. Тяжелая работа не всегда приводит к достижению «американской мечты». Несмотря на то, что борьба за равенство идет полным ходом, неравенство все еще существует. Наряду с верховенством права имеют место и проявления коррупции. При этом США продолжают представляться как безопасная, сильная и богатая страна.*

Ключевые слова: *«Американская мечта», система ценностей, терминальные ценности, инструментальные ценности, пропаганда, коммуникация, голливудские фильмы*

The concept of the American Dream

The “American dream” is a value system, which is deeply ingrained in American history, nevertheless, it still is relevant and it remains the locomotive of the development of American society. It is one of the core elements of the American identity. The first stories about the “American dream” can be traced back to English writer and sailor John Smith’s book, “The General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles”. When describing America, he wrote “Here every man may be master and owner of his own labour and land. ...If he has nothing but his hands, he may...by industries quickly grow rich.” (Smith, 1624). The “American dream” is also discussed in the declaration of independence of the United States: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed

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by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness (Jefferson, 2022).

The “American dream”, even though it had been discussed earlier, is usually attributed to historian James Truslow Adams, who, in 1931 coined the term “American dream” in the book “The Epic of America”; he described the “American Dream” as “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (Adams, 2012). Adams wrote that any person is capable of achieving success if they work hard, notwithstanding who they are and what social class they belong to. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the “American dream” is an American social ideal that stresses egalitarianism and especially material prosperity¹.

M. Hofman wrote that the “American dream” may sometimes contradict real life circumstances, but despite that, it is not an abstract dream: it embodies the values of a society, and, perhaps, chief among them is the respect for others. Society is the judge of what qualities one should be respected for, and what qualities they should be shunned for. In the old world, a one’s worth was decided not by one’s wealth, but by their personal qualities. In the new world, more often, one’s worth is decided by looking at their bank account. To gain the respect of society one must become a “millionaire”. Hofman (2013) also writes that the “American dream” is the dream of material success. For that reason, the 19th century became the time, when those in search of happiness dared to migrate from the Old world to the New world.

The prioritization of wealth acquisition, its inclusion in the list of national values, its becoming a way of measuring one’s success in society would sound strange before the protestant reformation. Tawney suggests that those people, whose main goal was making money, or, in other words, those, for whom financial gross was the prime motivator, were treated with mistrust and even contempt (Tawney, 2017). After the protestant reformation, the striving for gaining wealth became an accepted and valued goal, maybe, for the first time in human history, and became the main reason of the rise of western capitalism (Weber, 2005). The new capitalist, in contrast to the entrepreneur of the Middle Ages, no longer felt guilty for striving to become rich. Exactly the exact opposite became the norm: poverty was now considered a form of punishment, while wealth became a reward for one’s values and hard work. The ones who grew their wealth were seen as beacons of morality, since their position communicated that they possessed the bourgeois virtues of frugality, diligence, tirelessness, avidity and persistence. Profit was not a display of one’s greed, but a result of one’s professional skills. At the same time, poverty was perceived as the result of one’s sloth, failure, and submission to one’s vices. The poor, instead of receiving christian charity, were segregated from the rest and considered as punished (Norris & Inglehart, 2011).

Corporations and employers deliberately encouraged the association of a person with their work. The higher one’s professional status, the more probable it is, that one will associate oneself with their occupation, and will be a more motivated worker and will bring more profit to the corporation. The concept of a career motivates trustworthy employees, who tirelessly work toward furthering the goals of their company without supervision. Hard work, devotion and loyalty are encouraged and rewarded (Taylor, 2005).

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/American%20dream>

In 1979, Jimmy Carter, the president of the United States (years in office: 1977-1981) noted that “Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns”. For many people, consumption has become a more important source of identity and status than labor². Researchers have recognized that people consume in ways that are consistent with their sense of self, they use commodities to create their self-identities and communicate these selves to others and to themselves (Fisher, 1987; Hart, Clarck, Micken, 2002).

The concept of the “American dream” became substantial thanks to the joint efforts of the most important and powerful social institutes: politics, business, and religion. The following values were identified as the components of the “American dream” by different researchers:

1. Liberty, that promises success and prosperity for all (Jefferson, 2022),
2. Egalitarianism (equal rights for all or prosperity as a principle of organization of public life), as opposed to elitism, which is typical of European countries (Cullen, 2003),
3. Equal rights to achieving success (in most cases this refers to material success) (Kowal, 2019),
4. The rule of law, which establishes order and the safety of the citizens (Wyman, 2015),
5. Strong families, which are a cornerstone of the sustainable development of society (Cullen, 2003),
6. The idea, that the main guarantor of the achievement of the “American dream” is the unity of the American nation (Kaufmann, 2002),
7. The exceptional role of the United States in world history and geopolitics (Smith, 2003).

The idea of the “American dream” is preached and wildly successful both inside of the United States and abroad, where it presents the terminal values of equality, liberty, prosperity and happiness. Hard work, sacrifice, courage in the face of taking risks, diligence and the act of overcoming hardships are presented as instrumental values, which are required to achieve the terminal values mentioned above. This implies that high standards of living (owning property, having high-paid jobs, multiple cars, full medical insurance) bring about not only high status in the social hierarchy and the transition to a higher social stratum, but also, more importantly, happiness. Success is directly linked to the amount of effort that was put in. Big cars and houses, quality items and accessories, the American smile, and, of course, the flag of the United States are used to communicate and signify the American lifestyle and the happiness inherent to it.

Along with all the consumption goods and symbols listed above one of the tool that makes the “American dream” very vital and tangible all around the world is English language. It has a unique role in the propagation of the “American dream”, which, thanks to globalization has become the most widespread mean of communication. In 142 countries around the world, the English language is mandatory in public schools, in 67 of these countries, English is an official language³. In many countries, as well as in Armenia, proficiency in English has

² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/USHistory/Making/Carter.htm>

³ <https://www.berlitz.com/blog/english-speaking-countries#:~:text=English%20is%20the%20official%20language.more%20than%20one%20official%20language>

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become an important prerequisite for professional growth (Melkumyan & Tadevosyan, 2022). It expands a person's opportunities in the globalized world, bringing them closer to the "American dream". Globalization united everything, and the English language made globalization more efficient. Thanks to globalization, the English language gained worldwide power. According to statistics, English is the most commonly used language in the world: English is used for passenger transportation and shipping, the primary language of the internet is English, most of the international political, scientific, and cultural events are organized in English.

Thanks to the repeated communication of the same ideas, the propagation of the "American dream", it affects the lives, behavior, social mobility, and migration of people around the world. The citizen of the United States is proud that they are American and they're proud that they live in a free and independent country. Meanwhile, foreigners dream of living in a country where everyone has a chance of living a prosperous life.

Transformation of the American Dream

The United States created an economical system, which provided a fast pace of economic growth and also raised prosperity levels. The Founding Fathers limited the right to work for the "American dream" to white property owners. It took many decades of hard work to make this right unalienable for women, financially insecure members of society, and people of color, who belonged to the communities that were enslaved in the past.

President Abraham Lincoln brought about the emancipation, Woodrow Wilson supported women's right to vote, and Bill Clinton, along with George W. Bush advanced the dream of owning property. Barack Obama protected the legal benefits of the marriage contract, with no consideration of the couple's sexual orientation. Obama was also a supporter of Roosevelt's idea, that healthcare should be available for all. He softened the blow of the financial crisis for many, by increasing welfare funds and state support of students with their education loans (Gibson, 2013).

The Cold War helped solidify the concept of American Exceptionalism. The Truman doctrine established policies used to resist the USSR and its allies. Each of Truman's successors used the lexicon and ideas of American exceptionalism to solidify the foundation of the ideological fight against communism. George Kennan's famous work "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (July 1947), ends with this statement: "The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation" (Kennan, 1947).

However, providing welfare while only using internal resources was quite problematic. This void was filled with exploitation of people, but, as a consequence of the abolishment of slavery, the need of finding any resources outside of the United States appeared. The United States of America filled this void by employing the following strategies:

1. creating unequal conditions in different platform of trade and economic interaction (Fajgelbaum, Amit, 2014),
2. creating and expanding global manufacturing monopolies and corporations (Hubbard, 2021),

3. regulating cash flows in the world market under the influence of the largest financial institutions, in which the USA has a dominant role (Costigan, T., Cottle, D., Keys, A., 2017),

4. suppressing weak “partners” via military, political, and economic means (Crawford, 1997),

5. bribing the elites (De Sardan, 1999),

6. attracting highly qualified professionals from around the world, to make them work for the benefit of the United States, providing it with a leading position in world economy and scientific progress (Iredale, 2008),

7. supporting the spread of the English language by simplifying it (Johnson, 2009).

These conditions are necessary in sustaining the high quality of life in the United States itself, while also reinforcing the belief in the limitless abilities of the United States government and in the exceptional role of the United States in the world.

The challenges of the American Dream

The “American dream” is a value system, which affects every single member of American society, since it endows the individual the ideas of being a productive and useful member of society. On one hand, it motivates and inspires the individual, by employing stories about people, who started from nothing and achieved unbelievable success, overcoming challenges through hard work and effort, while on the other hand it imposes that if a person has not achieved success and hasn’t gotten rich, or is generally unhappy it is mostly his fault, because he did not work hard enough to achieve his dream. This message, which is almost inseparable from the concept of the “American dream”, reduces the responsibility of the state and the society for the failures of its members. People, who are taught that their failure is directly linked to their individual qualities, are less likely to blame society. In his 2008 speech, Joe Biden emphasized, that “Failure at some point of your life is inevitable, but giving up is unforgivable” (Wingfield, 2008).

The American value system emphasizes individuality, which, in turn, is strongly based on diligence, profit, and materialism. American children are raised on the principles of individualism, and they are confident that they are autonomous individuals, who are fully responsible for the events of their lives and for their destinies⁴. Thus, the “American dream” slightly imposes the idea, that failure must be perceived as one’s own fault, and society is not to be blamed. This is where the ambivalence of the “American dream” becomes apparent.

Despite the actions taken in many states by governmental and non-governmental institutions to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and disadvantaged members of the society, it is also obvious that inequality at all levels and between all groups of people continues to exist and play a significant role in the USA today. Women still have to face unequal treatment, discrimination and prejudice, and so do racial, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as people who have a low socio-economic status, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community, all of whom are vulnerable members of society. The idea that, in America, everyone is born equal, is no longer true. Every single person born in the USA enters society

⁴<http://www.umsl.edu/services/intelstu/Admitted%20Students/Visitor%20Handbook/keyvalues.html>

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with different levels of social, cultural, and economic capital, which greatly dictates the path their life will take and their social mobility. A class system is actively present and has a tremendous impact on the everyday lives of today's Americans. Social mobility in the American reality is not as easy and unambiguous as it seems. The main confusion comes from the treatment of societal obstacles as personal failures. In his book "Illusions of opportunity", John Schwarz (1997) states that "the amount of people who don't have sufficient living conditions outweighs the population of the 100 largest American cities combined". He states, that even though the unemployment rate in the US is low, the amount of jobs that can sustain a "bare minimum level of dignified standard of living" is severely limited and does not able to satisfy everyone who needs them. The absence of such jobs fundamentally calls into question the possibility of achieving the "American dream". The study results show that 57% of respondents are of the opinion that "the American dream is unachievable" for most American families, more than 2/3 of the respondents are worried that their children won't be able to live their lives like their parents. 59% of African-Americans have stated that the "American dream" is unachievable (Beder, 2018).

Levonyan-Radloff writes, that when taking into account the record amount of student loans, income stagnation, and the unemployment rate of college graduates, people start to doubt not only the value that college education provides, but also the plausibility of achieving the "American dream". People aged 18-24 face more difficulties than their parents' generation (Levonyan Radolff, 2013).

Furthermore, for the majority of Americans, graduating college was not a required factor in achieving the "American dream" or just living a middle class lifestyle 4-5 decades ago. After World War 2 American industry was prospering and developing supply chains for automobile manufacturing, weapons, medicine and many other goods: people were able to achieve the "American dream" straight out of highschool, by entering the job market as laborers, earning a decent living and learning all the skills they'd require right on the job (Tescher & Ehrbeck, 2018). However, in the last 30 years, American Economy, which was mostly industrial, started shifting in the direction of a more technologically advanced global service economy: an economy, where college education is a necessary part of achieving the "American dream". It can be concluded that the instrumental values of the "American dream" are changing, hard work is no longer enough, education is also a must nowadays.

Thus, the following challenges to the viability of the "American dream" can be distinguished:

- Social inequality and the limited nature of vertical social mobility possibilities,
- Increase of poverty and the social polarization of the rich and the poor,
- Racism and discrimination,
- National debt growth⁵,
- The depreciation of instrumental values, which simultaneously challenges terminal values: there is an end, the means of achieving which are not clear, leading to a social anomaly,

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2021&locations=US&start=1960>

- Social epidemics of obesity, child abuse and drug addiction also endanger the “American dream”,
- Climate change,
- Business managed democracy, business managed culture and consumerism subordinate all other values,
- US president Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” slogan suggests that America is not as great as it used to be.

Research Methodology

This research examines the visual, verbal and audial communication of the terminal and instrumental values of the “American dream”. The purpose of the research is to identify, how are the terminal and instrumental values of the “American dream” communicated. For that reason, the method of content analysis of Hollywood films about the “American dream” was chosen for this research.

The research was conducted in 7 key steps 1) setting goals and objectives, 2) watching and studying Hollywood films, 3) definition of changes, 4) content analysis tool creation, 5) collection of information, 6) information categorization, 7) analysis and presentation of research results.

Research Sampling

The sample of the research is drawn from films released in 2018-2021, which feature the “American dream” as a value. For the study, 5 categories of films were selected: Anti-racist films, films about family, films about the US president, films about the US Armed Forces and the rule of law in the US. In films that discuss these themes, the terminal and instrumental values of the “American deram” are emphasized. Purposive sampling was carried out on the IMDb website, and a search for films according to the selected categories was carried out using keywords (*See Table 1*). Then, the films that were produced most recently, were viewed the most, were the most critically acclaimed, had the highest ratings, grossed the highest were selected as most typical and influential.

Table 1

Criteria for selecting Hollywood films for content analysis.

Category	Keywords
Family	«family», «American family», «films about American families», «movies about families pursuing the American dream»
Army	«army», «American army», «movies about American army», «American military movies»
President	«president», «American president», «US president», «president of the United States», «movies about American president», «movies about saving the American president»
Antiracist	«anti racism», «racism», «movies about racism», «American movies about racism», «Hollywood movies about racism»
Rule of law	«FBI», «movies about FBI», «American movies about FBI», «CIA», «movies about CIA», «American movies about CIA», «Hollywood movies about CIA»

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The challenges of the “American dream” in Hollywood films

Lee Isaac Chung’s 2020 film “Minari” was selected to be researched from the category of Hollywood **films about family**. Stories about immigrants who achieve success in the US are very commonplace in Hollywood cinema (such as “America America” by Elia Kazan or “Green card” Peter Weir or “Spanglish” by James L. Brooks), but this film is not one of them. This film shows that nothing is as easy as it seems on the way to the “American dream”. The family depicted in the film worked at a poultry factory during the 10 years they’d lived in the US, but it still had not achieved the success they dreamed of. In the beginning of the film, the family is seen heading to their new home in a car. The long and completely green road leading to the family’s new house in this scene is meant to represent the terminal values of the “American dream”, particularly, the liberty. The road is leading the family toward a new life in a free and independent country. However, the house the road leads to is nothing like the big two-story house typical of the “American dream”. It is, in fact, a very humble house on wheels, which is in need of renovation. The father of the family, Jacob (played by Steven Yeun), and his 2 children are very excited and happy, while the mother of the family, Monica (played by Han Ye-ri), is disappointed. The film mainly communicates the instrumental values of the “American dream”. While the new home is quite humble, the land purchased along with it is quite large and fruitful. Jacob’s goal in the film is to earn good money by farming. Jacob is seen throughout the film, working the farm and growing Korean vegetables. At the same time, Jacob and Monica continue working at the poultry factory. Throughout the film, the values of hard work and overcoming challenges are communicated visually and verbally. It is noteworthy that during the 10 years that they lived in America, the family did not start to feel like a full part of American society, Monica still does not speak English well. The “American dream” is also communicated through one of the taglines of the film - “Family, Dream, Liberty”: these are the 3 key values, which the immigrant family strives for in America. In “Minari”, the “American dream” is presented under a critical light, attempting to show the reality, which immigrants have to face on their way to the “American dream” When the heroes of the film seem to have made some progress, a fire breaks out at the farm, burning the family’s “American dream” along with it, but in the forest near it, a minari plant planted by the grandmother is seen, giving the hope that not all is lost (Chung, 2020).

Joseph Kosinski’s 2022 film “Top Gun: Maverick” was studied as a film belonging to the category “**about the US Armed Forces**”, which is meant to show the power of the US Air Force to the world. The film shows the heavy training that members of the Air Force have to go through in preparation for important missions. “Maverick” shows that there is no military mission, that the US Air Force can’t complete, which, in turn, helps the US reinforce its image as a powerful country where dreams come true. The film is also an example of militaristic propaganda: the Pentagon donated 1.8 million dollars to the production of the film for using their devices. The US flag is almost omnipresent throughout the film, it’s featured even on Maverick’s (played by Tom Cruise) jacket (Kosinski, 2022).

Spike Lee’s 2018 film “BlacKkKlansman”, like many other films by him, is about the problem of racism in the US. This “**anti-racist**” film that was based on real events tells the story of the only black policeman of the Colorado Springs police force,

Ron Stallworth (played by John David Washington), who calls the “Ku Klux Klan” organization pretending to be a white man and tells them that he wants to become a member, this results in him being invited to an interview. Stallworth’s Jewish colleague goes to the interview instead of him, who manages to convince the Klan that he’s not Jewish and that he hates African-Americans. The film is set in 70s America, a time when racism was widespread, the Ku Klux Klan was active, and the Black Panther Party was fighting back against it, trying to protect black rights. While watching the film, it becomes apparent that the US of the 70s was not as egalitarian as it always presented itself to be, starting from the Declaration of Independence to presidents’ speeches, films, and television. In contrast to many films about the “American Dream”, where the flag of the United States is flown, here, the flag is joined by the Confederate battle flag on front porches, storefronts and even the police station. Throughout the film, Ku Klux Klan members constantly talk about differences between white people and black people, often mentioning that white people are members of the Aryan race. It never occurs to the Klan members, who spoke to the black detective on the phone, that their conversation partner is black, but they constantly mention how distinct a black person’s voice and manner of speech is from a white person’s. The phrase “God bless white America” creates a further divide between white Americans and people of other races. One of the leaders of the Ku Klux Klan, David Duke, when speaking of national services, states that people like him are needed, “to make America great again”. This phrase is a direct reference to Donald Trump’s election campaign slogan “Make America Great Again” : The director shows that the problem that is the differentiation of black and white people has always been present in the US and has not ceased to be. It is also noteworthy, that the black Americans shown in the film are educated, hardworking people, who are simply fighting for their rights, while some white people are criminals involved in suspicious activities, who try to limit the rights of the black people. “BlacKkKlansman” challenges all the stereotypes inherent to the representation of black persons in cinema. In many Hollywood films, black people are presented as criminals, drug dealers, athletes, or victims of poor socio-economic status (Denzin, 2005; Yuen, 2017). In contrast, this film features a black protagonist who is a member of the police forces, black people wear stylish clothing, inhabit good neighbourhoods and not ghettos. The film also ingeniously communicates the value of freedom through music, using the following tracks: Phillips Band’s “Freedom ride”, James Brown’s “Say It Loud-I’m Black and I’m Proud”, Dan Whitener’s “We Are Gonna Be Okay”. The closing shot of the film shows the US flag upside down, while the red and white stripes turn black and white. With this image, the film director tells us that the US flag that is meant to represent liberty, equality and justice for all, does not reflect the American reality, where racism, injustice, and inequality exist (Lee, 2018).

The film “BlacKkKlansman” was also analyzed in the “**Rule of law**” category, as that is also a theme that is apparent in the film, emphasizing the role of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations) and the police. In this film, Stallworth, the protagonist, is a member of the police force, whose duty is to enforce the rule of law and to protect the people. He develops a plot to fight the Ku Klux Klan from within. The film puts on display both the strengths and the shortcomings of the police. Despite the fact that the police works efficiently, there are still some shortcomings:, for example, the police still employs people with racist worldviews, who abuse the

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power given to them by the law. Nevertheless, there still are policemen, who, like Stallworth, that use the same power to help the people. The film shows the efficiency of the police force in dangerous conditions, when an undercover detective can be discovered anytime. Stallworth collaborates with the FBI, to receive the secret information, through which he finds out that 2 members of the Ku Klux Klan work at the Pentagon, and, in addition to that, the Ku Klux Klan is one of the prime suspects in the case of the disappearance of weapons belonging to the US Armed Forces. Here, the efficiency of US law enforcement is shown in contrast of the existence of members of law enforcement that threaten the safety of both the government and the people. Despite the fact, that in the end, thanks to the efficient cooperation of the detective and the police the act of terror planned by the Ku Klux Klan is stopped, the criminal policeman is arrested, but in the final few scenes that are actually recordings of real events that took place in 2017, the Ku Klux Klan and other neo-nazi groups are shown to still be attacking black people and other citizens who fight for black rights (Lee, 2018).

The 2019 film “Angel has fallen” was selected to represent the category of films **“about the president”**. It tells the story of the president being under attack just before the elections. The film communicates an array of both terminal (equality, liberty, wealth, happiness, family, etc.) and instrumental (hard work, sacrifice, overcoming the difficulties) values linked to the “American dream”. Besides that, the rule of law is emphasized in the storyline that follows the investigation of the attack on the president of the FBI. The film presents Russia and the president of the Russian Federation as enemies of the US. The protagonist of the movie is successful in single-handedly defeating the antagonistic force and protecting the president. Scripts like these are typical to Hollywood films about saving the president. The US flag is prominently featured throughout the film, the United States’ capability of defeating any threat is emphasized multiple times, the FBI is shown as an efficient and operative institution, successful in keeping the president and the country itself safe and secure (Waugh, 2019).

Conclusion

The study of the Hollywood films of 2018-2021 shows, that the cinema industry is effectively used as a part of propaganda toolset, which supports the establishment of the “American dream” as a value system inside and outside of the United States. Taking into account the fact, that Hollywood is among 10 of the the most viewed movie industries throughout the world, the concept of the “American dream” spreads to and affects both US citizens and foreigners. This article examines the representation of the terminal and instrumental values of the “American Dream” in 4 films with anti-racist content, as well as films about family, the American Armed Forces, the US president, and the rule of law, through visual, verbal and audio means typical of cinematography. An interesting trend can be observed in these 4 films shot in 2018-2021 in terms of the communication of the "American dream". Compared to the idealized films made in earlier years (such as “Citizen Kane” (1941), “East of Eden” (1955), “A Raisin in the Sun” (1961), “America America” (1963), “Stay Hungry” (1976), “Ragtime” (1981), “Wall Street” (1987), “Forrest Gump” (1994), “There will be blood” (2007), and “The Social Network” (2010)), the 4 films studied in this article

present a more critical approach, taking into account the current challenges of American society and the "American dream". Communicating the same terminal and instrumental values, the films nevertheless show the existing contradictions. Hard work does not always lead to the "American dream". Even though the fight for equality is going strong, inequalities still exist. Along with the rule of law, there are also manifestations of corruption. At the same time, the USA continues to be presented as a safe, powerful and wealthy country.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF COACHES' BELIEFS ON THE ATTITUDE OF ATHLETES TO THE USE OF PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES*

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Abstract. *This study presents the results of a survey of coaches and athletes to explore the similarities and differences between their beliefs regarding athletes' use of prohibited substances and methods in sport. The study was conducted in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova members of the Eastern European Regional Anti-Doping Organization in 2008-2021 and certified to comply with WADA standards. 270 coaches and 810 athletes were selected to participate in the study. Questionnaires for self-completion by coaches and athletes have been developed and approved by WADA. The ultimate goal of the study was to identify the main components of an anti-doping education program for coaches, which will ensure the positive influence of coaches on the attitude of athletes to doping. The results of the study allow us to conclude that it is necessary to include the following aspects in the education program for coaches in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova: clarification of the role of anti-doping organizations responsible for testing and disqualification of national and international athletes, a detailed explanation of the difference between substances prohibited all the time and only in-competitions, an explanation of the differences between the use of specific and non-specific substances, familiarization with the world statistics of anti-doping rule violations.*

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Այս նախագիծը ֆինանսավորվել և աջակցվել է Համաշխարհային հակադոպինգային գործակալության կողմից որպես սոցիալական գիտությունների հետազոտական նրամաշնորհային ծրագրի մաս:

Этот проект финансируется и поддерживается Всемирным Антидопинговым Агентством в рамках его Программы грантов на исследования в области социальных наук.

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The results of the correlation analysis allow us to conclude that in important factors of doping use, coaches generally have a positive impact on their athletes. However, on the other hand, coaching misconceptions are also passed on to athletes, which are formed as a result of receiving incorrect information from other coaches or the media, which can lead to the accidental use of prohibited specific substances and athlete disqualification.

Key words: social science research, coaches, athletes, beliefs about doping in sport, a cross-national investigation

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Ամփոփում: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում են մարզիչների և մարզիկների հարցման արդյունքները՝ որի նպատակն էր ուսումնասիրել Հայաստանի, Վրաստանի և Մոլդովայի մարզիչների համոզմունքների նմանություններն ու տարբերությունները սպորտում մարզիկների կողմից արգելված նյութերի և մեթոդների օգտագործման վերաբերյալ: Ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվել է Հայաստանում, Վրաստանում և Մոլդովայում, որոնք 2008-2021 թվականներին եղել են Արևելյան Եվրոպայի տարածաշրջանային հակադոպինգային կազմակերպության անդամներ և ունեն Համաշխարհային հակադոպինգային գործակալության (ՀՀԳ) չափանիշներին համապատասխանության արտոնագրեր: Հետազոտությանը մասնակցելու համար ընտրվել են 270 մարզիչներ և 810 մարզիկներ: Մարզիչների և մարզիկների ինքնուրույն լրացրած հարցաթերթիկները մշակել և հաստատել ՀՀԳ-ն: Հետազոտության

վերջնական նպատակն էր բացահայտել մարզիչների հակադրային գային կրթական ծրագրի հիմնական բաղադրիչները, որոնք կապահովեն մարզիչների դրական ազդեցությունը դուպլինգի նկատմամբ մարզիկների վերաբերմունքի վրա: Հետազոտության արդյունքները թույլ են տալիս եզրակացնել, որ Հայաստանի, Վրաստանի և Մոլդովայի մարզիչների կրթական ծրագրում անհրաժեշտ է ներառել հետևյալ ասպեկտները. մշտապես և միայն մրցումների ժամանակ արգելված նյութերի տարբերության մանրամասն բացատրություն, առանձնահատուկ և ոչ առանձնահատուկ նյութերի օգտագործման տարբերությունների բացատրություն, հակադրային գային կանոնների խախտման համաշխարհային վիճակագրությանը ծանոթացում: Հարաբերակցության վերլուծության արդյունքները թույլ են տալիս եզրակացնել, որ արգելված նյութերի օգտագործման կարևոր գործոններում մարզիչները հիմնականում դրական են ազդում իրենց մարզիկների վրա: Սակայն, մյուս կողմից, մարզիկներին փոխանցվում են նաև մարզչական սխալ պատկերացումներ, որոնք ձևավորվում են այլ մարզիչներից կամ լրատվամիջոցներից ոչ ճիշտ տեղեկատվություն ստանալու պատճառով, ինչը կարող է հանգեցնել արգելված նյութերի պատահական օգտագործման և մարզիկի որակազրկման:

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СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ВЛИЯНИЯ УБЕЖДЕНИЙ ТРЕНЕРОВ НА ОТНОШЕНИЕ АТЛЕТОВ К ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЮ ЗАПРЕЩЕННЫХ СУБСТАНЦИЙ

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Րեզյումե: *Վ այս ակնարկում ներկայացված են ակնարկի արդյունքները, որոնք ունենում են նպատակը համաշխարհային հետազոտությունների միջոցով մարզիչների և մարզիկների միջև կրթական և մարզչական տարբերությունների և նյութերի օգտագործման տարբերությունների վերաբերմունքի վրա: Սակայն, մյուս կողմից, մարզիկներին փոխանցվում են նաև մարզչական սխալ պատկերացումներ, որոնք ձևավորվում են այլ մարզիչներից կամ լրատվամիջոցներից ոչ ճիշտ տեղեկատվություն ստանալու պատճառով, ինչը կարող է հանգեցնել արգելված նյութերի պատահական օգտագործման և մարզիկի որակազրկման:*

2021 в состав восточно-европейской региональной антидопинговой организации и имеющих сертификат соответствия стандартам ВАДА. Для участия в исследовании было отобрано 270 тренеров и 810 спортсменов. Анкеты для самостоятельного заполнения тренерами и спортсменами были разработаны и одобрены ВАДА. Конечной целью исследования являлось определение основных компонентов антидопинговой образовательной программы для тренеров, которые позволят обеспечить положительное влияние тренеров на отношение спортсменов к допингу. Результаты исследования позволяют сделать вывод о необходимости включения в программу обучения тренеров Армении, Грузии и Молдовы следующих аспектов: разъяснение роли антидопинговых организаций, ответственных за тестирование и дисквалификацию спортсменов национального и международного уровня, подробное объяснение разницы между веществами, запрещенными постоянно и только во время соревнований, объяснение различий между применением специфических и неспецифических субстанций, ознакомление с мировой статистикой нарушений антидопинговых правил. Результаты корреляционного анализа позволяют сделать вывод о том, что в важных факторах применения допинга тренеры в целом оказывают положительное влияние на своих спортсменов. Однако, с другой стороны, спортсменам передаются также и заблуждения тренеров, которые формируются в результате получения неверной информации от других тренеров или СМИ, что может привести к случайному использованию запрещенных специфических субстанций и дисквалификации атлетов.

Ключевые слова: *социологические исследования, тренеры, спортсмены, представления о допинге в спорте, межнациональное расследование*

Introduction

Until now, vast majority of studies on the influence of coaches' beliefs towards the use of prohibited substances and methods on their athletes' attitudes towards doping has been conducted in Western European countries.

In the countries of Eastern Europe, including Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova, similar studies have not been conducted. The aim of study was to determine to what extent the state doping support system adopted in the USSR, influenced the attitudes and beliefs of coaches in the WADA certified members of the Eastern European Regional Anti-Doping Organization in 2008-2021 and to what extent these phenomena influenced the attitudes of their athletes to doping.

With funding from the WADA, a survey was conducted of coaches and athletes in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova with respect to existing knowledge and attitudes around doping, with the aim of identifying essential components for education programs for coaches to ensure a positive impact on the attitudes and beliefs of their athletes around doping. It was considered that social and cultural norms, perceived roles and behavioral control beliefs (reflecting both internal and external control processes) would significantly predict coaches' attitudes and beliefs about doping and doping education, and those coaches' attitudes and beliefs about doping and their role in doping education will be reflected in their athletes' attitudes towards doping and doping susceptibility.

It is known that the coaches play an important role in an athlete's sporting career, and coaches are frequently identified as a potential precipitating factor in athlete doping (Allen et al., 2015; Backhouse et al., 2007; Backhouse et al., 2012; Cleret L et al., 2011; Donovan et al., 2002; Figved, 1992; Fung et al., 2006; Laure et al., 2003; Lazuras et al., 2010; Lentillon-Kaestner et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2010,

Laure et al., 2003; Laure et al., 2011; Kirby et al. 2011; Lucidi et al., 2008).

The main objectives of this study was to investigate the extent to which the differences in social and cultural norms in these countries influence the beliefs and attitudes towards doping of Coaches and Athletes and to identify how coaches are a potential precipitating factor in athletes' use of prohibited substances.

Aims of this study

This study focuses on the beliefs and attitudes towards doping of Coaches and Athletes in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova and on the similarities and differences between this WADA certified members of the Eastern European Regional Anti-Doping Organization in 2008-2021 on these measures.

Material and Methods

Surveys of coaches and athletes using a self-completion questionnaire.

Coach and Athletes Selection: Coaches and athletes were selected from National Teams. In total, two hundred and seventy coaches and eight hundred and ten athletes (three under each coach) were selected and completed the questionnaire. The selection of coaches ensured that both coaches with extensive work experience (30 years or more who began their activities in the USSR), and young coaches (who started coaching in the 2000s) were included in the sample.

Questionnaire. Self-completion questionnaires for coaches and athletes were developed by Hovhannisyanyan et al. in a first-phase Pilot study and approved by WADA (Hovhannisyanyan et al. 2018). The questionnaire for coaches and for athletes included 26 questions of which 17 related to the following topics: perceived motivations of doping athletes; perceived effectiveness of anti-doping programs; beliefs about doping in sport and beliefs as a coach about doping. The questionnaires were piloted with coaches and athletes in each country.

Ethics approval: According to the laws of Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova, State ethics approval is not required for this kind of research, but each research organization granted permission from its Ethics Committee.

Statistical analysis

The questionnaire data were transformed to an Excel database for data management and statistical analyses using IBM SPSS Amos™ statistic program version 23, 2019. All statistical tests were evaluated against a 0.05 level of significance, and were two-sided tests. Before comparison of the data within or between groups, all data were checked for normality test ($p=0.05$). Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation were used to compare the data for the three countries. Depending on the results of the normality test, the comparative assessment of the results between the three countries was made using the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric one-way ANOVA rank-order test, with post hoc Dunn's Multiple Comparison Test, or parametric one-way independent measures ANOVA with Tukey's Multiple Comparison Test. Correlation analyses of the coaches' and athletes data were conducted using the Pearson or Spearman correlation coefficient depending on the results of the normality test.

Results and Discussion

Sample Demographic data

The mean ages of coaches and athletes were similar across all three countries.

Overall, 14% of participants represented team sports disciplines and 86% represented individual sports disciplines. More than half of the athletes were international-level athletes. About 80% of coaches and athletes were males. Whilst there was some variation between the three countries in mean ages and years of experience, none of these was statistically significant (Table 1).

Table 1

Age and working/training experiences of survey participants

Country	Age, years		Experiences, years	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
Armenia	45.51±13.9	24.30±5.5	13.88±9.6	10.4±5.6
Georgia	42.93±10.7	19.98±2.7	10.44± 6.7	6.76±3.3
Moldova	43.30±10.7	20.53±3.1	11.41±7.0	7.58±3.3

Beliefs about influences on an athlete’s decision to dope

Coaches and athletes were presented with five possible reasons for athletes’ decisions to get involved in performance enhancing doping and asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each factor as a potential influence in athletes’ decision to dope. The five factors and the percent agreeing with each of these are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Percent of coaches and athletes in each country agreeing that each of the listed factors ‘potentially influences an athlete’s decision to dope.

Reason for Doping	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
Economic/monetary	40.0	51.7	42.2	26.7	46.7	25.6	43.1	41.4
Speed up recovery from injury	33.0	73.7	38.9	70.4	45.6	32.6	39.7	59.1
Improve performance	75.6	53.0	66.7	25.9	75.6	30.4	71.6	36.4
Prolong career in sport	46.7	80.7	51.1	20.4	46.7	27.8	48.1	43.8
Due to peer pressure	23.6	68.2	37.8	17.4	30.0	21.1	30.5	36.4

Table 2 shows that, whilst the percentages for the various factors vary between countries and between athletes and coaches, each of the five factors was nominated as influencing athletes’ decision to dope by substantial proportions of respondents (i.e., from 21% to 81%). The factor most frequently nominated by Coaches across all three countries was “*To improve performance*” (71.6%; versus 36.4% for athletes), whereas the factor most frequently nominated by athletes, particularly in Armenia and Georgia, was “*To speed up recovery*” (59.1%; versus 39.7% for Coaches). Table 2 also shows that Athletes in Armenia are more likely to nominate each of these factors than Georgian and Moldovan athletes, and particularly “*To prolong a career in sport*”.

Perceived Effectiveness of Current Anti-Doping Activities

Coaches and athletes were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that the current system of drug testing is effective in catching dopers both in-

competition and out-of-competition. They were then asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that anti-doping education programs are effective in deterring athletes from doping, and whether the current sanction of a 4-year ban for a first doping offence is sufficiently strict to deter athletes from doping. The percentages agreeing with each of these factors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3**Beliefs about the effectiveness of anti-doping activities: % agreeing with these statements.**

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
The current system of drug testing is effective in catching dopers <i>in-competition</i>	82.3	58.9	83.3	51.8	81.3	73.7	81.7	61.9
The current system of drug testing is effective in catching dopers <i>out of competition</i>	83.3	53.3	72.2	80.7	72.5	71.5	85.6	68.5
Anti-Doping education programs are effective in deterring athletes from doping	87.8	64.4	80.0	67.8	80.2	75.2	75.6	68.5
The current sanction of a 4 year ban for a first doping offence is sufficiently strict to deter athletes from doping	75.6	61.4	72.2	73.7	73.6	66.7	76.0	57.3

Table 3 shows that overall, a substantial majority of coaches and athletes across all three countries agree that current drug testing, both in and out of competition, is effective in catching dopers, and that anti-doping education programs and the current 4-year ban for a first offence are effective deterrents to doping. However, apart from Georgia for ‘out of competition testing’ and ‘the current sanction’, coaches across all three countries are more likely than athletes to agree that each of these current activities is ‘effective’.

Coaches and athletes were also asked whether they had ‘any suggestions for how the current drug testing and sanctions system and how the content or delivery of anti-doping education could be improved’. The percent answering ‘yes’ to this question are shown in Table 4. Consistent with the high percentages agreeing that the above four factors were ‘effective’, and/or reflecting a lack knowledge in these areas, Table 4 shows that very few coaches and athletes across all three countries had any suggestions for improvements in these areas of education, testing and sanctions.

Societal Issues

Respondents were asked their opinion on two broad societal issues: whether or not they believed that ‘the media blows the doping issue out of proportion’ and whether or not they believed that ‘legalizing performance enhancements would be beneficial for sports’. The percent stating they agreed with each of these statements is shown in Table 5.

Table 4

Percent nominating any suggestions for improvement of drug testing and sanctions and the content or delivery of anti-doping education.

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
Improvement for drug testing and sanctions	2.2	2.6	2.2	3.3	3.3	3.7	2.2	3.4
Improvement for anti-doping education	11.1	3.7	5.6	3.3	5.5	4.1	7.5	3.6

Table 5

Percent Agreement with Societal Issues

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
The media blows the doping issue out of proportion	29	77.0	68.9	76.7	67.0	66.3	55.0	73.1
Legalizing performance enhancements drugs would be beneficial for sports	18	31.5	8.9	29.3	9.9	25.6	12.3	28.6

Table 5 shows that around two-thirds or more of coaches and athletes in Georgia and Moldova, and three quarters of athletes in Armenia believe that the media blows the doping issue out of proportion.

With respect to the legalization of performance enhancements substances, Table 5 shows that whilst the vast majority of both athletes and coaches in all three countries *disagreed* with this proposition, higher proportions of athletes in each country agreed with this proposition compared to coaches.

Beliefs About Coach Behaviors That Could Contribute to Doping by Athletes

Respondents were presented with the four Coach behaviors listed in Table 6 and asked whether they agreed or disagreed that these behaviors contributed to athletes being positively disposed toward doping. The percentages agreeing with each coach behavior contributing to a positive attitude to doping amongst athletes are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that almost 60% of Coaches (versus 24% of athletes) agree that both *'punishing mistakes by shouting at or dropping the athlete in question'* and *'actively encouraging rivalry'* could contribute to positive doping attitudes amongst athletes. In contrast, athletes most frequently nominated *'Showing favoritism towards the best athletes'* as contributing to a positive doping attitude amongst athletes (50.4% versus 34.9% of Coaches).

Table 6

Percent Agreement that Coach Behaviors could contribute to positive doping attitudes amongst Athletes

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
Failing to reward effort/improvement by athletes	63.3	9.6	7.8	9.6	18.7	33.7	29.8	16.9
Punishing mistakes by shouting at or dropping the athlete in question	61.1	6.3	65.5	40.4	49.4	27.8	58.7	24.3

Showing favoritism towards the best athletes in the group	13.3	58.5	51.1	45.9	38.4	47.4	34.9	50.4
Actively encouraging rivalry between teammates/training partners	61.1	6.3	65.5	40.4	49.4	27.8	58.2	24.4

Table 6 also shows some variation between coaches' and athletes' responses by country. For example, only 13.3% of Armenian coaches nominated 'favoritism' as an influencing factor, versus 51.1% and 38.4% of Georgian and Moldovan Coaches, and only 7.8% of Georgian Coaches and 18.7% of Moldovan Coaches nominated 'failing to reward effort' versus 63.3% of Armenian Coaches.

Actions Would Take if Respondents Became Aware of or Suspected that an Athlete Possessed a Prohibited Substance

Respondents were presented with the five actions listed in Table 7 and asked which action they thought they would take if they saw or knew that an athlete accepted or bought a prohibited substance. Table 7 shows that overall; a substantial majority of both Coaches (78.7%) and Athletes (69.5%) would report this behavior either to their National Anti-Doping Organization (NADO) (45.1% and 44.2% respectively) or their Sports Federation (33.6% and 25.3% respectively).

However, there are a number of notable differences between the countries for both Coaches and Athletes. For example, Armenian Coaches are far more likely to report the behavior to their NADO (73.3%), whereas Georgian and Moldovan Coaches are more likely to report the behavior to their Sports Federation: 37.8% and 52.7% respectively. It is also of concern that 11.4% of all Coaches stated they would 'explain to the athlete how to take the substance', with the percentages much higher in Georgia (13.3%) and Moldova (15.4%) than in Armenia (5.6%). With respect to Athletes, far fewer Moldovan than Armenian and Georgian Athletes would report this behavior to their NADO or Sports Federation: 36.7% versus 84.9% and 87.0% respectively.

Table 7

Percent Nominating Action They Would Take if Respondents Became Aware of or Suspected that an Athlete Possessed a Prohibited Substance

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
I will report this to the ADO	73.3	51.6	30.0	68.5	31.9	12.6	45.1	44.2
I will report this to the sports federation	10.0	33.3	37.8	18.5	52.7	24.1	33.6	25.3
I will talk with the athlete	11.1	8.1	18.9	7.4	0.0	56.7	10.0	24.1
I will explain to the athlete how to take it	5.6	6.3	13.3	5.6	15.4	5.1	11.4	5.7
I will not take any action	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.4

Respondents were presented with the three actions in Table 8 and asked which one they would take if they became aware that an athlete had received information on how long a particular prohibited substance would take to be removed from their body.

Consistent with the results in Table 8, Moldovan Coaches were far less likely than Armenian and Georgian Coaches to state they ‘would tell them to ignore that information and to never use any prohibited substance’: 67% versus 94.4% and 86.7% respectively. Conversely, Moldovan Athletes were more likely than Moldovan Coaches to ‘tell them to ignore that information and to never use any prohibited substance’ (83% versus 67%), and more likely than Armenian and Georgian Athletes to nominate this action. Overall, substantial percentages of either athletes or coaches across all three countries indicate a tolerance of athletes using a prohibited substance.

Coaches’ Beliefs about their Role in Anti-Doping

Coaches were presented with the three statements in Table 9 and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Table 9 shows the percent agreeing with each statement. Overall, across all three countries, 80% or more of Coaches agree that they are ‘expected to deter their athletes from doping’ and that they ‘plan to provide their athletes with anti-doping information’. Around three-quarters or more also state that they ‘feel under pressure to promote anti-doping’. Whilst the 80% of Coaches ‘plan to provide their athletes with anti-doping information’, around one in five Georgian and Moldovan Coaches ‘do not plan to do so’.

Table 8

Percent nominating action that coaches and athletes would take if became aware that an athlete received information about how long a Prohibited substance remained in their body

Statement	% agree							
	Armenia		Georgia		Moldova		Total	
	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes	Coaches	Athletes
I would tell them to ignore that information and to never use any prohibited substance	94.4	66.3	86.7	66.6	67.0	83.0	82.7	72.0
I would make the appropriate calculations and recommend using this substance on that basis	4.4	30.4	10.0	29.3	9.9	8.9	8.1	22.9
I would check the information via the Internet or from sports doctors and on the basis of the information received, recommend it to be used or not	1.1	3.3	3.3	4.1	23.1	8.1	9.2	5.2

Table 9

Coaches’ Beliefs about Their Role in Anti-Doping

Statement	% agree			
	Armenia	Georgia	Moldova	Total
It is expected of me that I deter the athletes I work with from doping	82.3	83.3	81.3	82.3
I feel under pressure in my role as a coach to promote anti-doping	83.3	72.2	72.5	76.0
I plan to provide anti-doping information to athletes I work with	87.8	80.0	80.2	82.7

Discussion

The similarities and differences between countries.

Analyzing the obtained results of similarities and differences between Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, it can be concluded that the differences in social and cultural norms in these countries to a much lesser extent determine the beliefs of coaches about doping, which can be transmitted to athletes. Despite the differences above the situation regarding Coaches' Beliefs about their role in Anti-Doping is approximately the same in all countries and shows that coaches understand their role in preventing the use of prohibited substances by their athletes.

To a much greater extent, the positive impact of coaches on their athletes depends on the degree of education and awareness of coaches in the anti-doping field. With respect to differences between countries, it appears to be a need for greater education of Coaches in Moldova and Georgia with respect to reporting an athlete suspected of possessing a prohibited substance, and/or more proactive action by the NADOs in those countries to encourage and support such reporting, and a need for reducing the tolerance of doping by Coaches and Athletes in Moldova.

There was no significant difference in the distribution of answers regarding the effectiveness of the current system of In-Competition and Out-of-Competition testing. More than 70% in all countries of coaches believe that the current system Out-of-competition and In-competition testing are effective. The same situation was registered for education programs and sanction in all three countries. Less than 10% of coaches agree that the testing, sanctions and education system should improve in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova.

More than half of coaches in Georgia and Moldova believe that the media blows the doping issue out of proportion an opposite situation was registered in Armenia where the media practically does not interfere in Armenian NADO after the formation of the Anti-Dopin Agency and after creating the special page on Facebook and new website. Practically all coaches (> 80%) in all countries were against legalizing of the prohibited substances and methods (performance enhancing substances).

The beliefs of coaches on the extent to which coaches can contribute to the positive attitude of athletes towards doping are highly divided. The significant difference were obtained in the beliefs regarding 'Failing to reward effort/improvement by athletes' between Armenia and other countries. The same situation was obtained for "*Showing favoritism towards the best athletes in the group*". The responses of survey participants in Georgia and Moldova are similar, in contrast with Armenia. At the same time, in the remaining two aspects "Punishing mistakes by shouting at or dropping the athlete in question" and "Actively encouraging rivalry between team-mates/training partner", the beliefs of coaches in all countries is approximately the same.

Only a small percentage of Coaches in all three countries would explain to the athlete how to take a prohibited substance. Less than 10% of coaches are sure that if they have the necessary information they will recommend to their athletes to take a prohibited substance. Despite the differences above the situation regarding Coaches' Beliefs about their role in Anti-Doping is approximately the same in all countries and shows that coaches understand their role in preventing the use of prohibited substances by their athletes. With respect to differences between countries, there appears to be a need for greater education of Coaches in Moldova

and Georgia with respect to reporting an athlete suspected of possessing a prohibited substance, and/or more proactive action by the NADOs in those countries to encourage and support such reporting, and a need for reducing the tolerance of doping by Coaches and Athletes in Moldova.

The only misconception of coaches, the cause of which is the legacy that remains from the propaganda that was conducted in the USSR and continues in the Russian media “all athletes use doping but only the USSR athletes are being sanctioned”, is the attitude of coaches to the problem, which can be assessed as a negative impact on athletes, for example the Athletes beliefs regarding the legalizing performance enhancements drugs. All other differences are due more to the quality of work of the Anti-Doping Agencies than to differences in Social and cultural norms.

The similarities and differences between coaches and athletes.

The results of statistical analysis show that it was big statistical difference between Athletes and Coaches believes in following aspects:

The significant difference between athletes and Coaches believes was obtained for evaluation the factors of reasons behind athletes' decisions to get involved in performance enhancing substances. The interesting difference were obtained only the factors “To speed up recovery from injury” and “To improve their performance”(p <0.0001*** and ρ <0.8). Unlike coaches, athletes are not sure that main reason of use the prohibited substance and method is “To improve their performance”. It can be concluded that in this matter the influence of coaches on athletes is very insignificant.

The athletes in contrast with the coaches in all three countries much less agree that the current testing, sanctions and education system is good and no need to improve (p <0.0001*** and ρ <0.8). The latter is especially true in relation to sanctions. However, when participants were asked to indicate whether the testing and education system needed to be improved (p > 0.05ns and ρ >0.8), but vast majority of coaches and athletes did not have any suggestion for improvement.

The beliefs of coaches Behaviors could not contribute to positive doping attitudes amongst Athletes show following. Beliefs of athletes significantly different from the opinion of coaches on the extent to which coaches can contribute to the positive attitude of athletes towards doping are highly divided. If in some aspects, such as “Showing favoritism towards the best athletes in the group”, the answers of survey participants as coaches as well as athletes in Georgia and Moldova are similar in their answers, then in other points the opinions are divided.

Approximately 2 times less athletes are convinced that the behavior of coaches indicated in the questionnaires cannot significantly influence their decision to use prohibited substances. Only a small percentage of Coaches and athletes in all three countries would explain to the athlete how to take a prohibited substance. An analysis of the situation as a whole allows us to think that coaches need to pay attention to these situations and influence athletes in terms of the inadmissibility of taking prohibited substances by anyone in principle. Probably in Moldova more attention should be paid to this issue during education seminars.

In contrast the beliefs of coaches and athletes are same in many ways, which may indicate a positive effect of coaches on athletes. For example more than half of Coaches and more than 70% of athletes believe that the media blows the doping issue

out of proportion ($p > 0.05^{ns}$ and $\rho > 0.9$). More than half of Coaches and athletes in all countries were against legalizing of performance enhancements drugs, and the influence of coaches believes to athletes is significant ($\rho > 0.9$). Despite the fact that statistically significant differences were found in the answers of athletes and coaches ($p < 0.001^{**}$), but, in general it can be concluded that only a small part of athletes believe that legalizing of performance enhancements substances would be beneficial for sports.

The data clearly shows that almost all Coaches in all three countries are ready to dissuade their athletes from using prohibited substance. It is interesting to note that only some of the beliefs of the coaches of athletes are completely particularly consistent, such as the assessment of current testing systems or the duration of sanctions.

Overall, and not unexpectedly, the results for all three countries combined showed a number of differences between Coaches' and Athletes' beliefs that indicate a need for increased anti-doping activities in various areas. For example, Athletes were less likely than Coaches to:

- (i) agree that current anti-doping activities were effective;
- (ii) report an athlete's possession of a prohibited substance to their NADO or Sports Federation;
- (iii) to tell an athlete to never use any prohibited substance.

Conclusion

Analyzing the obtained results, it can be concluded that differences in social and cultural norms in the countries of the study participants to a much lesser extent determine the beliefs of coaches about doping, which can be transmitted to athletes. In conclusion, attitudes towards the use of doping among coaches in all three countries differ somewhat, which may relate to differences in the quality of educational programs.

The latter conclusion makes it mandatory to include some information in the educational programs for coaches, about the athletes' duties, ways and means to control their behavior, revealing in detail the mechanisms of such control.

A necessary condition for the new Educational program for coaches may also be the holding of education seminars and workshops for athletes with the obligatory presence of their coaches using "the coach and his athletes" formula. During the workshops the participants will be given the task of learning how to use the NADO and WADA websites, from where they can get correct information about anti-doping rules and standards, about their rights and obligations, the side effects of prohibited substances and present the materials for using such information in their coaching practice.

Unlike the case of awareness as stated by A.Hovhannisyan in the previous study (Hovhannisyan, 2022), there is a big difference in the influence of coaches' beliefs on the attitude of athletes to the use of prohibited substances, both between countries and between coaches and athletes.

In the case of Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, where the majority of coaches and athletes know only the national language, the role of national anti-doping agencies is more important, which should be able to correctly explain the duties and role of coaches in the process of preventing the use of prohibited substances and

methods and enforcing anti-doping rules.

Summing up the results of the study, we can conclude that, in general, the results are useful especially in terms of how to improve the educational program in each country, namely which of the issues related to the use of prohibited substances and methods should receive additional attention. In order to increase the positive influence of coaches on the beliefs of athletes, it is also necessary to conduct joint seminars of coaches and athletes, paying attention to the discussion of the social behavior of coaches.

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RESIDENTS’ NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF FELLOW COUNTRYMAN’S TRAVELLING DURING EPIDEMIOLOGICAL RESTRICTIONS*

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Abstract. *This research explored the creation of negative perception towards returning travellers in response to the threat of spreading the virus and positive travel behaviour at the time of the COVID-19 health crisis. The data for research was collected from 530 respondents and analysed using hierarchical multiple regression, confirmatory factor analysis, and the Sobel test of significance. The study results revealed that people had a perception of a high risk of catching COVID-19, which has led to a negative perception of travel during a pandemic. Moreover, malicious travel behaviour reinforced discrimination, while positive travel behaviour reduced the negativity in perceptions of returning travellers but did not spare the returnees from discrimination. Implications for both practice and theory, as well as limitations and future directions are further discussed. Based on research findings, resilience of travel should not limit its focus on just the recovery and health control measures of regions that receive travellers, but also pay close attention to the perceptions of travellers returning home after vacations, so as to avoid social distress and stimulate a continuous growth of the demand for travel. In order to stimulate sustainable travel activity with no negative perception of travel and travellers among resident, maintaining local getaways is recommended.*

Keywords: *hierarchical multiple regression, risk management, travel behaviour, COVID-19, recovery marketing*

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Ամփոփում: Հոդվածում ուսումնասիրվել է բնակիչների բացասական վերաբերմունքն այն հայրենակիցների հանդեպ, ովքեր շրջագայել են Covid-19 համավարակի տարածվածության ընթացքում: Ուսումնասիրության տվյալները հավաքվել են 530 հարցվողներից: Պարզվել է, մասնավորապես, որ բնակիչների համավարակի պայմաններում տեղաշարժի սահմանափակումների անտեսմամբ շրջագայությունները խիստ բացասաբար են ընկալվել իրենց հայրենակիցների կողմից և հանգեցրել նրանց հանդեպ խտրական վերաբերմունքի: Անգամ այն դեպքերում, երբ շրջագայողների հանդեպ վերաբերմունքը բացասական չէր, այնուամենայնիվ խտրական վերաբերմունք է դրսևորվել, քանի որ իրենք ընկալվել են որպես վարակի պոտենցիալ կրողներ: Հետազոտությունը միտված է մշակելու միջոցառումների համախումբ, որոնք հետագայում նման պայմանների առաջաման դեպքում կնպաստեն խթանելու զբոսաշրջային գործունեությունը և ապահովելու մարդկանց առողջապահական շահերը:

Բանալի բառեր - բազմաշափ հիերարխիկ ռեգրեսիա, ռիսկերի կառավարում, տուրիստական վարք, Covid-19, վերականգնողական տուրիզմի շուկայավարում

НЕГАТИВНОЕ ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ЖИТЕЛЯМИ ПОЕЗДОК СООТЕЧЕСТВЕННИКОВ ВО ВРЕМЯ ЭПИДЕМИОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ОГРАНИЧЕНИЙ

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Аннотация. В данном исследовании изучалось формирование негативного восприятия возвращающихся путешественников в ответ на угрозу распространения вируса и позитивного поведения (готовность к поездкам) путешественников во время ослабления ограничений на поездки в период кризиса, связанного с COVID-19.

Данные для исследования были собраны от 530 респондентов и проанализированы с использованием иерархической множественной регрессии, факторного анализа и теста значимости Собея. Когнитивная реакция местных жителей, осознающих высокие риски заражения COVID-19, приводит к дискриминации и негативному восприятию людей, совершающих путешествия в этот период. Хотя больший негатив по отношению к возвращающимся путешественникам демонстрируют люди, полностью отказавшиеся от поездок, тем не менее даже со стороны жителей, склонных к позитивному поведению, наблюдается дискриминация по отношению к возвращающимся путешественникам. Далее обсуждаются последствия для теории и практики развития туризма выявленных когнитивных реакций местных жителей. Подобные установки создают риски к восстановлению туристической активности уже после снятия ограничительных эпидемиологических мер. Исходя из результатов исследования, устойчивость путешествий не должна ограничиваться только мерами по восстановлению и контролю здоровья в регионах, принимающих путешественников; необходимо уделять пристальное внимание восприятию путешественников, возвращающихся домой после отпуска, чтобы избежать социального стресса и стимулировать постоянный рост спроса на путешествия. В целях стимулирования устойчивой туристической активности без негативного восприятия путешествий и путешественников среди жителей рекомендуется поддерживать местный отдых.

Ключевые слова: *иерархическая множественная регрессия, управление рисками, туристическое поведение, COVID-19, оздоровительный маркетинг*

Introduction

Research on tourism recovery marketing focuses primarily on boosting tourists' confidence by restoring destinations' images and providing crisis communication for visitors (Mair et al., 2016). Consumer behaviour and willingness to travel in tourism regions during COVID-19 has been acknowledged to be affected by return travellers through social media, word of mouth (WOM), the transportation modes available, and health security requirements (Hall et al., 2020). By the end of 2020, after almost a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire world was affected by the virus. Therefore, people who decided to travel opened themselves up to the potential for increased risk of getting sick and also for infecting others with the virus upon their return. Nonetheless, the negative perception towards returning travellers during the pandemic has not yet been disclosed in the global tourism environment.

Safety has long been recognised to be a widespread concern for travellers, even without a health crisis (Dolnicar, 2005), and when there is an increased level of perceived risks, travel behaviour is expected to change. Previous studies of travel risk perceptions in tourism focused on perceptions towards the destination of travel and a positive effect between the destination country's image and people's travel intentions (Alvarez and Campo, 2014; Caber et al., 2020; Chew and Jahari, 2014). Subjective knowledge has been found to directly influence a destination perception (Perpiña et al., 2020). Jonas et al. (2011) indicated that health concerns have a negative effect on destination selection behaviours and further increase the perceived travel risks. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the decision to travel contained health risks by itself, the possibility of catching the virus was being communicated via the news media, and the public was being

advised to avoid unnecessary travel. For this study, any trip was associated with the risk perception of travel in general, and not specifically to a travel destination.

A broad range of studies during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 focused on people's travel behaviour during the crisis and their intentions to travel afterward (Das and Tiwari, 2020; Ivanova et al., 2021; Jeon and Yang, 2021). At the same time, academics recognised that the willingness of destinations to receive tourists could be undermined by the potential health risks (Joo et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2020). In addition to the social stigmatisation towards tourists in receiving regions, regions generating tourists could face an issue of residents discriminating towards tourists returning home from journeys. The negative perception of returning travellers during a health crisis should be acknowledged during recovery planning and in forecasting future tourism demands. Moreover, global stress such as that caused by the pandemic might have influenced people's judgement of how essential travel was in general, especially considering the travel-related risks, and thus may have fostered a more responsible consumption of local attractions instead (He and Harris, 2020).

This study focused on the relationship among risk perceptions, the negative perception of returning travellers, and people's travel behaviour during the pandemic. The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors that encourage negative perception of travellers during the relaxation of measures at the time of a health crisis, from the perspective of people's travel experience and perception of risks. Specifically, this study had two objectives: (1) to validate the influence of cognitive response on people's negative perception of returning travellers, and (2) to investigate the mediating effect of travel behaviour during COVID-19 on people's negative perception about returning travellers. The research sought to contribute to tourism studies on travel risks and travel intentions, as well as on the theory of negative stereotype development during a health crisis. From a practical viewpoint, the findings from this study may help to predict tourists' travel intentions during the relaxation of COVID-19 preventive measures and may anticipate a negative perception towards returning travellers in society and help avoid the appearance that travel is an irresponsible consumer choice after a crisis.

Literature review

The stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory

As the first step in developing our theoretical framework, we adopted the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), in which a behaviour is caused by the cognitive processes of individuals when stimulation is created by stimuli (a set of attributes) from outside. That framework helped us to identify the importance of outside stimulation on the outcome, thus potentially helping to adjust the stimulation's influence in order to adjust the behavior. A stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory is a useful investigative framework that is frequently used in a tourism context. Jani and Han (2015) used the model to understand the connection between hotel ambiance (stimulus), processed emotions (organism), and loyalty (response). Hew and colleagues (2018) used an SOR model to research mobile social tourism shopping and discovered that the shopping method's perceived mobility and social presence (environmental stimuli) influenced

tourists' mobile social tourism shopping intention through their inner organism changes (i.e., perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment). Kim and colleagues (2020) used the SOR framework to study virtual reality (VR) technology acceptance in tourism and found a significant impact from an authentic VR experience (stimulus) on cognitive and affective responses. Recently, Laato and colleagues (2020) studied unusual consumer behaviour (response) in the context of COVID-19, using information overload (stimulus) as a construct to measure the pandemic's environmental influence.

Indeed, the pandemic has influenced behaviours throughout many aspects of life. Following the logic used in other consumer studies of the experience as an outside influence, this study adopted the pandemic as a stimulus. We conceived of the organism as the bridge between the stimuli and the response, and anticipated it would be reflected through a combination of emotional and cognitive states (Sun et al., 2020). In this study, we referred to the perception of risks as an organism. Perception is an essential form of a person's cognitive contact with the world around him (Efron, 1969), and as such it fits the construct of an organism within the SOR framework. We took the construct of perception to include both the emotional and cognitive dimensions. The interplay between emotions and cognition has been extensively discussed in psychology (Izard et al., 1984; Strongman, 1996), although the distinction between feeling and thinking is arguable (Barrett et al., 2007). From the neuroscience perspective, emotions directly impact cognitive processing (Holland and Gallagher, 1999). Furthermore, emotions benefit the development of stereotypes (DeSteno et al., 2004; Chevtava et al.2021). For this study, I focused on the perception of COVID-19 in which the emotional experience is included in the dimension of perception. The response was in a form of attitude towards returning travellers.

Hypothesis development

Following the stigmatisation theory, negatively perceived individual attributes can lead to negative stereotypes (Major et al., 2002). Many individuals infected by the novel coronavirus show mild or no symptoms, yet they can spread the virus to others (Del Rio and Malani, 2020). Thus, the potential of asymptomatic illness may be a facilitator for stigmatisation and negative perception. Returning tourists, especially if there are no quarantine measures, may arrive and come into contact with local people, thus potentially becoming a threat to the community. This research explored the creation of negative perception towards returning tourists in response to the threat of spreading the virus and positive travel behaviour. Positive travel behaviour refers to a positive attitude towards travel and willingness to travel. Even when the government ends measures preventing individuals from travelling, subjective perceptions of norms can guide individuals' opinions (Tankard and Paluck, 2016).

According to the SOR theory, in our study the stimulus (COVID-19) would generate an internal reaction (perception of risk) and result in a response (attitude towards returning travellers). The SOR claims a reaction to a particular behaviour, in this case to a positive travel behaviour. Qiu and colleagues (2020) discovered that residents perceived a health risk posed by tourists who visited their city during the pandemic and potentially would spread the virus. Simultaneously, the unique circumstances of COVID-19 suggest that a similar negative perception may accrue

towards residents who choose to travel outside of the city and come back after their travels. Due to the great significance of COVID-19, its influence may lead to the rapid development of a stereotype towards outgroups (Sorokowski et al., 2020), such as a negative perception of people who travel during the pandemic. For example, at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, negative perception was developed against people from Asia, because the virus became associated with the region where it originated (Roberto et al., 2020).

In analyses of risks, personal experience of risk is commonly used as the determining factor of a more negative perception of the phenomenon (Barnett and Breakwell, 2001; Van der Linden, 2014). Moreover, the perception of risk is connected to tourism behaviours: Tourists who perceive high risk will take evasive action, whereas tourists who perceive low risk despite the reality of high risks will pay the price (Mahatme and Mekoth, 2020). During the health crisis, when pandemic control measures, such as wearing masks, social distancing and staying at home are not mandatory, the lax regulations may lead to insufficient compliance, and that can be seen as unfair and can intensify stigmatisation (Betsch et al., 2020). Accordingly, during the recovery stage of the pandemic there are two different groups of residents: the group of people who expose themselves to risks connected to travel, and the other group, who avoid travel. In addition, people who avoid travel may develop negative perception of returning travellers.

Thus, we hypothesised the following:

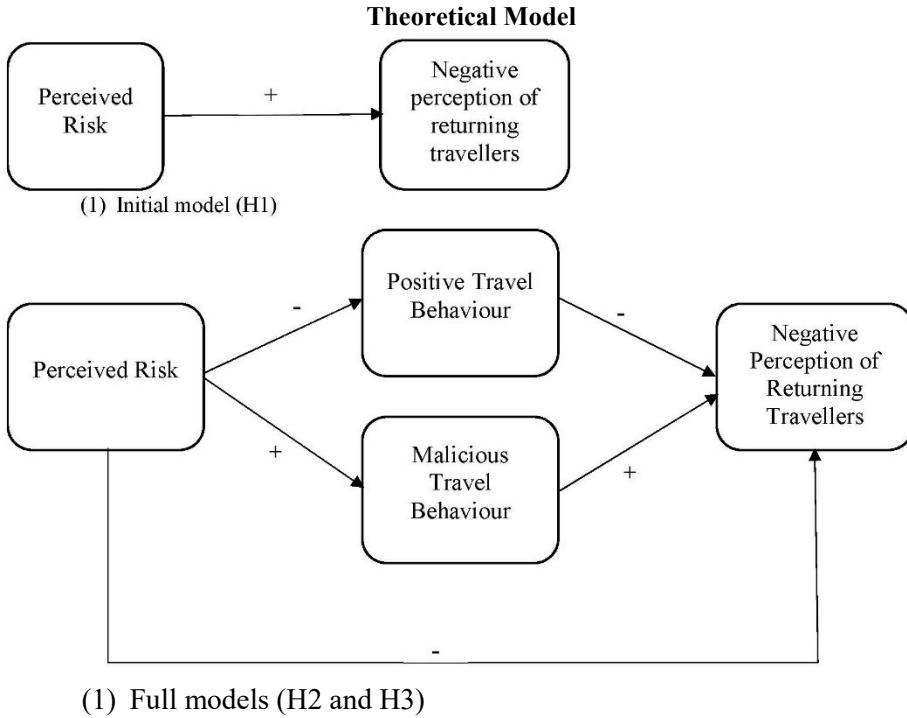
H1 = High risk perception of COVID-19 leads to a negative perception of returning travellers.

H2 = The relationship between perceived risk and the negative perception of returning travellers is mediated by (a) positive travel behaviour, and (b) malicious travel behaviour.

H3 = A relatively lower perceived risk of catching COVID-19, more than a higher perceived risk of catching COVID-19, leads to a negative perception of returning travellers, when controlling for (a) positive travel behaviour and (b) malicious travel behaviour.

Following those justifications and hypotheses, the study adopted the research model presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1



Methods

Sample and data collection

This study used an online questionnaire to gather data voluntarily from respondents, using the convenience sampling technique. It is generally difficult to use nonrandom samples for inference. However, such inferences are important (Liu et al., 2023). Recently, it is noted that data with detailed individual-level information such as age, occupation, sex and race can be used to generalize inference of nonrandom samples to their target population and the use of mass imputation approach in inferential analysis such as OLS and Hierarchical regression (Kim et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023). In addition, the law of large numbers reduces the random error that is due to the nonrandom sampling when conducting inferential analysis. Given this, a total of 530 respondents took part in the study. That sample size was enough to cover a proper solution for inferential analysis (Anderson and Gerbing, 1984; Hair et al., 2008) such as Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM). Females dominated the respondents (69.1%), and over half of the total respondents (67.4%) were young adults (under 30 years old). Almost half (45.3%) had a university degree. Also, a little over a quarter (30.4%) worked as social workers or government or state workers (in education, culture, or medicine).

Context of the study

We focused on residents of the city of Yekaterinburg, in the Sverdlovsk region in the Russian Federation. Yekaterinburg is one of the biggest and most developed cities in Russia, with high outbound tourism potential. In November 2020, travel was thriving in Russia during the pandemic. Although the country was closed to foreign visitors, residents were allowed outbound travel, and after July 2020 no quarantine was required upon

arrival⁷. Moreover, inbound travel within the largest country in the world (17.1 million km²) remained open. The Russian Tourism Organization encouraged domestic travel by introducing a 20% cashback offer⁸ that was promoted on an online government services webpage with 103 million users from Russia⁹. More than 500,000 Russian tourists visited Turkey in September 2020¹⁰, during a month when there were an average number of 5876 new COVID-19 cases a day¹¹. Although the Government of Russia set up an official webpage to provide information about the country's preventative measures for COVID-19 and shared daily updates and stay-at-home recommendations¹², there was no direct travel ban, and people could freely move within and outside the country, as long as other countries let them in. The unique circumstances in the Russian Federation during the second part of 2020 made it an interesting place for a case study of the cognitive and behavioural effects on negative perception of returning travellers.

Measurement scale

The study's initial measurement model included five constructs and 22 variables. The constructs of personal experience during COVID-19, perceived risk of COVID-19 and travel, positive travel behaviour, malicious travel behaviour, and negative perception of returning travelers were based on previous studies. The questionnaire used in the study is presented in Table 1. Variables were developed on the basis of the works of Rubin and colleagues (2020), Neuburger and Egger (2020); Conway and colleagues (2020), and Wells and colleagues (2020). All items were ranked with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Additional questions were asked about the respondents' gender, age group, education, occupation, and travel history during the COVID-19 in 2020. The initial questionnaire was created in English and later translated into the Russian language and discussed with academic professors in Russia, who evaluated the measurement items used to establish the final version of the questionnaire.

Table 1

Scales and literature sources used in developing the questionnaire's constructs.

Indicators of constructs	Literature sources
Perceived risk of COVID-19 travel (PR)	
PR1: I try to avoid other people because I don't want to get sick	Conway et al., 2020
PR2: Travelling by plane is a health risk, as many people may carry the virus	Neuburger and Egger, 2020
PR3: I feel my health is at risk as a consequence of COVID-19	Rubin et al., 2020

⁷ Travel World, 2020. *Russia lifts mandatory quarantine for arrivals*. [Online] Available at: <https://travel.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/destination/international/russia-lifts-mandatory-quarantine-for-arrivals/76992143>

⁸ Russia Travel, 2020. *Pay with the bank card "MIR" to get a 20% cashback from the cost of the domestic travel [Оплачивайте путешествия по России картой «Мир» и верните 20% от стоимости поездки]*. [Online] Available at: https://xn--b1afakdgpzinidi6e.xn--p1ai/?utm_source=bannertop&utm_medium=gosuslugi&utm_campaign=cashback2

⁹ Gosuslugi, 2019. *Gosuslugi in 2019. [Госуслуги в 2019 году]*. [Online] Available at: https://www.gosuslugi.ru/help/news/2019_12_30_results_of_the_year

¹⁰ TASS (Russian New Agency), 2020. *Over 500,000 Russians visited Antalya in September 2020*. [Online] Available at: <https://tass.com/society/1208201>

¹¹ Communication Centre of the Government of the Russian Federation, Russian Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing, & RIA Novosti (2020).

Cumulative number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, active cases, recoveries, and deaths in Russia as of November 9, 2020, by date of report [Graph]. [Online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1107929/cumulative-coronavirus-cases-in-russia/>

¹² Stopcoronavirus, (2020). *What to do? [Что предпринять?]*. [Online] Available at: <https://xn--80aefpbgmfbfc0a.xn--p1ai/what-to-do/all/>

Positive Travel behaviour (PTB)	
PTB1: During the pandemic, I engage in a holiday possibility within my own region	Wells et al., 2020
PTB2: During the pandemic, I still go for a vacation abroad	
PTB3: If the destination is opened, I might travel there for leisure	
Malicious Travel behaviour (NTB)	
NTB1: I try to stay at home as much as possible	
NTB2: During the pandemic, I will not engage in the International leisure travel	
NTB3: During the pandemic, I will not engage in Regional leisure travel	
NTB4: I miss traveling, but I wait till I get a vaccine	Rubin et al., 2020
Negative Perception of Returning Travellers	
NRPT1: I fear that the virus will be carried by returning travelers to my near surroundings	Neuburger and Egger, 2020
NRPT2: International Travelling should be prohibited to avoid the spread of the virus	
NRPT3: Regional Travelling should be prohibited to avoid the spread of the virus	
NRPT4: Currently, it is irresponsible to travel to international destinations	
NRPT5: Currently, it is irresponsible to travel within your region	

Analyses

The data were collected from 530 respondents and were analysed using hierarchical multiple regression, confirmatory factor analysis, and the Sobel test of significance. We used the averages of the Likert scale, to conduct the factor analysis to reduce the number of items and then convert the results to confirm the factors for regression analysis in this study. Such a technique has been used by several researchers and supported by several studies including Pallant (2007), Gamor et al. (2018), and Asún et al. (2016) who support the use of the Likert scale for factor analysis and further use for regression analysis.

Respondents’ demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, occupation, and educational status, were used as control variables. This approach did not reduce the sample size of the study, and it remained adequate for conducting ordinary least squares (OLS) techniques. To double-check the output, we conducted mediation analysis using SPSS PROCESSv3.4, and the results were the same as those from the OLS or even stronger. In all eight models, no collinearity issues were found in the predictors and the controlled independent variables because all VIF values were less than the cutoff value of 3. To determine the significance of the mediation effect in the full model, the Sobel test statistic *z* was used (Sobel, 1982):

$$z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2 SE_a^2) + (a^2 SE_b^2)}}$$

where *a* represents the regression coefficient for the relationship between perceived risk (IV) and positive travel behaviour (mediator), and *b* represents the regression coefficient for the relationship between positive travel behaviour and negative perception of returning travellers (DV). The term *SE_a* represents the standard error of *a*, and the term *SE_b* represents the standard error of *b*.

Findings and Discussion

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and the correlations among the

variables used in performing mediation analysis. A significant and negative correlation was found between perceived risk of COVID-19 and positive travel behaviour, malicious travel behaviour, and the negative perception of returning tourists. However, positive and significant correlation coefficients were recorded between the negative perception of returning travellers, the perceived risk, and malicious travel behaviour. The skewness and kurtosis values were below 3 in absolute terms, which was indicative of normally distributed data. All of the variables used in this study had coefficients with adequately high reliability. The reliability values of the scales were within the acceptable range, with the lowest value for Cronbach's alpha, of 0.6, occurring for positive travel behaviour. However, the highest value of Cronbach's alpha was for the negative perception of returning travellers scale (0.9). The summative scales also showed distinctness, with the Cronbach's alpha coefficients being consistently higher than the correlations between the constructs were.

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate the discriminant validity of the scales used in this study (Table 2). The results showed that the proposed model fit indices agreed with the goodness of fit (GFI) of a four-factor model, and the model was found to fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 301.932$, $df = 79$, $p < .01$; CFI=.931; TLI=.91; RMSEA=.07).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and alpha reliability values

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Skew	Kurt.	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Risk	2.987	.989	-.075	-.618	(0.7)			
2. Malicious Travel Behaviour	2.962	1.106	.014	-.826	.533***	(0.7)		
3. Positive Travel Behaviour	2.484	.886	.373	.054	-.172***	-.354***	(0.6)	
4. Negative Perception Returning Tourists	2.823	1.142	-.016	-.989	.503***	.591***	-.368***	(0.9)

Notes: $N=530$; *** $p < .01$

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients are shown in parentheses

To examine the influences that the selected variables had on the negative perception of the mediating role of travel behaviour, we conducted a series of regression analyses. Table 3 displays the standardised regression coefficients of the predictors. We controlled for characteristics of respondents that might influence the results of the study. Thus, the variables controlled for were the respondents' *age*, *gender*, *educational status*, *occupation*, and *travel*. In general, the R^2 values recorded an incremental change from Model 1 to Model 4, and also from Model 5 to Model 8, at a 0.05 significance level.

Hypothesis 1: High-Risk Perception

As the model predicted, in Hypothesis 1, the perceived risk of COVID-19 had a positive and statistically significant total effect (0.510; $p < .000$) on people's perceptions of returning travellers (Model 2). This shows that in the absence of a mediating variable, a higher risk perception, more than a lower risk perception, led to a negative perception of returning travellers. Thus, the higher the individual's risk perception concerning COVID-19 was, the more negatively judgemental he or she was about returning travellers. This finding aligned with previous research (Mahatme and Mekoth, 2020) and highlights the importance of managing risk perceptions, in an effort to avoid social conflicts and restart travel.

Hypothesis 2: Travel Behaviour as Mediator

In assessing the mediating effect of travel behaviour, positive travel behaviour (PTB) and malicious travel behaviour (MTB) were used as mediators of the link between

perceived risk and negative perception of returning travellers. All of the conditions for mediation were met, which demonstrated that positive travel behaviour and malicious travel behaviour each mediated the relationship between risk perception and a negative perception towards returning travellers (NPRT). First we found that perceived risk had a positive and significant effect on NPRT in Model 2. Second, the perceived risk of COVID-19 by an individual had a significant positive impact on MTB ($p < 0.001$) but a negatively significant impact on PTB ($p < 0.001$) (Models 6 and 8). Third, the PTB and MTB had a significant impact on the NPRT. Whereas the PTB had a negative impact ($-.275$; $p < 0.001$) in Model 3, the MTB had a positive impact ($.393$; $p < 0.001$) in Model 4 on the NPRT of individuals. Fourth, the relationship between the PTB was significant and negative ($-.275$; $p < 0.001$) in Model 3, whereas that of MTB was positive ($.393$; $p < 0.001$) in Model 4. However, the strength of the perceived risk of COVID-19 on NPRT was reduced ($.274$; $p < 0.001$) but remained statistically significant when the effects of the mediators were controlled for (See Hypothesis 3). This finding shows that both the direct and indirect effects were positive and that a lower perception of the risk of acquiring COVID-19 did not lead to a negative perception towards returning travellers, when we controlled for PTB and MTB.

To determine whether the mediation effect was significant, we used the Sobel test¹³. The results of the test revealed that the mediation effect from both PTB and MTB were significant ($z = 3.191$) and ($z = 7.711$), with respective two-tailed probability values of 0.001 and 0.000. That finding demonstrated that both PTB and MTB significantly mediated the relationship between perceived risk and a negative perception towards returning travellers. The indirect effect of risk perception through PTB (.040) and the total effect (.550) were lower than the indirect effect (.231) and the total effect (.741) of MTB. In the full model, the proportion of negative perception towards returning travellers that operated indirectly through PTB was only 7.72%, whereas approximately 31.2% operated through MTB. Therefore, a clear majority of the negative perception about returning travellers (roughly 90%) had a direct effect of perception on negative perception when dealing with PTB, whereas a little over half (68.8%) operated directly when dealing with MTB.

The finding that MTB led to a more muted reaction towards returning travellers was comparable to the stigmatisation of nonsmokers towards smoking as a habit that potentially causes passive smoking (McCool et al., 2013). This may be explained by a lack of understanding about such a behavioural choice. Therefore, following the example with smoking, promoting empathy during the COVID-19 recovery stage could help to lower negative perception towards returning visitors. For example, presenting materials about social frustrations arising from the absence of travel during COVID-19, or including information about different motivations for travel during the pandemic, could help to increase the level understanding among non-travellers towards returning travellers and perhaps could limit discrimination. However, whereas smokers have a more loyal perception towards a smoking habit, the influence of a PTB towards lowering the level of negative perception of returning travellers is quite low (7.72%). This finding suggests that researchers should look for additional factors that influence negative perceptions towards returning travellers and that engender stigmatisation of their travel habits.

¹³ Soper, D. S. (2021). *Indirect Mediation Effect Confidence Interval Calculator [Software]*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.danielsoper.com/statcalc/calculator.aspx?id=88>

Table 3

Results of the mediating effects of travel behaviour.

		Negative perception of return travellers							
		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable		Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF
Constant		3.486***(.212)		1.594***(.231)		2.372***(.244)		1.504***(.244)	
Age		.019 (.066)	1.308	-.068 (.058)	1.339	-.061 (.055)	1.340	-.085***(.051)	1.345
Sex		-.057 (.108)	1.034	.001 (.094)	1.047	.009 (.090)	1.048	-.019 (.083)	1.057
Educational Status		-.091* (.052)	1.324	-.075* (.045)	1.325	-.047 (.043)	1.338	-.035 (.040)	1.339
Occupation		-.064 (.023)	1.158	-.010 (.020)	1.169	.022 (.020)	1.184	.041 (.018)	1.188
Travel		-.065 (.034)	1.021	-.069* (.029)	1.020	-.032 (.028)	1.041	.010 (.026)	1.059
Perceived Risk				.510*** (.044) ^c	1.041	.465***(.042)	1.070	.274***(.046)	1.449
Positive Travel Behaviour						-.275***(.048) ^b	1.101	-.176***(.046)	1.202
Malicious Travel Behaviour								.393***(.043) ^c	1.602
R ²		.024		.274		.343		.439	
Adjusted R ²		.015		.266		.334		.430	
		Positive Travel Behaviour				Malicious Travel Behaviour			
		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
variable		Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF	Coefficient	VIF
Constant		1.728 ***(.161)		2.198***(.201)		3.341 ***(.203)		1.448***(.217)	
Age		-.003 (.050)	1.308	.026 (.050)	1.339	.187***(.063)	1.308	.071 (.054)	1.339
Sex		.095 (.082)	1.034	.060 (.082)	1.047	.014(.103)	1.034	.156* (.088)	1.047
Educational status		.090** (.040)	1.324	.086** (.039)	1.325	-.075 (.050)	1.324	-.058 (.042)	1.325
Occupation		.053***(.018)	1.158	.046***(.018)	1.169	-.066***(.022)	1.158	-.039**(.019)	1.169
Travel		.081***(.026)	1.020	.082***(.025)	1.020	-.103***(.032)	1.020	-.106***(.027)	1.020
Perceived Risk				-.146***(.038) ^a	1.041			.589***(.041) ^d	1.041
R ²		.066		.092		.051		.318	
Adjusted R ²		.057		.081		.042		.310	
Indirect effect through PTB/MTB =				(a*b) .040				(d*e) .231	
Total effect (indirect +direct effect)=				.550				.741	
Effect size =				7.27%				31.17%	
N=530. Table shows unstandardised coefficients (standard errors), ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.									

Conclusions

This research confirms the relationship between cognitive response and residents' negative perception towards returning travellers. As a result of the pandemic, people have had a perception of high risk of catching COVID-19, and that has led to negative perception against travellers. Therefore, the restart of travel should not limit its focus on just the recovery and health control measures of regions receiving tourism, but should also pay close attention to the perceptions of travellers returning home after vacations, so as to avoid social distress and stimulate a continuous growth of the demand for travel. This might especially be actual tasks for regions that simultaneously receive tourists and generate travel demand, such as the big megalopolis cities of London, Paris, Tokyo, and New York.

Another important finding was that malicious travel behaviour reinforced negative perception towards returning travellers. Accordingly, positive travel behaviour reduced the negativity in perceptions of returning travellers but did not spare the returnees from discrimination. Even people who were engaged in travelling during COVID-19 still discriminated against fellow travellers. This suggests that as soon as it seems safe,

regions wishing to preserve travel behaviour should encourage local vacations and small getaways, to remove the full suspension of leisure travel that will reinforce negative perception of returning travellers. Because residents' negativity about travel may influence travel intentions, it is important not to create a negative social environment that will result in stigmatisation towards potential tourists. In addition, an open discussion about why people travel during unstable times, how they travel, and what control measures are in place to secure their journeys should help to reduce discrimination. As this study showed, exhibiting a positive travel behaviour did not cause the negative perception of travellers to disappear. Therefore, a search for additional factors, constant monitoring of public perceptions, and public forums are needed to control the restarting of travel.

Although the findings of this study spotlight the issue of negativity towards returning travellers during the health crisis recovery stage, additional research could increase the understanding of relationship between negative perception of travellers and travel behaviour. Future research could focus on a more in-depth understanding of the elements in addition to travel behaviour that influence negative perception towards travellers, in order to keep the restart of travel under control. A main possibility would be to repeat this study in other destinations that are experiencing a recovery from a health crisis. A similar study in a diverse cultural setting is called for, once travel activity resumes, because that may help to forecast the recovery model further. We suggest replicating the study in Asian settings, because the perception of risk in Asian countries may vary from that in Europe (Law, 2006). Another possibility for travel research would be a comparison of negative perception towards returning travellers and towards upcoming tourists. An enhanced understanding of the public perception of risks and social stigmatisation will help the industry to plan better for future unpredicted crises, as well as to restart global tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic. The limitation of this study is in its focus on leisure travel, given that negative perception towards people who are forced to travel due to work or study circumstances might be different.

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DRUG TRAFFICKING PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES TO PREVENTION IN ARMENIA: EXPERT OPINIONS*

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Abstract. In response to the alarming consequences of drug abuse and the persistent issue it poses within our nation, the Scientific Research Center of Applied Problems in Criminology, operating under the auspices of the National Bureau of Expertise of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, undertook a comprehensive expert survey. The primary aim of this survey was to ascertain the magnitude of drug trafficking in Armenia, identify the factors that contribute to its proliferation, determine the social groups most adversely affected, elucidate the prevalent types of drugs being used, investigate the mechanisms employed for drug sales, and formulate effective strategies to combat drug trafficking. To ensure a comprehensive and diverse perspective, the survey enlisted the participation of 16 experts hailing from various sectors, including the police, the Investigative Committee, and the prosecutor's office. These individuals brought their extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of criminology and law enforcement to the study, enabling a multifaceted analysis of the drug trafficking situation in Armenia. The findings of the survey encompass a thorough risk analysis that sheds light on the vulnerabilities within the current system, allowing for a more precise understanding of the factors that contribute to drug trafficking. This analysis takes into account both internal and external influences, such as socio-economic conditions, geographic location, international networks, and technological advancements, among others. By identifying and assessing these risks, policymakers and law enforcement agencies can develop targeted interventions and preventive measures to mitigate the spread and impact of drug trafficking in Armenia. Moreover, the survey incorporates the development of a methodology aimed at preventing drug trafficking within the regional context of Armenia. This methodology combines evidence-based approaches with innovative strategies to create a robust framework that addresses the multifaceted nature of drug trafficking. It includes elements such as intelligence gathering and analysis, enhanced interagency cooperation, community engagement, public awareness campaigns, rehabilitation and support services for affected individuals, and international cooperation to combat transnational drug networks.

Keywords: *drug use, Armenia, dependency, expert opinion.*

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**ԹՄՐԱՄԻՋՈՑՆԵՐԻ ՇՐՋԱՆԱՌՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ
ԴՐԱՆՑ ԿԱՆԽԱՐԳԵԼՄԱՆ ՄՈՏԵՑՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆՈՒՄ.
ՓՈՐՁԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՐԾԻՔ**

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Ս. գ. թ., ԵՊՀ սոցիոլոգիայի պատմության և տեսության ամբիոնի դոցենտ, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ փորձաքննությունների ազգային բյուրոյի քրեաբանության կիրառական հիմնախնդիրների գիտահետազոտական կենտրոնի սոցիոլոգ:
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Ամփոփում: Հաշվի առնելով թմրամիջոցների կործանարար ազդեցությունը և խնդրի առկայությունը մեր երկրում՝ ՀՀ ԳԱԱ փորձաքննությունների ազգային բյուրոյի քրեաբանության կիրառական հիմնախնդիրների գիտահետազոտական կենտրոնը փորձագիտական հարցման միջոցով փորձել է պարզել թմրամիջոցների ապօրինի շրջանառության ծավալը, դրանց վրա ազդող գործոնները, առավել հաճախ թմրամիջոցներ օգտագործող սոցիալական խմբերը և օգտագործվող թմրամիջոցների տեսակները, տարածման մեխանիզմները և թմրամիջոցների ապօրինի շրջանառության դեմ պայքարի մեխանիզմները: Այդ նպատակով հարցում է անցկացվել Հայաստանի ոստիկանության, քննչական կոմիտեի և դատախազության համապատասխան ոլորտները ներկայացնող 16 փորձագետների հետ:

Բանալի բառեր – *թմրամիջոցների օգտագործում, թմրամիջոցների ապօրինի շրջանառություն, Հայաստան, կախվածություն, փորձագիտական կարծիք*

**ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОБОРОТА НАРКОТИКОВ И ПОДХОДЫ К ИХ
ПРЕДОТВРАЩЕНИЮ В АРМЕНИИ: ЭКСПЕРТНОЕ МНЕНИЕ**

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Аннотация. Принимая во внимание деструктивное воздействие наркотиков и наличие проблемы в нашей стране, Научно-исследовательский центр по прикладным вопросам криминологии при Национальном бюро экспертиз НАН РА посредством экспертного опроса попытался выяснить объемы незаконного оборота наркотиков, факторы, влияющие на них, социальные группы, наиболее часто употребляющие наркотики, и виды употребляемых наркотиков, механизмы сбыта и механизмы борьбы с незаконным оборотом наркотиков. С этой целью был проведен опрос с 16 экспертами, которые представляют соответствующую сферу полиции, Следственного комитета и прокуратуры Армении.

Ключевые слова: *употребление наркотиков, Армения, зависимость, экспертное мнение*

Research Problem

According to the United Nations (UNODC, 2021), the global number of drug addicts in 2021 reached 275 million people, with 36 million suffering from severe health conditions as a result. Approximately 5.5 percent of the world population

experimented with drugs at least once last year. Official statistics place Russia at the top of the post-Soviet countries in terms of drug use, with 1.8 million registered drug addicts. Ukraine follows with 317 thousand, and Kazakhstan with 94 thousand (Gubernatorov, Tkachev, Poryvaeva, 2022). It is important to note that these figures fail to account for a significant number of unregistered drug addicts, which considerably inflates these statistics.

The motives behind drug use encompass various factors, such as escaping from personal problems, including familial issues, the pursuit of pleasure and freedom, the desire to conform, the inclination for experimentation, curiosity, and more. Typically, drug abuse proliferates swiftly among young individuals. For instance, 20% of drug addicts in Russia are schoolchildren, 60% are young adults, and the remaining 20% belong to other age groups. Alarmingly, even children aged 9 to 13 are included in the group of school-age drug addicts. Youth-oriented establishments primarily facilitate the distribution of drugs among minors and young people (Fedosova, 2021).

The statistics regarding drug use in the European Union are even more distressing. The table below illustrates the wide spread of cannabis, cocaine and then other types of drugs in Europe (European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2022).

Cannabis

Prevalence of cannabis use in the EU, 2019 or most recent year

Age	Last year use	Rate	Lifetime use	Rrate	Lowest	Highest
Adults (15-64)	22.2 million	7.7 %	78.5 million	27.2 %	n.a.	n.a.
Young adults (15-34)	15.8 million	15.4 %	n.a.	n.a.	3.4 %	21.8 %

Cocaine

Prevalence of cocaine use in the EU, 2019 or most recent year

Population	Last year use	Rate	Lifetime use	Rrate	Lowest	Highest
Adults (15-64)	3.5 million	1.2 %	13.8 million	4.8 %	n.a.	n.a.
Young adults (15-34)	2.2 million	2.1 %	n.a.	n.a.	0.2 %	4.6 %

MDMA

Prevalence of MDMA use in the EU, 2019 or most recent year

Population	Last year use	Rate	Lifetime use	Rrate	Lowest	Highest
Adults (15-64)	2.6 million	0.9 %	10.4 million	3.6 %	n.a.	n.a.
Young adults (15-34)	2.0 million	1.9 %	n.a.	n.a.	0.2 %	8.5 %

Amphetamines

Population	Last year use	Rate	Lifetime use	Rrate	Lowest	Highest
Adults (15-64)	2.0 million	0.7 %	8.7 million	3.0 %	n.a.	n.a.
Young adults (15-34)	1.4 million	1.4 %	n.a.	n.a.	0.0 %	4.1 %

Heroin and other opioids

Drug	High-risk opioid users	OST clients	Drug treatment requests	Opioids in fatal overdoses
Opioids	1 million	510 000	26%	76%

Although the vast majority of states, including Armenia, have made efforts to combat drug trafficking, it remains an issue that is regulated in accordance with international agreements and Armenian legislation (1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1988

Convention for the Suppression of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances). The prevalence of drug use in our country continues to increase each year (Armenia reports an increase, 2018).

Studies have shown that the spread and use of all types of drugs, both mild and severe, are particularly prevalent during and after times of war. This is attributed to the need for stimulation, heightened risk-taking behavior, emotional detachment, and a desire to escape from a complex and negative reality (Andreas, 2019). For example, the UN reported an increase in drug distribution and consumption in Ukraine during the war, reflecting the patterns observed in society prior to the conflict (Conflict in Ukraine, 2022).

Considering the unprecedented socio-psychological challenges and stress caused by the defeat in the 2020 Artsakh war, domestic political instability, and worsening economic conditions, the desire to escape reality may lead even more individuals to engage in drug use and develop addiction (Movsisyan, Galoustian, Aydinian, 2022). Assessing and preventing the risks associated with drug use and distribution are vital issues for safeguarding public health, maintaining order, and ensuring effective governance in Armenia. These efforts necessitate professional interventions, continuous monitoring, and comprehensive research.

Research Results

Recognizing the significance and relevance of the problem, the Scientific Research Center of Applied Problems in Criminology at the National Bureau of Expertise, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, conducted an expert survey involving 16 specialists from the police, the Investigative Committee, and the prosecutor's office.

When examining drug trafficking in our country, experts compared the situation in Armenia with that of other countries. In comparison, the occurrence of this phenomenon in Armenia is relatively less common and does not raise significant concerns in terms of volume. However, the scale of drug distribution can change, particularly with the rise of online technologies and the availability of drugs through platforms like the Telegram application.

When considering the volume of drug trafficking, experts referred to the figures from other countries, which indicated that Armenia, considering its population size, falls significantly behind many other nations.

In the fight against drug trafficking, law enforcement agencies adhere to a plan of measures implemented until 2022 to combat drug addiction and illegal drug trafficking in the Republic of Armenia (RA Government's Decision on Approving, 2022). Although the problem may be insignificant in scale, it presents unique challenges, requiring a comprehensive approach. The police, the National Security Service, and the Office for Combating Smuggling work in sync to combat drug trafficking.

Various state bodies collaborate in the field of drug trafficking, including the police of the Republic of Armenia, the National Security Service, the State Revenue Committee, Penitentiary Institutions, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expert centers, specialized centers, and the Republican Center for Narcology. These entities provide statistical data on drug consumption.

The National Security Council oversees an interdepartmental committee that

involves all relevant departments, including the police, ministries, and other bodies. Through such cooperation, the effectiveness of anti-drug efforts is significantly enhanced.

Combating this pervasive issue is a shared responsibility. As it directly affects our country's future and the well-being of future generations, it is a global issue requiring collaboration with various organizations, both domestically and internationally. Cooperation exists not only among domestic departments but also with international organizations such as the UN and European drug control centers. Joint efforts with counterparts in the United States, European countries, and other countries in the CIS and CSTO are conducted through seminars, meetings, and the exchange of experiences to enhance the organization and effectiveness of drug control measures. Additionally, collaboration with institutions like the US DEA, the International Criminal Court, and the UN further strengthens international cooperation. Special programs, such as the Ion program for new drugs, are designed to identify emerging substances and include them in special watchlists. Currently, there are approximately 30 new drugs that have been identified, and a commission of experts provides evaluations to determine

Some experts struggled to provide a definitive answer regarding the latency of drugs in the context of illegal trafficking, while others initially underestimated it due to the small volumes involved and the effectiveness of the ongoing efforts to combat the issue.

I cannot pinpoint any specific figures regarding the latency. I believe that there will naturally be some latency, but it is likely to be a small percentage. This is because almost all cases are currently being documented due to the active fight against drug trafficking. We have operational information, and law enforcement personnel are dedicated to recording, registering, and exposing each case - an expert from the Armenian Police.

The low percentage of latency can also be attributed to the limited number of import routes. Since we do not have a sea route, importation is only possible via air or land. There are only two available land routes: through Iran and Georgia. While importers use various routes, the Iranian route carries the highest risk and accounts for the largest percentage of imported drugs, surpassing all other countries combined. Opium, as well as drugs like amphetamines and methamphetamines, are primarily imported from Iran. In contrast, the sphere of air importation is broader, including routes from the USA, Canada, European countries, Russia, and Turkey. Importation from other countries is rare. The American and French directions are particularly active in terms of volume, serving as sources of heroin, cocaine, and recently, other drugs. Experts attribute this circumstance to the presence of a strong Armenian community in these countries, through which drugs are smuggled into Armenia using various methods.

For instance, we have a sizable Armenian community in France, which means we also have friends and relatives seeking to expand their business ventures. Criminal elements exploit these connections, enabling people from our country to establish ties and receive tablets from France that are prescribed by doctors as medicine. These tablets are then used intravenously as drugs in Armenia - an expert from the Armenian Police.

The substantial amount of drug importation from Iran can be attributed to its border with Afghanistan, a major hub for drug exports. Additionally, Iranians play a significant role among importers.

Ground transport typically involves hiding drugs in secret compartments within cars or concealing them in luggage. The air method primarily entails concealing drugs in premises, clothing, or even within the body (such as the stomach or intestines).

Frequently, drugs are stored within organs or swallowed in the form of strips, which are later excreted upon arrival or held in the rectum after special preparation. Similar concealment methods are employed for drugs coming from Russia or European countries. There are also cases where drugs are concealed in chewing gum, sweets, or openly placed in electronic cigarettes and sent - an expert from the Armenian Police.

To ensure maximum efficiency, strict control measures are crucial at customs checkpoints to identify and apprehend individuals involved in drug purchase and sale. Inspection stations have also been established to facilitate thorough searches of vehicles, individuals, and clothing.

Several anti-drug measures are carried out with the involvement of relevant departments. For instance, the "Konopla-Mak" operation is conducted to detect and destroy wild hemp plants. Furthermore, as part of the CSTO countries' cooperation, the Canal anti-drug program is regularly implemented to combat drug trafficking through information sharing and mutual support among CSTO member states.

In the fight against drug trafficking, a significant amount of work is carried out through operational-search measures, such as wiretaps, surveillance of individuals at border crossings, and investigative actions, including interrogations. These measures are conducted by experts from the Investigative Committee of the RA.

While experts consider the measures implemented in the fight against drug trafficking to be sufficient, they believe that tightening control at checkpoints and customs services should be supplemented with a consistent study of new knowledge and international experience. Criminals constantly improve their qualifications, utilizing the latest technologies, and are always one step ahead.

In the current period, we are implementing a set of measures that were necessary, but offenders are attempting to improve their methods of concealment, acquisition, and importation. We can say that we are lagging behind by one or two steps, as the issue concerns the preservation of the national gene pool. Therefore, continuous annual events are crucial, according to an expert from the police.

Since narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are often imported by mail, experts focus on informing the population through the media about the illegality of such imports. In our country, when a person involved in drug use or trading is detected, a search is conducted, and they are then sent to the appropriate expert

department. Only based on the expert's conclusion can the type of drug be established, and this department is also responsible for initiating a criminal case. This process takes a significant amount of time.

As an additional and effective measure, experts suggest acquiring equipment available in different foreign countries. The use of such equipment greatly facilitates faster identification and preliminary disclosure of the type of drug. It is also necessary to increase the number of staff members, improve the material and technical resources, prioritize business trips to enhance professional knowledge, study foreign experiences, and familiarize oneself with new methods and tools. Experts also emphasize the importance of legislative changes.

In my opinion, it is necessary to create a legislative framework that will be approved by the National Assembly. Changes in drug quantities, increases, or the inclusion of new drugs that are becoming more popular should be considered, - an expert from the RA police.

International cooperation, experience exchange, and additional financing are also of considerable importance, as mentioned before. Another significant observation is that a large percentage of drug use and sales occur within criminal-executive institutions. Therefore, special attention should be paid to these institutions during the implementation of measures.

Penitentiary institutions have numerous events. For instance, in today's drug trafficking, mobile phones play a crucial role. If individuals in penal institutions are unable to use mobile phones and are cut off from the outside world, they cannot organize drug-related activities. Expert, the prosecutor's office of Armenia.

Constant monitoring of changes in the assortment of drugs necessitates legislative changes. While most experts consider the existing legal norms sufficient, they must be continually improved over time due to the emergence of new types of drugs. Since legal regulations provide for intervention in the presence of any drug from the list, newly emerged drugs should also be added to the existing drug list to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against drug trafficking.

We have also dealt with cases related to drugs that were initially considered medicinal, but later we discovered that when these drugs with medical significance are abused, they become equivalent to illicit drugs. Medications containing codeine, which were previously ordinary medicines for common ailments like headaches, have become a significant source of abuse and have already been included in the list of substances under special control through legislative initiatives, as confirmed by an expert from the police.

In this regard, the United Nations Office for Narcotic Drugs provides significant assistance by informing all countries about new types of drugs worldwide.

In the context of combating drug trafficking, it is crucial to have legal regulations in place to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts.

While some countries have legalized certain types of drugs, particularly marijuana, due to their use in medicine, experts' opinion regarding the legalization

of any mild drug, such as marijuana, in our country is generally and unambiguously negative. Firstly, from a medical standpoint, even an extremely small dose can have a positive effect. Secondly, considering the influence on the human body, it is not justified since it varies from individual to individual. There is also concern about the emergence of negative consequences, which could have a detrimental impact on future generations. Additionally, there is an increased risk of influencing minors.

The legalization of drugs will not prevent their use by minors, as they often unknowingly succumb to temptation, leading to addiction and irreversible consequences. This viewpoint is shared by an expert from the RA police.

The importation of a large number of drugs from Iran poses a problem for preserving the nation and maintaining a healthy society. Currently, there is a promotion of a healthy lifestyle, the use of environmentally friendly products, engagement in sports, and more. Therefore, illegal drug use can only lead to negative consequences. Whether it is marijuana or any other mild drug is irrelevant since each individual's reaction is unique, and it is not for an expert from the police to decide.

In general, experts believe that the legalization of mild drugs will have certain negative consequences. The main concern is the impact on the future generations' health and the potential for widespread manifestations. As previously mentioned, legalization would have negative effects on physiology and overall human well-being. Refraining from drug use contributes to the improvement of our nation's gene pool. This perspective is shared by an expert from the RA police. In essence, experts unanimously view drug addiction as a problem that threatens the existence of our nation, and they approach combating this issue through various mechanisms.

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APPLICABILITY OF POSSIBLE MODELS TO ENSURE EASY ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR RA STUDENTS***Syuzanna Yeghiazaryan** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1353-1639>Researcher, Faculty of Sociology, Yerevan State University (Armenia). Email suzanna.yeghiazaryan@mail.ru

Abstract. *The issue of student employment is always relevant in the context of ensuring the unimpeded entry of young professionals into the labor market, justification and proportionality of the employer's requirement for work experience to a person who has received a new scientific qualification. Ensuring the employment of students also includes the task of balancing professional theoretical and practical knowledge, which allows developing the ability to apply theory in practice, which is one of the important foundations of professional experience. At present, the issue of compliance with the requirements of the employer and university education is also relevant in terms of student employment. The difference between supply and demand in the labor market is increasing from year to year, as a result of which the real problems of finding employment for young workers are exacerbated. The need to balance the theoretical and practical aspects of professional knowledge in Armenian universities makes the issue more relevant. The article identified the following issues: 1. Find out the importance of combining study and work in reducing the unemployment rate of university graduates, thereby ensuring unhindered access for specialists to the labor market, increasing student employment in professional activities. 2. To identify effective employment models that ensure a smooth transition of high-quality specialists from the university to the labor market and do not negatively affect the quality of education. 3. To highlight the possibilities of effective implementation of student employment models in Armenian universities. 4. In the process of providing employment for students, allocate opportunities for employment related to their future profession. In the article, a number of issues of student employment are considered, related to solving the problems of interaction between universities and the labor market, ensuring unhindered access of students to the labor market, and also determining ways to prevent the negative impact of student employment on the quality of education. Thus, the informational model of interaction between the university and the labor market, the motivational model of student behavior, as well as the organization of employment of students according to their future profession or related professions are of great importance for increasing the level of professional training of students, professional adaptation and solving problems of social integration in the industrial environment.*

Keywords: *university, labor and professional experience, employment assistance center, competitive advantage*

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ԵՊՀ սոցիոլոգիայի պատմության և տեսության ամբիոնի հայցորդ:

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Ամփոփում: Ներկայումս ուսանողների զբաղվածության հարցում հրատապ է գործատուի պահանջների և բուհական կրթության համապատասխանության խնդիրը: Տարեցտարի աշխատաշուկայում սրընթաց աճում է առաջարկի և պահանջարկի տարբերությունը, որի պատճառով սրվում են երիտասարդ աշխատողների իրական զբաղվածության խնդիրները: Հարցն առավել արդիական է դարձնում Հայաստանի բուհերում մասնագիտական գիտելիքների տեսական ու գործնական կողմերի հավասարակշռման անհրաժեշտությունը: Ինչպես աշխարհի շատ երկրների բուհերում, մեր երկրում նույնպես տարիներ շարունակ եղել է և կատեսական գիտելիքները գործնականում կիրառելու բացը, որն ապագա մասնագետների մասնագիտական փորձառության և դրանով անխոչընդոտ աշխատաշուկա մտնելու կարևոր պայմանն է: Ուսանողական տարիներին մասնագիտական տեսական գիտելիքները աշխատանքում գործածելու կարողությունների ու հմտությունների վերածելը, աշխատանքային փորձի ձեռքբերումը նպաստում են նրանց սոցիալական և մասնագիտական հարմարմանը հասարակության մեջ, ինչպես նաև՝ աշխատաշուկայում մրցակցային առավելությունների ավելացմանը: Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է՝ ուսումնասիրել ուսանողների զբաղվածության ապահովման հնարավոր մոդելները: Հոդվածում քննարկվել են հետևյալ խնդիրները. 1. պարզել ուսումնառության և աշխատանքի համատեղման նշանակությունը բուհերի շրջանավարտների գործազրկության մակարդակի նվազեցման, դրանով մասնագետների անխոչընդոտ մուտքն աշխատաշուկա ապահովելու, մասնագիտական աշխատանքով ուսանողների զբաղվածության ավելացման հարցում: 2. Բացահայտել բուհից աշխատաշուկա բարձրորակ մասնագետների անխոչընդոտ անցումն ապահովող և կրթության որակի վրա բացասաբար չազդող զբաղվածության արդյունավետ մոդելներ: 3. Վեր հանել Հայաստանի բուհերում ուսանողների զբաղվածության ապահովման մոդելների արդյունավետ ներդրման հնարավորությունները: 4. Ուսանողների զբաղվածության ապահովման գործընթացում պարզել նրանց ապագա մասնագիտությանը վերաբերող աշխատանքային գործունեությամբ զբաղվելու հնարավորությունները: Կարևորվում են բուհ-աշխատաշուկա համագործակցության տեղեկատվական մոդելը, ուսանողների վարքի դրդապատճառային մոդելը, ինչպես նաև ուսանողների զբաղվածությունը նրանց ապագա մասնագիտությամբ կամ հարակից մասնագիտություններով կազմակերպելը, որոնք խիստ կարևոր են ուսանողների մասնագիտական պատրաստվածության մակարդակի բարձրացման, մասնագիտական հարմարման և աշխատանքային միջավայրում սոցիալական ներառման խնդիրների լուծման համար:

Բանալի բառեր – *համալսարան, աշխատանքային և մասնագիտական փորձ, զբաղվածության խթանման կենտրոն, մրցակցային առավելություն*

ПРИМЕНИМОСТЬ ВОЗМОЖНЫХ МОДЕЛЕЙ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ БЕСПРЕПЯТСТВЕННОГО ДОСТУПА К ЗАНЯТОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ РА

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Резюме. *Вопрос трудоустройства студентов всегда актуален в контексте обеспечения беспрепятственного выхода молодых специалистов на рынок труда, обоснованности и соразмерности требования работодателя к стажу работы лицу, получившему новую научную квалификацию. Обеспечение трудоустройства студентов также включает в себя задачу балансирования профессиональных теоретических и практических знаний, что позволяет развивать умение применять теорию на практике, что является одной из важных основ профессионального опыта. В настоящее время вопрос соответствия требованиям работодателя и вузовского образования актуален и в плане трудоустройства студентов. Разница между спросом и предложением на рынке труда год от года увеличивается, в результате чего обостряются реальные проблемы трудоустройства молодых работников. Необходимость сбалансировать теоретические и практические аспекты профессиональных знаний в вузах Армении делает вопрос более актуальным. В статье были выявлены следующие проблемы: 1. Выяснить значение совмещения учебы и работы в снижении уровня безработицы выпускников вузов, тем самым обеспечить беспрепятственный доступ специалистов на рынок труда, повышение занятости студентов в профессиональной деятельности. 2. Выявить эффективные модели трудоустройства, обеспечивающие плавный переход качественных специалистов из вуза на рынок труда и не влияющие негативно на качество образования. 3. Осветить возможности эффективного внедрения моделей трудоустройства студентов в вузах Армении. 4. В процессе трудоустройства обучающихся выделять возможности трудоустройства, связанные с их будущей профессией. В статье рассматривается ряд вопросов обеспечения трудоустройства студентов, связанных с решением проблем взаимодействия вузов с рынком труда, обеспечением беспрепятственного доступа студентов на рынок труда, а также определением путей предотвращения негативного влияния трудоустройства студентов на качество образования. Таким образом, информационная модель взаимодействия вуза и рынка труда, мотивационная модель поведения студентов, а также организация трудоустройства студентов по будущей профессии или смежным профессиям имеют большое значение для повышения уровня профессиональной подготовки студентов, профессиональной адаптации и решения проблем социальной интеграции в производственной среде.*

Ключевые слова: *вуз, трудовой и профессиональный опыт, центр содействия занятости, конкурентное преимущество*

Introduction

When studying the issues of student employment, researchers describe theoretical models of employment simultaneously with part-time employment or temporary, part-time employment, highlighting the problem of combining study and work of students (Pakhomova, Rudneva, 2013). A.A. Kozhurova characterizes the structure of the mechanism for regulating the employment of students by stages of development. A model of employment of a competitive young specialist is

presented, on the basis of which links and characteristics are described that ensure the formation of a competitive professional in a competitive environment of the labor market. It offers a *competitive employment model* for young professionals. It consists of the functions of regulation of youth employment or mechanisms of cooperation of all actors in the process of ensuring successful employment. A model that allows for the interaction of universities and the employment center with all subjects of the educational services market and the labor market, such as public educational institutions, universities, enterprises and the media (Kozhurova, 2017).

The advantage of the mechanism proposed by A.A. Kozhurova, is the focus of the system on the final result. As the end result of this mechanism, she calls “the hiring of a competitive young specialist, tested by competitive relations and phenomena in the real sector of the labor market. The employer concludes an employment contract with the employment center for a probationary period. A specialist who has successfully passed the test (competition) can be accepted on a permanent basis. If for one reason or another the probationary period has not ended, the employer has the right to terminate the employment contract. In this situation, the young person gets the opportunity to return to the labor market, get a different profession and look for a job with a new competitive status (Kozhurova, 2017).”

N.K. Mikhailova describes the main motivational models of behavior of full-time students working in a study-work combination. The behavior of working students is analyzed using a model of behavioral motivation through requirements. According to this model, “behavior is based on needs, which in this case induce (motivate) students to certain behavior (actions) aimed at satisfying the requirement” (Mikhailova, 2018).

Motivational models of behavior are considered from the point of view of needs as regulators of behavior. There are three motivational models of student employment, the first of which is based on *material needs*. The latter include the following motives: the desire to earn money to pay for education, the desire to be financially independent from parents (at least partially) in case of difficulties in covering the financial costs of the student's education. The conducted studies confirm that the choice of work within the framework of this model is in no way connected with the future profession, students do not have the problem of acquiring professional experience in employment. At the same time, preference is given to more paid jobs, regardless of working conditions, such as informal employment, inconvenient work schedules, lack of social guarantees, etc. Students with this type of employment often miss classes and have debts. The employment of students is informal, characterized by unevenness and low-quality jobs (Mikhailova, 2018).

This model is the most common in our country, because the main motivation for students to find a job during their studies is financial and economic, in the form of paying tuition fees, taking care of living conditions, etc. The main drawback of this model is that as a result of trying to combine study and work, in many cases, study is pushed to the secondary plan, as a result of which the student's professional knowledge is not formed at the proper level. However, among the advantages, one can mention the acquisition of practical experience and having already accumulated some work experience at the end of the studies, which can contribute to being more in demand and competitive in the labor market.

In the second motivational model of student employment, students strive to

work in modern organizations, gain professional and work experience. This model is considered effective, as students seek to get an official job close to their future profession in order to acquire the necessary skills and abilities to engage in professional activities, as well as work experience that increases the chances of finding a job in their specialty. This model is also characterized by an increase in students' interest in learning, “especially if the employer is interested in acquiring an employee with high-quality theoretical training. Therefore, when applying this employment model, the work activity of students contributes to professional inclusion, and early entry into the labor market increases the possibility of employment after graduation” (Mikhailova, 2018).

We can note that with this model, students are provided with more opportunities. Moreover, in recent years this employment model has become more and more popular in Armenian practice, as more and more students combine work and study, moreover, for various reasons: increasing the level of professional competence, combining variety and practical, opportunity for career advancement, etc.

Researchers have repeatedly spoken about the problem of employment of young professionals: employers are afraid to take on permanent jobs students and workers of the age group who have just completed their studies, because they are hindered by lack of work experience. On the other hand, among students who combine study and work, today there is a tendency to continue their studies, which reduces their work motivation (Razumova, Yanchuk, 2021).

The third motivational model is typical for self-employed students. The number of working students who have created jobs for themselves is small, so this model is not common. "Such students are active, sociable, self-confident, willing to take risks, have certain resources" (Mikhailova, 2019). N.K. Mikhailovna, T.A. Yarkov explains this motivational layout by the desire of students to acquire new skills and experience, which become competitive advantages for them in the labor market after graduation (Mikhailova, Yarkova, 2019).

We can say that the third model is even less applicable in our country, because the perceptions of self-employment, the need to combine study and work, as well as the corresponding awareness and responsibility have not yet been formed among our students. The main advantage of this model is to endow students with a number of characteristics: initiative, responsibility, self-awareness, etc. However, the short-term, informal nature of the work, which does not contribute much to further career advancement, can be noted as a disadvantage.

“The implementation of professional competencies most often occurs without the participation of the university, and it is the university that should help students undergo professional socialization” (Potravnaya, 2015). In principle, the creation and functioning of a model of social integration of students in the world of work becomes important and relevant. Therefore, state regulation of higher and professional education and the labor market should also be aimed at enhancing the role of universities in ensuring student employment. Universities should regulate the process of employment of working students (Evans, Gbadamosi, Richardson, 2014).

Murom Institute (branch) of Vladimir State University named after A.G. and N.G. Stoletovs has an interesting model of social integration of students in the sphere of work. The institute has created and operates a system to promote the labor

integration of university graduates, which is based on a theoretical model of the process of social integration of university graduates in the world of work (Popova, 2016). The constituent elements of this system are the subdivisions functioning at the institute (department of pre-university training, selection committee, departments of industrial practice, educational, additional professional education, employment support service for graduates of the university). Many of these structural units functioned as part of the university for a long time, but acted separately from each other. A few years ago, the leadership of the institute decided to combine these departments and services into a single system for their more efficient activities (from the recruitment of applicants to the employment of graduates (Popova, 2016).

The presented model of integration of graduates and its elements outlined above can be implemented in the activities of Armenian universities. In the process of introducing this model in Armenian universities, the real needs of the labor market in the region should be taken into account (Patton, 2001).

It is no secret that there is a certain "gap" between the requirements of the employer and the training of university graduates, which determines the current state of the labor market in Armenia and the presence of a number of negative trends. Such a model would also fill this gap by ensuring that experienced professionals enter the labor market. It will also promote a motivational system for students that will encourage them to work in their future profession along with their studies. In essence, the motivational system of student employment should balance material and professional motivations, when work during study is conditioned by the desire to improve the financial situation, as well as to acquire skills and experience.

Solving financial problems and gaining experience become the basis for the professional development of a working student and raising the level of those involved in professional activities in the labor market, therefore, improving the quality of work. Thus, the attractiveness of studying at a university is balanced - the quality of study - professional activity - effective work. Thus, the university prepares specialists who meet most of the modern demands of employers and who have competitive advantages in the labor market.

Constant changes in various fields of science, especially in the field of information technology, the introduction of innovations make employers seriously think about the selection of personnel. Employers want to be sure that a new graduate will be useful immediately, without additional investment in his training. Therefore, to increase their value, professionals from different fields, especially IT graduates, must have the necessary technical skills, experience with real-world problems, and interpersonal skills (Grant, Malloy, Murphy, Foreman, Robinson, 2010). But an effective solution to the problems of employment of graduates is possible only with the interaction of all participants in the process of forming graduates: the student himself, the university, the bodies of the Ministry of Education and Science, culture and sports, business structures and public organizations (Gimpelson, 2009).

The task of the university should be the formation of such a model of education so that the graduate is in demand in the labor market (Satybaldieva, Ualieva, Moldagulova, 2012).

The information model is considered effective for the interaction between the university and the labor market (enterprises, organizations). Within the framework of this model, graduates are informed about vacancies in the specialty of their professional education and related fields of activity, as well as employers are informed about the merits of graduates who need employment. To this end, changes in the labor market are monitored, various information and promotional materials are published, as well as directories of the best university graduates, open electronic databases, company presentations, job fairs and graduates, competitions are organized, various types of tests, tests, interviews, etc. d. This is one of the main models of activity of employment promotion centers of vocational educational institutions.

The mentioned model can be effectively applied to ensure the employment of students of Armenian universities and solve the problem of their employment after graduation, since an important field of activity of university employment and employment centers is to increase the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market and consists in temporary (secondary) organization of employment and work internships during the free study period. And here the model of information interaction plays an important role. The organization of temporary (additional) employment of students primarily aims to give students the opportunity to earn extra money in their free time to solve their social problems. However, it also helps students gain hands-on work experience, develop their communication skills, and learn about the technologies of various businesses and organizations, especially in the small and medium-sized enterprises sector (Satybaldieva, Ualieva, Moldagulova, 2012).

Temporary work can be effective for undergraduate and graduate students. Students have the opportunity to engage in temporary work during the summer holidays. In order to prevent the negative impact of employment on the quality of education, in most cases, temporary work is related to the future profession of students (Satybaldieva, Ualieva, Moldagulova, 2012). This is an important factor in balancing the theoretical and practical aspects of studying at a university.

The organization of internships for students in their free time is mainly aimed at obtaining practical experience in the field of education in universities, as well as in a related or complementary profession. Such internships are more relevant for students of economic specialties who, after graduation, due to lack of work experience, are not hired and do not have the opportunity to gain the necessary experience. Mathematics, science and engineering students at universities also need experience to get to know, for example, banks or other financial institutions, insurance companies, trade and commercial enterprises and other technologies where they would like to work in the future (Satybaldieva, Ualieva, Moldagulova, 2012).

The goal of the effective operation of the information model should be to ensure the experience and professional training of students, and experience should become an important factor in increasing the competitiveness of university graduates and ensuring the further entry of highly qualified specialists into the labor market (Triventi, 2014). In order to localize the information model in Armenian universities, it is important to create employment and employment promotion centers, as well as the necessary base for experience-oriented practice. On the other

hand, it is necessary through cooperation to ensure that employers, in addition to preferring the training of specialists, also plan their resources for the targeted training of specialists in universities or the organization of narrow professional specialization and internships for students (Passaretta G., Triventi M., 2015).

In previous studies also considered the issue of interaction between structures dealing with student employment issues, considering this the main direction of increasing the level of student employment. In this context, for effective cooperation, we emphasize the closeness of cooperation and partnership between state and non-state structures and universities interested in solving the problem, developing and implementing their new forms, ensuring the active participation of students in internships, research work and organizing their professional part-time employment based on professional orientation, raising awareness of demand trends in the labor market. These steps are aimed at ensuring a significant increase in the degree of employment of students and solving the problem of training specialists in accordance with the requirements of the employer, as well as the problem of the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market, since before graduation they will already have work experience that meets the requirements of today employer, which really hinders finding a job in the labor market today (Yeghiazaryan, 2020).

In order to ensure the organization of interaction between representatives of the education system, society, families, business structures, state and city authorities, it seems important to develop a model for managing students' secondary employment, which is an important direction in *improving the policy of managing students' labor activities* (Richardson, Evans, Gbadamosi, 2009). According to the model, the goal of student secondary employment management is the comprehensive development of young people and their potential, which should contribute to increasing active influence on various processes of creating advantages and value, as well as ensuring sustainable development. educational and professional systems (Alexandrovna, 2018). The model of managing the employment of secondary school students is built on three levels: state, intrastate and student youth institution. "With the dominance of the policy of passive employment, the state is given the leading role, because it is faced with the task of ensuring the preservation of jobs for those who want to work. For employers, the state must ensure the conditions under which the demand for their products will be ensured, for the unemployed, benefits and assistance in finding employment" (Alexandrovna, 2018).

In order do not reduce the quality of education of working students, in the organization of their professional and labor activity, we focus on labor activity in their future profession or related professions. Researchers of the problem testify to its importance, noting that some of the students, whose joint employment is related to their future profession (field of employment, places of work), form professional competencies (abilities), their social and professional identity. Observing a career, first of all, as a progressive movement of a person associated with the growth of professional skills and status, students perceive this time as an intermediate stage of the preliminary stage of a future professional career. Therefore, they do not consider it necessary to build their career only for the purpose of generating income. "During the student years, the "strength test", the combination of student studies and work contributes to their social and professional adaptation in society.

However, this process should not be carried out to the detriment of the main goal - getting an education, therefore, universities should take a differentiated approach to the issue of individualization of the education of busy students (Mikhailova, Yarkova).

In the motivational system of students' behavior, a balance of material and professional motivation is possible, when work during study is conditioned by the desire to improve their financial situation, acquire professional skills and work experience. Moreover, this can be achieved by ensuring the employment of students with professional paid work. The fact is that it is at the stage of study that the foundation for the professionalism of future specialists is laid, and already in labor activity it is rebuilt and strengthened.

Conclusions

The main results of the research and main conclusions derived from them are given below. The main problems in ensuring easy access for employment for young people in RA are: 1) a high proportion of informal youth employment; 2) difficulties in finding employment for university graduates, an imbalance in supply and demand in the youth labor market in terms of professional qualifications; 3) youth unemployment; 4) low guarantees for new forms of youth employment; 5) lack of statistical data on many indicators of decent work in the youth segment; 6) high differentiation of the profiles of "worthiness" of work by types of activity, etc. The different approaches to the implementation of the principles of work for students made it possible to develop a model of the mechanism for implementing the principles of work in the field of youth employment, which includes a set of methods and tools for influencing the subjects of social and labor relations on the characteristics of youth employment.

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INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS - ՏԵՂԵԿԱՏՎՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՀԵՂԻՆԱԿՆԵՐԻ ՀԱՄԱՐ - ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ДЛЯ АВТОРОВ

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Published book:

Crow, G. (1997). *Comparative Sociology and Social Theory*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Chapter in an edited book:

Nielsen, K., Jessop, B., Hausner, J. (2005). Institutional Change in Post-Socialism. *Strategic Choice and Path-Dependency in Post-Socialism* (eds. Hausner, J., Jessop, B., Nielsen, K.). Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 67-83.

Article in a journal:

Atanesyan, A. (2020). Media Framing on Armed Conflicts: Limits of Peace Journalism on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 14:4, p. 534-550. DOI: [10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018](https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018)

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- հաջորդ տողում՝ հեղինակի անուն-ազգանունը (գլխատառերով)
- հոդվածի վերջում նշվում են հեղինակի գիտական աստիճանն ու կոչումը, աշխատանքի վայրը, պաշտոնը, հեռախոսահամարը և

Էլեկտրոնային փոստի անվանումը (հեռախոսահամարը և էլ. փոստի անվանումը տպագրվում են հեղինակի համաձայնությամբ)

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- մերժված հոդվածը չի վերադարձվում
- խմբագրությունը կարող է տպագրված հոդվածները գետեղել հայաստանյան և արտերկրյա էլեկտրոնային շտեմարաններում և համացանցային կայքերում առանց օգտագործման իրավունքի սահմանափակման:

ԱՂՔՑՈՒՐՆԵՐԻ ՕԳՏԱԳՈՐԾՄԱՆ ԵՎ ՀՂՄԱՆ ՊԱՀԱՆՁՆԵՐԸ

Հոդվածի սկզբում ներկայացվող ամփոփումը պետք է հստակ պատկերացում տա, թե ինչի մասին է հոդվածը: Հաջողված ամփոփումը սովորաբար պարունակում է՝

- արդիականության և հետազոտվող խնդիրների հստակ ձևակերպում,
- տվյալների և մեթոդ(ներ)ի հակիրճ նկարագրություն,
- ստացված հիմնական տվյալների բացատրություն (կամ փաստարկներ, եթե աշխատանքը գուտ տեսական է):

Բոլոր աղյուսակներն ու պատկերները պետք է պատրաստվեն այնպես, որ բացվեն Microsoft Word և/կամ Excel ստանդարտ ծրագրային ապահովմամբ: Այլ կերպ՝ դրանք պետք է ճանաչելի լինեն (տպագրության համար ապահովվեն հիմնավոր սահմանում) և նախընտրելի է, որ լինեն սև ու սպիտակ (կամ մոխրագույն երանգներով): Գրաֆիկական ֆայլերը պետք է լինեն TIF կամ JPG ձևաչափով 300dpi կետայնությամբ:

Գրքերի, մենագրությունների, հոդվածների և վիճակագրական տվյալների **հղումները** տեքստում պետք է տրվեն փակագծերում՝ նշելով

հեղինակի ազգանունը, հրատարակման տարեթիվը, էջ(եր)ը՝ ըստ անհրաժեշտության:

Երբ հեղինակի անունը նշվում է տեքստում, հղեք հետևյալ կերպ՝ (Ավետիսյան, 2001): Երբ հղում եք անում էջին մեջբերման համար, կիրառեք հետևյալ ոճը՝ (ՄքԼուիան, 2001:91-92): Եթե աղբյուրն ունի երկու հեղինակ, երկու հեղինակի անունն էլ նշեք՝ անջատելով ստորակետով: Եթե հեղինակները երեքն են կամ ավելին, օգտագործեք «և այլք», օրինակ՝ (Գրիգորյան և այլք, 2010):

Ինստիտուցիոնալ հեղինակության համար օգտագործեք հետևյալը՝ (ՀՆԿԿ (Հետազոտական ռեսուրսների կովկասյան կենտրոն) CRRC Կովկասյան բարոմետր, 2001): Մեկ տարվա ընթացքում հեղինակի մեկից ավելի հղումները փակագծում տարանջատել հրատարակման տարեթվից առաջ տեղադրված թվեր օգտագործելով՝ (Պետերսոն 1, 2001): Փակագծերում ներառեք մինչև երեք հղում, որոնք բաժանված են կետ- ստորակետով: Բոլոր հղումները նշեք ժամանակագրական, ապա այբբենական կարգով՝ (Քելլի, 1999; Դոուլ, 2002; Բեյկեր, 2003):

Հոդվածի վերջում աղբյուրները նշեք ըստ այբբենական կարգի, իսկ նույն հեղինակի աշխատությունները՝ ըստ հրատարակման տարեթվի: Ընդունված հղումների օրինակները հաջորդիվ՝

Հրատարակված գիրք՝

Crow, G. (1997). *Comparative Sociology and Social Theory*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Խմբագրված գրքի գլուխ՝

Nielsen, K., Jessop, B., Hausner, J. (2005). Institutional Change in Post-Socialism. *Strategic Choice and Path-Dependency in Post-Socialism* (eds.

Hausner, J., Jessop, B., Nielsen, K.). Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 67-83.

Հոդված գիտական հանդեսում՝

Atanesyan, A. (2020). Media Framing on Armed Conflicts: Limits of Peace Journalism on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 14:4, p. 534-550. DOI: [10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018](https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018)

Որևէ կազմակերպության կողմից հրատարակված աշխատանք՝

World Bank (2005). *World Development Report 2005*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Ծանոթագրությունները պետք է ներկայացվեն տվյալ էջի ներքևում՝ տողատակում և պարունակեն լրացուցիչ բացատրություն, ոչ գիտական աղբյուրներ՝ հոդվածներ թերթերից, բառարաններից, իրավական փաստաթղթեր, և այլն: Բացի տողատակերից՝ այդպիսի աղբյուրների ներառումը գրականության ցանկում չի պահանջվում: Բոլոր հապավումները պետք է բացվեն:

Ներկայացված բոլոր աշխատանքներն ի սկզբանե ուսումնասիրվում են **խմբագրական կոլեգիայի** կողմից: Այս փուլում աշխատանքը կարող է մերժվել մասնագիտական եզրակացությունից առաջ, եթե այն բավարար չափով որակյալ չէ, չի համապատասխանում ուղեցույցի և հանդեսի պահանջներին: Մա կօգնի արագ որոշելու ներկայացված աշխատանքի անհամապատասխանությունը տպագրության պահանջներին և իրազեկելու հեղինակներին այդ մասին: Այն աշխատանքները, որոնք անցնում են նախնական վերանայման գործընթաց, ուղարկվում են մասնագիտական եզրակացության: Գրախոսման գործընթացը «կույր» է: Հոդվածներն ընտրվում են տպագրության ըստ մասնագիտական եզրակացության, փոփոխություններ կատարելու հեղինակի պատրաստակամության և խմբագրի վերջնական ընտրության: Մասնագիտական բացասական եզրակացություն ստացած հոդվածները մերժվում են:

Ինքնահղում. Խուսափեք կամ նվազագույնի հասցրեք Ձեզ հղում անելը: Անդրադարձեք Ձեր սեփական հղումներին երրորդ դեմքով: Օրինակ՝ գրեք «Հակոբյանը և Մովսիսյանը (2018) ցույց են տվել», ոչ թե «Մենք նախկինում ցույց ենք տվել (Հակոբյանը և Մովսիսյանը 2018)»:

Գրագողության բացառումը. հանդեսը հրատարակում է նորույթ պարունակող գիտահետազոտական աշխատանքներ: Հոդվածը հանդեսին հանձնելն ինքնին ենթադրում է, որ ուսումնասիրությունը չի տպագրվել կամ չի ներկայացվել այլ հանդեսում տպագրության: Եթե հեղինակներն օգտագործում են հրատարակված նյութի որևէ հատված (որևէ լեզվով), ապա նրանք պետք է պատշաճ հղումներ տան: Գրագողություն պարունակող աշխատանքները չեն ընդունվի տպագրության:

Հեղինակների աշխատանքների ինքնաարխիվացում. մինչև հանդեսում հրատարակելը հեղինակները պահպանում են հոդվածի բնօրինակը իրենց անձնական կայքում և այն հասանելի դարձնելու իրավունքը այն պայմանով, որ ընդունման պահից հեղինակները պատասխանատու են արխիվացված, դեռ չտպագրված նյութը DOI-ով թարմացնելու և այն հոդվածի տպագրված տարբերակին կցելու համար:

Հանդեսը հեղինակներին թույլ է տալիս օգտագործել հրատարակված հոդվածի վերջնական տարբերակը (հրատարակիչ pdf) հեղինակի անձնական կայքէջում և/կամ իր հաստատության պահոցում (շահույթ չհետապնդող սերվերում) արխիվացման համար: Հոդվածի լույսընծայումից հետո այլևս որևէ սահմանափակում չկա: Անհրաժեշտ է հաստատել հրատարակության աղբյուրը և հղումը անել պարբերականի գլխավոր էջին կամ հոդվածների DOI-ին:

Հոդվածի մշակման վճարներ. հանդեսը հեղինակներից որևէ վճար չի գանձում վերջիններիս աշխատանքների խմբագրման և հրատարակման համար:

Հեղինակային տեղեկատվությունը

Անունները և էլեկտրոնային փոստի հասցեները, որոնք մուտքագրվում են այս կայքում, կօգտագործվեն բացառապես հանդեսում նշված նպատակների համար և հասանելի չեն լինի այլ նպատակների համար կամ այլ անձանց ու կազմակերպություններին:

Руководство для авторов

Статьи должны составлять до 20 страниц в Microsoft Word и содержать следующую информацию:

- в начале статьи ставится заглавие (прописными буквами)
- в следующей строке – имя и фамилия автора (прописными буквами)
- в конце статьи указываются ученая степень и звание автора, место работы, должность, номер телефона и адрес электронной почты (номер телефона и e-mail печатаются с согласия автора)
- поля: поверх текста 25 мм, под текстом 25 мм, справа 25 мм, слева 20 мм
- шрифт армянского текста: Sylfaen
- шрифт английского текста: Times New Roman
- шрифт русского текста: Times New Roman
- основной размер шрифта – 11, интервал между строками – 1,5, ширина графиков и таблиц – до 125 мм
- ссылки даются внизу страницы в порядке возрастания, размер шрифта – 10, указывается автор источника (жирным шрифтом), название, том, место, год издания (газеты или журнала также номер) и страница

Требования к резюме

Резюме должно дать ясное представление о содержании статьи. В нём обычно чётко сформулированы

- исследуемые вопросы и их актуальность,
- краткое описание данных и методов (метода),
- пояснения к основным из полученных результатов (или аргументы, если работа носит сугубо теоретический характер).

ПРИМЕЧАНИЯ, ССЫЛКИ И ГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ ДАННЫЕ

Система АРА: *ссылки* на книги, монографии, статьи и статистические данные нужно привести в скобках, указав фамилию автора, год издания и страницу. В тексте ссылки на книги, монографии, статьи и статистические данные следует давать в скобках, указав фамилию автора, дату издания и при необходимости страницы. Когда имя автора указано в тексте, ссылайтесь следующим образом: (Аветисян, 2001). Когда ссылаетесь на страницу цитаты, используйте следующий стиль: (Аветисян, 2001:91-92).

Если источник имеет двух авторов, укажите имена обоих, разделив их запятой. Если авторов трое или больше, воспользуйтесь продолжением «и другие», например: (Григорян и другие, 2010).

При институциональном авторстве пишите так: КЦИИ (Кавказский центр исследовательских ресурсов) «Кавказский барометр» CRRC, 2001).

Если в скобках даётся более одной ссылки на труды одного автора, опубликованные в течение года, используйте цифры перед датой публикации (Петерсон 1, 2001). Помещайте в скобках до трёх ссылок, разделяя их точками с запятой. Ссылки нужно давать в хронологическом, а затем в алфавитном порядке (Петерсон, 1999; Доул, 2002; Бейкер, 2003).

В конце статьи (Литература) укажите источники в алфавитном порядке, а труды одного автора – в хронологическом.

Примечания должны быть помещены в нижней части данной страницы. В примечания помещаются пояснения, а также неакадемические источники - газетные статьи, словари, правовые акты и т.п. Данные источники включать в список литературы не требуется.

Все таблицы и рисунки следует изготовить таким образом, чтобы они открывались при стандартном программном обеспечении Microsoft Word и/или Excel. Иначе говоря, они должны быть узнаваемы (обеспечить для печати хорошее качество) и желательно чёрно-белыми (или серыми). Формат графических файлов – TIF или JPG с разрешением 300 dpi.

Опубликованная книга

Crow, G. (1997). *Comparative Sociology and Social Theory*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Глава отредактированной книги

Nielsen, K., Jessop, B., Hausner, J. (2005). Institutional Change in Post-Socialism. Strategic Choice and Path-Dependency in Post-Socialism (eds. Hausner, J., Jessop, B., Nielsen, K.). Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 67-83.

Статья в научном журнале

Atanesyan, A. (2020). Media Framing on Armed Conflicts: Limits of Peace Journalism on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 14:4, p. 534-550. DOI: [10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018](https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018)

Работа, изданная какой-либо организацией

World Bank (2005). *World Development Report 2005*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Все материалы изначально проверяются редакционной группой. На этом этапе статьи могут быть отклонены до рецензирования, если есть ощущение, что они недостаточно высокого качества, не соответствуют нашим рекомендациям или выходят за рамки журнала. Это гарантирует, что авторы быстро примут решение, если их статья не подходит. Статьи, прошедшие первоначальную проверку, будут отправлены на экспертную оценку. Процесс обзора является двойным слепым. Статьи будут отобраны для публикации на основании отзывов коллег, согласия автора на внесение изменений и окончательного выбора редактора. Статьи, не прошедшие рецензирование, будут отклонены.

Самоцитирование: Избегайте или минимизируйте самоцитирование. Ссылайтесь на свои собственные ссылки от третьего лица. Например, напишите «Акобян и Мовсисян (2018) продемонстрировали», а не «Мы ранее продемонстрировали (Акобян и Мовсисян 2018)».

Политика в отношении плагиата: Журнал нацелен на публикацию оригинальных исследовательских работ высокого качества. Подача рукописи в

журнал свидетельствует о том, что исследование нигде не публиковалось или не было отправлено для публикации в другие места. Если авторы используют какую-либо часть опубликованной статьи, они должны давать соответствующие ссылки. Журнал немедленно отклоняет материалы, ведущие к плагиату или самоплагиату.

Политика самоархивирования автора: До принятия для публикации в журнале авторы сохраняют за собой право разместить оригинальную версию статьи на своем личном веб-сайте и / или на веб-сайте своего работодателя и / или на бесплатных общедоступных серверах при условии, что после принятия авторы отвечают за обновление архива препринта с помощью DOI и привязку его к опубликованной версии статьи.

Журнал позволяет авторам использовать окончательную опубликованную версию статьи (pdf издателя) для самоархивирования (личный веб-сайт автора) и / или архивирования в институциональном репозитории (на некоммерческом сервере).

После публикации статьи периода эмбарго нет. Необходимо указать опубликованный источник и указать ссылку на главную страницу журнала или DOI статей.

Плата за публикацию статьи: Статьи в журнале публикуются бесплатно для всех авторов. Редакция не взимает с авторов платы за размещение статей в открытом доступе, рецензирование, подготовку журнала к печати, а так же содержание сайта и электронное депонирование рукописей.

Заявление о конфиденциальности

Имена и адреса электронной почты, введенные на сайте этого журнала, будут использованы исключительно для целей, обозначенных этим журналом, и не будут использованы для каких-либо других целей или предоставлены другим лицам и организациям.

