

Social Media as a Tool for the Development of Future Journalists' Communicative Competence

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Abstract

The aim of the work was to test the opportunities that social media offers on the Internet as a tool to improve the future journalists' communicative competence. Sociological methods were involved in the research in order to achieve its aim: a method of testing respondents to identify their initial level of communicativeness on the Communicative Competence Test and the Questionnaire Survey Method to obtain feedback from participants in the experiment. Working on media content on the Internet proved to improve communication skills of future journalists with the help of popular YouTube media and blogs with bright visual content. It was found that media resources can be used during lectures to stimulate interest and to engage students in active learning that promote deeper knowledge. The possibility of involving online mass media in joint learning, problem solving, interactive lecture demonstrations, as well as discussions was noted. A number of difficulties that the course participants encountered were found: a thorough understanding of copyright law, increased workload, lack of skills in working with electronic text, video and audio content, increased visual load. However, these difficulties did not affect the quality of training and allowed the participants to improve not only communication skills but also digital information skills and online media literacy. It was proved that social media is a powerful additional tool that encourages students to actively study, get high results and sustainable professional skills that are in demand in the future workplace. The media cannot, however, replace traditional teaching methods which are based on personal communication. Further research is required on complex long-term courses that use a wider range of media, including Tik-Tok, Facebook, Instagram, extended blogs in the form of a multipage website, a funnel for gathering the target audience and subscribing.

Keywords: YouTube, blog, media literacy, journalism, communication skills, reporting, social networks

1. Introduction

Socio-economic reform processes entail the emergence of new requirements for professional activity — a high level of competence with high creative potential. This requirement is not fully met because of the incomplete system of continuing education, as well as imperfect educational programmes. The educational components of training programmes often include mostly traditional teaching methodologies, while innovative training components are poorly involved. Mass computerization and the development of the latest information technologies have caused an impressive leap forward in the fields of education, business, industry, manufacturing, research and social life (Akimova, Akimova, & Akimova, 2022). The media system plays an important role in introducing innovations into the educational process; this especially applied to media workers, including journalists. Extensive opportunities of the media necessitate the study of the mechanisms of their functioning and development, the effectiveness of the impact on the audience.

Much attention in the training of journalists is being paid to communicative issues of competence as a criterion of professionalism. Communicative competence is a set of knowledge, skills and abilities, including:

- communication functions and features of the communicative process;
- types of communication and their main features;

- means of communication: verbal and nonverbal;
- types of listening and techniques of its use;
- “feedback” — questions and answers;
- psychological and communicative types of partners, the specifics of interaction and methods of influencing people;
- methods of generating ideas and integrating staff for constructive communication;
- self-presentation and success strategy (Donsbach, 2014).

According to the research conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite, published in Global Digital 2021 — the annual report on the state of the digital sphere:

- YouTube — the second most visited website in the world;
- It accounts for more than 25% of global mobile traffic;
- YouTube has more than 2 billion users, which is almost a third of all Internet users, who live in more than 100 countries and consume content in 80 different languages;
- YouTube users spend one billion hours a day watching content;
- 70% of viewers make purchases after watching advertising on YouTube;
- YouTube is the best video streaming programme. The average user spends 23.2 hours a month browsing content.

So, network technologies are the main vector of public attention to current events and world development, and journalists must implement the results of their activities in the network, which have their own specifics compared to traditional journalism, in order to reach the maximum audience. On the other hand, immersion in a network environment can lead to the replacement of live personal communication and reduce the communicative potential of future journalists. At the same time, social networks not only pose threats, but also offer opportunities for effective communication of young people, which we will try to justify in our empirical research.

Today, the educational market offer many Journalism Educational Programmes which poorly involve online media components to train future journalists. The traditional Aristotelian method to the development of communication skills through the content of personalized subjects in professional training of future journalists significantly reduces the graduates' ability to work online due to low skills of this activity. The hypothesis was advanced that the training of future journalists of the Journalism Educational Programmes with the increased number of educational components using modern network technologies enhances the motivation to study, increases the level of knowledge; raises interest in the future profession through the integrated use of traditional training methods and innovative networking technologies and through the integrated use of real and virtual learning experiments. To implement this approach, it was concluded that it is necessary to develop a special course for the development of communicative competencies by means of network technologies.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to test the possibilities of using social media on the Internet as a means of improving the future journalists' communicative competence, which is determined by the strong development of Internet technologies and active involvement of users in social networks.

This aim involves a number of research objectives:

1. Identify opportunities for the use of social media.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the use of social media compared to traditional trainings to increase the future journalists' communicative competence.
3. Find out the advantages and threats of the introduction of social media in the educational process for training future journalists.

2. Literature Review

Today's highly competitive journalistic environment is, in part, caused by the crisis in the business model of media organizations. The expansion of social media, the decline of local newspapers and the uncertainty of viable advertising models in the media are some of the issues that journalists and journalism students need to consider when developing their professional careers (Hdakovych, 2021; Barnes & de Villiers Scheepers, 2017). The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, 2020) reveals the basic concepts of media literacy, but it does not define aspects of their application in practical situations of training specialists in the field of journalism.

Previous research (Barnes & de Villiers Scheepers, 2017) in the field of training journalists has mostly focused on the description of journalistic competencies. Blom and Davenport (2012) dealt with the problems and traditional practices of teaching future journalists. But recent research in the field of journalism suggests that some of the challenges that future journalists face include not only instable news environment in which journalists work, but also inadequate training. In particular, Donsbach (2014) argues that it is crucial to develop stronger fundamental knowledge among future journalists during their education, and that this education should be adjusted to the needs of the community (Newman, 2020).

Journalism Educational Programmes are constantly changing due to the dynamism of the media industry, in which new technologies — virtual reality, smartphones, media networks — are being developed and implemented. At the same time, previous studies of journalism education dealt with the problems the journalists faced in preparing and teaching specialized content for the development of communication skills. Researchers also emphasize that journalism students must study the theory of mass communication if they want to keep up with the industry (Crolc et al., 2019). Waha et al. (2017) reported that there is a discordance over the relative value of other competencies such as multitasking and mass work despite the agreement between online journalists and online journalism instructors on the importance of basic writing and grammar skills.

In response to rapid technological change, some scholars (Dimitrova, 2017) even argue that journalists need to acquire computer skills to regain control of their work. Teachers have long been discussing the nature and purpose of media education. The problems associated with new technologies and the changing state of the media industry are of constant concern, but the actual structure of media education itself is one of the most difficult issues.

Communicative competence as an integral part of journalists' professionalism is the most important part of their professional profile. The professional competence of a journalist includes knowledge of the genres of business communication. Written business communication, in which dialogical relations are realized, is represented by all types of business letters, documents that fix the socio-legal relations — contracts, agreements and all types of related documents. Oral business language, in which dialogic relations are realized, is represented by genres of business negotiations, meetings, consultations, etc. Communicative competencies are expressed differently in the real and virtual world. Communication skills in the network are becoming increasingly important with the powerful development of the Internet (Turow, 2020).

Classical knowledge-based journalism (Blom & Davenport, 2012; Donsbach, 2014) suggests that in order to effectively serve a poorly informed public, journalists must be less general and more specialized in a particular field, having five mandatory competencies: knowledge of history and arts, professional knowledge and skills, understanding of a specific narrow subject, which is the focus of reporting, knowledge of the process of mass communication and commitment to professional values and roles. The basic prerequisite of classical knowledge-based journalism is that balancing the five competencies, including skills, experience and values, will lead to better training and comprehensiveness of journalists who will continue to produce higher quality journalistic products (Claussen, 2015).

Tabary et al. (2016) analysed projects for the quantitative assessment and visualization of media series statistics, and found an increased use of data journalism. At the same time, researchers note that this growth has not provided any new skills for the journalists in general.

Ashley (2020) accentuates the importance of journalistic literacy for democratic life, and adduces an argument that the critical context of news should be the focus of teaching literacy to journalists. Relying on studies on a range of subjects, including media research, political economy and social psychology, the researcher demonstrates how to extend the opportunities of citizens who count on the media to allow their fuller participation in democratic and civic life.

Safko (2010) covers tactics, tools and strategies for the successful development of new media channels. The latest techniques, platforms, technologies for working with the media were also offered, which allow working effectively in the world of social media and get the maximum effect of their activity.

Petrushka (2021) raised issues of academic integrity in the system of scientific communication with the use of social media, focusing attention, in particular, on possible plagiarism and ways to avoid it.

According to statistical research in January 2021, 4.66 billion people use the Internet worldwide, which is 316 million (7.3%) more than last year (Datereportal, 2021). The Internet penetration rate is now 59.5%. One of the reasons for such rapid growth was the COVID-19 pandemic, which also significantly affected the collection of data on the number of Internet users, so the actual figures may be higher. On average, Internet users created more than 1.3

million new accounts every day during 2020, which is about 15.5 new users per second (Wong et al., 2021).

Social media is a separate part of the Internet. There are more and more users of social networks. As of October 2021, 4.55 billion people or 57.6% of the world's population used them. This value increased by almost 10% compared to 2020. YouTube is the most popular social media service today, which leaves VKontakte, WhatsApp, Instagram, Viber, Telegram and Facebook Messenger slightly behind (Datereportal, 2021).

It is obvious that social networks have radically changed the way people communicate, and in the average usage time is constantly growing under the quarantine restrictions imposed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is, however, a lack of comprehensive studies on the peculiarities of journalists' knowledge of communication processes and media effects, as well as the impact of such knowledge on journalistic practice. The development of future journalists' online communicative competence, which includes not only the ability to listen, perceive, analyse, produce monologues and dialogues, use professional terminology appropriately, speak to the audience, interview, build communicative situations, but also to adapt to the informatization in social networks and on the Internet, taking into account the ethical and methodological aspects of work in the global network.

3. Methods

The study was conducted during the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. It was conducted in three main stages: summative, formative, control.

The summative stage of the research (2019-2020) involved work to diagnose the inclusion of components that improve communicative competences through the media in the Journalism Educational Programme of educational institutions of Ukraine. Based on the analysis of the educational programmes of different universities, certain educational programmes were found in the curricula of students majoring in 061 : Journalism with a significant number of educational components that improve communication through social media. These educational programmes include Publishing Business, Editing and Media Design; Journalism and Intercultural Communication; Journalism and Social Communication; Journalism; Advertising and Public Relations; Media Communications and Public Relations; Media Production; Advertising and PR in the Media Industry; Digital Journalism.

At the beginning of the formative stage of the experiment, the respondents' communicative competences were initially tested by using a typical Communicative Competence Test (Psyoffice, n.d.), which consisted of 60 questions (Appendix A). At this stage, the study identified initial natural communication skills or previously acquired communication skills. Another experiment was conducted after the course using social media (YouTube, personal blog) on the Internet to test hypotheses about their direct impact on the development of communication skills of future journalists (Table 1).

Table 1. Assignments after the Course

Take a photo and post it on social media
Write a report on a socially significant topic, post it on a blog and initiate its active discussion
Make, edit and upload a video report and initiate an active discussion
Invite as many real participants as possible to events using personal or online engagement tools

The control stage of the experiment involved survey of the participants to the experiment in order to obtain feedback and identify difficulties that the students encountered (Appendix B).

The students who participated in the experiment were randomly divided into control and experimental groups for the purpose of making the initial diagnostics.

The research involved special scientific methods; the method of testing respondents to identify their initial level of communicative competencies on the Communicative Competence Test; Questionnaire Survey Method; statistical and mathematical interpretation of empirical data and their analysis: Student's t-test for independent variables and analysis of Boxes and Whiskers graph.

The study involved 536 respondents majoring in 061 : Journalism of the 3rd – 4th years of study of the Bachelor's degree from eight higher educational institutions of Ukraine: National Aviation University, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn

National University, Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, National University of Water and Environmental Engineering, Kherson State University, Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State Pedagogical University, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. Students of each university were randomly divided into 2 groups: experimental and control. Senior students were chosen for several reasons:

- a) the ability to involve settings of conscious attitude to learning, motivational aspects of learning network communication, self-reflection mechanisms that are important for the development of communicative competence;
- b) they have knowledge, skills and abilities of the main directions of basic specialized subjects;
- c) they have Internet and information processing skills;
- d) the period of Bachelor's studies is crucial for students who are not willing to continue their studies for Master's degree: the development of network communication skills at this stage is crucial.

Statistica 10 software was used for the analytical study of the results of the pedagogical experiment.

4. Results

We provide more detailed data obtained at different stages of the study, and describe the experiment conducted among the respondents.

A pedagogical experiment was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the use of social media to improve the communicative competencies of future journalists. The idea of the experiment was to develop the communication skills of students of the two groups with the help of traditional trainings and innovative media. Four practice-oriented subjects were developed for each group aimed at the development of the participants' communicative competence. Two of them were taught to all, and two more were aimed at improving skills through personal communication for the control group, and through network communication for the experimental group. In aggregate, the developed subjects formed an experimental course of Journalistic Media Literacy, which was offered for all participants of the experiment. Table 2 presents the structure of the course.

Table 2. Structure of the Experimental Course of Journalistic Media Literacy

Control group	Experimental group	Number of lessons	Acquired competencies
Business training to improve communication skills (through business games)	YouTube communications (development of static and dynamic graphic content of networks and their promotion)	7	Conversational communicative competences
Psychological training to improve communication skills (by performing exercises)	Blogging (social media management)	7	Written communicative competencies
Training to improve communication skills by means of interaction with the media (personal and virtual)		7	Communicative competences of interaction
Training to acquire skills of flexibility of communication and overcoming conflict situations (personal and virtual)		7	Communicative competencies in stressful situations

So, the control group studied the theoretical and practical aspects of communication for journalists and underwent traditional trainings. At the same time, the experimental group students gained knowledge of network communications, blogging, photo and video content, networking, and completed online assignments through blogging (written communication skills) and YouTubing (oral communication). Teachers actively helped students focus on creating content that is relevant to the target audience throughout the study. In terms of professional content for journalists, both courses were identical.

The traditional course contained more in-depth additional theoretical materials on journalism theory, as well as training on communicative competencies in the group (offline). At the same time, the second course included only basic theoretical competencies of journalism, as well as basic online skills — preparation of electronic materials, network etiquette, blogging and YouTubing, as well as online practical assignments. Both courses involved electronic materials to provide methodological support for the course in the form of video lectures, as well as considerable resources for collaborative and interactive work — discussion forums, practical assignments with the cross-checking possibility and an online simulator.

Testing showed that both groups had approximately the same initial level, which was proved by the Student's t-test at a significance level of 0.95. An experiment was conducted at the next stage of the study in order to verify the results of the trainings, as well as to confirm the possibility of using the Internet to develop the future journalists' communication skills. The students received a series of assignments during the experiment:

- make, design and post a photo on social networks;
- write a mini-report for a blog on the subject of online work up to 3000 characters;
- make, edit, upload mini-videos to YouTube for up to 2 minutes;
- initiate and maintain a forum discussion of a blog post and a YouTube video;
- invite as many real participants as possible to three different events (in the scientific field, in the field of commercial trade and for political agitation) through personal and virtual means of communication.

When completing the assignment, students involved 536 participants and Student's t-test for two independent samples at a significance level of 0.95 showed a significant difference with higher scores in the experimental group (Table 3). The table shows the results for the control (Group 1) and the experimental (Group 2) groups for two tests: input to measure the initial level of communication skills, and the second — the number of invited participants.

Table 3. Application of Student's T-test to Check the reliability of the difference between the results of Measuring Communicative Competence When Using Different Communication Channels

	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	p-value	N1	N2	Std.Dev Group 1	Std.Dev Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p - Variances
Test 1	20.81	19.65	0.63	0.54	268	268	7.27	5.98	1.48	0.33
Test 2	33.15	38.23	-2.3	0.03	268	268	8.59	7.27	1.40	0.41

The sample data have standard deviations that do not differ statistically ($p - \text{Variances} \geq 0.05$) and mean values that also do not statistically differ in the two groups in the results of input testing ($p \geq 0.05$), but differ significantly in the results of output testing, which proves the higher efficiency of the course with existing network communications compared to the traditional course.

Boxes and Whiskers graphs (Figure 1 and Figure 2) built for the means of the control and experimental groups for the first and second test experiments, respectively, confirm the results obtained.

The experiment revealed the benefits of using media content to improve the communicative competencies of future journalists. Involving students in the creation of media stimulated creativity and learning of new technologies, ideas and concepts. It is important that the creation of original media, which are informative, entertaining and educational, does not require a large budget, equipped studio or specialist deep knowledge of technology. This requires basic knowledge and skills that are easily integrated into journalism courses.

In response to the questions contained in the questionnaire (Appendix B) on what they achieved during the experimental course, more than half of the respondents of the experimental group indicated particular skills such as interviewing, reporting, writing, video editing, social media management, photography and multimedia work. While the experimental group students often indicated in their questionnaires that they were not interested in the theory and methods of communication, it was emphasized that they did not see a connection between theoretical concepts and the practice of journalism that interested them.

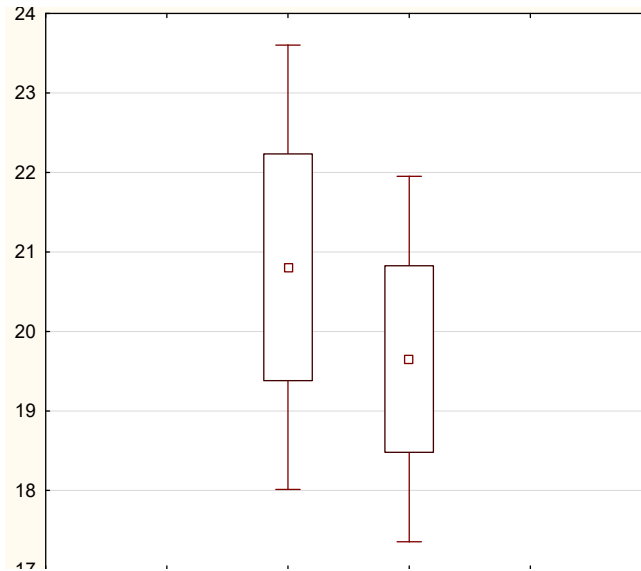


Figure 1. Boxes and Whiskers Graph for the Input Test to Identify Communication Skills

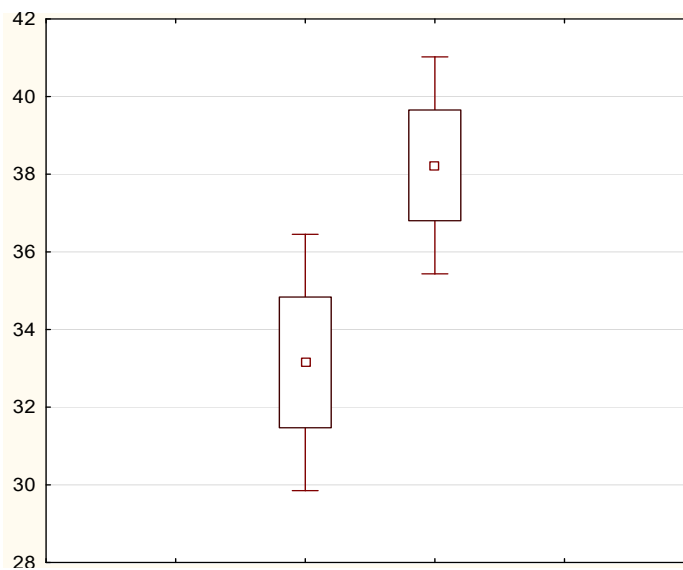


Figure 2. Boxes and Whiskers Graph for the Training Participants Involvement

In the control assignment to attract participants to the events, the control group students mostly used personal communications and took into account the opportunities of social networks only partially, while the experimental group students mostly used a wide range of methods of involvement through specially created accounts and communities in social networks on the Internet, but also actively involved participants through personal communications, too.

During the joint discussion, all participants in the experiment agreed that they had indeed acquired significant skills in influencing people around them. They were especially surprised by their own achievements in using social networks. The experimental group participants, who trained their communication skills mainly through social media on the Internet, felt more confident and showed a higher result compared to the control group in personal communication, where the participants did not always manage to control their emotions during personal contacts, some of the information for transmission was forgotten, and sometimes the necessary communication technology was not effectively selected. The group also had difficulties in using non-verbal means of communication — teenagers felt shy in an attempt to establish contact in a new environment, which clearly reflected in their posture,

gestures and facial expressions. The experimental group participants noted that it was much easier for them to communicate through social networks after taking the course and gaining experience in social media. The Internet as an indirect communication channel allowed them to anticipate and eliminate all the above issues.

5. Discussion

The research proved that social media is a powerful additional tool for communication, learning and development in a new relevant online environment in the training of future journalists. As an interesting and visual means of learning, the media encourage students to learn more actively, get better results and more stable professional skills that will be in demand in their future job (Prokopenko et al., 2020). The media, however, cannot replace traditional teaching methods which are based on personal communication. According to Waha et al. (2017), the role of network communications is important and has a significant impact on the development of the student's personality. In particular, the media network in modern life is one of the platforms for disseminating information and facilitating communication to form, strengthen and maintain social ties around the world.

Pennycook and Rand (2019) point to a big problem of misinformation in social networks, but the use of algorithms to increase the rating of content from reliable media can be a promising approach to counter the spread of misinformation on social networks. This aspect is important in further research into the development of communication skills of future journalists because the media contain large volumes of information which is not confirmed or even deliberately false. Identifying true information and knowing the methods to reduce false information can also be a great advantage for future journalists. Marker et al. (2018) note that the excessive use of social networks can have a negative effect on the quality of adolescent learning, in particular in social networks that provide a continuously updated chain of posts, such as Facebook. That is why blogging and YouTubing were chosen to introduce networking technologies to the experimental part of the Journalism Media Literacy course, as they provide more opportunities for training and improving communication skills without staying online for long and flicking through a large number of non-targeted posts.

Researchers from different countries conducted similar studies. In particular, Maarit Jaakkola (2020) studied media literacy in social practices by journalists in Finland. The article also focused on journalism media education and it was found that distinguishing journalism media education as a separate field in media literacy helps to define media education as more integrated into the functions of media organizations and contributes to the development of this area as a separate one. The media is, however, considered as a separate industry rather than an additional tool to improve journalists' communicative competencies.

Oversaturation and replacement of real communication can lessen the positive effect of the introduction of social media in the educational process. According to Lobschat et al. (2017), the transition to full online learning can have a negative impact on the quality of the results obtained. That is why the experimental course was introduced in addition to the main training programme for journalists, and did not replace it. Some classes were conducted according to traditional methods. Kim et al. (2009) state that the optimal balance between the use of traditional and Internet technologies is important, and affects not only the quality of learning, but also the learners' psychological well-being. Crolic et al. (2019) maintain the same position.

Moreover, Lobschat et al. (2017) and Tserklevych et al. (2021) indicate that the perception of real and virtual advertisements differs significantly even when communicating with potential audiences, which the participants in the experiment took into account when attracting customers to the events. Online interaction, especially virtual written communication, has a weaker impact on the decision-maker and causes less trust than real advertising (Hoffman & Novak, 2018), so most virtual communications were carried out orally, and written communications were used mainly for feedback and comments throughout the experiment. In a study of interaction with potential customers in the 21st century, Haenlein, (2017) agrees with this opinion. Belk (2013) demonstrated the expansion of capabilities in the use of virtual technologies in teaching. At the same time, the researcher challenges the extent of this expansion, and leaves the question about the extent at which the efficiency can be increased without harming health and compromising ties with the real world open.

It is especially important to master special media literacy, which differs from the literacy of real communication (Forsman, 2020). This view is also emphasized by Brites and Pinto (2017) in a study of the role of the new industry in improving literacy.

Bode (2016) conducted a similar study for the training of political scientists, and also found a positive effect of media technologies on learning outcomes. Baker and Algorta (2016) conducted a more thorough examination of this

issue and even found a correlation between depression and excessive use of social networks, but they also pointed to their effectiveness in the educational process provided no misuse.

The team of authors (Bail et al., 2018) made a reservation about the possibility of political polarization in the active work of journalists with the use of media. Their experiment, however, involved participants in non-political events. But when reporting on political issues, similar problems are possible due to the different, sometimes even inadequate perception of information by different people who belong to different political forces (Kryshchanovych et al., 2022). This can cause excessive aggression and lessen the positive impact of online communications.

So, the experimental group obtained a clear advantage at the end of the experiment: the training of communication skills in social online media provided its participants with positive experience and allowed applying it for establishing personal contacts. Besides, the experiment showed that one can always learn to communicate effectively with other people and achieve one's goal through informational influence regardless of the communicative potential and the initial abilities of man.

A number of advantages of using the media in the educational process were obtained in the course of the experiment. It was proved that the media provide both cognitive and emotional experience, which allows expanding their range of applications and attract the most loyal and interested audience to complete assignments with their involvement and get more sustainable results. It was also found that students knew about such popular media as movies, YouTube, and blogs with dynamic, vivid, and visual content, that helped them attract their attention and evoke interest in the theories and concepts being discussed. Students can see complex and general theories and concepts in action. Interaction through social media gives students a sense of affiliation, and creates close connections between them and their audience through feedback provided as comments, likes and reposts.

Moreover, students can improve their analytical skills in the course of learning through the media by demonstrating analysis of dynamic media content and elements of feedback to it, as well as by using the theories and concepts they study.

The processing of the survey results revealed that the students compared the use of the media in the learning process to the positive experiences they have in everyday life in the process of relaxation when watching TV, listening to music or going to the cinema with friends. Apart from the advantages of using the media, students also noted a number of difficulties that some of them encountered during the course. These include a thorough understanding of copyright law, increased workload, skills of working with the electronic text, video and audio content, and increased visual load. Another threat of being absorbed in social networks is global accumulation of enormous information volumes at an insane rate, with its media becoming more compact. Our focus reduces, and we lose our sense of native language, while learning a new language in the world of social networks. Social messaging platforms also have artificial intelligence responses, where users can push a button to send a quick automatically generated message that best suits for another person's question or comment. Users don't need to type what they need to say anymore, and other users behind the screen don't need to say anything.

The students who completed the course using mass communications demonstrated high results:

- they applied critical thinking skills more effectively to understand the media;
- they demonstrated written, visual, multimedia and social media literacy, which are important in relevant areas of mass communication in the 21st century;
- they developed and used original content for different media formats, including written, visual, radio, Internet, applications;
- they demonstrated proficient use of writing and speaking skills in the media that are necessary in a multimedia environment;
- they understood how to create multimedia elements of network communications that replace face-to-face communication and allow getting additional benefits of communication opportunities, including online feedback.

The study found that with this approach some students not only demonstrate the ability to write news, edit videos and work on social media, but also to create their own niche of content. Future professional journalists can choose between careers in public relations, sports journalism, environmental journalism, international journalism, and health journalism, among many others. The growing pressure of generalizing skills and specializing knowledge is a challenge for journalism schools which should try to adapt their curricula to industry trends.

It should be noted that social networks offer wide opportunities not only in terms of interaction and communication of their users, but they can also be considered a learning space, which is especially relevant in the context of state

educational standards. The expansion of the Internet space necessitates the introduction of new information technologies in the educational process. The subjects that provide competencies directly related to the use of the Internet and social networks need to be included in the educational programmes. It is also important to support the process of communicative development, acquisition of interpersonal communication and interaction, including in social networks.

In the course of online communication, we must, however, remember about traditional teaching methods, as virtual communication alone is unable to provide the same level as personal communication. Another reason is extremely concise and dry language of social networks, which uses smilies, gifs and abbreviations. The latter used in instant online communication affect the way people communicate in the real world, face to face with other people.

6. Conclusions

It was found in the course of the research that social media is a powerful subsidiary tool for improving communication skills of future journalists during their studies. This tool integrated into the educational process can enhance interest in learning, increase not only communication but also the competitiveness of future specialists in the labour market. However, like any innovative component, network technologies cannot be used to replace traditional means, but only to harmoniously complement trainings, offline meetings, real communication. In this way, it will give the maximum effect in the learning process. But network technologies, like any other innovative component, cannot replace traditional tools, they can only harmoniously supplement trainings, offline meetings, and real communication. This is how the maximum effect in the learning process can be achieved.

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Appendix A

Communicative Competence Test (Psyoffice, n.d.)

In this form, circle the statement with which you agree and cross out the statement about which you have objections. Count the number of statements circled.

1. You usually listen better when drawing doodles.
2. Humour is especially needed to reduce tension during a meeting.
3. Self-confidence is the best way to communicate.
4. The dissatisfied person never deserves to be listened to.
5. People who propose to appoint a chairman often want to see themselves in this position.
6. A smile is not necessarily a sign of joy.
7. Communication is a simple process.
8. They do not like to listen or read about what they do not agree with.
9. The one who comes to the meeting first is often the most interested.
10. One who speaks without stopping usually wants to express many important thoughts.
11. Usually, if people do not listen to you, they are not interested in the topic.
12. Things reflect individuality.
13. The ability to listen is a completely natural ability.
14. People usually forget what they are not interested in.
15. The person sitting at the head of the table is probably trying to influence the group.
16. To communicate productively, you must first be able to speak convincingly.
17. The manner in which a word is pronounced affects its meaning.
18. People sitting away from the table may be the least interested.
19. Fruitful communication is impossible if people are shocked or offended.
20. People say less when they are afraid of being criticized.
21. If a person allows himself or herself to give in to a dispute, it may mean that he or she is not interested in the case.
22. It is not very helpful to force a closed person to express his or her thoughts too often in a group.
23. A person who speaks the most seems to want to rule.
24. If someone often looks at his or her watch during a meeting, it probably means that he or she wants to leave.
25. It is the easiest to convince those people who are quick to grasp everything.
26. People usually communicate more successfully if they are in a good mood.
27. If the interlocutor looks away while the other is speaking, it usually means that he or she is not interested in the

subject.

28. Proficiency in the topic is almost one hundred percent the key to successful communication.
29. People usually speak less when they are angry.
30. The person summoned to speak at the meeting may be trying to put pressure on the audience.
31. Silence is a sign of consent.
32. You can express anger so that the person to whom it is directed will understand it and agree.
33. The expression of a person may change the meaning of the words spoken.
34. Misunderstandings rarely arise because of a misunderstood word.
35. Fearing to show themselves in an unflattering light, people may say that they have understood everything, when in fact this is not the case.
36. If someone shakes his head while listening, it means that he is interested.
37. The best way to express anger is usually to raise your voice.
38. Sometimes feelings are more important than the words which express them.
39. When raising eyebrows, it can mean a call for silence.
40. To communicate more productively, it is better to be expansive than closed.
41. Cautions, the accidental use of one word instead of another, can reveal the speaker's true feelings.
42. The one who comes last to the meeting is probably the least interested.
43. Clear instructions are almost always followed.
44. Raising your voice may be a sign of interest.
45. The office design can tell something about its owner's identity.
46. It is not enough to just listen, you need to be able to follow with the advice.
47. The repetition of what has just been said is a good proof that the message was clear.
48. People often communicate without thinking.
49. You will not achieve anything by screaming.
50. A misspelled word is sometimes entertaining.
51. The manner in which someone shakes your hand reflects his or her individuality.
52. If someone constantly offers different ways to perform the task during the meeting, it only slows down the work of the group and reduces its productivity.
53. You can be very helpful just by listening and not saying a word.
54. A gesture, even a restrained one, can say more than words.
55. The best way to realize the idea of life is to repeat it often, loudly and confidently.
56. Communication is productive only when the listener understands the message in the sense in which it is understood by the speaker.
57. A person's literacy can be indicative of his or her personality.
58. People who say little have little to offer.
59. Even with absolute disagreement, people can agree to end the discussion.
60. Different people express similar feelings differently.

In the first two lines of the form, all statements must be taken into account with the inverse sign: "agree" means "incorrect", "disagree" means "true".

1 4 7 10 13 16, 19 22 25 28

31 34 37 40 43 46 49 52 55 58

2 5 8 11 14 17 20 23 26 29

32 35 38 41 44 47 50 53 56 59 .

3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30

33 36 39 42 45 48 51 54 57 60 '

Communicative competence level:

1-20 — low, 21-40 — medium, 41-60 — high.

Appendix B

Initial Feedback Questionnaire

1. What competencies do you think you have acquired during the Journalism Media Literacy course?
2. Which of the skills do you think you acquired in the Journalism Media Literacy course at a high level:
 - a. Conducting interviews;
 - b. Reporting;
 - c. Written literacy;
 - d. Video editing;
 - e. Social media management;
 - f. Photo editing and retouching;
 - g. Creation of presentations;
 - h. Others (specify) _____
3. Are you interested in the theory and methods of communication:
 - a. In the traditional form of real communication;
 - b. Online.
4. Has the Journalism Media Literacy course helped you to better influence people around you?
5. What problems did you face when attracting participants to the events?
 - a. In personal communication;
 - b. Online.
6. How was it easier for you to attract participants to the event: through personal interaction or online media?
7. What are your positive impressions of using online videos after the course?
8. Would you like to start your own business based on investigative journalism, reporting and communication with people? If so, do you consider yourself ready for this?

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