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LI Yingying

NETWORK MEDIA AS A FACTOR OF INFODEMIC

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Scientific adviser –
Doctor of political science, Professor
Melnik Galina Sergeevna

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Introduction

The relevance of the study is to study the value aspect of the functioning of the Network media, which played an important role in overcoming the epidemic COVID-19. Digitalization of the media space, while having a strong impact on the audience, has social and cultural consequences for society that need special study and forecasting. New phenomena, such as infodemic, which means "large-scale psychological and informational pressure on people, the spread of panic among the population provoked by a large flow of news on a particular issue, the so-called information epidemic, fall into the scientific discourse¹.

In this regard, scientists are increasingly interested in the problems of identifying the genesis, specifics of the spread of infodemic, infodemic narratives and behavior of the main participants in the infodemic process².

The public health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus is also a political communication crisis and a health³communication crisis. Unlike previous epidemics, such as the plague, the new coronavirus spread much faster, and false information, all sorts of rumors, that accompanied the epidemic spread in global social networks- "faster than viruses", which directly gave rise to a "second field of combating the epidemic" for countries around the world⁴. Now, in the age of digital technologies and the Internet, infodemic is growing faster than anything else in the digital environment.

The dissertation research examines the network media space and the conditions for the emergence of destructive phenomena caused by infodemic, affecting the

¹ Pestova, M.E., Safonov, E.A. The pandemic of the new decade: coverage of the topic of coronavirus in the media // The media environment. - 2020. – № 17. – P. 166-172.

² Zemlyansky, A.V. Infodemic: genesis and morphology of the phenomenon // Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Series: Philology. Journalism. – 2021. – № 4. – P. 111-114.

³ Gollust, S.E, Nagler, R. H., Fowler, E F. The emergence of COVID-19 in the US: a public health and political communication crisis // Journal of health politics, policy and law. 2020. № 45(6). P. 967-981.

⁴ Orso, D., Federici, N., Copetti, R., Vetrugno, L., Bove, T. Infodemic and the spread of fake news in the COVID-19-era // Eur J Emerg Med. 2020. № 27(5). P. 327-328.

psychological state of society. Media develop tools for social interaction on Internet platforms, ensuring maximum access to information of any kind; they exist in social networks and instant messengers-often on several platforms simultaneously. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, social networks have become the main tool for spreading information about the epidemic, and the information needs of the audience are mainly met by the Network media.

In today's omnimedia era, the network space has become a center for spreading epidemic information, a place to discuss epidemic events, and a reflection of public opinion about the epidemic. According to the law of dissemination of information about the epidemic, the public has gone from "information hunger" at the beginning of the outbreak to "information explosion", and then to "information overload". Truth and rumor are intertwined in the online space, which negatively affects the rational thinking of the public, exacerbates changes in the positive mood of the public and encourages mass fanatical and extreme behavior.

In resolving the emergency, network media began to perform the functions of information dissemination, social mobilization and public opinion formation and played an important role, and people-to put forward higher requirements for professionalism in the production of news content in the media.

All this requires the development of new approaches to the study of media processes in the post-pandemic period. Studying the experience of Russian and Chinese mass media, experts in the field of mass media theory and practice note new trends in the development of the digital information environment: 1) growth of the Smart TV segment; 2) development of solutions for non-linear consumption of TV content; 3) distribution of mobile applications; 4) hybridization of various types of texts.

The change in the concept of news production in the digital environment opened up new opportunities for event coverage, which, in turn, required new research on the value content of news.

It is for this reason that various countries around the world have developed

guidelines for managing the infodemic 2019-nCoV. Russia and China have already introduced criminal liability for posting deliberately false information about the coronavirus on the Internet.

It is supposed to consider the subject in the context of other social phobias and "epidemics" generated by the media.

The object of research is network media, video content, and multicode texts on information platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Tik Tok, Weibo, VKontakte, and Wechat.

The subject of the research is the peculiarities of network media as an infodemic factor affecting the destructive states of the audience.

The purpose of the study is to show trends in the functioning of the Network media as an infodemic tool during the period of coverage of pandemic problems in the information and assessment space of Russian and Chinese media.

Objectives of the study:

- define methodological approaches to the definition of the concept of "infodemic" and identify the signs of "information pandemic";
- to characterize the nature of rumors and deficits in the perception of information about the pandemic and classify the main characteristics of the Russian content of rumors, fakes and provocations, describe the specifics of the content with an assessment of the psychological impact of the texts on the audience;
- analyze the tone of public opinion about the epidemic in social networks;
- to trace the dependence of national political stability on the quantity and quality of information flows in the context of the pandemic COVID-19;
- assess the degree of trust in online media and government in the context of the infodemic;
- characterize the dynamics of the main topics of posts and short videos in social media and social networks.

Research methods: to classify the main factors of network media functioning that cause infodemics, factorial and structural-functional analysis, methods of system and

comparative analysis were used. In the course of the work, an interdisciplinary analysis was also implemented that combines classical methods of political psychology and political journalism to characterize the phenomenon of "infodemic" as a socio-political phenomenon. The method of media monitoring for the period from December 2019 to June 2023 and the method of statistical analysis were used. We analyzed the publications of traditional and the Network media during the outbreak of the global COVID-19 epidemic (from December 2019 to June 2023). We used the principle of probabilistic selection, random sampling. The main condition for this selection was the availability of each of the available components of the general population of objects within the territorial-temporal borders (Russia, China). The method of media monitoring for the period from December 2019 to June 2023 and the method of statistical analysis were also used. The article analyzes publications in traditional and online publications during the outbreak of the global epidemic COVID-19 (from December 2019 to June 2023).

The author also conducted an online survey from March 20 to April 20, 2024. among groups of students in these cities during the epidemic COVID-19 in major cities in China and Russia (including Beijing, Guangzhou, Moscow and St. Petersburg). The purpose of the survey is to identify the assessment of trust in the Network media and the government from the perspective of the infodemic. A total of 13 questions were asked. A total of 252 responses from Chinese respondents and 263 responses from Russians were received, and because of analyzing the results, the total number of reliable questionnaires was 488 responses (240 Chinese responses and 248 Russian responses), which is close to 95%.

The empirical basis of the study was: mass media and open network portals such as Telegram, VKontakte, TASS, WeChat, TikTok, Weibo, YouTube, the People's Daily newspaper, etc., as well as documents such as national reports on sociological investigations, documents of the World Health Organization and the United Nations on the coronavirus epidemic, national reports of the World Health Organization and the United Nations on the coronavirus epidemic. government documents of China and Russia.

The theoretical and methodological basis for this study was the works that study such concepts as "infodemic", "rumors", "false news" and "disinformation", "disorganization"⁵; the works of L.O. Algawi, D.A. Al-Khanaki, S.G. Korkonosenko, S.S., Bodrunova, K.R., Nigmatullina, L.G. Svitich, N. Lasswell, W. Schramm and other authors⁶, which identify the features of the functioning of modern media; studies by O.A. Grinev, V.I. Duplenko, A.R. Kasparov, G. Bock, M. Mahmood, S. Sharma, C.P. Furner, R. Zinko, Z. Zhu, B.K. Lee, W.N. Lee, D. Shenk, P. Sotoacosta, F. Molinacastillo, C. Lopeznicolas⁷, related to information overload, works by T.B. Christie⁸, M. Metzger, A.

⁵ Brown, É. Fake news and conceptual ethics // *J. Ethics & Soc. Phil.*, 2019. 16. P. 144; Makurova, D.A. Disinformation in the mass media in the post-truth era // *Bulletin of SUSU. Series: Linguistics.* – 2020. – vol. 17. – №2. – P. 65-69.

⁶ Algawi, L.O., Al-Khanaki, D.A. Functions social media // *Bulletin of the RUDN. Series: Literary studies, journalism.* – 2012. – № 3. – P. 56-62; Korkonosenko, S.G. Fundamentals of journalistic activity: textbook for universities / S.G. Korkonosenko [et al.]; edited by S.G. Korkonosenko. – 3rd ed., reprint. and additional – Moscow: Yurait Publishing House, 2024. – 293 p; Li, Yingying. The functioning of "we-media" in the context of infodemic: security problems // *Regional Informatics (RI-2020)*. XVII St. Petersburg International Conference "Regional Informatics (RI-2020)". Conference materials. Part 1. – St. Petersburg: SPOISU, 2020. – P. 262-264; Nigmatullina, K.R., Chernova, E.V. Triggers of anxiety in news publications: methodology and approaches to study // *Caucasian Science Bridge.* – 2023. – Vol. 6, issue 3 (21). – P. 23-35; Svitich, L.G. The phenomenon of journalism: [monograph] / L.G. Svitich; edited by prof. Ya.N. Zasursky. – M.: Faculty of Journalism of Moscow State University IKAR, 2000. – 250 p; Lasswell, H.D. The structure and function of communication in society // *The communication of ideas.* 1948. 37(1). P. 136-139; Schramm, W. Mass communications, Second Edition. ed. Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1960. 695 p.

⁷ Grineva O.A. Information overload of a person in an information society // *Mission of confessions.* – 2022. – №65. – P. 193-199; Duplenko, V.I., Kasparov, A.R. The phenomenon of "fakes about coronavirus" in the context of information security of the Russian Federation // *Bulletin of the Adygea State University. Series 1: Regional Studies: philosophy, history, sociology, law, political science, cultural studies.* – 2020. – № 4 (269). – P. 96-103; Bock, G., Mahmood, M., Sharma, S. et al. The impact of information overload and contribution overload on continued usage of electronic knowledge repositories // *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce.* 2010. 20(3). P. 257-278; Furner, C.P., Zinko, R., Zhu, Z. et al. Electronic word-of-mouth and information overload in an experiential service industry // *Journal of Service Theory and Practice.* 2016. 26(6). P. 788-810; Lee, B.K., Lee, W.N. The effect of information overload on consumer choice quality in an on-line environment // *Psychology & Marketing.* 2004. 21(3). P. 159-183; Shenk, D. Data smog: surviving the Info Glut // *Technology Review.* 1997. № 100(4). P. 18-26; Sotoacosta, P., Molinacastillo, F., Lopeznicolas, C. et al. The effect of information overload and disorganisation on intention to purchase online: the role of perceived risk and internet experience // *Online Information Review.* 2014. 38(4). P. 543-561.

⁸ Christie, T.B. The role of values in predicting talk radio listening: A model of value equivalence // *Journal of Radio Studies.* 2007. 14(1). P. 20-36.

Flanagin, E. Nekmat⁹, S.S. Sundar¹⁰, A.B. Kupreichenko, E.V. Shlyakhovaya¹¹, Li Zhongchang¹², Li Yanli¹³, T. A. Rassadina¹⁴, and Jin Yi¹⁵, offering concepts of media trust; and research by I.V. Kireev¹⁶, F. Fukuyama¹⁷, V. Basolo, L.J. Steinberg, R.J. Burby¹⁸, N.A. Kamarulzaman, K.E. Lee, K.S. Siow, M. B. Mokhtar¹⁹, S.C. Whitfield, and E. A. Rosa, A. Dan²⁰, Tang Rongcheng, Wei Shuyan²¹, Xu Biao²², Xiong Meijuan²³, Yang Jianyu²⁴,

⁹ Metzger, M., Flanagin, A., Nekmat, E. Comparative optimism in online credibility evaluation among parents and children // *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 2015. 59(3). P. 509-529.

¹⁰ Sundar, S.S. Exploring receivers' criteria for perception of print and online news // *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 1999. 76(2). P. 373-386.

¹¹ Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Trust in information as a factor of trust in electronic mass media // *Psychological science and education*. – 2012. – № 1. – P. 1-15; Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Media trust as an integrated socio-psychological phenomenon // *Knowledge. Understanding. Ability*. – 2013. – № 1. – P. 191-196.

¹² Li, Zhongchang. A study on trust in the media // *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology (Social Sciences publication)*. – 2003. – № 1. – P. 59-61.

¹³ Li, Yanli. The mechanism of influence on the formation of social trust among network users in the era of social networks // *The world of public relations*. – 2022. – № 7. – P. 71-73.

¹⁴ Rassadina, T.A. Trust in the mass media in the conditions of a "risk society" 150 (on the example of Russian provincial cities) // *Izv. higher studies. establishments. The Volga region. Social sciences*. – 2012. – № 1 (21). – P. 61-70.

¹⁵ Jin, Yi. Analysis of factors affecting trust in the Chinese media // *The international press*. – 2006. – № 9. – P. 57-61.

¹⁶ Kireeva, I.V. Trust in power as a social practice in Russian society in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (based on the materials of a sociological study) // *Modern science and innovations*. – 2021. – № 4. – P. 218-226.

¹⁷ Fukuyama, F. *Trust: social virtues and the path to prosperity*. – M.: AST, 2004. -732 p.

¹⁸ Basolo, V., Steinberg, L.J., Burby, R.J., et al. The effects of confidence in government and information on perceived and actual preparedness for disasters // *Environment & Behavior*. 2009. 41(3). P. 338-364.

¹⁹ Kamarulzaman, N.A., Lee, K.E., Siow, K.S., Mokhtar, M.B. Public benefit and risk perceptions of nanotechnology development: Psychological and sociological aspects // *Technology in Society*. 2020. 62. P. 101329.

²⁰ Whitfield, S.C., Rosa, E.A., Dan, A., et al. The future of nuclear power: Value orientations and risk perception // *Risk Analysis*. 2009. 29(3). P. 425-437.

²¹ Tang, Rongcheng, Wei, Shuyan. Epochal features, evolutionary trends and practical revelations of Chinese Government trust in the transition period // *Journal of Socialist Theory*. - 2016. – № 3. – P. 20-25.

²² Xu, Biao. Restoring trust in the government after a public crisis // *Public Administration in China*. – 2013. – № 2. – P. 31-35.

²³ Xiong, Meijuan. A theoretical review of political trust research // *Journal of Public Administration*. – 2010. – № 6. – P. 153-180.

²⁴ Yang, Jianyu. A study of differences in the level of trust in the modern Chinese government. diss. ... Doctor of Political Sciences – Jinan: Shandong University, 2016. – 34 p.

offering concepts of trust in government.

The methodological basis of this research is also made up of scientific works of Russian, Chinese and foreign authors in the field of mass communication, political journalism, and political psychology, divided into several problem-thematic blocks.

The first group consisted of official documents of the Governments of China and Russia, reflecting the state information policy regarding the pandemic and the fight against its consequences²⁵, as well as documents of the World Health Organization (WHO)²⁶.

The second group consisted of scientific papers reflecting the process of occurrence and spread of COVID-19²⁷. The works offer new concepts of Western and domestic researchers in reflecting the pandemic, analyze the psychological state of society in the context of an information epidemic (infodemic) provoked by the spread of panic and fake information in social media.

The third group included articles reflecting the content of publications about the

²⁵ The Wuhan Municipal Health and Public Health Commission notified about the situation with viral pneumonia of unknown cause: all cases were treated in isolation / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://news.haiwainet.cn/n/2020/0103/c3541083-31693764.html> (date of access: 03.01.2020); The draft National Plan for the prevention of the importation and spread of a new coronavirus infection in the territory of the Russian Federation has been approved // Government of Russia / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://government.ru/info/39407/> (date of access: 01.31.2020).

²⁶ Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): situation report, 10 // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/330775> (date of access: 13.02.2022); Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): situation report, 13 // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/330778> (date of access: 01.22.2022); Fighting infodemic against the background of the pandemic COVID-19: encouraging responsible behavior and reducing the harmful effects of false information and misinformation // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.who.int/ru/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation> (date of access: 03.01.2023).

²⁷ Qi, Pengcheng, Zhao, Lu. Analysis of the spread of rumors in the era of new media // Journal of Journalistic Research. – 2019. – № 15. – P. 88-89; Rothkopf, D.J. SARS Also Spurs an “Information Epidemic” // Newsday, 2003. P. 29; Zarocostas, J. How to fight an infodemic // The Lancet. 2020. 395(10225). P. 676.

pandemic²⁸, assessing participants in the communication process during the pandemic, and sociological studies on trust in publications and videos about the pandemic on online platforms²⁹. Research papers on audience trust in the media³⁰, especially during the pandemic period, have been specially studied³¹. A special group consists of the works of researchers in the field of network media and digitalization of the media³² space and scientific works related to cognitive modeling and systems analysis as a tool for studying the structure, functions, and properties of media aspects in general and its components³³.

The research is based on the works of Chinese scientists focused on studying the

²⁸ Pandemics COVID-19 // Colloquium-journal. – 2020. – № 8. – P. 78-79; Pennycook, G., McPhetres, J., Zhang, Y., Lu, J.G., Rand, D.G. Fighting COVID-19 misinformation on social media: Experimental evidence for a scalable accuracy-nudge intervention // *Psychology Science*. 2020. 31. P. 770-780.

²⁹ The Internet audience in Russia in 2020 / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://mediascope.net/news/1250827/> (date of reference: 01.12.2021); The 47th statistical report on the development of China's Internet network. – Beijing: Information Center of the Chinese Internet Network. CNMIC / [Electronic resource] URL: http://www.cac.gov.cn/2021-02/03/c_1613923423079314.htm (date of access: 02.03.2023).

³⁰ Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Trust in information as a factor of trust in electronic mass media // *Psychological science and education*. – 2012. – № 1. – P. 1-15; Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Media trust as an integrated socio-psychological phenomenon // *Knowledge. Understanding. Ability*. – 2013. – № 1. – P. 191-196; Li, Zhongchang. A study on trust in the media // *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology (Social Sciences publication)*. – 2003. – № 1. – P. 59-61; Rassadina, T.A. Trust in the mass media in the conditions of a "risk society" 150 (on the example of Russian provincial cities) // *Izv. higher studies. establishments. The Volga region. Social sciences*. – 2012. – № 1 (21). – P. 61-70.

³¹ Li, Yanli. The mechanism of influence on the formation of social trust among network users in the era of social networks // *The world of public relations*. – 2022. – № 7. – P. 71-73; Zhang, Hongzhong, Du, Huang, Wang, Rui. Trust in the Media: the impact of private websites on state television in the context of China // *Journal of Asia-Pacific Communications*. – 2019. – № 29(2). – P.188-210; Orso, D., Federici, N., Copetti, R., Vetrugno, L., Bove, T. Infodemic and the spread of fake news in the COVID-19-era // *Eur. J Emerg Med*. 2020, 27(5). P. 327-328.

³² Melnik, G.S. Strategies of new media in the digital environment and journalistic education // *Phenomenology of modern media systems and media texts: Mater. international scientific-Practical conferences, November 16-17, 2018.* / ed. by S.V. Oleinikov. Tiraspol: Pridnestrovian State University, -2019. – P. 93-101; Melnik G.S., Teplyashina A.N. The impact of digitalization of network space on journalism education // *Education Media (Mediaobrazovanie)*. 2019. 59(1). P. 86-92; Melnik, G.S., Pantserev, K. Digitalization of the Communication Environment as an Incentive for Innovation in Media Education // *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 2020. 60(2), P. 290-297.

³³ Isina, G.I., Arataeva, A.T. Cognitive mechanisms of media discourse functioning // *International Journal of Applied and Fundamental Research*. – 2017. – № 1-2. – P. 357-360; Sukhodolov, A.P. Models of the media system for decision support / A.P. Sukhodolov, V.A. Marenko. Novosibirsk: Publishing House of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2021. 111 p.

practice of a journalist covering the pandemic³⁴, as well as foreign authors who raise the question of the relationship between new and old forms of presenting information to the audience³⁵. Works on the future of the Russian and global media industry in general are considered³⁶.

Attention is also drawn to the work aimed at preserving the objectivity of information and fact-checking (data verification)³⁷.

A large group of studies consists of articles that consider COVID-19 as a crisis of public health and political communications, and infodemic as a new challenge to public health, raising the problem of managing infodemic and information overload³⁸.

Global health crises are considered by the authors of the articles as information

³⁴ Ni, Ciao. A study of the characteristics of the dissemination and management of key moments of Internet rumors during the epidemic // Education in the field of public safety. – 2021. – № 3. – P. 41-44; Pan, Wenhao, Li, Jinjin, He, Bikai. Analysis of the emotions of Internet users and psychological dynamics in emergency situations in the field of public health – on the example of "New corona pneumonia" // Media observation. – 2020. – № 7. – C. 10-15.

³⁵ Dissemination of information about epidemics and their management in the era of media integration // People's Daily Online / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://yuqing.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0323/c209043-31644615.html> (date of access: 03.23.2023); Xie, B., He, D., Mercer, T. et al. Global health crises are also information crises: A call to action // Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology. 2020. 71(12). P. 1419-1423.

³⁶ The Russian periodical press. The state, trends and prospects of development. Industry report [Electronic resource] / under the general editorship of V.V. Grigoriev. – M.: Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, 2021. – URL: https://digital.gov.ru/uploaded/files/periodic-2021.pdf?utm_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fyandex.com%2f; Digital 2020: Global digital overview / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-global-digital-overview> (date of access: 05.15.2020).

³⁷ López-García, X., Costa-Sánchez, C.; Vizoso, Á. Journalistic fact-checking of information in pandemic: Stakeholders, hoaxes, and strategies to fight disinformation during the COVID-19 crisis in Spain // Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health. 2021. 18. P. 1227; Moreno-Gil, V.; Ramon-Vegas, X., Mauri-Ríos, M. Bringing journalism back to its roots: Examining fact-checking practices, methods, and challenges in the Mediterranean context // Prof. Inf. 2022. 31, e310215.

³⁸ Briand, S.C, Cinelli, M., Nguyen, T. et al. Infodemics: A new challenge for public health // Cell. 2021. 184(25). P. 6010-6014.; Ellwart, T., Happ, C., Gurtner, A. et al. Managing information overload in virtual teams: Effects of a structured online team adaptation on cognition and performance // European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology. 2015. 24(5). P. 812-826; Mooney, P., Juhász, L. Mapping COVID-19: How web-based maps contribute to the infodemic // Dialogues in Human Geography. 2020. 10(2). P. 265-270.

crises³⁹.

A large group of psychological studies examines the issues of fear and rumors fueling an unprecedented "infodemic"⁴⁰; examines the informational impact of the Network media on the psychological response to the COVID-19 pandemic and online knowledge gained⁴¹. A huge number of articles are devoted to the fight against the infodemic against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, they encourage responsible behavior and ways to reduce the harmful effects of false information and misinformation⁴². A few works are devoted directly to the analysis of the interaction of online platforms with the audience during the coronavirus epidemic, emphasizing the importance of the audience's response to the message structure, sources, as well as the analysis of ways of social support in informing to improve the perception of the reliability

³⁹ Capaldo, G.Z. The Global Community Yearbook of International Law and Jurisprudence 2019. Oxford University Press, 2020, 341 p; Xie, B., He, D., Mercer, T. et al. Global health crises are also information crises: A call to action // Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology. 2020. 71(12). P. 1419-1423.

⁴⁰ Deineka, O.S., Melnik, G.S., Dukhanina, L.N., Maksimenko, A.A. The psychological state of society in conditions of infodemic // Innovative development: the potential of science and modern education: collection of articles of the VI International Scientific and practical Conference / ed. by G.G. Gulyaev. – Penza: ICNS "Science and Education". – 2020. – P. 202-206; Rothkopf, D.K. When the buzz bites back // The Washington Post / [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2003/05/11/when-the-buzz-bites-back/bc8cd84f-cab6-4648-bf58-0277261af6cd/> (date of access: 09.15.2022).

⁴¹ Chronicles of the pandemic: the impact of social networks on the psychological state of the population / [Electronic resource] URL: https://lahtaclinic.ru/uptodate/social_networks_and_psychological_state/ (date of access: 10.06.2023); Garfin, D.R., Silver, R.C., Holman, E.A. The novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) outbreak: Amplification of public health consequences by media exposure // Health psychology. 2020. 39(5). P. 355.

⁴² Fight infodemic together // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.euro.who.int/ru/health-topics/Health-systems/digital-health/news/news/2020/6/working-together-to-tackle-the-infodemic> (date of access: 06.29.2022); Fighting infodemic against the background of the pandemic COVID-19: encouraging responsible behavior and reducing the harmful effects of false information and misinformation // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.who.int/ru/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation> (date of access: 03.01.2023); Fighting fake news about coronavirus // News portal of the BSPU named after M. Aknulla / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://bspu.ru/news/11273> (date of access: 02.03.2023).

of medical information⁴³. Several academic articles reflected a critical moment, " which reinforced the threats to journalism that already existed. But the pandemic also showed the continuing importance of journalism, as news organizations provided vital information to audiences and promoted cohesion and solidarity⁴⁴. The special issue reflects the rich global diversity of journalism responses and experiences to the coronavirus pandemic. Special attention is paid to the results of analytical studies covering the work of Chinese and Russian media with audiences during the pandemic⁴⁵.

The analysis of media materials is conducted in the context of political research and is based on the works of such authors as I.A. Bykov, Lai Lingzhi, E.G. Kulagina, S.B. Nikonov, L.V. Smorgunov, O.A. Ignatyeva, N.S. Labush, A.S. Puiy⁴⁶ and others.

⁴³ Li, Xiaojing. The study of information sources, trust in the media, as well as the prevention and control of emergencies in the field of public health – on the example of a new epidemic of coronary pneumonia // Books and Information. – 2020. – № 2. – P.19-24; Li, Y. Problems of network information and psychological security and measures to counter threats in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic // Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): Proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2021. – P. 301-303; The ways of the Russian infodemic: from WhatsApp to the Investigative Committee / A.S. Arkhipova [et al.] // Monitoring public opinion: economic and social changes / under the general editorship of S.G. Davydov. – 2020. – P. 231-265; Borah, P., Xiao, X. The importance of 'likes': The interplay of message framing, source, and social endorsement on credibility perceptions of health information on Facebook // Journal of health communication. 2018. 23(4). P. 399-411.

⁴⁴ Karin, Wahl-Jorgensen, Thorsten, Quandt. Introduction: Global Perspectives on Journalism and the Coronavirus Pandemic // Journalism Studies. 2022. 23:5-6. P. 545-550.

⁴⁵ Liu, Xiaozhong, Sun, Jini. A comparative study of the messages "COVID-19" and "SARS" in the People's Daily // News Research. – 2021. – № (02). – P. 93-95; Liu, Ziyun. Global communication in the context of COVID-19 // News dissemination. – 2021. – № 05. – P. 116-118; TASS: "Health code" – green? Wuhan after two months of quarantine / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/8053221> (date of access: 03.23.2023); TASS: "Only China can help." Coronavirus has called into question European solidarity / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/8014475> (date of access: 03.19.2020); Cui, Niwen. Reflections and education on constructive reports on the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK and the USA // Chinese Journalists. – 2021. – № 03. – P. 38-40.

⁴⁶ Bykov, I.A., Lai, L. On the development of communication specialties in China and Russia // The Russian School of Public Relations. The Almanac. - 2023. – № 31. – P. 77-95; Kulagina, E.G., Nikonov, S.B. Mental politics and Internet media: information confrontation in the network space. – Kursk: University. book., 2020. – 260 p; Smorgunov, L.V., Bykov, I.A., Ignatieva, O.A., et al. The structure of judgments on digital platforms in the process of communication between citizens and public authorities // Outsourcing of political judgments: problems of communication on digital platforms. – M.: Polit.

Scientific novelty. Research and analysis of the impact of the Network media on the spread of disinformation and the formation of an infodemic helps to understand how information in the Network media affects people's opinions and behavior, as well as public trust in media, which can be of great practical importance for society, helping to combat the infodemic and maintain information security. The paper introduces a large number of new empirical data into scientific circulation.

The theoretical significance of the dissertation consists in the development of an important problem for the theory and practice of journalism and mass communication-determining campaigns to cover the pandemic in the mass media.

The practical significance of the dissertation work lies in the possibility of applying the results, conclusions, and recommendations of the research in media practice, as well as in the educational process, such courses of lectures and practical classes as "Theory and practice of mass Media" and "Fundamentals of creative activity of a journalist".

Approbation of the topic. 18 articles were published on the topic of this dissertation, including 6 articles in periodicals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission. Among this list is 1 article in publications that are included in the Web of Science.

List of publications (WAC and Web of Science):

1. The phenomenon of political trust in virtual communities (based on the materials of Chinese social networks during the Covid-19 pandemic) // *Communicologiya*. 2023. 11(4). P. 13-24. DOI 10.21453/2311-3065-2023-11-4-13-24. **VAK**.
2. Dynamics of changes in the psychosocial characteristics of online media consumers under the influence of official information and rumors about COVID-19 // *Litera*.

encyclopedia., 2021. – P. 214-263; Labush, N.S., Nikonov, S.B., Puyu, A.S., Baichik, A.V., Kurysheva, Y.V. Meditization of the political process. The nature and condition of manifestation // *Man in India*. 2017. 97(07). P.143-153.

2024. № 2. P. 36-44. **VAK.**
3. The Construction of the Network Media as an Ideal model of Public Information Dissemination During the Epidemic of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia // Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie). 2023. 19(2). P. 337-342. **Web of Science.**
 4. Features of the spread of fakes about the COVID-19 vaccine in Chinese online media // Medi@lmanah. 2024. No. 2 (121). P. 94-101. **VAK.**
 5. The value of network media as a source of information about the epidemic COVID-19 // Humanitarian vector. 2022. Vol. 17. № 4. P. 157-164. **VAK.**
 6. Short video as a source of infodemic in the context of the epidemic COVID 19 // Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Philology series. Journalism. 2022. № 3. P. 122-124. **VAK.**

Structure of the work. The dissertation research consists of an Introduction, three chapters, eight sections, a Conclusion, Literature, and an Appendix. The first chapter is devoted to theoretical approaches to defining the concepts of "infodemic", "rumors", "false news" and "disinformation", "disorganization". This chapter examines the mechanisms of generation, distribution, and threat of infodemic in the context of the epidemic COVID-19, as well as its impact on the functioning of the Network media.

The second chapter examines the communication, social, propaganda, and political aspects of the infodemic and examines the challenges associated with the ecology of the global news communication system in the future.

The third chapter analyzes the process of interaction between the state and the population in the dissemination of online information during the epidemic COVID-19, determines среди китайских и российских студентов the degree of trust in the Network media and government among Chinese and Russian students during the epidemic COVID-19, and provides recommendations for managing online infodemics in combination with the real situation.

The main scientific results.

1. The impact of infodemic in the Network media on the audience⁴⁷.
2. Challenges of mass communication for the Network media⁴⁸ and governments⁴⁹ in the context of an infodemic.
3. In the context of the vaccine war, the spread of fakes about the COVID-19 vaccine in online media has led to the fact that the audience perceives false information in different ways⁵⁰.
4. Two-way processes of studying communication between the public and the government in the Network media⁵¹.
5. Development of topical problems caused by infodemic in mass media communication in the context of the coronavirus epidemic⁵².

⁴⁷ Li, Y. The "pandemic" of disinformation in the media about COVID-19 // Bulletin of Kabardino-Balkarian State University: Journalism. Education. Literature. – 2021. – Vol. 1. – № 1. – P. 64-73; Li, Y. Infodemic as a medium for the formation of fakes about coronavirus in the media space // Regional media: ways of interaction: Materials of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference, Chita, December 16, 2021 – Chita: Zabaikalsky State University, 2021. – P. 13-16.

⁴⁸ Li, Y. Challenges and research of global mass communication in the context of the epidemic of COVID-19 // Media technologies in a changing world: trends, problems, forecasts: proceedings / Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation; Federal State Autonomous Education "North Caucasus Federal University". Stavropol: North Caucasus Federal University, 2021. – P. 162-165; Li, I. Infodemic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as a modern socio-humanitarian challenge // Media in the modern world. The 60th St. Petersburg Readings: a collection of materials from the 60th International Scientific Forum. In 2 volumes, St. Petersburg, June 30 – 02, 2021. Volume 1. – St. Petersburg: Mediapapir LLC. – 2021. – P. 185-186.

⁴⁹ Li, Y. The Construction of the Network Media as an Ideal model of Public Information Dissemination During the Epidemic of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia // Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie). 2023. 19(2). P. 337-342.

⁵⁰ Li, Y. Features of the spread of fakes about the COVID-19 vaccine in Chinese online media // Medi@lmanah. 2024. No. 2 (121). P. 94-101.

⁵¹ Li, Y. Dynamics of changes in the psychosocial characteristics of network media consumers under the influence of official information and rumors about COVID-19 // Litera. – 2024. – № 2. – P. 36-44; Li, I. Mechanisms of dissemination of network information between the government and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic // Language. Communication. Society. – 2024. – № 1 (5). – P. 37-42; Li, Y. The phenomenon of political trust in virtual communities (based on the materials of Chinese social networks during the Covid-19 pandemic) // Communicologiya. 2023. 11(4). P. 13-24.

⁵² Li, Y. Problems of network security of personal information in the context of prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic // Regional Informatics (RI-2022): Jubilee XVIII St. Petersburg International Conference. Conference proceedings, St. Petersburg, October 26-28, 2022. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2022. – P. 377-379; Li, Y. Problems of network information and psychological

6. Analysis of features of the functioning and challenges of the Network media⁵³, such as we-media⁵⁴, in the context of infodemic during the epidemic COVID-19.
7. Strategies for managing the Network media in the context of an infodemic⁵⁵.
8. Analysis of fake news about the epidemic of the new coronavirus, widely distributed in short videos, which are modern popular Network media⁵⁶.

The statements are presented for the defense.

1. Infodemic – in the context of specific emergencies, is an overabundance of true and false information, which makes it difficult for people to find reliable sources and reliable instructions and guidance during emergencies when they need it. Infodemic has two main elements-information and epidemic, the relationship between which is causal.

security and measures to counter threats in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic // Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): Proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2021. – P. 301-303.

⁵³ Li, Y. The Network media in infodemic: features of functioning and challenges // Journalism and media communications: modern trends: materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, Tiraspol, October 27, 2023 / responsible editors: S.L. Raspopova, S.V. Oleinikov. – Tiraspol: Publishing House of Transnistria. unita, 2024. P. 123-128; Li, Y. The value of network media as a source of information about the COVID-19 epidemic // Humanitarian vector. – 2022. – Vol. 17. – № 4. – P. 157-164.

⁵⁴ Li, Y. The we-media are changing human life // Communications in the era of digital change: A collection of materials of the IV International Scientific Journal. practical conferences, Paris – St. Petersburg: L'Harmattan, St. Petersburg State University of Economics, 2020. – P. 116-119; Li, YI. Functioning of "we-media" in the conditions of infodemic: security problems // Regional Informatics (RI-2020). XVII St. Petersburg International Conference "Regional Informatics (RI-2020)". Conference materials. Part 1. – St. Petersburg: SPOISU, 2020. – P. 262-264.

⁵⁵ Li, Y. New media as an important driving force of digital transformation // Regional journalism: cultural codes, the space of meanings, multiethnic discourse: Materials of the I All-Russian Conference, Rostov-on-Don, November 10-12, 2022 / ed. by A.G. Bepalova, K.R. Nigmatullina, E.V. Shiota. Rostov-on-Don - Taganrog: Southern Federal University. – 2022. – P. 138-141; Li, Y. Strategic communications in the context of the coronavirus epidemic // Communications in the era of digital change: A collection of materials from the IV International Scientific and Practical Conference, Paris – St. Petersburg: L'Harmattan, St. Petersburg State University of Economics. – 2020. – P. 308-311.

⁵⁶ Li, Y. Short video as a source of infodemic in the context of the COVID 19 epidemic // Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Philology series. Journalism. – 2022. – № 3. – P. 122-124.

2. The mechanism of infodemic generation on network media allows us to distinguish the following aspects: first, public emotions are the basis for the emergence of infodemic; second, the socialization of network media has created a communication environment for the spread of infodemic; third, imperfect laws and rules for controlling infodemic.
3. The problem of network information security is the most urgent problem of the infodemic in the network space and includes the following aspects: A) defamation on the Internet; B) electronic attacks using network viruses; C) Internet harassment; D) information security incidents in distance education; E) problems of network security of personal information; F) the appearance of new technologies in the Internet. increased anxiety and increased stress reactions in the world affected by the coronavirus epidemic; G) the growing influence of the informatization process on the experience of an anxious state.
4. In the context of an infodemic, network media performs communication, sociological, propaganda, and political functions in resolving an emergency.
5. The most important challenges for the Network media against the background of the infodemic: A) generalization of subjects of information dissemination makes it difficult to distinguish between true and false content; B) insufficient stock of scientific professional knowledge of the media limits the depth of news coverage; C) irrational behavior of the audience in scientific communication accelerates the spread of rumors.
6. During the epidemic COVID-19, journalism is an intermediary between the state and the public. The interaction process is a process based on information "control" and "anti-control". The form of "anti-control" is also reflected in the confrontational discourse of the virtual community consisting of netizens, reflected not only in doubts about the level of public health services and the effectiveness of crisis response, but also in criticism of the nature of public servants.
7. Chinese and Russian students have the same trust in the media, with a preference for

political sources, then news and social networks, as well as trust in the government and perception of the risk of infection are approximately the same.

8. In the context of the infodemic, restoring the trust of netizens in the media and the government requires joint efforts of the government, the people, and the media.

Chapter 1. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY OF INFODEMIC IN THE MASS MEDIA

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in early 2020 is of epochal importance. The emergence of the new coronavirus and the global pandemic have changed the world order. Of course, no one can say for sure what new era and what new order we will establish. Therefore, in this epochal epidemic, people must win two completely new wars: on the one hand, the pandemic COVID-19 in the real world, on the other hand, the war called "infodemic" in the network space.

1.1 Methodological approaches to the definition of the concept of "infodemic" in relation to mass media

Although the term "infodemic" has become popular in many dictionaries around the world, it has also gained traction and become a hot topic in both academia and politics. The phenomenon of infodemic is studied by specialists in the humanities, such as

philosophers⁵⁷, psychologists⁵⁸, sociologists⁵⁹, political scientists⁶⁰, and lawyers⁶¹. Linguists analyze the causes of infodemic, its manifestations in various forms of communication, the level of trust of communicants to various sources of information, linguistic criteria for determining false information, identify dangerous stories and texts from a medical and legal point of view, and assess the impact of infodemic on modern journalism.

In the English Wikipedia, the word "infodemic" is explained as follows: "infodemic is the rapid and far – reaching dissemination of both accurate and inaccurate information on certain issues".⁶² An infodemic is a combination of information and an epidemic, and is used as a metaphor to describe how misinformation can spread from person to person like a virus and infect people like a disease⁶³.

In China, where the new coronavirus epidemic first broke out, the following translations of "Infodemic" are mainly used: "information epidemic", an expression that

⁵⁷ Novitskaya, I.E. The problem of disinfecting in the context of the mediatization of the global pandemic COVID-19 // *Philosophy and challenges of modernity*. – 2021. – № 3. – P. 83-86.

⁵⁸ Deineka, O.S., Maksimenko, A.A. Assessment of the psychological state of society in the context of infodemic through the analysis of social networks: a review of foreign publications // *Society. Wednesday. Development*. – 2020. – № 2 (55). – P. 28-39; Mikheev, E.A., Nestik, T.A. Psychological mechanisms of infodemic and personality's attitude to misinformation about COVID-19 in social networks // *Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Social and economic psychology*. – 2021. – Vol. 6, № 1(21). – P. 37-64.

⁵⁹ Pershutkin, S.N. Constitutional sociology in the context of infodemic: opportunities and new challenges // *Sociology and society: traditions and innovations in the social development of regions: A collection of reports of the VI All-Russian Sociological Congress, Tyumen, October 14-16, 2020* / Editor-in-chief V.A. Mansurov. – Tyumen: Russian Society of Sociologists, 2020. – P. 1756-1767.

⁶⁰ Plotichkina, N.V. Public policy for managing the COVID-19 infodemic // *Society: politics, economics, law*. 2021. – № 2 (91). – P. 12-16.

⁶¹ Akimov, A.A., Polishchuk, S.V., Grigoriev, S.M. Formation of legal awareness of young specialists of the military-industrial complex in the period of infodemic // *Human capital*. – 2020. – № 9 (141). – P. 224-231; Sovik, Y.I. "Fake news" and freedom of speech in a public health crisis: lessons "infodemic" // *Legal mi*. – 2021. – № 3. – P. 33-39.

⁶² Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): situation report, 13 // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/330778> (date of reference: 01.22.2020); Mooney P., Juhász, L. Mapping COVID-19: How web-based maps contribute to the infodemic // *Dialogues in Human Geography*. 2020. 10(2). P. 265-270.

⁶³ Simon, F.M., Camargo, C.Q. Autopsy of a metaphor: The origins, use and blind spots of the "infodemic" // *New Media & Society*, 2021. p. 14614448211031908.

is most often found in the Chinese media, and second, "information plague", a phrase that appears in the overseas version of "People's Daily" in Chinese. In Russian, "infodemic" is translated as infodemic ("information epidemic") or "information pandemic", respectively. The latter is the most frequent translation in the Russian media. Apparently, both expressions are literal translations. Experts and scientists with experience in medicine and public health usually prefer to use translations based on the name of the disease. However, the meaning of the word "infodemic" comes from a synthetic English dynamic noun that contains two meanings: 1) information is the cause, 2) the occurrence of epidemics is the result, so an infodemic is a description of a logical progressive process, namely from cause to result.

The term was first coined by health and crisis communications expert David Rothkopf back in 2003. He gave this definition of infodemic: "a few facts, mixed with fear, speculation and rumor, quickly spread and spread around the world with the help of modern information technology, have affected the national and international economy, politics and even security in ways completely out of proportion to the indigenous realities⁶⁴." Rothkopf originally proposed this theoretical concept in response to the spread of rumors around the world during the SARS outbreak in 2003. This concept has a double meaning: first, infodemic results from the overloaded distribution of information related to medical epidemics; second, this overloaded distribution itself acquires the property of contagiousness. At the same time, this concept implies the viral characteristics of new media. When information is widely distributed on the Internet, it can be said that the information is a virus that spreads at a high rate and is extremely difficult to control. An outbreak of infodemic simultaneously with the outbreak of the epidemic COVID-19 in the medical sense will cause double harm to society.

⁶⁴ Rothkopf, D.K. When the buzz bites back // The Washington Post / [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2003/05/11/when-the-buzz-bites-back/bc8cd84f-cab6-4648-bf58-0277261af6cd/> (date of reference: 09.15.2022); Rothkopf, D.J. SARS Also Spurs an "Information Epidemic" // Newsday, 2003. P. 29; Rothkopf, D.J. SARS, fear, rumors feed unprecedented "infodemic" // The Record, 2003. P. 1.

Some scientists noted that while SARS, including Middle East respiratory syndrome and Zika virus, caused a global panic, although there was no serious outbreak of infodemic, now the development of social media has exacerbated people's fears about the epidemic. Therefore, there is currently a violent outbreak of infodemic. The use of the term "infodemic" has increased rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization has defined infodemic as an abundance of information, some accurate and some inaccurate, which makes it difficult for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable recommendations when they need them⁶⁵. Subsequently, on February 13, 2020, WHO held an innovative research meeting on the epidemic COVID-19, and epidemic became the new term that the meeting focused on. Infodemic is characterized by an overabundance of information, especially false and misleading⁶⁶. The related term "disinfodemic" (referring to disinformation campaigns about COVID-19) was used by UNESCO⁶⁷. By the time the Journal of Medical Internet Research published its June 2020 issue outlining WHO's framework for dealing with the COVID-19 infodemic, the World Health Organization and public health agencies recognized infodemology as an "emerging scientific field" that critically reflects on the limitless flow of information during the epidemic COVID-19⁶⁸. Management expert Eisenbach described "infodemiology" as the study of "the determinants and spread of medical information and misinformation⁶⁹."

As mentioned earlier, the word "infodemic" is a combination of two components of the concept – "information" and "epidemic". This dynamic noun includes causal

⁶⁵ Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): situation report, 13 // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/330778> (date of reference: 01.22.2020).

⁶⁶ Zarocostas, J. How to fight an infodemic // *The Lancet*. 2020. 395(10225). P. 676.

⁶⁷ Capaldo, G.Z. *The Global Community Yearbook of International Law and Jurisprudence 2019*. Oxford University Press, 2020, 341 p.

⁶⁸ Eysenbach, G. How to fight an infodemic: the four pillars of infodemic management // *Journal of medical Internet research*. 2020. 22(6). P. 21820.

⁶⁹ Eysenbach, G. Infodemiology: The epidemiology of (mis) information // *The American journal of medicine*. 2002. 113(9). P. 763-765.

relationships, which was proposed by Rothkopf, a public health expert, and has recently received special attention from the WHO. Thus, an infodemic is basically an epidemic, that is, the process of its exacerbation caused by an excess of information. This is a "cross-border" concept of communication, psychology, and public health.

Information in the term infodemic includes two aspects: true and false information. Truthful information includes both reliable news, such as official or expert recommendations on disease prevention, etc., and disturbing real-world news, such as human-to-human transmission of the virus and a spike in the number of confirmed cases.

Some of the false information is mostly made up of rumors, fake news, and misinformation. Due to the inertia of human thinking, people's misunderstanding of the essence of the phenomenon, there is still a lack of a clear connotation of the phenomenon, so infodemic is easily associated with rumors, fake news, misinformation, which is a general lack of perception. Moreover, in the age of social media, the boundaries between fake news, misinformation, and rumors are becoming increasingly blurred⁷⁰.

This requires us to further clarify the relationship between infodemic and the concepts mentioned above, which are easily confused with it.

Infodemic and rumors. Compared to the infodemic that began in 2003, the concept of "rumors" is relatively old, which practically accompanies human society and goes along with it. Rumor refers to statements that do not have a relevant factual basis but are fabricated and promoted by certain means. Because the audience is not explicitly or implicitly fictitious, fabricated and disseminated statements that differ from the facts or even contradict reality are rumors.

In terms of mechanisms and functions, rumors are very closely related to the epidemic. First, according to the amount of news in the media, the false information that

⁷⁰ Prom, N.A. Mediafact: between authenticity and fiction // Sign: problematic field of media consumption. - 2018. – № 4. – P. 47-53; Apostol, Nikoleta-Elena. From The Fake news crisis to the crisis of journalism: The European Union's Approach // Rom. Jour. of Sociological Studies, New Series. 2020. № 2. P. 157-167; Barclay, D.A. Fake news, propaganda, and plain old lies: How to find trustworthy information in the digital age // Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 2018. P. 31-33.

caused the epidemic mainly consisted of rumors. During the epidemic period, the number of rumors about social security, everyday life and public policy is explosive and tends to increase. The concentrated appearance of a large number of rumors often becomes the main factor in the occurrence of infodemic. Second, rumors spread quickly. Especially in today's self-propagating environment using flexible and disorderly network communications, the price of illegal online rumors is extremely low. Since rumors spread faster and have a stronger effect, they can quickly expand the scale of the epidemic.

Precisely because rumors are closely related to an epidemic, when people talk about this large-scale disease, they usually assume that the epidemic is caused by rumors. However, infodemic and rumors have different connotations, and they cannot be directly considered synonymous. The reasons are as follows: first, the term "infodemic" includes two dimensions: true and false information. Rumors are deliberately presented as false information that does not contain any truth, which invariably generates subjective and groundless statements. As a rule, they are expressions of people's emotions and irrational judgments. For example, "drinking high-grade alcohol can prevent new coronavirus pneumonia" and "instilling sesame oil in the nostrils can prevent new coronavirus infection." Such information is typical hearsay and does not correspond to objective facts. Therefore, it can be argued that rumors are an integral part of an infodemic, and the relationship between the part and the whole should be complementary.

Rumors tend to be spread among individuals, and the source of rumors is usually individuals. Rumors today are usually carried out in the form of mass self-distribution. Such rumors are often irrational and emotionally cathartic. Those who were alarmed found some explanation in the rumors, and the rumors provided information that matched their feelings. And information from the infodemic comes from all walks of life, and the source can be individuals, mainstream media, or even the government.

Infodemic and fake news. Fake news – information deception or deliberate dissemination of disinformation in social networks and traditional media with the intent

to mislead in order to obtain financial or political benefits⁷¹. The connotation "fake news" implies the presence of real news events in nature, reproduced in messages that have the characteristics of news in form and position, but, in fact, are news without any source of objective facts, that is, fake news is a product of imagination, a fabrication based on news facts. In its purest form, fake news contains absolutely no truth.

In terms of definition and mechanism of action, fake news is very similar to rumors: if online rumors are rumors spread on the Internet, then fake news is rumors spread by the media. Thus, fake news is more like an updated version of online rumors and is more convincing. Online rumors that are reported by mainstream media (such as traditional media, major websites, news apps, etc.) are spread in the form of news and turned into fake news. For example, an online rumor that a new coronavirus was grown in a secret laboratory (referring to the Wuhan Institute of Virology) was published by the British Daily Star and quickly turned into fake news. The main reason for fake news is that some media outlets do not pay attention to investigating and verifying the source of news content in order to make it timely. There is also some fake news with political elements, such as fake news deliberately fabricated by some mainstream media outlets in the US to attack hostile political parties. However, not all online rumors can be classified as fake news, and fake news should be classified as rumors.

Thus, the relationship between fake news and an information epidemic is similar to the relationship between rumors and an information epidemic. At the same time, compared to rumors, the number of fake news is less, the publisher is more authoritative, and the trust in it is higher. The speed of distribution, the ability to spread, and the impact of fake news are far superior to the usual online rumors, especially when influenced by the combined efforts of the mainstream media and mass self-distribution.

Infodemic and disinformation. Misinformation is deliberately false or distorted

⁷¹ Brown, É. Fake news and conceptual ethics // J. Ethics & Soc. Phil., 2019(16). P.144.

information⁷². Currently, misinformation refers to deliberately false information disseminated by government agencies. The reason why the government publishes misinformation is related to the specific management situation. For example, when Western governments respond to social hotspots and public opinion events, they must make a choice between publicity and non-publicity. According to many incidents that have occurred, at the early stage of a natural disaster outbreak, the Government usually instinctively prefers not to disclose the facts in order not to harm its interests. However, the concealment of facts in the future may cause discontent from public opinion and affect the reputation of the government.

In order to find a balance between interests and pressure, the governments of a number of Western countries have used disinformation in strategic communications, for example, in the "vaccine wars"⁷³. Attempts by leading Western publications and world agencies, replicating the official position of their governments, to compromise vaccine manufacturers in Russia have acquired enormous proportions. The topic of the artificial origin of the virus, which was considered as a biological weapon, was also discussed. In the context of the infodemic, we can consider the activities of the Governments of these countries that spread false information. But even during a crisis, the amount of information about everything related to COVID-19 cannot be excessive. Therefore,

⁷² Dorofeeva, V.V. Fake news in the modern media space // Theoretical and Practical Issues of Journalism. – 2019. – Vol. 8. – № 4. – P. 774-786; Ershov, Y.M. The phenomenon of fake in the context of communication practices // Bulletin of the Tomsk State University. Philology. – 2018. – № 52. – P. 245-256; Makurova, D.A. Disinformation in the mass media in the post-truth era // Bulletin of SUSU. Series: Linguistics. – 2020. – vol. 17. – №2. – P. 65-69; Sukhodolov, A.P. The phenomenon of "fake news" in the modern media space: concept, types, purpose, counteraction measures // Scientific journal. Eurasian cooperation: humanitarian aspects. – Moscow, 2017. – vol. 6. – № 2. – P. 87-90; Sherilyn, A., Posetti, J. Journalism, "fake news" and disinformation: a guide for academic and professional training of journalists / Wardle, K., Derakhshan H., Matthews, E., Posetti J. et al. [translated from the French by A. Krasavina, South Ural State University]. – Yuzhno-Uralsk: SUSU, 2019. – 34 p.

⁷³ Melnik, G.S. Vaccine wars in the media as a threat factor to the information and psychological security of Russia // Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference. St. Petersburg, 2021. P. 305-307; Li, Y. Features of the spread of fakes about the COVID-19 vaccine in Chinese online media // Medi@lmanah. 2024. No. 2 (121). P. 94-101.

government misinformation cannot directly lead to information overload. That is, in terms of quantity, disinformation does not make up the bulk of the information in the infodemic, and its number is much less than rumors and fake news. However, official disinformation usually spreads faster, with greater speed and with wider coverage. When the infodemic broke out, governments had to take over the functions of dispelling rumors, releasing real and objective news in a timely manner, and providing people with reliable guidance for action. And when people find out that the official news is actually false news or carefully fabricated lies, and the one who rejects the rumors becomes their creator, trust in the government is lost. People who cannot find a reasonable guide to action will turn to all sorts of rumors and fake news, the number of rumors will increase dramatically with interpersonal communication, and the probability of fake news will be higher. The result is an information epidemic that is intensifying as people search in vain for reliable guidance on what to do amid an exponentially growing mass of rumors and fake news.

An analysis of the practice of Russian government agencies working with the public and the media during the pandemic showed that official information, designed for both internal and external audiences, was reliable and generally available. In the dissemination of information, government agencies adhered to the principle: any person who publicly distributes information that contradicts official Russian information, thereby spreads deliberately false information and, depending on the subject of such illegal information disseminated, in many cases bears administrative or criminal responsibility. This approach is supported by well-known judicial practice, including under Articles 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and 280.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

To sum up, the infodemic is closely linked to rumors, fake news, and misinformation. Infodemic has become a common information disease that often flares

up and spreads rapidly in the information age⁷⁴. The mechanism of infodemic generation is a superposition of information overload and information uncertainty⁷⁵, and the mechanism of its transmission is manifested as a connection of virtual network social relations in the constructed media environment.

Models of epidemic infections in the medical field divide subjects into two categories: susceptible and infected. There are also infected and susceptible individuals in infodemic: an infected person produces or spreads an "information virus", and a susceptible person becomes infected with an "information virus". In today's networked society, infected people spread the infodemic virus behind the information environment in the form of information traces through facts and opinions generated by the use of mass media and accelerate the spread through the Network media.

The spread of infodemic in the network space is a consequence of the participation of individuals in the dissemination of information needs. American sociologist Mark Granovetter divides interpersonal relationships into three types: strong connection relationships, weak connection relationships, and no connection⁷⁶relationships. Strong connections are characterized by people's similarity and cognitive balance, and their maintenance depends on strong emotional factors. In relationships with strong group communication, the proximity of relatives and friends makes it harder to distinguish false information in WeChat detection and Telegram groups. In a weak connection relationship, a weak social platform focuses on controversies and conflicts through public issues in the broader network space, constantly attracts people's attention in the form of a hashtag, and transmits infodemic. Therefore, complex and diverse social relationships, consisting of strong and weak connections, allow infodemic to produce cross-infection in wide social

⁷⁴ Briand, S.C., Cinelli, M., Nguyen, T. et al. Infodemic: A new challenge for public health // *Cell*. 2021. 184(25). P. 6010-6014.

⁷⁵ Grineva O.A. Information overload of a person in an information society // *Mission of confessions*. – 2022. – №65. – P. 193-199.

⁷⁶ Granovetter, M. The strength of weak ties: A network theory revisited // *Sociological theory*, 1983. P. 201-233.

circles. Regardless of whether there is a strong or weak link, "information viruses" must pass through certain intermediaries, such as the government, mass media, and individuals, and spread in the environment created by these intermediaries.

Infodemic is distributed and replicated in the media environment. In social network relations, many opinion leaders maliciously advertise, manipulate public opinion, unleash online wars of vituperation, or distribute overly entertaining content and distorted values, as well as disseminate sources of infodemic such as anxiety and anxiety, through viewing and reposting, influencing the receptive group with which they have a virtual social relationship⁷⁷.

To summarize, the infodemic is caused by the excessive dissemination of true and false information related to medical epidemics, and this excessive dissemination itself is contagious. At the same time, this concept implies the viral characteristics of the Network media. When information is widely distributed on the Internet, it can be said that the information is a virus that spreads at a high rate and is extremely difficult to control.

Thus, the concept of infodemic has a broad and narrow meaning. Infodemic in a broad sense refers to the phenomenon when information overload and information disorder prevent people from finding truly valuable and reliable information, thereby harming the individual, social security and economic stability. A narrow understanding of infodemic is often associated with the context of major public events, natural disasters, accidents, and especially public health events that are gaining more resonance.

Further discussion of infodemic in the Network media is focused on infodemic in a narrow sense. In the infodemic environment that accompanies major emergencies, the sense of loss of control increases people's panic and anxiety, and the decentralized and open nature of discursive power in the age of social media has also significantly weakened the authority of official discourse. In combination with different social perceptions and

⁷⁷ Burkova, V.N., Butovskaya, M.L. Coronaphobia, infodemic and fakes during COVID-19 // *Siberian historical Studies*. – 2023. – №2. – P. 55-75.

cultures of different regions and countries, the situation with infodemic in modern society is extremely complex. This first true infodemic in the age of social media provides the world with a valuable opportunity to review existing mechanisms for epidemic prevention and control, information management, risk awareness, and other mechanisms.

1.2 Mechanisms of generation and distribution of infodemic in the context of the epidemic COVID-19

Linguists investigate the causes of infodemic⁷⁸ and study its impact on the modern journalistic community⁷⁹. This section summarizes the generation of infodemic in three aspects: first, the expression of negative public sentiment laid the foundation for the emergence of infodemic; second, the socialization of the Network media accelerated the spread of infodemic; third, imperfect laws and regulations for controlling infodemic, and the spread of infodemic, characterized by complex information, increased attention, and severe confusion and the difficulty of control.

A) Public emotions are the basis for the emergence of infodemic.

American communication researchers Melvin DeFler and Everett Dennis noted that the more complex the social situation, the stronger the internal "insecurity" of people, the deeper people's dependence on the media and, accordingly, the stronger the demand for information. Information demand is the main reason why the public accesses and uses the media, and meeting information demand is also the basis for the public's assessment of the media and its credibility. Information needs are considered a necessity for survival and are real. They have two meanings: on the one hand, it is the public's need for basic

⁷⁸ Zemlyansky, A.V. Infodemic: genesis and morphology of the phenomenon // Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Series: Philology. Journalism. – 2021. – № 4. – P. 111-114; Zemlyansky, A.V. The causes of infodemic: a comparative analysis of coverage of the SARS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic // Bulletin of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. – 2021. – № 3(26). – P. 570-579.

⁷⁹ Ivanova, S.V. Infodemic in the mirror of journalism // Science and school. – 2021. – № 2. – P. 60-65.

and important information; on the other hand, the public's desire for special information. The epidemic of the new coronavirus pneumonia is associated with the safety of life and physical health of every person. People are seeking more information to understand the epidemic and events, and to better protect themselves. In this scenario, people's negative emotions such as panic, anxiety, and restlessness are aroused. As the epidemic COVID-19 becomes more serious, public attention is also increasing, and the public's demand for information about the epidemic is growing. However, an outbreak of public health emergencies is generally characterized by suddenness, uncertainty, and uncertainty, which inevitably leads to a lack of information in the early stages of the epidemic. The information needs of society cannot be met at all. Thus, false information and rumors have undoubtedly become one of the most convenient ways for information consumers to "release" their negative emotions in order to achieve a balanced state.⁸⁰

It is worth noting here that the public expression of emotions also has a certain positive effect, since it often reflects the direction of public discourse, which allows government departments to widely collect valuable information based on the degree of emotional response of the public, and to adjust their response policies in a timely manner. However, the disordered expression of public emotions leads to the spread of fakes, which contributes to a pandemic of false information and rumors and generates the phenomenon of infodemic.

B) Socialization of media has created a communication environment for infodemic.

Network Media is an online application that allows groups of users to create, interact, and share information between different platforms, provide real-time communication between networks, and provide an environment for active user participation in public discourse⁸¹. Compared to traditional media, users who publish

⁸⁰ Rosnow, R.L. Inside rumor: a personal journey // *American Psychologist*. 1991. 46(5). P. 484-496.

⁸¹ Senchishchev, M.A. Definitions of the term "new media" in modern science // *Bulletin of Science* – 2023. – Vol. 3. – № 12(69) – P. 996-972.

information on the Network media do not need too strict editorial control or review and can remain anonymous and express their personal opinions purely. Another feature of the Network media is that they can reach many information audiences and quickly distribute information via the Internet⁸².

As of 2024, 5.17 billion people use social networks, which is equivalent to 63.82% of the world's population⁸³.

In this context, the Network media has become the main communication medium, flooded with rumors and false information. The advent of the era of the Network media has allowed every user to create and disseminate information that there are many sources of information and has significantly complicated the fight against the infodemic.

C) Imperfect laws and regulations on infodemic control.

System design is an important part of the management system and an important means of ensuring an orderly, balanced, and efficient operation. In the process of preventing and controlling the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, some government departments still have obvious shortcomings in the development of systems, such as imperfect early warning mechanisms for rumors and disclosure mechanisms, and problems in these systems directly or indirectly create a living space for a pandemic of false information. First, the way of thinking of some government departments does not keep up with the times, and the construction of the system is not yet perfect. Even though the public can use the Network media to learn the latest news published by the government in a timely manner, and can also provide comments in a short time, the thinking and concepts of many government departments remain in the past, which believe

⁸² Neha, P., Eric, A.C., Hourmazd, H., Keith, G. Social Media and vaccine hesitancy: new updates for the era of COVID-19 and globalized infectious diseases // *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*. 2020. 16(11). P. 2586-2593.

⁸³ Social Media Users 2024 (Global Data & Statistics) / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.demandsage.com/social-media-users/> (date of accessed: 03.04.2024); Most popular social networks worldwide as of April 2024, by number of monthly active users / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> (date of accessed: 04.01.2024).

that their duty is only to publish information. And so, they ignore the real information needs of the public and the reaction to the information received. As a result, there is no mechanism for two-way communication between the Government and the public. Then, the problem of incomplete and irregular information management systems of some government departments is also obvious. In the early stages of the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, the information disclosure system of some government departments was imperfect, leading to information asymmetry between the government and the public. Infodemic is the result of an indirect effect of information asymmetry. Thus, in the context of the global epidemic COVID-19, improving the emergency management mechanism is essential for the prevention and control of the disease epidemic and infodemic.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic COVID-19, social media has become the main channel for spreading information about the epidemic. On the one hand, governments of different countries disseminated up-to-date information about the fight against the epidemic through the Network media. On the other hand, a large amount of misinformation also spread rapidly through the Network media, exponentially increasing people's panic. This violates public consensus and damages the reputation of Governments and international organizations.

This infodemic not only poses a serious threat to global public health, but also seriously undermines the foundations of international relations. In the context of the global spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, an accurate understanding of the infodemic, understanding its transmission models and control methods have already become important parts of global cooperation in the field of information management, joint response to the epidemic and preserving the commonality of the common future of mankind.

Infodemic is characterized by complex information, increased attention, severe confusion, and difficulty controlling it. Although the mechanism of its dissemination is unique, it also demonstrates a certain universality, which manifests itself in four aspects—strong incitement, powerful effort, broad influence, and effective management of public

opinion with great difficulty.

A) Strong incitement.

In the process of distributing information about public health emergencies, the sender and recipient can directly click on the control link to exchange information. In particular, the current media environment has encouraged more and more people to become a source of information dissemination, and the phenomenon of "decentralization" of the Internet is becoming more and more obvious, which has contributed to the strengthening of the infodemic. Professional knowledge of protection related to the epidemic is a great concern and spiritual food for people who are trapped at home and stay at home for several months. This news is mixed with some false, unscientifically verified information that satisfies the taste and psychological needs of the public, which is usually new and abnormal and can attract the attention and discussion of more people.

Attractive headlines and unconventional content are accompanied by high traffic and discussions, and these are the most important links in the chain of benefits of "traffic monetization" in the modern Internet era⁸⁴. The criterion for evaluating the success of a news story is no longer whether it is truthful and deep enough, but whether it can attract user clicks, drive traffic to news websites, and then convert traffic into revenue⁸⁵. Especially for those new media that have just emerged, and we are media that needs warmth, the traffic marketing concept will first make them known. Moreover, we-media allows more people to express their own opinions and disseminate facts, expand information distribution channels, and ensure that information is quickly and widely disseminated, which has a positive impact on the public's right to know, participate, and

⁸⁴ Hendrickx, J. From newspapers to TikTok: social media journalism as the fourth wave of news production, diffusion and consumption // *Blurring Boundaries of Journalism in Digital Media*. 2023. Vol. 140. P.229-289.

⁸⁵ Xin, Xiaofeng, Wang, Qiang. Four dimensions of new mainstream media to enhance the value of news products // *Media*. – 2023. – № 24. – P. 56-58.

exercise oversight⁸⁶. Due to the growing spread of the coronavirus and related discussions around the world, people prefer to trust the false information that floods social networks. Some misinformation and rumors about COVID-19 even mask the right preventive measures and promote improper behavior that increases the spread of the virus. As of August 2020, at least 800 people worldwide have died from false information related to the coronavirus epidemic. The negative environmental environment of the media, created by false information, not only affects the physical and mental state of a person, but even causes social chaos and panic.

Even if the media makes fake news, and this often leads to many false news, such as various "magic medicines" from different countries of the world being spread around the world, stigmatization of the Chinese epidemic, unprovoked accusations against the WHO, and so on, under the slogan "prevent and resist the coronavirus". At the same time, the inflammatory characteristics of such news also encourage the original "silent majority" to no longer remain silent, but instead to become a divergent link in the communication structure of the information network, allowing more real or false information to flow into the information river and sea through the Network media, which are grouped into the category of topics most discussed by citizens and having the greatest public response.

B) A powerful effort.

Twitter reports that back in late January 2020, there were already more than 15 million tweets about the coronavirus outbreak, and the discussion was quickly gaining momentum⁸⁷. Among them, a large amount of information on social networks is changing rapidly. A large amount of real and false information has been adapted, removed, pieced

⁸⁶ Li, Y. We-media are changing human life // Communications in the era of digital change: A collection of materials of the IV International Scientific Journal. practical conferences, Paris – St. Petersburg: L'Harmattan, St. Petersburg State University of Economics, 2020. – P. 116-119.

⁸⁷ Coronavirus infodemic: how social networks fight the disease / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://supa.ru/blog/posts/sotsialnyie-sieti-i-koronavirus-rol-platform-v-borbie-s-zabolievaniem> (date of access: 02.24.2020).

together, and fabricated to spread properly, and a series of rumors have emerged that do not match the facts. In the context of the trend towards integration, mainstream media will also be affected by false information in the Network media and will report unconfirmed news. For example, the Chinese publishing house "People's Daily" published a report during the epidemic that "ShuangHuangLian" can effectively prevent the new coronavirus. As soon as the report appeared, it quickly spread through the Network media. As a result, citizens snapped up the medicine "ShuangHuangLian", which led to chaos in the social order. During the epidemic, rumors spread in the Network media, and the mainstream media, which enjoy trust, failed to formulate programs purposefully and proactively in accordance with this period in different periods of public opinion.

Regardless of whether we are talking about direct distribution of information or distribution through the media after verification, the final effect of distribution will affect the event itself. Thus, it again affects the dissemination of information, which corresponds to the formation of a closed structure between the sender and the recipient. The advantage of this closed loop is that you can get timely feedback and then adjust. However, as far as the distribution mechanism is concerned, whether imperfect or imperfect, the gatekeeper role cannot be implemented on-site in the event of an emergency. On the contrary, the negative force generated will be unprecedented, even causing irreversible damage and impact on both the passer-by and the receiver. An example is pseudoscientific rumors that were born during an epidemic and led to adverse events such as blind looting and price spikes in various places. The effect of such rumors is great.

C) Broad influence.

In the space created by global social networks, events around the world occur almost simultaneously. The speed of information dissemination on the Internet exceeds the speed of people's feelings. Human understanding and its interaction with the outside world are connected through the Internet. In a networked space where information is ubiquitous, it is difficult for people to be "isolated" as infected patients exist in real life,

and they can accept information comprehensively. With the rapid development of the mobile Internet, social networks have become a new type of global platform for public opinion, a center for spreading international ideological and cultural information, and an amplifier of public opinion about emergencies⁸⁸. According to the latest report published jointly by WeAreSocial and Hootsuite, as of January 2020, the number of social media users worldwide is 3.8 billion, representing more than 49% of the total world population⁸⁹. Because the global social network is tightly interconnected, once an infodemic occurs, it will target many users around the world and will be quickly transmitted across borders, regions, and races.

In today's media environment, the explosive effect of information dissemination is no longer surprising⁹⁰. Unlike traditional media, the new media overcame the limitations of time, space, and technology, changed the system of information exchange, made both sides of the transmission and reception of information more flexible, and diversified the sources of communication. At the same time, the interactivity of new media has undoubtedly accelerated the depth and breadth of information dissemination, and the response to the spread of the nuclear chain in the era of social media will be faster and more intense. Therefore, "epidemic " in" infodemic " implies the danger of its spread. In today's situation, when everyone has a mobile device, the infodemic, like the new coronavirus, "infects" people-men, women, and children, and has a wide range of impact and coverage.

Thus, this situation can easily provoke public panic, create a tense social atmosphere, and even affect public value trends and trust in the government, which is extremely harmful to society.

⁸⁸ Xiang, Debao, Zhang, Wenzheng. Analysis of the impact of global think tanks on social networks in the era of new media // Abstracts on social sciences. - 2018. - № 4. - P. 118-120.

⁸⁹ Digital 2020: October Global Statshot Report / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-october-global-statshot> (date of access: 20.10.2020).

⁹⁰ Dorofeeva, V.V. Fake news in the modern media space // Theoretical and Practical Issues of Journalism. - 2019. - Vol. 8. - № 4. - P. 774-786.

D) Lack of effective public opinion management.

The relationship between media systems, media trust, people's behavior in their everyday media consumption, and seemingly purely epidemiological parameters of diseases, infection, etc. is not as remote as it seems⁹¹. Throughout the entire public opinion dissemination cycle, Governments' efforts to inform the public about the coronavirus epidemic have always faced problems of unwanted, untimely, and incomplete information coverage. This infodemic revealed the lack of filtering, verification, and control of information in the media in the event of an emergency. At the same time, there are shortcomings such as insufficient processing and management of relevant public opinion, and late use of binding actions.

Fragmentation of epidemic information and confusion of information have made information management more difficult to some extent. Faced with the irrational thinking of the public in an emergency, combined with the extremely rapid dissemination of information on the Internet and its wider audience than traditional media, the effective management of information on the part of the state places higher demands.

1.3 Impact of infodemic on functioning the network media in the context of the epidemic COVID-19

Rumors, fake news, and misinformation are all "viruses" in the infodemic and are closely related to the generation and distribution of the infodemic. This section brings together the results of research related to the control of rumors, fake news, and misinformation that contribute to the study of current issues of infodemic in mass media communication (especially in the context of public health emergencies).

⁹¹ Kolchina, A. Media and urban spaces: dynamics of changes // When the "crown" is heavy: digital media in the era of the pandemic / edited by A. Kachkaeva, S. Shomova. – Yekaterinburg: Higher School of Economics, 2020. – 196 p.

Problems of network information security⁹². In early 2020, the coronavirus broke out. The spread of COVID-19 infection is the first pandemic in human history to make extensive use of social media to keep people safe, informed, productive, and connected⁹³. At the same time, the technologies that audiences use to communicate and receive information are generating and amplifying an infodemic that continues to undermine the global response and threatens to undermine efforts to combat it. However, the problem of network information security is being updated, which fully reveals the lack of work with network information security in emergency situations, which makes it very difficult to prevent the fight against the epidemic COVID-19.

During the epidemic COVID-19, there were typical network information security problems that looked daunting. Some netizens deliberately spread rumors on the Internet, carry out cyber-attacks and harassment on the global network, in addition to the interest of others and society for psychological reasons.

A) Defamation on the Internet. Online defamation is the most frequent network security incident during the epidemic COVID-19. Relevant online platforms and reputable media around the world promptly placed defamatory ads on the Internet. As of March 7, 2023, more than 459 pieces of information about the epidemic COVID-19 were marked as "rumors" on the "China Online Rumor Denial Site". Various rumors that

⁹² See in more detail: Li, Y. Problems of network security of personal information in the context of prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic // Regional Informatics (RI-2022): Jubilee XVIII St. Petersburg International Conference. Conference proceedings, St. Petersburg, October 26-28, 2022. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2022. – P. 377-379; Li, Y. Problems of network information and psychological security and measures to counter threats in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic // Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): Proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2021. – P. 301-303.

⁹³ Fighting infodemic against the background of the pandemic COVID-19: encouraging responsible behavior and reducing the harmful effects of false information and misinformation // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.who.int/ru/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation> (date of access: 03.01.2023).

mislead the public, distort facts, and incite hatred have had an extremely negative impact. Under infodemic conditions, the masses are prone to stress and physiological reactions, such as insomnia and palpitations.

B) Electronic attacks using network viruses. Criminals have used the psychological impact of the epidemic COVID-19 on the public to conduct social engineering attacks, namely email phishing through spam resources and more targeted attempts such as compromising business email⁹⁴.

C) Online bullying. Some netizens used anonymous accounts of social programs on the Internet, and indiscriminately criticized other people in order to put psychological pressure on them. For example, some artists were subjected to online harassment during the epidemic COVID-19. Even they were wrongly accused of not donating money or materials to the hard-hit areas, or the donation amount was too small.

D) Problems of information security in distance education. During the epidemic COVID-19, schools conducted distance learning and faced information security problems. The teacher made inappropriate comments in class, which led to a ban on the broadcast. Moreover, information leakage from the distance education platform has become a serious vulnerability. The original resources on the distance learning platform were misappropriated, which violated intellectual property rights. This has seriously undermined the activity of teachers in creating distance learning resources.

E) Problems of network security of personal information. Since the outbreak of the epidemic COVID-19, cases of illegal leakage and transfer of personal information have constantly occurred, and a large-scale transaction to leak personal information on the Internet is common. As the digital age evolves, the use of the Internet is becoming more popular and profound. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, although the attackers

⁹⁴ Davydov, V.O. Pandemic speculation: how criminals are using the covid-19 crisis (based on the report of the Executive Director of Europol K. De pain "Pandemic profiteering: how criminals exploit the covid-19 crisis") // Proceedings of Tula State University. Economic and legal sciences. – 2020. – № 2. – P. 19-25.

did not come up with new network criminal schemes, they actively exploited the topic of the epidemic COVID-19. And since most of the work has moved online, the number of attacks on the Internet has naturally increased. According to Kaspersky Lab's telemetry data, in 2020, compared to the same period in 2019, fraudsters were five times more likely to send malicious emails about alleged social benefits and benefits to recipients⁹⁵. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the level of literacy of the population in the field of information security.

In the modern information age, there is a high degree of concentration of personal information and data in all spheres of life. The amount of personal data collected reaches millions or even hundreds of millions. This easily causes a surprisingly large-scale leak of personal data. Earlier this year, according to the Russian Telegram channel "Information Leaks", a sample of QR code databases vaccinated from the application "Gosuslugi STOP Coronavirus" appeared on the shadow forum. The sample contained 10 thousand lines, including the first letters of the patient's last name, first name and patronymic, date of birth, a few digits from the passport number, the name of the vaccine, etc. Due to the temptation of huge benefits from the transaction of personal information, the relevant black and gray industries use secret sales and trading channels to make rampant profits. And the seller demanded 100 thousand dollars for the base.

According to a report by China's Southern Metropolis Daily, information documents registered for more than 7,000 people who returned to Hubei from other provinces were suddenly sent to social media sites such as WeChat and Weibo.

The content of the documents includes names, photos, places of work, home addresses, mobile phone numbers and ID card numbers. Many of them even received spam calls and abusive text messages. They also say that it causes them to live in fear and self-doubt for a long time.

⁹⁵ History of 2020: remote work / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://securelist.com/the-story-of-the-year-remote-work/99720/> (date of access: 12.21.2022).

September 21, 2021, The Elysee Palace in France has confirmed that the QR code of President Emmanuel Macron's medical pass has been leaked and spread to the Network media. As a result, his personal information was leaked, including his name, date of birth, time and type of vaccination. Shortly before the incident, the QR code of French Prime Minister Castel's medical pass was also leaked. Moreover, before that, the personal information of 1.4 million French people was leaked due to the use of testing for the new coronavirus.

F) The emergence of fears, increased anxiety, and increased stress reactions of people around the world. The social situation with the epidemic threat that has developed in recent years due to the spread of COVID-19 has significantly increased the uncertainty of impact and the risk to human life and health. The spread of coronavirus infection has changed in all spheres of public life. The work of many enterprises and educational institutions has been suspended all over the world, almost all public events have been interrupted, a mandatory regime of masks, a system of social distance and isolation has been introduced. Many people find themselves in a situation of sudden job loss and financial instability in a short time. All these circumstances, as well as the loss of a sense of stability, the inability to meet their social needs, cause fears, increased anxiety, increased stress reactions, which negatively affected the health of humanity.

Anxiety is a natural emotional response of humanity. The concept was first mentioned by Z. Freud's 1926 monograph *Inhibition, Symptoms, Anxiety*, in which he first identified and emphasized the state of anxiety, anxiety. He described the state as an emotional state that includes feelings of anticipation and uncertainty, a sense of helplessness⁹⁶.

However, when anxiety is excessive and prolonged, the condition can seriously impair a person's performance, relationships, and overall functioning. Especially difficult

⁹⁶ Pogorelova, E.I. Anxiety as a factor of personality development (On the example of overcoming extreme situations): dis. ... cand. Psychological sciences: 19.00.13 / E.I. Pogorelova. – Taganrog, 2002. 151 p.

in the context of an epidemiological threat can be the situation of people with anxiety disorders, for whom it is important to maintain stable quality of life in conditions of self-isolation and the spread of coronavirus infection, so that they can feel safe.

G) The influence of the informatization process on the experience of anxiety.

The information environment is a collection of virtual stimuli and information flows that affect people in various ways. Through virtual stimuli, societies communicate rules, behavioral patterns, norms, and values to people. The peculiarities of this influence of the environment on a person's consciousness form a specific image of reality and self-image⁹⁷. Research by D. Garfin, R. Silver, and E. Holman suggests that media coverage of events related to the epidemic COVID-19 indirectly affected people at low risk of infection, causing them to increase anxiety and stress reactions that give rise to somatic symptoms of the disease⁹⁸.

A concerned society has long been in a state of confusion due to the uncertainty of the source of infection with the epidemic COVID-19 and the unpredictability of the consequences of a mass disease for society⁹⁹.

Due to the emergence of new means of communication, the Network media are playing an increasingly important role in shaping public opinion and consensus, and mainstream media that were initially in the spotlight are at risk of being sidelined by the mainstream¹⁰⁰. The Social flagship report Q3 2020 on social media trends for the third quarter, published by GlobalWebIndex in September 2020, shows that the Network media

⁹⁷ Vinogradova, S.M. Psychology of mass communication / S.M. Vinogradova, G.S. Melnik. – M.: Yurait, 2020. – 512 p.

⁹⁸ Garfin, D.R., Silver R.C., Holman, E.A. The novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) outbreak: Amplification of public health consequences by media exposure // Health psychology. 2020. 39(5). P. 355.

⁹⁹ Kaziev, V.M. Media literacy as the basis of information and communication and socio-psychological security in a digital society / Digital humanities and technologies in education (DHTE 2020) // Collection of materials of the All-Russian Scientific Conference. practical conference with international participation. Stavropol: Publishing House of NCFU, 2020. – P. 80-87.

¹⁰⁰ Priporov, E.S. The role and influence of "New media" in the modern world // Vestnik Nizhegorod. N.I. Lobachevsky University. -2014. – № 3-1. – P. 251-255.

has become the cornerstone of digital news consumption, and shows outstanding results in finding and receiving the latest news, current events and life services. However, the epidemic COVID-19 has accelerated the global trend of relying on the Network media for updates. In addition, the organization We Are Social, together with Hootsuite, released the Digital 2020 October Global Stat shot Report, according to which users of almost all the world's leading the Network media (such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok) have achieved significant growth over the past 12 months, increasing by more than 12% compared to the same period last year. The increase in the number of users reflects the continued importance of the Network media.¹⁰¹

According to the survey, during this epidemic, the main sources of information for Chinese netizens are WeChat (25.7%), Weibo (22.1%), media websites or their mobile devices (21.6%). During this time, people often prefer to stay behind closed doors to avoid a crisis, so attention is usually focused on the Network media. The biggest source of panic is that people are watching the epidemic gradually expand on the Network media, which will cause a huge psychological panic among people. In turn, the panic also led to a wave of accumulation and panic buying, disrupting the normal order.

An infodemic will lead to people not being able to make the right decisions out of fear and blindly following false information to make the wrong actions. The WHO gave an example: people can flock to buy a certain "effective drug" (actually an HIV drug) that is claimed to be able to treat the novel coronavirus pneumonia. This behavior can lead to a shortage of HIV medications. Those patients who really need anti-HIV drugs cannot receive them without hindrance, which affects their health.

Conclusions to the first chapter.

The study of the concept of infodemic is interdisciplinary, and specialists in different fields of communication science, political science, medicine, psychology,

¹⁰¹ Digital 2020: October Global Stat shot Report / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-october-global-statshot> (date of access: 20.10.2020).

journalism, etc. have unique interpretations of this term. As a result of this study, we concluded that infodemic – in the context of specific emergencies-is an overabundance of true and false information, which makes it difficult for people to find reliable sources and reliable guidance when they need it.

Infodemic has two main elements-information and epidemics, which are located in the relation "cause – "effect" / "viruses" (rumors, fake news, disinformation).

The mechanism of infodemic generation on network media can be summarized in the following aspects: first, public emotions are the basis for the emergence of infodemic; second, the socialization of network media has created a communication environment for the spread of infodemic; third, imperfect laws and rules for controlling infodemic.

Moreover, the mechanism of infodemic spread in the context of the epidemic COVID-19 is unique. It also demonstrates a certain universality, which manifests itself in four aspects-strong incitement, powerful effort, broad influence, and lack of effective public opinion management.

Infodemic has a wide impact on network information security, and causes a number of problems in the network space, which include the following aspects: A) defamation on the Internet; B) electronic attacks using network viruses; C) Internet harassment; D) information security incidents in distance education; E) network security problems of personal information F) the emergence of fears, increased anxiety and increased stress reactions among humanity; G) the growing influence of the informatization process on the experience of anxiety.

Chapter 2. THE NETWORK MEDIA IN INFODEMIC: FEATURES OF FUNCTIONING AND CHALLENGES¹⁰²

The epidemic COVID-19 raged across five continents in early 2020. In the era of intelligent media, the coronavirus epidemic broke out, turning into a "global epidemic". Countries around the world took turns pressing the "pause" button, and people were forced to stay and work from home. At the same time, the infodemic broke out and spread simultaneously, and the overwhelming media coverage and chaotic social media noise profoundly changed the structure and medium of global news distribution. The cross-border, inter-regional and cross-cultural transmission of the crisis and its "butterfly effect" are becoming increasingly visible. The epidemic caused problems such as isolation and discrimination among people, inefficiency and even failure of social functioning mechanisms, which undermined the audience's trust. Timely and effective news releases and public awareness are important tools to address these challenges. This chapter examines and summarizes the new challenges associated with the ecology of the global news communication system during the epidemic, which forced the Network media to change the way it operates and how it works with mass audiences.

2.1. Functioning of the Network media as a source of information in an infodemic environment

In the history of communication research, the American scientist Harold Lasswell was the first to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the social value of communication.

¹⁰² See in more detail: Li, Y. Network media in infodemic: features of functioning and challenges // Journalism and media communications: modern trends: materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, Tiraspol, October 27, 2023 / responsible editors: S.L. Raspopova, S.V. Oleinikov. – Tiraspol: Publishing House of Transnistria. Unita, 2024. P. 123-128.

In his work "The structure and functions of communication in society", published in 1948, he suggested that the values of the media are reflected in three social functions:

- A) environmental monitoring;
- B) social coordination;
- C) cultural heritage¹⁰³.

His follower Schramm saw the value of communication in the realization of political, economic and social functions¹⁰⁴. The sociologist's political functions include observation, coordination, social heritage, and the transmission of laws and customs; economic functions include the material benefits that can be brought by spreading news; and social functions include the coordination of society, the exercise of social control, and the transmission of norms to members of society.

Note that the object of political, social, and economic functions is still humanity. According to scientists, the main function of mass media is "serving people".

The identification of mass media with journalism is observed in many studies. Professor S.G. Korkonosenko of St. Petersburg University identifies the functions of journalism in a subjective way, such as the functions of integration, cognition, propaganda, agitation, organization, personal orientation, official professionalism, and creativity¹⁰⁵. Professor at Saint Petersburg University K.R. Nigmatullina believes that media in the formation of discourse can increase or level anxiety, fears, and even affect the transmission of certain values and meanings¹⁰⁶. L.G. Svitich, a Soviet and Russian scientist, sociologist, and journalist, developed a special functional classification of mass

¹⁰³ Lasswell, H.D. The structure and function of communication in society // The communication of ideas. 1948. 37(1). P. 136-139.

¹⁰⁴ Schramm, W. Mass communications, Second Edition. ed. Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1960. 695 p.

¹⁰⁵ Korkonosenko, S.G. Fundamentals of journalistic activity: textbook for universities / S.G. Korkonosenko [et al.]; edited by S.G. Korkonosenko. – 3rd ed., reprint. and additional – Moscow: Yurait Publishing House, 2024. – 293 p.

¹⁰⁶ Nigmatullina, K.R., Chernova, E.V. Triggers of anxiety in news publications: methodology and approaches to study // Caucasian Science Bridge. – 2023. – Vol. 6, issue 3 (21). – P. 23-35.

communication, called journalism, identified forty-five categories journalistic functions that, in fact, unite all areas of media activity¹⁰⁷.

Network media, performing these functions, play a significant and important role in the digital age. Researchers L.O. Algawi and D.A.N. Al-Hanaki identified the following functions of social media: creative function; collaboration; assessment of relevance and relevance of materials; fact checking; classification and categorization; exchange of created content; training; consolidation and media activism¹⁰⁸.

In the author's work "The functioning of we-media in the context of an infodemic: security issues", we emphasized: the functioning of we-media during a pandemic has shown that it is a force that can surpass the influence of institutions that control news and information and influence the situation both positively and negatively¹⁰⁹.

At the end of 2019, several cases of infection of residents with an unknown type of pneumonia were detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Subsequently, the transmission of infections increased significantly. This epidemic has become a major public health emergency affecting the entire world.

A concerned society has long been in a state of confusion due to the uncertainty of the source of infection with the epidemic COVID-19 and the unpredictability of the consequences of a mass disease for society¹¹⁰. Against this background, in addition to the main "battlefield" where people around the world are fighting the epidemic, there is another "battlefield" that is a war of public opinion: a lot of false and malicious

¹⁰⁷ Svitich, L.G. The phenomenon of journalism: [monograph] / L.G. Svitich; edited by prof. Ya.N. Zasursky. – M.: Faculty of Journalism of Moscow State University IKAR, 2000. – 250 p.

¹⁰⁸ Algawi, L.O., Al-Khanaki, D.A. Functions social media // Bulletin of the RUDN. Series: Literary studies, journalism. – 2012. – № 3. – P. 56-62.

¹⁰⁹ Li, Y. The functioning of "we-media" in the context of infodemic: security problems // Regional Informatics (RI-2020). XVII St. Petersburg International Conference "Regional Informatics (RI-2020)". Conference materials. Part 1. – St. Petersburg: SPOISU, 2020. – P. 262-264.

¹¹⁰ Kaziev, V.M. Media literacy as the basis of information and communication and socio-psychological security in a digital society / Digital humanities and technologies in education (DHTE 2020) // Collection of materials of the All-Russian Scientific Conference. practical conference with international participation. Stavropol: Publishing House of NCFU, 2020. – P. 80-87.

information is widely distributed on the Internet, which becomes an infodemic.

As a direct consequence of this, the government and traditional media have been slow to move ahead of the truth¹¹¹.

Network media is a type of mass communication carried out via the Internet and has several significant differences from traditional media. The Network media refers to the main media that have a certain scale, embody and disseminate social ideology and values, as well as direct social development and movement¹¹². In the early period of the global outbreak of COVID-19, the Network media began to perform functions in the field of communication, sociology, propaganda, politics, etc. and played an important role in resolving emergency situations, analyzing news on the Internet from December 2019 to June 2020.

Communication functioning. When human communication activity was emerging, "communication" was a basic need and function, and the media has been an important channel for the dissemination of public information since ancient times. In the context of information technologies that rely on the convenience, interaction and personalization of the Network media, the methods of information dissemination are more diverse, which significantly expands the possibilities of transmitting information both in time and in space.

In public health emergencies, the amount and speed of information dissemination has changed more than the general situation, so the characteristics of the Network media have been given a large display space. Especially when it comes to such information as express information, comments on current events, popular science and propaganda information, the convenience and timeliness of distribution of network media demonstrate advantages that traditional media can compare with.

There has been a shift from primarily linear information distribution to a

¹¹¹ Qi, Pengcheng, Zhao, Lu. Analysis of the spread of rumors in the era of new media // Journal of Journalistic Research. – 2019. – № 15. – P. 88-89.

¹¹² Moskovkina, Y.Y. New media as mass media // Young Scientist. – 2018. – № 52 (238). – P. 239-241.

combination of linear and network distribution¹¹³.

A) *Express information*. The course of public health emergencies often changes within a short period of time, and any change will lead to a change in response measures. Therefore, timely communication of these changes to the population is the main function of the media in responding to public health emergencies. During the epidemic, Russian media VKontakte, Chinese Weibo and The New York Times in the United States created special pages about the epidemic COVID-19 and broadcast daily data on the number of cases, implementing the principles of editorial policy in reflecting epidemic prevention in various countries and regions in real time.

B) *Comments on current events*. In this epidemic of new coronary pneumonia, information overload has occurred due to the multiplicity of information sources. As a result, the public has different levels of discrimination and trust in different information that has the characteristics of changing public opinion on the Internet.

Thus, the media respond to public concerns in a timely manner and clearly express their position on some controversial events, which can play a role in transmitting the government's position and in stabilizing public opinion. As one of the main the Network media, Weibo has many users and authority in the media, especially performs a communication function when distributing news with comments on current events.

According to the "Weibo User Development Report Weibo2020", in 2020, the number of government agency accounts on Weibo exceeded 140,000, the number of users exceeded 3 billion, and the number of Weibo reads exceeded 450 billion times. During the epidemic, 37,000 government posts and more than 3,000 media outlets published Weibo 6.076 million pieces of official information on Weibo and launched 30,000 live broadcasts of the epidemic, and the average daily consumption of information about the

¹¹³Sharkov, F.I. Internet and mass media: local discourse in Network and mass communications // Communicologiya. – 2014. – vol. 8. – № 6. – P. 15-28.

epidemic on Weibo was 16.1 billion times¹¹⁴.

For example, on February 2, 2020, the People's Daily published on its official Weibo account: "People's comment: the more we focus on fighting the epidemic, the more we must ensure the normal functioning of society. The fierce battle to fight the epidemic is at a critical stage, as the normal lives of hundreds of millions of people are under threat. In the process of epidemic prevention and control, we must not only fight the epidemic fiercely, but also take into account people's moods in order to ensure the stability of society¹¹⁵." The Network media were able to respond positively in a timely manner to hot topics on the Internet during the epidemic, such as how to balance epidemic prevention and control policies with normal production and people's lives, and how charitable donations can participate in prevention and control work with maximum efficiency, etc.

C) *Popular science and propaganda information*. It is also worth noting the function of filtering information from network media in emergencies in the field of public health. Networked media has reduced barriers to self-expression and dissemination and deconstructed the one-way way of communication of traditional media. This feature has led to changes in the methods and effectiveness of communication, as well as caused a large redundancy of information and even the gratuitous dissemination of false information. From the point of view of the media communication function, refuting false information is just as important as providing correct information.

Emergencies in the field of public health are related to a greater amount of professional knowledge and have a great impact on the production and life of a normal society and require special coping mechanisms. Thus, the media is not only required to explain and analyze the state, scope, causes, and trends of the public health incident itself,

¹¹⁴ Weibo User Development Report for 2020 / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://data.weibo.com/report/reportDetail?id=456&sudaref=www.baidu.com> (date of access: 03.12.2021).

¹¹⁵ The more we focus on fighting the epidemic, the more we must ensure the normal functioning of society / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://wap.peopleapp.com/article/5099159/4994967> (date of access: 02.02.2020).

but it is also required that the media do a good job of broad interpretation and dissemination of relevant professional knowledge. Especially in the early stages of the epidemic, people's lack of understanding of the new coronavirus and panic about it led people to believe rumors and false news on the Internet. For example: Chinese academic Zhong Nanshan suggested that people stay at home for two weeks; eating garlic is better than a virus-killing medicine; eating bananas will cause a new coronavirus pneumonia; white vinegar can disinfect the air. In contrast, the dissemination of important correct knowledge about epidemic prevention, such as wearing masks, washing your hands frequently, and restricting travel, is very limited. In response to this phenomenon, the People's Daily published popular science posts on its official Weibo, the official CCTV News WeChat account, and the Xinhua News Agency mobile app to refute the rumors. For example: on WeChat a popular science column was created on the official CCTV News WeChat account to collect various refuting rumors about the new coronavirus pneumonia; on Weibo the article "About the new coronavirus pneumonia: 100 scientific information you should know" was published on the official Weibo site of the People's Daily newspaper and received more than 100 thousand views.

In the context of infectious diseases, the population tends to spread rumors and believe rumors while in a state of panic, so it is especially important for the main the Network media to publish such refuting rumors in a timely manner.

Social functioning. During an emergency, social uncertainty increases. In addition, ambiguity and untimely information will lead to the gratuitous growth of rumors and false news. At the same time, the "backfire effect" also seriously affected the public's greater propensity for false news, that is, when people report that they believe even more in misinformation after seeing an evidence-based correction aimed at correcting it, which is often used as a reason not to correct misinformation¹¹⁶. For example, the statement "The

¹¹⁶ Swire-Thompson, B., Miklaucic, N., Wihbey, J.P., Lazer, D., DeGutis, J. The backfire effect after correcting misinformation is strongly associated with reliability // *J Exp Psychol Gen.* 2022. 151(7). P. 1655-1665.

COVID-19 vaccine will not change your DNA" is intended to dispel misinformation, but the repetition of the words "COVID-19 vaccine" and "altered DNA" is suggested to make this inaccurate connection more obvious. The feedback effect is thought to occur because of people being more likely to believe repeated information is true, a phenomenon called the illusory truth effect. As a result, radical public opinion will hinder the development of social assistance. The media is society's pressure relief valve. This figurative metaphor reflects that the media can perform the function of social integration by channeling public emotions. Concentrated changes in social reality will lead to changes in individual emotions in a short period of time, thus becoming an important window for influencing public opinion. The works of T.A. Didaev, S.V. Kapralova, Y.A. Popova, D.I. Shvedova, S.G. Ushkin¹¹⁷, et al. are devoted directly to the problems of the influence of social networks on the process of formation and functioning of public opinion. During the epidemic, the public is in a state of confusion. At that time, the social function of the media was to guide public opinion, balance public sentiment, overcome social differences, and create a harmonious and positive environment for the formation of public opinion aimed at social development. Sui Yan, a professor at the University of Communications of China, believes that the essence of social media is to spread emotions¹¹⁸. Public sentiment fluctuates greatly, and negative emotions easily accumulate due to information overload and inability to accept the information that is really needed. At the same time,

¹¹⁷ Didaeva, T.A. The potential of social networks in the formation of public opinion // *Communicology: electronic scientific journal*. – 2021. – № 3. – С. 48-57; Kapralova, S.V. Progress of information and computer technologies and the development of the Internet as factors in the formation of public opinion // *Historical and socio-educational thought*. – 2013. – № 4 (20). – P. 169-172; Popova, Y.A. Information technologies in the system of public opinion formation [Electronic resource] // *Psychology, sociology and pedagogy*. 2015. – № 7. – URL: <https://psychology.snauka.ru/2015/07/5560> (date of access: 05.09.2023); Ushkin, S.G. The influence of virtual social networks on protest activity in Russian society: abstract. diss. ... cand. Social Sciences: 22.00.04 / S.G. Ushkin; Mord. State University named after N.P. Ogarev. – Saransk, 2015. – 25 p; Shvedova, D.I. The influence of social networks on the formation of public opinion // *Youth scientific and technical Bulletin* / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://ainsnt.ru/doc/823670.html> (date of access: 11.11.2015).

¹¹⁸ Sui, Yan, Li, Yan. The influence of network language on the social communication of individual emotions // *The international press*. – 2020. – № 42(1). – P. 79-98.

because of the need to seek emotional support and social sympathy, people are more likely to mindlessly share negative emotions.

This implies that "negative emotions are more likely to encourage emotional engagement of the audience," and then form a strong field of public opinion. The network media platform is not only the birthplace of such public opinion, but also the best channel for defusing the emotions of netizens and responding to public concerns. Through a networked media platform, it is possible to provide communication between the parties transmitting and receiving information in order to stabilize public opinion and play a role in social integration.

During the epidemic, the Wuhan Red Cross Society caused social controversy over the allocation of material resources to help victims of natural disasters. In the face of public outrage and social discord, major the Network media outlets such as CCTV News, the People's Daily newspaper, and the Xinhua News Agency quickly intervened and published relevant information to calm public sentiment in a timely manner. In this context, public opinion is a tool that allows you to participate in the process of regulating the activities of government bodies and other social institutions directly or indirectly through special mechanisms in order to influence their activities¹¹⁹.

In addition, on the one hand, mainstream media focused on objectively reporting facts and updating data; on the other hand, mainstream the Network media paid more attention to groups such as government officials, reputable experts, and medical personnel, and thus did not pay attention to ordinary people and emotional needs. New media technically overcame the barriers of ordinary people in expressing their speech, and their technological advantages made the Network media more capable of protecting the voice of ordinary people compared to the institutional system and traditional media¹²⁰. The

¹¹⁹ Gorshkov, M.K. Public opinion: history and modernity / M.K. Gorshkov. – M.: Politizdat, 1988. – 383 p.

¹²⁰ Melnik, G.S. New technologies of media production: achievements and costs // Chelyabinsk. a humanitarian. – 2020. – № 4(53). – P. 48-56.

Network media itself is interactive and provides the majority of users who have remained silent in the past with the opportunity to actively express their opinions.

Information that users share on social networks due to sadness, anger, depression, and other reasons is a real story. Media is an important channel for people to express their emotions, especially mobile-based the Network media, which has a huge impact on the direction and regulation of public empathy.

According to the Chinese study "Analysis of Emotions and Psychological Dynamics of Internet users in public Health emergencies-on the example of the new Coronavirus pneumonia incident", using the CNN neural network algorithm to analyze the emotional trend of 92,347 Weibo text data Weibo related to the "epidemic coronavirus pneumonia" from December 11, 2019 to February 12, 2020 For example, in the social media network Weibo, the number of posts with negative emotions was higher than the number of posts with positive emotions (texts with negative emotions accounted for 63.5%, and texts with positive emotions – 36.5%)¹²¹.

The study showed that public health emergencies are closely linked to the vital interests of the population. The public is generally sensitive to such information. At the earliest stage of such incidents, if authoritative information is not published in a timely and open manner, it can easily lead to the viral spread of negative comments and even form the phenomenon of polarization of emotions in different social groups. The emergence of this phenomenon of collective negative emotion coherence can lead to a doubling of public social insecurity. However, the corresponding negative emotional bias also plays a role in contributing to the positive development of the event. Stress theory emphasizes that shifting negative attention is a kind of measure of a person's self-defense. People tend to prioritize negative information over positive information. By prioritizing negative information, the audience can better identify the threat's goals and prepare ahead

¹²¹ Pan, Wenhao, Li, Jinjin, He, Bikai. Analysis of the emotions of Internet users and psychological dynamics in emergency situations in the field of public health – on the example of "New corona pneumonia" // Media observation. – 2020. – № 7. – С. 10-15.

of time. This contributes to the survival and development of humanity. At the very beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, there were more negative phenomena of emotional polarization, such as fear and anxiety. This phenomenon does not mean that network users are pessimistic and negative about the event itself. Most likely, this is a manifestation of the psychological reaction of people and their desire for the epidemic to end as soon as possible. At the beginning of 2020, the epidemic was developing in a positive direction, and hidden dangers threatening public safety were being controlled. Then, positive optimism among the public began to prevail. Social networks are able to identify and unite disparate protest opinions, consolidate them and, ultimately, transfer public opinion from the spiritual sphere to the real sphere of activity. In this case, social networks are real triggers that affect mass activity¹²².

As of June 2020, the topic of the "Wuhan Diary" Weibo was discussed 4,216 million times on Chinese the Network media Weibo. The posts recorded: the time of the 76-day isolation of people in Wuhan has become the most difficult time for people from all walks of life¹²³.

Among the posts, many positive ones were recorded (for example, the enthusiasm of the Wuhan masses to overcome the difficulties of the epidemic was noted), which fully confirmed that in a public health emergency, the spread of social networks plays a positive role in relieving people's psychological tension and increasing social cohesion. The huge number of posts on Weibo is proof that the Network media guarantees ordinary people the right to vote.

Propaganda functioning¹²⁴. The media destroys rumors, false news, and reports

¹²² Ushkin, S.G. The influence of virtual social networks on protest activity in Russian society: abstract. diss. ... cand. Social Sciences: 22.00.04 / S.G. Ushkin; Mord. State University named after N.P. Ogarev. – Saransk, 2015. – 25 p.

¹²³ Hao, Weiguang. "Wuhan Diary 2020": Recording the love and warmth of Wuhan using Vlog // Media. – 2021. – № 7. – P. 3.

¹²⁴ See in more detail: The value of network media as a source of information about the COVID-19 epidemic // Humanitarian vector. – 2022. – Vol. 17. – № 4. – P. 157-164.

that incite hatred and division, and works to spread accurate information, hope, and solidarity. Melissa Fleming, Undersecretary for Global Communications, said spreading fear, uncertainty and false news could make it harder for countries and the world to respond to the virus and allow those seeking to deepen social divisions to benefit. These actions may hinder global cooperation, and we urgently need global cooperation to address this crisis. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres even said on UN Web TV that our world can only deal with this virus in one way: by acting together¹²⁵.

Under the influence of the Internet, both the structure of the media and the methods of communication, technologies of communication with the audience have undergone profound changes. During the epidemic, the Network media not only spread information in a timely manner and channeled public emotions, but also formed a positive public opinion through propaganda work. In reporting on the fight against the epidemic, new media decided to direct their cameras and microphones to people's anti-epidemic actions, covered events from the point of view of medical personnel, ordinary citizens and anti-epidemic volunteers, and recorded the facts of the joint fight against the epidemic.

At the same time, the communication architecture of the Network media, which currently has hundreds of millions of users, significantly increases the potential for propaganda impact. In covering the pandemic, the main network media followed the position of public opinion, played a synergistic role, combined technical resources, introduced innovative communication methods, and increased the productivity of integrated news through short videos, live broadcasts, and so on. For example: at the beginning of the outbreak, China's main network media, CCTV, merged using live broadcast formats ("slow live Streaming, mobile live streaming, and Connected Cloud Live streaming), and launched an innovative "Escort for Angels" live broadcast in their

¹²⁵ Our world can cope with this virus in only one way: by acting together / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.un.org/ru/coronavirus/our-world-can-only-get-ahead-virus-one-way-together> (date of access: 01.15.2021).

mobile apps, presenting stories of health workers during the Wuhan epidemic¹²⁶. The English news documentary "Chronicles of the Wuhan Epidemic", released by CGTN on YouTube, showed the entire process of the epidemic's transition from rapid outbreak to containment in this city of tens of millions of people over the past month for 33 minutes. The main the Network media outlets that tell stories during the epidemic aroused people's empathy and strengthened everyone's confidence in the joint fight against the epidemic.

Russia becomes the first country in the world to successfully produce a COVID-19 vaccine, as science continues to pave new paths of hope. However, the information market was filled with false data and misinformation, as evidenced by the statements of the White House press secretary and the press secretary of the Russian President about the inadmissibility of politicizing the topic of vaccines and waging information wars on this basis. US intelligence agencies calculate "harmful agents" of influence, including media resources that are little known in Russia-News Front, New Eastern Outlook, Oriental Review, Rebel Inside, allegedly controlled by the FSB, which conduct anti-propaganda (The First World Vaccine War. Evening Moscow. 2021. March 16)¹²⁷. At the same time, the media must conduct effective, fact-based propaganda to gain public trust and increase trust and understanding of vaccines. A key advertising message or public announcement idea can influence the minds of recipients through text, photos, or images, or a combination of these tools¹²⁸. Promotion of the vaccine in social advertising consists in positioning the doctor as an opinion leader through a special media portrait. People in white coats told the public about the special importance of vaccination. Social advertising

¹²⁶ Chen, Taixiu, Huang, Hongzhen. The growth and causes of slow live broadcasts in the new report on the corona epidemic // *Young Journalist*. – 2020. – № 26. – P. 88-89.

¹²⁷ Melnik, G.S. Vaccine wars in the media as a threat factor to the information and psychological security of Russia // *Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): Proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference, St. Petersburg, November 27-29, 2021*. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2021. – P. 305-307.

¹²⁸ Fadeeva, I.V. Textual and visual propaganda of COVID-19 vaccination in new media of the Astrakhan region // *Bulletin of the V.N. Tatishchev Volga State University*. – 2022. – Vol. 2. – № 2. – P. 268-275.

has a significant reach. At the same time, mass media use various forms and methods of influencing the audience. In social networks, texts about health workers who talk about the benefits of vaccination are accompanied by infographics, photos, and video content. Thus, through the media, the function of propaganda is performed, designed to meet social needs¹²⁹. Such propaganda is an integral part of State policy in a situation where the country, together with the world community, is experiencing a pandemic and struggling with its consequences.

Political functioning. In today's media society, communication has become a major part of the "strategic game" that determines the success of individual groups of citizens, organizations, social groups, or even the entire society¹³⁰. The political function of mass media allows monitoring the activities and decisions of government bodies, as well as forming a holistic and clearly expressed public opinion about certain actions of government bodies, which allows "all citizens to receive information about the political process, and those who have the opportunity to publish information in the media, to influence the implementation of political programs" conjuncture and worldview people becomes a mutually influencing factor of influence. The mass media have a significant impact on the political sphere of society and the formation and functioning of political institutions in it through the so-called "political socialization of the individual"¹³¹. The essence of the model of political socialization is that society develops an individual social person into a political person and cultivates the role of a political person corresponding to the prevailing political culture of society¹³². People of political orientation include

¹²⁹ Propaganda discourse in the context of digitalization / edited by V.A. Achkasova and G.S. Melnik. – St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University, 2023. – 424 p.

¹³⁰ Münch, R. The dynamics of the communication society. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995. 313 p.

¹³¹ Gorbatova, N.V., Malkevich, A.A. Modern mass media as a tool of political socialization of youth // Managerial consulting. – 2015. – № 5 (77). – P. 52-62.

¹³² Yu, Kun. Paradigm transformation and adjustment of political socialization of youth from the point of view of the network // Shandong: Journal of the Shandong College of Youth Management Personnel. – 2010. – № 1. – P. 18-21.

those citizens who really become the basis of real politics, citizens who have political abilities and participate in politics¹³³.

Under traditional media methods, information exchange and communication channels between the political system and society are one-sided. The disadvantage of this method is that it is always top-down, the communication system is inefficient and has a single structure. Because it is impossible to reach the highest level of communication – face-to-face, the two sides of communication are in an unequal position, which causes an imbalance and makes political persuasion more like direct indoctrination.

In the age of networked media, audiences can rely on new technology platforms to achieve two-way interactive communication. Both the main the Network media and social networks have overcome communication barriers between the Government and the public, allowing them to conduct an independent dialogue. According to K. E. Vinogradova, communication in the political sphere is described as "the process of transmitting political messages, structuring and giving a new meaning to political activity, forming public opinion and political socialization of citizens, taking into account their needs and interests»¹³⁴."

Professor Walter Ian Lipkin, an American infectious disease expert known as the "virus hunter," said in an interview with CCTV that many people no longer get information from newspapers, radio and television, but get used not only to receive information through the Network media platforms, but also to believe in such information.

In today's media environment, the explosive effect of information dissemination is no longer surprising. Moreover, the decentralization of the Network media has disrupted the original communication scheme. The Network media has become a powerful center for shaping public opinion, since every user of the Network media can become a producer

¹³³ Sun, Guanhong. Hu, Yuchun, Ren, Junfeng. Introduction to Political Science // Shanghai: Publishing House of the Fudan University. – 2014. – 320 p.

¹³⁴ Vinogradova, K.E. The role of mass media in the political system of society // Journalistic yearbook. – 2013. – № 2-1. – P. 64-67.

and consumer of information. Realizing the need for interaction between the government and the people, government departments began to open official accounts on online platforms to quickly respond to audience requests. According to N. Luhmann, in a constantly changing differentiated society, the liberal model of glasnost as a "mirror"¹³⁵. At the same time, some countries have created a network service platform to collect suggestions for epidemic prevention and control. In 2021, St. Petersburg has already become one of the leaders in working with the population through the Network media, the top also includes the Vologda, Chelyabinsk, and Samara regions and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug. So, for the first quarter of 2022, 22,137 messages were received from residents via social networks in St. Petersburg, via the Gosuslugi platform. We decide together " – 41,250 messages. One of the most popular search topics was COVID-19 vaccination.¹³⁶ Similar resources were used in China during the epidemic. The State Council has created a "government-civil society interaction" platform on WeChat to collect public opinions and suggestions on prevention and control work. This enables the public to inform the Government in a timely manner about various problems that exist in the fight against the epidemic, and to accelerate the pace of victory in the fight against the epidemic. In the case of physical isolation, an uninterrupted flow of information ensures an effective dialogue with the population and helps to stabilize the psychological state of people¹³⁷.

¹³⁵ Luhmann, N. Social complexity and public opinion // Sociological Enlightenment 5: Constructivist perspectives. 2005. P. 163-175.

¹³⁶ Vaccination against COVID-19 has become one of the main topics of Nizhny Novgorod residents' appeals on the platform "Public Services. We decide together" // Government of the Nizhny Novgorod region. / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://nobl.ru/novosti-nizhegorodskoj-oblasti-za-vse-vremya/vaktsinatsiya-ot-covid19-stala-odnoy-iz-glavnykh-tem-obrashcheniy-nizhegorodtsev-na-platforme-gosusl?ysclid=lsbqinxfgq736976636> (date of access: 07.10.2021).

¹³⁷ Fangfang, W. Features of coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic in China in the materials of ITAR-TASS // Bulletin of Kabardino-Balkarian State University: Journalism. Education. Literature. – 2021. – № 1(3). – P. 72-86; Liu, Xiaozhong, Sun, Jini. A comparative study of the messages "COVID-19" and "SARS" in the People's Daily // News Research. – 2021. – № (02). – P. 93-95; Liu, Ziyun. Global communication in the context of COVID-19 // News dissemination. – 2021. – № 05. – P. 116-118; Cui,

2.2 Challenges of the Network media in the infodemic in the context of the epidemic of the new coronavirus

In this gunpowder – free battlefield of the novel coronavirus epidemic, network media has undoubtedly played a huge role. They not only conveyed the authoritative voice of WHO, reported on the "touching" stories of the fight against the epidemic and paid attention to the emotional needs of ordinary people, but also fought against the infodemic, which is a derivative of the viral epidemic. All types of the Network media have passed a great test, and the most important problems are related to the generalization of subjects of information dissemination, the stock of scientific knowledge, and the fact that the irrational behavior of the audience in scientific communication. We are confident that such challenges will continue and will have an impact on the entire media ecosystem in the future.

Generalization of subjects of information dissemination makes it difficult to distinguish between true and false content. Infodemic is a serious problem for the dissemination of social information, especially in the field of health. Educator John Dewey said, " Society exists not only through transmission and communication, but more precisely, it exists in transmission and communication¹³⁸." The changes taking place in the information world should awaken our vigilance. The development of technology makes communication between people more convenient. Lars Backstrom also demonstrated in his experiments that new media can reduce the world from the six degrees of separation previously proposed by four degrees of separation, which was classified by Harvard psychologist Stanley Milgram¹³⁹. Today, there is indeed a degree of communication between people that was never possible before due to the lack of

Niwen. Reflections and education on constructive reports on the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK and the USA // Chinese Journalists. – 2021. – № 03. – P. 38-40.

¹³⁸ Dewey, J. Democracy in education // The elementary school teacher. 1903. 4(4). P. 193-204.

¹³⁹ Backstrom, L., Boldi, P., Rosa, M. et al. Four degrees of separation // Proceedings of the 4th Annual ACM Web Science Conference, 2012. P. 33-42.

technology.

Digitalization is changing the structure of journalism, which uses new methods and tools to achieve tangible economic benefits¹⁴⁰. Based on the results of research on the nature of new media technologies, we will find two key points: digitalization and interactivity.

Digitalization has changed the way content-level information is produced, stored, distributed, and consumed, and has contributed to the transformation of traditional media and the emergence of new media. At the level of relationships, digitalization, especially mobile Internet technology, has allowed us to reorganize, deconstruct and build traditional social relationships in different regions, time periods and groups. More and more information systems and databases can be accessed and interacted with via mobile devices, and more and more access to changing spaces is becoming a crucial feature of social organizations¹⁴¹.

Regardless of content or relationships, interactivity is key to distinguishing new media from traditional media. The fact that the cost of interactivity tends to zero forces new media to form new changes based on the existing achievements of traditional media in terms of the main subjects of communication, forms of communication and communication channels. Technological interactivity has promoted interactivity of

¹⁴⁰ Gradyushko, A.A. Production and distribution of content on digital platforms: assessment of audience engagement // Proceedings of BSTU. Series 4: Print and Media technologies. – 2022. – № 2 (261). – P. 43-49; Gradyushko, A.A. Content production in digital journalism // Journalistka – 2023: stan, problems and perspectives: materials of the 25th Mill. navuk. practice. kanf., Minsk, 22 listap. 2023 / Belarus. dzjarzh. un-t; redkal.: A.V. Byalyay (gal. red.) [i insh.]. – Minsk: EB BSU: Social Sciences: Mass communication. Journalism. Mass media, 2023. – P. 118-120; Melnik, G.S. Strategies of new media in the digital environment and journalistic education // Phenomenology of modern media systems and media texts: Mater. international scientific-Practical conferences, November 16-17, 2018. / ed. by S.V. Oleinikov. Tiraspol: Pridnestrovian State University, -2019. – P. 93-101; Chua, S., Westlund, O. Platform Configuration: A Longitudinal Study and Conceptualization of a Legacy News Publisher's Platform-Related Innovation Practices // Online Media and Global Communication. 2022. Vol. 1. Issue 1. P. 60-89.

¹⁴¹ Castells, M., Fernandez-Ardevol, M., Qiu, J.L. et al. Mobile communication and society: A global perspective. Mit Press, 2009, 352 p.

content and relationships and implemented a "people-centered" way of communicating in new media.

Network media, which introduced a human-centered mode of communication that is based on people-to-people communication, is still the most authoritative human-centered channel for most people. The ease of using the Network media and the growing power of public discourse allow anyone to become a subject of scientific communication. Against the background of the epidemic COVID-19, professional scientists, health workers, journalists, mass people, etc. can share their opinions and participate in the scientific communication process through social media platforms such as Weibo, TikTok and YouTube, Telegram, etc. Thus, each person has a chance to become a journalist or informant, everyone can be involved in the story and influence the audience. For the first time, people can get rid of the shackles of time and space and participate in almost all the necessary exchanges simultaneously with multiple identities. Generalization of subjects of information dissemination has enriched the content of scientific communication, but at the same time it has made it difficult to distinguish between true and false content. Among the large amount of content for distribution, many are rumors created by unscrupulous distribution entities to attract public attention and deceive views. Moreover, during the fight against the coronavirus epidemic, the control of rumors has become an important target of social networks¹⁴².

Moreover, many "fake doctors" have started using well-known social media platforms to attract the attention of the audience. This has damaged the spread of high-quality information about the virus and further reinforced the belief in simple mysterious treatments, thereby causing people to become careless and contribute to the spread of the disease. For example, rumors spread about the use of humidification and steam to prevent

¹⁴² Li, Y. Challenges and research of global mass communication in the context of the epidemic of SOW-19 // Media technologies in a changing world: trends, problems, forecasts: proceedings / Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation; Federal State Autonomous Education "North Caucasus Federal University". Stavropol: North Caucasus Federal University, 2021. P. 162-165.

illness, and Facebook live (Facebook is owned by Meta Platforms Inc., whose activities are recognized as extremism in the Russian Federation) showed a 40-minute video explaining the use of "steam inhalation" as a way to kill the virus. In the video, a "technician" explained the use of boiled water mixed with sea salt and citrus peel for 15 minutes, which was viewed 2.4 million times.

According to Canadian media reports, a TikTok rumor that "the coronavirus is spread through manufactured surgical masks" has received more than 2 million likes from users. In addition, a teenager in Vancouver (Canada) posted a TikTok video of a boy in a breathing mask coughing at a trash can in the cafeteria corridor. The person behind him called the emergency hotline. This news was presented as a screenshot, as this is the first confirmed suspicious case of coronavirus in British Columbia. This humorous and fake video was played more than 400 thousand times¹⁴³.

Although several subjects of information dissemination can disseminate information from a larger number of sides, due to the low media literacy of subjects of information dissemination outside the scientific community, it is difficult to distinguish true from false.

Insufficient stock of scientific professional knowledge of the media limits the depth of news coverage. According to the "most popular Google searches and news topics in 2020" provided by Semrush, "COVID-19" significantly surpassed the search volume for all other keywords, reaching the highest search volume of 101 million in March 2020. The report "Ten main Social Topics of 2020", published by the Chinese media The Paper, shows that the topic of knowledge and education on epidemic prevention and control is the category of topics with the highest frequency of words in various social networks¹⁴⁴. WHO officials have noted that the new coronavirus is

¹⁴³ Li, Y. Short video as a source of infodemic in the context of the COVID 19 epidemic // Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Philology series. Journalism. – 2022. – № 3. – P. 122-124.

¹⁴⁴ The ten main social points of 2020 / [Electronic resource] URL: https://m.thepaper.cn/baijiahao_10600883 (date of access: 12.30.2020).

spreading around the world at breakneck speed, and even worse, the spread of misinformation on the Internet is faster than the spread of viruses. Networked media is a double-edged sword, and along with its advantages, it also has disadvantages. While they can spread objective information faster and more widely, they can also spread false information, rumors, extreme emotions, and so on at a relatively high rate.

Many disciplines such as medicine, psychology, and communication study infodemic. In addition, an epidemic incident differs from general news reports. It belongs to the field of public health. At the beginning of the pandemic, the medical community played a role, making the situation even more confusing. In some cases, inaccurate, unverified, and contradictory information came from medical institutions, and various comments on COVID-19 were added to it. COVID-19 is a new type of coronavirus that people are facing. At the same time, the medical community didn't know much about it. This is the root cause of all sorts of rumors and false claims. People's "ignorance" of COVID-19 has become a hotbed of rumors and false claims¹⁴⁵. Inevitably, the editors' lack of relevant medical knowledge created difficulties in interpreting the epidemic situation and obtaining key data and providing the public with scientific and effective suggestions. The lack of professional knowledge of media employees limits the depth of news reports. Traditional mainstream media usually focuses on popular information, stories, and current affairs reports. But in the face of an epidemic, the public needs more knowledge about epidemic interpretation and professional protection. In view of this, there is a need, especially in the case of pandemics, to remind doctors of the social responsibility of providing evidence-based information to the public. At the same time, information should be delivered to the audience in a simple and publicly accessible way to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstandings. Therefore, better coordination between

¹⁴⁵ Li, Y. Infodemic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as a modern socio-humanitarian challenge // Media in modern the world. The 60th St. Petersburg Readings: a collection of materials from the 60th International Scientific Forum. In 2 volumes, St. Petersburg, June 30 – 02, 2021. Volume 1. – St. Petersburg: Mediapapir LLC. - 2021. – P. 185-186.

the medical community, Governments, and the media is needed to avoid spreading misinformation through various channels, limit the presence of fake news in the media space, and thereby more actively involve the public in compliance with the established rules¹⁴⁶.

There was a lot of controversy in the media around the contradictory positions of doctors. From numerous interviews with medical professionals, we identified two groups with opposite positions: on the one hand, those who were inclined to spread disturbing news, and on the other hand, those who had optimistic ideas supporting the non-dangerous nature of COVID-19. Since the outbreak, unprofessional comments about treatment options for COVID-19 have been seen in mainstream media. However, in the post-epidemic period, awareness of the population about the prevention of the new coronavirus is also increasing. Even though some people are very concerned about the need to store medicines. Some unauthorized authors use deceptive "folk proverbs" to spread them on the Internet. An environment is being created in which anyone can become an expert on COVID-19.

WeChat Sequence Chart in October 2022, many people have already seen the "New Corona Medicine Sequence Chart" posted on the public WeChat account "Hubei Daily", on major online platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, TikTok, etc. In some groups with a weak ability to filter information and easily listen to rumors, a wave of information about the "accumulation of drugs" was launched.

Medical treatment is a professional medical problem. Although the current epidemic situation will inevitably cause some people to feel uneasy, when taking medications, you should follow the authoritative medical professional recommendations. If people go to pharmacies to "stock up" on medicines just because of rumors, they will spend money, but it can also affect those who already have normal needs for medicines,

¹⁴⁶ Li, Y. The "pandemic" of disinformation in the media about COVID-19 // Bulletin of Kabardino-Balkarian State University: Journalism. Education. Literature. – 2021. – vol. 1. – № 1. – P. 64-73.

causing a secondary panic. It is also noteworthy that knowing about their dangers does not affect the level of user confidence in information obtained from online networks and search engines¹⁴⁷. In the Internet age, the adage "don't look for a doctor in the media" was born. There were also farces in the past, such as the seizure of the medicine "radix isatidis" and "ShuangHuangLianKouFuYe", which also taught people a deep lesson.

From this, we can see that some the Network media lack professionalism. However, social networks even with a large user base follow their example and carry out "popularization of fake science" among the public, causing adverse consequences.

Irrational behavior of the audience in scientific communication accelerates the spread of rumors. The sudden outbreak of the epidemic COVID-19 has caused huge harm to the population, both physically and psychologically. The most intuitive reflection of this panic is the appearance of irrational behaviors such as believing and spreading rumors when they engage in scientific communication¹⁴⁸. After the mass population sees information about the new coronavirus epidemic in the Network media, especially such as WeChat, Weibo, Twitter, etc., they mostly do not go to professional websites or platforms to check whether the news is true, considering the content to be true, and forward it directly to relatives and friends. to your friends.

According to L. Festinger, people driven by fear will pay more attention to rumors during a disaster, because rumors provide cognition that is in tune with fear, in the sense that people accept them and believe them¹⁴⁹. In addition to finding fear support, people also need some rumor support to stick to their positions. This change in the psychological

¹⁴⁷ Zadorin, I.V., Saponova, A.V. Dynamics of the main communicative practices of Russians // Communications. Media. Design. – 2019. – Vol. 4. – № 3. – P. 48-68.

¹⁴⁸ Hou, Yang. The study of the phenomenon of the lack of rationality in scientific communication in the Internet era [Electronic resource] // Hunan Pedagogical University. – 2019. – URL: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=ACks_bcdpKISXr7C9Nod03R46RI65y4IzUe9X_PkKcp_oTLP1bzZ7Xn-hPNdM451ql8XOfdwHdKghuXFW8IQhWOwFt1PoW72PTNn3zlZiytpnKSd3IJaiboXd0ahCodO3Qz2Pi6hIyI5UW9QS2aRPTA==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS (date of access: 05.01.2019).

¹⁴⁹ Festinger, L. A theory of cognitive dissonance. Vol. 2. Stanford university press, 1962. 291 p.

state of the population will also cause them to lose the ability to think rationally and behave irrationally, such as believing and spreading rumors. Thus, during a pandemic, the spread of rumors will suddenly increase. Some content producers also use people's psychology to create many rumors or spread rumors to gather attention.

Of course, this epidemic was an important warning for us: rumors are not necessarily fake information, and some information that we cannot yet recognize as true cannot simply be classified as "rumors". Verifying the accuracy of information is a very professional job, and it cannot be completely solved by the media literacy of ordinary users, and even some reputable organizations cannot judge it based on their experience but depend on professional investigation and verification. However, in the spread of social media today, rumors often spread earlier, faster, and more widely than information that refutes rumors.

While respecting users' choices has become a necessity today, in response to the rapid spread of rumors, most of the Network media have adopted the simple and crude method of "deleting posts".

Today's social platforms need to rethink their role in the dissemination of public information and communication with the public, as well as take on the corresponding responsibilities, which are not only reflected in the "removal of posts", but also in ensuring the greatest possible diversity of the information environment.

Conclusions to the second chapter.

In the era of global communication, the asymmetric, one-sided, and local communication model of traditional society was disrupted, and the hidden public gained a voice, forming a multipolar communication model. In the context of the current infodemic, the Network media have begun to play a special role in audience orientation and the implementation of communication, sociological, propaganda and political functions in the resolution of emergencies.

All types of the Network media have passed a great test, and the most important problems have been revealed: A) generalization of subjects of information dissemination

makes it difficult to distinguish between true and false content; B) insufficient stock of scientific professional knowledge of the media limits the depth of news coverage; C) irrational behavior of the audience in scientific communication accelerates the spread of rumors. For people at a critical moment, such as a major epidemic, it is very important what media and information sources they come into contact with, which greatly affects the subsequent media trust and information processing methods, which in turn affects the public and media to deal with the infodemic success or failure.

**Chapter 3. INFLUENCE OF THE INFODEMIC FACTOR
ON CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL JOURNALISM
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EPIDEMIC COVID-19**

**3.1 Infodemic impact in the Network media
on national political stability
in the context of the epidemic COVID-19**

In the information age, the existence of the Internet has greatly changed the state of information exchange in physical society. This not only gives everyone the opportunity to participate in the process of creating and distributing information, but also accelerates the dissemination of information and its sphere of influence. Network dissemination of information is considered as the behavior and process of distributing information on network media¹⁵⁰. However, while the Network media has caused information overload, it has also accelerated the emergence of many problems, especially those caused by the infodemic. The State and the public, as recipients and producers of information, participate in the process of information dissemination¹⁵¹.

In early 2020, the epidemic COVID-19 spread around the world. Public health security is closely linked to the physical health of citizens, as well as the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. This is an issue of people's life support, which all segments of society pay special attention to. Based on this feature and importance, citizens experience a greater demand for information as an urgent psychological need. Thus, during the epidemic, survey data from all over the world showed that people's

¹⁵⁰ Danina, M.M., Chaliapin, A.A. Socio-psychological aspect of the study of social networks on the Internet // Bulletin of the Moscow University. Episode 10. Journalism. – 2012. – № 3. – C. 16-33.

¹⁵¹ Manoilo, A.V. "Fake news" as a method of intercepting the information agenda in the context of modern information warfare // Cultural Policy. – 2019. – № 1. – P. 254-258.

dependence on the Network media increased significantly¹⁵². However, it is the growing public attention that creates conditions for the emergence and spread of a large number of conspiracy stories and fakes about the coronavirus on the Internet. It is no coincidence that the chief physician of the World Health Organization remarked with regret: "We are fighting not only an epidemic, but also an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and much easier than the virus itself and is no less dangerous than it¹⁵³." At the same time, the main task of fake news is to intercept the information agenda and lock it in, so that the fake content becomes an obsession for a while, subordinating the consciousness of a person who has fallen under the influence of fake news¹⁵⁴." At the same time, it should be emphasized that fakes and conspiracy theories rather increase mass fears and anxieties¹⁵⁵. In other words, now the widespread spread of an obscure and powerful coronavirus infection that has suddenly changed lives around the world is perceived more than a disease, and more than an epidemic. Remote work and self-isolation measures have led to the problem of information dissemination in the field of communications. The coronavirus has become a huge socio-cultural, economic, and even political event for

¹⁵² The Russian periodical press. The state, trends and prospects of development. Industry report [Electronic resource] / under the general editorship of V.V. Grigoriev. – M.: Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, 2021. – URL: https://digital.gov.ru/uploaded/files/periodic-2021.pdf?utm_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fyandex.com%2f; CSM: Report on the survey on media consumption by users and expectations from use during the epidemic / [Electronic resource] URL: https://www.sohu.com/a/375603267_809031 (date of access: 02.25.2020); GWI: April 2020 Series 4: Media Consumption and Sport / [Electronic resource] URL: [https://www.globalwebindex.com/hubfs/1.%20Coronavirus%20Research%20PDFs/GWI%20coronavirus%20findings%20April%202020%20-%20Media%20Consumption%20\(Release%204\).pdf](https://www.globalwebindex.com/hubfs/1.%20Coronavirus%20Research%20PDFs/GWI%20coronavirus%20findings%20April%202020%20-%20Media%20Consumption%20(Release%204).pdf) (date of access: 03.31.2020).

¹⁵³ Fighting fake news about coronavirus // News portal of the BSPU named after M. Akhmedov / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://bspu.ru/news/11273> (date of access: 02.03.2023).

¹⁵⁴ Manoilo, A.V. "Fake news" as a method of intercepting the information agenda in the context of modern information warfare // Cultural Policy. – 2019. – № 1. – P. 254-258.

¹⁵⁵ Barinov, D.N. Media virus of fear: features of the Russian media's representation of the coronavirus pandemic (covid-19) during the first wave (January-June 2020) // Sociodynamics. - 2021. – № 2. – P. 73-86; Melnik, G.S., Misonzhnikov, B.Y., Shevchenko, A.V. Mediaprovocative discourse as a producer of social phobias // National Health. – 2019. – № 3. – P. 117-120.

almost all modern people and countries¹⁵⁶.

The scale, high degree of tension, and unpredictability of human health impacts, which exceed the normal response capacity of relevant government departments, health and sanitation systems, and communities, make it possible to define it as a "public health emergency"¹⁵⁷. The information environment in which people are located and their possible behavior in public health emergencies are different from those that occur in other emergencies. Some scholars have pointed out that any crisis caused by public health emergencies is also an information crisis, which will cause many problems related to informatization and the search for scientific library sources¹⁵⁸.

As an example of the coronavirus pneumonia (COVID-19) caused by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (SARS CoV-2) as a serious large-scale public health emergency, covering a large area around the world, noted that the dissemination of epidemic information and the ability of the media to manage emergency situations during sudden crisis events pose a threat to the health of the population. huge problems. On February 2, 2020, Dr. Sylvie Briand, WHO Global Infectious disease prevention expert, noted that since the outbreak of the new coronary pneumonia epidemic, infodemic has also had a huge impact on people's lives. Infodemic creates a situation in which it is almost impossible for the consumer to assess information as true or false, since the search for reliable sources of information is difficult, while identifying sources is extremely necessary, since some of them may even be harmful to human health¹⁵⁹. Unlike the information epidemic caused by public health emergencies (such as SARS in 2003, H1N1

¹⁵⁶ Li, Y. Strategic communications in the context of the coronavirus epidemic // Communications in the era of digital change: A collection of materials from the IV International Scientific and Practical Conference, Paris – St. Petersburg: L'Harmattan, St. Petersburg State University of Economics. – 2020. – P. 308-311.

¹⁵⁷ Nelson, C., Lurie, N., Wasserman, J. et al. Conceptualizing and defining public health emergency preparedness // American journal of public health. 2007. 97(Supplement_1). P. 9-11.

¹⁵⁸ Xie, B., He, D., Mercer, T. et al. Global health crises are also information crises: A call to action // Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology. 2020. 71(12). P. 1419-1423.

¹⁵⁹ Rarenko, A.A., Vorontsova, V.O. Infodemic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic // Social and humanitarian sciences. Domestic and foreign literature. Ser. 11: Sociology. – 2021. – № 2. – P. 93-103.

influenza virus in 2009, and MERS in 2015), the age of omnimedia and media integration has created more complex channels of information dissemination, more information volume, and a more diversified system of communication between senders and consumers. they also made the infodemic phenomenon more visible¹⁶⁰. In this context, a reasonable and complete understanding and effective control of the infodemic will help individuals, the media, and government organizations better respond to health crises and control disease epidemics in public health emergencies.

With the development and popularization of information and communication technologies, the information environment of people became more complex, and information became too abundant in quantity and form. In an infodemic situation, a large amount of dense, indistinguishable, and contradictory information has multiple effects on the recipients of information. One of the most frequent manifestations of the reaction to it, as we noted earlier, is information overload. Information overload has become one of the main causes of infodemics. Research on information overload has long attracted the attention of scientists in the field of consumer behavior¹⁶¹, organization management¹⁶², and the management information system¹⁶³.

¹⁶⁰ Dissemination of information about epidemics and their management in the era of media integration // People's Daily Online / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://yuqing.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0323/c209043-31644615.html> (date of access: 03.23.2023).

¹⁶¹ Furner, C.P., Zinko, R., Zhu, Z. et al. Electronic word-of-mouth and information overload in an experiential service industry // *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*. 2016. 26(6). P. 788-810; Lee, B.K., Lee, W.N. The effect of information overload on consumer choice quality in an on-line environment // *Psychology & Marketing*. 2004. 21(3). P. 159-183; Sotoacosta, P., Molinacastillo, F., Lopeznicolas, C. et al. The effect of information overload and disorganisation on intention to purchase online: the role of perceived risk and internet experience // *Online Information Review*. 2014. 38(4). P. 543-561.

¹⁶² Ellwart, T., Happ, C., Gurtner, A. et al. Managing information overload in virtual teams: Effects of a structured online team adaptation on cognition and performance // *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. 2015. 24(5). P. 812-826; Shenk, D. Data smog: surviving the Info Glut // *Technology Review*. 1997. 100(4). P. 18-26.

¹⁶³ Duplenko, V.I., Kasparov, A.R. The phenomenon of "fakes about coronavirus" in the context of information security of the Russian Federation // *Bulletin of the Adygea State University. Series 1: Regional Studies: philosophy, history, sociology, law, political science, cultural studies*. – 2020. – № 4 (269). – P. 96-103; Bock, G., Mahmood, M., Sharma, S. et al. The impact of information overload and

Creating a social platform facilitates communication between people. When the amount of information coming to the platform and the number of users reach a certain scale, it inevitably becomes a public platform for distributing information. However, these information exchange platforms can become an "information cocoon" that directly shapes people's judgments and their perception of the world¹⁶⁴. For example: the above-mentioned focus on ordinary people in the zone of the new coronavirus epidemic, the conclusions of medical experts and proposals for epidemic prevention measures provided by the government. Short videos are also very popular. On TikTok, bilibili, YouTube, and other platforms, a video lasting just a dozen seconds gets millions or even tens of millions of views. In addition to these reports, there were also all sorts of rumors about the coronavirus. The media, spreading information about natural disasters, excite the public, causing a very wide range of feelings – horror, fear, disgust, panic, sympathy. So, the media can "turn off" common sense¹⁶⁵.

Master of Psychological Sciences L. Chambers, founder of the coaching company Essentialise, answered: "Although the use of social media affects each of us differently, the continuous flow of negative and false information continues to sow fear. An intrusive and disproportionate focus solely on issues, whether social, political, or medical, can discourage any optimism. Artfully edited photos and toxic-negative content leave no chance to feel safe or express emotions in a healthy way¹⁶⁶." As L. Festinger mentioned above, rumors provide knowledge that allows you to live in harmony with fear, in the

contribution overload on continued usage of electronic knowledge repositories // Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce. 2010. 20(3). P. 257-278.

¹⁶⁴ Li, Y. The Construction of the Network Media as an Ideal model of Public Information Dissemination During the Epidemic of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia // Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie). 2023. 19(2). P. 337-342.

¹⁶⁵ Melnik, G.S., Misonzhnikov, B.Y., Shevchenko, A.V. Mediaprovocative discourse as a producer of social phobias // National Health. – 2019. – № 3. – P. 117-120.

¹⁶⁶ Chronicles of the pandemic: the impact of social networks on the psychological state of the population / [Electronic resource] URL: https://lahtaclinic.ru/uptodate/social_networks_and_psychological_state/ (date of access: 06.10.2023).

sense that people accept them and believe them.¹⁶⁷ People also need some support from the rumors to make sure that their position is correct and stick to it in the future. Therefore, in times of disaster, the spread of rumors will suddenly increase.

When distributing publicly available online information, its reliability plays an important role in the stability and development of society. The category of reliability in philosophy acts as a synonym for truth and appears as a "characteristic of knowledge as well-founded, evidential, indisputable"¹⁶⁸.

At the same time, listening to rumors is more related to the social mentality and social reality that generates rumors. Rumors are not only negative, they can not only reflect people's internal needs¹⁶⁹, but also deconstruct and reconstruct social trust, and promote social development¹⁷⁰. However, the unrestrained dissemination of false information in an information overload will necessarily disrupt the order of social development, and at the same time cause pan-politicized attacks and affect the political stability of the country¹⁷¹. While the Network media can be a way to spread false information, the Government and media can also use the Network media to clarify rumors and publish truthful information to ensure and strengthen initiative and the right to speak out in the dissemination of information. It is important to know that numerous fakes will mislead people about the situation and increase panic. Objectively, this negates the Government's efforts to prevent and combat epidemics¹⁷². In the context of this novel

¹⁶⁷ Festinger, L. A theory of cognitive dissonance. Vol. 2. Stanford university press, 1962. 291 p.

¹⁶⁸ Korolev, I.A. On the definition of the concepts of "verification" and "fact checking" in the theory and practice of journalism // Journal of the Belarusian State University. Journalism. -2022. – № 1. – P. 28.

¹⁶⁹ Knapp, R.H. A psychology of rumor // Public opinion quarterly. 1944. 8(1). P. 22-37.

¹⁷⁰ Ma, Hao, Ma, Xiaoyue. Research on clustering of new media events based on network structure and content distribution // Modern intelligence. – 2021. – № 41(02). – P. 30-41.

¹⁷¹ Heath, A. Fake news is killing people's minds, says Apple boss Tim Cook // The Telegraph / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/02/10/fake-news-killing-peoples-minds-says-apple-boss-tim-cook/> (date of access: 02.13.2024).

¹⁷² Li, Y. Infodemic as a medium for the formation of fakes about coronavirus in the media space // Regional media: ways of interaction: Materials of the All-Russian Scientific and practical conference, Chita, December 16, 2021 – Chita: Zabaikalsky State University, 2021. - P. 13-16.

coronavirus epidemic, the needs of citizens and society were for timely updates, professional sources of information, and publicly available knowledge. Given the speed of distribution of information on the Network media and the huge user base, the combination of mainstream media and the Network media often allows you to achieve high results at low cost. Mainstream media can take advantage of the coexistence of information authority, timeliness, directness, and interactivity through the Network media.

Both press conferences and website disclosures are one-way dissemination of information, while the Network media can provide communication and interaction between the official and the audience¹⁷³. As the channels of communication between the Government and the public expand and deepen, the Network media are becoming an important factor in building a stable political system in the country. In a pandemic outbreak, government communication with the public has a greater impact on social psychology, and the public often uses the effectiveness of government crisis communication to assess the degree of importance that the government attaches to the public¹⁷⁴. Disclosure and public disclosure of government performance are ways for the public to understand the progress and effectiveness of the Government's administrative work, as well as important factors that influence the public's assessment of the Government's political stability. Although online news channels reprint press conferences and announcements on government websites as the main channels for public understanding of government work, in most cases this method of communication requires the public to take the initiative in finding information published by the government. Consequently, a few questions will arise, such as whether the information itself can be read and whether disclosing government information can provide effective social

¹⁷³ Kiseleva, A.M., Shpak, E.A. Social networks in the process of communication between government and society // *Issues of management*. – 2015. – №6 (18). – P. 66-75; Kolesnik, O.A. Features of interaction between public authorities and the media // *International Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences*. – 2021. – Vol. 2-2 (53). – P.46-48.

¹⁷⁴ Li, Y. Dynamics of changes in the psychosocial characteristics of online media consumers under the influence of official information and rumors about COVID-19 // *Litera*. – 2024. – № 2. – P. 36-44.

coverage, as the lack of reliable information forces people to spread rumors and exaggerate threats¹⁷⁵.

In the current network era, the form of interaction between society and government has changed radically. The public is not only ready to participate in political discussions through unofficial channels, but also looks forward to a more active government response. The discussion and evaluation of certain specific events by network users is the exercise by people in cyberspace of the rights to freedom of speech, the right to information, and the right to control that were suppressed in a physical society. The "anti-government" role of the public through rumors or false information forces the official authorities to give an answer¹⁷⁶. In a modern society that advocates rationality, fakes are seen as bad things. They are often associated with irrational, abusive, fabricated, purposeful actions. But all phenomena have a dual character. Network fakes also have a duality. They perform both negative functions and show a certain positive value in a particular environment. Online fakes are the product of a game between public opinion and official opinion and play the role of opinion control. In this sense, the process of dissemination of public information is also a process of communication and feedback between the public and the Government.

During the epidemic COVID-19, when the government took a dominant advantage to control the latest information related to the epidemic, the public defended civil rights and spread rumors to achieve the goal of getting the truth out of the information. According to the official Weibo account of the Chinese network platform for refuting rumors, information published from January 1 to April 30, 2020, was selected, rumors about the same information were excluded, and 542 fragments of information refuting rumors about the new coronavirus epidemic were classified. By type of distribution, the

¹⁷⁵ Makhovskaya, O.I. The potential of media in the formation of solidarity during the covid-19 pandemic: a review of Western socio-psychological literature // *Man: Image and essence. Humanitarian aspects.* – 2022. – № 2(50). – P. 7-23.

¹⁷⁶ Popov, D.G., Fokina, V.V. On the communicative space of meanings and fakes // *Terra Linguistica.* – 2021. – Vol. 12 – №2. – P. 137-146.

largest share falls on rumors about epidemic policy – 38.6%, followed by rumors about personal prevention, treatment and health, rumors about the development of the epidemic situation – 26.6% and 25.5%, respectively; rumors about social livelihood accounted for 6.3%, and other rumors-4.1%. Online fakes are a non-institutionalized political expression. They can spread quickly because they represent a part of public opinion. It is worth noting that high-frequency fake words about state policy were "closing the city", "disinfection", "road closure", "alcohol", "masks" and "starting school". By analyzing keywords, it showed that netizens' need for state control of the pandemic, their need for a sense of security, as well as their expectations about the resumption of work and production. However, with the help of the Internet, fakes about information policy can increase people's dissatisfaction with the existing political system¹⁷⁷. In addition, network fakes can not only put pressure on the government through online opinion, but also force the authorities to respond to topics in order to achieve the goal of knowledge search.

In terms of the relationship between publicly available false information and government behavior, the impact of rumors about the novel coronavirus epidemic points to some key policy areas – the content of relevant policies issued by the government, the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies, and the performance of public administration, etc. Being isolated since January 23, 2020, news of "urban isolation" has spread to many cities and districts around the world. As epidemic prevention and control policies were implemented in various cities and districts, typical rumors that appear one after another included information about traffic management policies, the supply of live materials to support the daily life of the population, and so on. From these rumors, we can see that false information in the Network media is inextricably linked to our real life, and the appearance of rumors reflects public awareness and attitude to the impact of epidemic

¹⁷⁷ Li, Y. Dynamics of changes in the psychosocial characteristics of online media consumers under the influence of official information and rumors about COVID-19 // *Litera.* – 2024. – № 2. – P. 36-44.

risk management policies on everyday life¹⁷⁸. When a political power exercises dominant control over the release of information, the public is often in a weak position to receive and recognize information. However, the double pressure and fear of the new coronavirus epidemic and the infodemic are forcing the public to seek more reliable and truthful information.

In addition, many rumors and misinformation arise because the content of government actions and policies is not clear to the public. In other words, the government's work on epidemic prevention and control tends more towards a top-down approach. In the fight against the spread of the virus, as well as in preventing and controlling risks, rapid implementation of policies is fundamental. Policy interpretation and public awareness take a back seat, so it is difficult for the public to intuitively understand the main purpose and information of the health policy being implemented.

For example: In January 2020, a video uploaded to YouTube by a Korean user spread online claiming that a nurse from Wuhan had accused the People's Republic of China of having diagnosed more than 90,000 patients, and that the virus had "mutated twice" and one person could transmit it to others – up to 14 people¹⁷⁹. On January 21, 2020, 4 netizens posted rumors on the WeChat groups that the "lightning fast news release Qilu.com A suspected case of pneumonia from Wuhan with a new type of coronavirus infection has been detected on Beian Street, Qingdao City¹⁸⁰" On the same day, information appeared on the Internet that a patient with a diagnosis of severe special infectious pneumonia escaped from the Beijing Union Medical College hospital, and

¹⁷⁸ Ni, C. A study of the characteristics of the dissemination and management of key moments of Internet rumors during the epidemic // Education in the field of public safety. – 2021. – № 3. – P. 41-44.

¹⁷⁹ Foreign forces are spreading rumors about a pneumonia epidemic! Fake doctors lied about the number of infections during the epidemic! Netizens reveal the truth // sohu.com / [Electronic resource] URL: https://www.sohu.com/a/369021571_679184 (date of access: 01.29.2023).

¹⁸⁰ Shandong Jimo Police Report: 4 people were arrested for fabricating and spreading rumors about a new pneumonia // The Paper / [Electronic resource] URL: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_5597541 (date of access: 01.22.2023).

communication with him was lost¹⁸¹. On January 24, 2020, the Weibo account "Witch Xiao Xi" posted a video claiming that three corpses were left unattended in the emergency department of the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital. And on January 25, the LKSM Central Committee said on Weibo that the corresponding video was duplicated and reproduced, which is not true. The problems reflected in these rumors are the lack of public awareness of the epidemic reporting system's procedures, how patients are treated and treated, and other supportive control policies. Consequently, the online text acts as a way of public intervention in the process of discussion of the topic, decision-making¹⁸². But these rumors do not represent public resistance to the country's political power. On the contrary, the public participates in policy discussions on epidemic management with a sense of accountability and expects explanations and responses from government agencies, while monitoring compliance with rights. The spread of rumors about imported cases of the disease outside of China is a good example of the fact that the public needs a government response.

By the end of February 2020, the epidemic situation in China was gradually brought under control, and the international epidemic situation was becoming more severe, at the same time, there were rumors of imported cases from abroad, and related rumors increased. For example, a post on Weibo claimed that "because the domestic epidemic in South Korea is on the rise, and China's internal control of the epidemic is very effective. Many Koreans believe that flying a plane to Qingdao, the closest to South Korea, can ensure their own safety." Although the public cannot prevent foreigners from entering the country, it uses this distorted information, full of panic and anxiety, to attract the attention of a wider group of people, forcing the government to respond to cases abroad. After the Chinese government issued a series of policy statements in late March about importing

¹⁸¹ The hospital of the Beijing Union Medical College dispelled rumors that "patients with pneumonia escaped from Wuhan": they are still undergoing treatment // Beijing news / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://www.bjnews.com.cn/news/2020/01/22/677839.html> (date of access: 01.26.2024).

¹⁸² Melnik, G.S., Teplyashina, A.N. The impact of digitalization of network space on journalism education // Education Media (Mediaobrazovanie). 2019. 59(1). P. 86-92.

cases from abroad, the related unfounded rumors were also effectively brought under control. Similarly, society's response to rumors about people's livelihoods is the same, such as a food scare during an epidemic. "Hoarding food" and "buying toilet paper" are incredible phenomena that occurred in many developed countries in Europe and the United States during the epidemic, but also a specific manifestation of the infodemic outbreak. With the spread of the new corona pneumonia epidemic in Europe, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Russia has also increased, and Russians have started stocking up on pharmacy products. Photos and messages about empty store shelves were widely distributed on social networks, stimulating people. After Russia announced confirmed cases of the disease at the end of January 2020, medical masks began to become more expensive and began to disappear from sale. At the beginning of March, sales of fungicides in pharmacies, in stores and on online trading platforms increased sharply.

In addition to rumors directly related to government risk management behavior, the public has the right to know about epidemic information and have knowledge about prevention through personal prevention, treatment, and health rumors. It is also an important answer for ensuring the safety of one's own life from the individual's point of view. For example, a screenshot appeared on WeChat in some groups and posts entitled "The second whistleblower of the coronavirus, Professor Shi Zhengli, issued a warning to all mankind." The article said that Professor Shi, director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, issued a warning to residents across the country: mosquitoes will become the third carrier of the human virus. Although experts are constantly updating technical terms such as contact transmission, droplet transmission, and aerosol transmission, they cannot reach a general understanding of the public. The public often connects the route of transmission of the virus to their daily lives and uses more convenient information sharing to find evidence and knowledge to get more specific and accurate responses to preventive measures.

In this context, in the context of expanding the technological capabilities of the

Network media and expanding the possibilities of discourse, the confrontation of virtual communities with the official dominant discourse in an abnormal state is becoming more and more noticeable. Because a form of "anti-control " also manifests itself in the confrontational discourse of a virtual community consisting of netizens. In the area of preventing and controlling the novel coronavirus pandemic of pneumonia, confrontations in the discourse of the virtual community are reflected not only in doubts about the level of public health services and the effectiveness of crisis response, but also in criticism and accountability of the character and behavior of public servants. In general, during the COVID-19 pandemic, questions, doubts, and criticism were the main manifestations of confrontational discourse in the virtual community, while the destruction of the main discourse and the destruction of political trust were derived from "confrontation"¹⁸³.

In the process of interaction with the government and the public, they showed a desire to actively participate in anti-crisis management in special situations. In the age of networked media, as audiences can rely on new technology platforms to achieve two-way interactive exchange. The publication of personal opinions, as well as communication between the audience and political organizations, can be carried out through the Network media. A mechanism of bottom-up communication that can be initiated by the audience itself has been created, which implements two-way communication and information dissemination between the masses and the political communication system. In the face of the government's dominant control over information, the public also took appropriate strategic actions, that is, using their right as citizens, they disseminated, including in the form of online rumors, to expand social issues, to stimulate the response of government departments and promote the relevant agenda, settings that allow for "reverse control" of information. The Network media has enabled ordinary people to participate in politics and discuss politics, which is of epochal significance. Overcoming a situation where

¹⁸³ Li, Y. The phenomenon of political trust in virtual communities (based on the materials of Chinese social networks during the Covid-19 pandemic) // *Communicologiya*. 2023. 11(4). P. 13-24.

politics is dominated by a powerful class and elite will ultimately make democracy a truly universal value. In addition, healthy democracies need healthy media and quality journalism¹⁸⁴.

Thus, a full-fledged system of political communication creates an equal platform for dialogue between the ruler and the governed, increases the importance of communication, can deepen mutual interaction and mutual understanding, and provides a guarantee of communication for the establishment of a truly democratic public order and state policy.

In this section, we will focus on the secondary epidemic caused by the coronavirus epidemic – in an infodemic, due to information overload, people cannot distinguish between real information on the Internet, which leads to a confrontation between communities with different opinions. The process of interaction between the state and the population in the dissemination of online information during the epidemic COVID-19, which is essentially a game process of information "control" and "anti-control" based on "power" and "rights". From the perspective of the Government, there is a situation where political power dominates decision-making regarding information, and government departments and decision makers have the power to disclose and manage information. From the point of view of the public, with the development of people's legal awareness, the public pays more and more attention to the preservation and implementation of their rights. When the interests of citizens are linked to the safety of individual lives, the desire of society to exercise its civil rights, including the right to receive information, is especially obvious. At the same time, the popular use of the Network media in the information age compensates for the problem of "rights deficits" in real society and

¹⁸⁴ Rassokhina, I.Y. In the context of the digital shift of interaction between government and society: from e-government to smart government // Communications in the context of digital change: a collection of materials of the VII International Scientific Conference. practical conf. St. Petersburg, November 28-29, 2023 / edited by prof. A.D. Krivonosov. – St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg State University, 2023. – P. 36-39; Gans, H.J. Democracy and the News. Oxford University Press: New York, 2003. 157 p.

provides individuals and groups with non-institutional methods of participation, which contributes to the development of information management models that consider the needs of the government. This change also increases the political and practical value of society's rights.

3.2 Assessment of trust in the Network media and government from the perspective of the infodemic (based on a survey of Chinese and Russian students)

This section raises the issue of trust in the media, analyzes Western and Russian theories of trust. In the scientific discourse, there is a marked decline in trust in news around the world, especially in the post-covid period. The decline in trust in media and governments has intensified in the context of the global pandemic, rising media populism, and social and political unrest¹⁸⁵.

For mass media, trust is the basis of social influence and a criterion for measuring the position of mass media in the public consciousness. Trust in the media is a key issue in the study of journalism and communication. Many scientists around the world conduct continuous and systematic research in this area. Back in the early 1980s, discussions such as "the theory of media credit" and "the theory of media integrity" were conducted, and the issue of "trust in the media" began to be discussed. Since the 1990s, although there is still no common understanding of all the causes and conditions of distrust of news, nevertheless, various discussions on this topic have laid the foundation for studying this large-scale problem.

Western scholars usually view media trust as a multi-faceted concept and define it from the perspective of the audience, comprehensively and from different angles. "Trust

¹⁸⁵ Ksiazek, T., Kim, S., Nelson, J., Park, A., Patankar, S., et al. Distrust Profiles: Identifying the Factors That Shape Journalism's Credibility Crisis // Media and Communication. 2023. № 11(4). P. 308-319.

in the media" is the main criterion for research in the academic environment. Researcher T. Christie defined trust in the media as a "value equivalent"¹⁸⁶.

Russian scientists understand trust in information as "a psychological attitude that includes interest in information, an idea of the needs that can be met as a result of using this information, emotions from anticipation of their satisfaction, which is accompanied by its positive emotional assessments and readiness to use this information in their activities"¹⁸⁷.

Researcher A.B. Kupreichenko understands media trust as "trust that arises in the process of mass communication using material, including electronic, media and means. Trust in the media is the result of integrating trust in information, trust in an online magazine, and trust in an online journalist"¹⁸⁸. Based on the resource approach of T.A. Rassadina, trust in the media is a set of perceptions and moods of the audience: reflecting their expectations that the media will implement some practices that allow the audience to increase or maintain their social resources¹⁸⁹. Trust in the media is implemented at various levels of the media system and relies on the internal motivation of the audience to consume the product of the media, and not on fear and coercion.

The key characteristic of trust in the mass media is the use of information provided by the media to solve socially significant tasks of audience members, without spending social, psychological, and other resources on their verification. Genuine trust contributes to maintaining effective relationships and creating effective feedback between the media and the audience.

¹⁸⁶ Christie, T.B. The role of values in predicting talk radio listening: A model of value equivalence // *Journal of Radio Studies*. 2007. 14(1). P. 20-36.

¹⁸⁷ Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Trust in information as a factor of trust in electronic mass media // *Psychological science and education*. – 2012. – № 1. – P. 1-15.

¹⁸⁸ Kupreichenko, A.B., Shlyakhovaya, E.V. Media trust as an integrated socio-psychological phenomenon // *Knowledge. Understanding. Ability*. – 2013. – № 1. – P. 191-196.

¹⁸⁹ Rassadina, T.A. Trust in the mass media in the conditions of a "risk society" 150 (on the example of Russian provincial cities) // *Izv. higher studies. establishments. The Volga region. Social sciences*. – 2012. – № 1 (21). – P. 61-70.

Chinese scholars generally believe that the credibility of the media lies in the fact that this social institution provides the public with real news products for a long time. Due to the authenticity and credibility of news products, they gain the public's trust, are accepted by the public, and become the main source of information in the public's mind, thereby constantly increasing the communication power and influence of the media¹⁹⁰. At the same time, information products provided by the media are also closely related to the psychological expectations of the population. For example, whether the coverage of the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic by traditional media, as well as the Network media, corresponds to the information that the public expects to know.

The main manifestation of the category of "trust" is the degree of correspondence between the social expectations of the public regarding the media and the actual activities of the media¹⁹¹.

Trust in the media is based on the principles of credibility, impartiality and neutrality. The media should use this as a basis for raising the professional standards of media journalists, which can become a media outlet that the public relies on and trusts. Generally speaking, trust in the media refers to the degree of public trust in media institutions, media content, and media channels. It is usually used to assess public perception of the reliability of sources, information, and channels¹⁹².

Existing studies have confirmed many factors that influence the assessment of media trust, among which the use of media is one of the important factors affecting media trust. The higher the frequency of use of mass media, the higher the degree of trust in it¹⁹³.

¹⁹⁰ Li, Zhongchang. A study on trust in the media // *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology (Social Sciences publication)*. – 2003. – № 1. – P. 59-61.

¹⁹¹ Jin, Yi. Analysis of factors affecting trust in the Chinese media // *The international press*. – 2006. – № 9. – P. 57-61.

¹⁹² Metzger, M., Flanagan, A., Nekmat, E. Comparative optimism in online credibility evaluation among parents and children // *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 2015. 59(3). P. 509-529; Sundar, S.S. Exploring receivers' criteria for perception of print and online news // *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 1999. 76(2). P. 373-386.

¹⁹³ Li, Yanli. The mechanism of influence on the formation of social trust among network users in the era of social networks // *The world of public relations*. – 2022. – № 7. – P. 71-73.

P. Borah's research also showed that information about the revenue structure from expert sources with many "likes" is considered the most reliable information¹⁹⁴. Thus, hypothesis 1 is put forward: the frequency of media use by the population positively correlates with the population's trust in the media, i.e. the higher the frequency of media use, the higher the level of trust in them.

Against the background of the coronavirus pandemic, public confidence in the main social institutions, including political ones, has decreased¹⁹⁵. Trust in the government originated in the field of political ethics, is a barometer of the effectiveness of public administration, a link between the people and the government and plays the role of a stabilizer in the system of relations, Trust consists of political, social and economic components. Research by some scientists on the risks of natural disasters and public health events has shown that a high level of trust in the government can reduce the public's perception of risk¹⁹⁶. Some Chinese scholars believe that trust in the government is the interaction between public and political organizations¹⁹⁷, some of them believe that trust in the government is a dynamic process of cooperation between the public and the government¹⁹⁸, others believe that trust in the government is a positive public expectation

¹⁹⁴ Borah, P., Xia, X. The importance of 'likes': The interplay of message framing, source, and social endorsement on credibility perceptions of health information on Facebook // *Journal of health communication*. 2018. 23(4). P. 399-411.

¹⁹⁵ Kireeva, I.V. Trust in power as a social practice in Russian society in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (based on the materials of a sociological study) // *Modern science and innovations*. – 2021. – № 4. – P. 218-226.

¹⁹⁶ Basolo, V., Steinberg, L.J., Burby, R.J., et al. The effects of confidence in government and information on perceived and actual preparedness for disasters // *Environment & Behavior*. 2009. 41(3). P. 338-364; Kamarulzaman, N.A., Lee, K.E., Siow, K.S., Mokhtar, M.B. Public benefit and risk perceptions of nanotechnology development: Psychological and sociological aspects // *Technology in Society*. 2020. 62. P. 101329; Whitfield, S.C., Rosa, E.A., Dan, A., et al. The future of nuclear power: Value orientations and risk perception // *Risk Analysis*. 2009. 29(3). P. 425-437.

¹⁹⁷ Xiong, Meijuan. A theoretical review of political trust research // *Journal of Public Administration*. – 2010. – № 6. – P. 153-180.

¹⁹⁸ Tang, Rongcheng, Wei, Shuyan. Epochal features, evolutionary trends and practical revelations of Chinese Government trust in the transition period // *Journal of Socialist Theory*. - 2016. – № 3. – P. 20-25.

of the reliability of the government¹⁹⁹, and still others argue that trust in the government is a positive assessment and the public's optimism about the government's capabilities²⁰⁰. When studying the category of "trust in the government", it can be concluded that this concept has the following characteristics: confidence in the reliability of government bodies; predictability as a set of socially justified and socially confirmed expectations from the behavior of the authorities²⁰¹; integrity of government bodies, that is, the ability of government bodies to perform their functions; competence of government bodies. It can be concluded that the concept of trust in the government includes mainly three elements: the main part of trust in the government is the people and the government; and the content of trust in the government is the people's trust in government policies, organizations and officials; trust in the government is also embodied in the category of "dynamic psychological expectation"²⁰².

The media play the role of a source of information about government activities for the public and serve as a link between the political system and the public²⁰³. In addition, the media can influence the public's attitude towards the government²⁰⁴. With the development of network technologies, the role of the Network media in shaping public perception of risks is becoming more and more noticeable²⁰⁵. The more radical the changes in society, the stronger the sense of uncertainty among people, the more they rely

¹⁹⁹ Xu, Biao. Restoring trust in the government after a public crisis // *Public Administration in China*. – 2013. – № 2. – P. 31-35.

²⁰⁰ Yang, Jianyu. A study of differences in the level of trust in the modern Chinese government. diss. ... Doctor of Political Sciences – Jinan: Shandong University, 2016. – 34 p.

²⁰¹ Fukuyama, F. Trust: social virtues and the path to prosperity. – M.: AST, 2004. -732 p.

²⁰² Li, Y. The phenomenon of political trust in virtual communities (based on the materials of Chinese social networks during the Covid-19 pandemic) // *Communicologiya*. 2023. 11(4). P. 13-24.

²⁰³ Sibert, F., Peterson, T., Schram, U. Four theories of the press. Translated from English by M. Polevoy. – M.: Vagrius, 1998. – 223 p.

²⁰⁴ Petty, R., Priester, D.R., Brignol, P. Changing attitudes to the media: the consequences of developing a probabilistic model of persuasion // Bryant D., Zillman D. *Media effects: achievements in theory and research*. – New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002. – P. 155-198.

²⁰⁵ Zhu, Z., Liu, Y., Kapucu, N., Peng, Z. Online media and trust in government during crisis: The moderating role of sense of security // *International journal of disaster risk reduction*. 2020. 50(4). P. 101717.

on the media and the more they are affected²⁰⁶ by it. Unlike traditional media and interpersonal media, some the Network media platforms, especially we-media, exaggerate the content of the information disseminated to attract attention, and the authenticity of some information is called into question²⁰⁷, which disrupts the risk communication process between the government and the public²⁰⁸. The public will face the formation of an information epidemic in a short period of time, and its sense of uncertainty and panic will increase²⁰⁹. For example, the Malaysian Government's repeated emphasis on the high infectious risk of a new coronavirus infection during the epidemiological period led to a positive correlation between public confidence in the government and the level of perceived infectious risk, and this positive relationship was reinforced by the influence of fakes in the Network media²¹⁰. The public is exposed to exaggerated and officially contradictory information in the Network media, which undermines confidence in the government and increases the perceived risk of infection. Thus, hypothesis 2 is put forward: fakes in the Network media can weaken the negative impact of trust in the government on the perception of the risk of infection.

At the same time, trust in the media includes not only the cognitive attitude of the audience, but also depends on individual subjective judgments and assessments. Trust manifests itself as a social phenomenon that is closely related to the social structure of

²⁰⁶ Ball-Rokeach, S.J. The origins of individual media-system dependency: A sociological framework // *Communication Research*. 1985. 12(4). P. 485-510.

²⁰⁷ Li, Y. We-media are changing human life // *Communications in the era of digital change: A collection of materials of the IV International Scientific Journal. practical conferences, Paris – St. Petersburg: L'Harmattan, St. Petersburg State University of Economics, 2020. – P. 116-119.*

²⁰⁸ Xue, Ke, Yu, Laihui, Yu, Minyan. The impact of media contacts on government trust: based on a test of Chinese Netizens // *Modern Communication (Journal of the Communication University of China)*. – 2017. – № 39 (4). – P. 131-136.

²⁰⁹ Naeem, M. Do social media platforms develop consumer panic buying during the fear of Covid-19 pandemic // *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. 2021. 58(4). P. 102226

²¹⁰ Hassan, M. Risk perception, self-efficacy, trust in government, and the moderating role of perceived social media content during the COVID-19 pandemic / Hassan M., Al Halbusi, H., Najem, A., Razali, A., Abdel Fattah, F., Williams, K. *Risk // Changing Societies and Personalities*, 2021. 5(1). P. 9-35.

society and the cultural environment²¹¹. Therefore, investigations should be conducted under specific conditions and in specific groups.

During the epidemic, the lifestyle of the population, including students, has undergone major changes, and their use of and dependence on the media has increased significantly. According to the latest statistics from the China Internet Information Center, as of December 2020, the number of netizens in China reached 989 million, of which netizens aged 20-29 accounted for 17.8%, ranking third among all age groups²¹². However, the report "Internet audience in Russia in 2020" from Mediascope showed that Internet penetration in Russia among the younger population in 2020 exceeded 90 %, and among the youngest Russians (12-24 years old) approached 100 %, network users in the 25-34 age group also reached 95.8 %²¹³.

Since a group of students are extremely active in media use and relatively rich in knowledge about news, it is very important to study their choice of media use, attitude to news, and trust in media and government during the epidemic. In addition, Russia and China are countries with different political systems and social cultures, and choosing Chinese and Russian students as research subjects can help to understand attitudes and behaviors towards the Network media and trust in government in different cultural contexts. Moreover, the media environment in Russia and China is very different from Western countries, with a higher degree of state control over the media, so students' attitude to the Network media can be influenced by government propaganda and control. Finally, students are a talent pool, possibly future social and political leaders. Understanding their trust in politics and the media can help predict future political trends

²¹¹ JLi, Xiaojing. The study of information sources, trust in the media, as well as the prevention and control of emergencies in the field of public health – on the example of a new epidemic of coronary pneumonia // Books and Information. – 2020. – № 2. – P.19-24.

²¹² The 47th statistical report on the development of China's Internet network. – Beijing: Information Center of the Chinese Internet Network. CNMIC / [Electronic resource] URL: http://www.cac.gov.cn/2021-02/03/c_1613923423079314.htm (date of access: 02.03.2023).

²¹³ The Internet audience in Russia in 2020 / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://mediascope.net/news/1250827/> (date of reference: 12.01.2021).

and social dynamics. Based on this, further comparison of the similarities and differences between Chinese and Russian students' media use and their attitude to political trust during the epidemic provides a good basis for understanding how current and future groups of highly educated people evaluate and respond to media during a public health emergency.

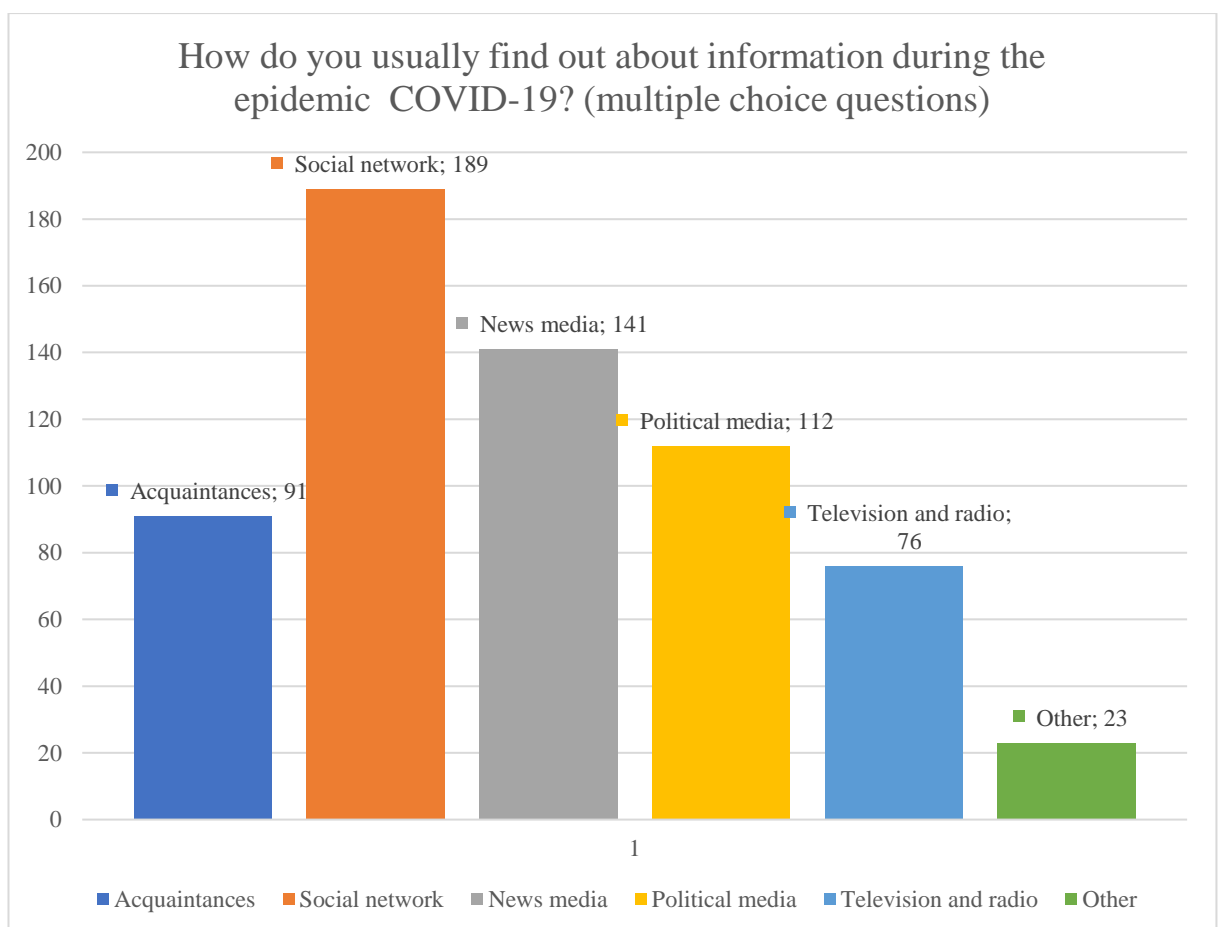
This section is intended to combine the theories of Chinese, Russian and Western media and use the questionnaire method. Data is collected on how students use the media, what concerns them most about news about the epidemic COVID-19, what is the level of risk, how they feel about online fakes, how satisfied they are with the media's efforts to debunk fakes, how much they trust the Network media, and how confident they are in the government's efforts to prevent and control the outbreak. In order to minimize differences in experience and language between respondents, the researcher divided the respondents into two groups, Chinese and Russian, according to their countries, and developed a questionnaire in Russian and Chinese to be filled out by Russian and Chinese respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to groups of students in major cities in China and Russia (including Beijing, Guangzhou, Moscow, and St. Petersburg). This study was conducted from March 20 to April 20, 2024, using the Microsoft survey research platform, which distributed online questionnaires and collected data among students in these cities during the epidemic COVID-19. A total of 13 questions were asked. A total of 252 responses from Chinese respondents and 263 responses from Russians were received, and because of analyzing the results, the total number of reliable questionnaires was 488 responses (240 Chinese responses and 248 Russian responses), which is close to 95%. In addition, the introductory part of the questionnaire explains to respondents that this is an anonymous study and that the data obtained will be used only for scientific research.

According to the collected survey data, respondents in the age groups of 17-20 and 21-30 years were the majority, accounting for 62 % and 22%, respectively, and the remaining 16% were respondents in the age group of 31-40 years. Among them, 52 % of respondents have a bachelor's degree, 13% and 24% of respondents have a specialist and

master's degree, as well as 2% and 6% have a postgraduate and Doctor of Science degree. Young students tend to be more sensitive to social and political issues, they may be more likely to participate in public affairs, and they may have clearer views on the role of the media and government. In addition, college-educated students may have better analytical and critical thinking skills and be capable of deeper reflection and feedback. They may be better able to understand complex political and social issues, such as trust in the Network media and government in the context of infodemics, which will make the research results richer and more meaningful.

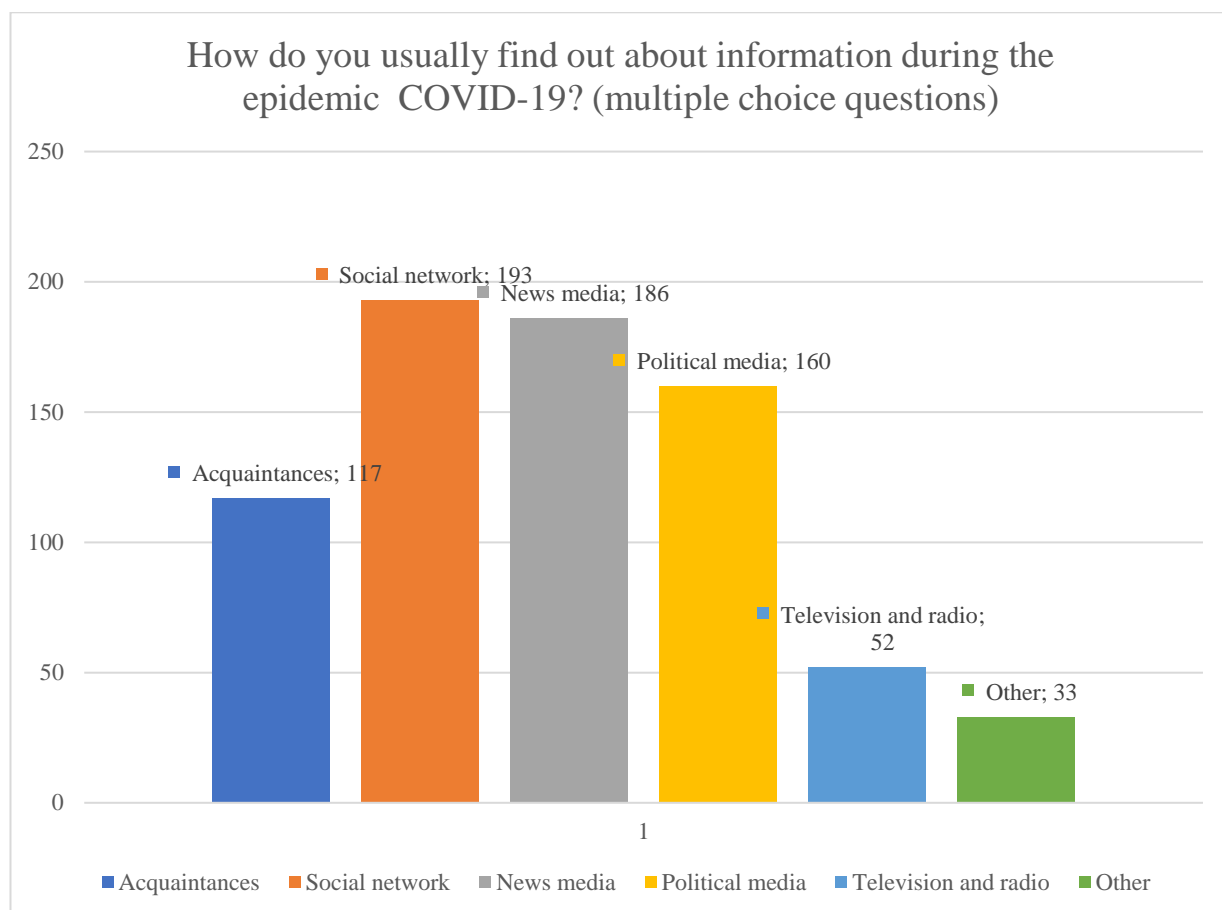
The question concerned sources of information during the epidemic COVID-19. The survey showed: Russian students received information through several channels, and the most frequently used media were social networks, news, and political media, followed by friends, television and newspapers, and others.

See. diagram № 1.



Chinese students also revealed that they received information through several channels during the epidemic. The three most frequently used media are also social media, news, and political media, followed by friends, television and newspapers, and others.

See. diagram № 2.



In general, Chinese and Russian students simultaneously used multimedia channels to get information about the epidemic, and among them, social networks are the preferred and most frequently used media for getting information about the epidemic among the Chinese and Russian students surveyed.

In the responses of the Russian and Chinese sides to the question *"What are the names of the media that you most often use to get information about the epidemic during COVID-19"*, word clouds are formed based on the answers in descending order of word frequency.

See. diagram № 3 and 4.

YouTube
 Дзен
 РИА новости
 ВКонтакте
 Яндекс новости
 Lenta.ru РБК
Телеграм
 TACC
 Google новости
 Минздрав РФ
 Роспотребнадзор
 МЭШ
 RT на русском

丁香医生
 人民日报
 CCTV
 搜狐新闻
 国家卫健委
 新浪新闻
 腾讯新闻
 央视网
 抖音
 微信
 微博
 今日头条
 中国疾病预防控制中心
 小红书
 环球时报
 新华社
 澎湃新闻
 百度新闻
 中国日报

In accordance with the word cloud on the Russian language, Russian College students often use Telegram for information about the epidemic, among them more Russian students mention the news media with a certain depth and professionalism of lighting, such as Google news and Yandex news; and some of the Russian respondents mentioned resources such as the Ministry of health of the Russian Federation and the Federal service.

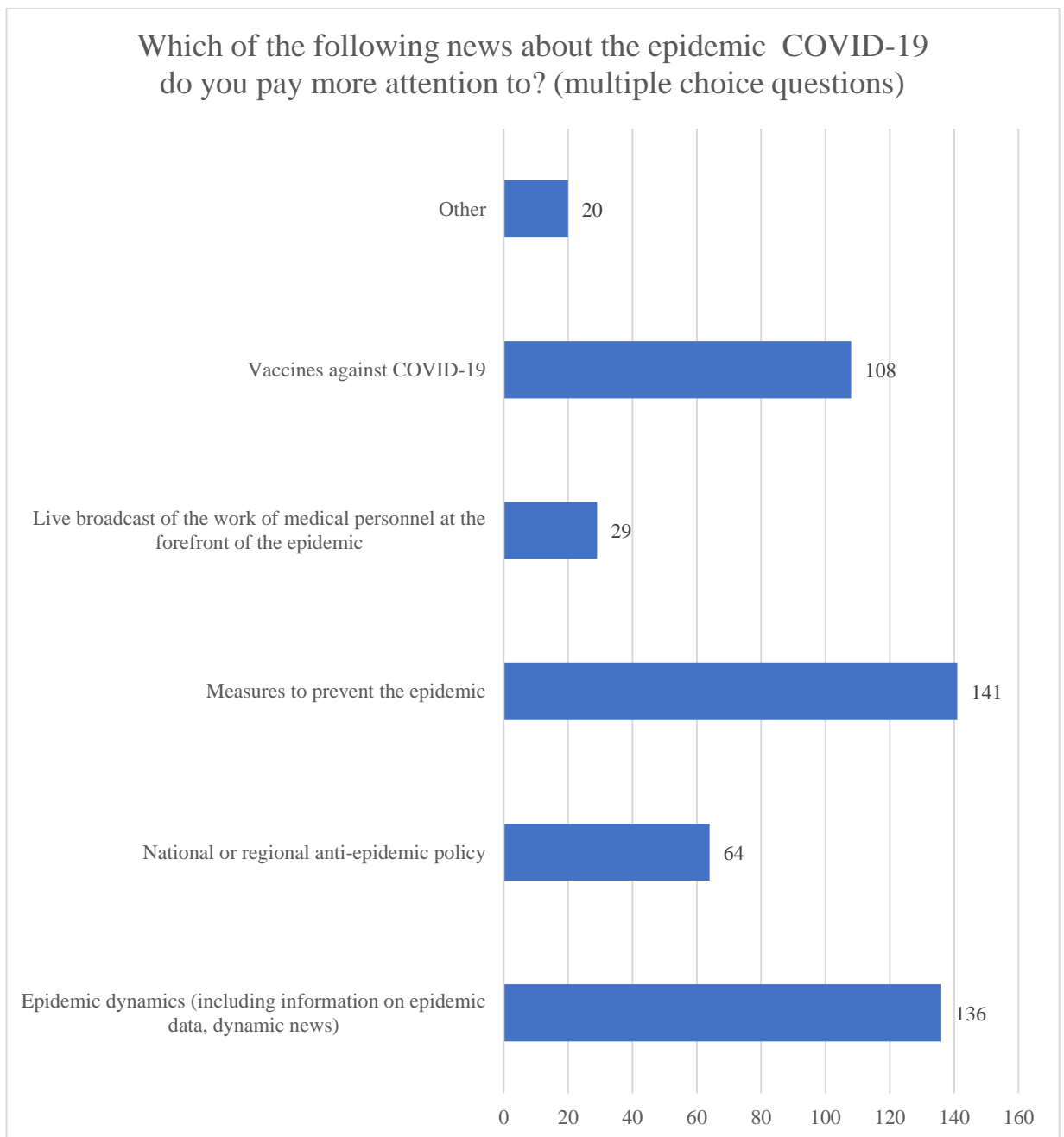
Moreover, according to the word cloud in Chinese, most Chinese respondents noted that WeChat is most often used to get the latest information about the epidemic. In addition, more and more Chinese students are using social networks, including TikTok and Weibo, and many respondents also mentioned some Chinese news media, such as CCTV, People's Daily, The Paper, etc. Some respondents learned about the epidemic COVID-19 from the official media of government departments, such as the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Health Commission, etc. In addition, a small number of respondents also mentioned medical media, for example: we are "Doctor Dingxiang" media.

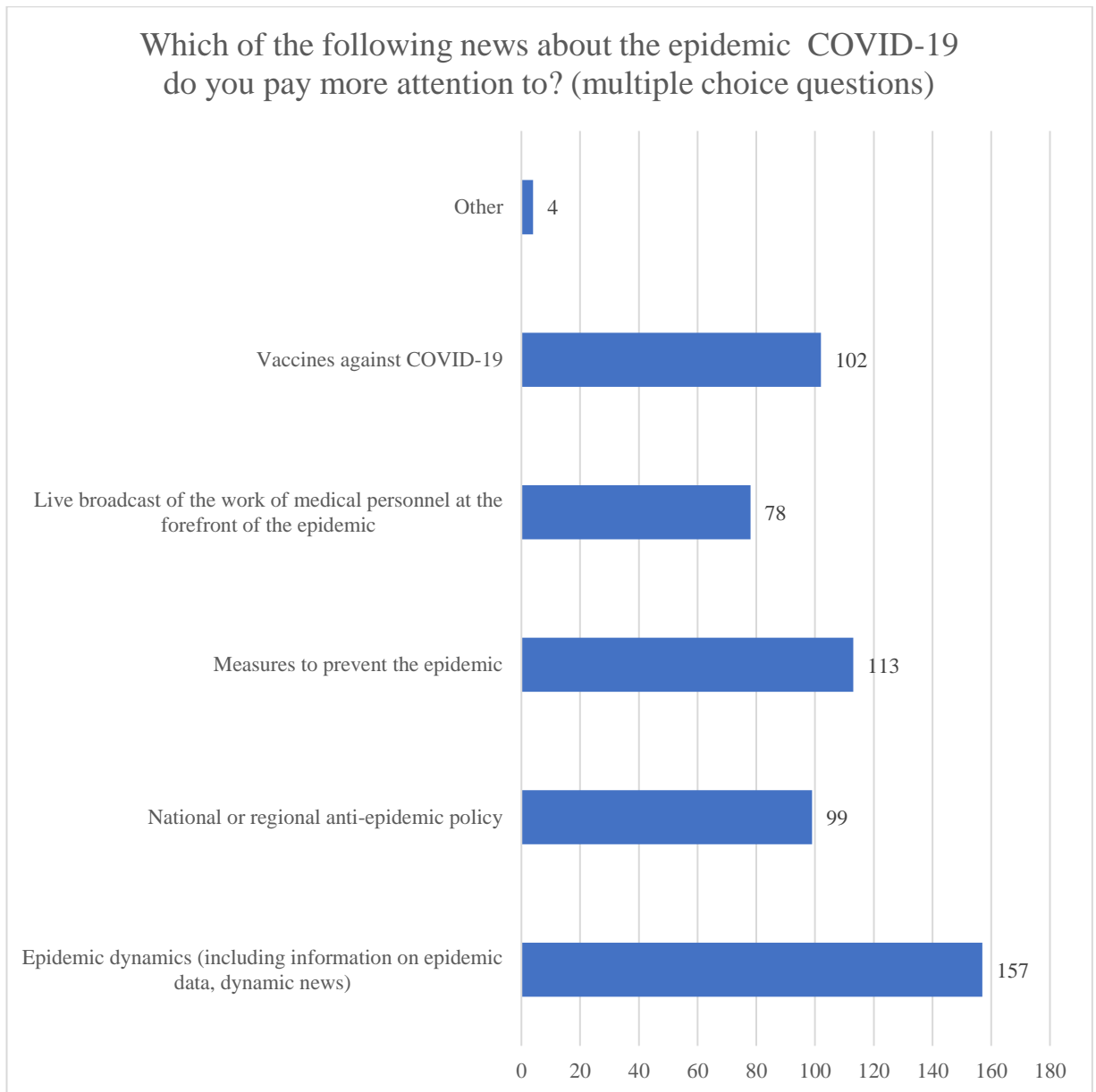
Thus, given the rich choice of media channels during the epidemic COVID-19, individual media exposure to university students in both countries was local in terms of media attributes and their own habits, but there are also certain similarities between Chinese and Russian students in terms of their interaction with social networks.

When you read the question *"Which of the following news items about the epidemic COVID-19 do you pay more attention to?"* Russian and Chinese students are most concerned with the dynamics of the epidemic (including information on epidemic data and news), then measures to prevent the epidemic and information about the new vaccine. Information on national or regional epidemic prevention policies and live broadcasts of the work of medical personnel on the frontline of the epidemic ranked fourth and fifth in terms of the degree of attention of both Chinese and Russian students, with Chinese students paying significantly more attention to live broadcasts of the work of medical personnel on the frontline of the epidemic than Russian students. This may be because

China became the first country to experience an outbreak of the new coronavirus, and as a result, it was at the center of the global epidemic and the country most affected by the outbreak.

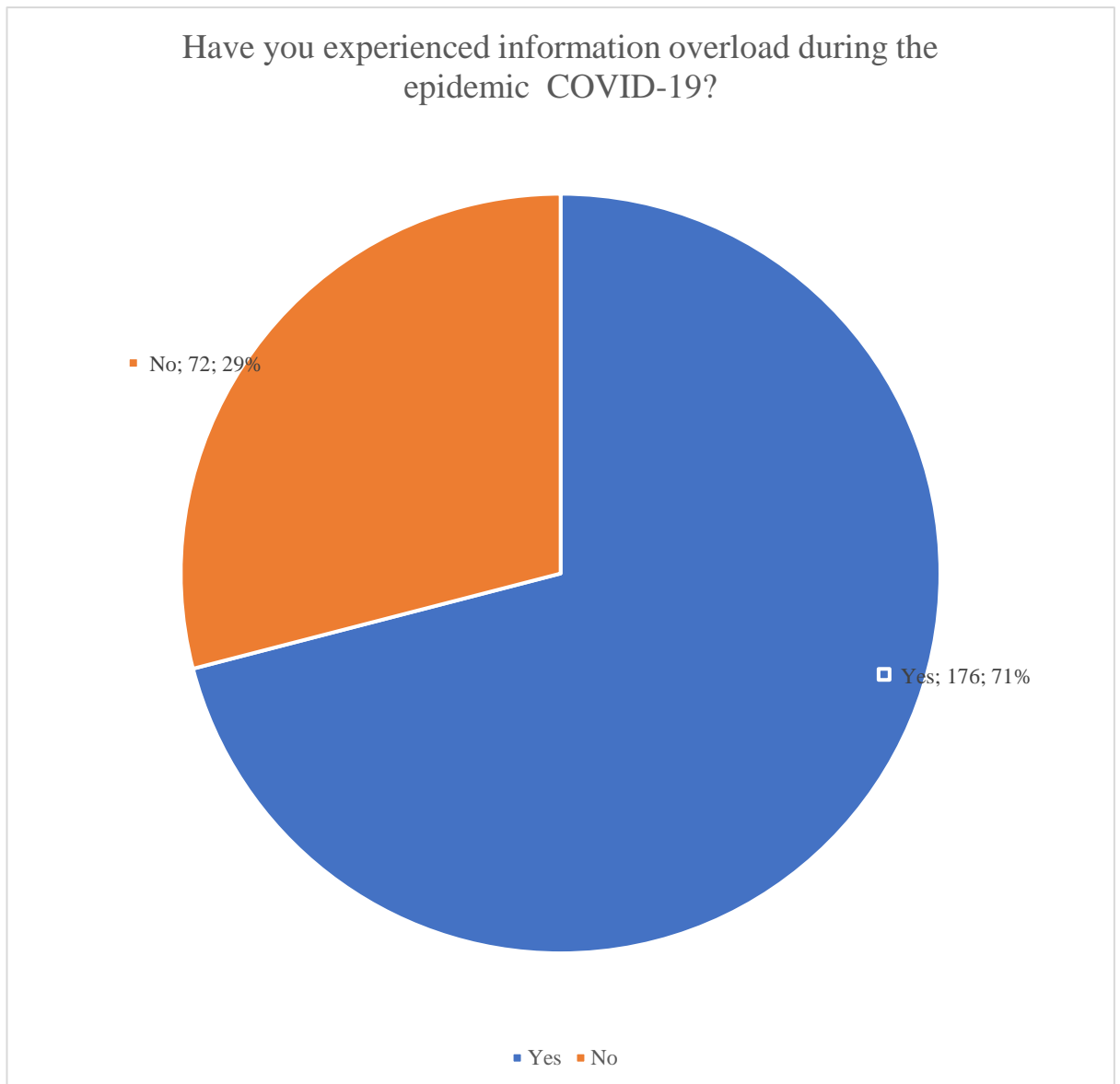
See. diagram № 5 and № 6.

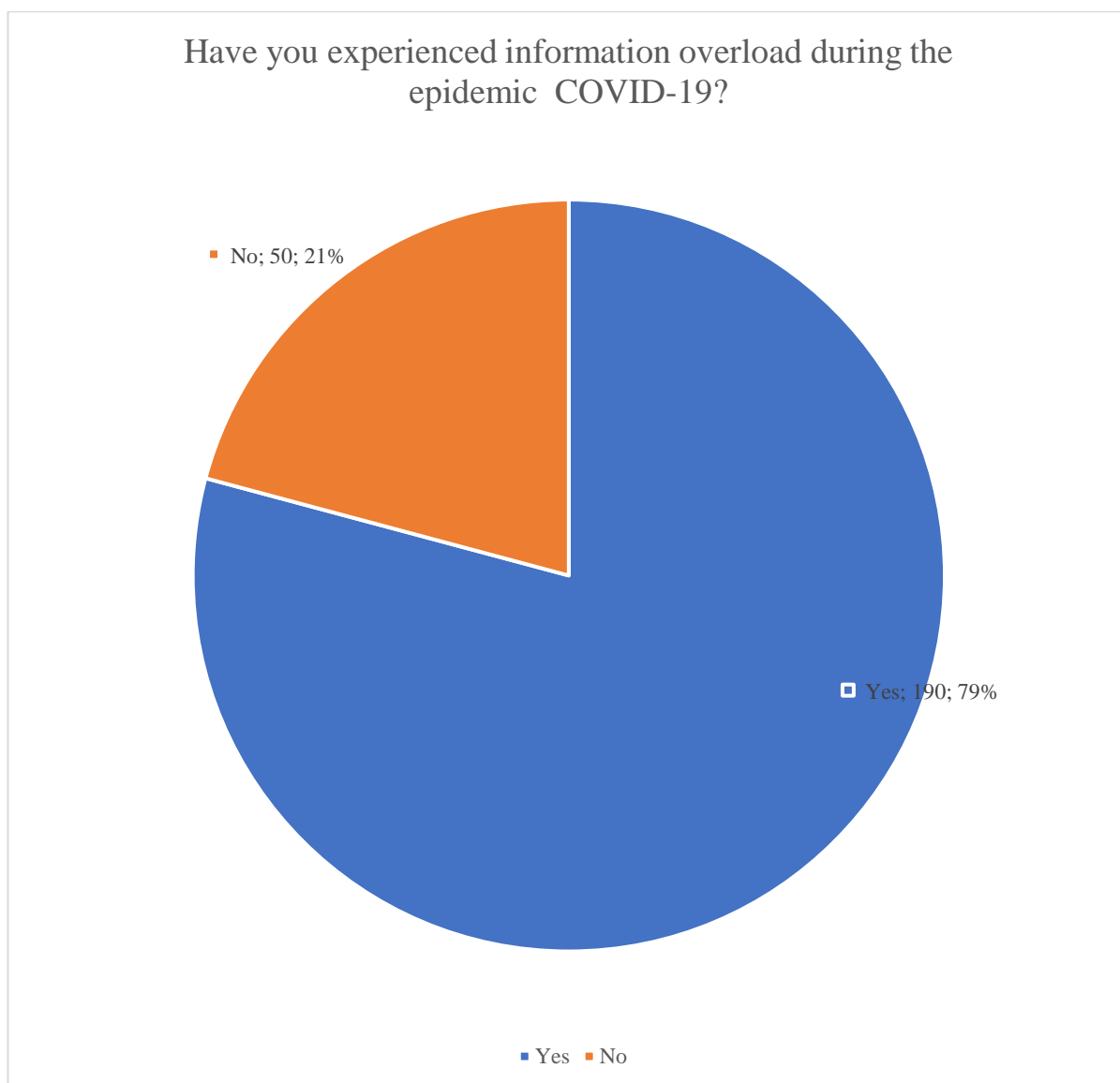




To the question addressed to Russian and Chinese youth, "*Have you experienced information overload during the epidemic COVID-19?*", both Russian and Chinese youth gave approximately the same answer. More than 70 % of both sides of the respondents gave a positive answer.

See diagram № 7 and 8.





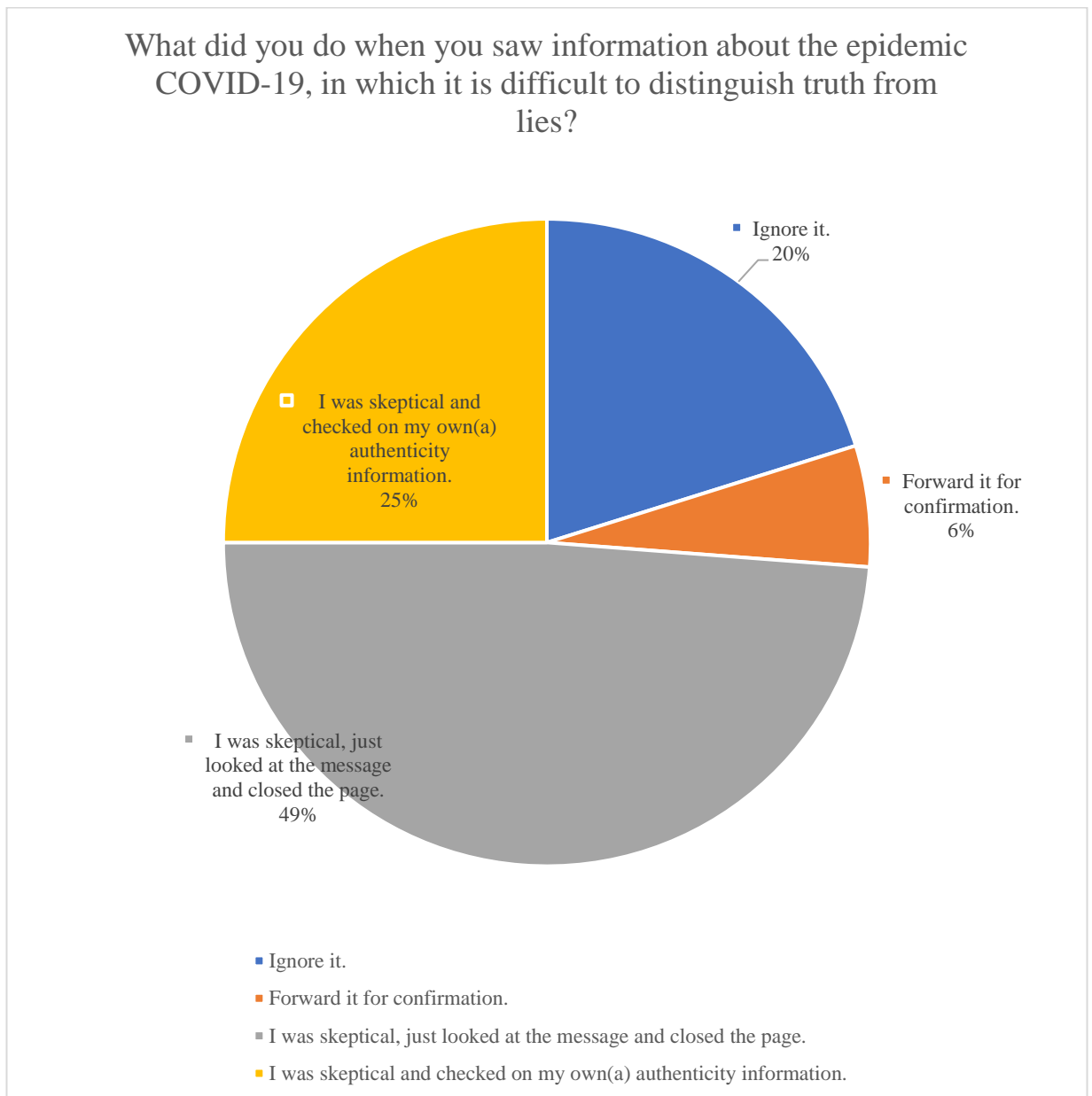
It should be noted that the simultaneous influx of a huge amount of information through the media to a certain extent led to the problem of "information overload". Too much immersion in the flood of negative information related to the epidemic also puts the audience in a state of stress and further increases their anxiety²¹⁴.

The question asked to Russian youth was: "What did you do when you saw information about the epidemic COVID-19, in which it is difficult to distinguish truth

²¹⁴ Li, Y. Dynamics of changes in the psychosocial characteristics of online media consumers under the influence of official information and rumors about COVID-19 // Litera. – 2024. – № 2. – P. 36-44.

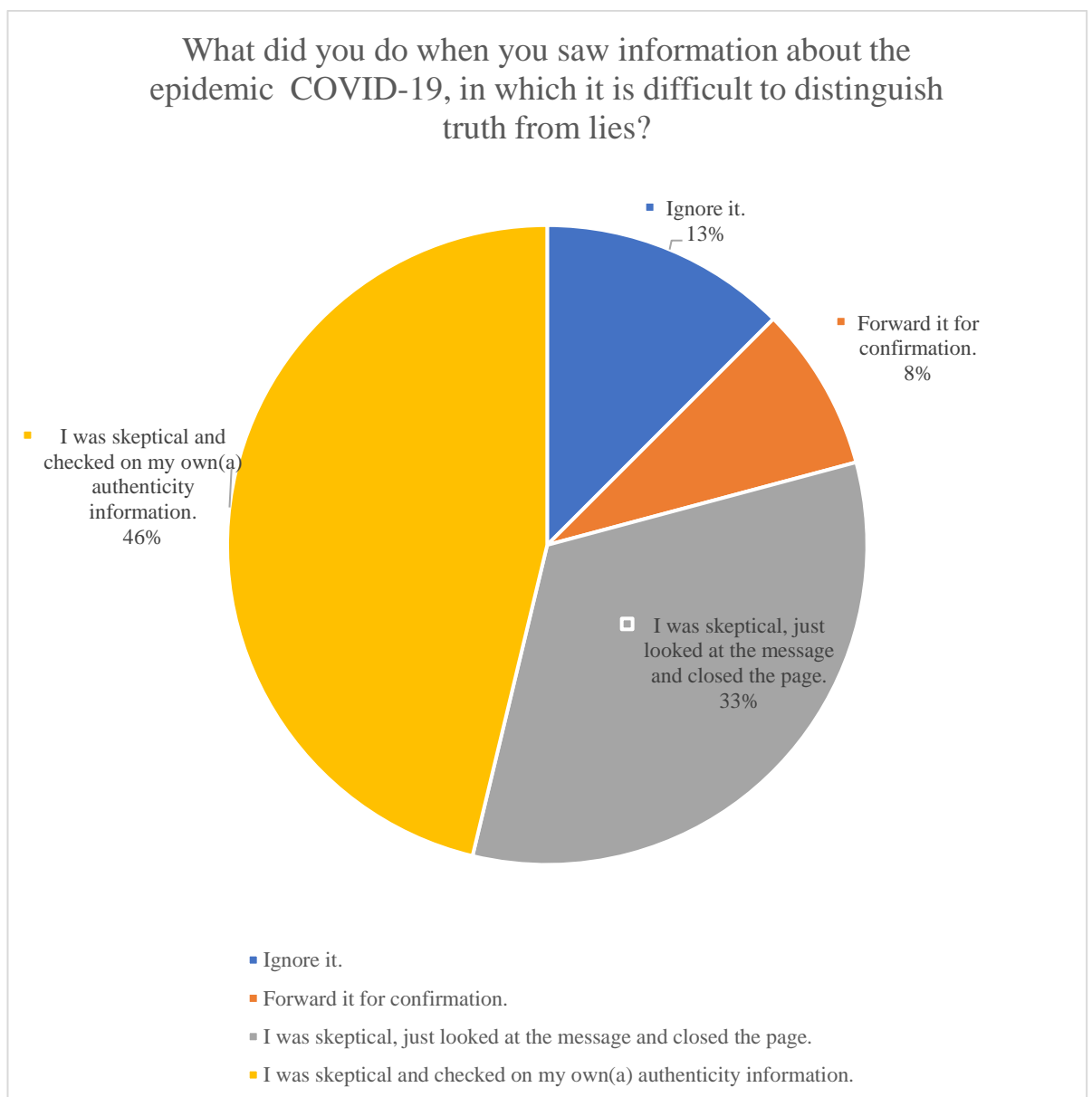
from lies?". The results of the responses showed that almost four-thirds of respondents (74 %) expressed skepticism, while 49% of Russian students said that they simply looked at the page and launched it, and the remaining 25% said that they would try to independently verify the truth of the information. Finally, 20 % of respondents said they would ignore the message, and 6 % would forward it to others for confirmation.

See diagram № 9.



The responses of Chinese youth were like those of Russian youth. The results show that more than four-thirds of respondents (79 %) reacted skeptically to the message, 46% of them said that they would ask for confirmation of the information themselves, and the remaining 33% of students said that they simply looked at the information and launched the page. Finally, 13 % of respondents said they would ignore the message, and 8 % would forward it to others for confirmation.

See diagram № 10.



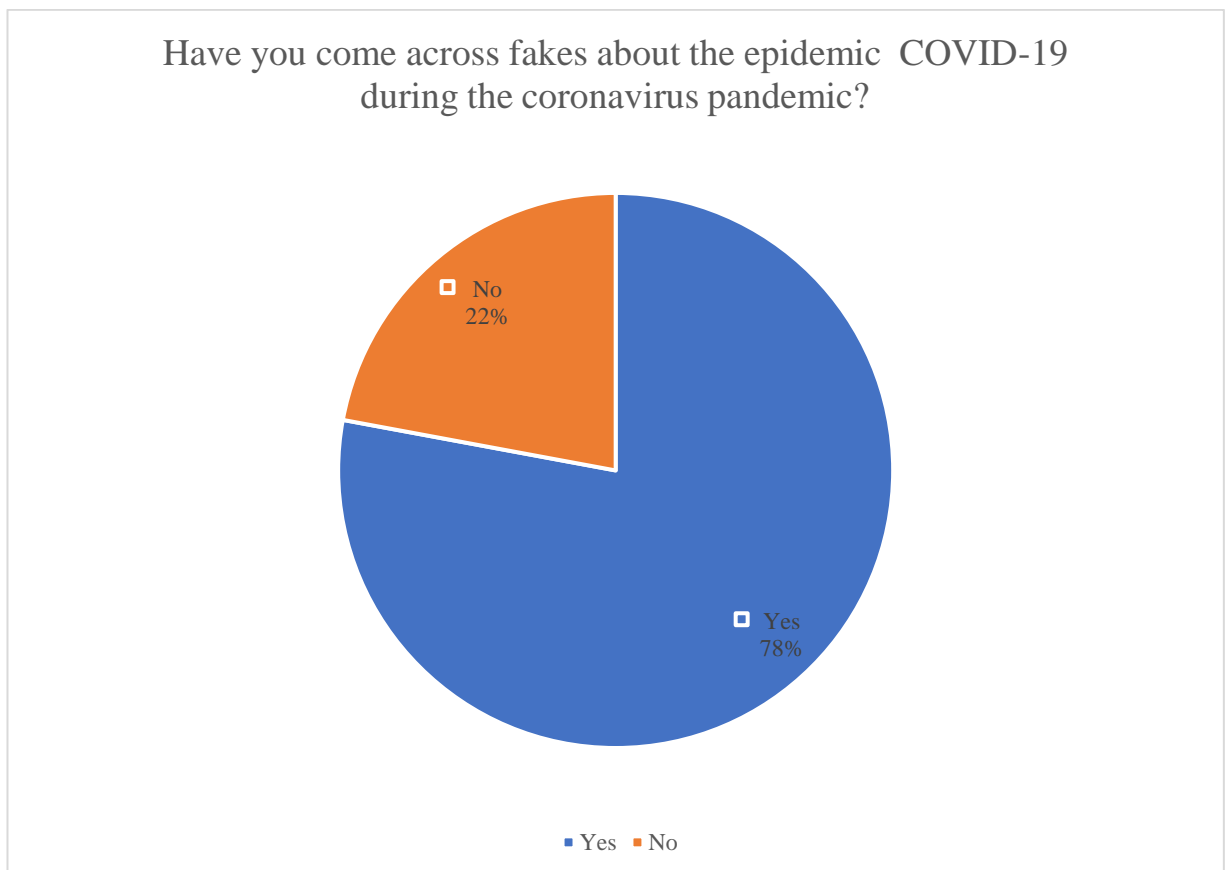
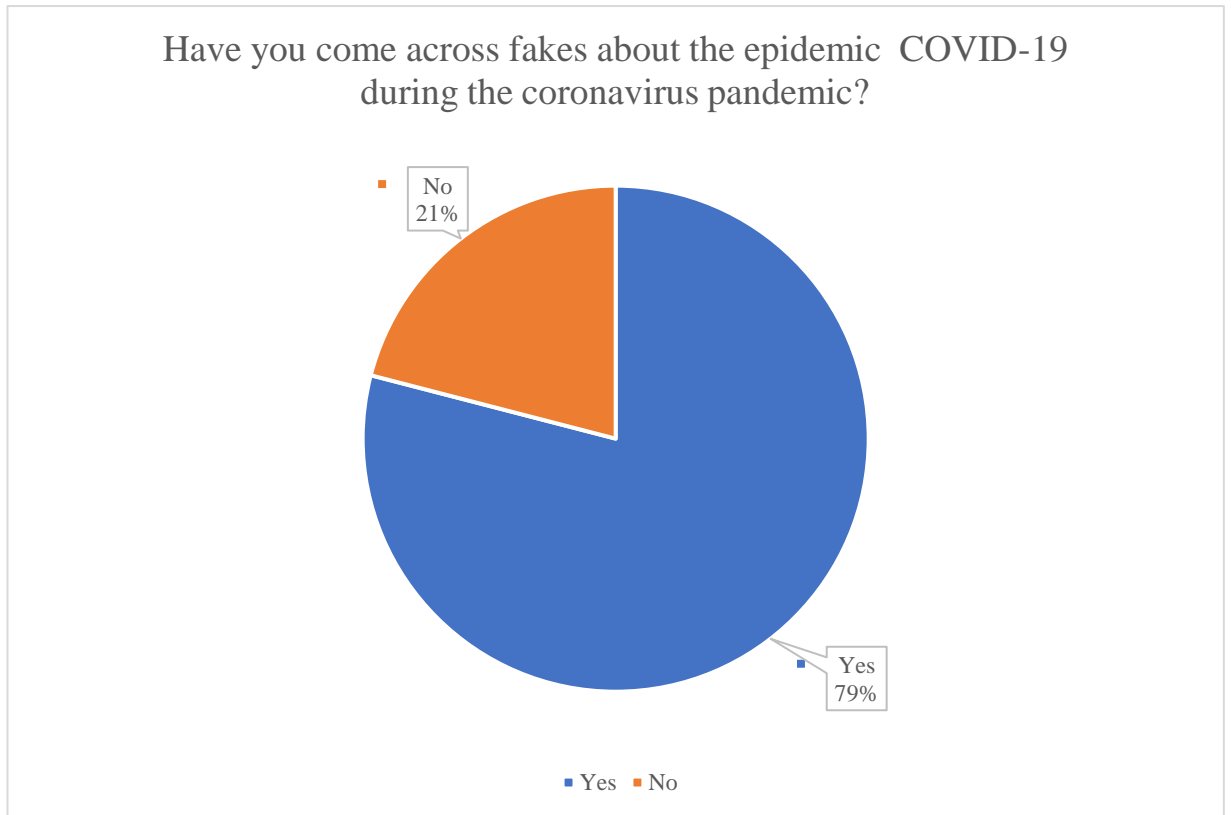
The reason most college students will be skeptical about this issue is that a large amount of information about the COVID-19 pandemic can come from a variety of sources, including social media, news reports, and expert opinions. Since the source of the information is unknown, readers may be skeptical about the accuracy of the information²¹⁵. In addition, conflicting information may occur during an outbreak due to factors such as the speed of updating information and differences in expert opinions. Some information may contradict what you have previously heard, which may cause readers to be skeptical about the information. Finally, in the context of infodemics, the spread of rumors, misinformation, and conspiracy theories can increase readers' skepticism about information²¹⁶. They may be afraid that they will be misled by false information, and therefore become more cautious about new information.

To the question *"Did you encounter fakes about the epidemic COVID-19 during the coronavirus pandemic?"* Russian and Chinese respondents were unanimous: almost 80 % of respondents said that they had encountered fakes, 79 % and 78%, respectively.

²¹⁵ Li, Y. Challenges and research of global mass communication in the context of the epidemic of SOW-19 // Media technologies in a changing world: trends, problems, forecasts: proceedings / Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation; Federal State Autonomous Education "North Caucasus Federal University". Stavropol: North Caucasus Federal University, 2021. P. 162-165.

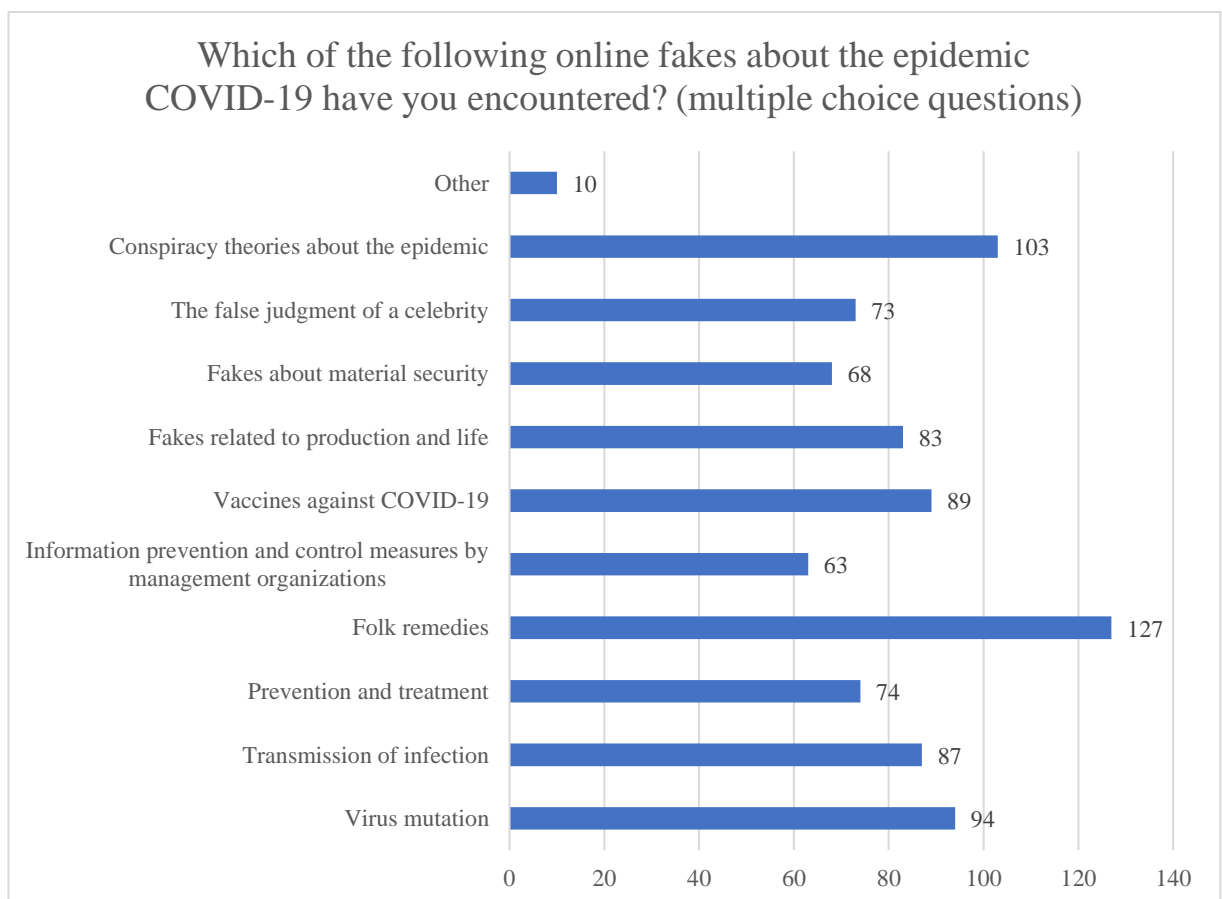
²¹⁶ Li, Y. Infodemic as a medium for the formation of fakes about coronavirus in the media space // Regional media: ways of interaction: Materials of the All-Russian Scientific and practical conference, Chita, December 16, 2021 – Chita: Zabaikalsky State University, 2021. – P. 13-16.

See diagram № 11 and 12.



These 79% of young Russians who were confronted with false information said that they were most often confronted with folk remedies, followed by conspiracy theories about epidemics and virus mutations. Fakes about new vaccines, transmission of infection, and issues related to production and life were also most often spread in the Russian media. Finally, in descending order of frequency, there are fakes about preventive treatment, fake statements by celebrities, fakes about material security, as well as measures of prevention and control of information by management organizations.

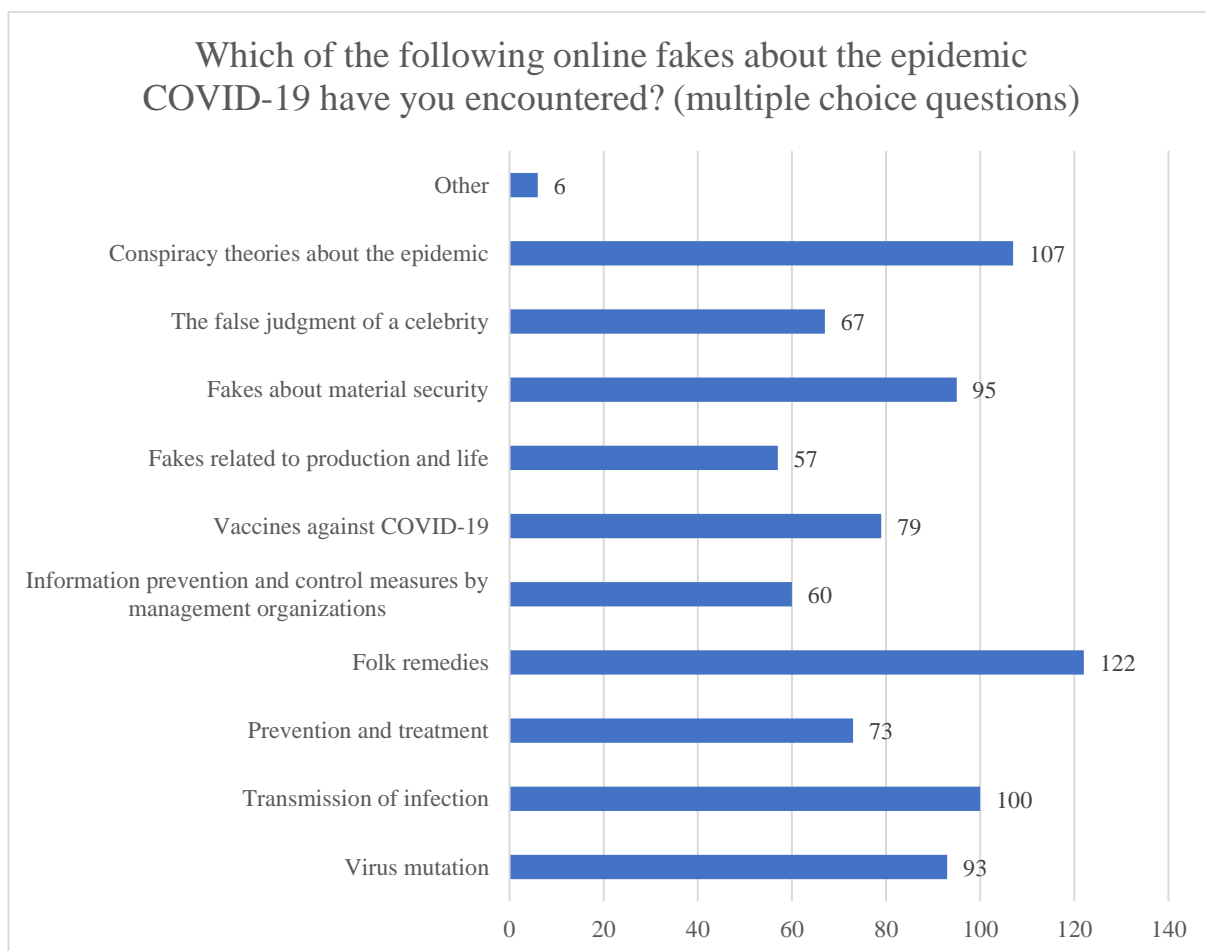
See diagram № 13.



78% of Chinese youth who experienced fake news, as mentioned above, also noted that folk remedies were the most common type of fake news they encountered. However, unlike Russian respondents, conspiracy theories about epidemics and transmission of infections were the second and third most common types of fake news. Then, in

descending order of frequency of occurrence of fakes, there are fakes about material security, viral mutations, new vaccines, preventive treatment, false statements of celebrities, measures of prevention and control of information by management organizations, and fakes related to production and life.

See diagram № 14.



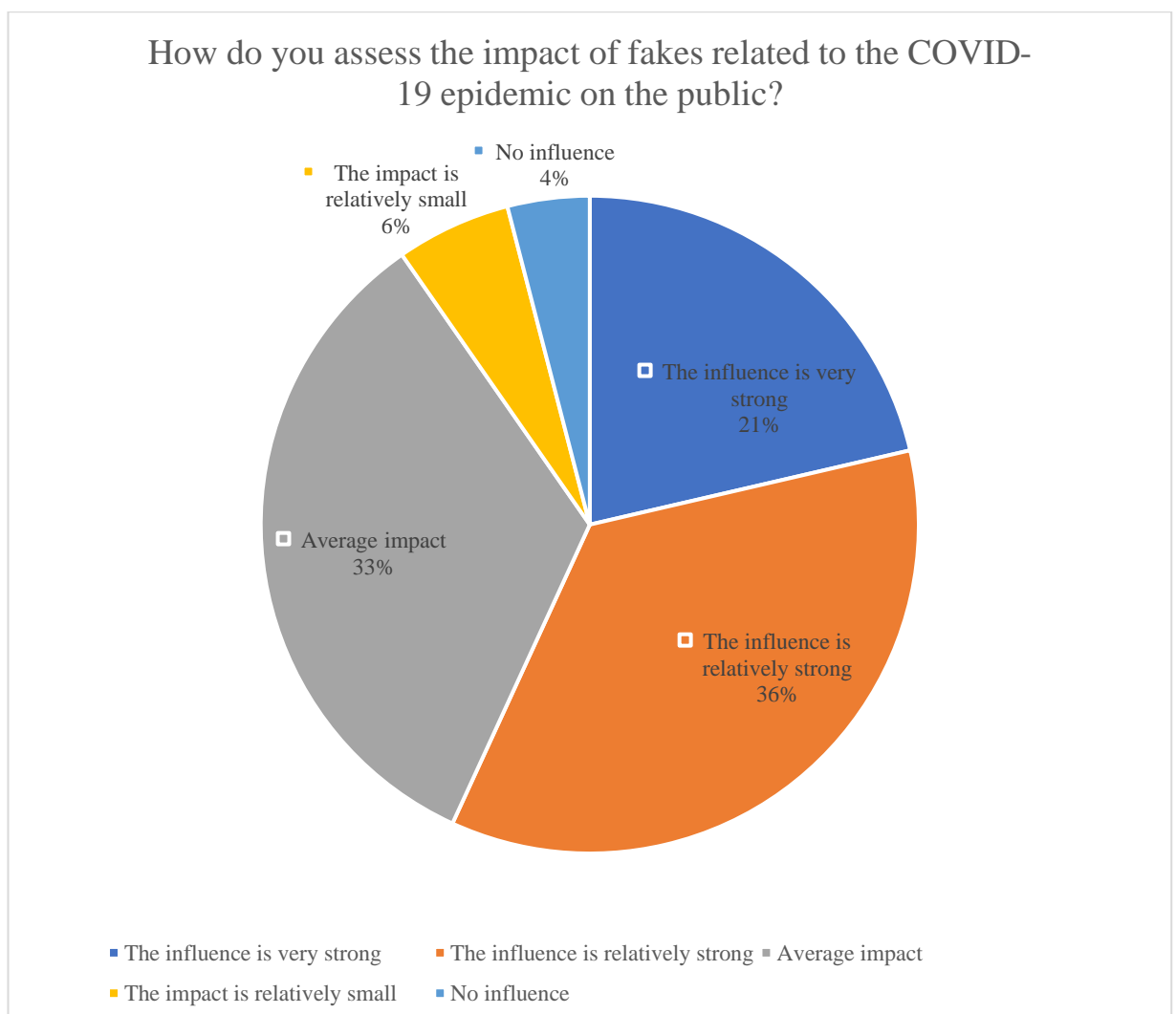
Both Chinese and Russian respondents most often encountered fakes about folk remedies, which can be explained by the fact that during an outbreak, people affected by the infodemic experience anxiety and panic²¹⁷ and want to find effective remedies and

²¹⁷ Deineka, O.S., Maksimenko, A.A. Assessment of the psychological state of society in the context of infodemic through the analysis of social networks: a review of foreign publications // Society. Wednesday. Development. – 2020. – № 2 (55). – P. 28-39.

treatment as soon as possible. In addition, at the early stage of the epidemic, information about the new coronavirus can be relatively scarce, and the public's understanding of the virus is limited, in the absence of reliable sources of information, in which case some simple folk remedies may attract more attention.

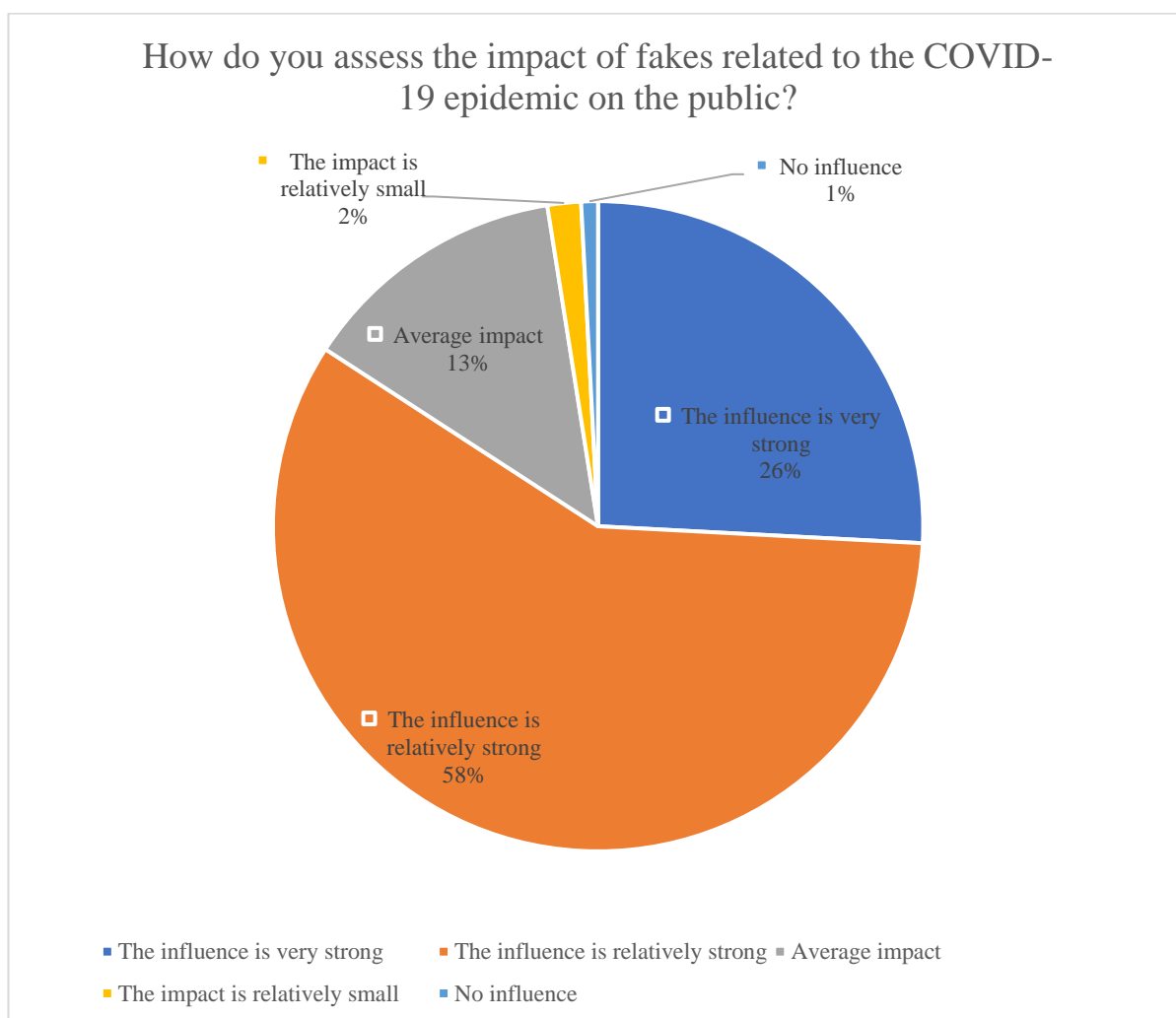
The answers received from Chinese respondents to the question *"How do you assess the impact of fakes related to the epidemic COVID-19 on the public?"* are indicative. 21 % of Russian respondents believe that fakes about the epidemic had a very strong impact on society during the epidemic COVID-19; 36% believe that fakes had a fairly strong impact; 33% believe that the impact was average; 6% believe that the impact was quite low; and 4% believe that the impact was quite high. it wasn't.

See diagram № 15.



In the responses of the Chinese side to the same question, it turned out that, as in the survey of young Russians, 26 % of Chinese respondents believe that fakes about the epidemic had a very big impact on society during the epidemic COVID-19; in contrast to Russian respondents, 56% believe that fakes had a rather big impact; 13% believe that fakes had a very big impact on the they believe that the impact was average; 2 % believe that the impact was quite low; and only 1 % believe that they did not have any impact.

See diagram № 16.

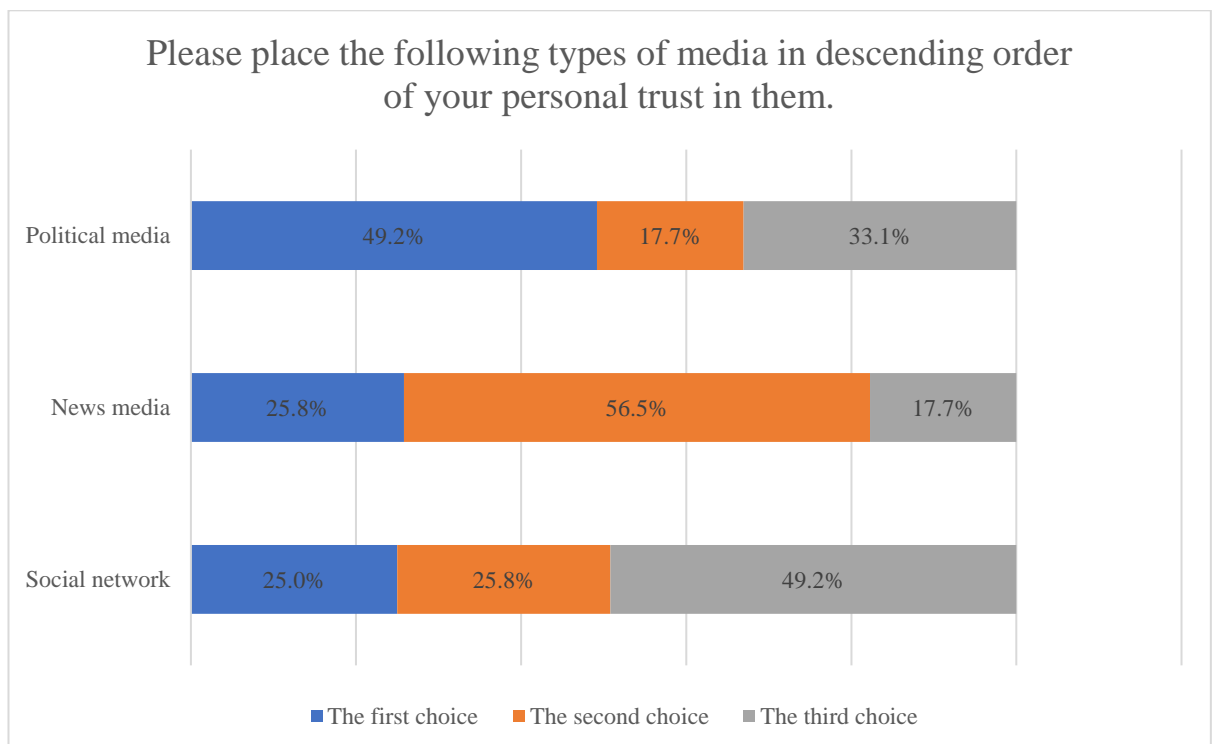


The reasons why young people believe that fakes have a greater impact on society can be as follows: a) young people are the main users of the Network media, and they are aware of their importance in spreading information; b) fakes can spread through several

media platforms and affect more social groups, which has a greater impact on society c) during an epidemic, anxiety, panic, and uncertainty prevail in society, and the mass tends to get more information to deal with this uncertainty, in which case fakes can satisfy the psychological needs of the mass and cause even more panic and anxiety, which also has a greater impact on society; d) young people can pay more attention to the situation in which they live. more attention is paid to social responsibility and the public interest, and they realize that fakes can affect social stability and security.

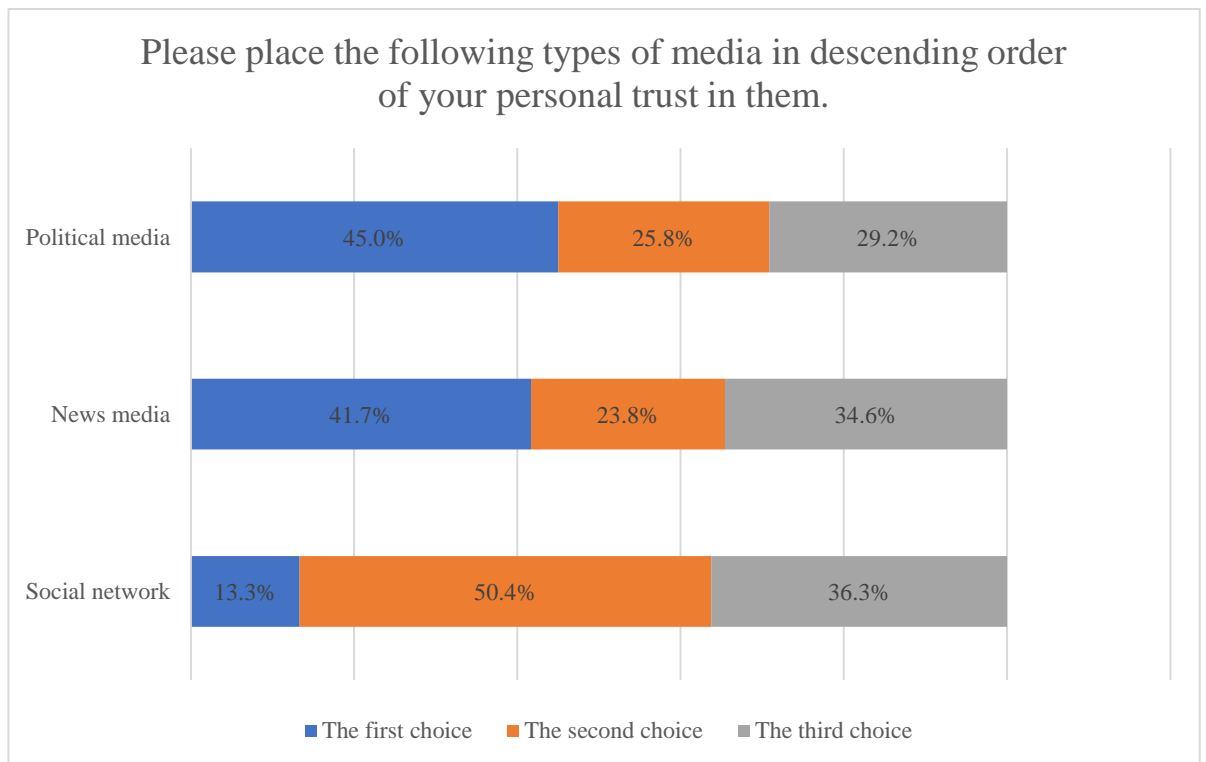
The question *"Please put the following types of media in descending order of your personal trust in them"* gave the following results: almost 50% of Russian students put political media in the first place and about 20% put it in the second place; about 25% of respondents put news media in the first place and more than 50% of respondents – in the second place; 25 Some 25 % of respondents put social networks in the first place, and about 25% of respondents put them in the second place. The survey showed that the most trusted the Network media for the majority of Russian students are political media, followed by news media and, finally, social networks.

See diagram № 17.



Similar results were obtained for Chinese respondents to the same question. 45% of Chinese students ranked political media first, and about 25% of respondents ranked it second; more than 40% of respondents ranked news media first, and about 24% of respondents ranked it second; almost 13% of respondents ranked social media first, and more than 50% of students ranked it second. To summarize, for most Chinese students, the most reliable the Network media is also political media, followed by news media, and finally social media.

See diagram № 18.



This indicates a high degree of public recognition of the state information support of emergencies in the healthcare sector. For example, political media such as the National Health Commission and the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation have authoritative qualifications and high professionalism, and the authenticity and reliability of the information they publish are guaranteed. Political media are "official", which means that they have more authority and trust, so the public is more willing to believe

information published by political media. Compared to other types of media, news media have the status of "gatekeepers", the content of their messages has sources and grounds, and their messages are more professional and comprehensive, so they also enjoy greater trust among young people.

In addition, the survey results also showed that the social networks most often used by students were rated by respondents as the least trustworthy (49.2 % of Russian respondents and 45% of Chinese respondents rated trust in social networks at the end of the list). In addition, the survey results showed that respondents rated social networks that are most often used by university students as the least trustworthy (about 50 % of Russian respondents and 36.3% of Chinese respondents ranked social networks as the least trustworthy).

Thus, the first hypothesis is not confirmed. First, during the epidemic COVID-19, although students most often used social media, their confidence was rated as the lowest due to the impact of infodemic. Information on social networks may have come from anonymous users or from unverified sources, so they lacked credibility.

Second, during the epidemic, the presence of a large amount of information on social media caused an information overload that included rumors, fake news, misinformation, and conspiracy theories, among other things, creating an infodemic and making it difficult for people to determine whether information is true or false. Moreover, rumors, fake news, and misinformation spread quickly and widely on social networks, and their impact is very strong²¹⁸. Finally, social media algorithms can manipulate the display of content that is used to put users in an information cocoon, making them more biased about a particular point of view or interest²¹⁹. Thus, against the background of an infodemic, unreliable sources of information, information overload, the spread of fakes

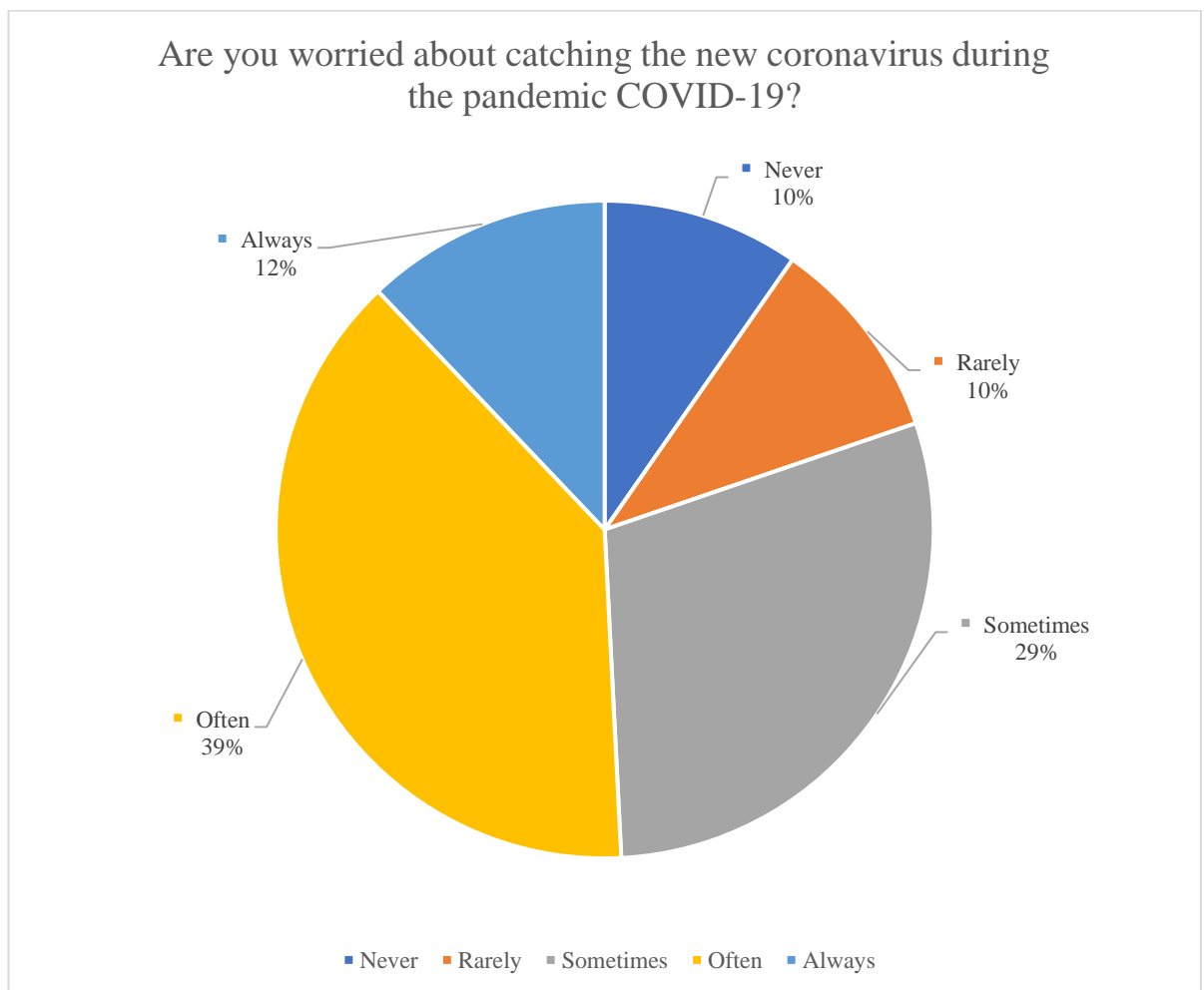
²¹⁸ Li, Y. Mechanisms for the dissemination of network information between the government and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic // *Language. Communication. Society*. 2024. № 1 (5). P. 37-42.

²¹⁹ Li, Y. The Construction of the Network Media as an Ideal model of Public Information Dissemination During the Epidemic of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia // *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*. 2023. 19(2). P. 337-342.

and algorithmic manipulation of content can make the public doubt the trust in social networks.

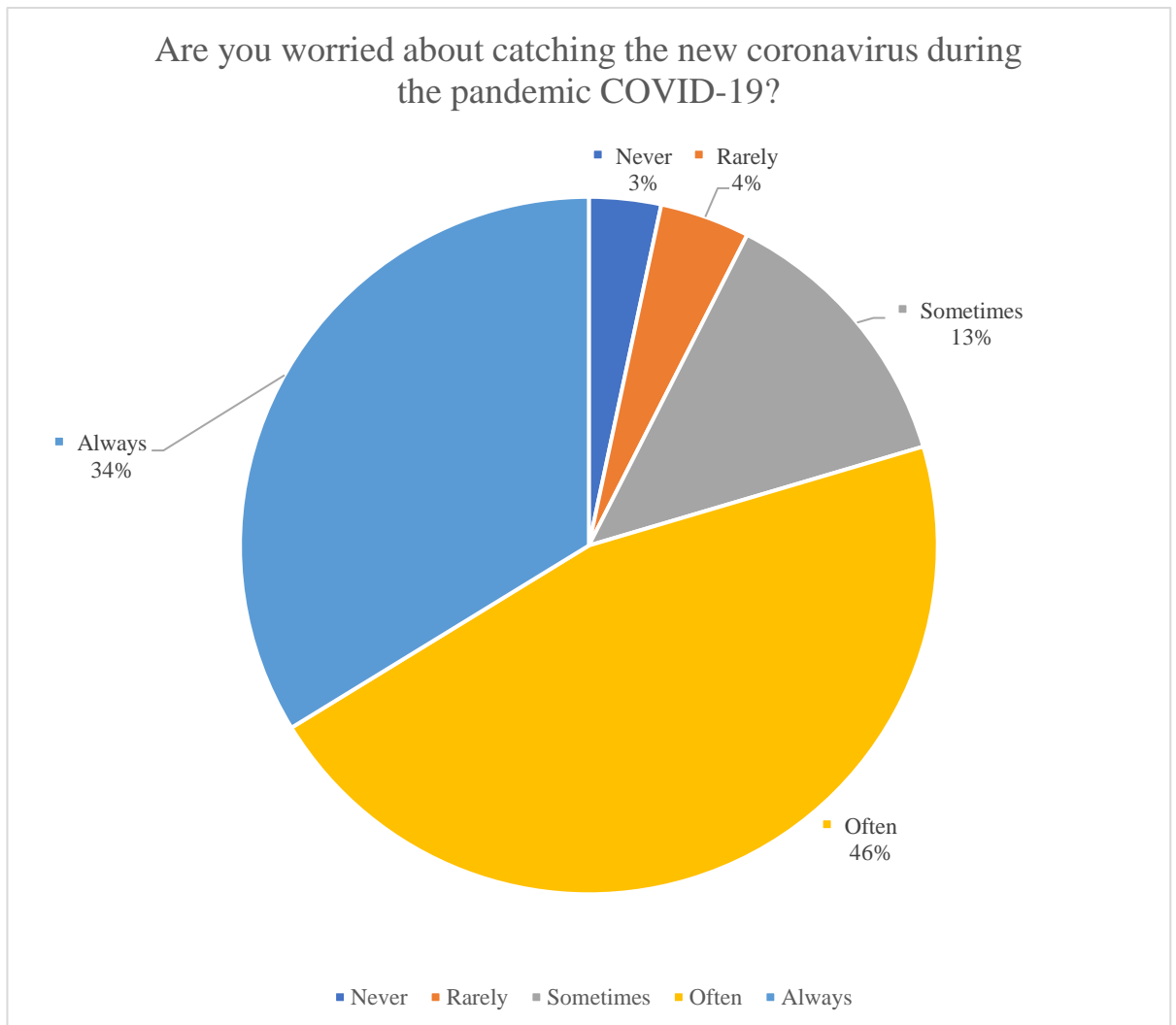
When asked about the estimated risk of contracting the new coronavirus, 12 % of young Russians said that they are always afraid of getting infected; 39% and 29% of them - that often and sometimes, respectively; and those who worry rarely and even never worry, made up 10% each.

See diagram № 19.



However, 34 % of young Chinese people said that they are always worried about the possibility of infection; 46 % and 13% said that they often worry and sometimes worry, respectively; while those who are afraid rarely and even never experience fear were 3% and 4 %, respectively.

See diagram № 20.



Almost half (49 %) of Russian respondents were always and often afraid of infection, which indicates that the level of perceived risk of infection among the young population is in the aspect of susceptibility.

During the epidemic, quarantine measures and restrictions on travel and social

activities were introduced in many regions of Russia²²⁰, as well as in China²²¹, which increased the level of fear of infection with the new coronavirus among young people. In addition, news media and social media provided extensive coverage of the development and impact of the outbreak, including information on the number of cases, deaths, and the strain on medical resources, which may have increased young people's concerns about the outbreak.

Finally, the combined impact of the epidemic COVID-19 and infodemic can increase the psychological stress of young people, including anxiety, panic, loneliness, etc.²²² These are emotions that can increase anxiety about risky infections.

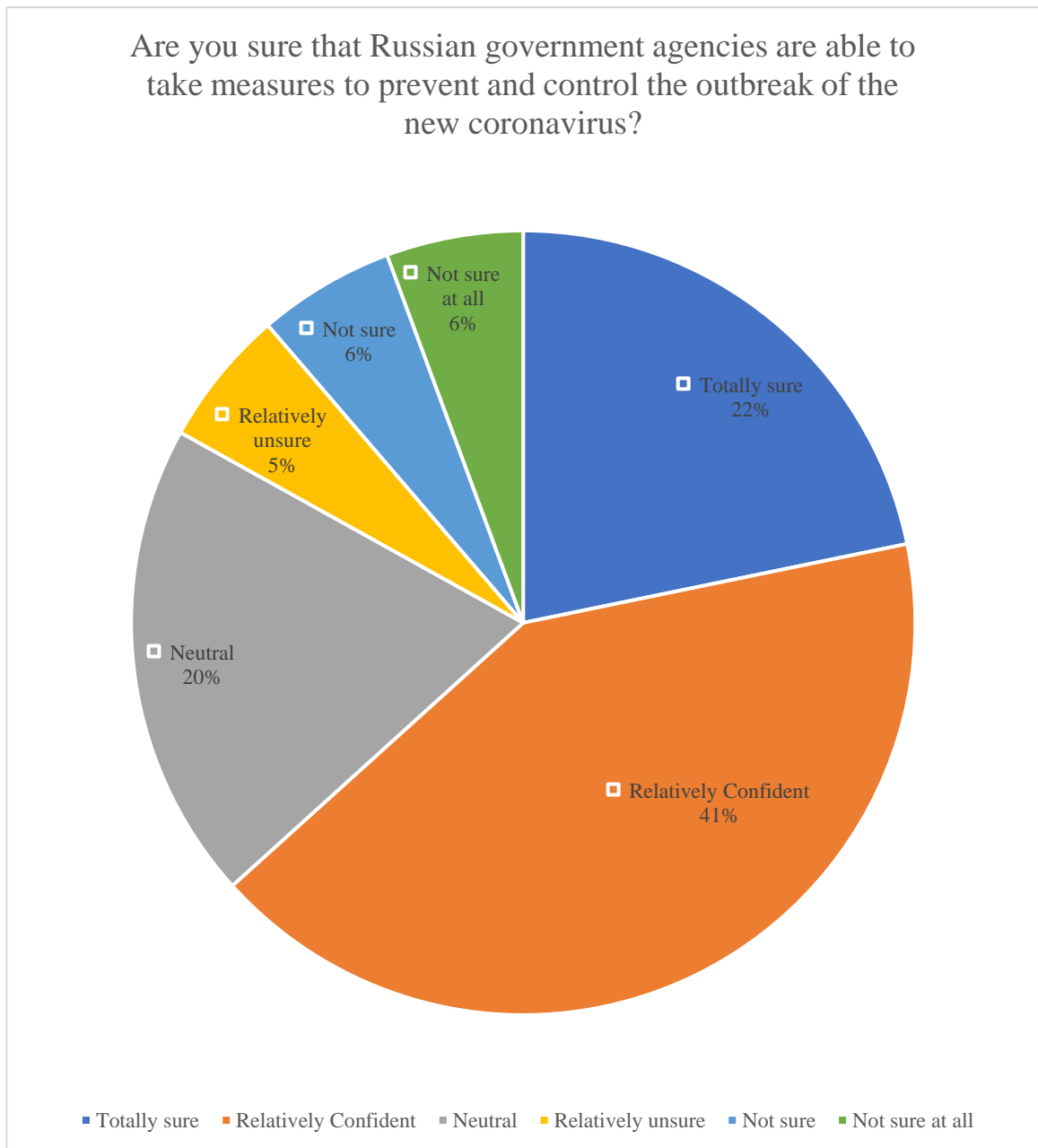
The question addressed to Russian youth, "Are you sure that the Russian government departments involved in preventing and combating the outbreak of the new coronavirus will be able to cope with this work?" showed the majority of respondents' confidence in the ability of the relevant departments of the Russian government to prevent and control the epidemic of the new coronavirus. 22 % of Russian respondents said that they are fully confident in the government's ability to cope with this task; 41 % of students are relatively confident. The share of respondents who gave a negative answer was relatively small. Finally, 20 % of respondents expressed a neutral opinion.

²²⁰ History of coronavirus restrictions in Russia / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://tass.ru/info/15101389?ysclid=lvv3w3sk2i520376460> (accessed 01.07.2022).

²²¹ Prevention and control of COVID-19 (9th edition) / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-05/14/5606469/files/97921b2e20134f1faad6af9dacd51d07.pdf> (date of access: 06.27.2022).

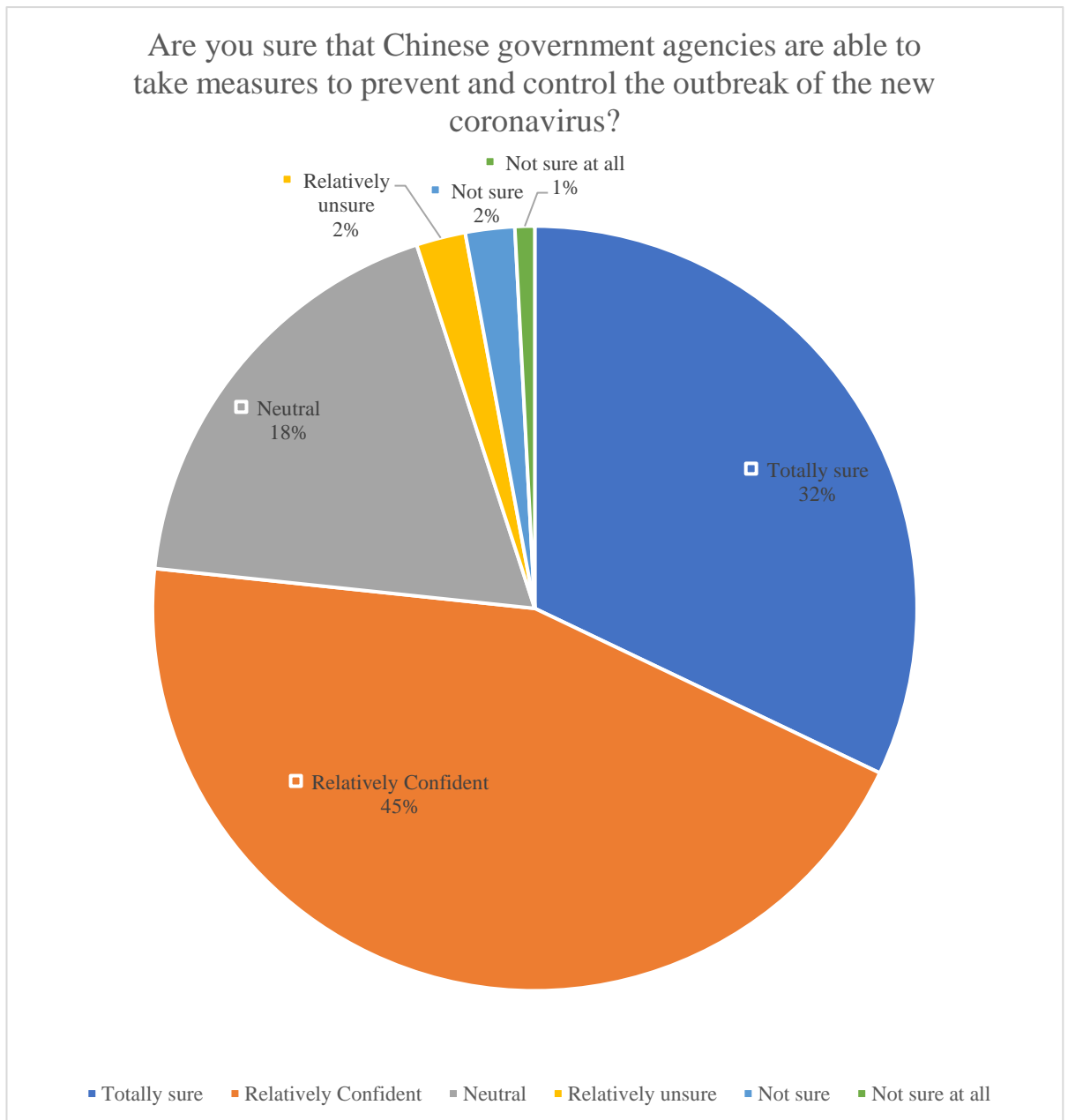
²²² Mikheev, E.A., Nestik, T.A. Psychological mechanisms of infodemic and personality's attitude to misinformation about COVID-19 in social networks // Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Social and economic psychology. – 2021. – Vol. 6, № 1(21). – P. 37-64.

See diagram № 21.



Compared to the situation of Russian respondents, young Chinese people showed a higher degree of confidence in the government's response to the new coronavirus epidemic than: 32% of Chinese respondents said they fully believe in the government's abilities; 45% are relatively confident in this. Overall, 5% of respondents gave negative answers. As a result, 18% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion.

See diagram № 22.



In general, young people in both Russia and China have more confidence in their government's efforts to combat the epidemic COVID-19.

Interestingly, in both countries, there was a positive correlation between young people's trust in the government and the perceived risk of coronavirus infection. This shows that in the context of an infodemic, fakes in the Network media can confuse the

public's understanding of the epidemic, making it difficult to assess the severity of the epidemic and the actual level of risk. Thus, even if the public believes that the government can handle the epidemic, it cannot accurately assess its own risk of infection. Moreover, fakes tend to exaggerate the severity of the epidemic and create an atmosphere of panic, causing the public to be overly concerned about the risk of infection. Therefore, even if the public believes that the government can handle the epidemic, it still believes that it is at high risk. Therefore, the second hypothesis is correct.

Conclusions. In a public health emergency, the use of mass media is specific and diverse. The role of social networks such as WeChat and Telegram in the dissemination of information should be emphasized. News media, government media, and some medical network media have come to play an important role as complementary sources of information. The youth audience focused on the dynamics of the epidemic (including information on epidemic data, operational and emergency news), measures for epidemic prevention and vaccines against COVID-19. However, exposure to a huge amount of information in the online environment also led to information overload. It is worth noting that a large number of fakes in the Network media can create an infodemic in conditions of information overload, which can have a great impact on society, as well as cause emotional anxiety in young people. Chinese and Russian students' trust in the media was similar during the epidemic. Most of all, they trusted political media, then news media, and finally social media. Finally, in both Russia and China, there was a positive correlation between students' trust in their own government and their perceived risk of contracting the novel coronavirus. The Network media can maintain a high level of self-assessment of the risk of infection by spreading rumors, fake news, misinformation, and exaggerating the risk of an outbreak, despite having faith in the government's ability to respond. The spread of rumors, fake news, misinformation, and exaggeration of the outbreak risk in the Network media negatively affected public confidence in the government and perceptions of the risk of contracting the virus. Thus, while the public believes that the government can respond to the outbreak, its own assessment of the risk

of infection is crucial.

3.3 Strategies Network media management strategies in the context of infodemic

Historical experience and lessons teach that the more large-scale public events, the more problems the sphere of public information dissemination faces. Engels, for example, argued that there is no great historical catastrophe that is not compensated for by historical progress. In the face of an infodemic, the Network media, mass audiences, and the Government must carefully and timely summarize experiences and lessons learned. Based on the ability to disseminate information about emergencies in the field of public health in combination with the real situation, the following proposals for managing network infodemics are put forward.

A) Continuous improvement of media literacy of the population²²³.

In the context of the new coronavirus epidemic, the cause of infodemic is that the coronavirus is a virus that has never appeared before and is unknown to many experts. The world's leading medical experts are working hard to defeat the new coronavirus, but there are still many unsolved human mysteries behind it. Experts do not have much scientific knowledge, and it is even more difficult for ordinary people to determine the truth or falsity of relevant information. The ability to correctly evaluate information is associated with a person's media literacy. Media literacy-characterizes the ability to analyze and synthesize media reality, the ability to "read" media text, the ability to use media technology, knowledge of the basics of media culture, that is, the result of

²²³ See in more detail: Li, Y. Problems of network security of personal information in the context of prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic // Regional Informatics (RI-2022): Jubilee XVIII St. Petersburg International Conference. Conference proceedings, St. Petersburg, October 26-28, 2022. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2022. – P. 377-379.

media²²⁴education. The most complete definition of media literacy was formulated by Professor A.V. Fedorov: This is a set of motives, knowledge, skills, and competencies of the individual that contribute to the selection, use, critical analysis, evaluation, creation and transmission of media texts in various types, forms, and genres, as well as to the analysis of complex processes of media functioning in society²²⁵. Individual media literacy can be divided into strong and weak, and people with low media literacy can easily become victims of false information, which can fall into three categories.

The first category is adolescents who lack the accumulation of knowledge, life and social experience, and are susceptible to false information.

The second category is the elderly. Older people are less sensitive and receptive to new knowledge and things, and often rely on life experience as the basis for selecting and evaluating information. However, times are changing too fast, and it is impossible to stay in your "comfort zone" and continue to use experience to cope with the current extremely complex information scene. On the other hand, some we-media will serve the target audience to get attention. They are well versed in the mental state, aesthetic preferences, and language habits of older people, seeking to maximize the attention of the older group and convey information. Therefore, older people are also susceptible to false information.

The third group of susceptible people is people with a relatively low level of education. The more knowledge and techniques a person learn, the stronger their ability to understand and analyze problems. Accordingly, they are weaker in understanding, synthesizing, criticizing, and reflecting, and are easily confused by rumors and gossip.

One of the ways to gain media literacy is satisfaction, which means that the audience improves in practice repeatedly. For example: when netizens encounter certain

²²⁴ Artemenko, M.A. Media literacy of youth in the context of Internet security // The intellectual potential of the XXI century: the stages of knowledge. – 2012. – № 10-1. – P. 25-37.

²²⁵ Fedorov, A.V. Media pedagogues and theorists of media culture of foreign countries: an encyclopedic reference book. Moscow: Publishing house of the NGO "Information for all", 2011. – 54 p; Fedorov, A.V. The development of media competence and critical thinking of students of a pedagogical university. M., 2007. – 616 p.

false information shared on WeChat or Weibo, after many generalizations and reflections, they accumulate experience and lessons, and they will be vigilant and careful about this information environment to create an information security protection network for themselves.

Of course, it is not enough to rely only on individual efforts, but also the participation of the state, society and professional institutions, especially vocational education institutions, is necessary for the development of mass media education. The content of media education can include media characteristics, information characteristics, media ecology, audience management and analysis, etc.

An emergency like the epidemic COVID-19 is an unprecedented test of the population's media literacy.

At the same time, the development of media literacy takes time, and even people with relatively high media literacy find it difficult to be immune from all problems. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink the responsibilities of the Network media in relation to infodemic and their possible solutions.

B) Monitoring public opinion using information technologies.

With the gradual development of information technologies, it has become possible to break down communication barriers and complete monitoring of public opinion. In addition, monitoring of the psychological state of society in the context of a pandemic using digital methods of analyzing texts, audio and video content of the Internet, since monitoring provides feedback on the social well - being of the population, its mood and types of response to content distributed on the Internet²²⁶. Judging by the period of the epidemic COVID-19, online educational offers grew like mushrooms after the rain. In China WeChat, WeChat created a QR code for a "rumor shredder," and Weibo added a

²²⁶ Deineka, O.S., Melnik, G.S., Dukhanina, L.N., Maksimenko, A.A. The psychological state of society in conditions of infodemic // Innovative development: the potential of science and modern education: collection of articles of the VI International Scientific and practical Conference / ed. by G.G. Gulyaev. – Penza: ICNS "Science and Education". – 2020. – P. 202-206.

reminder to refute the rumors. At the beginning of the epidemic COVID-19, a special group was created under the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, whose task was to detect the spread of " fakes " in social networks²²⁷. Google has launched an information gathering page about the coronavirus pneumonia outbreak in the United States, which is dedicated to providing real-world information from reputable institutions on educational science, prevention methods, and local resources. In addition, on social platforms, you can implement mandatory communication of content with people, and wide dissemination of information. For example: WeChat and Telegram ads can be sent to everyone at the same time, and sometimes targeted messages can also be sent to various specific circles. Network media can also adjust their algorithms in favor of content that refutes rumors. These measures show a trend in the development of new media technologies and media integration.

C) Cleaning the network environment.

In today's increasingly diversified communication channels, any state of affairs, especially sensitive events and emergencies, has been linked to globalization. Within this trend, only by seeking initiative in the dissemination of information can we adapt to the changes in the maelstrom of the past times. Thus, it is necessary to create a healthy network environment in order to promote the sustainable development of the whole society and promote the effective dissemination of health information. Technical specialists should use technical means to regularly clean up the network environment, improve relevant laws and regulations in a timely manner, and resolutely counteract the penetration of illegal information.

D) The coexistence of decentralized and centralized communication models.

After the emergence of social media, people moved to it. Following this, decentralized communication gradually emerged. The advantages of decentralized

²²⁷ Arkhipova, A.S. The ways of the Russian infodemic: from WhatsApp to the Investigative Committee / A.S. Arkhipova [et al.] // Monitoring public opinion: economic and social changes / under the general editorship of S.G. Davydov. – 2020. – P. 231-265.

content production and personalized content distribution are obvious: the threshold for content production is lower; the explosive growth of content supply can meet the ever-increasing user demand for content; the efficiency of content distribution is higher²²⁸. An advanced algorithm sifts the information that most interests the user from the vast amount of information so that the user's individual needs can be met. Under the impact of the epidemic, we have seen some new changes in the era of decentralization: high-quality platforms are regaining the trust of users. All of this together is contributing to a better content environment.

The emergency period of the epidemic also largely revealed the problems of decentralized communication, such as insufficient information gathering, information confusion, emotional communication, etc.²²⁹.

Some content industry professionals saw attention as the sole operational goal, created hot spots, actively created or distributed false news, and other low-quality content. During the epidemic, rumors such as "drinking alcohol can kill bacteria and prevent infection", "Chinese academic Zhong Nanshan suggested gargling with salt water to prevent viruses" and other rumors that had a major impact on epidemic prevention in society were spread. The media market needs specialists with new communication competencies, creative, technological and entrepreneurial skills²³⁰.

To improve the environment of public information and communication with the public and create an ideal communication model for the dissemination of public information, one should not rely solely on a particular mode of communication,

²²⁸ Seok-Won, S., Jiwon, S., Matthew, N., Debangsu, S., Sudheendra, H., et al. PrPI: a decentralized social networking infrastructure. In Proceedings of the 1st ACM Workshop on Mobile Cloud Computing & Services: Social Networks and Beyond (MCS '10) // Association for Computing Machinery. 2010. 8. P. 1-8.

²²⁹ Rarenko, A.A., Vorontsova, V.O. Infodemic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic // Social and humanitarian sciences. Domestic and foreign literature. Ser. 11: Sociology. – 2021. – № 2. – P. 93-103.

²³⁰ Melnik, G.S. Strategies of new media in the digital environment and journalistic education // Phenomenology of modern media systems and media texts: Mater. international scientific-Practical conferences, November 16-17, 2018. / ed. by S.V. Oleinikov. Tiraspol: Pridnestrovian State University, -2019. – P. 93-101.

centralized, or decentralized. Sometimes they need to co-exist.

E) Continuous improvement of the system of content of relevant laws and regulations.

Media technologies used by new media are generally based on the achievements of the Global Network, but it has a certain virtual nature. This can become a factor affecting the quality of information, and the presence of different subjects of information that are not limited by ethical and legal norms, or other conventions, can consciously or unconsciously allow information to be distorted²³¹. Therefore, the government can improve the provisions of laws and regulations in terms of Internet information services management and network security, study international legal experience and cases from domestic judicial practice, optimize the content of legislation and legal provisions, as well as improve the efficiency of legal provisions. Governments can enact laws that prohibit the dissemination of misinformation or false information, especially in critical areas such as public health. These laws may provide for fines or legal consequences for those who intentionally spread false information. So, in the Russian Federation, such a law has been adopted, for example, the Criminal Code provides for liability for the dissemination of deliberately false information on the topic of the epidemic. Article 207.1. Public dissemination of deliberately false information about circumstances that pose a threat to the life and safety of citizens provides for measures to ensure the safety of the population and territories, techniques and methods of protection from these circumstances²³². Circumstances that pose a threat to the life and safety of citizens are recognized in this article as emergencies of a natural and man-made nature, environmental emergencies, including epidemics.

²³¹ Li, Y. New media as an important driving force of digital transformation // Regional journalism: cultural codes, the space of meanings, multiethnic discourse: Materials of the I All-Russian Conference, Rostov-on-Don, November 10-12, 2022 / ed. by A.G. Bepalova, K.R. Nigmatullina, E.V. Shirota. Rostov-on-Don - Taganrog: Southern Federal University. – 2022. – P. 138-141.

²³² Federal Law No. 100-FZ dated 04/01/2020. / [Electronic resource] URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202004010073?ysclid=lyssh7adzu675918089>

F) Strengthening national confidence in the authorities²³³.

Infodemic carries many dangers. Not only does it endanger the health of individuals, but it can also generate xenophobia, hatred, and exclusion, which can have long-term consequences for public health and human rights. Governments, organizations, and Governments need to act openly, seeking consensus and building public trust to bring this trend under control. This requires regular and open communication and dynamic partnerships²³⁴.

The epidemic has passed, but the panic and slander caused by the infodemic will have a negative impact on public order, political stability, and even trust in the media, journalists, and information, and the results will be shared by the entire society. In the Internet age, real-time performance, high efficiency, and interactivity are important characteristics of the Network media. The infodemic has developed rapidly in the context of new media technologies, and the scale of transmission has reached a greater degree of breakthrough in both time and space. The infodemic has led to the fact that the Network media platforms, the country, and the general public have become more aware of the importance of improving the information management capabilities of the Network media.

Conclusions to the third chapter.

In this chapter, we found out that the process of interaction between the state and the population in the dissemination of network information during the COVID-19 epidemic, in fact, is a game process based on information "control" and "anti-control". There is a situation where political power dominates decision-making regarding

²³³ See in more detail: Li, Y. Problems of network information and psychological security and measures to counter threats in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic // Information security of the regions of Russia (IBRD-2021): Proceedings of the XII St. Petersburg Interregional Conference, St. Petersburg, November 27-29, 2021. – St. Petersburg: Regional public organization "St. Petersburg Society of Informatics, Computer Technology, Communication and Control Systems", 2021. – P. 301-303.

²³⁴ Fight infodemic together // World Health Organization / [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.euro.who.int/ru/health-topics/Health-systems/digital-health/news/news/2020/6/working-together-to-tackle-the-infodemic> (date of access: 06.29.2022).

information, and government departments that make decisions have the right to disclose and manage information. With the development of people's legal awareness, the public pays more and more attention to the preservation and realization of their own rights. When the interests of citizens are related to the security of personal life, society especially strives for the realization of civil rights. During the COVID-19 pandemic, although the expression of confrontational discourse in the virtual community in the online environment of public opinion played a role in controlling the work of government, the insane and disorderly growth of "confrontational" discourse also led to a weakening of political trust and hindered the implementation of public policy. This does not help prevent and control the epidemic, does not contribute to social security and stability, but, on the contrary, undermines the authority of public administration. Therefore, in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic, restoring political trust in virtual communities requires joint efforts by the government, the people, and the media.

In public health emergencies, the media are used in a specific and diverse way. The role of social media such as WeChat and telegram in the dissemination of information should be emphasized. The media, government media, and some online medical media have begun to play an important role as additional sources of information. The youth audience is focused on the dynamics of the epidemic (including information on epidemic data, operations and the latest news), epidemic prevention measures and vaccines for the prevention of COVID-19. During the epidemic, the results of Chinese and Russian students' trust in the media were the same. Most of all, they trust the political media, then the news and, finally, social networks. Finally, in Russia and China, there is a positive correlation between students' trust in their governments and the risk of contracting the new coronavirus. The Network media can maintain a high level of self-assessment of the risk of infection by spreading rumors, fake news, misinformation and exaggerating the risk of an outbreak, despite full confidence in the government's ability to respond. The spread of rumors, fake news, misinformation, and exaggerated outbreak risks in the Network media has negatively affected public confidence in the government and the

perception of the risk of infection with the virus.

In the face of the infodemic, network media, mass audiences and the government must carefully and timely summarize experiences and lessons. Based on the ability to disseminate information about emergencies in the field of public health in combination with the real situation, the following proposals are put forward for managing network infodemics: a) continuous improvement of media literacy of the population; b) monitoring of public opinion using information technology; c) purification of the network environment; d) coexistence of decentralized and centralized communication models; e) continuous improvement of the system of content of relevant laws and regulations; f) strengthening national trust in the authorities.

Conclusion

The research on the concept of infodemic is interdisciplinary in nature and involves experts in various fields, such as communication sciences, political science, medicine, psychology, journalism, etc. This term has a unique explanation. As a result of this study, we concluded that infodemic – in specific emergency situations, there is a lot of true and false information, which makes it difficult for people to find reliable sources and reliable recommendations when needed. An infodemic consists of two main elements-information and epidemics, which are related to "cause and effect" / "viruses (rumors, fake news, false information)".

The mechanism of infodemic generation on network media can be generalized from three aspects: first, social emotions are the basis for the emergence of infodemic; second, socialization of network media forms a communication environment for the spread of infodemic; and third, laws and rules controlled by infodemic are imperfect.

In the context of the epidemic COVID-19, the mechanism of infodemic spread is unique. It also demonstrates a certain universality, which manifests itself in four aspects-strong incitement, determined efforts, broad influence, and lack of effective public opinion management.

The infodemic has had a large-scale impact on the information security of the network and caused some problems in cyberspace, including the following aspects: A) defamation on the Internet; B) electronic attacks using network viruses; C) Internet harassment; D) information security incidents in distance education; E) network security problems in personal information; F) the emergence of a person's fear, increased anxiety and increased reaction to stress; G) the process of informatization has an increasing impact on the experience of anxiety.

In the era of global communication, the asymmetric, one-sided and local communication model of traditional society was disrupted, and the hidden public gained a voice, forming a multipolar communication model. The ideal situation would be to track

in the media space meanings that reveal the essence of phenomena related to an emergency, helping to understand how news appears, persists, and changes, and what is real and what is not. In the context of the current infodemic, online media have become particularly visible in performing communication, sociological, propaganda and political functions in resolving emergencies. All types of online media have passed a great test. An analysis of their functioning during the COVID-19 period revealed the most important problems: A) generalization of subjects of information dissemination makes it difficult to distinguish between true and false content; B) insufficient stock of scientific professional knowledge of the media limits the depth of news coverage; C) irrational behavior of the audience in scientific communication accelerates the spread of rumors.

For people at a critical moment, such as a major epidemic, it is very important what media and information sources they come into contact with, which greatly affects the subsequent media trust and information processing methods, which in turn affects the public and media to deal with the infodemic success or failure. Journalism must fight misinformation in the digital sphere.

During the epidemic COVID-19, the process of interaction between the government and the public in the dissemination of public information is actually a game process based on information "control" and "anti-control". There is a situation where political power dominates decision-making regarding information, and government decision-making agencies have the right to disclose and manage information. With the development of people's legal consciousness, the public attaches more and more importance to the maintenance and realization of their own rights. When the interests of citizens are linked to the security of personal life, society is especially committed to the realization of civil rights. However, a form of "anti-control" also manifests itself in the confrontational discourse of a virtual community consisting of netizens. In the area of prevention and control of the novel coronavirus pandemic, confrontations in the virtual community discourse are reflected not only in doubts about the level of public health services and the effectiveness of crisis response, but also in criticism and accountability

of the character and behavior of public servants. In general, during the COVID-19 pandemic, questions, doubts and criticism were the main manifestations of confrontational discourse in the virtual community, while the destruction of the main discourse and the destruction of political trust were derived from "confrontation". At the same time, the popularity of online media in the information age not only contributes to the development of information management models tailored to the needs of the state, but also increases the political value of social rights. Therefore, from the point of view of objective dissemination of online information, this study recommends: first, an effort to build information technologies and flexible public administration; second, improving institutional guarantees for the objective expression of state and public information; and third, expanding institutionalized media channels for public participation.

A survey of Chinese and Russian students found that during the period of public health emergencies, the materials offered by the media, including social networks, news and government sources, were very diverse. Special attention is paid to the role of platforms such as WeChat and Telegram in the dissemination of information. The youth audience focused on the dynamics of the epidemic (including information on epidemic data, operational and emergency news), measures for epidemic prevention and vaccines against COVID-19. However, the flow of information online can lead to congestion and infodemic due to fake news, which is worrisome. Chinese and Russian students have the same confidence in the media, with political sources preferred over news and social networks. There is a link between trust in the government and perceptions of infection risk. Online media can increase the perception of risk by spreading rumors and misinformation, despite believing in the government's response.

In the face of an infodemic, online media, mass audiences, and the Government must carefully and timely summarize experiences and lessons learned. Based on the ability of the media to disseminate information about emergencies in the field of public health, taking into account the actual situation, the following proposals can be formulated for managing network infodemics:: a) continuous improvement media literacy of the

population's media literacy; b) monitoring public opinion through information technologies; c) clearing the network environment; d) co-existence of decentralized and centralized communication models; e) continuous improvement of the content system of relevant laws and regulations; f) strengthening national confidence in the authorities.

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Annex

Annex 1
to paragraph 3.2

**Questionnaire "Media use and students' trust in
media and government during the COVID-19 epidemic"**

Hello, dear friends !

I am a post-graduate student at St. Petersburg State University. The purpose of this survey is to understand how students' use of online media affects their trust in government during the COVID-19 epidemic. This form is filled out anonymously and your information is kept strictly confidential. Please fill it out carefully according to your actual situation. Your response will provide important background data for this study. Thank you for your support and participation!

1. Your age group :

17-20 years old

21-30 years old

31-40 years old

41-50 years old

2. Your level of education :

Bachelor

Specialist

Master

Graduate student

Doctor

Other

3. How do you usually learn about information during the epidemic COVID-19?

(multiple choice questions)

Acquaintances

Social network

News media

Political media

Television and radio

Other

4. What are the names of the media outlets that you most often use to get information about the epidemic during COVID-19?

5. Which of the following news items about the epidemic COVID-19 do you pay more attention to?

attention? (multiple choice questions)

Epidemic dynamics (including information about epidemic data, dynamic news)

National or regional anti-epidemic policies

Measures to prevent the epidemic

Live broadcast of the work of medical personnel on the frontline of the epidemic

Вакцины против COVID-19 vaccines

Other

6. Have you experienced information overload during the epidemic COVID-19?

Yes

No

7. What did you do when you saw information about the epidemic COVID-19, in which it is difficult to distinguish truth from lies?

Ignore it.

Forward it for confirmation.

I was skeptical, just looked at the message and closed the page.

I was skeptical and checked on my own(a) verification of authenticity.

8. Have you ever encountered fake news about the epidemic COVID-19 during the

coronavirus pandemic?

Yes

No

9. Which of the following online fakes about the epidemic COVID-19 have you encountered? (multiple choice questions)

Virus mutation

Transmission of infection

Prevention and treatment

Folk remedies

Measures of information prevention and control by managing organizations

Вакцины против COVID-19 vaccines

Fakes related to production and life

Fakes about material security

Fake celebrity Judgment

Conspiracy theories about the epidemic

Other

10. How do you assess the impact of fake news related to the epidemic COVID-19 on the public?

The influence is very strong

The impact is relatively strong

Average impact

The impact is relatively small

No impact whatsoever

11. Please place the following types of media in descending order of your personal trust in them.

Political media

News media

Social network

12. Are you worried about catching the new coronavirus during the pandemic COVID-19?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

13. Are you sure that Russian (Chinese) government agencies can take measures to prevent and control the outbreak of the new coronavirus?

Totally sure

Relatively Confident

Neutral

Relatively unsure

Not sure

Not sure at all