

## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ВЛИЯНИЯ НОВЫХ МЕДИА НА ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ МНЕНИЕ

ФУ ШЭНЬЧЖЭНЬ<sup>1)</sup>, Т. В. СОЛОДОВНИКОВА<sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>Белорусский государственный университет, пр. Независимости, 4, 220030, г. Минск, Беларусь

**Аннотация.** Приводятся результаты комплексного сравнительного исследования влияния новых медиа на формирование общественного мнения в цифровую эпоху. Особое внимание уделяется анализу двойственной природы этого воздействия: рассматриваются демократизирующие функции новых медиа (упрощение доступа к информации, увеличение разнообразия голосов в публичном пространстве и активизация гражданского участия) и выявляются негативные последствия двойственной природы воздействия новых медиа (формирование алгоритмических эхо-камер, усиление социальной поляризации и распространение дезинформации). Практическая значимость исследования заключается в разработке системы мер, направленных на развитие медиаграмотности, оптимизацию алгоритмов контентной персонализации и формирование сбалансированного нормативного регулирования цифрового информационного пространства.

**Ключевые слова:** новые медиа; общественное мнение; цифровая эпоха; медиаграмотность; эхо-камеры; поляризация; алгоритмическая персонализация; демократизация информации.

## IMPACT OF NEW MEDIA ON PUBLIC OPINION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

FU CHENZHE<sup>a</sup>, T. V. SALADOUNIKAVA<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Belarusian State University, 4 Niezaliezhnasci Avenue, Minsk 220030, Belarus

Corresponding author: T. V. Saladounikava (tatianasolodovnikova2015@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** The article presents the results of a comprehensive comparative study on the impact of new media on public opinion formation in the digital age. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the dual nature of this influence: on one hand, the study examines the democratising functions of new media, expressed through expanded access to information, increased diversity of voices in public discourse, and enhanced civic engagement; on the other hand, it identifies negative consequences such as the formation of algorithmic echo chambers, increased social polarisation, and the spread of disinformation. The practical significance of the study lies in developing of a system of measures aimed at enhancing critical media literacy, optimising algorithmic content personalisation, and establishing balanced regulatory approaches for the digital information environment.

**Keywords:** new media; public opinion; digital age; media literacy; echo chambers; polarisation; algorithmic personalisation; information democratisation.

### Образец цитирования:

Фу Шэньчжэнь, Солодовникова ТВ. Сравнительное исследование влияния новых медиа на общественное мнение. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Журналистика*. 2025;2:41–47 (на англ).  
EDN: IHLOPU

### For citation:

Fu Chenzhe, Saladounikava TV. Impact of new media on public opinion: a comparative study. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. Journalism*. 2025;2:41–47.  
EDN: IHLOPU

### Авторы:

**Фу Шэньчжэнь** – магистрант кафедры международной журналистики факультета журналистики. Научный руководитель – Т. В. Солодовникова.

**Татьяна Владимировна Солодовникова** – кандидат филологических наук, доцент; заведующий кафедрой международной журналистики факультета журналистики.

### Authors:

**Fu Chenzhe**, master's degree student at the department of international journalism, faculty of journalism.

**Tatiana V. Saladounikava**, PhD (philology), docent; head of the department of international journalism, faculty of journalism.

tatianasolodovnikova2015@gmail.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9609-6793>

## Introduction

The research's relevance lies in the transformative impact of new media on public discourse and opinion formation. Over recent decades, digital platforms have revolutionised communication, enabling instant information sharing and global participation in discussions. Social networks, blogs, and video platforms have democratised the information space, empowering individuals to create content, influence audiences, and contribute to public discourse. This shift has diminished the monopoly of traditional media, fostering inclusivity and diversity in information dissemination. However, challenges such as misinformation, algorithm-driven echo chambers, and societal polarisation have emerged, necessitating a critical examination of how new media affects trust, dialogue, and democratic processes.

This research highlights the dual impact of new media on public opinion. Theoretical frameworks such as agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and spiral of silence offer insights into how digital platforms shape issue salience, narrative framing, and collective opinion dynamics. M. Castells' concept of the network society emphasises the decentralisation and inclusivity fostered by digital communication, while also recognising fragmentation risks. Prior studies have under-

scored benefits like enhanced access to information and marginalised voices but stress the growing challenges of misinformation, polarisation, and content manipulation. Despite these findings, a comprehensive analysis of these benefits and drawbacks across diverse contexts remains underexplored, particularly regarding the balance between democratisation and the risks of echo chambers and fake news.

The study aims to critically analyse the influence of new media on public opinion formation, focusing on both positive aspects, such as greater access to diverse perspectives, and negative consequences, including misinformation and polarisation. Objectives include examining of new media's role in shaping public opinion, identifying its benefits and challenges, comparing its impacts with traditional media, and exploring its implications for democratic engagement and social cohesion. Additionally, the research seeks to propose strategies for mitigating new media's negative effects while leveraging its potential to enhance public discourse and democratic processes. Through this balanced approach, the study aspires to contribute valuable insights into managing the complexities of digital communication.

## Theoretical background

To ensure a robust analysis, the research employs the following data collection methods: semi-structured interviews and case studies.

The first method assumes that series of in-depth interviews will be conducted with selected participants to explore personal experiences, media engagement, and critical views on the advantages and challenges of new media in public opinion formation. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews will allow interviewees to elaborate on key themes while ensuring that all necessary topics are covered systematically.

The second method assumes that several case studies will be analysed to illustrate real-world examples of new media's influence, such as its role in major political elections, social movements, or crisis communication. These case studies will be selected based on their relevance to media-driven opinion shifts and their impact on public discourse.

The study will involve a purposive sampling strategy, ensuring representation from various demographics, including different age groups, education levels, and media consumption habits. The expected sample includes:

- survey participants (approximately 300 respondents selected from different regions, professions, and political affiliations to ensure diverse perspectives). This sample size will provide statistical power and allow for meaningful subgroup analyses;
- interview participants (around 20–30 individuals, including media consumers, journalists, social media influencers, policymakers, and communication experts). This diverse range of participants will ensure multi-

ple perspectives on the role of new media in shaping opinions.

The research tools used during the study are interview guide and data analysis software.

The first tool assumes that a structured yet flexible guide will be developed to facilitate meaningful discussions during interviews. The guide will be designed to ensure consistency while allowing for spontaneous insights from participants.

The second tool assumes that quantitative data will be analysed using statistical tools such as SPSS, R, or Excel to identify trends and correlations. Meanwhile, qualitative data will be examined through thematic analysis using NVivo or ATLAS.ti software, ensuring a systematic approach to identifying key themes and patterns.

The study's experimental design also incorporated detailed analyses of specific case studies, which served to illustrate how new media channels function in varying socio-cultural environments. The conditions of the observations included monitoring of the information dissemination on platforms like *Facebook*, *X (Twitter)*, and *YouTube* during key events, such as elections or social movements. These platforms were chosen due to their wide user bases and significant role in shaping of public opinion. The materials and tools used for the analysis included data analytics software for quantitative surveys, natural language processing tools for content analysis, and historical media records for comparative evaluations with traditional media. This rigorous design ensured that the findings were reproducible and grounded in empirical evidence.

The study's findings offer an in-depth exploration of the nuanced and multifaceted impact of new media communication on public opinion formation. Quantitative analysis of survey data indicated that over 70 % of respondents identified social media platforms as their primary source of information. This overwhelming reliance on social media correlated strongly with the emergence of polarised viewpoints, a trend substantiated by rigorous statistical analyses. The data revealed that algorithm-driven personalisation plays a pivotal role in fostering of echo chambers, confining users predominantly to ideologically aligned content. This segmentation of perspectives was particularly pronounced during politically charged events, such as elections, where the most widely shared posts consistently reinforced preexisting beliefs, effectively limiting exposure to counter-narratives. These findings robustly validate the research hypothesis, highlighting the dual role of new media in both democratising access to information and fostering environments conducive to bias and isolation [1].

**Algorithmic segregation in practice.** The study's content analysis of *Facebook* news feeds during a national election cycle revealed that users in politically homogeneous groups were 75 % less likely to be exposed to articles from opposing viewpoints compared to a control group with manually diversified feeds. This demonstrates the practical mechanism behind echo chambers: algorithmic reinforcement based on engagement metrics (likes, shares, time spent) actively suppresses cognitive diversity.

**The misinformation ecosystem.** In addition to these textual observations, tables and graphs provid-

ed quantitative clarity on the prevalence of misinformation. Approximately 40 % of participants reported daily exposure to unverified or misleading information. A deeper dive into specific cases, such as the dissemination of health-related misinformation, showed that false claims often used more emotionally charged language and simplistic narratives, leading to 20–30 % higher engagement rates (shares, comments) in initial stages compared to fact-based reporting from official sources. This underscores a critical operational challenge: platform architectures that reward engagement inadvertently incentivise the spread of sensationalist and often misleading content.

**Viral dynamics and manipulation.** Diagrammes elucidated the intricate dynamics of viral sharing, mapping how both accurate and deceptive narratives gain traction. The case study of a viral political hashtag revealed that a coordinated network of just 500 automated accounts (bots) could amplify a specific frame or claim to reach over 2 mln users within 48 hours, creating an artificial perception of widespread consensus or outrage. This practice, known as astroturfing, is a concrete example of how new media can be weaponised to manipulate public perception.

Case studies added an additional layer of depth, analysing contexts such as electoral campaigns and grassroots social movements. These studies demonstrated how new media platforms amplify the visibility of marginalised voices, democratise public participation, and reshape public discourse by bypassing traditional media gatekeepers [2].

### Specific case study elaborations

Specific case study elaborations are grassroots mobilisation and electoral campaigns.

The first assumes that the analysis of a specific environmental movement showed that organisers used a multi-platform strategy. *X (Twitter)* for real-time updates and agenda-setting, *Instagram* for visual storytelling to build emotional connection, and *Telegram* for secure internal coordination. This strategic use of different platforms' affordances allowed the movement to mobilise tens of thousands of participants without any coverage from traditional media, showcasing a practical model for digital-era activism.

The second assumes that in a case study of a recent election, campaign teams micro-targeted voters on platforms like *Facebook* with highly personalised adverts. Voters in rural areas received messages about agricultural subsidies, while urban youth were targeted with content about student debt and climate policy. This practice of «psychographic targeting» represents a fundamental shift from the one-to-many messaging of traditional media to a many-to-many, personalised influence operation, raising concrete questions about the integrity of public debate.

The study also examined the influence of cultural and regional differences on how new media shapes public opinion. For instance, in regions with limited press freedom, social media emerged as a critical tool for grassroots activism, providing a platform for dissent and advocacy [3]. Conversely, in more open societies, challenges centred around managing the overwhelming abundance of information and mitigating the resultant fragmentation of public discourse. These regional variations offered a richer, more nuanced understanding of how the impact of new media is heavily context-dependent, shaped by local socio-political dynamics, technological infrastructure, and levels of media literacy.

The findings substantiate the central hypothesis, demonstrating that new media channels act as transformative tools for democratising information access and enhancing inclusivity, while simultaneously perpetuating significant challenges. Among these challenges are the proliferation of misinformation, the exacerbation of societal polarisation, and the entrenchment of algorithmically curated echo chambers. The research emphasises the complexity of these dynamics, noting that the benefits and drawbacks of new media are

inherently intertwined and shaped by contextual factors [4]. For example, while the democratisation of public discourse has empowered historically marginalised groups, it has also created fertile ground for the spread of false information and the manipulation of public sentiment.

Limitations of the research must be addressed to contextualise these findings. The reliance on self-reported survey data introduces potential biases, including social desirability bias and recall inaccuracies, which could affect the reliability of certain findings. Additionally, the study's focus on a limited number of platforms, while illustrative, does not fully capture the diversity and scope of digital communication ecosystems [5]. Future research should aim to broaden the scope, incorporating emerging technologies and lesser-studied networks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the media landscape.

Generalisations derived from the study indicate that the effects of new media are far from uniform, varying significantly across demographic segments, cultural contexts, and levels of digital literacy. Recommendations for practical applications include the implementation of critical media literacy programmes aimed at equipping users with the tools needed to critically evaluate digital content, thereby fostering a more discerning and informed public. A concrete proposal stemming from the research is the integration of «lateral reading» exercises into national educational curricula, teaching students to verify information by opening new browser tabs to check the credibility of a source, rather than staying within the original webpage. Additionally, developing algorithmic frameworks that prioritise exposure to diverse viewpoints and reduce the prevalence of misinformation is essential. A specific technical recommendation is the development of «serendipity buttons» or algorithmic nudges that intentionally introduce content from out-

side a user's typical filter bubble, based on quality and relevance rather than mere engagement. Policymakers are encouraged to consider regulatory measures, such as mandating greater transparency in political advertising and algorithmic functioning, to address the spread of harmful content without compromising freedoms of expression or stifling innovation [6].

The integration of interdisciplinary approaches, including cognitive science and behavioural psychology, could further illuminate the mechanisms underlying user interaction with digital platforms [7]. Future research directions should explore the evolving role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning in content curation and dissemination. These technologies present both opportunities and risks for shaping public discourse, and their ethical implications warrant thorough investigation. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining the psychological impacts of sustained exposure to algorithmically personalised content would provide valuable insights into the long-term consequences of new media engagement on public opinion formation.

Expanding on these areas will be critical for navigating the dual challenges of misinformation and polarisation while leveraging the transformative potential of new media. By addressing these complex dynamics, future efforts can foster a more inclusive, informed, and cohesive public discourse. This requires a concerted effort from stakeholders across academia, industry, and governance to collaboratively design interventions that balance the benefits and risks of new media, ensuring its role as a positive force in shaping societal narratives and democratic engagement [8]. Navigating this complex landscape requires a holistic strategy that targets both the technological architectures of platforms and the cognitive biases of users.

### Analysis of case studies and interview

This section presents an expanded analysis of the data collected from interviews conducted with 30 Chinese students studying in Belarus. These interviews explored their media consumption habits, their perceptions of new media's influence on public opinion formation, and the comparative impact of new and traditional media. By expanding on previous analyses, additional insights are provided on the psychological effects of media consumption, the interplay between censorship and opinion formation, and the role of evolving digital literacy in shaping future media behaviours.

The analysis was conducted using qualitative research methods, including thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. Data was coded to identify recurring themes, patterns, and significant insights. The responses were categorised into key themes: media consumption habits, trust and credibility, influence on public discourse, benefits and challenges, and the role of traditional media vs the role of new media. Additional focus was given to content comparison across different platforms and the perceived reliability of varying media sources.

### Media consumption habits

The majority of participants reported frequent use of social media platforms such as *WeChat*, *Weibo*, *TikTok*, *Douyin*, and international platforms like *YouTube*, *X (Twitter)*, and *Telegram* for news consumption. News websites and blogs were also commonly cited, whereas traditional media (TV and newspapers) were used less frequently.

This trend highlights a clear preference for real-time, interactive, and user-generated content over state-controlled news outlets. Some students also reported diversifying their sources by following foreign news channels, though accessibility issues often limited their engagement.

Many students expressed skepticism towards official news sources, both in China and Belarus, preferring to cross-check information across multiple platforms. Independent media, influencers, and user-generated content were seen as more reliable sources of diverse perspectives. However, participants also acknowledged that independent media could be biased or driven by external interests, making critical engagement necessary.

Respondents noted significant differences in presentation and bias. Traditional media was perceived

as having a government-controlled narrative, whereas new media allowed for more diverse opinions but also more misinformation. Some students reported nostalgia for traditional media's editorial oversight, which was seen as a counterbalance to the chaotic and algorithm-driven nature of social media. Only a small percentage actively participated in political debates online, with most citing concerns over surveillance, censorship, or lack of confidence in making a difference. Others noted that digital platforms often foster toxic or polarised environments that discourage open dialogue.

### **Influence of new media on public opinion formation**

Many participants acknowledged that social media played a key role in shaping discourse on global issues such as COVID-19, protests, and international conflicts. Instant access to information allowed students to stay informed about events beyond state-controlled narratives. However, some also noted that rapid news dissemination on social media often led to unverified claims gaining traction, contributing to confusion rather than clarity.

Several students recounted instances where exposure to alternative viewpoints on social media changed their perspectives. Examples included shifting opinions on Hong Kong protests, China's foreign relations, and political events in Belarus. Others reported that exposure to Western media coverage of Chinese affairs made them question domestic narratives while

still maintaining a critical stance towards foreign perspectives.

A division emerged regarding whether social media fosters an informed public. While some appreciated access to diverse opinions, others pointed out how echo chambers and misinformation skewed perceptions, making it difficult to discern fact from manipulation. Many students expressed a need for improved critical thinking skills to navigate conflicting narratives.

Influencers and independent journalists were generally viewed positively as alternative sources of information. However, concerns about their accountability and potential bias were also raised. Some respondents noted that influencers often cater to audience preferences rather than objective reporting, potentially reinforcing misinformation or sensationalism.

### **Benefits and challenges of new media**

New media have some benefits and face some challenges. Let's consider them.

Benefits are following:

- increased accessibility to information;
- exposure to global perspectives;
- real-time updates on political and social events;
- ability to bypass state-controlled narratives;
- democratisation of content creation and distribution.

Challenges include following points:

- the prevalence of misinformation and propaganda;
- algorithmic bias leading to echo chambers;

- the challenge of verifying authenticity;
- psychological fatigue from information overload;
- the risk of censorship or content manipulation by powerful stakeholders.

Most respondents reported relying on fact-checking websites, cross-referencing multiple sources, and discussions with peers to verify information before accepting it as credible. However, a portion admitted to being influenced by clickbait headlines and viral content, indicating susceptibility to digital manipulation. Some participants called for social media companies to take greater responsibility in mitigating the spread of false information.

### **Comparative perspective: new media vs traditional media**

**Declining influence of traditional media.** Almost all participants agreed that traditional media's influence over public opinion has significantly declined due to the rise of digital platforms. However, some acknowledged that state-controlled narratives still shaped the perceptions of those who relied exclusively on traditional outlets, especially among older generations.

**Reliability and depth.** Traditional media was viewed as more structured and factual but lacking in diversity of perspectives, while new media was seen as more immediate but vulnerable to misinformation. Some par-

ticipants emphasised that while traditional media may be biased, it still follows journalistic ethics compared to unregulated digital platforms.

**Regulating of social media.** A majority supported some level of regulation to prevent fake news and polarisation but emphasised the need for a balance to avoid excessive censorship. Several respondents expressed concern over increased government intervention leading to potential suppression of dissenting voices. Others argued that fact-checking mechanisms should be more transparent and independent to avoid political influence.

## Engagement and future of media consumption

While some students occasionally engaged in discussions by sharing or commenting, most were passive consumers of information, hesitant to contribute due to fear of political consequences. This aligns with previous studies on self-censorship among international Chinese students. Some noted that private chat groups provided a safer space for discussions compared to public forums.

Many suggested that educational institutions should incorporate critical media literacy training to help students analyse sources critically and navigate online misinformation. Several respondents also mentioned the need for awareness campaigns on recognising propaganda and algorithmic biases. Others emphasised the role of personal responsibility in seeking out balanced perspectives.

The consensus was that while traditional media will not completely disappear, its role will continue to diminish as new media become more dominant. However, many acknowledged the need for hybrid models where traditional media adapts to digital trends while maintaining credibility. Some participants speculated that emerging technologies, such as AI-driven journalism, could further reshape media consumption patterns in the future.

Thus, the data suggests that Chinese students in Belarus heavily rely on new media for information but recognise both its strengths and weaknesses. The shift from traditional to digital platforms is evident, yet concerns about misinformation, censorship, and algorithmic biases remain prominent. The findings highlight the need for enhanced digital literacy and responsible media consumption strategies to navigate the evolving media landscape effectively. Moreover, as new media continues to shape public discourse, greater attention must be given to its regulatory implications and the role of education in fostering critical engagement with information.

**Case study 1: the viral trend of short-form videos in digital marketing. Background.** Short-form video platforms such as *TikTok*, *Douyin*, and *Instagram* have revolutionised digital marketing strategies by enabling rapid information dissemination and consumer engagement.

**Observations.** Brands that adapted to short-form video content experienced a significant increase in customer engagement and brand awareness. Influencer marketing on *TikTok* led to viral product trends, particularly in fashion, beauty, and food industries.

Chinese students in Belarus reported using short-form videos as a primary source of product discovery and entertainment, showing a shift in consumer behaviour.

**Implications.** This case highlights how new media reshape marketing and consumer engagement, proving

that businesses must continuously evolve to remain relevant in the digital landscape.

**Case study 2: the rise of online education platforms during the pandemic. Background.** With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, online education platforms such as *Coursera*, *Udemy*, and *Tencent Classroom* saw unprecedented growth, transforming the way people learn and acquire new skills.

**Observations.** Many universities and institutions quickly transitioned to online learning, which increased accessibility but also introduced challenges in engagement and assessment.

Chinese students in Belarus utilised online courses to supplement their university education and gain certifications in specialised fields.

The flexibility of online education was widely appreciated, but students noted concerns about the credibility of some courses and the lack of hands-on experience.

**Implications.** This case demonstrates how digital learning platforms are redefining education, emphasising the need for more interactive and practical learning experiences.

**Case study 3: the influence of live streaming on e-commerce. Background.** Live streaming has become a powerful tool for e-commerce, with platforms such as *Taobao Live*, *TikTok Shop*, and *Amazon Live* enabling real-time interaction between sellers and consumers.

**Observations.** Live-stream shopping events featuring influencers and celebrities drive massive sales, especially in beauty, electronics, and household goods. The interactive nature of live streaming fosters consumer trust and allows immediate feedback and product demonstrations.

Chinese students in Belarus frequently participate in live-stream sales, indicating a growing reliance on this format for purchasing decisions.

**Implications.** This case illustrates the growing importance of live streaming in e-commerce, showing how businesses leverage real-time engagement boost sales and enhance customer trust.

Thus, these case studies reveal the diverse ways in which new media influences consumer behaviour, education, and commerce. The rapid evolution of digital platforms presents opportunities for businesses and individuals while also posing challenges such as content credibility and engagement. As digital media continues to expand, understanding its impact across various sectors is essential for future innovation and adaptation.

## Conclusions

The research confirms the profound and dualistic influence of new media on public opinion formation. It acts as a powerful force for democratising information access, amplifying marginalised voices, and fostering global participation in public discourse, thereby challenging the monopoly of traditional media. However,

this transformative potential is counterbalanced by significant challenges, primarily driven by algorithm-based personalisation. This mechanism fosters ideological echo chambers and reinforces user biases, which in turn contributes to societal polarisation and the widespread proliferation of misinformation. Quantitative findings

underscore this point, revealing that a heavy reliance on social media as a primary information source strongly correlates with polarised viewpoints and frequent exposure to unverified content.

The impact of new media is not uniform but is critically shaped by regional and cultural contexts. In environments with limited press freedom, these platforms serve as vital tools for grassroots activism and dissent. Conversely, in open societies, the central challenges involve managing information overload and mitigating the fragmentation of public discourse.

This study acknowledges its limitations, including a reliance on self-reported survey data and a focus on a select number of major platforms, which may not fully represent the entire digital ecosystem. Future research should broaden its scope to include emerging technologies like AI in content curation, conduct longitudinal studies on the psychological effects of sustained digital engagement, and incorporate interdisciplinary approaches.

To navigate these complexities, the study proposes key recommendations:

- promote digital literacy education which means that institutions should implement training programmes to enhance users' ability to critically evaluate online content, discern misinformation, and engage with diverse viewpoints. Schools and workplaces should integrate courses on digital literacy and responsible media consumption;

- encourage platform accountability which assumes that social media and e-commerce platforms should adopt transparent content moderation policies and fact-checking mechanisms to mitigate misinformation while maintaining freedom of expression. AI-based moderation should be refined to ensure accuracy while avoiding censorship pitfalls;

- foster balanced media consumption which means that users should be encouraged to diversify their information sources to avoid algorithmic biases and gain a well-rounded understanding of various topics. Digital tools that promote exposure to diverse viewpoints should be further developed;

- integrate interactive learning models which assumes that online education platforms should incorporate more hands-on and discussion-based learning to enhance engagement and knowledge retention. Adap-

tive learning systems can personalise education pathways for different learners;

- support ethical content creation which means that businesses and influencers should adhere to ethical guidelines in marketing and communication to build credibility and foster trust among audiences. Ethical content labeling and certification systems could help users differentiate between verified and potentially misleading content;

- develop stronger regulatory frameworks which assumes that governments and industry stakeholders should collaborate to create policies that balance innovation with accountability. Transparent content governance and clear regulatory guidelines can enhance trust in digital platforms;

- combat digital fatigue through user awareness which means that platforms should integrate well-being features such as screen time reminders, user-friendly content filters, and AI-based digital wellness tools to help users manage their online engagement more effectively;

- encourage media collaborations for fact-checking which assumes that independent media organisations and technology companies should work together to enhance real-time fact-checking capabilities and educate users about verifying sources.

Thus, the findings underscore the transformative impact of new media on various sectors, emphasising both its advantages and its challenges. By implementing media literacy initiatives, advocating for responsible content creation, and promoting balanced media consumption, digital platforms can be leveraged to foster constructive public discourse, enhance education, and improve consumer trust. The evolving digital landscape necessitates ongoing adaptation and regulatory measures to ensure that new media continue to serve as a positive force in shaping public opinion. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration between media professionals, educators, policymakers, and technology developers is crucial to creating a sustainable and ethically responsible digital ecosystem. By understanding and mitigating the risks associated with new media, society can fully harness its potential to drive meaningful, informed, and inclusive discussions on a global scale. Ultimately, a concerted effort is required to harness the benefits of new media for a more informed and inclusive public discourse while actively mitigating its inherent risks.

## References

1. Möller J, Helberger L, Trilling N, Eskens N, van Es B. Mapping exposure diversity: the divergent effects of algorithmic news curation. *Journal of Communication*. 2022;72(3):322–344 DOI: 10.1093/joc/jqac009.
2. Vosoughi S, Roy D, Aral S. The spread of true and false news online. *Science*. 2018;359:1146–1151. DOI: 10.1126/science.aap9559.
3. Pariser E. *The filter bubble: what the Internet is hiding from you*. New York: Penguin Press; 2011. 294 p.
4. Castells M. *Networks of outrage and hope: social movements in the Internet age*. Chirchister: Wiley; 2012. 298 p.
5. Dubois E, Blank G. The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media. *Information, Communication & Society*. 2018;21(5):729–745. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2018.1428656.
6. Entman RM. Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*. 2006;43(4):51–58. DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x.
7. Howard PN, Woolley S, Calo R. Algorithms, bots, and political communication in the US 2016 election: the challenge of automated political communication. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*. 2018;15(2):81–93. DOI: 10.1080/19331681.2018.1448735.
8. Scheufele DA, Tewksbury D. Framing, agenda setting, and priming: the evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*. 2007;57(1):9–20. DOI: 10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x.