Why does the Media Disregard Internal Fact-Checking? The Fact-Checking Logic Determination in the Case of Ukrainian Media

Artem Zakharchenko

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
https://ror.org/02aaqv166

Anna Nagorna

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
https://ror.org/02aaqv166

Oleksandr Chekmyshev

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
https://ror.org/02aaqv166

Abstract. In this article, fact-checking logic is introduced as part of general media logic. This system is responsible for news editors' decisions on whether to believe a fact or check it before publishing the news. Through the qualitative research applying semi-structured interviews with seven news editors of the leading Ukrainian online media, we have revealed that their fact-checking logic is built on the efforts for reconciliation between accuracy and other factors like speed, social media algorithms, audience metrics, virality, and the management style of editors-in-chief. We have discovered that publishing news without 100% confidence is common. The participants justified the absence of fact-checking with the publishing pressure, bad mood, the author's or boss's assurance, and many other excuses. They confess that news publications often appear to be inaccurate or even fake. We discuss incentives, drivers, and decision-making processes for fact-checking in the Ukrainian media and observe that mostly the inaccurate information published by the Ukrainian media can be attributed to cases when news editors were not completely confident in their decision to publish some fact, but not to the situations when they wrongly have 100% confidence. We suggest a way to solve this problem through the public declaration of fact-checking media logic principles.

Keywords: media logic, fact-checking logic, fact-checking, media management, media quality.

Kodėl žiniasklaida ignoruoja vidinį faktų tikrinimą?
Faktų tikrinimo logikos nustatymas Ukrainoje

Santrauka. Šiame straipsnyje faktų tikrinimo logika pristatoma kaip bendrosios žiniasklaidos logikos dalis. Ši sistema lemia, ar naujienų redaktoriai nusprendžia tikėti tam tikru faktu ar jį patikrinti prieš publikuodami naujieną. Taikydami kokybinį tyrimą ir pusiau struktūruotus interviu su septyniais pagrindinių Ukrainos interneto žiniasklaidos priemonių naujienų redaktoriais, atskleidėme, kad jų faktų tikrinimo logika grindžiama

pastangomis suderinti tikslumą su kitais veiksniais, tokiais kaip naujienų greitis, socialinių tinklų algoritmai, auditorijos rodikliai, virusinis plitimas ir vyriausiųjų redaktorių valdymo stilius. Nustatėme, kad naujienų publikavimas neturint 100 proc. įsitikinimo yra įprastas dalykas. Dalyviai pateisino faktų netikrinimą publikavimo spaudimu, bloga nuotaika, autoriaus ar vadovo įsitikinimu bei daugybe kitų pasiteisinimų. Jie pripažįsta, kad naujienų publikacijos dažnai būna netikslios ar net klaidinančios. Straipsnyje analizuojame paskatas, veiksnius ir sprendimų priėmimo procesus, susijusius su faktų tikrinimu Ukrainos žiniasklaidoje, ir pastebime, kad dažniausiai netiksli informacija atsiranda tais atvejais, kai naujienų redaktoriai nebuvo visiškai įsitikinę dėl fakto publikavimo, o ne tuomet, kai jie klaidingai manė, kad yra 100 proc. įsitikinę. Siūlome šią problemą spręsti viešai deklaruojant žiniasklaidos taikomus faktų tikrinimo logikos principus.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: žiniasklaidos logika; faktų tikrinimo logika; faktų tikrinimas; žiniasklaidos valdymas; žiniasklaidos kokybė.

1. Introduction

Internal fact-checking is an integral part of journalists' work. Provided by the media itself, it complements external fact-checking conducted by media watchdogs and civil society. Together, these two types of fact-checking shall ensure the objectivity of the content in the media system. News editors and reporters, analysts, and investigative journalists need it to decide on the content of their media products. This skill is transmitted in two complementary ways. In its hardline version, it is usually taught in media schools. But then, in practice, media workers are faced with another, less radical approach.

This skill is usually transferred from experienced workers to newcomers in the editorial offices. It may include, among other things, some compromises and excuses for negligent attitude to this part of work under different circumstances. It may consist of the methods of the information check and the range of situations. For example, this covers situations in which news editors do not need to check the information and whether one source is enough or vice versa, when they need a second and a third source of information.

We are working from the premise that internal fact-checking (Graves and Amazeen, 2019) is a mandatory procedure for journalists, i.e., it is assumed as a stage in the journalistic routine. So, journalists have to do internal fact-checking every time they publish a news piece. Based on their decision-making patterns, they select the method of fact-checking, or even sometimes skip this stage. We called these patterns 'fact-checking logic' as a part of general media logic introduced by (Altheide and Snow, 1988). In this article, we revealed the fact-checking logic of leading Ukrainian media during the period before the full-scale invasion of Russia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Media logic, news value, and internal fact-checking

Media logic is a concept intended to describe relations between the media and the information that they hold. The definition to which the authors adhere is: "a form of communication and the process through which media transmit and communicate information" (Altheide and Snow, 1988). Partially, this form defines a set of criteria that journalists usually use to decide whether some particular information should be covered in the news

outlet or not. This set includes news value criteria, for example, emphasized by (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001): reference to the political elite, celebrities, entertainment, unexpectedness, bad news, good news, magnitude, relevance, connection to the events that are already covered, and the agenda of the specific media. Also, it involves considerations about the nature of the medium through which this information disseminates. In the modern digital media system, these are social media algorithms (Peterson-Salahuddin and Diakopoulos, 2020), virality (Khuntia et al., 2016), and the growing role of audience metrics (Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc, 2018). The management style of the executive editors has found the media logic issue to be crucial for the micro-level decision-making in the editorial office, including media logic and thoroughness of the plagiarism checking (Sylvie, 2003). It has also proven to be influential in shaping the editors' decisions about resource allocation between the journalists and the covered topics (Himma-Kadakas and Palmiste, 2019).

This concept led to mediatization, which describes the proliferation of media logic outside of newsrooms (Hjarvard, 2008). Now extreme forms of mediatization used by politicians distort the very notion of media logic, Altheide provides Donald Trump as an example (Altheide, 2020). In turn, journalism has also changed into the so-called post journalism, where visual, dramatic actions and entertainment formats are preferable (Altheide and Snow, 2019). "The post journalism turn fundamentally challenged the autonomy and relevance of professional journalism's training, ethics, and truth claims", writes Altheide, bearing in mind the situation when leading US news channels failed to do proper fact checking to identify potential lies before the U.S. operation in Iraq (Altheide, 2004, 295).

Internal fact-checking (Graves and Amazeen, 2019) is not usually precepted as a process driven by the media logic. Researchers indicate that there are no standardized practices for journalists on how to provide fact-checking, and different prescriptions vary significantly from one textbook to another (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, 97).

Therefore, some sectoral studies found connections between fact-checking and media logic. Specifically, messages about the prestige of the journalist position were recognized as a better incentive for fact-checking than the audience's demand. "Political fact-checking is driven primarily by professional motifs within journalism" (Graves et al., 2016).

Many studies found that thorough fact-checking is rather an exception for routine work of news editors (Shapiro et al., 2013, 659). Shapiro showed differences in the approaches used by journalists in determining different types of facts in the news pieces (names, geographical information, quotes, background facts): "With varying degrees of self-awareness, participants described a divergence between stated ideals and actual practice" (Shapiro et al., 2013, 664).

This issue became especially problematic in the online environment. A notable emphasis there is juxtaposing two media logic principles: speed versus accuracy (Lee, 2015). "The speed of the digital news age <…> hinders journalists' ability to maintain ethical standards" (Joseph, 2011, 709). The fact-checking and other decisions of journalists who cover tragedies are compared to the decision-making of first-responders: police officers and doctors (Rupar, 2020). Ethnography studies of the newsrooms show how this juxtaposition is solved within institutionalized daily routines by communication among editorial staff (Ekström et al., 2021).

This absence of thorough fact-checking can be followed by high praise for the journalists' skills: journalists are usually sure that they can separate fact-checking from political activism and provide it impartially (Mena, 2019). In other words, journalists are often confident that they are doing their job well.

2.2. Confidence in information

Confidence is a valuable parameter in misinformation studies as a factor that shapes the impact of incorrect content on people. It is focused mainly on the final recipients of information rather than journalists. Their readiness for fact-checking was checked: "If participants can use confidence judgments and testify/withhold judgments to discriminate between real and suggested memories" (Horry et al., 2014), otherwise this is not performed. Other factors influence the level of confidence as well. Namely, scholars hypothesize that people interpret the familiarity of repeated claims as a marker of accuracy (Foster et al., 2012). The same goes with source attractiveness, which usually makes their information more convincing (DeBono and Harnish, 1988; Guyer et al., 2019). The simultaneous impact of several factors on the recipient's confidence in received information, like source likability, source expertise, argument quality, and honesty, was also explored (Ziegler et al., 2002).

There are typical confidence patterns for different online activities. For example, online searchers have less confidence in their knowledge than in online information (Ferguson et al., 2015). On the other hand, confidence does not correspond with the actual integrity of reports (Tomes and Katz, 2000).

If similar effects can be observed in newsrooms, this can explain the deplorable situation with fact-checking practices. Therefore, it is important to study journalists' confidence. This study will be fruitful within the concept of media logic because it will allow us to look not just at the confidence 'as is' but at the whole system of journalists' relations with information and its sources. Unlike most ethnographic newsroom studies, which are usually focused on behavior practices in the newsrooms and collaboration between journalists, the media logic approach allows focusing on the relations between media workers and information in the working environment.

2.3. Ukrainian media landscape before the full-scale invasion of Russia

Our hypotheses about the fact-checking logic are checked on the material of the Ukrainian information system before the full-scale invasion of Russia. This system is typical for hybrid political regimes. For example, it includes the informal influence of politicians on media, rent-seeking, patronage, clientelism (Ryabinska, 2017), self-censorship (Fedirko, 2020), etc. This media system is a typical representative of the *Polarized Pluralist model* based on the classification by Hallin and Mancini (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). It does not include the influential party press, which is common in the *Democratic Corporatist model*.

After the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014), the Ukrainian media system started some transformations toward aligning with the democratic model, but, on the other hand, researchers point out (Orlova, 2016: 457) the complex challenges that Ukrainian Journalism faced during that period: the control of oligarchs over the significant me-

dia, which was making the journalists an instrument for the oligarchs' political goals; substantial decline in the advertising market caused by the economic crisis; unfinished public broadcasting reform; the issues of personal journalists' safety and security in the course of the Ukrainian-Russian war. There is also the problem of the low ethical level of multiple Ukrainian media workers, the widespread hidden advertising, the use of media for special information operations (Zakharchenko et al., 2021), and the gender equality issue in communications (Zakharchenko et al., 2020).

In addition to the internal rivalry, the Ukrainian media faced another competitor. The Russian media content, saturated with propaganda, had already been influencing Ukrainian readers and viewers even before the full-scale invasion despite the legal restrictions being imposed (Peisakhin and Rozenas, 2018). It has been noted that the consumption of the content of the Russian media is the best predictor of support for the Russian narrative (Szostek, 2017).

Such realities made it too hard for the media to maintain the required professional level (Zakharchenko et al., 2021).

The picture would be incomplete without a short description of the Ukrainian political life in that period. In the presidential elections of 2019, the former comedian Volodymyr Zelensky won the presidency with 73% support and a non-agenda ownership strategy (Zakharchenko et al., 2019). His primary opponents were on that time the incumbent Petro Poroshenko, who utilized the patriotic agenda, Yulia Tymoshenko with her social agenda, and *The Opposition Platform for Life Party* with its pro-Russian agenda.

Fact-checking under such circumstances created the ground for some unique self-organized communities that evolved in 2013–2014, which succeeded in the meme war against Russian trolls (Makhortykh and Sydorova, 2017), and which was countering Russian fakes (Sienkiewicz, 2016). This movement primarily involved fact-checking organizations like *StopFake* or *Behind the News*. These organizations became well-known, and they are playing a prominent role in maintaining the quality of the Ukrainian media.

2.4. Professional and ethical standards in Ukrainian media

The 'quality' of journalism, that is, the compliance with media codes of ethics requires accountability and transparency (SPJ, 2014), particularly fact-checking, which guides the social sustainability of media.

There is no doubt that factual precision is not the only issue of media quality, and the right to qualitative media information is not limited to verified facts. A sustainable media environment should also protect against other propaganda techniques including framing bias (Morstatter et al., 2018), strategic narratives (Szostek, 2017), agenda-setting manipulations (Zakharchenko et al., 2021), and many others. However, there is no sense in speaking about protection against this type of manipulation in widespread fake news consumption.

The professional and ethical standards of Ukrainian journalists adopted by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine on December 12, 2013, regulate the conflict between promptness and accuracy on the one hand and the verification of information as such on

the other hand. In particular, the first standard to be adhered "Efficiency of information submission" states that news should be published as quickly as possible, if possible, earlier than in other media (Chekmyshev, 2018, 25). Another standard, that of "Accuracy of Information", states that inaccurate information is misinformation. Any statements must be quoted or retold without distorting the original content. Any message by each and every journalist has to be accurate. The standard requires every possible effort to verify each fact.

When there is a lack of time, or it is impossible to find additional sources of verification, and the editors rely entirely on the belief that the journalist has understood the fact completely. When there is a contradiction between the journalist's claim and other sources, editors have to try to find out the truth. If this is not possible, they rely on the journalist. Therefore, the journalist is primarily responsible for the accuracy of the information. Yet, the accuracy issue is a matter of honor for the entire editorial office and each of its employees. Therefore, everyone can be an additional 'accuracy controller' and take the initiative to verify any information the editorial board intends to publish.

The Ukrainian media has to make every effort to receive the information independently from the source. Press officers, secretaries, spokespersons, and press attachés authorized to make statements on behalf of certain institutions or agencies are responsible for their accuracy. Journalists may publish such information with obligatory reference to the sources. Journalists may check such information on their own initiative.

When reporting on an event which journalists have not seen themselves, or where facts are known only from other people's accounts, journalists have to verify the factuality with at least two different sources of information. If only preliminary information is available, but it is of an extreme social significance, it is necessary to inform the audience about this situation. But, in any case, when the editorial office has doubts about the accuracy of the information, and, for some reason, it is impossible to verify it, it cannot be made public, no matter how interesting it may seem (Chekmyshev, 2018, 25–27).

The standard of the "Reliability of the submitted information" stipulates that the sources of information should be referred to clearly and unambiguously. This standard also regulates the use of anonymous sources of information. Under Ukrainian law, journalists and editorial offices have the right not to disclose their sources of information. Information regarding an unknown source can be given when the following circumstances coincide: the piece of information is socially significant, the source is unquestionably competent, the editorial board is confident in the good faith of the source, and the source, for valid reasons, does not want their name to be published. The journalist must report this source to the editor. It is forbidden to use references such as 'sources report' (without specifying the nature of the sources), 'as it became known', references 'experts believe', or 'observers note' (Chekmyshev, 2018, 31).

However, the above-mentioned standards are not necessarily always fulfilled, as evidenced by the numerous Ukrainian public monitoring missions. For example, the Equal Opportunities Committee, the Common Space Association, the Ukrainian Press Academy, the Institute of Mass Media, and other institutions which systematically monitor compliance with professional and ethical media standards have frequently identified various violations and attempts to manipulate the public opinion (Chekmyshev, 2018, 180–189).

3. Data and Methods

As we see, previous researchers focused on the specific methods used by journalists in fact-checking or on their theoretical understanding of truth. The incentives and decision-making process for fact-checking in news websites have not been studied and communicated in detail. We shall define these approaches as a fact-checking logic: the part of the media logic responsible for deciding whether to believe some fact and whether to publish this information.

This logic consists of two steps. As the first step, the news editor assesses to what extent s/he is confident in a fact s/he has going to report, and, as the second step, the news editor decides whether to publish the fact with this level of confidence or not.

Articulation of the fact-checking logic principles allows for elaborating on some universal approaches that other news editors may apply. As a result, the overall quality of media information should grow.

Thus, our research questions can be framed:

RQ1. What are the principles of the fact-checking logic of Ukrainian media editors?

As we noted in the literature review, on the one hand, Ukrainian journalists claim that they fulfill standards of journalism, including accuracy. That means, *inter alia*, confidence in the accuracy of published news. On the other hand, we brought evidence of the significant spread of misinformation in the Ukrainian media landscape. That can be attributed to poor fact-checking practices that result in accuracy mistakes despite the 100% confidence of journalists, or to the practice of publishing news without 100% confidence.

RQ2. Is it common for Ukrainian news editors to publish news without 100% confidence, and, if so, what are the drivers for flouting the accuracy of their news?

To answer these questions, we conducted semi-structured interviews with news editors of seven leading Ukrainian news websites from October 2019 to February 2020. Interviews serve much better for the investigation of questions than surveys because open questions and fluent conversations allow one to find hidden reasons for some decisions and determine the conclusion reached for each separate news piece during the work shift.

The websites were selected based on the TOP-30 rating of the Ukrainian media efficiency compiled by the *Center for the Content Analysis* (Center for the Content Analysis, 2019), excluding news aggregators and pro-Russian media, namely strana.ua, vesti.ua, 112.ua, znaj.ua, and others – these nine positions in total (Institute of Mass Information, 2019). If employees of some media refused to give an interview, we moved to the next one and, at last, we ran seven interviews and received 14 refusals. It was not our aim to capture all media. Instead, we intended to gather insights from the different types of editorial offices. Thus, the sample obtained in this way consists of media with varying ownership structures and a focus on diverse audiences, and therefore it displays the variety of the mainstream media landscape of Ukraine.

These media were: 1. *Ukrainska Pravda* – one of the oldest contributors to the Ukrainian online media, at the time of study owned by its management, considered high-quality media with a slight tendency to sensationalism in headings; 2. *UNIAN* – an information agency

from the media holding of the oligarch, Ihor Kolomoyskyi, usually considered biased when reporting topics related to the business of this oligarch; 3. *RBC-Ukraine* – an independent information agency, a former part of the Russian *RBC* holding, which, after the beginning of the war in 2014, severed ties with the mother company and now has no defined bias; 4. *Obozrevatel* – the most visited 'yellow' media that is prone to strong sensationalism, namely, by usually exaggerating the news; 5. *Liga* – an independent media outlet, one of the leaders of media quality ratings, with its widespread use among the business audience; 6. *Depo* – a socio-political project of the *Kartel* holding, formerly focused on the business media, but now considered a media outlet without a defined bias; 7. *Radio Svoboda Ukraine* – the Ukrainian office of *Radio Liberty*, United States Government-funded media network which is also one of the leaders in the media quality ratings. Description of their peculiarities was provided based on evaluations of Ukrainian media experts (Center for the Content Analysis, 2018; Institute of Mass Information, 2021; Rybak, 2018).

We had no goal of choosing precisely the most experienced media workers. Conversely, we tried to get a broad range of respondents. Also, our respondents were not considered as representatives of their media, but rather as representatives of different traditions of news editing, transferred from more experienced journalists to newcomers. The average duration of one interview was 30 to 40 minutes. Our respondents gave the interviews right after the end of their shifts on the news feed. We involved only one interviewer to maintain the unity of the approach; the interviews were conducted by one of the authors of this paper.

In the first stage, they had to mark from 1 to 10 their confidence level in each publication they had published.

In the second stage, they had to answer several standardized questions about their education, journalistic experience, the most trusted information sources, ways of verifying the information, and priorities in their work (speed, accuracy, or self-confidence).

In the third stage, we had a more informal conversation. The respondents were asked to explain why they were confident in specific publications they had published, under what circumstances they did not check the information when this checking was deemed to be mandatory, how they usually check the facts, and how they harmonize their professional standards with their political position.

The interview scenario was to collect as many different options of replies and examples as possible. We did not ask our respondents to remember failures or situations when they were confident in the information but also offered them different examples and cases to help them remember more options.

Subsequently, this structure of the interview determined the coding framework. It was based on the central questions of the interview. The formal part was coded quantitatively. As the conversations were fluent, our interlocutors often mentioned the same topics in different parts of the recording regarding the informal part. Consequently, we adopted the concept-driving coding (Gibbs, 2007, 44) of thematic analysis, and the coder found the following reasoning:

- The drivers of confidence and uncertainty in the news.
- The circumstances under which different fact-checking methods were adopted or fact-checking was disregarded.

- The reasons to excuse the absence of rigorous fact-checking.
- The stories about mistakes and their consequences.

Coding was conducted by the interviewer immediately after conducting the interview.

The interviewer found the quotes that expressed the categories listed above and made lists of quotes for each category. Then, other authors of this article by collaborative efforts provided a generalization and analysis of the received data.

We also used triangulation to ascertain the validity of our data (Gibbs, 2007, 94). Specifically, we checked the consistency between the respondents' answers to standardized questions and their answers in informal conversations. Each case of inconsistency was clarified with the respondent by the interviewer.

4. Results

The coding and analysis of the interviews revealed an overall scheme of the fact-checking process in news media. First, editors evaluate their confidence in the integrity of facts received from different sources. Then, they decide whether to check these facts more or less carefully. Alternative ways include publishing without fact-checking or refusing to publish the topic's news. At last, after the publication, editors may find out that they have published fake news, and thus they correct it or write a refutation and draw conclusions about the confidence in the following news from these sources.

4.1. General information about news editors

Our respondents were fairly different in their seniority and workflows. Namely, it can be seen in Table 1 that our respondents predominantly had relevant education in journalism (5 out of 7 editors), which means they had not only Bachelor's but also Master's degrees in journalism due to the peculiarities of the Ukrainian journalism education system, but their experience in media was very different and varied from 1 to 15 years. The same goes for the number of news publications they published during their shifts. They ranged from 8 (when the editors themselves mainly wrote news publications) to 19 (when they were primarily written by other journalists). We believe that this difference makes our study more diversified and allows us to hear from different practitioners.

Table 1. **Information about respondents**

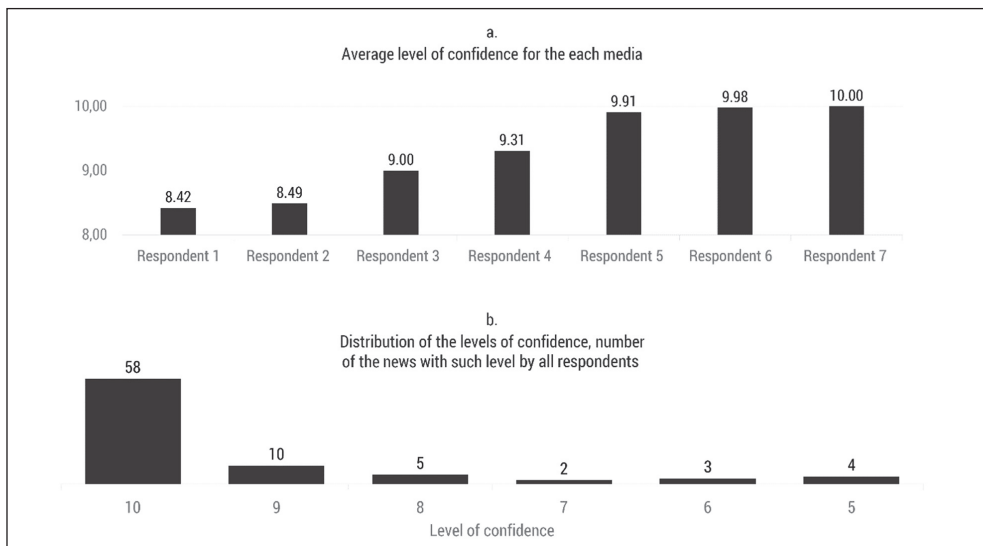|	Media 1	Media 2	Media 3	Media 4	Media 5	Media 6	Media 7
Media education		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Experience in media, years	15	7	5	1	11	15	10
Number of news publications the respondents published during their studied shifts	18	19	8	8	8	11	9

Figure 1. **Confidence in the news**

4.2. Confidence in the news and its sources

It is typical for most media, except for one outlet of the seven explored, to publish information without 100% confidence. On the other hand, most of the news items in each media are published with this 100% level, and thus, editors of each media are confident in most of their news items.

Quantitative information for the qualitative approach can be only the secondary tool, but it illustrates these results well. Specifically, the average confidence reported by respondents varies from 8.42 to 10.00 (see Fig. 1, a). Fifty-eight publications, or 70.7% of all items published by the respondents, had a mark of 10. Nevertheless, they allowed four publications even with mark 5 (Fig. 1, b). In other words, the respondents were not confident in their news for 100% in more than 29% of the cases explored, and were highly non-confident in 9% of the cases (confidence less than 7).

Sources of confidence vary considerably between different media outlets. The most popular sources are shown in Table 2. The same applies to uncertainty sources.

Four categories were found to be sources of confidence for 6 of 7 respondents: officials and their press offices, verified social media accounts, leading foreign media, and events seen first-hand by reporters or editors. Nevertheless, even these four mindsets differ in their details.

For example, it is widely accepted that news items reported by other media are not necessarily true. The typical attitude is, "Often some media are reporting some news just for attracting attention", or, "There are some dump media outlets that publish news for money or on the request of the owner". Yet, most of the respondents indicate that they trust some reliable media "who were never caught in a lie". Usually, well-known international media, information agencies, or Ukrainian media with Western funding are mentioned in this list.

Table 2. **Sources of confidence**

The most popular sources of confidence	
Prevalent (6 mentions)	Officials and their press offices; Verified Facebook, Twitter, Telegram accounts of officials; Leading foreign media; Messages of own reporters about events they witnessed
Minor (2–3 mentions)	Ukrainian media with good reputation Reliable experts

On the other hand, there are a lot of differences in details. One of the most experienced respondents clarified, "We have more confidence in Ukrainian media because we know their owners well and what interests they have. Regarding the foreign media, we often do not have such information". Another, editor, who also is an experienced one, confirms that he relies on intuition in this issue, "I always see intuitively when other media manipulate because I work with it for years".

The same applies to official sources like governors, ministries, or press offices. Overall, they are also considered reliable, but with differences in details.

"I was taught to trust official sources", said one of the news editors who had no education in journalism. "We deem to be truthful the news reported by the President, the Prime Minister and other officials who make this news", adds another respondent. Most of the editors noted that officially confirmed social media authorities' accounts are considered reliable. Only one editor denoted by high experience noted that he has doubts about some official statements. "Sometimes officials say something, and you feel that this is a benefit for them or maybe inconsistent with reality", he raises a doubt, "it's a different matter if they report something like a fire in a school, where they have no reason to lie".

But still, editors do not trust some particular government bodies for various reasons. For example, one respondent with an average experience level pointed out that he does not trust the National Police. "They can write that activists during the rally attacked the police, and then we see on the video that situation was the opposite". On the other hand, he noted that his editorial office always believes the messages of the Ministry of Defense about the war in the East of Ukraine.

Regarding other non-government speakers, editors have far more doubts. Only two out of seven respondents mentioned reliable experts as a source of confidence.

The attitude to different journalists also varies in various media outlets. Only one inexperienced editor noted that his confidence in the texts written by various journalists of his media does not depend on the personality of these journalists. He is equally critical of everyone when publishing their news. Others confessed that they are more confident in the texts of more experienced journalists. One respondent also noted that he believes less in the reports of photo correspondents when they are the only eyewitnesses of some events because they have no such skills as ordinary reporters.

4.3. Decision about checking information

Generally, confidence is connected to checking. When the editor is not confident in some fact, s/he usually checks it. "If we feel that the confidence is under 90%, we endeavour to check the facts", said the editor whose confidence in published news was high. Namely, this concerns official sources and reliable media. "Our media has the list of sources we trust and don't check before citing them", said the respondent. The same applied to situations where the editor sees something with his/her own eyes, as somebody's speech on a TV broadcast or his/her experienced journalist saw it. So, even highly skilled editors do not check the content of the speech and check instead the very fact of the speech. That is inconsistent with our operational definition of fact-checking, which is to review all facts in a piece, and not only selected aspects.

Table 3. **Excuses used by news editors to justify their neglect of fact-checking**

The most popular sources of confidence
Rush
Bad mood or feeling ill
Two or more media indicated that they confirmed some information from their own sources
Using a heading formula 'Something happened – media'
Insider information from anonymous Telegram channels that will be published quickly by all competitors
Inability to check the information for the nearest hours or days (i.e., on Saturday)
Using a heading formula 'Something happened – social media users'
Information from a source which already gave truthful information
The journalist vouches for his/her source
If boss says this is true
Using a heading formula 'Something happened – source'
The information is from insiders from the occupied regions of Ukraine

Editors have a lot of excuses for neglecting fact-checking in different situations when they accept that they are not confident for 100% and have to check the facts but they still do not do it. These excuses are listed in Table 3. Let us look at them in more detail.

Some editors were definitive about less reliable media sources, saying, "If the news appeared on the media with no public confidence, but this news is denoted by social significance, we have to check it carefully and not chase the primacy". Therefore, there are some loopholes for editors. "If one media published some news referring to own sources, but other media wrote that they found confirmation of it in other sources, that's enough for publishing this news on our website", said one experienced editor. The other two editors, one with more experience and another with less, said that they might use the heading based on the formula "Something happened – media", which means that they are not responsible for the integrity of this message.

None of the news editors are confident in the information from bloggers and anonymous *Telegram* channels. Therefore, four of them indicated that they sometimes publish such information. "For example, some channels report news from the Government's ses-

sions. And we have to publish them because these sessions are non-public and we can't prove this fact, only in three hours. Meanwhile, our competitors will report it faster with reference to this channel, and nobody will read our publication", were the thoughts of a respondent with relevant media education. He added, "This is always an internal struggle. There are no precise algorithms. When it is big news, you are reporting minimal text and then trying to check the information". Speed is the main reason for this choice. "When it was Saturday, and press offices didn't work, we did not want to wait till Monday to check this information, so we published it referring to the blogger", confesses another respondent without the relevant education. The third one said that "A Facebook blogger is not a good source, but still we publish their statements with the remark 'as social media users noted'. That is true because we saw this post".

Another field of compromise is news based on the own sources of journalists. "If the information is precious and this source already gave us truthful information, we will have an editorial council and decide whether to publish it. But, in 70% of cases, the answer will be 'no' if we can't prove it in other sources", said an editor with a high confidence level in its news publications. Another media has a different approach, "We often publish exclusive news referring to the sources of our special correspondents. But they need to have an audio record to prove it. Otherwise, it is terrible". The third respondent makes decisions based on personal feelings, "We can't publish the news referring only to the one source, but if the journalist vouches for this source..." The fourth editor with the relevant education relies on his boss, "Everything depends on the editor-in-chief's decision. If he says 'yes', we will publish it". The fifth says, "If there is no confirmation, they use the formula 'Something happened – source'." The sixth editor gave an example, "When we report news from the territories occupied by Russia, we can't verify the information provided by our insiders with the official sources because we don't trust the reports of the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic' or 'Lugansk People's Republic'."

The most popular excuse for avoiding fact-checking is rush. "When we have a backlog, editors may miss something, but I can't remember situations like this", said one of the respondents. Another respondent was less scrupulous, "We cannot allow our competitors to be first because we are number 1, and all have to read from us". The third confirmed, „When we have a lot of challenges, we may neglect fact-checking maybe in 20 cases out of a hundred".

Another excuse is a bad mood or feeling ill, "It can impact the fact-checking quality in 5% cases". Another editor said that, under these circumstances, he rather avoids working with complicated topics and postpones them or refers them to colleagues instead of getting involved in poor fact-checking. An unfamiliar topic *per se* is not an excuse, and editors assure that they usually try to figure it out. "Given my five-year experience, I am dealing with all topics", said one editor. "When we create backgrounds to the news, we always go deep into the topic and so we are always aware of it", added another one.

Table 4 presents the circumstances under which news editors do not check the information and the situations when facts are necessarily thoroughly checked.

The pattern of the decision-making is usually based on the editor's own experience (6 answers), the advice of managers in the actual place of work (3 answers), and the advice

of managers in a previous place of work (3 answers). None of the respondents mentioned public advice from well-known colleagues from other media or teachers in university.

Table 4. **Incentives to fact-checking and to neglecting fact-checking**

Specific situations for fact-checking		
The circum-stances under which news editors don't check the information	Prevalent (5–7 mentions)	"From the first hand" (seen on telecast, presence at the event) Information of press-offices Own sources
	Minor (1–3 mentions)	Confidence in the journalist who wrote this text Professional intuition Rush When the event is expected, or the quote is logical for this speaker Accessibility of the source document
The situation when facts are necessari-ly thoroughly checked	Prevalent (5–7 mentions)	Unknown sources Biased media Foreign media with unknown professional level
	Minor (1–3 mentions)	Personal uncertainty Inconsistency, confusions in the text Anonymous own sources of journalists Other media without a reference to the source Suspicious photo or video Messages of law enforcement agencies Messages of local media

4.4. Inferences from committed inaccuracies and mistakes

We have also checked whether the news published by our respondents on the interview days was claimed later by Ukrainian fact-checking organizations to be fake, and we have found no such occurrences. But still, in their interviews, news editors mention a lot of stories of the wrongful choices when the news items published by their media were proven to be fake. Only a few of these stories ended with proper conclusions getting made of the issue.

These are the typical narratives of such failures:

- We published the news yesterday about the detention of some official, referring to Radio Liberty, although we were not confident for 100%. Today, we published refinement because while there was actually detention, another official was detained.
- We write refinements or delete published news almost every day because most editors do not take their work to heart.
- Sometimes our news with headings like 'Something happened – media' or 'Something happened – source' really ended up to be fake.
- We are most criticized for publishing somebody's opinion as a fact.
- You may impact the mood of the news by choosing different quotations. It was, maybe, one or two times when I deliberately made the news compromising on a speaker, but I genuinely do not like this guy.
- There were situations when I published the news realizing that it was not completely ok, so after that, it detracted me from my life.

- When somebody edited the video with our member of the Parliament, looped one of his moves, and said that this guy masturbates, we realized that it was not true, but we published it with the header 'Facebook users noted…' I think this is the entertainment function of journalism.

In summary, many of these confessions contain excuses or at least do not contain intentions to correct the situation, nor to repeat mistakes. A few editors learn from others' mistakes. "We now don't use unconfirmed sources since the last month when many media have got scrammed", said one of the respondents.

5. Discussion

As we can see, the media logic approach to the analysis of media workers' confidence in the news is very fruitful: it allowed us to focus on the news editors' understanding of their mission regarding the doubtful news, the logic of the choice whether to publish a news item or not, and the sources of confidence in news.

The given results show the fact-checking logic of Ukrainian news editors of seven powerful Ukrainian media outlets, which is an answer to RQ1. This logic is based on the contradiction between the ethical standards (first of all, accuracy) and other factors such as speed, social media algorithms, audience metrics, virality, and the management style of editors-in-chief. The value of accuracy in this contradiction is not constant, and thus newsrooms have a different level of sensitivity to inaccuracies.

More specifically, the editor usually uses different arguments to decide whether to provide additional fact-checking in some particular situation or not.

Editors often rely on the 'boss' in their decisions. They do it directly in doubtful situations about unsubstantiated reports, or indirectly when they have to justify their choices by the editorial policy. This policy requires them to get ahead of the competitors, even if it means weak fact-checking, to publish deliberately false but scandalous statements, as in the example with the member of parliament, to believe all official sources, or to doubt some of them like the police, to publish information from the list of reliable media without checking and so on.

This subjective approach to the fact-checking logic often leads to controversial practices. For example, they consider headings like 'Something happened – media', 'Something happened – source', or 'Something happened – social media users' as a sufficient warning for readers that this information had not been checked by journalists of the media. By no means do all readers have an enhanced culture of media consumption, and so they ignore such details.

Bloggers and anonymous *Telegram* channels are also irrelevant sources because they are not media outlets, and they do not have to guard their reputation like the media do. Furthermore, some channels were likely created deliberately to accustom readers to exclusive information that always turns out to be true. At the right time, they will publish a big lie. The same is applied to personal sources of journalists.

Some respondents indicated that publishing data from official sources without confirmation from a second source may also be dangerous. On the other hand, checking every

official message is problematic. So, at least, checking for the internal logic and consistency with the background is necessary, as one of the respondents pointed out.

These results also help to answer RQ2. It is common for Ukrainian news editors to allow themselves to risk with the accuracy of their news. Namely, in 30% of cases, news editors reject the issue of the accuracy of their news and publish it without 100% confidence. They usually use rush, bad mood, and a lot of other excuses to justify these situations (see Table 1). Moreover, consciously or unconsciously, they distort the meaning of fact-checking by limiting it to checking the very fact of somebody's speech instead of checking the content.

The consequences are apparent: editors often confess that their media publish inaccurate or even fake news more or less frequently. On the other hand, they do not use the narrative of the correction of mistakes when they speak about their fact-checking habits. They speak about their doubts, desire to be the first to report some news, and so on. Most of them speak about it as 'acceptable mistakes' in their work, which causes some frustration but is inevitable in a highly competitive environment.

As a result, we see that, mostly, inaccurate information published by the Ukrainian media can be attributed to cases when news editors were not completely confident in their decision to publish some fact, but not to the situations when they wrongly had 100% confidence. This is unlike the observations of the 'ordinary people', whose confidence does not correspond with the actual integrity of reports (Tomes and Katz, 2000). This means that excuses and neglect of thorough fact-checking are the main challenges of the accuracy issue for the known Ukrainian media, instead of the low professional level of the journalists.

The solution to this problem may be to communicate the fact-checking logic of different media at media practice conferences, in scientific papers, and even in the educational process. Teachers in media schools do not teach their students their typical excuses for overriding the double-check – at least this is not listed in the professional standards of the multimedia editors that are used in the Ukrainian educational system (Professional Standard: Editor of the Multimedia Editions, 2013). Internal fact-checking techniques and decision-making in the actual situation under the pressure of competitors, managers, audience metrics, and so on should be discussed in the lessons. The results show that this issue is not spelled out enough.

6. Conclusions

Relevant and correct media information is an essential factor in the times of the information society. Internal fact-checking may be considered one of the most important preconditions of it. Based on the concept of the media logic, we introduced the concept of the fact-checking logic as its part, which is responsible for deciding whether to believe some fact or not, and whether to publish this information. Our interviews with news editors of seven leading Ukrainian media outlets showed that: 1) news editors often reject the accuracy of their news and publish the news without 100% confidence; 2) The fact-checking logic of Ukrainian media editors is built on the efforts for a compromise between the accuracy

and other factors such as speed, social media algorithms, audience metrics, virality, and the management style of editors-in-chief. As a result, the aggregate quality of the news published by the surveyed media is not high enough: they often report their mistakes and correct their news items. And, mostly, the inaccurate information published by the Ukrainian media can be attributed to cases when news editors were not completely confident in their decision to publish some fact, but not to the situations when they wrongly had 100% confidence.

The outcomes of this research involve a restriction. They were made on the material of a specific Ukrainian media system. The fact-checking logic of the *Democratic Corporatist* or *Liberal* models may differ significantly. Therefore, the overall conception of the fact-checking logic and its importance are common for all countries globally.

Further investigations should include the study of the fact-checking logic in different media systems. Also, the study of the role of the fact-checking logic in mediatization may be of interest. A question may be raised: When business organizations or political parties subordinate their actions to the media logic, how do they reckon with the fact-checking part of journalists' work?

Acknowledgments

Author contributions

Artem Zakharchenko: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, visualization.

Anna Nagorna: data curation, investigation, validation.

Oleksandr Chekmyshev: supervision, writing – original draft.

References

Altheide, D. L. (2004). Media Logic and Political Communication. *Political Communication*, *21*(3), 293–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600490481307

Altheide, D. L. (2020). Pandemic in the Time of Trump: Digital Media Logic and Deadly Politics. *Symbolic Interaction*, *43*(3), 514–540. https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.501

Altheide, D. L., & Snow, R. P. (1988). Toward a Theory of Mediation. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *11*(1), 194–223. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1988.11678687

Altheide, D. L., & Snow, R. P. (2019). *Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351328883

Center for the Content Analysis. (2019). *Top Efficient Ukrainian Media Brands in 2018*. https://ukrcontent.com/en/blog/top-efektivnih-onlajn-ukrainskih-mediabrendiv-2018.html

Chekmyshev, O. (2018). *Fundamentals of Journalism: the theory and the practice of the journalist speciality*. Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

DeBono, K. G., & Harnish, R. J. (1988). Source expertise, source attractiveness, and the processing of persuasive information: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*(4), 541–546. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.55.4.541

Ekström, M., Ramsälv, A., & Westlund, O. (2021). The Epistemologies of Breaking News. *Journalism Studies*, *22*(2), 174–192. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1831398

Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Fact-Check. In *Cambridge English Dictionary*. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fact-check

Fedirko, T. (2020). Self-censorships in Ukraine: Distinguishing between the silences of television journalism. *European Journal of Communication*, *35*(1), 12–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323119897424

Ferguson, A. M., McLean, D., & Risko, E. F. (2015). Answers at your fingertips: Access to the Internet influences willingness to answer questions. *Consciousness and Cognition*, *37*, 91–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2015.08.008

Ferrer-Conill, R., & Tandoc, E. C. (2018). The Audience-Oriented Editor. *Digital Journalism*, *6*(4), 436–453. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1440972

Foster, J. L., Huthwaite, T., Yesberg, J. A., Garry, M., & Loftus, E. F. (2012). Repetition, not number of sources, increases both susceptibility to misinformation and confidence in the accuracy of eyewitnesses. *Acta Psychologica*, *139*(2), 320–326. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2011.12.004

Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208574

Graves, L., & Amazeen, M. A. (2019). Fact-Checking as Idea and Practice in Journalism. In J. Nussbaum (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (pp. 1–16). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.808

Graves, L., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2016). Understanding Innovations in Journalistic Practice: A Field Experiment Examining Motivations for Fact-Checking. *Journal of Communication*, *66*(1), 102–138. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12198

Guyer, J. J., Briñol, P., Petty, R. E., & Horcajo, J. (2019). Nonverbal Behavior of Persuasive Sources: A Multiple Process Analysis. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *43*(2), 203–231. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10919-018-00291-x

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790867

Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2001). What Is News? Galtung and Ruge revisited. *Journalism Studies*, *2*(2), 261–280. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700120042114

Himma-Kadakas, M., & Palmiste, G. (2019). Expectations and the actual performance of skills in online journalism. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *50*(2), 251–267. https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2018.1479718

Hjarvard, S. (2008). The Mediatization of Society. *Nordicom Review*, *29*(2), 102–131. https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0181

Horry, R., Colton, L.-M., & Williamson, P. (2014). Confidence–accuracy resolution in the misinformation paradigm is influenced by the availability of source cues. *Acta Psychologica*, *151*, 164–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2014.06.006

Institute of Mass Information. (2019). *Russian propaganda in a main Ukrainian news websites: research results*. https://imi.org.ua/monitorings/viyna-vybory-i-tserkva-osnovni-temy-rosiys-koi-pro-pahandy-v-ukrains-kykh-internet-zmi-doslidzhennia-i28315

Institute of Mass Information. (2020). *Monitoring into professional standards in online media. 1st wave in 2020*. https://imi.org.ua/en/monitorings/monitoring-into-professional-standards-in-online-me-dia-1st-wave-in-2020-i31706

Khuntia, J., Sun, H., & Yim, D. (2016). Sharing News Through Social Networks. *International Journal on Media Management*, *18*(1), 59–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/14241277.2016.1185429

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2007). *The elements of journalism: what newspeople should know and the public should expect*. Three Rivers Press.

Lee, A. M. (2015). Social Media and Speed-Driven Journalism: Expectations and Practices. *International Journal on Media Management*, *17*(4), 217–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/14241277.2015.1107566

Makhortykh, M., & Sydorova, M. (2017). Social media and visual framing of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. *Media, War & Conflict*, *10*(3), 359–381. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217702539

Mena, P. (2019). Principles and Boundaries of Fact-checking: Journalists' Perceptions. *Journalism Practice*, *13*(6), 657–672. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2018.1547655

Morstatter, F., Wu, L., Yavanoglu, U., Corman, S. R., & Liu, H. (2018). Identifying Framing Bias in Online News. *ACM Transactions on Social Computing*, *1*(2), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1145/3204948

Orlova, D. (2016). Ukrainian media after the EuroMaidan: in search of independence and professional identity. *Publizistik*, *61*(4), 441–461. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11616-016-0282-8

Peisakhin, L., & Rozenas, A. (2018). Electoral Effects of Biased Media: Russian Television in Ukraine. *American Journal of Political Science*, *62*(3), 535–550. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12355

Peterson-Salahuddin, C., & Diakopoulos, N. (2020). Negotiated Autonomy: The Role of Social Media Algorithms in Editorial Decision Making. *Media and Communication*, *8*(3), 27–38. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v8i3.3001

Rupar, V. (2020). Journalists as first responders. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, *15*(2), 349–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2020.1741405

Ryabinska, N. (2017). *Ukraine's Post-Communist Mass Media: Between Capture and Commercialization*. ibidem-Verlag.

Shapiro, I., Brin, C., Bédard-Brûlé, I., & Mychajlowycz, K. (2013). Verification as a Strategic Ritual. *Journalism Practice*, *7*(6), 657–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2013.765638

Sienkiewicz, M. (2016). Open source warfare: the role of user-generated content in the Ukrainian Conflict media strategy. In M. Pantti (Ed.), *Media and the Ukraine Crisis: Hybrid Media Practices and Narratives of Conflict* (pp. 19–70). Peter Lang.

SPJ. (2014). *SPJ Code of Ethics - Society of Professional Journalists*. https://www.spj.org/ethicsco-de.asp

Sylvie, G. (2003). A lesson from the New York Times: Timing and the management of cultural change. *International Journal on Media Management*, *5*(4), 294–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/14241270309390045

Szostek, J. (2017). The Power and Limits of Russia's Strategic Narrative in Ukraine: The Role of Linkage. *Perspectives on Politics*, *15*(2), 379–395. https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271700007X

Tomes, J. L., & Katz, A. N. (2000). Confidence–accuracy relations for real and suggested events. *Memory*, *8*(5), 273–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210050117708

Zakharchenko, A., Maksimtsova, Y., Iurchenko, V., Shevchenko, V., & Fedushko, S. (2019). Under the Conditions of Non-Agenda Ownership : Social Media Users in the 2019 Ukrainian Presidential

Elections Campaign. *COAPSN-2019 International Workshop on Control, Optimisation and Analytical Processing of Social Networks*, 199–219. http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2392/paper15.pdf

Zakharchenko, A., Peráček, T., Fedushko, S., Syerov, Y., & Trach, O. (2021). When Fact-Checking and 'BBC Standards' Are Helpless: 'Fake Newsworthy Event' Manipulation and the Reaction of the 'High-Quality Media' on It. *Sustainability*, *13*(2), Article 573. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020573

Zakharchenko, O., Avramenko, R., Zakharchenko, A., Korobchuk, A., Fedushko, S., Syerov, Y., & Trach, O. (2021, November 1–4). *Multifaceted Nature of Social Media Content Propagating CO-VID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: Ukrainian Case*. International Workshop on Small and Big Data Approaches in Healthcare, Leuven, Belgium.

Zakharchenko, O., Zakharchenko, A., & Fedushko, S. (2020). Global challenges are not for women: Gender peculiarities of content in Ukrainian Facebook community during high-involving social discussions. *CEUR Workshop Proceedings*, *2616*, 101–111.

Ziegler, R., Diehl, M., & Ruther, A. (2002). Multiple Source Characteristics and Persuasion: Source Inconsistency as a Determinant of Message Scrutiny. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*(4), 496–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202287007

Annex. Questionnaire for interviews with news editors

1. **Assessment of the news released**
    The interview is held immediately after the end of a work shift. The news feed editor gives scores from 1 to 10 to all the news items that he/she has produced during this shift.

2. **Discussion on the scores given**
    The interviewer conducts a conversation with the news editors and asks the following questions about most of the news items (not verbatim):
    -   You have answered that you are X points confident in news item N. Why is your confidence in this case ranked at this level?

3. **General block of questions**
    In the third block, the interviewer conducts a general conversation consisting of the following questions, but often they are reworded, their order is changed, and numerous clarifying questions are asked.
    -   How well do you know the subject matter of the news you produce?
    -   Have you ever produced a news item that you did not understand?
    -   If you are not sure about a news item, do you prefer to do fact-checking by yourself or do you ask your colleagues to do it?
    -   Who bears more responsibility for the release of fake news – the journalist or the editor?
    -   To what extent does your confidence in the news depend on how familiar you are with the journalist or the author of the story?
    -   Does your mood, state of health or other factors affect your vigilance in checking news?
    -   What is the most important thing in publishing news: completeness, accuracy, or speed?
    -   How often do you think about the credibility of news?
    -   How is confidence in the news related to its source?

- If other media have published the news, can you publish it without checking it?
- Are social media accounts reliable sources for you?
- What do you do if a journalist does not disclose his or her sources to you?
- Do you find funny news more suspicious?
- Do you ever want to publish a news story because of your political beliefs?
- Why does it happen that a news item is released, and it has to be retracted afterwards?